

SLOW FISH 2021 EVENT REPORT



SLOW FISH

2021

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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In addition, we would also like to thank Denisa Livingston, Melanie Brown, and Jacquelyn Ross for guiding us in land acknowledgments throughout the event; Chefs Dana Honn, Evan Mallett, and Paul Reilly for creating cook-along videos that helped us connect with our food from the comfort of our homes; musicians Wade Fernandez and Sunny Porch Collaborative for helping bring joy to our gathering, and notetakers from our internal planning teams as well as Michelle DiMuzio, Malia Guyer-Stevens, and Victoria Ojeda of Slow Food USA. The language throughout this report has been adapted from the notes taken throughout the event.



SPONSORS

A final thank you to our sponsors for making this even possible.



INTRODUCTION

The strength of Slow Fish North America is the passion, commitment, and unity of individuals within this grassroots network. This has been one constant since the network emerged as a small community of disparate seafood folks rallying around a shared set of values over a decade ago. That community strength was the driving force that led to the first in-person event in New Orleans in 2016, and carried forward to the second event in San Francisco in 2018.

In both cases, the network grew, relationships formed, and people left feeling more engaged, more energized, more empowered to stand up for shared values of good, clean, and fair seafood. That collective sense of unity drew together a large task force to plan Slow Fish 2020 in New Hampshire. It was that bedrock of the network's community strength that enabled this dedicated team to adapt on the fly to a pandemic and convert months of intense live event planning into four comprehensive, interactive, soul-healing and brain-nourishing webinars.

And it was that same collective energy that again harkened another incredible team to plan Slow Fish North America's first virtual gathering in March of 2021. Planning compelling, network-driven, deep-dive discussions via a virtual format spread out over six days proved to be much more challenging than the planning team originally thought.

But resilience is also a key tenet within the network. So we found ways to maximize the virtual format and integrate a variety of music, poetry, humor, and a sense of creativity and exploration into each day of programming. We encouraged network dialogue via chat boxes and breakout rooms. We set up virtual booths where folks could showcase their work and share ideas with others.

INTRODUCTION

Fish harvesters, fishmongers, chefs, scientists, Indigenous leaders, and folks in and around the seafood supply chain told great stories, networked, and brainstormed new ideas for addressing some of the key challenges the industry faces. We discussed a variety of important topics, some of which include: community-based fisheries and direct, transparent supply chains; responsible aquaculture practices; Indigenous access to natural resources; the Blue Commons, and the effort to provide equitable access to fisheries around the world; communities building resilience in vital river basins; and youth in fisheries.

And in the process, we got back to the network's original mission: Growing the community as we uplift our shared values so we can help bring those values into a broader community.

This report is a reflection of that effort, and of everyone who planned and participated in Slow Fish 2021 Virtual Gathering. It is also a testament to the passion, commitment, and unity of the Slow Fish North America network. This report, and all of the collective effort to plan, execute, and participate in the virtual gathering will set the framework and the tone as we continue these conversations and plan future Slow Fish North America events.



KEY MESSAGES AND THEMES

We had a number of objectives for Slow Fish 2021, many of which were centered around how we can grow our community through broadening our reach to like-minded individuals, organizations, and the public so we can increase our impact. One objective in particular, however, was focused on how we can empower our membership and thought leaders to uplift our shared values and create pathways for individual and collective action. With that in mind, we synthesized the conversations that happened throughout the event and highlighted those common themes, threads, and values that rose to the surface.

These common threads weave together to form and reinforce the fabric of Slow Fish. They further illuminate our collectively held values; help define and elevate our collective voice; and shape our calls to action paving the way we move forward as individual activists, as allied organizations, and as a strong and powerful network. We have come together due to a common sense of purpose, and in that way may be preaching to the “choir.” But we are not just a choir. We are a ground force building a chorus that can change the world. Some—by no means all—of these common threads include:

- **Our deep connection to marine and freshwater resources**
- **We need intergenerational revitalization**
- **Fish is a critical part of our food system**
- **Equity and social justice are priorities**
- **Relationships are the foundation of and for change**

OUR DEEP CONNECTION TO MARINE AND FRESHWATER RESOURCES

We have a deep and timeless connection to marine and freshwater resources, and this is a relationship we must value and honor. Our wellbeing is necessarily tied to the wellbeing of the natural system. This was beautifully expressed in many ways throughout the Deep Dive conversations of the gathering.

