



# What's Cooking

*A quarterly publication of the South Carolina Aquarium's Sustainable Seafood Initiative*

Fall 2007

## General News

### Welcome!

Welcome to the newest SSI partner: The Fat Hen

### New Opportunity for Partners

All SSI restaurant partners are now eligible to apply for Platinum or Gold Partnership. To become a Platinum or Gold Partner, the seafood on your menu will be assessed for sustainability. Platinum and Gold Partners will be recognized as such on all promotional materials and will be eligible for special promotions and enhanced media opportunities. Contact Megan Westmeyer at (843)579-8502 for more information.

## Upcoming Events

- 🐟 Tuesday, December 4 - Sustainable Seafood Dinner at The Boathouse at Breach Inlet - Chef Arena will prepare a four course meal for the evening featuring a selection of local seasonal seafood including clams, mussels, shrimp, oysters, triggerfish, striped bass, red snapper, and red porgy.
- 🐟 February, 2008 – Winter Sustainable Seafood Dinner at Middleton Place

## Event Opportunities

- 🐟 Are you interested in hosting a sustainable seafood dinner? Are you interested in participating in a sustainable seafood dinner at another restaurant? If so, please contact Megan Westmeyer at 579-8502 or [mwestmeyer@scaquarium.org](mailto:mwestmeyer@scaquarium.org).



**Red porgy, also known as pinky or pink snapper, was once severely overfished. Harvest was limited in 2002 and the population is now rebuilding very successfully. One of the reasons red porgy became so overfished is its reproductive strategy: hermaphroditism. Like many groupers and seabasses, all young red porgies are female. At a certain age they become male! Because fisheries tend to harvest the largest fish first, the sex ratios in the population became skewed (many more females than males) and reproduction declined.**

**Red porgy is a part of Charleston's history. A shallow water reef fish, it was easy to harvest before the advent of mechanized and industrialized fisheries and therefore, was commonly sold in the streets of Charleston by street vendors calling out "Porgy, porgy!". Some say that this fish is the origin of the name "Porgy" of Porgy and Bess!**

### Inside This Issue

Red Porgy, Fall Signature Seafood.....	2
FishWatch .....	2
Local Shrimp Gets More Sustainable.....	2
Partner Activities.....	2
Gulf Reef Fish Update.....	3
Whale Protection Measures.....	3
Summer Flounder Update .....	4
Current SSI Partners.....	4

*Our goal is to promote the conservation of fishery resources and the use of sustainable, especially local and domestic, seafood in restaurants.*

## Signature Seafood, Fall 2007: Red Porgy



Red porgy, a shallow water reef fish similar to a snapper, is now considered sustainable due to successful management by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. After red porgy was found to be overfished in 2002 the Council drastically reduced the commercial and recreational harvest in the South Atlantic. Since then, the red porgy stock has begun to rebuild to a sustainable level. In fact, the population is rebuilding more quickly than anticipated and fishermen have been allowed to moderately increase harvest.

Red porgy is caught by local snapper and grouper fishermen and should be available through your local seafood purveyor or snapper or grouper fisherman. Because harvest is still strictly limited (commercial fishermen may only harvest 120 red porgy per trip and the fish must be at least 14 inches in length) availability may be sporadic. Try this fish soon, before the season closes from January through April.

### In the News

#### FishWatch: A New Educational Resource

NOAA Fisheries, the federal agency responsible for the sustainability of our nation's fisheries, has launched a new consumer education website called FishWatch ([www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch)).

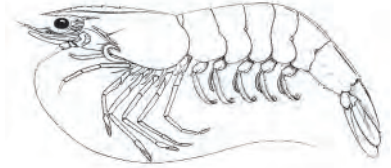
FishWatch is designed to help consumers identify the status of fishery stocks and understand the science and management regulations required to make seafood sustainable. FishWatch also contains technical information for those interested in delving deeper.

The website currently contains information on 36 popular seafood items from around the country. FishWatch also provides information on U.S. fisheries management, fishing gear types, seafood and health, and trade in fisheries products. This website is a great resource and all SSI partners are encouraged to take a look.

## Local Shrimp Gets More Sustainable

The Sustainable Seafood Initiative has always touted the sustainability of local shrimp and bragged far and wide about the conservation actions taken by our local shrimpers. The shrimp fishery is also sustainably managed by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, making shrimp a great choice for chefs and consumers in the Lowcountry.

