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SeaWeb Announces Seafood Champion Award Finalists

Sustainability advocates from around the world, working up and down the supply chain, drive progress through leadership, innovation, vision and an activist spirit

BOSTON, March 20, 2017—SeaWeb today announced 16 finalists for the 2017 Seafood Champion Awards who have demonstrated brilliance and tenacity in working across borders, language barriers and industries to change our relationship with the sea. From fish cops in East Africa to the creator of easily replicated 3-D ocean farms, and from a chef who cycled across Canada promoting sustainable seafood to a company whose solar-powered data collector puts small-scale fishing boats on the map, these Champions show an inspiring level of ingenuity and commitment.

The annual Seafood Champion Awards program, now in its 11th year, recognizes individuals and organizations for excellence in promoting environmentally responsible seafood. Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony on June 5 at the SeaWeb Seafood Summit in Seattle.

“This year’s finalists have a global perspective, whether they act locally or at a broader level,” said Mark Spalding, president of SeaWeb and The Ocean Foundation. “Improving seafood’s sustainability requires addressing difficult political, technical, social and economic questions. To create change, you have to forge alliances and bring people together around a common cause. These are not easy things to do, but the Champions on this list have forged ahead and are making real progress.”

The finalists were selected by a panel of seafood sustainability experts from industry and nonprofit organizations based in Asia, Europe and North America. “Our judges bring deep knowledge and diverse perspectives to a complex evaluation process,” said Spalding. “We greatly appreciate their generosity in volunteering so much time and thought to recognizing excellence in the seafood community.”

The **Seafood Champion Award for Leadership** recognizes people and organizations that bring stakeholders together to improve seafood sustainability or ocean health. The finalists are:

- **Susi Pudjiastuti**, Indonesia’s Minister of Marine 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.
- **Wally Stevens** of the **Global Aquaculture Alliance**. A widely admired leading light in aquaculture, he has developed the GAA as both a competitive force, with its Best Aquaculture Practices certification, and a precompetitive convener via the annual GOAL Conference, the Responsible Aquaculture Foundation, the Global Aquaculture Advocate and other initiatives.
- **Mariah Boyle** of **FishWise**. Known for bridging divides to unite businesses, NGOs and governments in pursuit of common goals, she has led companies such as Albertsons, Target, Hy-Vee and Sea Delight to improve traceability and reduce the risk of IUU fishing and human rights abuses in their supply chains. Her efforts have positively affected more than 7,500 stores and 250 million pounds of seafood.

- **Sea Pact**, an innovative alliance of nine leading North American seafood businesses. The organization uses its collective power to lead improvement throughout the global supply chain, funding projects to drive change while showcasing how competitors can work together.

The **Seafood Champion Award for Innovation** recognizes those who identify and apply new solutions to ecological challenges, market needs or sustainability barriers. The finalists are:

- **FISH-i Africa**, a partnership of eight East African countries that combats large-scale illegal fishing by sharing information and taking collective enforcement action. FISH-i's string of investigations and prosecutions has created a more responsible fisheries sector.
- **Pelagic Data Systems**, which has developed a vessel-tracking technology based on an affordable, solar-powered data collection device for small vessels. The technology has helped combat IUU fishing in Gabon, Mexico, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Peru, Philippines, Thailand and the U.S.
- **Alan Lovewell** of the 1,200-member, community-supported fishery **Real Good Fish**. He also runs Bay2Tray, a program within Real Good Fish that brings affordable local fish to public school districts with high poverty rates and sends fishermen into classrooms to teach about the ocean, fishing and health.
- **Karl Warr** of **Better Fishing**. He has improved the sustainability of bottom trawling with an easily fitted cage mechanism that can free 95 percent of juvenile fish, saving fuel costs and allowing fishers to catch species selectively.

The **Seafood Champion Award for Vision** recognizes distinctive visions that significantly advance the sustainable seafood community. The finalists are:

- **Bren Smith**, who is leading the development and promotion of 3-D ocean farms. His nonprofit **GreenWave** helps fishers become ocean farmers by adopting GreenWave's open-source, replicable model, which restores rather than depletes ocean ecosystems.
- **Matthew Beaudin**, executive chef of the **Monterey Bay Aquarium**, who moved \$1 million in buying power to seafood producers within a 90-mile radius. He also is a regional and cross-border leader, developing aquaponics programs to support orphaned, HIV-positive children in Mexico.
- The **Marine Research Foundation**, a three-person nonprofit in Malaysia whose work protects endangered sea turtles while making Malaysia's shrimp-fishing industry more sustainable. The MRF overcame entrenched opposition to the use of turtle excluder devices and now anticipates a full rollout of the devices, which will save an estimated 4,000 turtles. That will open access for Malaysia to a global market hungry for sustainable shrimp.
- The **Global Ghost Gear Initiative**, the first effort to tackle the problem of abandoned fishing gear on a global scale. This international, cross-sector partnership works with stakeholders from fishers to the United Nations to collect data and develop and model solutions that remove ghost gear from the ocean.

The **Seafood Champion Award for Advocacy** recognizes the promotion of sustainability, use of the media to raise the profile of sustainable seafood, work to strengthen public policy and resource allocations, and championing of advances in sustainable seafood. The finalists are:

- The **International Pole & Line Foundation**, which spearheaded an effort by Indian Ocean countries to reform tuna fisheries management and played a central role in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission's groundbreaking adoption of a precautionary harvest strategy.
- **Ned Bell**, Ocean Wise executive chef at the **Vancouver Aquarium** and founder of **Chefs for Oceans**, who 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.

- **Dr. Caleb Otto**, former Permanent Representative of the Republic of Palau to the United Nations, who has led his small island nation to a position of leadership on the international stage through his passionate advocacy for ocean health and sustainability at the United Nations.
- **Bill Mook** of **Mook Sea Farm** in Maine, who is modeling how shellfish growers everywhere can address the threat of ocean acidification. He has become a resource for hatchery and farm operators in the U.S. and abroad, counseling them on how to avoid losses and exchanging innovative ideas for protecting the industry.

For more information on the awards and finalists, go to www.seafoodchampions.org. For more information on the awards ceremony and the Seafood Summit, go to www.seafoodsummit.org.

About SeaWeb

[SeaWeb](#) serves the sustainable seafood community by nourishing a coordinated infrastructure of people and knowledge to guide, inspire and reward the seafood industry's adoption of sustainable practices. SeaWeb is a project of [The Ocean Foundation](#), a unique community foundation with a mission to support, strengthen and promote organizations dedicated to reversing the trend of destruction of ocean environments around the world. SeaWeb produces the Seafood Summit in partnership with [Diversified Communications](#).

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