



Seafood Watch: 2011 Press Kit

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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‘SEAFOOD WATCH’ HELPS CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES PROTECT OCEAN WILDLIFE THROUGH SEAFOOD CHOICES

It was once thought that the ocean’s supply of seafood could never be exhausted. Today, an ever-increasing demand for seafood is putting our oceans under severe pressure worldwide. The Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch program works to broaden awareness of the links between the seafood on our plates and the health of our oceans as it helps consumers and businesses choose seafood that supports environmentally responsible fishing and fish farming practices. It’s a buying decision that can contribute directly to ocean health.

“Fisheries conservation is one of the most important marine conservation issues today,” says aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard. “It’s an environmental problem whose solution is in people’s hands every time they buy seafood. Through Seafood Watch, we want to give people the information they need to make wise choices when they shop or dine out.”

In 1997, an aquarium special exhibition - Fishing for Solutions - prompted an internal review of the aquarium’s own seafood-buying practices, resulting in a list of recommendations for internal use. Visitors began asking for a copy of this list and the Seafood Watch pocket guide was born. Since its debut in 1999, the Seafood Watch program has grown to include six regional pocket guides, with three Spanish-language options, featuring popular seafood found in different regions of the U.S. In 2008, a guide to sustainable sushi was introduced. Guides are updated every six months to reflect ongoing research, resulting in “Best Choices,” “Good Alternatives” or items to “Avoid.”

In partnership with zoos, aquariums and other institutions across the U.S., the Monterey Bay Aquarium has put over 36.7 million Seafood Watch pocket guides in the hands of consumers; over nine million guides were included in the 2007 DVD release of the animated film Happy Feet. Thousands of guides are also downloaded each year from the aquarium’s website. A mobile version of the pocket guide is also available for mobile devices with Internet connection, in addition to the free application for the iPhone and iPod touch which has been downloaded by over 500,000 users.

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Seafood Watch offers online resources and practical tools for consumers, seafood buyers and Seafood Watch partners. An annual three-day event, “Cooking for Solutions,” connects individual buying decisions to the health of the oceans and the land with celebrity chefs showcasing dishes featuring sustainable, organic and local food and wine options.

Through the efforts of Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch program and the broader sustainable seafood movement, major seafood buyers are embracing the move to sustainable sourcing. Compass Group North America and ARAMARK’s food service division have each made a commitment to sustainable sourcing. Such commitments are having a huge impact, with millions of pounds of more sustainable seafood purchased each year.

Consumer demand, together with a growing understanding of the urgent issues facing the oceans, is encouraging other seafood buyers to seek more ocean-friendly alternatives. The aquarium continues to develop a network of Seafood Watch restaurant partners and to work closely with other businesses to create market incentives for a switch to sustainable seafood.

Increased consumer demand for seafood has had a profound effect on the health of our oceans. Today nearly two thirds of the world’s assessed fish stocks require rebuilding. Bycatch – the unintended capture of marine life in fishing gear – is having a serious impact on ocean wildlife, particularly long-lived animals such as sea turtles, sharks, marine mammals and seabirds. Bycatch is also concern because of the sheer volume of fish and invertebrates that are thrown overboard; it’s estimated that eight percent of global landings are discarded.

With the worldwide catch in decline, aquaculture (or fish farming) seeks to fill the gap. In the next year, for the first time, farming will likely overtake wild-caught fish as the leading source of our seafood. While fish farming can help ease pressure on wild fisheries, some aquaculture methods can have their own negative impact. One major concern is the amount of wild-caught fish required to feed carnivorous species of farmed fish, such as salmon and tuna.

Yet there are signs of hope. In several regions of the world, proactive management in both fisheries and aquaculture operations is turning the tide in favor of sustainability. To learn more, download the aquarium’s new report, “Turning the Tide: The State of Seafood” online at www.montereybayaquarium.org/seafoodwatch.

The mission of the Monterey Bay Aquarium is to inspire conservation of the oceans.

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Editors: Images of Seafood Watch pocket guides are available through the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s online pressroom at www.montereybayaquarium.org/aa/pressroom.

