

MEDIA RELEASE

19 April 2011

Sustainable Victorian seafood in time for Good Friday

As many Victorians start to think about sustainable seafood choices for Good Friday, the Australian Conservation Foundation and the University of Technology, Sydney, have today announced the results of an independent sustainability assessment of six Victorian seafood products—a first for the State.

“There is a great deal of confusion about what seafood is sustainable and what is not,” said ACF Healthy Oceans Campaigner Chris Smyth.

“Overfishing, bycatch and habitat damage mean commercial fishing can be bad news for oceans, but there is also good news about efforts the seafood industry is making to become sustainable.

“The six seafood products we are announcing today are some of those good news stories,” said Mr Smyth.

“Our independent and scientifically rigorous assessments take out the guesswork for consumers who want to make sustainable seafood choices,” said Professor David Booth from the University of Technology, Sydney.

“By choosing local and sustainable seafood products, consumers will encourage seafood producers to move towards sustainability. That will improve the health of our oceans while also supporting our coastal lifestyle and the economies of regional communities,” said Professor Booth.

ACF and UTS congratulates the producers of the following six Victorian regional seafood products:

- **Southern calamari from Corner Inlet**
- **Southern calamari from Port Phillip Bay**
- **King george whiting from Port Phillip Bay**
- **King george whiting from Corner Inlet**
- **Blue mussel from Sea Bounty Pty Ltd, Corio Bay**
- **Rainbow trout from Goulburn River Trout Pty Ltd, Alexandra**

These complement the five previously assessed and recommended products:

- **Red emperor from the Pilbara, Western Australia**
- **Farmed barramundi from Marine Produce Australia, Cone Bay, Western Australia**
- **Yelloweye mullet from the Coorong, South Australia**
- **Western king prawn from the Spencer Gulf, South Australia**
- **Squid from the Hawkesbury River, New South Wales**

The Sustainable Australian Seafood Assessment Program will continue to assess regional seafood products in Australia’s oceans. Funding for the Victorian project has been provided by the Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation and the Ruffin-Falkiner Foundation. Log onto the interactive map to learn more about the assessed products at www.acfonline.org.au/seafood

For interview – Chris Smyth: 0438 123 536, **media enquiries** – Sara McMillan: 0400 834 130

(Cont.).

Victorian seafood products assessed as sustainable by the Sustainable Australian Seafood Assessment Program

ACF, the University of Technology, Sydney and the Science Reference Panel are pleased to announce the first results from the Victorian Sustainable Seafood Assessment Project. We congratulate the producers of the following six products.

Southern calamari from Corner Inlet, Victoria

The southern calamari, *Sepioteuthis australis*, is a short-lived—only 18 months—and fast growing species found in estuaries and nearshore coastal waters over reefs, sand and seagrass areas. The small Corner Inlet fishery harvest calamari using specially designed haul seines and techniques that have minimal impacts on stocks, bycatch and habitat.

Southern calamari from Port Phillip Bay, Victoria

The southern calamari, *Sepioteuthis australis*, is a short-lived—only 18 months—and fast growing species found in estuaries and nearshore coastal waters over reefs, sand and seagrass areas. The Port Phillip Bay fishery uses haul seine and squid jigs to harvest calamari, techniques that have minimal impacts on stocks, bycatch and habitat.

King george whiting from Port Phillip Bay, Victoria

King george whiting, *Sillaginodes punctata*, is only found in southern Australia, living in bays and estuaries where it feeds on crustaceans, worms, molluscs and fish. The Port Phillip Bay fishery uses haul seines and mesh nets to catch whiting with minimal impacts on stocks, bycatch and habitat.

King george whiting from Corner Inlet, Victoria

King george whiting, *Sillaginodes punctata*, is only found in southern Australia, living in bays, estuaries and creeks over sand and seagrass meadows where it feeds on crustaceans, worms, molluscs and fish. Whiting are caught in the Corner Inlet fishery using haul seines, small boats and specialised techniques that minimise impacts on stocks, bycatch and habitat.

Blue mussel from Sea Bounty Pty Ltd, Corio Bay, Victoria

Blue mussels, *Mytilus galio provincialus*, are intertidal filter-feeding molluscs that have been farmed around the world for centuries. Sea Bounty Pty Ltd grows blue mussels on drop lines at a number of locations in southern Port Phillip Bay. The company's management practices, including the deliberate stocking of mussels at low densities, ensure the farms have only minor local environmental impacts.

Rainbow trout from Goulburn River Trout Pty Ltd, Alexandra, Victoria

Rainbow trout, *Oncorhynchus mykiss*, is a member of the salmon family and is native to streams flowing into the Pacific Ocean in Asia and North America. Goulburn River Trout Pty Ltd grows rainbow trout in a series of land-based ponds on the banks of the Goulburn River. The company's feed management—only small proportions of protein are sourced from wild caught marine fish—and effluent monitoring ensure there is little local environmental impact.

(Cont.).

MEDIA RELEASE

19 April 2011

The six Victorian regional seafood products now join the five assessed as sustainable by the Program in 2010. These are:

Red emperor from the Pilbara, Western Australia

The red emperor, *Lutjanus sebae*, which grows up to a metre long, lives across Australia's northern tropical waters in around coral reefs, lagoons and flats. In the Pilbara Trap Fishery they are caught using fish traps, a highly targeted fishing method and one of the least damaging, with very low habitat impact and bycatch.

Farmed barramundi from Marine Produce Australia, Cone Bay, Western Australia

Wild barramundi, *Lates calcarifer*, are found in turbid waters of the estuaries, creeks and mangrove forests of tropical Australia. The barramundi from Cone Bay are farmed in the sea along a small and isolated part of the Western Australian coast, 100 kilometres north of Derby. The farming operation has very low environmental impacts.

Yelloweye mullet from the Coorong, South Australia

The yelloweye mullet, *Aldrichetta forsteri*, grows to about 40 centimetres in length and lives around sandy areas in estuaries. The Lakes and Coorong Fishery is a well-managed small scale fishery operated by fishing families using small boats and harvesting techniques that have low levels of habitat impact and bycatch.

Western king prawn from the Spencer Gulf, South Australia

Spencer Gulf has the world's largest population of the western king prawn, *Penaeus latisulcatus*. The Spencer Gulf Prawn Trawl Fishery uses management and harvesting techniques that ensure the prawns are caught in an ecologically sustainable way with low level of habitat impact and bycatch.

Squid from the Hawkesbury River, New South Wales

A number of squid species live in estuaries along the east coast. They grow quickly – some up to a mantle length of about 20 centimetres – but only live for about six to seven months. The squid fishery in the Hawkesbury River is a small, well-managed estuary trawl fishery that has little impact on the overall stock, the local ecosystem and on bycatch species.

ENDS