

SeaFood



BUSINESS

Your Authority on Buying and Selling Seafood

Looking at sustainable
seafood through the eyes
of new businesses

Generation next

Page 20 | By James Wright

CONSUMER SURVEY **28** • TOP SPECIES: WILD SHRIMP **34**
HANNAFORD **36** • BARTON SEAVER **52**



A threat to Gulf's sustainability

There's no more appropriate way to celebrate this month's World Oceans Day (June 8) than offering readers a special issue on wild, sustainable seafood. The majority of the features have a sustainability element, starting with the Top Story by Associate Editor James Wright, *The Information Age*. While our coverage of sustainability in the monthly *Going Green* column tackles issues such as sustainability certification and community-supported fisheries, this Top Story focuses on three small businesses and how each approaches sustainable seafood differently. Wright approaches the community aspect — one inherent in sustainability plans but not often discussed.

The sustainability of the Southeast's wild seafood stocks is definitely being challenged in the Gulf as the oil spill disaster from the drill rig *Deepwater Horizon* continues to unfold. At press time, scientists were tracking the oil's movement and were fearful that it had reached the Gulf of Mexico Loop Current. If this is true, the oil jeopardizes the Florida Keys and then could move up the East Coast. This may not be just a Gulf Coast problem.

Those who aren't witnessing the oil spill firsthand are left feeling helpless. But there are a few things you can do; start by not getting caught up in the misinformation. A lot has been seen and heard in the past month: stories of potential price-gouging, reports of oil in harvest areas that weren't even affected, even fears that the oil spill was going to affect the farmed tilapia supply (really! And for those who don't know, tilapia isn't farmed in the ocean). Instead, focus on continuing to source seafood from Gulf seafood processors, who need all the support they can get right now.

Folks in New Orleans braved torrential rain for the Gulf Aid concert a few weeks ago, which benefited Gulf fishermen and wetland restoration efforts. Donations to the nonprofit organization can be made at www.gulfaid.org. The sustainability of the entire region's seafood industry is on the line, so please do what you can now to help.

P.S.

SFB engaged its Twitter audience to find a cover image for this special issue. Thanks to all of our followers for their submissions, including the cover image by Mark Halvorsen of the F/V *Hans Halvor* out of Oregon, submitted by the Western Fishboat Owners Association. The interior image on p. 20 was by Randy Freese on the F/V *Alsea* out of Newport, Ore.

Follow us at @SeaFoodBusiness for more behind-the-scenes outtakes, and look for a similar image contest for the special issue on sustainable farmed seafood in the fall!



Correction

The What's in Store column in the March *SFB* issue (Stores Push Private Label, p. 82) contained some incorrect statistics. Private-label canned tuna volume rose 10.6 percent, to 258 million units (cans, pouches, cups, boxes) in 2009. We regret the error.

Editorial Advisory Board

Distribution

Rich Polins, *North Coast Seafoods*
Mike Henninger, *Ipswich Shellfish*

Foodservice

Roger Berkowitz, Richard Vellante,
Legal Sea Foods
Aiden Coburn,
The Fish Market Restaurants
Steve LaHaie, *Shaw's Crab House*
Andrew Wilkinson, *Skipjack's*

Retail

Robert Cerullo, *Wakefern Food Corp.*

SeaFood BUSINESS

Publisher

Mary Larkin / mlarkin@divcom.com

Associate Publisher / Editor

Fiona Robinson / frobinson@divcom.com

Editor, *SeaFoodSource*

Steven Hedlund / shedlund@divcom.com

Associate Editor, *SeaFood Business*

James Wright / jwright@divcom.com

Assistant Editor, *SeaFoodSource*

April Forristall / aforristall@divcom.com

Contributing Editors

Christine Blank, Lisa Duchene, Joanne Friedrick,
Mercedes Grandin, Lauren Kramer, John Snyder

