



For Immediate Release

Media Contacts:

Melissa Holland, Shedd Aquarium
312-692-3330 or mholland@sheddaquarium.org

Fish-Friendly Wallet Card, Recipes and Substitution Chart from Shedd Aquarium Help Consumers Make Best Seafood Choices

Consumer Demand Has Driven Some Fish Populations to Lowest Levels Ever

(Chicago) – “Fish is good for you” is one of the few things nutritionists around the world can agree on. As more people regularly incorporate fish into their diets Shedd Aquarium wants consumers to understand that there are environmental costs associated with some fishing and fish farming methods. With the “right” information, people can feel good knowing that by choosing their seafood more thoughtfully – whether in a restaurant or at a grocery store – they are helping the oceans and helping ensure that there is seafood for the future.

"Chicagoans can become part of the solution by using the power of their wallets," said Michelle Jost, who heads the sustainable seafood program in Shedd Aquarium's conservation department. "By making environmentally responsible buying decisions, we can support species that are abundant and from well-managed fisheries while giving those that aren't a chance to recover."

Alaska salmon, U.S.-farmed tilapia and catfish are some of the seafood options Chicagoans will see hovering in the green - or OK to eat - portion of the Seafood Wallet Card. In addition, Shedd Aquarium has put together a substitution chart along with several “Right Bite” recipes for consumers.

“When preparing seafood, a few simple substitutions such as troll-caught mahi mahi for swordfish encourages abundance rather than depletion in the seas,” said Brad Curlee, executive Sous Chef at Shedd Aquarium. "Fish in the red or "avoid" section of the wallet card can easily, and cost effectively, be substituted with fish in the green in most seafood recipes without compromising taste and flavor. Seafood substitutions provide a win-win situation for a diner, restaurant owner, chef and fish."

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Seafood diners carrying the "Right Bite" Seafood Wallet Card can make quick decisions about which seafoods to choose when in a restaurant or seafood market. Consumer demand for seafood in the card's green category provides incentive for fishers, fishery managers and fish farmers to move toward best practices and sustainability.

The "Right Bite" Seafood Wallet Card ranks 39 species or groups of fish and shellfish - all available in Chicago - along a color bar. If the fish is ranked green - OK to eat - then it is relatively abundant and is caught or farmed in a way that causes relatively little harm to habitat and other marine life. Other examples of green ranked species are Alaska halibut and farmed clams and mussels.

Fish in the yellow category - such as sea scallops or lobster - means there are some problems, and consumers should use their conscience to decide whether or how frequently to eat it. A fish in the red indicates major problems, such as vulnerable biological characteristics, depletion, or that the fishing or farming method degrades fragile habitat or other marine life.

Depleted species including sharks and Chilean sea bass are ranked red. Consumers are encouraged to choose seafoods higher on the scale, in the green with only occasionally dipping into the yellow zone.

Even as many seafood species are being driven to their lowest levels ever, more than 1 billion people worldwide continue to rely on seafood as their primary source of protein. But there is good news. Examples are surfacing of how species can rebound when the fisheries they support are managed well.

A strong recovery plan that reduced catch limits in the once highly depleted North Atlantic swordfish resulted in an upturn of juveniles in the population. Swordfish have moved from a former ranking in the red/yellow zone on the previous cards to the yellow category. Central to this success has been support from prominent chefs and restaurateurs in Chicago and other major cities.

"Shedd is working with chefs, restaurants, caterers and seafood purveyors in joining with consumers to give troubled species a chance to recover," said Jost. "Together, we can make a tremendous difference in protecting the world's oceans and waters, particularly in a high profile location like Chicago."

Created by Shedd Aquarium, National Audubon Society's Living Oceans program and Monterey Bay Aquarium, the "Right Bite" Seafood Wallet Card can be obtained free of charge at Shedd Aquarium. A printable version of the card, along with the substitution chart and recipes can also be found on Shedd's Web site, www.sheddaquarium.org.