



MEDIA ADVISORY

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LEADING CONSERVATION GROUPS INVITE COMMENT ON COMMON TOOL FOR ASSESSING SEAFOOD SUSTAINABILITY

Public comment period now open; implementation planned for 2008.

(September 28, 2007 - LONDON) Three leading environmental organisations are inviting comment on a common tool for assessing seafood sustainability. WWF International, the North Sea Foundation and Greenpeace have developed two common methodologies to assess wild-caught and farmed fish species. The process, facilitated by the Seafood Choices Alliance, was undertaken in order to develop a consistent method for determining the sustainability of certain fish species. The resulting assessments are designed to be the foundation for consistent messaging of sustainable seafood issues by the organisations involved to the seafood industry and to the general public.

The methodologies were submitted to a rigorous scientific and academic review over the summer, and adjustments were made based on the comments from reviewers. The Alliance is now coordinating a public comment period for the methodologies, designed to solicit feedback from the seafood industry sector before the methodologies are implemented in 2008.

The wild-caught and farmed methodologies can be found online for comment at the Seafood Choices Alliance website (www.seafoodchoices.org/newsroom/CommonMethods.php) and will remain open for review until October 31, 2007. A cover letter discusses in greater detail the functions (as well as the limitations) of the methodologies and is attached below.

Currently, different methodologies are used across Europe to produce tools such as seafood wallet cards and online consumer databases. This practice has resulted in varying degrees of consistency from environmental groups when communicating about 'smart' seafood choices and those species that should be avoided.

Increasingly, consumers want to feel safe in the knowledge that the seafood they're purchasing was procured in a way that didn't cause harm to the ocean environment. The seafood industry has recently stepped up its engagement with conservation organisations to ensure their seafood meets an environmental bottom line. The aim of the organisations involved in this process is to improve the consistency of seafood messages conveyed to the public and the industry, ultimately resulting in a healthy ocean and sustainable seafood marketplace.

Following a discussion on the public stakeholder comments received, the groups plan to implement the methodologies for all future seafood work and tools in 2008. The Alliance's Seafood Summit (January 27-30, Barcelona, Spain) will feature a question-and-answer session on the methodology process.

For more information on the public comment period or the methodology process, please contact: Julia Roberson at +44(0)207.811.3349 or jroberson@seafoodchoices.org.

NOTES TO THE EDITOR:

About the organisations involved:

As a global conservation organisation, WWF's ultimate goal is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. Several WWF offices in Europe produce seafood guides. www.wwf.org

The North Sea Foundation is a Dutch environmental organisation seeking to protect the North Sea by supporting stronger conservation policies and developing outreach programs to inform consumers, decision-makers and the seafood industry. Its key issues include offshore wind turbines, shipping and fisheries, and its Good Fish Guide is widely used in the Netherlands. www.noordzee.nl

Greenpeace is an independent, campaigning organisation that uses non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems and force solutions for a green and peaceful future. Greenpeace's goal is to ensure the ability of the Earth to nurture life in all its diversity. Several Greenpeace offices in Europe produce seafood guides. www.greenpeace.org

Seafood Choices Alliance is a global trade association for the issue of ocean-friendly seafood. The Alliance helps the seafood industry – from fishermen and fish farmers to distributors, wholesalers, retailers and restaurants – to make the seafood marketplace environmentally and economically sustainable. There is a growing interest worldwide in environmentally responsible seafood. Seafood Choices Alliance mobilises and connects the world's leading voices in support of a sustainable supply of seafood choices, highlighting the need for a global solution to threats facing the ocean. www.seafoodchoices.org

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