



# Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch

## **New and updated ratings and recommendations**

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Updated ratings

Species	Scientific name	Location	Method	Previous rating	Updated rating	Justification
Sturgeon, White	<i>Acipenser transmontanus</i>	U.S.	Freshwater tanks, raceways, and ponds	Green	Green	<p><b>White sturgeon farmed in the U.S. is rated green.</b> All but two criteria are rated green, indicating that most environmental impacts and risks are low. The two yellow-rated criteria concern feed and escapes. Based on the available information, the feed’s marine ingredients come from moderately sustainable fisheries, but 1.24 metric tons of wild fish must be caught to supply the fish meal needed to produce one metric ton of sturgeon. Most U.S. white sturgeon is produced in California, where no major escape events have occurred, and the risk is considered low. In Idaho, sturgeon are farmed in raceways connected to natural water bodies, and operators follow best practices to prevent escapes. However, a significant flood in 2017 demonstrated that large-scale events can occur. Otherwise, the industry as a whole has low effluent (farm waste), habitat, chemical, and disease impacts. For example, California producers discharge effluent onto agricultural land, which means there are no direct impacts on natural water bodies. In Idaho, effluent is discharged into the Snake River watershed, where phosphorus levels are high, but sturgeon farms contribute only a minor amount compared to other industries. Most sturgeon farms are on former agricultural land, and enforcement of habitat regulations is considered effective. The use of antibiotics and other chemicals is minimal, and disease outbreaks are reportedly infrequent. However, more data are needed to fully understand the potential disease risks to wild sturgeon populations.</p>

Species	Scientific name	Location	Method	Previous rating	Updated rating	Justification
Tilapia	<i>Oreochromis spp.</i>	Taiwan	Ponds	Yellow	Yellow	<p><b>Tilapia farmed in Taiwan in ponds is rated yellow.</b> The industry has shifted to near-zero-discharge ponds, where daily water exchange is very low. Most water is reused via connected ponds and reservoirs. This shift away from groundwater use to rainwater collection and reuse means farms release very little effluent (farm waste) into the environment. Most tilapia ponds are on former farmland, and the industry hasn't expanded in recent years. Habitat regulations are strong, but with more than 2,000 small farms, enforcement capacity is limited. Data on chemical use are limited, and antimicrobials that are highly or critically important to human health are used. Compliance with the government's random residue testing program is very high, but farmers can bypass prescription rules, and some U.S. imports have been rejected due to residues. Tilapia feeds typically include small amounts of marine ingredients, with about half coming from by-products, based on information provided by the feed companies contacted. Tilapia were introduced to Taiwan in the 1940s and have become well established. Although ponds are located in flood-prone areas, the risk of escapes is low because farms discharge very little water and operators use containment measures such as raised embankments and screens. Lower escapes minimize the risk of spreading disease to wild species, and near-zero discharge further limits the spread of pathogens.</p>