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commitment to fisheries funding and transparency

PLUS: Q&A WITH REID SCOTT | DEFENDING U.S. OCEANS | PEOPLE POWER IN BELIZE

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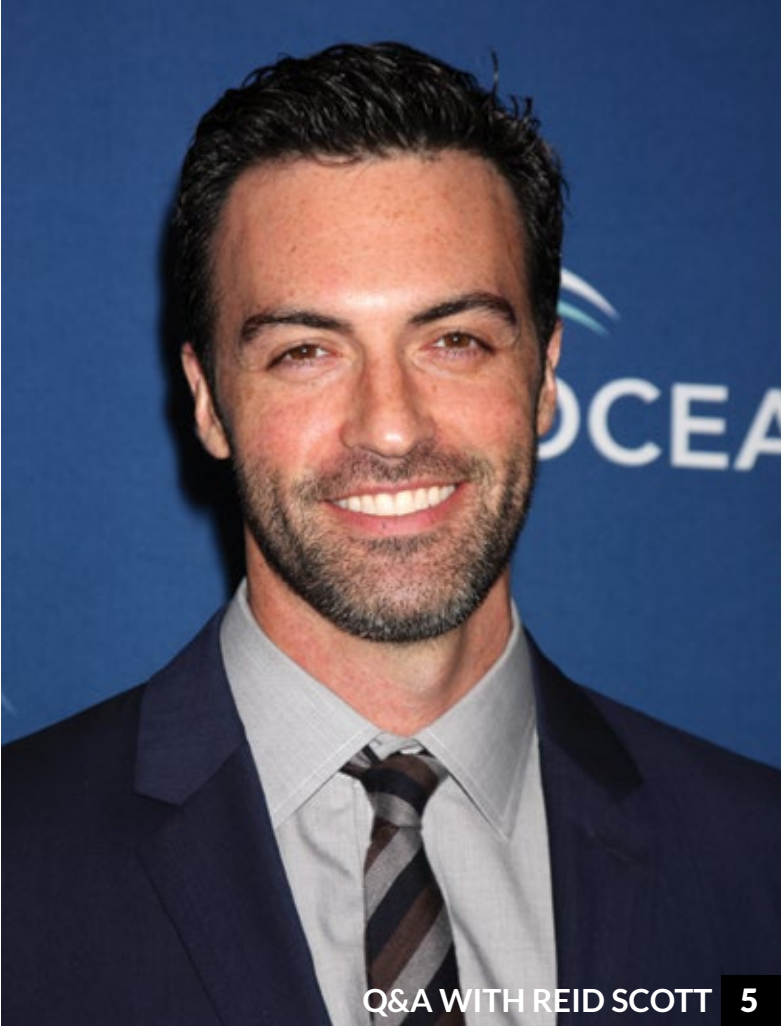
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Dear Friend of Oceana,

Recently I was in London reporting to one of Oceana's earliest and most generous backers. "Since we last met," I said, "we've had some big campaign victories and also some losses. I want to make sure today that you know what we're getting done." Smiling, she replied, "Why don't you start with your losses? It'll make your victories more credible."

It's advice I've taken to heart.

So here's a real loss:

In 1776, Oliver Goldsmith described visiting the coast of England and seeing schools of herring 5 or 6 miles long. These were, he reported, being chased by dolphins, sharks, fin whales, sperm whales and tuna, all clearly visible from the seashore.

Other striking natural losses are reported in *The Unnatural History of the Sea* by Callum Roberts, or in the more recent *Feral*, by George Monbiot. For example, early in the European settlement of North America, New England colonists finding 20-pound lobsters along the coasts were so unimpressed that they decided to feed them to their pigs. At the same time, canoe-paddling "gentlemen" not far from Washington, D.C. on the Potomac River caught more than 600 sturgeon — in one day (!). And in the 18th century, the biggest great white sharks were 50 percent larger than today's titans — sometimes reported to reach 9 meters in length.

Daniel Kahneman, a Nobel Prize winner in economics, has written about how we come to understand the world. Very often we're operating by intuition. And this "fast thinking" about problems is often accomplished by finding a familiar analogy. Whether accurate or not, the analogy then provides us a quick answer, saving us the time and effort of critical thinking.

Most people are not familiar with the causes of ocean depletion. Asked to explain this appalling loss of abundance off the coasts of England (both New and Old), people apply the analogy of climate change. They rapidly conclude that saving the oceans, like saving the climate, will require vigorous, coordinated and enforceable international action, probably led by the United Nations.

And because that process is profoundly difficult, people conclude that saving the oceans must also be nearly impossible.

That is not correct.

While some ocean species require coordinated international protection, the most productive parts of the world's ocean can be saved country by country. Indeed, more than 90 percent of the world's ocean productivity is caught in the exclusive economic zones of just 29 of the world's countries and the European Union. Huge parts of the world's oceans have been nationalized. That means that coastal countries can restore their ocean abundance. They can do so simply by stopping overfishing in their ocean. They don't need to get agreement from any other country.

So don't let the problems of stopping climate change convince you that rebuilding ocean abundance is impossible. It's a false analogy.

We have, over the past 15 years, seen real progress. In the United States, since 2000, the share of fish stocks considered overfished has been halved. Nearly 40 species had been fully rebuilt by 2015, and some people are even speculating about the day when all overfishing in U.S. waters will end. The European Union, responsible for the third most productive set of ocean fisheries in the world, is seeing steady improvement in its ocean, and is in sight of nearly fully rebuilding its Atlantic fisheries

by 2020. And huge strides are being made in habitat protection — for example, Presidents Bush and Obama each acted to create a huge fully protected marine park around the northwest Hawaiian Islands.

Oceana, together with our allies, is winning policy changes that restore and protect abundant oceans. Of course, we don't always win. As I reported on our losses to our generous backer in London, I again felt their sting. But by the end of the meeting, she agreed that the overall win-loss record was very encouraging for all of us committed to ocean abundance and biodiversity. Since our founding 15 years ago, we have counted nearly 200 policy victories for the oceans. Some of our newest victories are described in this issue of our magazine, and we are very happy to share them with you.

It now seems likely that newly elected governments in the United States and in Europe will make Oceana's job more difficult. We are shifting more of our resources and attention to defending key ocean laws rather than fighting to strengthen them. But we are not discouraged. We know how to win, and we'll find a way, as we always do, to deliver policy outcomes that put more fish in the sea.

Your generous support makes them possible. We are entirely dependent on voluntary contributions from you and others committed to healthy and abundant oceans. Your loyalty is now more important than ever. Thank you!

Sincerely,



Andy Sharpless
CEO
Oceana

OFFSHORE DRILLING OFF THE TABLE IN U.S. ARCTIC AND ATLANTIC

Oceana has long campaigned for the protection of the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans from the dirty hunt for fossil fuels. During the final months of his second term in office, President Obama and his administration took significant steps to defend the country’s oceans against offshore drilling.