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SEAFOOD WATCH PROGRAM

Fact Sheet

The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program empowers seafood consumers and businesses to make choices for healthy oceans. The program works to transform seafood markets in ways that create incentives for sustainable fishing and fish-farming practices. Key elements of the program include public education efforts to raise consumer awareness about sustainable seafood issues, primarily through distribution of Seafood Watch pocket guides; and outreach efforts with retailers, restaurateurs, major buyers and other seafood purveyors to encourage them to make the switch to sustainable seafood.

HISTORY

In 1997, the Monterey Bay Aquarium opened its "Fishing for Solutions" special exhibition to inform visitors about conservation issues surrounding fishing and aquaculture practices. In the course of developing the exhibit about the environmental threats from non-sustainable practices, the aquarium evaluated the seafood it was serving through its own restaurant and catering services, and to its exhibit animals. The aquarium made a commitment to serve only seafood from environmentally responsible sources. Low-key publicizing of the change prompted visitors to ask for copies of the aquarium's approved seafood list. From this modest beginning, the Seafood Watch program was born. In 1999, with the launch of a new and expanded aquarium website www.seafoodwatch.org, this information metamorphosed into the first Seafood Watch consumer pocket guide.

In 2001, Seafood Watch was awarded a grant of more than \$2 million from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to significantly expand the program. Subsequent grants from the Packard and Annenberg foundations have supported the aquarium's evolving Sustainable Seafood Initiative as it works to shift the buying habits of consumers and businesses to support sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

CONSUMERS

The Seafood Watch pocket guide lists ocean-friendly seafood choices for consumers in a green "Best Choices" column, and non-sustainable choices in a red "Avoid" column. Those in the "Avoid" column come from sources that are overfished, or are caught or farmed in ways that harm the environment. There is also a yellow "Good Alternatives" list; these seafood items are an acceptable and sustainable option, but there is concern with how they're caught or farmed.

Pocket guides are updated every six months to incorporate the latest available research. A full downloadable scientific report is available on the website. The Seafood Watch website attracts thousands of visitors each year, to download pocket guides and use the online resources to make ocean-friendly choices.

Our iPhone application brings the latest Seafood Watch recommendations directly to your iPhone or iPod touch www.montereybayaquarium.org/iphoneapp. The iPhone app has been downloaded by over 500,000 users. In 2010, a new feature "Project FishMap" was added to the app. This feature enables users to tag where they find ocean-friendly seafood. Recommendations are also available for mobile devices with Internet connection at mobile.seafoodwatch.org

To date, the Aquarium and its Seafood Watch partner organizations have distributed more than 36.7 million pocket guides. There are six regional guides (West Coast, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Central U.S. and Hawaii), plus three Spanish-language guides. Nine million pocket guides were distributed in the 2007 DVD release of the Academy Award-winning animated film, *Happy Feet*. A national sushi guide was launched in October 2008 featuring the most popular sushi items found in the U.S., listed by their Japanese sushi names.

BUSINESS OUTREACH

Increasingly, the Seafood Watch program focuses on efforts to change the buying habits of seafood businesses: restaurants, food services providers and wholesalers. These businesses are the gatekeepers to the seafood supply in the United States. Restaurants alone account for approximately 70 percent (by dollar value) of all seafood sold nationwide.

Online, the Seafood Watch website (www.seafoodwatch.org) offers resources that purveyors can use to understand sustainable seafood issues and train their staff to discuss the complexities of sustainable seafood with their customers. Seafood Watch offers fact sheets and downloadable research reports. In addition it has developed a training package to aid purveyors as they move to incorporate sustainable seafood onto their menus and at their seafood counters. The Seafood Watch Training Program is available as a two-disc DVD set, with portions available online.

Since 2002, the aquarium and Seafood Watch have hosted an annual Cooking for Solutions event, which brings together celebrity chefs from across the United States and beyond to prepare gourmet dishes using sustainable seafood and organic ingredients, paired with organic and sustainable wines.