Production Director

Randy LeShane / rleshane@divcom.com

Art Director

Laura Lee Dobson / ldobson@divcom.com

Production Associate

Dylan Andrews / dandrews@divcom.com

Production Web Designer

Katie Emery / kmoreau@divcom.com

Production Associate

Lindsey McMorrow / lmcmorrow@divcom.com

Audience Development Manager

Stephanie Hedlund / shwedlund@divcom.com

Advertising Coordinator

Wendy Jalbert / wjalbert@divcom.com

ADVERTISING SALES

Sue Kogan, Sales Manager
(305) 598-0757 / Fax: (305) 598-0758
skogan@divcom.com

Classified Advertising (Portland, Maine)

Marie Elaine Harrington / (800) 842-5603
classifieds@divcom.com

twitter @SeaFoodBusiness, @SeaFoodSource

DIVERSIFIED BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

121 Free St., P.O. Box 7438
Portland, ME 04112-7438
(207) 842-5606
Fax: (207) 842-5603



Published by

Diversified Business Communications

Publisher of *National Fisherman* and *WorkBoat*

Copyright © 2010

Diversified Business Communications

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

diversified

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

Producer of

The International Boston Seafood Show, Seafood Processing America, New England Food Show, European Seafood Exposition, Seafood Processing Europe, and www.seafoodsource.com

Nancy Hasselback President/CEO

Mary Larkin VP Seafood Exhibitions

Hilary Manning Sales Director,
Seafood Expositions

Karen Butland Sales Manager, IBSS

Victoria Hennin VP Strategic Marketing
and Business Intelligence

(207) 842-5500 / Fax: (207) 842-5505

www.divbusiness.com

Top Story



Photo courtesy of Randy Freese, F/V Alsea

The information age

Small business leaders share visions of what sustainable seafood should be

By James Wright

Whether it's forests, fuel or food, sustainability constantly challenges what we think we know about the world's natural resources and the impact of human behavior on the environment — especially life below the ocean's surface. Sustainable seafood is a fluid issue that's perpetually in flux. Ask three people in the seafood industry what sustainability means — and what sources of information they rely on most to help make their business decisions — and you'll likely get three distinctly different answers.

So that's exactly what we did.

For the Top Story of this special issue, devoted entirely to wild sustainable seafood, *SeaFood Business* reached out to three individuals who have molded for themselves

and their businesses a deeply personal, unique or even daring definition of sustainable seafood.

Each runs a fairly small business that is relatively new

based mail-order company, I Love Blue Sea, will only be three months old by the time this issue is published, yet has already been featured by one of the nation's most recognized food writers.

Besides sharing fresh perspectives and a promise that all their products are 100 percent sustainable, they each willingly and frequently impart their beliefs about the importance of community to their customers, be they retail stores, restaurants or home gourmants. A passion for high-quality seafood that consumers can trust — and that benefits the harvesters and producers — is their common ground; their differences bear out in their views on environmental groups, the sustainability of wild seafood

to the industry. Andrea Angera of Litchfield Farms is a longtime organic farmer who just three years ago shifted the focus of his family's decades-old business from charcuterie entirely to seafood. James MacKnight of River & Glen works with artisanal producers and fishermen around the world to procure sustainable seafood and game for sale to food cooperatives and discerning chefs in the East Coast's biggest cities. And Martin Reed is a twenty-something entrepreneur whose Internet-

The F/V Alsea tows 200 tons of MSC-certified Alaska pollock back to port.

and the fisheries that bring them to market.

And that's no easy task: There are more sources of sustainability information than ever, some of them contradictory. Before adopting one group's philosophies or another's (or none at all), a seafood company has to do its homework in order to promote its seafood as "green." For some, Marine Stewardship Council certification, or some other eco-label indicating responsible fishery management, is all the proof needed.

Because all seafood companies depend on natural resources, many are partnering with environmental groups or other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to fill their knowledge gaps in sustainability research. The New England Aquarium in Boston and the Monterey Bay Aquarium (MBA) in Monterey, Calif., are two noteworthy entities helping seafood buyers form sustainable seafood procurement policies (see Top Story, November 2009 *SFB*) based on scientific research, as long as a commitment to improve practices is shown.