In January, the administration finalized the final Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2017-2022, in which the government establishes the schedule for leasing tracts of ocean floor for oil and gas development. The Artic Ocean’s Chukchi and Beaufort Seas were removed from the plan, which means that, for the first time in 40 years, these distinctive and diverse ocean ecosystems are safeguarded. The Atlantic Ocean had already been removed from the plan following widespread East Coast opposition, supported by Oceana, earlier in the year. Additionally, in December, President Obama used his authority under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to permanently put 31 underwater canyons along the East Coast off limits for drilling, protecting 3.8 million acres.

FINNING FINISHED IN PERU

Peru’s Ministry of Production announced measures in November 2016 banning the landing and transshipment of shark fins and headless or finless shark bodies in all Peruvian ports. This rule not only aims to discourage shark finning, but also encourages the monitoring and gathering of more scientific information about shark species. This data will help Peruvian fisheries officials make responsible, science-based management decisions, and will promote traceability in the shark supply chain. These measures also ban the use of harpoons to hunt dolphins, which are primarily used as shark bait.

Shark finning — the practice of cutting off a shark’s fins and discarding the body — often occurs while the shark is still alive, leaving it to drown, bleed to death or be eaten by other marine animals. The shark fin trade has played a major role in the steep decline of shark populations, with as many as 73 million sharks killed for their fins annually. Shark fins are primarily used to make a luxury soup popular in some Asian countries.

A NEW RECOVERY PLAN FOR MEDITERRANEAN SWORDFISH

On World Fisheries Day, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) — the intergovernmental body that manages fishing of migratory species, such as tuna and swordfish — agreed on a recovery plan for the severely depleted Mediterranean swordfish.

Oceana has fought for more than a decade for greater protections for the Mediterranean swordfish, which has decreased in population by two-thirds since the 1980s.

The new plan includes the adoption of a quota system to prevent illegal fishing and improve transparency in the swordfish fishery management and trade, as well as a modest reduction in the number of swordfish fishers are allowed to catch. Although the agreed-upon catch reduction is significantly less than what scientists advised and might therefore only nominally help the vulnerable stock, the paradigm shift is nevertheless welcomed as a step in the right direction.



Illegal drift net fishing by Italian vessel in the Mediterranean Sea.
©Oceana/Carlos Suarez

U.S. PROGRAM COMBATS SEAFOOD FRAUD AND ILLEGAL FISHING

In December 2016, the Obama administration finalized the Seafood Import Monitoring Program, designed to address illegal fishing and seafood fraud in the United States. The program requires that imported seafood at risk of illegal fishing and seafood fraud be traced from the fishing boat or farm to the U.S. border. Key details — such as where, when and how the fish was caught, as well as its specific species — will have to be provided before the shipment can enter the United States.

The Seafood Import Monitoring Program will also help American fishers. For the first time, some imported seafood will be held to the same standards as domestically caught fish — helping to level the playing field for U.S. fishers and reducing the risk facing consumers.

SEISMIC TESTING SCRAPPED IN U.S. ATLANTIC

East Coast communities, economies and ecosystems won big in January when the Obama administration formally denied all pending permits to conduct seismic airgun blasting in the Atlantic. This loud, harmful practice is used to detect oil and gas below the ocean floor. Given that the administration had already removed the Atlantic from the government’s five-year oil and gas leasing program, seismic blasting would have been pointlessly destructive.

Over the past two years, a grassroots campaign supported by Oceana has rallied more than 120 East Coast municipalities, and thousands of elected officials, businesses and fishing families to oppose offshore drilling, seismic airgun blasting or both.



Demosponge from the Deep-sea Lebanon Expedition.



Turtle escaping a new using a TED.

©NOAA



A school of fusiliers on the reef crest

Photos: ©Oceana unless otherwise noted

Oceana and Lebanese scientists deployed a remotely operated vehicle to explore a complex system of submarine canyons deep in the Mediterranean, documenting more than 200 species including rare corals, sponges and fish. Part of the Deep-Sea Lebanon Project, the one-month expedition surveyed previously unstudied areas of the country’s waters. The expedition’s findings will bolster Lebanon’s efforts to establish new deep-sea protected areas.

In November 2016, Oceana proposed a plan to phase out bottom trawling in Chile. This destructive fishing practice involves dragging heavy nets along the ocean floor, crushing corals, sponges and other habitat-forming structures. Oceana’s proposal would eliminate bottom trawling within 5 miles of the coast, ban trawling in collapsed fisheries and prevent trawlers from fishing in previously untrawled areas.

As many as 2,500 endangered and threatened sea turtles could be saved each year as a result of a rule proposed in December by the Obama administration. The rule would require three types of shrimp trawlers to include Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) on their nets, allowing sea turtles to escape should they accidentally become entangled with the vessel’s catch.

The European Parliament voted in February on a proposal to regulate the European fishing fleet outside of European Union waters, thus taking a significant step toward making the EU fleet a model for a transparent, accountable and sustainable fisheries. More than a quarter of the EU fleet’s total catch results from fishing outside of EU waters.

Catches in European waters could increase by 57 percent if stocks were fished sustainably and based on scientific advice. That’s the key finding from a 2016 Oceana report that analyzed 397 stocks across the EU. The report — the most comprehensive overview to date of overfishing in European fish stocks — found that 85 percent of stocks were in an unhealthy state.

The Tañon Strait Protected Seascape Enforcement summit in the Philippines drew more than 120 participants from government and the fishing industry together to review and strengthen the enforcement plan designed to protect Tañon Strait — one of the country’s largest marine protected areas and home to diverse marine life — from commercial, illegal and destructive fishing operations.



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Q&A: REID SCOTT

For Reid Scott, life imitates art. Not only does he play politico Dan Egan on HBO’s *Veep*, he’s also spent time talking with real politicians to help Oceana’s climate and energy campaign — work for which Scott was honored at the Television Industry Advocacy Awards last September. He generously took a break from his busy schedule to talk to Oceana about his time working in the salmon industry, how his father instilled a love of nature in him and how anyone can help protect the oceans.

What drew you to ocean conservation?

I’ve been an environmental conservationist my entire life. I spent a lot of time in nature with my dad as a kid, and he always impressed upon me the idea of “leaving it better than you found it.” When I moved to California from New York, the ocean became a big part of my life. Surfing, swimming, diving. And believe me, there is definitely a way to leave it better than we found it.

Is it true you once worked in a salmon cannery?

Yes, I worked in a salmon cannery in Naknek, Alaska in the summer of 1997. At the time, it went down as the worst season in history. It was an El Niño year, which brought warmer waters and sent the fish running too deep for the boats to legally catch. The law limits the fishing depth so that a certain number of fish can escape, spawn and run again in the future. Honoring that law may have meant meager earnings for the cannery workers that summer, but it helped ensure that there would be fish for generations to come.

