



MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM®

# Seafood WATCH



## 2010 Press Kit

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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 32 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 cell phones and mobile devices with Internet connection, in addition to the free “Seafood Guide” application for the iPhone and iPod touch.

Seafood Watch offers online resources and practical tools for consumers, seafood buyers and Seafood Watch partners. An annual two-day event, “Cooking for Solutions,” connects

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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. Bon Appétit Management Company - operator of the aquarium’s onsite restaurant and café - its parent company Compass Group North America, and ARAMARK’s food service division have each made a commitment to sustainable sourcing in partnership with the aquarium. Such partnerships 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](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/aa/pressroom](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/aa/pressroom).**

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# MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

## 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 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](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 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 new "Seafood Guide" iPhone application brings the latest Seafood Watch recommendations directly to your iPhone or iPod touch [www.montereybayaquarium.org/iphoneapp](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/iphoneapp). Mobile pocket

guides are also available for cell phones or other mobile devices with Internet connection by logging on to [mobile.seafoodwatch.org](http://mobile.seafoodwatch.org)

To date, the Aquarium and its Seafood Watch partner organizations have distributed more than 32 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](http://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 food service providers like Bon Appétit Management Company, Compass Group North America and ARAMARK as they shift their menus and buying toward sustainable seafood and establish themselves as leaders in the transformation of the food service industry. Bon Appétit, the Aquarium's own in-house food service provider delivers 80 million meals per year in over 400 cafés in 29 states.

Seafood Watch partners with 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.

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## NEWS RELEASE

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# RESTAURANTS PARTNER WITH AQUARIUM TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program has partnered with 25 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, nearly 50 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 restaurants that have been part of the aquarium's annual Cooking for Solutions events, an annual two-day gourmet celebration featuring celebrity chefs, sustainable seafood, organic cuisine and sustainable/organic premium wines. Cooking for Solutions 2010 will take place May 21 and 22. Chef Suzanne Goin, of Lucques in Los Angeles will be this year's honoree for her strong commitment to food sustainability. Renowned chef, Rick Bayless, will also be honored as Educator of the Year.

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

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**SUZANNE GOIN, RICK BAYLESS WILL BE  
TOP HONOREES AT ‘COOKING FOR SOLUTIONS 2010’**

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*The Food Network’s Guy Fieri joins as a special guest emcee;  
great chefs, culinary gala, tours put spotlight on sustainable cuisine*

Renowned chefs from across North America, including James Beard Award-winners Suzanne Goin of Lucques in Los Angeles and Rick Bayless of Topolobampo/Frontera Grill in Chicago will share their passion for fine dining and environmentally sustainable living when they’re honored at the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s “Cooking for Solutions 2010” on May 21-22, 2010.

The Food Network’s Guy Fieri, host of four shows including *Diners, Drive-ins and Dives*, will participate for the first time as a special guest emcee for the Sustainable Seafood Challenge that concludes the two-day celebration.

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 nonprofit aquarium’s Seafood Watch program, which has worked for the past decade to transform the seafood market in ways that preserve healthy ecosystems and sustain ocean wildlife.

Title sponsors of Cooking for Solutions 2010 are Bon Appétit Management Company, an award-winning food service company recognized internationally as a leader in promoting sustainable cuisine; 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.

Suzanne Goin, the influential founder of Lucques and two other acclaimed restaurants will be recognized as **Chef of the Year** at the ninth annual “Cooking for Solutions” celebration.

Rick Bayless, the renowned chef, author and proponent of sustainable seafood and environmentally sound farming practices, will be honored as **Educator of the Year** – recognition that follows his earlier selection as a Cooking for Solutions Chef of the Year in 2006.

Seventeen other noted chefs from across the United States and Canada will also receive honors as **Celebrity Chef Ambassadors**.

New honorees include: François Blais (Panache Restaurant, Quebec City, Canada), Joanne Chang (Myers + Chang/Flour Bakery + Café, Boston), John Critchley (Area 31, Miami, Florida), Mark Dommen (One Market Restaurant, San Francisco), Anthony Fusco (formerly of Harbour, New York City), Kevin Gillespie (Woodfire Grill, Atlanta), Brandon Hill (Bamboo Sushi, Portland, Oregon), Gerald Hirgoyen (Piperade/Bocadillo, San Francisco), Brandon McGlamery (Luma on Park, Winter Park, Florida), Tim McKee (Sea Change/Solera/La Bell Vie, Minneapolis), Bruce Sherman (North Pond, Chicago) and Jason Wilson (Crush, Seattle).

They'll be joined by five renowned chefs who have been honored at past celebrations: John Ash (cookbook author/culinary educator, Fetzer Vineyards, Hopland, California), Sam Choy (Sam Choy's Breakfast, Lunch & Crab, and Big Aloha Brewery, Honolulu), Jesse Ziff Cool (Cool EatZ Restaurant and Catering/Flea St. Café, Menlo Park, California), Jim Dodge (Bon Appétit Management Company, Palo Alto) and Rick Moonen (Rick Moonen's rm seafood at Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas, Nevada).

The Friday gala on May 21 – 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 75 exceptional regional restaurants. In addition, 60 premium vintners from California and the western U.S. will pour organic and sustainable wines. Organic juices, coffee and tea will also be available.

The gala will be preceded by a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception with Suzanne Goin and Rick Bayless. Noted chefs will sign their cookbooks during the gala, which also features a sustainable sushi lounge and a Premium Access Lounge for aquarium members.

Saturday's lineup of Food and Wine Adventures includes culinary outings with several Cooking for Solutions chefs, including Suzanne Goin. Several chefs will also present morning cooking demonstrations at the aquarium featuring sustainable seafood and other ingredients.

Saturday evening brings the fifth 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. Guy Fieri and Sam Choy will provide lively commentary, before a judging panel recognizes the chefs in four fun categories.

The aquarium's Seafood Watch program, which inspired 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.

In 2009, the aquarium published *Turning the Tide: The State of Seafood*, a benchmark research report documenting progress toward securing a sustainable seafood supply for the future.

At year's end, sustainable seafood – and sustainable dining in general – was identified as a top national culinary trend by influential publications and observers, including *Nation's Restaurant News*.

Seafood Watch creates regional and national pocket guides to sustainable seafood that consumers can use to guide their seafood buying decisions at the restaurant or market – including an iPhone app that debuted in 2009 and that has been downloaded by more than 175,000 people.

Since 1999, Seafood Watch has distributed more than 32 million pocket guides, all featuring seafood items popular in different regions of the United States. It also partners with zoos, aquarium, 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.

Seafood Watch recommendations are also available for internet-enabled mobile devices.

Tickets for Cooking for Solutions 2010 are available by calling the Monterey Bay Aquarium toll-free at 866-963-9645, beginning January 4 for aquarium members and January 18 for the general public.

Details are available online at [www.cookingforsolutions.org](http://www.cookingforsolutions.org). You can request event brochures by sending an email to [events@mbayaq.org](mailto:events@mbayaq.org).

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).

**See program details and chef bios below. Public Relations can provide photos of Suzanne Goin, Rick Bayless, Guy Fieri and other chefs; and photos/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 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. 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 has already distributed more than 500,000 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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More information about all aquarium programs is online at [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org).

**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).**

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