

## Wild versus Farmed Salmon: What's the difference?

**Wild-caught** is your best bet when purchasing salmon. Be aware that some wild-caught salmon originate from hatcheries.

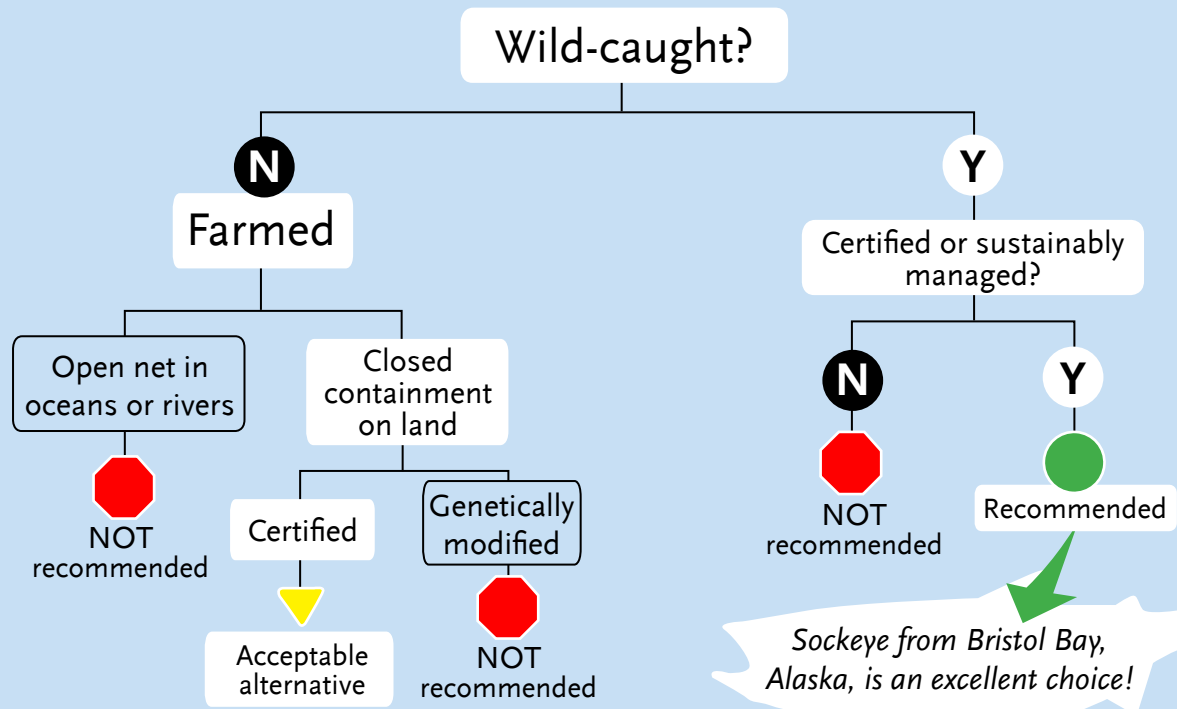
**Farmed salmon** are commercially raised fish in some form of an enclosure. Fish farms do vary but from a consumer perspective, they can be divided into two categories: open net pens and closed containment systems.

**Open net pens** are usually a cage or net system located in coastal waters, such as the salmon farms off the coast of British Columbia. Evidence points to these open net pens still not being a good choice due to chemicals used, transmission of diseases and parasites, and risk of escapement.

**Closed containment systems** utilize an impenetrable barrier that separates the farmed fish from the outside environment. A closed system prevents the transmission of diseases and parasites, eliminates escapement issues, requires fewer chemicals, and uses less feed.

There are five species of Pacific salmon that you are likely to encounter at a fish market or backyard barbecue: Chinook, sockeye, coho, pink, and chum. **We recommend wild-caught, MSC-certified salmon (such as Alaska sockeye).** Avoid purchasing steelhead marketed as "wild" because wild steelhead are threatened across many rivers in North America.

For more information on hatchery fish and their long-term implications for wild fisheries, visit [wildsalmoncenter.org](http://wildsalmoncenter.org).



For more information, go to [wildsalmoncenter.org/eatsalmon](http://wildsalmoncenter.org/eatsalmon)



Wild salmon (left)—like flamingos—get their deep pink color from eating crustaceans, which contain astaxanthin. Farm-raised salmon (right) tend to look far more pale because they are fed synthetic astaxanthin and the related canthaxanthin, a carotenoid pigment. Because of environmental and dietary differences, farmed salmon may contain more potentially harmful contaminants than wild salmon.

## Top Three Ways to Make Sure Your “Wild Salmon” isn’t a Fraud

Transparency advocates and media reports have proven that seafood mislabeling is a real thing. To ensure that the salmon you are purchasing is truly “as advertised,” take these precautions:

1. Purchase salmon with recognized sustainability certification labels like the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). Better yet, purchase straight from the source—either from the processor or a community supported fishery.
2. Any fish marketed as both “fresh” and “wild” in the winter months is likely a fraud. Either it is farmed, or it is wild and has been flash-frozen. And the latter is a completely acceptable option in the non-season months.
3. If it seems too good to be true (e.g. low price for premium fish), it probably is.