We’ve watched your *Veep* character Dan Egan stretch his political muscle for years, but readers might not know that you’ve also lobbied in real life with Oceana. Tell us a little about that.

That’s right. I was asked to join Oceana to lobby Congress to cease the use of

seismic airgun testing in the Atlantic by exploratory oil companies. And guess what? We won! But you don’t have to walk the halls of Congress to make a difference. Write a letter, make a phone call, get involved in clean-up efforts and wildlife protection. When politicians see a groundswell movement they take notice. We can make a difference.

So many of the oceans’ species and habitats are at risk today. What gives you hope that Oceana and others who love the oceans can improve conditions for them?

It’s not matter of “Can we?” It’s “Will we?” It’s clear now that we have the knowledge, the technology and the ability to turn back the clock on global warming, to keep our oceans clean, to find balance in nature. We just need to do the work. I’m a dad now, and I’m doing my part to teach my son about leaving this place, the planet Earth, better than we found it.

And finally, what’s your favorite memory of the ocean?

Three years ago in Fiji, my wife and I paddled our kayak out to a tiny uninhabited island. The water was so clear you could see 20 feet straight down. And as we sat on that island, all alone in the middle of the Pacific, the sun setting, watching fish jump straight out of the water, it was like seeing what the oceans were like 10,000 years ago. Beautiful.

OCEANA IS BUILT TO WITHSTAND CHANGING TIDES IN POLITICS

AS NEW LEADERS SHIFT THE AGENDA IN WASHINGTON, OCEANA CONTINUES TO DO WHAT IT DOES BEST — FIND WAYS TO WIN BIG FOR THE OCEANS.

BY LAURA LACY
Climate change — of the political kind — has been at the forefront of ocean advocates' minds since the election of President Trump and the empowerment of an anti-environment majority in Congress. Major shifts in Washington and across the country are spelling trouble for hard-won laws that protect our air, water and natural landscapes.

American oceans face particular threats. The U.S. fishing industry, coastal towns and marine animals from bait fish to blue whales stand to suffer from the new administration's promise to slash federal budgets and roll back environmental safeguards. But though the near-term outlook may seem grim, marine protection has a history of bipartisan support in the United States. Oceana is rolling up its sleeves — and rolling out new plans — to fight for the oceans for the next four years and beyond.

DRAINING THE SWAMP?

President Trump said he would “drain the swamp” in Washington, but anti-

environment extremists in Congress seem more focused on harming literal ecosystems than metaphorical ones.

A spate of new legislation suggests that the Trump administration is eager to put its deregulatory platform into action. Congressman Don Young, R-Alaska, recently introduced a bill that would undermine the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the key legislation that governs fisheries management in U.S. waters. Young and six other congressional Republicans also introduced a bill that would reverse the Department of the Interior's 2016 rule to reduce the environmental risks from exploratory oil and gas drilling in the Arctic. These safety measures were put in place after the Deepwater Horizon disaster.

Congressman Pete Olson, R-Texas, proposed weakening the Endangered Species Act, which protects species at risk of extinction. Senator Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, put forth a bill that would limit the President's power to create national monuments, including marine monuments. And President Trump signed a bill recently passed by Congress that removed a requirement that oil, gas and other extractive companies disclose payments to foreign countries.

These are just five out of dozens of regulatory actions that would undermine protections for marine wildlife, a stable climate, and clean air, water and food.

Extreme cuts to federal agency budgets also threaten ocean conservation. Trump's budget, released in mid-March, would slash the EPA's budget by 31 percent and the Department of State's by 28 percent.

Oceana was established for the purpose of making sure there was always a group that was looking out for the ocean

At the Department of Commerce, a reduction of 16 percent, or \$1.5 billion,

is directly aimed at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Taken together, these anti-environment bills and budget proposals represent the most unfavorable political environment for ocean conservation in a long time. Fortunately, Oceana has won nearly 200 victories for the oceans in its 16 years, in political climates both favorable and hostile.

“Luckily, Oceana was established for the purpose of making sure there was always a group looking out for the ocean,” said Jackie Savitz, Oceana's senior vice president for the United States and Global Fishing Watch. “I don't think there has been a time where the need for that was more clear than it is now.”

BUILDING A BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER

In the United States, ocean protection has a history of bipartisan support. In 2006, President Bush created the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in Hawaii. A decade later, President Obama nearly quadrupled the size of the monument, making it the largest protected area in the country. The 1976 Magnuson-Stevens Act, the bedrock of fisheries management in the U.S., was named after two senators from opposite sides of the aisle.

“The Magnuson-Stevens Act is a great example of a bipartisan effort to rebuild American fisheries,” Savitz said. “It was sponsored by two senators. One was a Democrat. One was a Republican. If that's any guide, it means that we can find bipartisan opportunities.”

Savitz emphasized that local voters can be a major force for change. “People



The carcass of a finned shark lies among corals.
©Nancy Boucha/MarinePhotobank

care about the ocean,” she said, “whether it’s because they make their living in the ocean or through the related tourism industry or they simply love the water.”

Savitz continued: “These constituencies can remind their politicians that they’re the ones who sent them to Washington. That’s how we hope to find an ocean-supporting majority that can stand up to members of Congress and senators who are more focused on, say, the needs of the oil industry. They weren’t sent to Washington to represent the oil industry.”

SHORING UP EXISTING PROTECTIONS

The Trump administration may seek to reverse or weaken several key laws that protect marine wildlife, limit the spread of offshore oil and prevent overfishing. But Oceana is prepared to support and defend the policies that support healthy oceans.

OFFSHORE DRILLING PROTECTIONS

In 2016, President Obama removed the U.S. Arctic and Atlantic from the 2017-2022 oil and gas leasing plan, and formally denied all pending permits to conduct seismic airgun blasting in the Atlantic. Oceana will defend these critical safeguards — in part by strengthening the grassroots support that initially that led to these victories.

THE MAGNUSON-STEVENSONS ACT

Since its enactment in 1976, the Magnuson-Stevens Act has helped rebuild dozens of overfished stocks. Rep. Young’s bill aims to weaken this act, along with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Antiquities Act, the Endangered Species Act and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.

“If Congressman Young’s bill survives, it could lead to the overfishing of vulnerable fish populations and will hurt the United States in profound ways,” Savitz said. “Rather than moving in the direction of feeding more people, creating more jobs and building a stronger fishing economy, we’ll be moving in a direction of feeding fewer people, creating fewer jobs and weakening our economy. That’s what happens if we weaken the Magnuson-Stevens Act.”

