

# Restaurant Testing Exposes Rampant Shrimp Mislabeling in Savannah

*The new findings underscore the need for shrimp labeling laws*

SAVANNAH, GA, UNITED STATES, March 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A recent investigation by [SEAD Consulting](#) reveals that 77% (34 of 44) of sampled restaurants in Savannah, Georgia falsely market their shrimp as premium U.S. wild-caught shrimp when they are actually serving farm-raised imported shrimp.

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA), representing the U.S. shrimp fishermen, processors, and related businesses across all eight Gulf and South Atlantic shrimp-producing states, including Georgia, commissioned the testing to highlight deceptive restaurant practices that harm local shrimpers, honest restaurants, and mislead consumers who expect a premium product.

In 2024, SSA worked with the [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#) to inform seafood restaurants that it is a violation of federal law for restaurants to create an impression that they are offering wild-caught domestic shrimp when farmed, foreign shrimp is being served. Yet, the results of random testing underscore the urgent need for stronger labeling laws and enforcement to ensure transparency in the restaurant industry.



Southern Shrimp Alliance logo



Box of Georgia Shrimp from Anchored Shrimp Co.



Consumers want the superior flavor and texture of wild-caught shrimp harvested by a sustainable, well-managed local fishery. Restaurants use the imagery of local shrimpers to sell farmed shrimp."

*John Williams, executive director of the Southern Shrimp Alliance*

## Georgia's Proposed Shrimp Labeling Bill a Critical Step Forward

In February, the Georgia House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed bipartisan House Bill 117 by a vote of 165 to 7 which would require all commercial food service establishments in Georgia to clearly inform customers when imported shrimp is used, either by displaying a placard that says "Foreign Imported Shrimp" or labeling each menu item containing shrimp with "Foreign Imported." The bill has since been revised in the Senate to also require restaurants to also disclose whether they are serving imported beef or chicken as well as shrimp.

Other states that, like Georgia, currently lack restaurant disclosure requirements have seen similar false advertising rates in shrimp testing, averaging a 78% inauthenticity rate. The exception is Louisiana, where restaurant disclosure laws for shrimp have helped curb misrepresentation. Baton Rouge, Lafayette and New Orleans restaurants had an average inauthenticity rate of just 25%, proving that transparency laws work.

"I have spent many years distinguishing wild Georgia shrimp from farm-raised imports. Yet, none of that work is worth anything if restaurants mislead consumers through false advertising," states John Wallace, owner of Anchor Shrimp Co., a leading supplier of wild Georgia shrimp to Savannah and the Georgia coast. "We thank Georgia Representative Jesse Petrea for sponsoring and Representatives Buddy DeLoach, Lehman Franklin, Rick Townsend, and Al Williams for co-sponsoring legislation to mandate restaurant disclosures that allow consumers to make an informed decision when ordering shrimp."

## The Big Swap and Continued Illusion

Few Americans realize that U.S. taxpayers have helped finance global shrimp aquaculture development, undermining domestic shrimpers. Combined with decades unfair trade practices, weak labor, environmental, and food safety regulations in exporting countries, U.S.-supported investments have shrunk the U.S. shrimp industry's market share to less than 10%.

Today, the vast majority of the shrimp sold in U.S. restaurants and grocery stores is farm-raised and imported from India, Ecuador, Vietnam and Indonesia—but consumers, especially in coastal communities like Savannah, still expect a dock-to-table experience when dining out. Restaurants use décor, signage and waterfront locations to maintain the illusion and sometimes outright mislabel menu items. However, when given a clear choice, many consumers select local wild-caught shrimp.

"Consumers--including Savannah's many tourists--want the superior flavor and texture of wild-

caught shrimp harvested by a sustainable, well-managed local fishery. Restaurants know that and use the culture and imagery of local shrimpers when selling farmed shrimp raised halfway around the world on processed feed, fungicides, and banned antibiotics," explains John Williams, executive director of the Southern Shrimp Alliance.

### Savannah's Culinary Reputation at Risk

Savannah is a destination known for its culinary excellence, and food tourism is a major driver of the city's economy. In 2023, visitors spent \$4.7 billion, with the largest growth in spending on food and retail, according to tourism and travel research firm Longwoods International. However, restaurants misleading customers about their seafood threaten Savannah's reputation as an authentic coastal food destination.

Consumers deserve to know what they are paying for and eating. Taking the steps necessary to enact the restaurant disclosure requirements envisioned by House Bill 117 would help to ensure that Georgia's citizenry is able to make an informed choice as to how to spend their money.

### Restaurants Supporting U.S. Shrimpers

Following are the 10 restaurants out of 44 sampled in the Savannah area found to be serving wild-caught local Georgia shrimp as advertised or implied:

1. Belford's Seafood and Steaks, 315 West St. Julian Street, Savannah, GA 31401
2. Boar's Head Grill & Tavern, 1 North Lincoln Street, Savannah, GA 31401
3. Coastal 15, 102 W Bay St, Savannah, GA 31401
4. Fiddler's Crab House & Oyster Bar, 131 West River Street, Savannah, GA 31401
5. Love's Seafood & Steak, 6817 Chief O.F. Love Road, Savannah, GA 31419
6. The Olde Pink House, 23 Abercorn Street, Savannah, GA 31401
7. Pier 16, 1601 Inlet Ave, Tybee Island, GA 31328
8. Rhett, 412 Williamson Street, Savannah, GA 31401
9. Sea Wolf, 106 S Campbell Ave, Tybee Island, GA 31328
10. Wood's Seafood, 711 GA-30, Port Wentworth, GA 31407

The 34 restaurants found to not be authentic are being sent letters from SEAD Consulting to make them aware of the findings. Genetic retesting of the market and the misleading restaurants is likely.

[Learn more about seafood labeling at other states](#)

### About the Southern Shrimp Alliance

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) is an organization of shrimp fishermen, shrimp processors, and other members of the domestic industry in the eight warmwater shrimp-producing states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.

### About SEAD Consulting

SEAD (Seafood Development) Consulting works to foster innovation and sustainability

throughout the sector, bridging commercial fishery science with testing and processing technologies to combat seafood mislabeling and substitution fraud. They currently hold the patent, in partnership with Florida State University, for portable rapid ID high-accuracy genetic test RIGHTTest™.

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