Just when we thought our local shrimp fishery couldn't get any more sustainable, one local shrimper proved us wrong. Wayne Magwood, of Shem Creek, has converted his boat, Winds of Fortune, to biodiesel.



Biodiesel, sourced from Southeast BioDiesel of North Charleston, is a renewable fuel source made from natural sources of oil such as chicken grease, recycled vegetable oil, or virgin soybean oil, all substances which are produced in the United States. Diesel engines were originally designed to run on vegetable oil therefore biodiesel can be substituted for petro-diesel fuel without major modifications to the engine.

Wayne Magwood took the plunge, started buying biodiesel and has been pleased with the results. The fuel actually causes the engine to run quieter and produces less smoke and smell than when using petro-diesel fuel; it's also less expensive than petro-diesel fuel at today's high prices.

Other shrimpers throughout the Lowcountry have followed suit, and Wild American Shrimp, Inc. is considering the promotion of biodiesel as one of their new conservation initiatives.

### Partner Activities

It's been a busy summer and fall year for the Sustainable Seafood Initiative and our dedicated partners.



On July 25, longtime SSI partner Chef Fred Neville hosted his first sustainable seafood and wine dinner at his new John's Island restaurant, The Fat Hen. Chef Craig Deihl of

*continued on page 3*

Cypress and Chef Ken Vedrinski of Sienna joined Chef Neuville for the evening and each prepared a sumptuous sustainable seafood course which was paired with



sustainably-produced wines from Green Point and Cape Mentelle, donated by Moët-Hennessey. Chef Deihl started the evening off with prosciutto-wrapped cobia, Chef Vedrinski followed with vermentino-poached skatewing paired and Chef Neuville wrapped up with local shrimp and crab hoppin' john.

On August 29, the Sustainable Seafood Initiative joined Carolina's for the first ever sustainable seafood and beer dinner – which turned out to be a wild success! The local beers crafted by Palmetto Brewery were the perfect complement to the local shrimp, clams, wahoo and grouper that Chef Jeremiah Bacon prepared for this local and sustainable feast. Dinner guests not only learned about the sustainable seafood set before them, they also learned about the local produce Bacon combined with the seafood, as well as the development of Palmetto's traditional brews and were the first to try Palmetto's seasonal "pilot brew" for the fall.



The Restaurant at Middleton Place, the SSI 2006 Partner of the Year, hosted their third (yes that says third!) sustainable seafood dinner on September 29. Food and Beverage Director Doug Beard, Executive Chef Brandon Buck and Executive Sous Chef Micah Garrison themed the evening around local blue crab, including it in each course, and highlighted wreckfish in the entrée. The dinner sold out weeks in advance and had a waiting list; guests lucky enough to make an early reservation were thrilled with the evening of fine food and wine!

This summer, Fish became the first restaurant partner to list the origin of each seafood entrée on the menu. Today's educated customers want to know more about the origin of their food, especially seafood, and the information provided on Fish's menu helps those



customers make educated decisions. "Do I want tuna from Costa Rica, or mahi mahi from Florida? Flounder from the Carolinas or scallops from Maine?" Though it creates more work for Chef Nico Romo, due to the need to constantly question his seafood purveyors about the origin of the product, he feels the seafood identification is worth the extra effort.

## Fishery Management Updates

### Satellite Tracking Systems Required of Gulf Reef Fish Vessels

Reef fish, such as snappers and groupers, in the Gulf of Mexico have been heavily fished for generations. Many species have experienced overfishing and are still depleted, while some such as red grouper, have recovered due to successful fishery management.

Conservation measures in the Gulf of Mexico include a number of area specific regulations that restrict or prohibit fishing to protect habitat or spawning aggregations of reef fish, or to reduce fishing pressure in areas that are heavily fished.

Enforcement of such conservation regulations is an integral part of a sustainable fishery. As such, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council now requires vessels with a commercial Gulf reef fish permit to install a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), a satellite tracking system.

The VMS unit sends an hourly position report to NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement, to ensure that vessels are not fishing in a closed area. VMS, though another costly burden on a fishery stretched thin by low fish prices and high fuel prices, allows much more thorough enforcement of conservation regulations and will result in a more sustainable fishery.