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Oceana is part of the Endangered Species Coalition, a nationwide network of organizations dedicated to protecting endangered and threatened species and the law that shields them. The Endangered Species Act has helped to bring bald eagles, gray whales and other rare animals back from the brink of extinction.

Like the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Endangered Species Act has already found

itself in Congressional crosshairs. Outside of Capitol Hill, however, the act is popular — according to a recent Endangered Species Coalition poll, 84 percent of Americans support it.

THE MARINE MAMMALS PROTECTION ACT

Established in 1972, the Marine Mammal Protection Act seeks to protect marine mammals from human harm. This includes limitations on marine mammal bycatch in commercial fisheries. Last August, new requirements were added to the act, which mandated that foreign fisheries that import seafood to the U.S. abide by bycatch rules comparable to American standards.

Ocean advocates are worried that there are challenges to this act on the horizon. “Oceana is very concerned about the Marine Mammal Protection Act,” Savitz said. “One way we’re addressing that is by working toward building a national coalition to defend it.”

A RISING SWELL OF ACTIVISM

As the old adage goes, the best defense is a good offense. The same holds true in the case of our oceans — we don’t simply want to maintain the status quo; we want to keep improving. Oceana has identified ways to push forward that we believe have a chance of success in the current political environment.



Sardines flee from a hungry sea lion.
©Andrea Izzotti

THE SHARK FIN TRADE BAN

Each year, as many as 73 million sharks die because of the shark fin trade. Finning — the practice of cutting off a shark’s fins and dumping the shark back into the ocean, often while still alive — is primarily driven by the demand for shark fin soup in Asia. While finning is illegal in U.S. waters, imported fins are still available in stores and restaurants across the country. Though 11 states have banned the sale of shark fins, this has led to what Savitz called “a game of whack-a-mole.”

“When we helped get it banned in California, it popped up in Texas. Then you banned it in Texas, and it would pop up in Georgia and so on,” Savitz said.

For that reason, Oceana has launched a campaign for a nationwide ban. The resulting legislation won bipartisan support in Congress last year. The House bill was reintroduced in March.

SEAFOOD FRAUD

Since 2011, Oceana has led the movement against seafood fraud in the United States, conducting investigations into fish, shrimp, crab cakes and salmon. Overall, one-third of the seafood sampled in these studies was found to be mislabeled. Fish that can cause illness were sold as safer ones, threatened animals were disguised as their sustainable counterparts and cheap fish masqueraded as more expensive types. After reviewing data from more than 200 studies, Oceana found that, on a global

scale, an average of one in five tested seafood samples was mislabeled.

The key to addressing this fraud is traceability, from the farm or boat of origin to Americans’ plates. New requirements for imported seafood were put in place in December 2016, and Oceana will work to ensure they are implemented. Consumers and companies can also push for seafood traceability — and Oceana aims to help them do so.

GRASSROOTS OPPOSITION TO OFFSHORE DRILLING

In January 2014, more than 300 residents in Kure Beach, a 2,000-person coastal town in North Carolina, banded together to protest the then-mayor’s support of seismic

Oceana has readied itself to defend the oceans from radical political leaders and will continue to push forward science-backed policies to promote abundance.



©Lane V. Erickson

airgun blasting. Their resistance sparked a grassroots movement up and down the East Coast that, with help from Oceana, has resulted in significant protections for the Atlantic.

Seismic airgun blasting and offshore drilling threaten coastal communities and marine wildlife. On the Atlantic Coast, for instance, 1.4 million jobs rely on a healthy ocean. To date, 121 East Coast municipalities and more than 1,200 elected officials, 35,000 businesses and 500,000 fishing families from Massachusetts to Florida have publicly opposed airgun blasting, offshore drilling or both.

Savitz explained that the next step is to bring the offshore oil campaign to a national stage. “That’s going to

mean partnering with lots of other organizations that are concerned about offshore drilling,” Savitz said, “whether they’re in the Southeast or the Northeast or on the Pacific coast. With other conservation groups, we’re going to try to scale up the grassroots strategies that have worked so well for us.”

Events like the Women’s March on Washington or the spontaneous “Muslim ban” airport protests may be early signs of a rising tide of grassroots activism in the U.S. “We’ve entered a new phase of political engagement in our country,” Savitz said. “It’s so incredibly important if we want to have a say in how our government works. That is important for a lot of different reasons, and protecting ocean health is chief among them.”

How can you help the oceans? Join Wavemakers, Oceana’s e-activism program. We’ll soon be looking for people to volunteer, organize and lead, supporting the issues we’ll be promoting. And make your voice heard in Washington. Call your member of Congress to tell them you oppose pieces of legislation, like those mentioned above, that threaten the ocean.

A TIMELINE OF SUCCESS

2016

- Brazil’s ‘Red List’ reinstated to protect 475 endangered aquatic species
- Executive order to create the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area in Alaska
- Scientists recommend management measures to control sardine overfishing in the Philippines
- New prosecutors to boost law enforcement in Philippine protected areas
- Government finalizes safety and prevention rules for U.S. Arctic Ocean exploration drilling
- Court of Appeals orders Sernapesca to provide information about antibiotics used in the salmon farming industry in Chile
- Pacific loggerhead conservation area in California closed to drift gillnets to protect sea turtles
- Deep-Sea trawling ban protects 4.9 million square kilometers in European oceans
- Chile announces density reduction plan for salmon industry
- The Honourable Minister LeBlanc announces a big step forward for more transparent fisheries management in Canada
- California moves to protect hundreds of forage fish species in state waters
- 1,400 square kilometers in Spain’s Balearic Islands protected from destructive fishing
- Oceana Brazil celebrates appointment of members to Fisheries Management Committee
- Oceana wins pledge from Obama administration to issue new rule to save thousands of sea turtles in the United States
- Forage fish in Oregon win significant protections
- Chilean government officially decrees the creation of the Nazca-Desventuradas Marine Park
- Oceana Wins Habitat Protections in the Strait of Sicily
- Critical marine conservation measures for sharks and sea turtles approved in Brazil

2015

- GrubHub takes shark fin soup off the menu in the United States
- Moratorium and ban protects Belizean marine resources
- First-ever fishing ban created for Danish marine parks
- Chile announces designation of largest marine park in the Americas
- Shell abandons drilling activity in U.S. Arctic Ocean
- Texas bans shark fin sales
- Chile bans salmon farming in large pristine area in Chilean Patagonia
- Portugal’s Gorringe Bank to be a protected Site of Community Interest
- Louisiana now requires TED enforcement on shrimp trawl vessels
- Construction of largest coal-fired plant in Chile stopped
- Amended Fisheries Code becomes law in the Philippines

To see more victories, visit www.oceana.org/victories

IN **BELIZE**, PEOPLE POWER PUT THE BRAKES ON COVERT OFFSHORE OIL EXPLORATION

Oceana helped to mobilize a public outcry that put an end to oil exploration near the Belize barrier reef. But will the country's government ever make good on its promise to ban offshore oil exploration?

by Allison Guy



The Placencia community takes a stand and joins thousands of other Belizeans, who have and continue to say "no" to offshore oil in Belize. Placencia Village, Stann Creek District.

