



OCEAN TRUST

SUSTAINING THE OCEANS & COMMUNITIES THAT DEPEND ON THE SEA

SUSTAINABLE OCEANS INITIATIVE 2012-2013

Ocean Trust provides a science-based partnership for the sustainability of seafood, and programs to help restore and protect fisheries, wildlife and the environment.

FISHERIES

Our fisheries initiatives include both scientific assessments and workshops on the status and sustainability of fisheries and farmed products as well as projects to improve the sustainability of stocks through gear research, protected areas and tagging studies. Current projects include:

Science & Sustainability Forum

Our Science & Sustainability Forum held annually with the American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists (AIFRB) brings international scientists and resource managers together to review the status and sustainability of seafood. The forum priorities sustainability issues and research needs, and seeks to improve public access to competent science authorities on sustainability issues.



Over 35 presentations have been given covering fisheries from the European Union, Norway, Iceland, Canada, United States, Mexico, Russia, New Zealand, Antarctic as well as global stocks covered by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and international Regional Fishery Management Organizations governing high seas migratory tuna and large pelagic fisheries.



Our forum provides direct dialog with leading scientists

Combined with our own research, it forms the basis of sustainability profiles we provide to the public and our members.



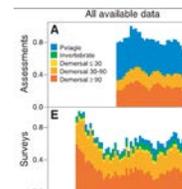
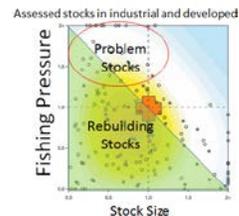
Our 2012 Forum focused on global, national and regional stock trends and assessments; reviewed “red listed” fish like farmed salmon, orange roughy, Chilean sea bass, Atlantic cod from a science perspective; and evaluated alternative programs to ensure fisheries sustainability and explored tools and priorities for end buyers to meet their sustainability needs. Plans are underway for our 2013 Forum. Stay tuned.

Review of Global Stock Status

Ocean Trust monitors the status of global fisheries reviewing detailed management and status reports from appropriate science authorities to keep its members up-to-date on major stock status issues related to seafood sustainability. Our review provides a refreshing look at the status of fisheries from a science perspective and a summary of findings from leading scientists recognized by the AIFRB like Ray Hilborn, Brian Rothschild, Dick Beamish, and national and international science organizations. A few observations that highlight our global review:

- Claims of the demise of fisheries based on projected catch and misuse of terminology have created confusion on the status of fisheries (Science Sustainability Forum 2012).

- Catch levels have been lowered for 2/3 of global stocks by management agencies to stabilize and promote stock growth (SSF 2012).
- Abundance levels of global fisheries for which we have data have remained stable since 1980 (Worm et al. 2009, Hilborn 2012).
- In most places where we have assessment data stocks are not declining, but increasing and overfishing is declining (Worm et al 2009).
- Individual populations and catch composition vary by region, but globally fisheries productivity has remained stable since 1985 (FAO SOFIA 2010).
- Fisheries under management can be sustainable even if stocks are not at highest levels producing maximum yields, MSY (Rothschild 2012).
- Fisheries sustainability is best defined by the management system, not a snap shot of status or fishing levels (over/fully fished, etc.) at any point in time (SSF 2012).
- Since the mid-1990s, several studies have predicted the rapid decline of marine fisheries worldwide. Paradoxically, total global capture data prompts a word that has very rarely been used to describe catch trends: stability (FAO SOFIA 2010).



Advancement of Sustainable Fisheries Assessments

Ocean Trust is exploring new tools to measure fisheries sustainability based on management systems and recovery plans for overfished stocks. Relying on only fishery status classification is a misleading and incomplete measure of sustainability as many overfished stocks have been restricted under management plans to stabilize fisheries and promote stock growth.

Framework Assessment of Management Programs

Fishery and aquaculture management programs in many seafood producing nations like the US, Norway, New Zealand, Australia, Iceland, Canada are comprehensive and produce sustainable seafood. Many national and Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) undergo performance reviews by independent science panels established by FAO, the Center for Independent Experts, and the National Research Council which provide third-party reviews on the sustainability of management systems. Ocean Trust is not only one of the few independent nonprofit foundations to recognize these initiatives, but is conducting a comparative assessment of national and state management programs with NOAA and Gulf States using FAO's ecolabelling criteria to bring proper focus on evaluating management systems as opposed to fishing classifications.



Global Ocean Portal

The quality of information provided to the public on seafood sustainability depends on the scientific basis of the data. Past use of catch trends have led to sensational, but untrue claims on the status of fisheries. Ocean Trust is developing a web-based portal accessible from smartphones via Ocean Trust's QR Code and its website to provide public access to competent science authorities on the status of global fish stocks, aquaculture species and country reports important to the US market.