These events—which reach several thousand consumers annually as well as top food journalists and food industry leaders—strengthen the connection between the foods people eat and the health of the oceans and the land. Notable chef participants have included Alice Waters, Jacques Pépin, Diana Kennedy, Martin Yan, Rick Bayless, Nora Pouillon, Rick Moonen, Barton Seaver, and more than three dozen other renowned chefs.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium works with the nation's largest food service providers, ARAMARK and Compass Group North America as they shift their buying toward sustainable seafood and establish themselves as leaders in the transformation of the food service industry.

The Aquarium has also partnered with Whole Foods Market and Santa Monica Seafood. Both are leaders in their field in offering their customers the most ocean-friendly seafood choices.

Seafood Watch partners with 30 local restaurants in the Monterey Bay region to promote ocean-friendly seafood menus, and provides tools to train wait staff to understand the issues and communicate sustainable seafood messages with restaurant patrons. Through the aquarium's membership in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Seafood Watch brings the sustainable seafood message to tens of millions of zoo and aquarium visitors nationwide with 198 partners across the U.S. distributing pocket guides.

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RESTAURANTS PARTNER WITH AQUARIUM TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program has partnered with 30 restaurants from the Monterey Bay area to help transform the seafood market in ways that protect ocean wildlife and preserve critical ocean habitats.

In total, 60 establishments have joined the Seafood Watch "Restaurant Partner" program, pledging to drop from their menus all red-list species in the "Avoid" category of the aquarium's Seafood Watch pocket guide. They also commit to continue to work with the aquarium and to train their staff to answer customer questions about ocean-friendly seafood.

The roster of partners includes 30 restaurants that have been part of the aquarium's annual Cooking for Solutions events, a three-day gourmet celebration featuring celebrity chefs, sustainable seafood, organic cuisine and sustainable/organic premium wines. Cooking for Solutions 2011 will take place May 20, 21 and 22. Chef Rick Moonen, of rm seafood in Las Vegas will be this year's "Chef of the Year" for his strong commitment to food sustainability.

"It's great that so many restaurants want to do their part for healthy oceans by making wise seafood choices," said Sheila Bowman, senior outreach manager for Seafood Watch. "Taking 'red-list' items off the menu and telling customers about what they're doing really makes a big difference."

The full – and growing – list of restaurant partners, as well as additional background about the Seafood Watch program, is available at www.montereybayaquarium.org/seafood.

The mission of the Monterey Bay Aquarium is to inspire conservation of the oceans. More information about all aquarium programs is online at www.montereybayaquarium.org.

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‘COOKING FOR SOLUTIONS 2011’ ADDS 3RD DAY, NEW EVENTS TO CULINARY CELEBRATION

*All-star lineup for May 20-22 includes Chef of the Year Rick Moonen,
Alton Brown, Guy Fieri, Nathan Lyon, P. Allen Smith, Lynne Rossetto Kasper*

Renowned chefs from across North America will share their passion for fine dining and environmentally sustainable living when they're honored at the Monterey Bay Aquarium's "Cooking for Solutions 2011" on May 20-22, 2011.

Now in its 10th year, the celebration of sustainable gourmet cuisine offers new opportunities to savor sustainability. The celebration includes a third day of public events on Sunday, May 22 and new types of programs – from powerhouse presentations by culinary TV celebrities in the *Coastal Living* Pavilion to smaller gatherings with sustainability leaders in an intimate setting overlooking Monterey Bay.

The nonprofit aquarium and its acclaimed Seafood Watch program will honor Rick Moonen of rm seafood in Las Vegas as **Chef of the Year** for his passionate advocacy for sustainable seafood. It will also welcome as **Special Guests** television all-stars Alton Brown and Guy Fieri of The Food Network, public television's Nathan Lyon, syndicated gardening and cooking guru P. Allen Smith, and public radio's Lynne Rossetto Kasper of *The Splendid Table*.

At Cooking for Solutions, celebrity chefs – selected and recognized by the Monterey Bay Aquarium for their leadership in promoting food practices that protect the health of the ocean and the soil – will create gourmet dishes, host food and wine adventures, and offer cooking demonstrations that feature sustainable seafood and organic ingredients.

