



News Release

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Wegmans Goes Marlin-Free; Endorses Take Marlin Off the Menu Campaign

Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (June 10, 2009) – Wegmans Food Markets, Inc. (www.wegmans.com), based in Rochester, N.Y., reaffirms its commitment to selling sustainable seafood by becoming the first supermarket chain to endorse the Take Marlin Off the Menu Campaign (www.takemarlinoffthemenue.org) and refusing to sell marlin, sailfish and spearfish at its 72 stores located throughout New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia and Maryland.

In recognition of Wegmans' commitment to not selling marlin, the Take Marlin Off the Menu Campaign, launched eight months ago by three leading marine conservation non-profits, wants consumers to know they can purchase seafood at their nearest Wegmans supermarket with the full knowledge that Wegmans is officially "Marlin Free." The Take Marlin Off the Menu Campaign was launched by the International Game Fish Association (www.igfa.org), the National Coalition for Marine Conservation (www.savethefish.org), and The Billfish Foundation (www.billfish.org).

As a leader in the supermarket industry, Wegmans urges other supermarket chains throughout the United States to follow its lead in not selling marlin, and helping to raise awareness among consumers that marlin populations are in serious danger due to overharvesting by commercial fishing fleets.

Supporting the Take Marlin Off the Menu Campaign is in keeping with Wegmans' reputation for innovation. Founded in 1916, Wegmans is recognized as a leader

throughout its industry, distinguished for its innovative approaches to customer service. In 2008, Wegmans published its Sustainable Seafood Sourcing Philosophy, a policy that has been followed for many years and is promoted at all Wegmans stores, as well as on its website. Wegmans also posts a chart of items sold in its stores that are certified sustainable and those which are not sold due to sustainability concerns.

“As an industry, we have a great deal of influence in what Americans eat,” says Carl Salamone, vice president of seafood. “Every day, in supermarkets across the country, consumers ask seafood professionals what’s great to eat. That’s when we can point consumers to fish and seafood that is flavorful and good for our environment. Because when the marlin are gone, we all lose.”

The ultimate goal of the Take Marlin Off the Menu Campaign is, through education and political advocacy, to end the commercial harvest, sale and importation of marlin, sailfish and spearfish in the United States, according to Jason Schratwieser, conservation director for the International Game Fish Association (IGFA).

“This is a huge step for our campaign because Wegmans is respected by consumers for its commitment to customer service,” adds Ken Hinman, president of the National Coalition for Marine Conservation, located in the Washington D.C. area, “as well as throughout the supermarket industry for its innovation. We applaud Wegmans for stepping forward among its peers in the supermarket industry and coming out on the side of marlin and other billfish.”

In addition to Wegmans, a growing number of restaurants support Take Marlin Off the Menu, including Wolfgang Puck Companies, which operate some of the most well known restaurants in the world.

The challenge facing the Take Marlin Off the Menu Campaign is drawing awareness to the plight of marlin and other billfish, says Ellen Peel, president of The Billfish Foundation. Unfortunately, many Americans are not aware that marlin have suffered a dramatic population decline. According to a national Harris Interactive consumer survey of 2,078 consumers conducted on February 25, 2009, and sponsored by the Take Marlin Off the Menu Campaign, 93 percent of American consumers were unaware that the populations of marlin have declined 80 percent from their peak several decades ago, before the advent of large-scale commercial fishing worldwide.

“However, according to our national consumer survey,” Peel added, “when consumers become aware of the plight of billfish such as marlin, 78 percent of American consumers say they won’t order or buy marlin. With this insight, we know that our job is to increase awareness of this issue and to persuade restaurants and seafood retailers to embrace our cause.”

Marlin, sailfish, and spearfish are collectively called “billfish” because the long extension of their upper jawbone looks like a spear or bill. Marlin, the largest of the billfish species, have powerful muscular bodies, can weigh as much as a ton, and roam

throughout the oceans feeding on smaller fish and keeping marine ecosystems in balance. As apex predators in the ocean, they serve the same role as lions, tigers and wolves on land.

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IGFA

The International Game Fish Association (www.igfa.org), based in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is a not-for-profit organization committed to the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical angling practices through science, education, rule making and record keeping. Founded in 1939, the IGFA is internationally known for maintaining and publishing world records for saltwater and freshwater catches, and for maintaining the world's most comprehensive fishing hall of fame and museum.

National Coalition for Marine Conservation

The National Coalition for Marine Conservation (NCMC), based in Leesburg, Va., was founded in 1973 by conservation-minded anglers and is dedicated exclusively to conserving ocean fish and their environment. NCMC works to prevent overfishing, reduce fish bycatch and protect habitat for a wide variety of ocean fish. The group specializes in identifying problems and finding solutions; educating the public; developing proactive conservation strategies; and networking with like-minded fishing and environmental organizations. For more information about the NCMC, visit www.savethefish.org.

The Billfish Foundation

The Billfish Foundation (TBF) is a science-based, non-profit organization dedicated to conserving and enhancing billfish populations worldwide, working through research, education and advocacy. TBF's comprehensive network of members and supporters includes anglers, captains, mates, tournament directors, clubs, and sportfishing businesses. TBF provides support to regional groups by contributing expertise in science, socio-economics, education and fisheries policy to help find solutions to billfish threats so fishing opportunities will remain available. For more information about TBF, visit www.billfish.org.