

# Sustainable Oceans Campaign

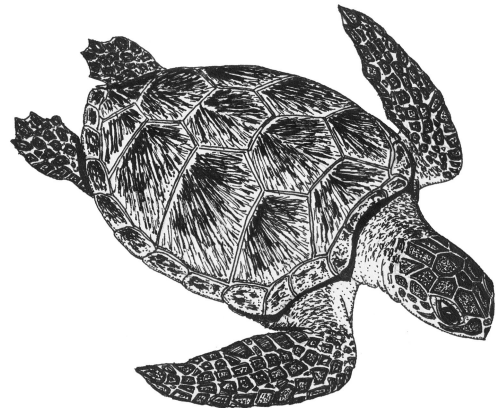
An Action by *Green Sangha\**

## Goals/Objectives:

- To reduce consumption of fish and other seafood whose consumption is harmful to our bodies and/or to the delicate balance of our oceans' ecology. Our objectives include the sharing of educational literature that includes the *Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch* wallet cards.

## What are some of the big issues regarding ocean/fishery sustainability?

- Ocean species, especially large predatory fish such as shark are being over-fished and depleted to unsustainable levels. Over the last 50 years, according to one recent study, these and other top-of-the-food-chain species have been depleted by 90% with only 10% remaining in the world's oceans (Myers and Worm, *Nature*- May, 2003).
- Industrial fishing methods catch thousands of non-target species commonly known as bycatch. Over 25% of species caught and often killed are accidentally caught as bycatch (U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization). Shrimp boats often have a bycatch that is 5 to 10 times greater than their intended catch. This amounts to 5 to 10 pounds of killed marine species (including sea turtles) for every pound of shrimp you eat.
- Vulnerable species are being over-fished. Species such as orange roughy and Chilean sea bass face extinction unless drastic measures are taken to protect them.
- Industrial and commercial fleets continue to use longline fishing methods that are, in effect, strip-mining the oceans at unsustainable levels.
- Fishing methods often destroy habitat. Bottom trawl nets used to catch bottom dwelling species drag the ocean floor, which has the effect of disrupting or destroying all bottom habitat in its path.
- Wetlands, the nurseries of our oceans, continue to be destroyed for coastal development and inland aquaculture. Shrimp aquaculture is often responsible for destroying coastal habitats, including mangrove forests.
- Open net-pen and coastal aquaculture methods (i.e. fish farms, etc.) create pollution from biological waste, overfeeding, and from the use of drugs such as antibiotics that are used because of overcrowded conditions. Fish farms are also sources of parasites and disease that can spread to wild stocks.
- There are no global policies or international treaties that adequately protect oceans in a comprehensive way. Existing international treaties are weak or non-existent and often have inadequate enforcement.
- US policies and fishery management are grossly inadequate to protect fisheries in U.S. and international waters.

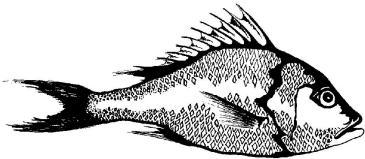


## How can I help protect endangered marine species?

- You can reduce demand for fish and other seafood that is caught using harmful unsustainable practices by becoming an informed consumer and purchasing only sustainably caught seafood.
- You can educate your friends, local businesses (restaurant and grocery store owners, etc.) regarding seafood consumption.
- You can stop eating swordfish, fresh tuna and shark. In addition to reducing the high level of bycatch associated with the catching of these species you will be reducing your intake of the high levels of toxic methylmercury, a potent neurotoxin which can severely damage developing fetuses and children.

## Why do we need to inform people?

- People cannot see the fishery depletion/habitat decimation under the surface of the ocean. There is no widespread means of knowing what is happening (forest clearcuts are visible, marine species decimation is not).
- The oceans and their inhabitants are a critical part of our planet's food web and must be protected.
- The choices we make in our eating habits can have a significant effect on the world's ocean health.



## What else can I do?

- Reduce your consumption of seafood.
- Eat lower on the seafood web (eat smaller, shorter-lived fish species). This will reduce your intake of metals and chemicals that bioaccumulate, protect endangered species and keep large predator fish species from becoming depleted.
- *Use and share* the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Card with family and friends; it will help them choose sustainable seafood.
- Visit supermarkets/restaurants that carry unsustainably-caught fish and fish high in mercury- (swordfish, shark and fresh tuna) and fish high in PCB's (farmed salmon) and ask them to stop carrying them- share sustainable fish literature with store managers.
- Write or call your elected officials and demand a sound fishing policy for the US and for the world.
- Learn more by visiting websites of organizations that are fighting for sustainable fishing practices. Visit the following sites and inform yourself further about sustainable oceans and eating sustainable seafood:



<http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/> (click Seafood Watch)

<http://www.oceana.org>

<http://www.seafoodchoices.com>

<http://www.seaturtles.org>

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\* Green Sangha is a spiritual community committed to environmental action. Groups are based in Marin County, San Francisco and the East Bay (start one in your hometown!). Groups meet monthly to meditate, educate, support one another and perform environmental actions.

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