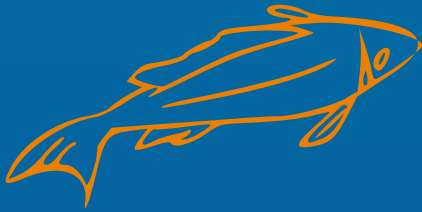


WE NEED INTERGENERATIONAL REVITALIZATION

The need to address the increasing loss of relationship between the next generation and our seafood resources and the need to revitalize this connection arose in almost every conversation. Concerns ranged from an increasingly serious succession issue in small boat fishing fleets to loss of traditional knowledge, to decreasing capacity in rural communities to steward, manage, and harvest resources. This is the result of many factors: from deteriorating incomes and job security dissuading new, young fisheries entrants to the dispossession of local people from their environment, severing historical ties to the resource.

FISH IS A CRITICAL PART OF OUR FOOD SYSTEM

Fish and seafood are critical to our food security. They are a necessary part of ensuring access to good, clean, fair food for all. This came up across all sessions as a uniting theme. Our collective reliance on and respect for fish and seafood as a safe, sustainable, healthy, and delicious local food source is one of the ties that binds us together so strongly. And indeed, as Carlo Petrini says, in our commitment to doing the hard work to build a world in which ALL have access to good, clean, fair food, as a community we unite around not just the struggle of the work, but also the pleasure and the celebration of food.



EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ARE PRIORITIES

Perhaps one of the most ominous and threatening challenges we face is the lack of focus on social equity and justice. The focus by those in power is consistently on the big “E” for economic growth/investment opportunity, and secondarily the big “C” for conservation. Local, state, federal, and international agencies give a nod to equity in terms of human and community wellbeing, social justice and fairness, and social and cultural objectives. But there is little if any concrete movement to address these issues meaningfully. Too often we see big environmental non-governmental organizations and big corporations compete to produce an outcome that prioritizes spaces saved and profits earned at the expense of rural communities and those who live with, and rely on, the resources being grabbed or saved.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF AND FOR CHANGE

Relationships are foundational to realizing the change we seek. This theme ran through every session at Slow Fish 2021. We identified the need to build relationships in every direction: with elders, with youth, with the public, between harvesters and eaters, between agencies and tribes, amongst allies, and amongst ourselves. Relationships are at the heart of everything we do. Building transparent, inclusive collaborative, respectful, relationships is the foundation for our path forward.



GATHERING SUMMARIES

Thursday, March 18

Welcome

Slow Fish 2021 kicked off with Jim Embry grounding us in Equity, Inclusion, and Justice values because a food system is not sustainable without equity and justice. We also heard from Denisa Livingston, International Indigenous Councilor of the Global North at Slow Food International, who guided us in a land acknowledgement. Finally, Anna Mulé, Executive Director of Slow Food USA, Paula Barbeito, Slow Fish Campaign Coordinator at Slow Food International, and Colles Stowell, President of One Fish Foundation, talked us through the partnerships of Slow Food USA, Slow Food International, and Slow Fish North America.

Slow Fish North America is committed to the development of an equitable, just, and healthy seafood system. We recognize that injustices throughout the food system, both on land and at sea, are rooted in race, class, and gender disparities. We see this with the theft of land & ocean bottom grabbing; farmworker, fish harvester, and other food and seafood chain worker exploitation; and consolidated and privatized land, oceans, and freshwaters. As these injustices continue, the voices of Black, Indigenous, communities of color, poor or low-income communities and people, and women are excluded from the mainstream food movement.

Keynote

Keynote speaker Buck Jones, salmon marketing specialist at the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, welcomed participants by speaking about the relationships being built to protect tribal fishing rights. Buck's message was clear: food systems and food sovereignty are about feeding our children and grandchildren, not just about feeding ourselves. These sentiments were echoed by speakers and attendees throughout the gathering.

Seascape World Cafe

Advocacy and Action

Facilitator: Jon Russell **Storyteller:** Denisa Livingston



This session focused on ways that Slow Fish can boost its collective voice around advocacy and policy. The conversation centered around how we can leverage our resources to help others, as well as what reparations look like in the context of fishers and fishing communities.

Growing the Network

Facilitator: Anna Mulé **Storyteller:** Gary Granata



This session focused on strengthening the Slow Fish community and best practices for engaging with Slow Food and other like-minded groups. The conversations centered around continuing to make connections while aligning around values.