©Oceana

In late 2015, the Belizean government vowed it would permanently ban oil exploration along the country’s iconic 300-kilometer (190-mile) barrier reef and within its seven World Heritage sites. Thousands of Belizeans hailed this announcement as a significant step towards safeguarding the country’s ocean-based economy from offshore oil. But in October 2016, a phone tip to the Oceana Belize office made it clear that the government’s deeds did not match its words. Officials had already approved a contract to explore for oil just a kilometer off the reef.

Because Oceana Belize has led a long-standing campaign against offshore oil, the team was poised to take action. With help from outside organizations, the team analyzed satellite tracking data and found that the Northern Explorer — a ship owned by the oil exploration company TGS — had sailed from the Mexican port of Progreso a few days earlier and then motored down Belize’s coast. On October 18, the vessel traced an odd, tangled trajectory near Turneffe Atoll and Lighthouse Reef, home to Belize’s famous Blue Hole formation. If the ship was transiting from one port to another, it would be traveling in a straight line. It was clear that this was something different.

A day later, the Oceana team’s suspicions were confirmed: Seismic activity had commenced well in advance of the start date the government was compelled to announce, without notice to Belizean citizens and without the benefit of an Environmental Impact Assessment. A passenger on a small aircraft shot a photo of the Northern Explorer towing an array of seismic air guns, proving without a doubt that oil exploration was already underway.

After these photos and the satellite data went public, the outcry from Belizeans was immediate. “People got angry because they had said no to offshore oil, they continued to say no to offshore oil, and they felt disrespected in terms of not being consulted,” said Janelle Chanona, the vice president of Oceana Belize. As for the government, Chanona said, “I don’t think they were prepared for the kind of outrage people have towards the idea of offshore oil.”

In Belize, 35 percent of all jobs are tourism-dependent and a further 22 percent are tied to the seafood sector. More than 190,000 Belizeans, in a country of less than 400,000, depend on the health of coastal and marine ecosystems. Seismic airguns — which can kill fish eggs and larvae, disrupt animal migration and disturb or deafen whales and dolphins — mean that oil exploration and drilling are a major threat to the country’s economy.

In an attempt to calm the protests against offshore oil, government officials traveled to San Pedro to hold a meeting with local businesses, fishers and organizations. San Pedro, the only town on Ambergris Caye, is Belize’s main tourism hub and one of the country’s major economic drivers. Angry tourism stakeholders and residents of all ages packed into a meeting room to confront the officials. Among the crowd was Belize’s Minister of Tourism, Jose Manuel Heredia. At one point during the confrontation, Heredia stood up and announced that he would be the first one to jump — presumably into action — if the country’s marine resources were threatened. As video captured and streamed on Facebook reveals, the crowd at that point started chanting: “Jump, jump, jump.”

“I can tell you it was one of those moments of goose bumps,” Chanona said. “This was a room full of stakeholders, students, tour guides and tour operators saying, ‘We understand that seismic is a very slippery slope to a full-blown oil industry. And we know what that will mean for our livelihoods, for our future, for our industry and for our country.’ To witness ‘people power’ was humbling.”

The next day, the Northern Explorer pulled up its seismic array and headed back to port. Concerned islanders even got into their own boats to personally see to it that the air guns were packed away.

Despite the departure of the Northern Explorer, the danger of offshore oil development has not passed. The Belizean government has failed to follow through with its vow to ban offshore oil exploration and drilling along the barrier reef. It also has yet to keep its pre-election promise to hold an official referendum on the issue. As for its December 2015 declaration, the Government



Seismic testing ship leaving Belizean waters after public outcry halted testing. Here, seen just after English Caye Channel.

has also not scientifically justified why the proposed ban only extends one kilometer from the reef — or how it plans to stop winds and currents from smothering corals and wildlife with oil if a spill occurs.

“The ships have left but the threat remains. We want to be clear: this is about calling on and supporting our leaders to do the job they signed up for — for them to lead. We don’t want their job. We just want to live in a Belize where the environment doesn’t need protecting,” Chanona said. “And honestly, this business of feeling like we have to fight our government to know what’s happening in our own country, with our shared resources, that’s horrifying. But since their decisions will determine our collective future, they leave us few options.”

While recognizing the scale of the fight ahead, Chanona expressed gratitude to her fellow Belizeans: “To the tens of thousands of sensational Belizeans who continue to remain engaged in this issue and who continue to recognize that their right to have a role in what happens next, again, we say thank you for being sensational Belizeans; your children and grandchildren will thank you.”



Ocean advocates spell out a giant “no” to express their opposition to offshore oil.



Originally from Hopkins Village in the Stann Creek District, Randolph Gilbert Nunez is a boat captain for the Wildlife Conservation Society’s research station.



Tourists fly-fishing for a school of bonefish off the southern point of Middle Caye in Glovers Reef Atoll. Glovers is one of three atolls found in Belize.

SHINING A LIGHT ON ON THE SECRETS HIDING IN CANADA'S FISHERIES

Oceana Canada seized an opportunity to bring transparency and accountability to government fisheries management. What does this mean for Canada's long-neglected Northern cod and other struggling fish stocks?

by Allison Guy

In the waters off Newfoundland, northern cod are showing early signs of return. In the 1990s, overfishing shaved the numbers of these iconic fish to just 1 percent of their historical abundance. For Aubrey Payne, who has been fishing off Newfoundland's tiny Fogo Island for 45 years, the return is both a blessing and a concern. Cod, after all, have sustained his family for centuries. But he worries that the government and the fishing industry will just retrace the steps that led to the initial collapse.

"We've lost our markets, and we're asking the Canadian government not to increase the quota too fast," Payne said, adding that he didn't expect officials to proceed with the hoped-for caution. Fishermen like Payne have reason to be skeptical. Despite the fact that there's been a fishing moratorium on northern cod for 25 years, the country's fisheries management body — Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) — has yet to implement a plan to rebuild this species to healthy levels. In fact, a recent government audit found that of the 15 major fish stocks that are in critical condition and are being fished, 12 do not have rebuilding plans.

The absence of recovery plans is one symptom of a decades-long trend of messy data collection, insufficient fisheries laws and meager funding for science. The result of this, as a 2016 Oceana Canada report revealed, is that 15 percent of Canada's fisheries are in critical shape, and a further 45 percent are considered 'unknown' — a finding that shocked both Oceana Canada and the wider fisheries community.

