

Monterey Bay Aquarium Convenes Culinary Task Force Committed to Ocean-Friendly Seafood

From Florida to Washington, Alabama to Ohio, task force members (listed below) represent informed individuals and businesses across the country who will actively engage their communities, colleagues and customers in meaningful conversation about sustainability.

"Task force members are thought leaders with the ability to change the way we think and act about food," said Sheila Bowman, manager of culinary and strategic initiatives for Seafood Watch. "With their insight and influence Seafood Watch can better engage the culinary community, and further inspire consumers and businesses to make informed choices in the seafood they consume and source."

The culinary industry plays a key role in shaping sustainable food preferences at local and global levels, pushing producers to shift to quality, environmentally responsible products and to spread awareness about sustainability to consumers. In their unique roles, chefs and restaurateurs shape both supply and public demand for sustainable seafood.

Twenty leading chefs and culinarians from across the country gathered in Carmel Valley, Calif. in December 2013 as the Blue Ribbon Task Force, candidly discussing the challenges as well as opportunities to elevate sustainable seafood in the marketplace and motivate consumers to ask the critical question, "Do you serve sustainable seafood?"

In the coming year, task force members will help shape the Seafood Watch program and work with the seafood industry, suppliers, restaurants and media to motivate responsible choices for the future of seafood. Blue Ribbon Task Force members have hosted sustainable seafood dinners and cooking demonstrations, made presentations at culinary schools, and promoted sustainable seafood in public and media appearances. Task force members also work with the fishing and fish farming industries, encouraging participation and open dialog with the Seafood Watch program.

"Environmental sustainability" and "sustainable seafood" topped the charts of the National Restaurant Association's ["What's Hot in 2014"](#) culinary forecast as numbers three and nine, respectively.

"These rankings are proof positive that both chefs and consumers are interested in the keeping oceans healthy and bountiful for the future," Bowman said.

The mission of the not-for-profit Monterey Bay Aquarium is to inspire conservation of the oceans. The aquarium celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2014, and the 15th anniversary of its Seafood Watch program.

New Blue Ribbon Task Force members:

- [Robyn Almodovar](#) - Chef/Owner, Palate Party Truck - Hollywood, FL
- [Rick Bayless](#) - Chef/Owner, Frontera, Topolobampo and XOCO - Chicago, IL
- [Richard Blais](#) - Chef/Owner, Juniper & Ivy - San Diego, CA, and The Spence, Atlanta, GA
- [Seth Caswell](#) - Executive Chef, Seattle, WA
- [William Dissen](#) - Executive Chef/Owner, The Market Place Restaurant - Asheville, NC
- [Christopher A. Hastings](#) - Chef/Owner/Author/Consultant, Hot and Hot Fish Club - Birmingham, AL
- [Kerry Heffernan](#) - Consulting Chef, Dylan Prime Restaurant - New York, NY
- [Chris Ivens-Brown](#) - VP of Culinary Development/Executive Chef, Euresst / Compass Group - Charlotte, NC
- [Sara Jenkins](#) - Chef/Owner, Porsena, and Porchetta - New York City, NY
- [Douglas Katz](#) - Chef/Owner, Fire Food and Drink; Chef/Partner, Provenance at the Cleveland Museum of Art; Owner, The Katz Club Diner - Cleveland, OH
- [Chris Kobayashi](#) - Chef/Owner, Artisan - Paso Robles, CA
- [Rick Moonen](#) - Chef/Owner, Rick Moonen's RM Seafood and Rx Boiler Room - Las Vegas, NV
- [Cindy Pawlcyn](#) - Culinary Partner, Cindy's Waterfront at the Monterey Bay Aquarium and Chef/Owner Mustards' - Napa Valley, CA
- [Hari Pulapaka, Ph.D., C.E.C.](#) - Executive Chef/Co-owner, Cress Restaurant and Associate Professor of Mathematics, Stetson University, - DeLand, FL
- [Jenneffer Pulapaka, D.P.M.](#) - Manager/Wine Director/Co-Owner, Cress Restaurant - DeLand, FL
- [Jeff Rogers](#) - Executive Chef, Cindy's Waterfront at the Monterey Bay Aquarium - Monterey, CA
- [Jonathon Sawyer](#) - Chef/Owner, The Greenhouse Tavern and Noodlecat - Cleveland, OH

- [Brian Stapleton](#) - VP Food and Beverage, Aramark Parks and Destinations - Chapel Hill, NC
- [Blaine Wetzel](#) - Chef, Willows Inn on Lummi Island - Lummi Island, WA
- [Tim Wood](#) - Executive Chef, Carmel Valley Ranch - Carmel, CA