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MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

**“Turning the Tide: The State of Seafood”  
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## NEWS RELEASE

For information contact:

Ken Peterson, (831) 648-4922; [kpeterson@mbayaq.org](mailto:kpeterson@mbayaq.org)

Karen Jeffries, (831) 644-7548; [kjeffries@mbayaq.org](mailto:kjeffries@mbayaq.org)

Angela Hains, (831) 647-6804; [ahains@mbayaq.org](mailto:ahains@mbayaq.org)

Alison Barratt, (831) 647-6856; [abarratt@mbayaq.org](mailto:abarratt@mbayaq.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 20, 2009

## **BENCHMARK AQUARIUM REPORT FINDS FUTURE OF GLOBAL SEAFOOD SUPPLY AT A TURNING POINT**

*Summary: Many trends positive, urgent action is needed; 'Super Green' seafood list debuts*

Global prospects for securing a sustainable seafood supply and protecting ocean ecosystems are improving, thanks to a growing consensus on how best to manage fisheries and fish-farming operations, and new commitments by consumers, major buyers and the fishing community.

That's the conclusion of a benchmark research report – "Turning the Tide: The State of Seafood" – released today (October 20, 2009) by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the aquarium and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its Seafood Watch program.

The report was released at the California Science Center, which announced a new partnership with the aquarium to advance public and business awareness about the connection between seafood choices and the health of the world's oceans. The Center will collaborate with the aquarium on many programs in the months and years to come, and will open new Ecosystems exhibits in the spring of 2010.

The aquarium also announced a partnership between Seafood Watch and Santa Monica Seafood – the largest seafood distributor in the southwest and an emerging national leader in sustainability.

"The State of Seafood" details significant and continuing threats to healthy oceans from mismanagement of wild-caught fisheries and a booming fish-farming sector, and highlights trends that offer hope for the future.

In conjunction with release of the report, the aquarium has launched a national campaign asking top chefs and culinary leaders to take a "Save Our Seafood" pledge not to serve items from the aquarium's Seafood Watch red "Avoid" list as a way to restore ocean health. More than two dozen prominent figures have signed on already, including Los Angeles chefs Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger (Border Grill/Ciudad), and Suzanne Goin (Lucques), along with Alton Brown (Be Square Productions, Atlanta), Rick Bayless (Frontera Grill/Topolobampo, Chicago), Susan Spicer (Bayona, New Orleans), Rick Moonen (rm seafood, Las Vegas), Fedele

Bauccio (Bon Appétit Management Co., Palo Alto), Michelle Bernstein (Michy's, Miami), and Michel Nischan (The Dressing Room, Westport, Conn.).

The “State of Seafood” report also identifies a “Super Green” list of wild and farmed seafood – items that are both good for human health and are produced in ways that protect ocean ecosystems. The list was developed in collaboration with the Environmental Defense Fund and scientists from the Harvard School of Public Health.

Copies of “The State of Seafood” report, including the “Super Green” list, are available at [www.montereybayaquarium.org/seafoodwatch](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/seafoodwatch). The aquarium will update the report every two years.

“Ocean life is still in decline and we clearly need to take urgent action to turn things around,” said aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard. “The good news is that we know what it will take, and that key players are working more closely than ever to solve the problems. I’m confident that we can and will create a future with healthy oceans.”

While many other human activities strain the marine environment – including growing impacts from global climate change – the primary factors in the oceans’ decline today are related to commercial fishing: failure to consider the entire ecosystem when managing fisheries and aquaculture operations, and the rapid industrialization of fishing effort worldwide to keep up with growing human demand for seafood, the report concludes.

A century of industrial-scale fishing and ineffective management has left major commercial fisheries around the world in need of rebuilding. Many have collapsed. In addition, populations of large, long-lived animals, including whales, sharks, turtles, tunas, manatees, rockfish and billfishes, have plummeted.

Ocean wildlife caught commercially are not the only species affected. Bycatch – the unwanted or unintentional catch of animals in fishing gear – is the single greatest threat for nearly 250 species of threatened or endangered ocean animals, according to the report.

While wild fisheries have reached a plateau, demand for seafood continues to grow worldwide. In 2009, farmed seafood will for the first time eclipse wild-caught fish in the human diet. Yet management of aquaculture has not kept up with skyrocketing global expansion.

Yet for all the discouraging trends, there is an equally long list of positive new developments, the report finds. These include:

- The release earlier in 2009 of a consensus scientific study that unified marine ecologists and fisheries management scientists on a set of principles for restoring ocean ecosystems and commercial fish populations.

- Significant new commitments from major seafood buyers, including retailers like Walmart and North America’s largest food service companies, to shift their purchases to seafood from sustainable sources.
- Growth in the supply of sustainable seafood that has been certified by reputable international organizations, notably the Marine Stewardship Council.
- Adoption by governments around the world of policies to better manage fisheries and fish-farming, reduce the rate at which wildlife is caught and killed accidentally in fishing gear, and to protect critical ocean habitat vital to maintaining healthy ocean ecosystems.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium recognized the warning signs more than a decade ago, first when it opened a special exhibition on the topic and later when – in response to public demand – it created its acclaimed Seafood Watch program.