Sustainability is being addressed at the executive level of the world's largest corporations. But the seafood industry is a diverse landscape comprising myriad fringe players and small, family-run operations at the supply, distribution and service levels. Who do the smaller players source from? How do they view sustainable seafood and what is their vision of the future? The following folks provide a glimpse of how they navigate the information age.

New generation, new direction

When Andrea Angera Jr. took over his family's business four years ago he didn't just move the company from Oldwick, N.J., to Litchfield, Conn. He turned the business model on its head, forgoing the charcuterie and fresh sausages that Andy's Provision Co. had produced since the 1930s in favor of seafood.

That wasn't the original plan, however. Angera had hoped to add a line of sustainable seafood products to its case-ready program for distributors like Wakefern Food Corp. and The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co. He began by sourcing farmed seafood products like organic salmon from Ireland through the San Francisco-based CleanFish Alliance, and witnessed broad-based demand for organic and sustainable food.

The foray into seafood was successful, and the company soon cut its meat production entirely, says Angera, adding that the primary focus of Litchfield Farms Organic & Natural, the name it officially does business under, is seafood, with only a small wild game program.

"The fish business was less competitive because no one was doing what we do, which is find small producers and support them," says Angera, the company's general manager.

As much as possible, Angera investigated the research that influences NGOs' consumer seafood guides, and didn't simply accept their recommendations at face value. The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program posts its research online for those who want to dig deeper.

"We don't simply accept the MBA," says Angera. "We don't believe the industry approach

right now is the right one. We think most certifications are industry-driven; they're all working in the same context. The premise of all these methodologies is that you can have a sustainable fishery. But history shows that's never happened. All these certifications are meaningless. We're managing the end."

Displeased with the industrial commercial fishing industry and continued reports of depleted fish stocks, Angera supports small-batch farmed fish like the 1- to 2-pound halibut raised in a closed containment setup by Maine Halibut



Photo courtesy of Litchfield Farms Organic & Natural

All these certifications are meaningless. We're managing the end.

— Andrea Angera Jr., general manager, Litchfield Farms Organic & Natural

Farms in Orono, Maine. He sources striped bass from Cabbage Hill Farm in Mt. Kisco, N.Y., an aquaponics operation that raises fish in a multi-trophic environment.

"All their feeds are grown on the farm," Angera says. "Basically, it's as close to perfect as you can get. And they're only on the grid about three months a year. We're not shopping fish so much as the people producing them."

Angera's community-ori-

ented sourcing philosophy does include wild fish, but only from a community-supported fishery (CSF). Angera is working with a few CSFs in Maine and New Hampshire to help them get their fish to his customers, which include upscale New York City restaurants Marc Forgione, Le Cirque, Per Se and Le Bernardin as well as a host of organic markets and co-ops in New York and New England.

And, if funding can be secured, by year's end he'll roll out something the seafood industry has never seen: A processing facility on wheels. With some venture capital and the help of a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant, Angera hopes to convert a tractor-trailer truck into a "mobile processing unit" that can be set up near the region's CSF ports and small aquaculture operations like Great Bay in Portsmouth, N.H. The biggest complaint he hears from small producers is, "we have limited processing capabilities," and Angera thinks groups like the Yankee Fisherman's Cooperative in Seabrook, N.H., will clearly see the benefits — they'll be able to provide fillets, not just whole fish, to consumers.

Bob Campbell, manager of the Yankee co-op, says a lack of processing facilities in New Hampshire indeed limits the CSF's marketing abilities.

"Local supermarkets and restaurants — they all want finished product. There's great demand for local seafood," says Campbell. The co-op and Litchfield Farms agreed last year to start out slow, and "do what was best for each other."

"That was obvious pretty quick," says Campbell.

"What we're saying is, 'If you're buying this fish, you're supporting someone who needs the work,'" Angera says.

Top Story

“We’re in business to do the right thing. We want people to eat fish, but we want them to focus on what’s good for the community and their health. We need a smaller fish industry. But the one that we have needs to be integrated into the fabric of our communities.”

