Nearly 11 percent of total U.S. seafood imports and over 13 percent of U.S. imports caught at sea in 2019 were derived from illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, according to a new report by the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC).


As requested, the USITC, an independent, nonpartisan, factfinding federal agency, reported on the size, scope, supply chains, pricing pressures, and potential economic effects of U.S. imports of IUU seafood products. The USITC findings include:
The United States imported an estimated $2.4 billion worth of seafood derived from IUU fishing in 2019. This figure represents nearly 11 percent of total U.S. seafood imports, and over 13 percent of U.S. imports caught at sea (“marine capture”).

Among the major categories of marine-capture IUU imports were imports of swimming crab, wild-caught warmwater shrimp, yellowfin tuna, and squid.

China, Russia, Mexico, Vietnam, and Indonesia were relatively substantial exporters of marine-capture IUU imports to the United States.

The removal of IUU imports from the U.S. market would have a positive effect on U.S. commercial fishers, with estimated increases in U.S. prices, landings (catches of fish), and operating income.


USITC general factfinding investigations, such as this one, cover matters related to tariffs or trade and are generally conducted at the request of the U.S. Trade Representative, the House Committee on Ways and Means, or the Senate Committee on Finance. The resulting report conveys the Commission's objective findings and independent analyses on the subjects investigated. The Commission makes no recommendations on policy or other matters in its general factfinding reports. Upon completion of each investigation, the USITC submits its findings and analyses to the requester. General factfinding investigation reports are subsequently released to the public, unless they are classified by the requester for national security reasons.

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