



# **SCIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY FORUM**

*Advancing Science and Management for Sustainable Ocean Resources*



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## **MAKING SENSE OUT OF SUSTAINABILITY**

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*Ocean Trust and the American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists pull together  
Key scientists from around the world to more clearly define sustainability.*

**Reston, Virginia – March 9, 2012** – Senior science and management representatives from leading fishing nations gathered together to discuss the state of fisheries and the sustainability of seafood at the second annual Science and Sustainability Forum (SSF).

Major findings from the SSF were that many so-called NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) “red listed” species are from well-managed sustainable fisheries, that scientific data and terminology are being misinterpreted to incorrectly describe the state of fisheries, and that contrary to public perception, most fish stocks where we have data are sustainably managed.

Trends in fish abundance show that since 1980 global fish stocks have been stable, not in decline. Previous work depicting the collapse of fish stocks based on catch trends has been refuted by the scientific community. Declines in catch often are the result of fisheries management decisions to restrict fishing for stock rebuilding. Abundance data indicate managed stocks are performing well.

SSF presentations by senior managers and scientists brought forward several observations:

- In its simplest form, sustainability is about “meeting the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations.”
- In fisheries, sustainability is best defined by the management system, not a quick snapshot of the stock status or fishing level at any point in time.
- Stocks fluctuate naturally in response to changes in the ocean environment and so will catches in sustainably managed fisheries.
- The terminology used to describe sustainable food production from fisheries is confusing and sometimes misused which makes effective communication challenging.
- “Fully-exploited” is a term that describes stocks fished at levels to maximize long-term sustainable food production which is a common fisheries management objective, not a poor outcome.
- Leading fishing nations have introduced conservative management policies to support sustainable fisheries and aquaculture operations that will provide for current and future generations.
- Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) have undergone independent third-party performance reviews to strengthen the management of highly migratory and regional fisheries.
- Globally, governmental fisheries management agencies have reduced fishing pressure on 2/3 of global assessed stocks to levels that will allow fisheries to thrive.

For Example:

- The New England Groundfish stocks have increased six fold since the mid-1990s as a result rebuilding programs.
- Orange roughy is being managed sustainably with major populations responding to reductions in fishing quotas which are limited to no more than 4-5% of the available biomass.
- In Norway, sustainable strategies have been introduced into salmon aquaculture to enhance food production while managing its ecological footprint.

The SSF will hold its 2013 Forum prior to the International Boston Seafood Show.

**Boston Seafood Show (Booth 186):** Information on the SSF will be available at the Boston Seafood Show from the Ocean Trust booth. Representatives from the AIFRB will be present Monday, March 10 to discuss their partnership in the SSF and planned research projects for 2012.

### **About the Science & Sustainability Forum**

The Science & Sustainability Forum is a network of professional fishery scientists and government fishery management organizations established to promote effective management of fisheries. The Forum is tasked to provide factual guidance to seafood consumers and retailers based on the best scientific and unbiased information available.

Participants included AIFRB, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, Iceland Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs Norway, New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries, International Council for the Exploration of the Seas, Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Rutgers University, University of Washington, University of Florida Gainesville, Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco Brazil, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation and Ocean Trust.

The forum allowed industry participants to interact with the Ocean Trust panel. Participants included: Bonefish Grill, Mazzetta Company, Sealord, Sea Watch International, Profish, Inland Seafood, Save on Seafood, Bluefin Seafood, Deepwater Group and Norwegian Seafood Council.

### **About Ocean Trust**

Ocean Trust is an award-winning ocean conservation foundation building science, conservation and industry partnerships for the sustainability of the oceans. Its program focus includes fisheries sustainability, wildlife protection and environmental restoration in partnership with coastal communities dependent on the sea. Ocean Trust serves as secretariat for SSF. [www.oceantrust.org](http://www.oceantrust.org)

### **About American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists**

AIFRB is a professional organization established to promote conservation and proper utilization of fishery resources through the use of fishery and related sciences. The role of the Institute is the professional development and performance of its members, and the recognition of their achievements. AIFRB is a cosponsor of the Science and Sustainability Forum. [www.aifrb.org](http://www.aifrb.org)

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