All proceeds support the Seafood Watch program, which has helped to transform the seafood market in ways that preserve healthy ecosystems and sustain ocean wildlife.

Lead sponsors of Cooking for Solutions 2011 are Earthbound Farm, the nation's leading organic farming business with a mission to bring the benefits of organic food to as many people as possible and serve as a catalyst for positive change; and *Coastal Living*, a national magazine that celebrates life along the coast and serves as the source of inspiration and information for people who live or dream of living a coastal lifestyle.

Along with Rick Moonen, 15 other noted chefs from across the United States and Canada will be honored as **Celebrity Chef Ambassadors**.

New and returning honorees include: the aquarium's new culinary partner and celebrity host chef Cindy Pawlcyn (Mustards Grill, Cindy's Backstreet Kitchen and Go Fish, all Napa Valley, and the Monterey Bay Aquarium Restaurant, Monterey); John Ash (Fetzer Vineyards, Hopland, California); Seth Caswell (emmer&rye, Seattle); Chris Cosentino (Incanto, San Francisco); William Disen (The Market Place, Asheville, North Carolina); Carla Hall (Alchemy by Carla Hall, Washington, D.C.); Ed Kenney (town, Honolulu); Bun Lai (Miya's Sushi, New Haven, Connecticut); Anthony Lamas (Seviche, Louisville, Kentucky); Peter Pakh (Kingsmill Resort, Williamsburg, Virginia); Lee Richardson (Ashley's Restaurant at Capital Hotel, Little Rock, Arkansas); Casey Thompson (Brownstone, Fort Worth); Bryan Voltaggio (VOLT, Frederick, Maryland); Eric Warnstedt (Hen of the Wood, Waterbury, Vermont); and Virginia Willis (Virginia Willis Culinary Productions, Atlanta).

Six participating **Special Guests Chefs** – all honored as Celebrity Chef Ambassadors at past Cooking for Solutions celebrations – include: Regina Charboneau (Inn at Twin Oaks, Natchez, Mississippi); Sam Choy (Sam Choy's Breakfast, Lunch & Crab, Honolulu); Michael Cimarusti (Providence, Los Angeles), Jesse Ziff Cool (Cool EatZ Restaurants and Catering/Flea St. Café, Menlo Park, California); Brandon Hill (Bamboo Sushi, Portland, Oregon); and Charles Phan (The Slanted Door, San Francisco).

They'll be joined by **Special Guests** Alton Brown (creator of the Food Network's *Good Eats*, Be Square Productions, Atlanta), Guy Fieri (chef and host of the Food Network's *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* and other programs, Santa Rosa, California), Lynne Rossetto Kasper (author and host of public radio's *The Splendid Table*, St. Paul, Minnesota), Nathan Lyon (chef and host of PBS's *Growing A Greener World*, Los Angeles) and P. Allen Smith (syndicated garden and food program host, P. Allen Smith Garden Home, Little Rock, Arkansas).

The Friday gala on May 20 – the signature celebration at Cooking for Solutions and a sell-out event every year – offers gourmet dishes from appetizers to desserts, created by the celebrity chefs, notable presenting chefs who host them for the events, and 69 exceptional regional restaurants. In addition, 63 premium vintners from California and the western U.S. will pour organic and sustainable wines. Beer and non-alcoholic beverages will also be available.

The gala will be preceded by an amuse-bouche program with Rick Moonen and Lynne Rossetto Kasper featuring a cooking demonstration, conversation, wine and hors d'oeuvres. A popular sushi lounge and a Premium Lounge area for aquarium members will also be part of the evening events.

Saturday's lineup includes new elements including *Coastal Living* Pavilion Presentations by Alton Brown, Guy Fieri and P. Allen Smith and a "salon series" of conversations with leaders in the sustainable and organic movements – individuals like Maria Rodale, Myra Goodman and Kristine Kidd.

The day will also feature culinary outings and morning cooking demonstrations with Cooking for Solutions chefs, and a daylong Sustainable Foods Celebration open to all aquarium visitors.