It’s all good

Promoting one’s new business as having “the world’s first online sustainable seafood market” with the “largest selection of sustainable seafood” will surely garner attention — as well as plenty of curiosity and criticism. San Francisco-based mail-order company I Love Blue Sea was launched only on March 15 yet managed to pique the interest of New York Times columnist Mark Bittman by early April. Hits on *iloveblueseas.com* “exploded” after the interview was published, says owner and founder Martin Reed.

“A lot of consumers are just sort of overwhelmed by sustainable seafood,” says Reed, who at the age of 27 represents one of the seafood industry’s youngest company leaders. “One of the comments [on Bittman’s blog] that highlighted the thoughts of many was to refrain from eating fish altogether. That’s absolutely the wrong thing to do. We need to support the fisheries that are making responsible decisions and leading the recovery.”

After college, Reed worked for an Arizona consulting firm doing business-plan writing for sustainable companies like solar power equipment providers. There in the desert he discovered very few outlets for consumers to shop for fresh seafood, much less awareness of sustainable seafood. He knew such products were out there, but people weren’t

hearing that story and were getting confused.

“I don’t think the seafood industry, from what little I know about it, is the most trustworthy industry. There’s a fair amount of nefarious activity that goes on,” says Reed. “Do consumers know that? I’m not sure. What I do know is they’re disenchanted with the fact that the seafood industry has gotten us to where we are now. They’ve lost trust and rightfully so.”

The welcome phrases on *iloveblueseas.com* typically read, “No more guesswork!” and “It’s all good — for you



Photo courtesy of Todd Porter and Diane Cu

“I don’t want anyone to blindly trust us. So we tried to be as transparent as possible.”
— Martin Reed, owner/founder, I Love Blue Sea

and the environment.” But does Reed think his company deserves consumers’ trust because it refuses to sell any fish on the Seafood Watch “avoid” list or that is considered unsustainable by controversial activist group Greenpeace?

“I don’t want anyone to blindly trust us,” says Reed, whose top sellers through the first month of business were farmed Arctic char

fillets from the United States and Canada, domestic Dungeness crabmeat, whole squid and Kumamoto oysters from California and greenlip mussels from New Zealand. “So we tried to be as transparent as possible. We don’t simply follow any of the guides, but we use them as a baseline, which is important. We’re into transparency and our own standard, but you have to follow something.

“It’s a big ask of consumers to find out where their seafood is from and how it’s caught and then compare it to NGO guidelines,” he adds.

When filling out his product roster, Reed sought the help of author and Greenpeace oceans campaigner Casson Trenor, who is the sustainability advisor for numerous West Coast sushi restaurants, including Tataki in San Francisco, which he helped found. Trenor steered Reed away from the bigeye and yellowfin tuna loins he planned to offer because of “high levels of fraud.”

“I gave him the same advice I give all the chefs and restaurateurs I work with: I’m not a scientist. You’re not a scientist. The days of selling fish with impunity are over,” says Trenor. “We need to be humble and accept the fact that folks that work on fishery dynamics day in and day out at places like Greenpeace’s science department and at the Monterey Bay Aquarium know far more about this than we do. The best thing we can do is act in concert with their recommendations.”

While early media exposure was certainly beneficial for I Love Blue Sea, Reed found himself responding to double-standard concerns about overnight shipping and the carbon footprint such a

delivery method necessitates. An ambassador of his tech-savvy generation, on April 14 Reed responded via Twitter: “don’t let perfect stand in the way of good.”

The company is striving to become a community in which customers dictate what should — and should not — be for sale. “People are already suggesting products we should sell,” says Reed.

Teach them well

As a young boy growing up in a small town on the west coast of Scotland, James MacKnight would catch salmon from a local river, proudly tote his prize into town on his bicycle and sell it to hotel chefs for the equivalent of \$2 a pound. “It was beautiful fish,” he says.

After following his father to the United States in his early 20s, he borrowed \$5,000 to start a smoked-salmon business near his new home of Pennsylvania. That business eventually became MacKnight Smoked Foods, now a global supplier based in Miami. MacKnight sold the business about a dozen years ago, not long after the “big boys” in Chile started smoking salmon. It typified what MacKnight called the increasing “industrialization” of the seafood industry, and it was nothing he wanted to be a part of.

