Crab Cakes – They’re Not What You Think

Maryland is facing controversy over mislabeled blue crab cakes. Because of its crucial role in the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem, the blue crab is considered a keystone species. Without it, the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem would suffer serious disruption. The blue crab is also a staple of the local economy in Maryland, with 50% of the blue crab harvested each year in the United States coming from the Chesapeake Bay. The high demand and economic value of blue crab has led to overharvesting and resulting regulations.

Places in Maryland that sell crab cakes have started using other types of crab while falsely marketing their product as blue crab. A recent study by Oceana has shown that as much as 38% of crab cakes sold in Maryland as blue crab are, in fact, other types of crab. In addition to the deception, the crab used in these crab cakes is imported from areas around the world where the crab is harvested using unsustainable methods.

Researchers found eight other species besides blue crab with 48% of the crab cakes using crab species originating from the Pacific coast of Mexico and the Indo-Pacific region. In addition, almost 50% of the species used are ones that seafood guides warn people to avoid.

The only way that the problems of mislabeled seafood are going to be solved is through strengthening the tracking process for seafood from the place it’s caught to the place it’s served. Oceana is a leader in the movement to shore up food safety by improving the monitoring process of seafood production and cracking down harder on seafood fraud. They have urged the government to have the Task Force on Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Seafood Fraud implement traceability requirements on all seafood sold in America so

that consumers can be confident that they get what they pay for and not something else.

Recommended Reading:

- *Genetically Modified Salmon Is On Its Way To Your Store*

Sources:

- *Oceana Reveals Mislabeling of Iconic Chesapeake Blue Crab* – Oceana
- *Blue Crab* – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Chesapeake Bay Office
- *Seafood Production* – Maryland At a Glance