In October 2015, the election of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau marked what could be a turning point for Canada's fisheries. Many ocean advocates hope that the new government may end decades of opaque decision-making and budget-slashing. Spurred in part by Oceana Canada's first major campaign, the Trudeau administration has increased funding in fisheries science and management, made more information available to the public and committed to developing rebuilding plans. For fish like northern cod, it might be coming in the nick of time.

WEIRD SCIENCE

In the 1950s, Canada was the world's seventh largest producer of wild fish. But by 2015, its rank had slipped to 21st place. How did things get so bad? To begin with, said Josh Laughren, executive director of Oceana Canada, the fisheries department had a "historical culture of treating the industry as clients." Especially in the face of declining staff and budget, fisheries officials focused more on meeting industry needs, to the detriment of the long-term health of species like cod and mackerel.

The 2006 election exacerbated these long-standing problems. From 2006 to 2015, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's administration waged what the media dubbed a "war on science," slashing funding for research, dismissing evidence-based policies and restricting government scientists from speaking with the media or collaborating with outside researchers. For Robert Rangeley, Oceana Canada's director of science, this violated what he called a "fundamental" aspect of science: "You don't closet it up."



Fishing boats at docks in the villages' harbours in Bonaville, Newfoundland, Canada.
©valleyboi63



Atlantic cod
©Grigorev Mikhail



A fisherman shows off his catch.
©Anton Petrus

This tight-reined approach to science, coupled with decades-long cuts to fisheries research and management, kept the true state of Canada’s fisheries shrouded in confusion. “Nobody could get a good sense of how things were doing,” Laughren said, “except by looking individually at every single stock, every single stock assessment, every single fisheries management decision.” The work required to understand just a single fishery, Laughren added, “was forensic.”

FISHING FOR TRANSPARENCY

Before the October 2015 election, Oceana Canada began preparing an effort to push fisheries transparency into the spotlight “We did work with each of the parties heading into the election to let them know what we thought the priorities on oceans should be,” Laughren explained.

The Liberal Party’s platform of open government and evidence-based policy-making struck a chord with Canadians. After Trudeau won the election, one of his first moves to make good on this pro-science platform was to encourage government scientists to speak to the media. “That was huge,” Rangeley said.

But there were bigger fish to fry. To encourage the Trudeau administration to tackle fisheries transparency next, Oceana Canada emphasized that it would be “an easy, inexpensive, meaningful and possibly quite quick way to deliver on the ‘open government’ agenda,” Laughren said.

Oceana Canada also worked with the fisheries department to convince it to release the data it had kept under lock and key. The team made the case that releasing this information, even if imperfect or incomplete, would bring public and political attention to the need to invest in fisheries management. Many in the department agreed, glad to know there was a public appetite for their data.

While these government-focused efforts were underway, Oceana Canada collaborated with two top fisheries scientists to compile the most comprehensive and up-to-date report ever conducted on the state of Canada’s fish stocks. Thanks to Oceana Canada’s efforts, Laughren said, the government was receptive to the report’s findings. Laughren paraphrased their attitude as: “We agree that this is a problem, we accept the recommendations, and we’re intent on fixing it.”

A SURPRISING SYMPOSIUM

After laying the groundwork with the new government and the public for several months, Oceana Canada was ready to make its next big move: the *Rebuilding Abundance: Restoring Canada’s Fisheries for Long-Term Prosperity* symposium. This symposium, held at the end of last October, brought together academics, fisheries officials, fishers and Indigenous Peoples. The event offered a prime platform for the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, to announce his plans on fisheries transparency. According to Laughren, no one knew exactly what he would say: “They kept us waiting until the morning of.”

In a major win for fisheries transparency, Minister LeBlanc announced that his department had that day released key information on the status of 159 commercial fish stocks. This information was made available to the public for the first time as the online Sustainability Survey for Fisheries, a database that will be updated annually. Minister LeBlanc also committed \$24 million extra each year to support science-based fisheries management efforts. The release of the data and increase in funding addressed a longstanding problem that had been identified by many organizations and academics over the years.

“I think it’s safe to say that if it hadn’t been for Oceana Canada really pushing this, it wouldn’t have happened,” said Kim Elmslie, Oceana Canada’s campaign director. Laughren agreed, calling the Minister’s announcement the culmination of a “terrific good news story. This government was ready to act on increasing science and transparency, and we helped show them how it could be of enormous benefit to the health of Canada’s fisheries, and the health of our oceans.”

But Oceana Canada isn’t done with this issue yet. Over the next year, the team will provide advice on adding new information to the Sustainability Survey for Fisheries, as well as create its own online “dashboard” to track the health of the country’s fish. Oceana Canada also plans to push the government to enact rebuilding plans for all overfished stocks and to commit to releasing annual reports on the health of every fishery.

ARE YOU THERE, COD?

Back on Newfoundland’s Fogo Island, Oceana Canada’s transparency victory could spell positive



changes for fishers like Aubrey Payne. With northern cod showing early signs of recovery, open data and science-based management are more important than ever. “This is exactly the time we need to make sure we have a rebuilding plan in place,” Laughren said, “so that we don’t squander this generational opportunity to rebuild cod.”

Payne is also preparing for a once-in-a-lifetime shot to get things right. He’s part of a growing initiative led by local organizations to perfect “cod

pots” and introduce them across the province. These eco-friendly, low-bycatch fish traps are a big improvement on the gillnets and bottom trawls used by industrial vessels. “We’re moving back to a cod fishery again,” said Payne, “and in this way we’re trying to be leaders here in Newfoundland. I guess we’re the new generation now. We’re going to be fishing a different way so that we can sustain our way of life and our children.”

CANADA’S FISHERIES

Many Canadian fisheries including cod, mackerel and redfish are in bad shape, leaving the country’s fishers dangerously dependent on a handful of shellfish species. But if managed right, the abundance of Canada’s oceans can be rebuilt within our lifetime.

Data sourced from Here’s the Catch, 2016

1992

The cod industry in Canada collapsed, leading to a moratorium on fishing of the species.

18

Canadian stocks currently in critical condition

77%

of Canada’s seafood value comes from shellfish in the Atlantic

70+ species

are caught as bycatch in the Atlantic halibut fishery.

46,000

Canadians employed directly by wild fisheries

\$6 billion

Export value of Canada’s fisheries in 2015

1,600%

Increase of adult haddock biomass on eastern Georges Bank due to conservation efforts

< 1/4

of Canada’s fish stocks are known to be healthy.

55%

Decline in the abundance of Canada’s fish stocks since 1970

Blue rockfish in Canada ©schmezz



Trawling boat out at sea ©Philip Lange

Illegal Fishing by Another Name Smells too Sweet

I’m writing this on a plane home from the Netherlands, where I attended a conference sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research and the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement. Why, you may ask, did these two very different organizations co-sponsor a conference? It was to discuss and closely examine the relationship between illegal fishing and the ecosystems and food security of developing countries. The conference brought together experts from disciplines that rarely collaborate, namely fisheries scientists and criminologists. It caused me to consider how and why we — in the conservation community — need to increase our focus on illegal fishing as a stand-alone issue.