Since 1999, Seafood Watch has become a recognizable standard and reference point for millions of conservation-minded consumers, and for restaurateurs and major seafood buyers in the United States.

It has distributed nearly 32 million consumer pocket guides with seafood recommendations covering all regions of the United States, and partnered with Compass Group and ARAMARK – the two largest food service companies in North America – to help shift millions of pounds of seafood purchases to more sustainable sources. ARAMARK also initiated the connection between Monterey Bay Aquarium and Harvard researchers that led to creation of the “Super Green” seafood list.

“Our Seafood Watch initiatives address the most critical issues raised in ‘The State of Seafood’ report,” Packard said. “They give everyone – from consumers to chefs to major seafood buyers – an opportunity to be part of the solution.”

“The California Science Center is extremely proud to partner with the Monterey Bay Aquarium in jointly presenting their report on “Turning the Tide: the State of Seafood,” said Jeffrey Rudolph, president and CEO of the center. “The educational promotion of sustainable seafood is at the heart of both our missions and we look forward to partnering on many events, programs and exhibits in the future.”

Monterey Bay Aquarium is working with 14 other nonprofit organizations across the United States and Canada as part of the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions ([www.solutionsforseafood.org](http://www.solutionsforseafood.org)). Participating organizations have crafted a Common Vision for Environmentally Sustainable Seafood to help seafood buyers and suppliers develop comprehensive, corporate policies on sustainable seafood.

Since the debut of the Common Vision in 2008, more than 20 major companies across North America have pledged their support.

In 2009 the Monterey Bay Aquarium celebrates 25 years of inspiring ocean conservation.

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Angela Hains, (831) 647-6804; [ahains@mbayaq.org](mailto:ahains@mbayaq.org)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 20, 2009

## NATION'S TOP CHEFS, CULINARY LEADERS TAKE PLEDGE TO 'SAVE OUR SEAFOOD'

More than two dozen top chefs and culinary leaders from across North America have signed an open letter to "Save Our Seafood," pledging to serve only sustainable seafood items and to recruit peers and customers to the cause.

The letter was released today (October 20, 2009) in conjunction with release of a benchmark scientific report from the Monterey Bay Aquarium and its Seafood Watch program outlining the threats to healthy oceans from current fishing and fish-farming practices – and the steps it will take to assure a future with healthy oceans.

Signatories include Alton Brown (Be Square Productions, Atlanta), Rick Bayless (Frontera Grill/Topolobampo, Chicago), Susan Spicer (Bayona, New Orleans), Rick Moonen (rm seafood, Las Vegas), Fedele Bauccio (Bon Appétit Management Co., Palo Alto), Michelle Bernstein (Michy's, Miami), Suzanne Goin (Lucques, Los Angeles), Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger (Border Grill/Ciudad, Los Angeles), and Michel Nischan (The Dressing Room, Westport, Conn.).

The pledge includes a commitment not to serve items from the Seafood Watch red "Avoid" list –seafood rated by aquarium scientists and outside experts as destructive of healthy oceans.

Copies of the pledge, the seafood report and a new "Super Green List" of seafood that is optimal for human health and is caught or farmed in ways that protect ocean ecosystems, are available at [www.montereybayaquarium.org/seafoodwatch](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/seafoodwatch).

"Great chefs are opinion leaders for peers and the public," said aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard. "We're honored that these distinguished culinary figures have partnered with us in our efforts to assure a future with healthy oceans."

Many of the chefs have been honored by the aquarium at its "Cooking for Solutions" culinary celebrations – events that began in 2002 as a way to raise public awareness about the connection between fishing and farming practices, and the healthy of soil, streams and oceans.

Suzanne Goin will be recognized as chef of the year at the 2010 Cooking for Solutions celebration, and Rick Bayless – a past chef of the year – will be recognized as 2010 educator of the year. Alton Brown was honored as educator of the year in 2009.

“Every bite you take is like a vote... a statement of values,” Brown said. “I value healthy oceans, oceans that have cared well for mankind through the ages. It's high time we took better care of our seas and the bounty they produce. There are a lot of ways each of us can help but eating by Seafood Watch is a great way for all of us to help.”

Bon Appétit Management Co. and its founder and CEO Fedele Bauccio were the first national food service company to fully embrace Seafood Watch guidelines for purchases at all of its 400-plus client properties.

The chef and culinary leaders open letter reads:

Ocean wildlife is threatened today as never before by human activities. And nothing exacts a greater price than the scope and scale of global fishing to feed our growing global appetite for seafood.

As individuals and as a society, it is imperative that we take action to assure a future in which the oceans can thrive.

