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**SEAFOOD CHOICES ALLIANCE ANNOUNCES
SEAFOOD CHAMPION FINALISTS AT THE 2009 SEAFOOD SUMMIT**

(San Diego, CA - February 1, 2009) Ten Seafood Champion finalists were announced during the kick-off event of the Seafood Summit, Seafood Choices Alliance's annual conference. The 2009 Champion finalists are the American Albacore Fishing Association, London restaurateur Caroline Bennett, Gary Johnson of McDonald's Corporation, Australis Aquaculture, organic shrimp farmer Mathias Ismail of Madagascar, French fishing organization Association des Ligneurs de la Pointe de Bretagne, Santa Monica Seafood Company, Tracy Taylor of supermarket chain Ahold, Seafood Scotland and Dr. Tom Pickerell of the UK Shellfish Association.

The Seafood Champion Awards are presented annually by Seafood Choices Alliance, a program of the ocean conservation organization SeaWeb, to honor those who have made significant strides in improving practices and awareness of responsible seafood sourcing. The winners will be announced at a reception during the Boston Seafood Show in March.

Melanie Siggs, Director of Seafood Choices Alliance, commended the ten finalists for their commitment to the preservation of the ocean's resources and those that depend on them. "It is a privilege to honor these outstanding finalists," said Siggs. "The challenges facing industry, governments and communities that depend on a responsible supply of fish are real and complex. Through their actions both the Champion finalists, and the attendees at the 2009 Summit, are demonstrating sharing responsibility with each other and their peers to accomplish real change to protect oceans and the seafood industry for future generations."

The 2009 Seafood Summit, *Sharing Responsibility for Real Change*, is being held this week in San Diego, California. Over 400 attendees from 33 countries will gather to address the critical issues facing the global seafood supply. The Summit inspires productive dialogue between conservation groups, government officials, scientists, and different sectors of the seafood business—from retailers and suppliers to chefs and restaurateurs—in order to work together to improve the sustainability of this industry.

Mike Boots, Vice President for Sustainable Markets at SeaWeb, said: “The Seafood Summit is a powerful forum where new connections and frank conversations allow all players working on this issue to come away with tangible ideas for more responsible practice. The sustainable seafood movement is an example of how an industry, in partnership and collaboration, can play a role in accelerating conservation gains, which benefit economic, social and environmental bottom lines.”

Topics on the agenda at the San Diego Summit include marine protected areas, sustainable aquaculture and the success of catch shares as a method for successful fisheries management. These issues have been in the news in recent weeks, with former President Bush declaring in early January the creation of the world’s largest marine reserves off the Hawaiian coast. The conservation organization WWF announced the formation of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council on January 26 to certify the sustainability of fish farming operations. Finally, a recent paper in the journal *Science* revealed that catch shares fisheries, whereby each shareholder is guaranteed a fixed portion of a fishery’s total allowable catch, set each year by scientists, can reverse collapsing fisheries.

For a complete list of the Seafood Summit’s panels, presentations and workshops, visit www.seafoodsummit.org.

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For interviews with Seafood Summit attendees and other media requests, including background information, images and b-roll, please contact Julia Roberson (jroberson@seaweb.org or 1.828.734.0431) or Brian Cohen (bcohen@seaweb.org or 1.301.512.4906).

Seafood Choices Alliance is an international program of SeaWeb that provides leadership and creates opportunities for change across the seafood industry and ocean conservation community. We seek to create synergies and help identify creative solutions to long-held challenges. By building relationships and stimulating dialogue, Seafood Choices is encouraging and challenging all sectors of the seafood industry along the road toward sustainability. www.seafoodchoices.org

SeaWeb, founded in 1996 to raise awareness of the growing threats to the ocean and its living resources, is a communications-based nonprofit organization that utilizes social marketing techniques to advance ocean conservation. By increasing public awareness, advancing science-based solutions and mobilizing decision-makers around ocean conservation, SeaWeb has brought together multiple, diverse and powerful voices for a healthy ocean.

www.seaweb.org

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