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## **SeaWeb Announces Winners of 2016 Seafood Champion Awards**

*Seafood Summit celebration honors four winners and 16 finalists for advancing seafood sustainability and ocean health*

**St. Julian's, Malta (February 1, 2016)**—Seafood leaders chose a retail executive who set the bar for sustainable seafood in the United Kingdom, a Cornwall fisherman who influenced EU policy and technology innovation, a coalition of Pacific Islands nations that acted aggressively to ensure the health of their tuna fishery, and a Maldives ministry that pushed sustainability for Indian Ocean fisheries as the 2016 Seafood Champions.

The annual Seafood Champion Awards recognize individuals and organizations for excellence in promoting ocean health and environmentally responsible seafood with honors in four categories: leadership, innovation, vision and advocacy. The top honors were revealed at the opening reception of the SeaWeb Seafood Summit in Malta.

“The 2016 Seafood Champions are a diverse group, but the finalists share the qualities of incredible persistence and willingness to lead. It’s never easy to be the first to do something others believe is risky or even impossible,” said Mark Spalding, president of SeaWeb and The Ocean Foundation. “That’s why it’s so important to celebrate these Champions—they will inspire others to build on their accomplishments, and to take on the tough challenges that remain in the effort to ensure ocean health and advance seafood sustainability.”

The **Seafood Champion Award for Leadership** went to **Ally Dingwall**, Aquaculture and Fisheries Manager at Sainsbury’s in the U.K. Dingwall is a model of how individuals can make a difference in large companies. His leadership led to Sainsbury’s earning recognition as MSC Fish Retailer of the Year in 2014, serving as an integral member of many sustainable seafood organizations, and advancing its commitments to sustainable sourcing of wild and farmed seafood. Dingwall also encouraged other U.K. retailers to reach MSC commitments.

**David Stevens** and his company, **Crystal Sea Fishing** in Cornwall, U.K., received the **Seafood Champion Award for Innovation** for initiative and leadership as well as technical innovation in meeting the EU’s mandate to eliminate fish discards at sea. Stevens formed a partnership with the U.K. fisheries agency to conduct discard reduction trials. After years of testing gear innovations, he found the best configurations to avoid discarding juvenile haddock and other unwanted species. Stevens’ work led to changes in EU rules to allow the new gear and inspired other fishers to follow his lead.

The **Parties to the Nauru Agreement Organisation**, based in the Marshall Islands, earned the **Seafood Champion Award for Vision** for seeing the need to manage the Western and Central Pacific tuna fishery for the long term and quickly taking effective action. The eight nations in the

group collectively control over 50 percent of the global supply of skipjack tuna, and the PNA has used that power to institute practices and technologies that preserve the fishery while benefiting local economies.

The **Seafood Champion Award for Advocacy** went to the **Maldives Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture** for its efforts to promote sustainable fishery practices and policies in the Indian Ocean. The Maldives' advocacy led to MSC certification of the skipjack and yellowfin pole-and-line fisheries and inspired a number of other countries to develop their own fishery improvement projects.

"All too often the easy thing to do is sit back and accept 'business as usual.' It takes ambition and often courage to stand up and show that there is a better way to do things," said Steve Trent, executive director of Environmental Justice Foundation and one of six judges who evaluated the nominees. "What stood out for me in this selection of finalists was the scope of activities and range of players, coming from government, industry and the nonprofit sector, all of whom were essentially working to achieve the same core goal: ethical, sustainable and legal seafood."

The judges chose winners from a group of 16 finalists from around the world: Australia, Canada, the U.K., Indonesia, Japan, the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, New Zealand and the U.S. They winnowed the finalists from a list of 90 nominees from the fishing, aquaculture, seafood supply and distribution, retail, restaurant and food service sectors, as well as nonprofit organizations, academia and the media.

For more information on the awards, go to [www.seafoodchampions.org](http://www.seafoodchampions.org).

### **About SeaWeb**

SeaWeb, a program of The Ocean Foundation, transforms knowledge into action by shining a spotlight on workable, science-based solutions to the most serious threats facing the ocean, such as climate change, pollution and depletion of marine life. To accomplish this important goal, SeaWeb convenes forums, such as the Seafood Summit, 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 and online information tools to inform and empower diverse ocean voices and conservation champions, SeaWeb is creating a culture of ocean conservation. SeaWeb envisions a world where all people act on the belief that a healthy ocean is vital to human life and essential to a sustainable future. For more information, visit: [www.seaweb.org](http://www.seaweb.org).

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