As chefs and culinary leaders, we have a special responsibility. Through our menu choices, our purchasing decisions and the platform we enjoy to reach the public, we are in a unique position to help turn the tide.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program – backed by rigorous, peer-reviewed science and updated twice a year to reflect the latest information on the state of seafood items in the U.S. market – offers a powerful tool for chefs, seafood buyers and consumers. Seafood Watch allows us to use our purchasing power, and our influence, to make a difference for the oceans.

The Aquarium's new report, *Turning the Tide: The State of Seafood 2009* documents the threats facing ocean wildlife today, and the many hopeful signs that point to a better future – if we take action now.

We therefore pledge:

- To serve no wild-caught or farmed seafood from the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch red “avoid” list.
- To communicate our commitment – with peers and the public – so others will join us.
- To use our talents to introduce to new dishes demonstrating that sustainable seafood is also delicious to eat.

The oceans are resilient, and fish populations can rebound – if we give them a chance. Through our actions, we intend to be part of the solution.

Since 1999, Seafood Watch program has become a recognizable standard and reference point for millions of conservation-minded consumers, and for restaurateurs and major seafood buyers in the United States.

It has distributed nearly 32 million consumer pocket guides with seafood recommendations covering all regions of the United States, and partnered with Compass Group and ARAMARK – the two largest food service companies in North America – to help shift millions of pounds of seafood purchases to more sustainable sources.

In 2009 the Monterey Bay Aquarium celebrates 25 years of inspiring ocean conservation.

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For information contact

Monterey Bay Aquarium: Ken Peterson, (831) 648-4922; [kpeterson@mbayaq.org](mailto:kpeterson@mbayaq.org)

Environmental Defense Fund: Tim Fitzgerald, (914) 419-8662.; [tfitzgerald@edf.org](mailto:tfitzgerald@edf.org)

Harvard School of Public Health: Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian; (617) 432-2887; [dmozaffa@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:dmozaffa@hsph.harvard.edu)

October 20, 2009

## NEW ‘SUPER GREEN’ SEAFOOD LIST RELEASED; RATES TOP CHOICES FOR BOTH HUMAN, OCEAN HEALTH

How do you choose between the health of you and your family, and the health of the oceans when it comes to eating seafood?

Now there’s an answer.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium has identified a “Super Green” list of wild and farmed seafood items that are both heart-healthy and produced in ways that protect the health of the oceans. The list was developed in collaboration with scientists from Environmental Defense Fund and the Harvard School of Public Health.

The “Super Green” list makes its debut as part of a new report, *Turning the Tide: The State of Seafood*, released by the aquarium today (October 20, 2009). It offers consumers the best choices when it comes to heart-healthy, vitamin-rich options that are low in contaminants and are ocean- friendly – a win-win for all.

The list is available online at [www.montereybayaquarium.org/supergreen/](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/supergreen/).

“We understand that seafood consumers may be overwhelmed by all of the information they hear about seafood,” said aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard, “so we wanted to create a list that addresses all the concerns people may have and shows how you can choose healthy seafood that’s good for the oceans, too.”

The aquarium worked with longtime partner Environmental Defense Fund – which provides the contaminant warnings for the aquarium’s respected Seafood Watch pocket guides – and scientists from the Harvard School of Public Health to determine which species the three groups could agree provide maximum health benefits for humans and the environment.

“It is wonderful that Monterey Bay Aquarium is highlighting the important health benefits of fish consumption,” said Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian, Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, who has published extensively on the issue. “The ‘Super Green’ list offers information for consumers interested in both the Seafood Watch program’s environmental guidance and the cardiac benefits from eating seafood. This is a great advance, as heart disease kills more men and women in the U.S. than any other disease.”

“Now more than ever, consumers are concerned with the health and environmental impacts of their seafood choices,” said Tim Fitzgerald, a fisheries policy specialist with Environmental Defense Fund. “The Super Green list is an excellent tool for choosing fish that are healthy for them *AND* the oceans.”

The “best of the best” list offers seven such choices, and includes the U.S. consumers’ top three favorite seafoods: tuna, salmon and shrimp. Albacore tuna caught by pole-and-line or troll-caught from the U.S. or British Columbia is one such option, and is available both canned and fresh. Wild-caught salmon from Alaska and Oregon pink shrimp are also “Super Green” options.

All three are Seafood Watch “Best Choices” and are certified as sustainable to the standards of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).

The Super Green list also includes mussels and oysters – sustainable farmed shellfish that contribute to ocean health because they require no additional feed, and clean ocean waters as they filter their food. Shellfish such as these are low in fat and unsaturated fat, and oysters are high in zinc.

All of the “Super Green” choices provide optimal levels of omega-3 fatty acids for human health. The list includes other seafood items that are slightly lower in omega-3 fatty acids, but that still meet Seafood Watch criteria as “Best Choices,” and Environmental Defense Fund standards for low levels of contaminants.

Another Seafood Watch partner – ARAMARK, a world leader in professional facilities management and food services – put the aquarium and Harvard researchers together for conversations that resulted in development of the “Super Green” list.

The “Super Green” list was released on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the aquarium’s Seafood Watch program.

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