



# Monterey Bay Aquarium **Seafood Watch**

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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.

“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 for seafood 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 – including Spanish-language options – featuring the most popular seafood found in different regions of the U.S. A guide to sustainable sushi was added to the portfolio in 2008. Printed [guides are updated every six months to reflect ongoing research, resulting in an ever growing list of recommendations for seafood in the categories of “Best Choice,” “Good Alternative” or items to “Avoid” for now.](#)

In partnership with zoos, aquariums and other institutions across the U.S., the Monterey Bay Aquarium has put over 42 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 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 a million 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. The nation’s two largest food service companies, Compass Group North America and ARAMARK have each made a commitment to sustainable seafood sourcing in partnership with the aquarium. Partnerships such as these, together with retailer commitments, like those of Whole Food Markets – to remove all red ranked wild-caught species from their stores – are having a huge impact.

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 recent years seafood sourced from farms has started to surpass the supply from wild-capture fisheries. 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 report recently updated report, “Turning the Tide: The State of Seafood” online at [www.montereybayaquarium.org/seafoodwatch](http://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](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org).**

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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 businesses: retailers, restaurateurs, major buyers and other seafood purveyors first to educate them about the issues surrounding seafood and ocean ecosystem impacts and secondly to shift their purchases in favor of sustainability.

### 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](http://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 seafood choices for consumers in a green "Best Choices" column, and least ocean-friendly 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 ok to eat, but there are some concerns with how they're caught or farmed.

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

The Seafood Watch app for iPhone and Android brings the latest recommendations directly to your Smartphone. The app has been downloaded by over a million users. In 2010, a new feature, Project FishMap was added. This feature enables users to tag where they have found ocean-friendly seafood. Thousands of user submitted recommendations have added to the growing database of locations making responsible purchasing choices.

Recommendations are available for all smart phones with on the mobile site [www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org).

To date, the Aquarium and its 100 conservation outreach partner organizations across the U.S. have distributed more than 42 million pocket guides. There are six regional guides (West Coast, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Central U.S. and Hawaii), plus two Spanish-language guides. Nine million special edition 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, [What Businesses Can Do | Seafood Watch | Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) 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 online and is complemented by a short 15-minute documentary "Can the Oceans Keep Up the Hunt?"

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, Thomas Keller, Barton Seaver, Michel Nischan, Rick Moonen and dozens of other renowned chefs.

[The Monterey Bay Aquarium partners with](#) the nation's two 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 partners with Whole Foods Market and Mars Pet Care. Both are leaders in their field in offering their customers, including cat lovers, the most ocean-friendly seafood choices.

In total, 104 establishments have joined the Seafood Watch "Restaurant Partner" program, pledging to drop from their menus all red-list species in the "Avoid" category. They also pledge to share their commitment to ocean-friendly seafood and their work with the Seafood Watch program with their staff, customers, suppliers, colleagues and staff.

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### RESTAURANTS PARTNER WITH AQUARIUM TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program has partnered with 33 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, [104 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 pledge to share their commitment to ocean-friendly seafood and their work with the Seafood Watch program with their staff, customers, suppliers, colleagues and staff.

The roster of partners includes 38 restaurants that have participated in Seafood Watch events such as 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 2013 will take place May 17, 18 and 19. Chef and seafood activist Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall will be honored as **Educator of the Year** for his commitment to going beyond serving sustainable options to demanding policy change.

"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 'Avoid-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

[http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch/web/sfw\\_restaurant\\_program.aspx#list](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch/web/sfw_restaurant_program.aspx#list)

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](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org).

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **AQUARIUM'S 'COOKING FOR SOLUTIONS 2013' FEATURES THREE DAYS OF GREAT CHEFS, GREAT CULINARY EVENTS, MAY 17-19**

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*All-star lineup includes Carla Hall, Lorena Garcia, Art Smith, Chris Cosentino, Richard Blais, Educator of the Year Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, Cindy Pawlcyn and more*

Renowned chefs from North America, the United Kingdom and Latin America will share their passion for fine dining and environmentally sustainable living when they're honored at the Monterey Bay Aquarium's 12<sup>th</sup> "Cooking for Solutions" celebration on May 17-19 in Monterey.

The annual gathering of top chefs and winemakers offers a full weekend of spectacular events featuring gourmet cuisine: from a festive Friday night gala tastings with celebrity chefs, 80 restaurants and nearly 60 premium wineries and breweries, to a weekend of lively presentations by culinary TV celebrities, an ocean-view breakfast with celebrity chef Carla Hall, food adventures and a bountiful new Street Food Extravaganza.

Tickets go on sale to aquarium members on January 28 and to the general public on February 11 and will be available online, or by calling the aquarium at 866-963-9645. The full program of events and chef bios is at [www.cookingforsolutions.org](http://www.cookingforsolutions.org).

The nonprofit aquarium and its respected Seafood Watch program will honor Britain's Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall as Educator of the Year for his role – on his River Cottage farm, through his TV shows and books, and in his public leadership – in promoting seasonal and sustainable food production, as well as fishing practices that preserve the health of the oceans.