IUU VS. ILLEGAL FISHING

In the ocean conservation world, you will often hear about “IUU fishing,” which stands for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. It was created to shed light on the scale of “off-the-books” fisheries. The conference made clear, however, that the term IUU has long outlived its usefulness. IUU has too often been used as a synonym for “illegal,” and has consequently conflated criminal activities with fisheries management issues including what may be the simple non-reporting of catches from perfectly legal fisheries. Illegal fishing is a crime and as such must be dealt with by law enforcement institutions rather than lumped together with fishery management problems. It’s not an issue of fishery management any more than car theft is an issue for car mechanics. We now have other ways, such as new data on the Sea Around Us website, to emphasize the (very large) scale of other forms of off-the-books fishing.

The crime of illegal fishing directly affects food security in developing countries. For example, when Russian industrial vessels illegally target sardines off Senegal in Northwest Africa, they catch a fish that is also sought after by the local, canoe-based artisanal fishery. This fishery in turn supplies local processors who dry the sardines and send them inland where they represent a unique source of animal protein and micronutrients.

Illegal fishing not only threatens food security, it also threatens the very biodiversity upon which functioning marine ecosystems depend. A Chinese fleet operating off Mauritania, another Northwest African country with extremely productive waters, illegally catches seabirds (yes, seabirds!) such as the Northern gannet, in addition to targeting the fish for which they have presumably paid an “access fee.” We know this because in 2013 Mauritanian inspectors found a Chinese fishing vessel with boxes labeled “corvina,” which are also known as croakers or weakfish. The boxes actually contained frozen gannets ready to thaw and cook.

FEWER FISH, MORE CRIME

The decline of fish stocks worldwide has spurred some unscrupulous fleet owners to reduce the cost of fishing through illegal means. These criminal workarounds include using flags of convenience for their vessels — registering the ship to another country or “flag,” which may enable a ship to bypass oversight and regulations — or illegally accessing fish by not paying for fishing rights in a coastal nation’s Exclusive Economic Zone. The owners and officers of vessels involved in illegal fishing are too often also

involved in other illegal activities such as drug running, wildlife and human trafficking or human rights violations against their semi-enslaved crew. So, as many of the criminologists at the conference pointed out: Suppressing illegal fishing helps reduce associated criminal activities as well.

As a result, the many national and international NGOs that increasingly deal with illegal fishing must begin to focus on the role that states and intergovernmental organizations such as Interpol, the International Maritime Organization and the International Labor Organization play in combating illegal fishing. The efforts of NGOs may not be enough to crack a criminal enterprise, but a determined state prosecutor — especially one who gets information from NGOs — can be. Global Fishing Watch and other data-based projects from the nonprofit sector are an excellent start to ensuring that the information needed to find and track illegal fishing is made available to the right individuals, authorities and institutions.

This last point seems crucial to me. It’s time to move beyond discussing how awful “IUU fishing” is and to start assisting the parts of government — namely law enforcement authorities and the judiciary — that can help to address the “illegal” or criminal enterprise present in this acronym. Doing so will help us all to save the oceans and feed the world.



Daniel Pauly is the principal investigator of the Sea Around Us Project at the University of British Columbia’s Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries and a member of the Board of Oceana.



Purple Parrotfish, Indian Ocean - Kenya
©Kim Briers



Angelfish, Indian Ocean - Kenya
©Kim Briers



Snapper fish, Indian Ocean - Kenya
©Rich Carey

KENYAN REEF FISH

The calming blue surface of the Western Indian Ocean hides a secret — a vast, vibrant coral reef spanning hundreds of miles up and down the African coast. The region’s reef is one of the world’s largest fringing reefs, or reefs near a shoreline. Upwards of 15 million people rely on this reef for food and for their livelihoods. But pressure from an increasing population meant that by the late 1990s, local fishers’ nets were coming up empty. With simple management efforts, however, the daily catch in several study sites nearly doubled in just a few years.

Between 1996 and 2005, researchers with the Wildlife Conservation Society tracked several artisanal fishing sites in southern Kenya. Fishers there target a variety of species, from parrotfish and snapper to octopus. Though their gear is low-tech — basket traps, hand-held nets and spearguns

— intense fishing pressure meant that most large predatory species had disappeared, and other fish were vanishing fast.

In 1996, the average daily catch in the study sites was 4.9 kilograms. By 2000, this number had slipped to 2.5 kilograms per day. But starting in 1997 and continuing until 2005, many of the study sites phased out or restricted a harmful and technically illegal form of fishing gear called a “beach seine.” These fine-mesh nets — pulled through shallow water by teams of up to 30 men — can decimate small and reproductively immature fish.

The new regulations were a boon for overfished species. Between 2005 and 2012, the average fisher’s daily catch had climbed to 4 kilograms. On the north coast of Kenya, where there had been no efforts to restrict beach seines, catches had

barely budged — remaining at a paltry 2.3 kilograms per day.

The new management techniques happened to coincide with rising ocean temperatures caused by the 1997-1998 El Niño in the Indian Ocean, which destroyed a significant amount of coral. Surprisingly, this extreme change in the environment did not harm the fishermen’s catch or income. The possible reason, according to the researchers? The sound management practices embraced by the community and the fishers themselves. Healthier, more diverse ecosystems likely strengthen fish communities’ resilience to climate change.

McClanahan TR and Abunge CA, “Catch Rates and Income Are Associated with Fisheries Management Restrictions and Not an Environmental Disturbance, in a Heavily Exploited Tropical Fishery,” Marine Ecology Progress Series 513 (2014): 201–10.



The Pearl Necklace Book

MIKIMOTO EVENT

On Oct. 13, 2016, renowned jeweler and longstanding Oceana supporter Mikimoto hosted an event celebrating a special installation called the *Mikimoto Möbius Ribbon*. The stunning display of archival photographs and campaign materials flowed through a 775-square-foot space in ribbon-like fashion at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa, California.

VIPs marked the unveiling with a cocktail party and viewing of one-of-a-kind pieces and historical treasures, including the necklace baseball great Joe DiMaggio gifted to his glamorous wife Marilyn Monroe. This coincided with the release of Assouline’s coffee table book *The Pearl Necklace*, a compendium of the history, allure and magnetism of the pearl.

Guests included Oceana Board Vice-Chair Valarie Van Cleave, Oceana Ambassador and actor Oscar Nunez, Mikimoto COO Meyer Hoffman and Mikimoto VP of Retail Mitra Parsa. Other notables included Jennifer Segerstrom, Karen Cahill, Debra Gunn Downing and Dr. Danni Sun.