Saturday evening brings the sixth Sustainable Seafood Challenge, an "Iron Chef"-like event in which four Cooking for Solutions chefs prepare tasty seafood dishes from the same sustainable ingredients in a tournament-style kitchen set-up. A celebrity chef judging panel will recognize the chefs in four fun categories.

Sunday will feature a Gulf coast champagne breakfast with Regina Charboneau, Lee Richardson and Virginia Willis, along with live Cajun music; a second day of *Coastal Living* Pavilion Presentations with Alton Brown and Nathan Lyon, a continuation of the "salon series" with noted chefs and the final day of the Sustainable Foods Celebration.

The aquarium's Seafood Watch program, which inspired the creation of Cooking for Solutions, gives consumers, chefs and major seafood buyers the tools and information they need to make seafood choices that help assure a future with abundant ocean wildlife.

Since its inception in 1999, Seafood Watch has played a key role in moving sustainable seafood into the culinary mainstream. Today, it creates regional and national consumer pocket guides and partners with restaurants and major food service companies to shift millions of pounds of seafood purchases to sustainable sources.

Seafood Watch has distributed more than 36 million pocket guides, and the Seafood Watch iPhone app has been downloaded by more than 325,000 people. The program partners with nearly 200 zoos, aquariums, conservation organizations, national retailers, restaurateurs and seafood distributors – all to shift the seafood market in directions that reward fishing practices that protect ocean ecosystems and the marine animals that depend on them.

Tickets for all Cooking for Solutions 2011 events go on sale beginning January 4 for aquarium members and January 24 for the general public. They're available online at www.cookingforsolutions.org, or by calling the Monterey Bay Aquarium toll-free at 866-963-9645.

Event details are available online at www.cookingforsolutions.org.

The mission of the nonprofit Monterey Bay Aquarium is to inspire conservation of the oceans. To learn more, visit www.montereybayaquarium.org.

Program details and chef bios below. Contact Public Relations for chef photos, and photos and video of past Cooking for Solutions events.

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AQUARIUM ISSUES SPANISH-LANGUAGE SEAFOOD GUIDES

Spanish-speaking consumers now have a tool to help them protect ocean wildlife every time they order seafood at restaurants and seafood markets: Spanish-language pocket guides to ocean-friendly seafood, created by the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

The Spanish-language guides are modeled on three of the pocket guides issued by the aquarium's Seafood Watch program. Costa Oeste Guía de Mariscos features over 60 of the most popular seafood species found on the U.S. West Coast. Each item is ranked "Las Mejores Opciones" (Best Choices), "Buenas Alternativas" (Good Alternatives) or "Evite" (Avoid). A guide is also available for the Southwest (Guía de Mariscos Sudoeste), and Guía de Mariscos Nacional is based on the National pocket guide.

"We wanted to empower the Hispanic community," said Sheila Bowman, Seafood Watch senior outreach manager. "The pocket guides are a great way for families to make a difference for the oceans." Bowman noted that in a 2003 statewide survey, the Public Policy Institute of California found that Hispanic residents were more concerned about many of the environmental problems affecting the coast than non-Hispanic Californians. One significant finding: between 32 and 46 percent of Hispanic voters say that overfishing is a big problem for the state.

The aquarium distributed more than a million Spanish-language pocket guides, both in the aquarium and through partner organizations. Guides can be downloaded from the website, or viewed on the iPhone app or mobile guide site mobile.seafoodwatch.org.

Seafood Watch produced the Spanish-language West Coast guide in collaboration with staff at the Fishwife and Turtle Bay Taqueria restaurants on the Monterey Peninsula. Restaurant owners Julio and Marie Ramirez – and their bilingual staff – helped to create the new guide.

"Our staff was honored to contribute to the Spanish-language guide," said Marie Ramirez. "This is a great tool for our staff to share with our Spanish-speaking customers, who in turn can take it home and share it with their families and friends."

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Editors: Copies of the Spanish-language Seafood Watch guides are available from the Public Relations or online at www.montereybayaquarium.org.

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