The aquarium welcomes as Special Celebrity Guest television all-star Carla Hall of ABC's *The Chew*. She and Celebrity Guest Host Cindy Pawlcyn – the aquarium's culinary partner, and creator of Mustards Grill in the Napa Valley and the new aquarium restaurant, Cindy's

Waterfront – will be joined by 20 celebrity chefs from three continents, and 23 local host chefs and presenting chefs from throughout the region.

All have been selected and recognized by the Monterey Bay Aquarium ([www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org)) for their leadership in promoting sustainable farming and fishing practices that protect the health of the ocean and the soil.

Cooking for Solutions supports the aquarium's Seafood Watch program, [www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org), the nation's leading source of information to help transform the seafood market in ways that preserve healthy ecosystems and sustain ocean wildlife.

The national lineup of 20 honored celebrity chefs who share the aquarium's commitment to sustainably delicious cuisine includes:

- Returning Celebrity Chef John Ash of Santa Rosa, a culinary educator and Cooking for Solutions founder; past Chef of the Year honorees Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger of Border Grill (Los Angeles, Santa Monica and Las Vegas); and past honorees Sam Choy of Sam Choy's Kai Lanai in Hawaii, Jesse Ziff Cool of CoolEatz Restaurants & Catering/Flea St. Café (Menlo Park), Chris Cosentino of Incanto (San Francisco), Elena Hernández, chef, director of the Academia de Artes Culinarias and president of Panamá Gastronómica (Panamá); Emily Luchetti of Farallon/Waterbar (San Francisco); Nathan Lyon of Los Angeles, a chef, TV host and author; Hákon Már Örvarsson, of the Culinary Institute of Iceland in Reykjavik; Charles Phan of the Slanted Door (San Francisco); and Jeff Rogers of Cindy's Waterfront (Monterey Bay Aquarium).
- First-time honored Celebrity Chef Ambassadors Richard Blais of Flip Burger Boutique/HD-1/The Spence (Birmingham, Alabama and Atlanta); Duskie Estes of zazu restaurant + farm/black pig meat co. (Santa Rosa & Healdsburg); Lorena Garcia of Lorena Garcia Cocina/Lorena Garcia Tapas (Miami and Atlanta); Kerry Heffernan of New York, a chef, TV host and author; Diego Oka, a Peru native and chef at La Mar Cebichería Peruana (San Francisco); Michele Ragussis of The Pearl Seafood Restaurant and Raw Bar (Rockland, Maine); Art Smith of Table Fifty-Two/Art and Soul/LYFE Kitchen/Southern Art and Bourbon Bar (Chicago, Washington, D.C., Palo Alto and Atlanta); and Vikram Vij of Vij's Restaurant (Vancouver, B.C.).

The Friday-night gala on May 17 – the signature event at Cooking for Solutions and a sell-out every year – offers gourmet dishes from appetizers to desserts, created by the celebrity chefs,



local host celebrity chefs and 80 exceptional regional restaurants. In addition, 60 premium vintners from California and the western U.S. will pour organic and sustainable wines.

Other highlights of the three-day weekend:

- A Friday-night pre-gala special event with Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and special guests (aquarium members only).
- A Premium Access Lounge (aquarium members only) throughout the evening with live music and special treats, hosted by celebrity chefs Sam Choy and Carla Hall.
- Saturday culinary outings with celebrity chefs that range from visits to wineries in the highlands overlooking the Salinas Valley, to spectacular homes in the Carmel Highlands and ocean view destinations on the Big Sur coast.
- Saturday and Sunday “Salon Series” demonstrations and tastings of everything from artisan California cheeses to high-end chocolate, premium wines, dairy desserts, Indian dishes, and gourmet pasta and paninis.
- New on Saturday evening, a Street Food Extravaganza hosted by Carla Hall, with demonstrations and abundant tasting of favorite street food dishes prepared by celebrity chefs Sam Choy, Susan Feniger, Emily Luchetti, Mary Sue Milliken, Michele Ragussis, Art Smith, Sarah LaCasse and James Waller of the Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa.
- The Morning Chew, a Sunday breakfast with Carla Hall.
- A weekend-long Sustainable Foods Celebration (included with aquarium admission) with tastings, cooking demos and the Whole Foods Market and Kids’ Zone.

Tickets for Cooking for Solutions 2013 events go on sale January 28 for aquarium members and February 11 for the general public. They are available online at [www.cookingforsolutions.org](http://www.cookingforsolutions.org), or by calling the Monterey Bay Aquarium toll-free at 866-963-9645.

The mission of the nonprofit Monterey Bay Aquarium is to inspire conservation of the oceans. To learn more, visit [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org).

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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 two 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 menus and in markets on the U.S. West Coast. Each item is ranked "Las Mejores Opciones" (Best Choices), "Buenas Alternativas" (Good Alternatives) or "Evite" (Avoid) based on research by the Seafood Watch team. Guía de Mariscos Nacional is also available and 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 has already distributed more than a million Spanish-language pocket guides, both in the aquarium and through partner organizations. These guides can also be printed from the Seafood Watch website [www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org) or viewed on a cell phone or other mobile device with Internet connection.

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 office, or online at [www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org).**