

# In cod we can't trust: DNA shows fish often mislabelled for sale

304 words

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[CBC News](#)

Many consumers are being reeled in and are paying high prices for fish that has been mislabelled, according to a University of Guelph study.

The study, which will be published next week in the journal of Food Research International, tested the DNA of 100 fish samples taken from restaurants and markets in Toronto, Guelph, Ont., and New York City.

The researchers found that 25 per cent of the fish tested were mislabelled. The study showed, for example, that Atlantic Halibut was often sold as Pacific Halibut and samples of Atlantic cod and Acadian redfish were mislabelled as the pricier Red Snapper.

"This not only raises concerns of consumer fraud, but also public health," said Robert Hanner, the associate director for the Canadian Barcode of Life Network, in a release.

"A person could have allergies to a certain species and if it's mislabelled that could have dangerous consequences."

Researchers also noted that some labels for endangered fish species had been swapped.

"Consumers may think they are doing the right thing for the environment by buying a certain type of fish that is eco-friendly when really they could actually still be buying exploited species," said Hanner.

Hanner and Eugene Wong, a graduate student at the University of Guelph, teamed up with Kate Stoeckle and Louisa Strauss, two recent high school graduates in New York City.

Stoeckle told the New York Times she initiated the project because she was curious about checking the genetic fingerprinting of sushi samples. She enlisted Strauss to help with the project and sent the samples to Wong to compare against Guelph's Barcode of Life Database.

Stoeckle and Strauss plan to publish their findings in Pacific Fishing Magazine.

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**[FarLeft](#) wrote:**Posted 2008/08/22

at 1:09 PM ETWe need to stop the insane privatisation course that Conservative and right-wing governments are pushing for.

Canadians need to be better served by our governments, and that should include regulation of such things as food!

This article demonstrates that the free market cannot be trusted to uphold the public's best interests!

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**[Jonathan B](#) wrote:**Posted 2008/08/22

at 12:45 AM ETI like the title: it is accurate, informative, and kinda funny -something news can do more.

sensationalism and bad titles are like these:

Britney spears marries cod! (title)

and (story) goes:

"What you see isn't always what you get. A study found mislabelled fish in dinner plates"

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**[Mind Guerrilla](#) wrote:**Posted 2008/08/22

at 12:39 AM ETWhat do you expect from an industry that's almost NOT regulated. Not that it matters at this point, soon there will be nothing left to regulate.

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**[Bard29](#) wrote:**Posted 2008/08/22

at 12:32 AM ETIt would be interesting to know whether there's the same level of mislabelling in places like Halifax or St. John's where there's a higher likelihood that the consumer can tell one species of marine fish from another. It's hard to believe, for example, that someone could buy cod labelled as snapper - that's like buying chicken labelled as beef!

In Halifax we sometimes have fish which are sold under names that are not used locally, and so its hard to know whether they were properly labelled. Anyway - this is a problem that needs to be taken seriously given the worldwide decline of marine fish, many of which are at population levels below 10% of where they should be.

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**[RevPro](#) wrote:**Posted 2008/08/22

at 12:14 AM ETThis is one of the worst headlines I have ever seen. Why do writers insist on trivializing important stories with these sophomoric puns?

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**frequent flyer** wrote: Posted 2008/08/22

at 12:06 AM ET some people have not crossed over yet from the monkey stage.

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**Mayor Quimby** wrote: Posted 2008/08/22

at 12:05 AM ET Sounds fishy to me.

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