“They had to get into the value-added business and get top dollar for their product,” says MacKnight. “Very soon it got diluted. Everyone was talking about boutique this, and gourmet that, but what really happened was they put those terms on something that really wasn’t small. They were using them for marketing purposes and that is so wrong. I saw that we were

getting far, far away from where we should be.”

MacKnight’s passion for authentic, artisan-crafted foods drove him to form a new seafood venture — River & Glen in Warminster, Pa., which he founded about four years ago. MacKnight still smokes salmon — about 85 percent of his product list is seafood, the remainder small game and poultry — and offers upscale restaurants in Philadelphia and New York what he has determined to be the most sustainable fish

available, like “hookers” cod, caught by hook-and-line fishermen from Cape Cod, and salmon and black cod (sablefish) from Alaska.

“I think Alaska is the finest example of sustainable fisheries in the world,” he says.

But he doesn’t want chefs he supplies to simply put “Alaska” or “Cape Cod” or “Scotland” on their menus next to the entrée — he wants them to have the full story about the fish. His sustainable-seafood education project in the works, dubbed Local Abundance,

aims to do that for his chefs and their wait staff with an interactive Web site and point-of-sale materials highlighting fishermen and their products.

“We’ll do whatever’s possible to connect chefs to the fishermen. I love finding fishermen who have a passion but don’t have a market,” says MacKnight. “And there’s no better satisfaction than telling a day-boat fisherman that his fish will end up in [Philadelphia restaurant] LaCroix this evening.”

Consumers have to be

educated about sustainable seafood for it to really catch on, he says. “But there’s a tremendous amount of confusion,” MacKnight says, adding that he relies most heavily on the Seafood Watch program for scientific information about wild fish stocks. “They’re very thorough, sometimes overly so. Most organizations are very black and white. But let’s be honest: It’s hard to say this species or that species is a complete ‘avoid.’ I like the fact that [MBA] has ‘good alternatives.’ There has to be a gray area.”

No man is an island

Pursuit of sustainable seafood a Maine chef’s life work

In the mid-1970s, Sam Hayward took what he thought would be a “working vacation” from the music business. It was only supposed to be a six-month stint as an assistant during the construction of the Shoals Marine Laboratory on Maine’s Appledore Island, a place he calls a “90-acre rock in the middle of nowhere.”

Instead, he stayed on for three years as a cook, an experience that revealed to him many things, including the Gulf of Maine’s rugged beauty, his penchant for pots and pans and his passion for fresh seafood. From the local fishermen, who knew him as the guy who would buy the strangest fish nobody else wanted (like monkfish), he’d get his pick of the catch.

“I’d say, ‘I’ll take those four flounders, that halibut, that big cod.’ I could get a 50-, 60-pound cod, and I could feed everyone on the island, with that one fish,” he says.

But the nighttime scene was troubling: Hayward remembers big factory tenders from eastern Europe that crowded the waters in the dark, looking for haddock and cod far offshore — and finding plenty of them. “It would look like a city out there. It was unbelievable — the whole horizon was

lights. You could see that the presence of those factory ships was problematic. They had to go.”

Two decades later, Hayward and two business partners founded what many critics say is Maine’s finest restaurant, Fore Street in Portland. It is a tribute to Maine’s unique terroir — much of the cuisine is locally or regionally sourced, especially the seafood. Rope-grown mussels from nearby Casco Bay, roasted in a wood-fired oven, are a menu mainstay.

Yet flavor is only one of many criteria for the fish served at Fore Street and its sister restaurant, Street & Co., which stands only six blocks away on a cobblestone footpath in the city’s Old Port district. The seafood, nearly all of it supplied by Hayward’s friend George Parr, owner of wholesaler Upstream Trucking, also in Portland, has to have a history.

No matter what fish Parr brings into the restaurants, “We’re always, always asking George, ‘How was it caught?’” says Hayward, adding that the two often “yell back and forth” at each other. “He’s as conservation-minded as anyone, but we just disagree sometimes on the particulars and what the criteria are for making choices.”



