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## **SeaWeb Announces 2017 Seafood Champion Awards**

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

**SEATTLE, June 5, 2017**—A fearless fisheries minister who’s led a high-profile campaign against harmful fishing practices, a collective effort to combat large-scale illegal fishing in East Africa, two chefs who step far outside their kitchens to promote sustainable seafood, and a foundation breaking new ground in preemptive protection of Indian Ocean tuna are SeaWeb’s 2017 Seafood Champions.

The annual Seafood Champion Awards, presented at the SeaWeb Seafood Summit, recognize individuals and organizations for excellence in promoting ocean health and responsible practices with honors in four categories: leadership, innovation, vision and advocacy.

“The 2017 Seafood Champions demonstrate that courage and creativity can drive progress on seafood sustainability worldwide,” said Mark Spalding, president of SeaWeb and The Ocean Foundation. “These Champions have made smart use of strategies and tools tailored to their unique situations. Some employed teamwork and diplomacy to patiently overcome resistance. Others took bold actions. All have shown the determination and leadership that are the core qualities of Seafood Champions.”

The **Seafood Champion Award for Leadership** went to **Susi Pudjiastuti**, Indonesia’s Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries since 2014. She has banned the use of bottom trawlers and other unsustainable catching devices; led the fight against illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing in her geographically dispersed island nation; and fought against the use of forced labor on fishing vessels.

**FISH-i Africa**, a partnership of eight East African countries, received the **Seafood Champion Award for Innovation** for sharing information and taking collective enforcement action to combat large-scale illegal fishing. FISH-i’s string of investigations and prosecutions has created a strong deterrence to illegal activity and promoted legitimate operators.

**Matthew Beaudin**, executive chef of the **Monterey Bay Aquarium**, earned the **Seafood Champion Award for Vision** for leading the shift to local and sustainable seafood within the Monterey Bay restaurant scene. In 2016, Chef Matt visited more than 20 cities to promote Seafood Watch and responsible sourcing. He is a regional and cross-border leader, having also developed aquaponics programs to support HIV-positive orphans in Mexico.

Sharing the **Seafood Champion Award for Advocacy** were the **International Pole & Line Foundation** and **Ned Bell**, Ocean Wise executive chef at the Vancouver Aquarium and founder of Chefs for Oceans. IPNLF earned its place at the top for spearheading Indian Ocean tuna

fisheries reform, most notably the adoption of a precautionary harvest strategy by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission—a huge leap forward for global tuna management. Chef Ned has made sustainable seafood his mission. In 2014, he rode his bike 8,700 km across Canada, hosting 20 events alongside some of the country’s best chefs to raise awareness of sustainable seafood.

“This year’s Seafood Champions show an important trend: providing practical and affordable solutions for small-scale fishers and developing nations is now a priority,” said judge Katie Miller, sustainable seafood project lead for UK-based ClientEarth. “I’m looking forward to seeing how these play out on the water.”

The judges chose winners from a group of [16 finalists](#) doing remarkable work in their home waters or in multinational coalitions. They winnowed the finalists from an outstanding group of 115 nominees working in 43 countries, reflecting a sector that is increasingly global, collaborative and distributed throughout the supply chain.

The Seafood Champions were honored June 5 at the [SeaWeb Seafood Summit](#) kickoff reception, sponsored by the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute. Seafood sustainability leaders from around the world attended the event, which was held at Chihuly Garden and Glass.

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

### **About SeaWeb**

[SeaWeb](#) accelerates the adoption of sustainable practices and products in the global seafood industry through communication, convening and facilitation. SeaWeb is a project of [The Ocean Foundation](#), and produces the Seafood Summit in partnership with [Diversified Communications](#).

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