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**2015 Seafood Champion Award Winners Honored
at the SeaWeb Seafood Summit**

Six world leaders recognized for promoting ocean health and sustainable seafood

New Orleans, LA (February 9, 2015) – Sixteen finalists and six winners were honored tonight for their inspirational work promoting seafood sustainability. The awards were presented before hundreds of the world's leading voices on sustainable seafood during the opening reception of the SeaWeb Seafood Summit.

The SeaWeb Seafood Summit hosted the Seafood Champion Awards Ceremony to recognize individuals and companies for outstanding leadership in promoting environmentally responsible seafood and ocean health. The winners were chosen from a group of sixteen finalists that represent the best of the best in sustainability from around the world. The group of finalists hail from Argentina, Canada, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of the Maldives, Panama and the United States, covering five continents. They were selected from over 100 nominations from the fishing, aquaculture, seafood supply and distribution, retail, restaurant and food service sectors, as well as conservation and social non-profit organizations, academia and the media.

"These Seafood Champions are looking beyond the status quo in best practices and responsible sourcing, and are addressing seafood sustainability in the context of ecological, human rights, and community needs," said Dawn M. Martin, president of SeaWeb. "That kind of drive, passion and creativity will pave the path to a healthy future for this economically and environmentally important resource and the rest of us who depend upon the ocean as part of our daily lives."

This year, for the first time, the Seafood Champion Awards honored excellence in four targeted categories: Leadership, Innovation, Vision and Advocacy. The finalists, four within each category, were announced on September 2, 2014 at the Seafood Expo Asia in Hong Kong.

The surprise of the evening was the presentation of the first-ever *Grand Champion Award* to Bill DiMento, Corporate Director of Sustainability at High Liner Foods, Inc. for his work that stretched across all four categories. Bill is an internationally-recognized seafood sustainability leader with over 35 years industry experience. He led High Liner's efforts to achieve 99% of their strategic goal to sustainably source all of their seafood.

The 2015 *Seafood Champion Award for Leadership* went to **Andrew Jackson**, International Fishmeal and Fish Oil Organisation (IFFO) for working with stakeholders toward creating a uniform standard and encouraging responsible production of fishmeal and fish oil, often used as feed in aquaculture. As a result of his efforts, 100+ fishmeal/fish oil production plants across nine countries are now independently certified to IFFO's standard.

The *Seafood Champion Award for Innovation* was awarded to **Anova Food, LLC: Fishing & Living Initiative**, for advancing sustainable fisheries by incorporating community development and the wellbeing of fishers in their work to achieve environmental goals. Through Fisheries Improvement Projects and fisher education, Anova is bringing the Indonesian Handline Yellowfin tuna into the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standards.

The *Seafood Champion Award for Vision* was given to **TJ Tate**, for her work as Sustainability Director for Gulf Wild, a brand of responsibly-caught seafood providing traceability and accountability to each reef fish landed. TJ was recognized for her pioneering work including video monitoring on fishing boats, bringing scientists and fishers together, and creating a market for bycatch to avoid waste.

Finally, the *Seafood Champion Award for Advocacy* was shared between two winners, each of whom were presented with the prestigious Award: **Ayumu Katano**, Japanese fisheries expert, author and educator, and the **Environmental Justice Foundation**. Mr. Katano's focus on sustainability stands out in Japan, especially for his efforts to explain sustainability and fisheries in terms that resonate within the Japanese culture. The Environmental Justice Foundation's Oceans Campaign has used community-based surveillance and easy to use technology in places like West Africa in their work to eradicate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) or 'pirate' fishing.

"The people, the organizations and the countries celebrated here tonight give us all hope for the future," said Dawn M. Martin, SeaWeb President. "In just the last few years we have seen tremendous growth in both the way the seafood industry has embraced sustainability and how the public has acknowledged its connection to ocean health. This year we received the greatest number of Seafood Champion nominations in the history of the awards—a sign that the leadership on this issue continues to grow and that those leaders deserve to be recognized."

For more information on the Awards, visit www.seafoodchampions.org.

About SeaWeb

SeaWeb transforms knowledge into action by shining a spotlight on workable, science-based solutions to the most serious threats facing the ocean. To accomplish this important goal, SeaWeb convenes forums where economic, policy, social and environmental interests converge to improve ocean health and sustainability. SeaWeb works collaboratively with targeted sectors to encourage market solutions, policies and behaviors that result in a healthy, thriving ocean. By using the science of communications to inform and empower diverse ocean voices and conservation champions, SeaWeb is creating a culture of ocean conservation. For more information, visit: www.seaweb.org.

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Media contacts:

SeaWeb

Marida Hines, Senior Manager

mhines@seaweb.org

+1 301 580 1026