Sam Hayward

Photo by Laura Lee Dobson

Still, he does a tremendous amount of his own sustainable seafood research, relying on information sources like Seafood Choices Alliance, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland and NOAA’s FishWatch. “In the old days, I had to make a lot of phone calls,” he adds.

“Lately, it’s a matter of every time you do research, you discover several other channels you need to explore,” says Hayward. “The work is increasing. But I’m hopeful that by working with organizations we can trust — and we’re asking for information in a timely and regular way with some prose that I can understand — I think it will get easier.”

But it is, he laments, too late for chefs to claim ignorance about depleted fisheries or unsustainable fishing practices or to simply say, “I didn’t know.”

“Some will say that and some will avoid the ethical question, including some famous fish chefs, and that worries me,” says Hayward. “They’re either resisting the message or possibly they’re in denial.” — J.W.

Top Story

MacKnight supports the Cold Spring Harbor, N.Y.-based Blue Ocean Institute (BOI) and its Green Chefs, Blue Oceans initiative, an Internet-based sustainable seafood training program and resource center for chefs. Kate McLaughlin, BOI seafood program director, says the program is catching on at culinary schools like the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in Hyde Park, N.Y. The University of Montana, which she says focuses on sustainability, has adopted the program.

“It’s comprehensive but not overwhelming for those

who want to source [seafood] responsibly and don’t know where to start,” says McLaughlin. “We want to give users a baseline of information about all the issues behind sustainable seafood. They would then know where to go for more information, what questions to ask and what to make of the answers.”

With so much seafood being consumed at restaurants and with little evidence of that changing, today’s culinary students are tomorrow’s leading seafood buyers. The U.S. government is well aware

of this and is also working its way into the classroom. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s FishWatch program contains sustainability information on more than 80 domestic fisheries on its Web site (nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch) and is partnering with CIA to provide curriculum materials.

Chris Moore, division chief for partnerships and communications for NOAA’s Office of Sustainable Fisheries, says FishWatch offers a fair and objective look at wild seafood from domestic waters.

“I’ve been in a number



Photo courtesy of River & Glen

“We’ll do whatever’s possible to connect chefs to the fishermen.”
 — James MacKnight, founder, River & Glen

of different forums where people ask me, specifically, ‘I’m confused, what should I buy?’ I tell them to buy U.S. seafood. If there’s a marine species under federal management, it’s being managed in a sustainable way,” says Moore. “U.S. fisheries are some of the best regulated in the world. [The United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization] would rank the United States right at the top with New Zealand and some others. Most of our stocks are not overfished and the American public should know that.”

Thanks to government, collaborative-minded environmental groups and scientists at the nation’s leading aquariums, the seafood industry is getting, and spreading, the message about sustainable seafood. Yet along with consumers, many companies are still learning how to fully put that knowledge into action.

Associate Editor James Wright can be e-mailed at jjwright@divcom.com

Comparing notes

The Monterey Bay Aquarium and Marine Stewardship Council, two sources of sustainable seafood information to buyers big and small, discuss with *SFB* their organization’s mission by answering this question:

What sets your methodology and message apart from other organizations?

In global collaboration with conservation organizations, industry and scientists, the Marine Stewardship Council maintains the world’s most rigorous standard for certifying sustainability of wild-capture fisheries. Independent, accredited certifiers conduct detailed on-site assessments and annual audits at the fishery level. In addition, the MSC program includes supply-chain certification, ensuring that any seafood bearing the MSC eco-label can be traced to the certified fishery of origin. MSC is the only seafood certification consistent with ISEAL Alliance and United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization guidelines. Other programs offering general species guidance serve a valuable place and we partner with many of them. But most agree MSC is the gold standard, which is why so many seafood buyers and sellers worldwide rely on the MSC label as assurance they are sourcing seafood specifically from sustainable, well-managed fisheries.



Kerry Coughlin
 Regional director, Americas
 Marine Stewardship Council



Michael Sutton
 VP, Center for the Future of the Oceans
 Monterey Bay Aquarium

www.cfo-oceans.org