For the last nine years, Mikimoto has been an auction sponsor at the SeaChange Summer Party, Oceana’s largest fundraiser in Laguna Beach, helping to raise over \$225,000.

Mikimoto is recognized as the world leader and foremost producer of the finest quality cultured pearl jewelry. Company founder Kokichi Mikimoto was the first person to develop a technique for the cultivation of pearls in 1893, which is still in use today.



Ryan Blackstock, Heidi Hong, Casey Lum, Robert Kollar



Jennifer Segerstrom, Mitra Parsa, Valarie Van Cleave



Karen Cahill and Oscar Nunez



Sabrina Azadi and Meyer Hoffman



Kathleen Conner and Don Courtney



Stephanie Howard and Kathleen Cenci



Mikimoto Möbius Ribbon

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: MONIQUE BÄR, JENA KING AND JEAN WEISS

Three distinguished philanthropists and ocean advocates are now part of the Oceana family. Monique Bär, Jena King and Jean Weiss, the newest members of the Oceana board of directors, join 17 other board members who hail from the business world, academia, philanthropy backgrounds and the arts. The Oceana board plays a key role in achieving our many policy victories and expanding the organization into other regions all over the world.

“We are honored to welcome Jean, Jena and Monique to our board of directors at a time when protecting, preserving and restoring the world’s oceans matters more than ever,” said Oceana CEO Andy Sharpless. “We’re looking forward to tapping into their diverse backgrounds and expertise to further Oceana’s mission to save the oceans and feed the world.”



MONIQUE BÄR

Monique Bär is the founder and president of the Arcas Foundation, a Swiss organization devoted to promoting equal work opportunities for marginalized people. In addition to Oceana’s board, Monique serves on the board of several foundations that support sustainability, social property and education, including Educa Swiss, Forma Futura Invest AG and SwissFoundations. With degrees in engineering as well as supervising and coaching, Monique has counseled a variety of business and nonprofit organizations since the mid-’90s.

“Oceana campaigns for concrete policies that will protect the oceans and help restore abundance. This model has led to more than 100 significant policy victories and the protection of more than one million square miles of ocean — an impressive track record. I am proud to be joining the board of such a proven, successful organization.”

Photo courtesy of Monique Bär



JENA KING

Philanthropist Jena King founded the Jena and Michael King Foundation with her late husband in 1999. Since then, the foundation has supported the efforts of 78 environmental and humanitarian nonprofits, and Jena was honored with Global Green’s Entertainment Industry Environmental Leadership Award for her commitment to the environment. In addition to overseeing a donor-advised fund through the Jewish Community Foundation, she is a founding member of C.O.A.C.H for Kids, which provides medical assistance to underserved children, and a board member of the National Resources Defense Council.

“We are all tied to the sea — it is home to much of our planet’s life and inextricably linked with our own history. If we want a healthy planet, we need to restore the oceans. I am excited to work with Oceana so that our children and grandchildren can experience the wonder of healthy, biodiverse oceans.”

Photo ©Vince Bucchi/Getty Images



JEAN WEISS

Jean Weiss spent her business career in training and development and worked in Los Angeles for the American Funds, a member of the Capital Group Companies. For more than 25 years, she and her husband Tim have spearheaded many fundraising efforts for the arts, education, healthcare and the fight against domestic violence. Although her family’s livelihood came from her father working offshore for more than 30 years, Jean is passionate about protecting the oceans from offshore drilling, overfishing and the effects of global warming. The BP Deepwater Horizon rig explosion, which practically destroyed the marine life, fishing industries and way of life in her hometown, inspired her work with Oceana.

“Oceana has been a leader in the fight against dangerous offshore oil drilling activities, both in the United States and around the world. Protecting the U.S. Arctic and Atlantic from offshore oil drilling and exploration are major accomplishments. I look forward to joining Oceana’s efforts as a member of the board of directors.”

Photo courtesy of Jean Weiss

SAM TALBOT’S THAI COCONUT MUSSELS

(from *The Perfect Protein*) | Serves 4-6 as an appetizer



Chef Sam Talbot grew up fishing for blue crab and flounder along the North Carolina coast, and he strives to serve seafood that’s just as fresh, local and sustainable. A fan favorite on two different seasons of Top Chef, the mastermind behind Brooklyn’s new Pretty Southern restaurant and the author of *100% Real: 100 Insanely Good Recipes for Clean Food Made Fresh*, Talbot is always on the lookout for ingredients that honor people and the planet. “I’m constantly looking for the most eco-responsible source,” he said. “And usually when you find those people, their products, their fish, their vegetables, their honey, it’s far superior to everything that’s out there.” Sweet, spicy and layered with flavor, this dish can be made with fresh littleneck clams if mussels aren’t available. Serve with bowls of warm white sticky rice.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp. peeled and finely chopped fresh ginger
- 4 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped lemongrass
- 2 tbsp. ground unsweetened coconut
- 1 ½ lbs. mussels, debearded, scrubbed well and washed clean
- 1/3 cup dry white wine
- 1 tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 tsp. fish sauce
- 1 tsp. sambal (chile-garlic paste)
- ¾ cup coconut milk
- ½ cup torn cilantro leaves, stems discarded
- ½ cup torn mint leaves, stems discarded
- Juice and zest of 2 limes
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Warm the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the ginger, garlic, shallot and lemongrass and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, or until fragrant. Add the coconut and stir frequently for 2 minutes, or until the shallot is translucent and the garlic and ginger have softened. Add the mussels and wine to the pan and increase the heat to medium-high. Cook for 1 minute. Add the soy sauce, fish sauce, and chile-garlic paste. Simmer for 1 minute. Stir in the coconut milk.

Cover the pan and steam the mussels for 2 to 4 minutes, or until they open. Discard any that don’t open, and spoon the remaining mussels into a large warmed serving bowl. Stir the cilantro, mint, lime juice and lime zest into the broth. Season with salt and pepper as needed. Serve immediately.

Tip: Look for lemongrass, ground coconut, fish sauce, and sambal in your local Asian market.



Sunset at Middle Caye, home to the Wildlife Conservation Society's research station. Glovers Reef Atoll, Belize.
©Oceana/Alexander Ellis

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Tunicate colony (*Clavelina lepadiformis*) seen in
Porto Meloxo, Ría de Arousa, Galicia, Spain

© Oceana/Carlos Suárez

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Oceana's accomplishments wouldn't be possible without the support of its members.

You can help Oceana fight to restore our oceans with your financial contribution. Call us today at 1.877.7.OCEANA, go to our website www.oceana.org/give and click on "give today" or use the envelope provided in this newsletter. You can also invest in the future of our oceans by remembering Oceana in your will. Please contact us to find out how. All contributions to Oceana are tax deductible. Oceana is a 501(c)(3) organization as designated by the Internal Revenue Service.