



seafood  
choices  
ALLIANCE  
bringing  
ocean conservation  
to the table

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## EUROPEANS PREFER SEAFOOD THAT IS ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE

### *New study shows interest in protecting ocean is high*

(December 14, 2005) In the first-ever poll of European consumers, supermarkets, chefs and restaurateurs on attitudes toward seafood and the ocean, 79% said that the environmental impact of seafood is an important factor in their purchasing decisions.

The new study, commissioned by the Seafood Choices Alliance in partnership with Greenpeace, the Marine Conservation Society, WWF and the North Sea Foundation, reveals that 86% of consumers would prefer to buy seafood that is labelled as environmentally responsible. Consumers say that reassurance is more important than price, and 40% are willing to pay 5-10% more for seafood identified as eco-friendly, the study from the nonprofit trade association shows.

Conducted in the UK, Germany and Spain, the study also found an emerging activism for protecting the ocean through the choices that seafood buyers make: 95% of consumers and 85% of seafood professionals say they want more information about how to buy sustainable seafood.

“These findings highlight the leading role that European seafood professionals and consumers are playing to preserve the ocean through the choices they bring to the dinner table,” said Michael Boots, director of the Seafood Choices Alliance, which launched its European program earlier this year after being founded in the United States in 2001. “By working with the industry to help source ocean-friendly seafood, we will ensure a lasting supply that is good for the ocean, good for business, and good for consumers.”

The study also highlighted great concern among Europeans about the state of the oceans, with 88% of seafood professionals and 85% of consumers saying they were quite or very concerned. Knowledge of specific threats to the ocean environment is also high, with 71% of professionals aware of overfishing and more than half of consumers acknowledging bycatch and overfishing.

"Seafood retailers like ASDA and others involved in buying and selling unsustainable seafood ignore this research at their peril. It is clear that consumers care greatly about the environmental impacts of the seafood they eat, and are willing to pay more to ensure the fish they consume isn't harming the oceans," says Oliver Knowles, Greenpeace UK Oceans Campaigner. For information on Greenpeace's retailer campaign visit <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/oceans/supermarkets/>.



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“These findings are very encouraging because they show that when retailers and consumers are given adequate information, they are quite willing to alter their purchases in favor of sustainable seafood,” said Bernadette Clarke, Fisheries Officer at the Marine Conservation Society. For more information on the MCS’s Good Fish Guide visit <http://www.fishonline.org/>.

“Consumers have the power to tell the fish suppliers what they want – and this study shows that they want nothing less than sustainable seafood,” said Katherine Short, Fisheries officer for WWF’s Global Marine Programme, “If you are buying fish from a shop, look out for the blue Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) logo that guarantees that the fish comes from a sustainable source. It still isn’t too late to save threatened fish stocks and consumers and chefs in Europe can drive the urgent action that is needed to sustainably manage one of our most precious resources.” For more information on WWF’s marine programs, visit <http://www.wwf.org.uk/>.

"This research shows that European consumers, chefs and retailers want tools available to them in order to make better seafood choices," says Esther Luiten, project leader for sustainable seafood at the North Sea Foundation. "Our Good Fish Guide makes it simple to choose eco-friendly seafood for the holidays or any season." For more information on the NSF’s Good Fish Guide, visit [www.goedevis.nl](http://www.goedevis.nl).

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### NOTES TO THE EDITOR:

The Seafood Choices Alliance study was conducted by RSM, a market research firm based in London, and included 12 focus groups as well as telephone surveys of 1,207 people (751 consumers/456 professionals). The margin of error for the total consumer sample is plus or minus 3.6%, and for professionals, 4.7%. The study was funded by the Oak Foundation, a group of charitable organizations that commits its resources to addressing issues of global social and environmental concern, including the sustainable use of marine ecosystems.

The Seafood Choices Alliance brings ocean conservation to the table by providing fishermen, fish farmers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers and restaurants with the information they need to make the seafood marketplace more environmentally sustainable. The nonprofit trade association’s first study of European attitudes was undertaken in partnership with WWF, the Marine Conservation Society (UK), The North Sea Foundation (The Netherlands), and Greenpeace.

Other noteworthy findings from the European consumer poll:

- Seafood consumption is high, with three-quarters of polled consumers eating seafood once a week or more. It is consistently seen as a healthy alternative to meat.
- Supermarkets are the key source of seafood in Germany and UK, rivalled by market stalls in Spain. Unlike the U.S., restaurants are not central to the consumption of seafood in these countries.
- 62% say fish caught in an environmentally responsible manner is of higher quality.
- Consumers want government and retailers to bear most of the responsibility for providing eco-friendly seafood choices.
- And they want information from environmental groups that they can act on at the supermarket, with 82% saying these groups are a reliable and trustworthy source.
- 84% of consumers say one should refuse to purchase seafood that is overfished or caught in a way that damages the ocean environment.

Additional findings from the poll of European seafood retailers, chefs and restaurateurs:

- They recognize that sourcing environmentally responsible seafood is essential to the future of their businesses, and 88% accept some responsibility for promoting better seafood choices.
- 62% equate environmentally responsible fishing with a higher quality product.
- 71% of retailers, chefs and restaurateurs believe that consumers are more likely to purchase “environmentally responsible” seafood.
- Seafood professionals do not universally place the demands of customers before sustainability. Less than half agree that consumer tastes will always come before environmental considerations.
- Seafood professionals say there is a deficit of authoritative information available, and 79% say an alliance of environmental groups would be a reliable and trustworthy source of information on which seafood choices are best for the ocean environment.
- They are willing to take further actions to protect the ocean, including carrying seasonal fish, offering environmentally certified product and offering fish that are caught using the best, least damaging technologies.

More key findings as well as similar research conducted by the Alliance in the United States can be found at [www.seafoodchoices.org](http://www.seafoodchoices.org).

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