

Awareness and labeling initiatives can benefit inland fisheries

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Sustainable seafood initiatives, including certification and ecolabeling and awareness schemes, could be extended to more effectively cover inland, freshwater fisheries, according to researchers writing in the November issue of *BioScience*.

The world's growing dependence on fish protein and the imperiled state of many freshwater fisheries argues for such efforts, the authors conclude, although because freshwater fisheries tend to be smaller and are more concentrated in [developing countries](#) than marine and coastal fisheries, the efforts would have to be modified substantially to target the different consumers.

The article's authors, Steven Cooke of Carleton University and two colleagues, initially set out to assess the scientific literature on ecolabeling and awareness schemes as they related to freshwater species, but soon determined there were very few such studies. Although freshwater species and those (such as salmon) that live in freshwater during part of their [life cycle](#) are included in lists intended for guide consumers on sustainable diet choices, they constitute a small minority, according to a survey of 10 certification and labeling schemes.

This imbalance could lead to a public [misperception](#) that freshwater species are generally less at risk than [marine species](#), Cooke and his colleagues argue. Grassroots schemes, rather than multimedia marketing-oriented certification schemes, are the most promising approach to increasing awareness of the threats to freshwater species and what choices consumers can make to reduce these, the authors say, because many freshwater fisheries are artisanal.

Provided by American Institute of Biological Sciences

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