

February 26, 2018

**Key Messages on U.S. Seafood Sustainability  
NOAA Fisheries  
Seafood Expo N. America, March 11-13, 2018**

***Background & Purpose***

The seafood expo is one of the agency's longest occurring, signature corporate events and engagement venues for our various programs comprising the agency's portfolio of activities related to sustainable seafood and U.S. seafood supply. As such, we have a large contingency of Leadership and staff in attendance representing the agency, its policies, services and activities of importance to attending seafood industries. To that end, it is important for everyone to be on message.

This document is to serve as a resource for consistent messaging and a quick reference for talking points, rollout plans and other communications documents. These have been crafted in coordination with the Offices of SF, IASI, AQ, OLE, and Comms.

**NOAA Fisheries' Top-Level Messaging on U.S. Seafood Sustainability:**

- **Global Leader:** The United States is recognized as a global leader in sustainable seafood - both wild-caught and farmed.
- **U.S. fishermen and fish farmers operate under some of the most robust and transparent environmental standards in the world:** NOAA Fisheries works to advance and export sustainable management practices internationally, establish and maintain a level the playing field for our fishermen and fish farmers, and maintain confidence in U.S. seafood products and access to the global marketplace.
- **Farmed fish are critical for a sustainable seafood portfolio:** Building on our success in wild-capture fisheries, developing a domestic aquaculture industry is critical for the economic and environmental resiliency of our coastal communities and supply of sustainable seafood.
- **Sustainable seafood relies on strong science, responsive management and enforced compliance:** NOAA's office of Law Enforcement enforces best stewardship practices over our ocean fisheries, working with domestic and international partners to ensure a level playing field for those playing by the rules, combating IUU fishing and expanding compliance with ocean stewardship laws.
- **FishWatch is the go-to source for up-to-date information on the science, status and management of U.S. seafood:** Please visit [www.FishWatch.gov](http://www.FishWatch.gov) .

***Messaging on U.S. wild-capture fisheries***

- U.S marine wild-capture fisheries abide by some of the most rigorous environmental standards in the world—giving U.S. the earned reputation as a global leader in sustainability.
- Managing wild fish populations sustainably and keeping fishermen on the job requires a dynamic process based on strong science, responsive management and enforced compliance.
- U.S. fisheries are managed under 10 national standards of sustainability--including preventing overfishing, protecting other species and habitat, and minimizing bycatch on non-target species.

- U.S. fisheries make a significant contribution to the U.S. economy and the broader seafood supply chain of services and products. In 2016, U.S. commercial fishermen landed 9.6 billion pounds of seafood valued at \$5.3 billion.

***Messaging on Aquaculture:***

- Our global population is rising, but our global abundance of wild fish is not. Over the last 30 years, global wild-capture fisheries have plateaued. Aquaculture has become the fastest growing form of food production worldwide.
- NOAA Fisheries and its partners have made good progress in ending overfishing in the United States through sound, science-based management practices, but wild fish harvests cannot meet growing seafood demand. The future of sustainable seafood must include both farm-raised and wild-capture seafood.
- Seafood farming, if done responsibly as it is in the US, is increasingly recognized as one of the most environmentally sustainable ways to produce food and protein. Marine aquaculture is a resource-efficient way of increasing and diversifying U.S. seafood production. It can expand and stabilize the U.S. seafood supply in the face of environmental change and economic uncertainty.
- Marine aquaculture is part of NOAA's strategy for economic and environmental resiliency in coastal communities. Marine aquaculture operations contribute to the nation's seafood supply, supplements commercial fisheries, restores habitat and at-risk species and provides a year-round source of high-quality jobs and economic opportunities in coastal communities.
- The U.S. aquaculture industry is a small producer on a global scale, but we play a major role developing aquaculture advancements, supplying a variety of advanced technology, feed, equipment, and investment to other producers around the world.
- Our 2016 Fisheries of the U.S. report released by NOAA Fisheries found that 627 million pounds of seafood worth \$1.4 billion was produced by U.S. aquaculture farmers, who cultivated popular species like oysters, clams, and salmon.

***Messaging on International & Seafood Trade:***

- A recognized global leader in sustainable seafood, one of the major fisheries exports from the U.S. is its robust fishery management practices.
- Home to some of the largest and best managed marine fisheries in the world, the U.S. has both the opportunity and responsibility to advance sustainable conservation and management practices on the high seas and, as appropriate, to support other nations in achieving similar outcomes in their economic zones.
- Both a major seafood importer and exporter, the U.S. works to align domestic seafood capacity with global demand and ensure maximum value for domestic products, while also ensuring access for U.S. consumers to wholesome, affordable seafood.
- Our nation's appetite for imported seafood makes it incumbent on the U.S. to work with international partners to ensure sustainable harvest practices, combat illegal fishing and strengthen transparency and enforcement of fisheries regulations, and promote the stewardship of our global ocean resources and habitats.
- While the U.S. works to leverage its demand to achieve conservation benefits, it also works to ensure the competitiveness of U.S. seafood products and preserve access to high seas fisheries by U.S. fishermen who abide by some of the world's most accountable and robust stewardship practices.

- In working to level the playing field for the U.S. fishing industry and those who play by the rules, the U.S. has taken a leadership role in combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and seafood fraud—including through the establishment of the Seafood Import Monitoring Program to identify illegal and/or misrepresented product from entering the U.S. market.

***Messaging on Enforcement:***

- Sustainable seafood relies on strong science, responsive management and enforced compliance. NOAA’s Office of Law Enforcement directly supports NOAA’s stewardship mission through promoting compliance and enforcement with ocean stewardship and protection laws.
- In partnership with local, state, and fellow agencies, the work of NOAA’s Office of Law Enforcement is critical to preserving fishing communities, jobs, and the reputation of the U.S. fishing and seafood industries.
- NOAA’s Office of Law Enforcement works with the fishing industry in the U.S. and abroad to support sustainable fishing practices and build compliance capacity with our partner nations to combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud; and protect threatened and endangered species, critical habitats, and marine sanctuaries.
- NOAA’s Office of Law Enforcement works to ensure a level playing field for those playing by the rules including by providing real-time compliance assistance to the fishing industry.
- NOAA’s Office of Law Enforcement has jurisdiction over 4.4 million square miles. Within the U.S. waters, NOAA enforces more than 40 federal statutes.
- OLE partners with 28 state and territory partners to ensure maximum protection and enforcement of marine resources laws.

***Messaging on FishWatch:***

- FishWatch is a reliable source of up-to-date information about the most common types of wild-capture and farmed fish eaten in the United States.
- FishWatch helps consumers learn about the dynamic, science-based process necessary for wild-capture fisheries to be sustainable.
- FishWatch reassures consumers about the U.S. reputation as a leader in sustainable seafood and the importance of supporting our fishermen and fish farmers.
- FishWatch also helps seafood consumers understand the importance of developing a domestic aquaculture industry in the United States to ensure we have a sustainable supply of seafood.
- Ever evolving, FishWatch will continue to add easy-to-read content reflective of domestically produced seafood—fished or farmed—including the status of high-seas fisheries in which the U.S. is engaged.