### Whale Protection Requires Modifications to Pot/trap Gear and Gillnets

Under the requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the National Marine Fisheries Service established the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team in 1996 to investigate and develop methods of reducing the interaction of large, often endangered whales, with commercial fishing gear.

Work thus far has included restrictions on where and how fishing gear can be set, research on whales, outreach to and education of fishermen, enforcement, and whale disentanglement programs.

*continued on page 4*

Fisheries regulated under the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan include lobster pot/trap fisheries and gillnet fisheries and will soon include other pot/trap fisheries such as black sea bass, scup, conch/whelk, shrimp, red crab, hagfish and Jonah crab.

The most recent regulations from this Plan (to be implemented over the next 12 months) are designed to reduce the likelihood of whales (typically right, humpback and fin) becoming entangled in gillnets, lines anchoring gillnets to the bottom, ropes



connecting pots to each other (groundlines or mainlines) and to surface buoys (vertical lines).

These new regulations include measures to reduce the vertical profile of groundlines (using sinking or neutrally buoyant groundline), modifications to vertical lines such as a weak link to allow whales to break free of the line when entangled, and weak panels in gillnets. These regulations do include some exemptions for nearshore waters of Maine and Long Island Sound where whales are infrequent.

Though these regulations are necessary to protect threatened and endangered species of whales (the Atlantic right whale population has only 300

individuals), the cost (likely to be thousands of dollars per vessel) of these gear modification will be hard for fishermen to absorb; yet another reason to support American fishermen as they strive for sustainable fisheries.

### Summer Flounder Update

Summer flounder, a popular and once severely overfished seafood item, has been rebuilding to a sustainable level bit by bit for the last decade. Unfortunately, the recovery has not been progressing as quickly as expected and is not on track for full rebuilding by 2013. Last year's reauthorization of the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Management Act included a provision that allowed the previous deadline, 2010, to be extended to 2013 to lessen the yearly harvest cuts that were required to get the population recovery back on track. Unfortunately, the 2008 quota is likely to involve another substantial and unexpected cut in harvest. Many fishermen believe the rebuilding target, 197 million pounds of spawning fish per year, is unattainable due to a variety of factors affecting coastal habitat and water quality. While scientists, managers, and fishermen resolve this fishery management quandary, we encourage chefs to continue to use Atlantic summer flounder.

## SSI Partners

### Charleston Restaurants

39 Rue De Jean  
A.W. Shuck's  
Blossom  
The Boathouse Restaurants  
Bocci's  
Carolina's  
Carolina Catering  
Charleston Crab House  
Circa 1886  
Coast  
Cru Café & Catering  
Cypress Lowcountry Grille  
Daniel Island Club  
Embassy Suites Hotel,  
Airport-Convention Center  
EVO Pizzeria  
The Fat Hen\*

FIG  
FISH  
Fleet Landing  
Hank's Seafood Restaurant  
High Cotton  
Hominy Grill  
Hyman's Seafood  
Il Cortile del Re  
Island Chef - A Complete  
Personal Chef Service  
Magnolias  
McCrary's  
Middleton Place Restaurant  
Old Firehouse Restaurant  
Old Village Post House  
Peninsula Grill  
Poogan's Porch  
Red Drum Gastropub

The River Course  
Sea Island Grill  
Slightly North of Broad  
Stephen Duvall Catering &  
Events  
Tides at the Beach Club  
Tommy Condon's  
Triangle Char and Bar  
Tristan  
Voysey's at Cassique  
Woodlands Resort and Inn

### Beaufort and Hilton Head Restaurants

Alligator Grille Seafood  
Restaurant and Sushi Bar  
CQ's Restaurant  
Panini's Café

### Grand Strand Restaurants

Umi Pacific Grille

### Retail and Community Partners

Aramark Special Events  
Catering at the College of  
of Charleston  
Charleston Cooks!  
Cindy's Seafood & Country  
Market  
Earth Fare  
Slow Food Charleston  
Swimming Rock Fish and  
Shrimp Company\*

\*New Partner

The Sustainable Seafood Initiative is supported in part by a grants to the South Carolina Aquarium from the South Carolina Seafood Alliance and the Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation.

*What's Cooking* is a quarterly publication from the Sustainable Seafood Initiative at the South Carolina Aquarium. Please contact Megan Westmeyer at (843) 579-8502 or [mwestmeyer@scaquarium.org](mailto:mwestmeyer@scaquarium.org) with any questions or to be removed from this distribution list.