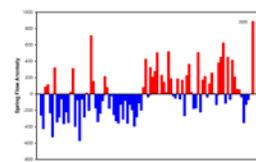
Species Profiles & Issue Assessments

In addition to linking seafood buyers to reliable databases on seafood sustainability, Ocean Trust has profiled over 60 seafood species as well as consumer issues on the future of fisheries, endangered species and seafood sustainability. Updating and expanding species profiles are ongoing tasks as issues and interest demands.

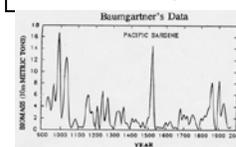


Fishing & the Environment

Ocean conditions change continuously, sometimes favoring one species over another (haddock v. cod, sardine v. anchovy). Cyclical ecosystem shifts occur in all oceans (Pacific Decadal Oscillation, North Atlantic Oscillation) impacting individual population structures and fish distribution. Stocks rise and fall as they have for thousands of years (Soutar & Isaacs 1969; Baumgartner et al 1992). Recent examples include the 1977 Bering Sea regime shift that changed the region from a shellfish to salmon/groundfish environment (Beamish 2012). In 2012, Ocean Trust cosponsored a national forum with the AIFRB on fishing and the environment to explore its relationship to the management and regulation of fish population abundance.



Climate variability drives stock cycles



Sponsored Research

Ocean Trust provides funding to organizations like the University of Florida Gainesville, Fisheries Scholarship Fund, Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation (www.gulfsouthfoundation.org/research/ongoing), Southeastern Fisheries Association to reduce fisheries bycatch, test new gear which may enhance quality and reduce bycatch mortality, collect empirical data on red snapper through tagging studies needed for stock assessments, support fishing community outreach to school children, and protect closed areas like Tortugas pink shrimp nursery area.



WILDLIFE

Ocean Trust is a long-standing, recognized partner in the restoration of endangered marine wildlife. With support from members, Ocean Trust has been able to help bring about the recovery of one of the most endangered sea turtles in the world, the Kemp's ridley sea turtle. Sea turtle conservation is important to many trawl and longline fisheries which interact with sea turtles. Our funding keeps restoration and nest protection programs going and supplies equipment such as solar panels for restoration camps. At the same time, our independent assessments on shrimp fishery compliance with US Turtle Excluder Device (TED) requirements provided additional documentation for the re-certification of foreign shrimp exports to the US.



ENVIRONMENT

Without habitat, there are no fisheries. That is why Ocean Trust has a long history of managing and supporting projects to restore coastal areas for a broad range of fishery and other estuarine dependent marine species. Ocean Trust participates in Restore America's Estuaries conferences with presentations and exhibits on many ongoing projects as follows.

Gulf of Mexico Coastal Restoration Center: an Ocean Trust initiative to help restore coastal ecosystems and wetlands that support fisheries and marine wildlife in the Gulf of Mexico. The Ocean Trust facility will propagate coastal wetland plants, house a public native plant garden for educational outreach on the importance of wetland restoration, and restore critical habitat damaged by development, storm surges and oil spills throughout the western Gulf.



Bahia Grande Restoration: an ongoing award-winning project restoring a 10,000 acre shallow water estuary which will support a wide variety of coastal fisheries, shrimp, crab, waterfowl and other marine life. Ocean Trust has and continues to serve as the leading nonprofit foundation in this public private partnership commonly recognized as the largest wetland restoration project in the US. This partnership includes many Ocean Trust members and supports.



Mangrove Restoration: a long-standing effort to support mangrove use in shrimp farm water quality projects and promote coastal habitat restoration.



Laguna Atascosa Wildlife Refuge: a recent shoreline stabilization to protect critical habitat for both coastal and upland endangered species.



Mexiquita Flats: a current initiative to enhance a shallow water South Texas wetland habitat with additional mangrove acreage for local fish and waterfowl.

Isle de Carmen: a new project to enlarge mangrove habitat for coastal birds and fisheries and control erosion from vessel traffic in the Port Isabel Channel.



Grouper Reef: an ongoing project to expand near shore fisheries habitat for North Carolina grouper and similar reef dependent species.

JOIN OUR SUSTAINABLE OCEANS PARTNERSHIP

Ocean Trust provides a comprehensive and science-based approach to sustain the oceans and coastal communities dependent on the sea.

Our objective is to be an honest broker of science, to bring credible partners to seafood sustainability issues, to provide solutions that make a difference and improvements in fisheries, marine wildlife and the environment.

We rely on our federal, foundation and private partners to help sponsor our many initiatives. In return, we provide:

- Monitoring of global stocks and sustainability issues
- Leadership in measuring and promoting sustainability
- Recognition to our contributing partners in seafood sustainability
- Web links, portals, information to help answer customer questions
- Solutions to address issues which affect the use of marine resources
- Innovative programs to gain consumer support like our Ocean Trust Martini or Roundup for the Ocean™ - ask us how to become a participating partner.



Please join us by sending a tax-deductible personal or business contribution. Visit www.oceantrust.org for more information on our Sustainable Oceans Partnership.

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