Young Fish Harvesters

Facilitator: Cailyn Siider **Storytellers:** Jordyn Kastlunger & Ryan Bradley

This session highlighted the changes and opportunities facing young fish harvesters and potential ways the Slow Fish community can offer support. The conversation centered around the impacts of privatization and commodification on young fish harvesters becoming involved in the industry and community and how Slow Fish could offer support by uplifting stories and advocating for change around creating more equitable management systems in our fisheries.



"Fishing
isn't
catching"

-Jordyn Kastlunger

Friday, March 19

Deep Dive: Seafood Supply Chain

The Seafood Supply Chain Deep Dive conversation focused on seafood supply chains throughout the world, with an emphasis on the supply chains in North America. We talked about how to eat sustainably and responsibly harvested seafood if you don't live near the coast and how relationship building and direct sourcing play a role. Direct connections between fish harvesters and customers, retailers, and other harvesters are increasingly essential to growth and survival. Moving toward a sustainable seafood supply chain starts with building connections, knowing the who, when, where, and how it was harvested.



Moderators

Elizabeth Herendeen, AK, SalmonState
Sarah Shoffler, CA, NOAA

Storytellers

Kayla Cox, ME, New England Fishmongers
Jordyn Kastlunger, CA, Tuna Harbor Dockside Market
Ana Shellem, NC, Shell'em Seafood
Jenny DeVivo, MA, Lunch lady with a cause
Cailyn Siider, BC, Young Fishermen's Network
Marsh Skeelee, AK, Sitka Salmon Shares



Thoughtleaders

Steve Kurian, PA, Wild for Salmon
Lance Nacio, LA, Anna Marie Seafood
Andrea Tomlinson, NH, NH Community Seafood
Jared Auerbach, MA, Red's Best

Saturday, March 20

Deep Dive: Indigenous Access to Food Sources

The Indigenous Access to Food Sources Deep Dive featured stories from coast to coast, taking us on a journey to appreciate the bounty of our oceans. The session started with laying out the groundwork for understanding the importance of traditional foods, and the interconnectedness between traditional, ecological knowledge and landscapes. Many threats loom over traditional foods -- climate change, globalization, monoculture, water scarcity, and urbanization -- but all of the storytellers shared inspiration, hope, and calls to action for all of us to move forward becoming better stewards of the land and sea.

Johnathan Perry left us all with some questions to ponder:

- How can you help Indigenous people access our home waters?
- How can Indigenous people assist the fishing community when we cannot access the ocean ourselves?
- What changes will you propose to help our nations?
- Where can you turn to stand and be a good ally to Indigenous people?
- How can you help access our homewaters, support subsistence practices, and ensure the health of the next generation of Indigenous people, fish communities, and marine life?

Facilitators

Noah Wahquahboshkuk, CA, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation

Hillary Renick, CA, Sherwood Valley of Pomo Indians

Storytellers

Jonathan Perry, MA, Aquinnah Wampanoag

Melanie Brown, AK, Yup'ik, Salmon State

Suntayea Steinruck, CA, Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation

Elizabeth James Perry, MA, Aquinnah Wampanoag

Thursday, March 25

Deep Dive: Aquaculture

The panelists in the Aquaculture Deep Dive framed the broad, complex issues surrounding both aquaculture and wild-caught fisheries. Two questions recurred throughout the session: How do we dispel the myth that all aquaculture is either “good” or “bad,” and How do we distinguish between the two ends of the spectrum? We learned about small-scale, ecosystem-balanced operations like an oyster farm near Miami, seaweed farming in Maine, and wild seaweed harvest in British Columbia. We also heard about collective efforts to oppose industrial-scale finfish and shrimp farming and other operations, which upset marine ecological balance and often socio-economically displace coastal communities that depend on local fisheries for their lives.

Facilitator

Hallie Templeton, Friends of the Earth

Storytellers

Severine von Tscharner Fleming, ME, Greenhorns

Brian Rosseger, FL, Lost Coast Oysters

Charlie Abner, SC, Commercial fisherman

Thoughtleaders

Paul Molyneaux, ME

Amanda Swinimer, BC, Dakini Tidal Wilds

Rosanna Marie Neil, NAMA



Friday, March 26

Rivers Connect the World

The Rivers Connect the World discussion featured compelling stories of habitat restoration and preservation from the Mississippi, Danube, Snake, and Copper rivers as well as the rivers of Cork, Ireland. The conversation focused on the ways we can care for our environments and the habitats of fish while protecting biodiversity and culture. Efforts to do just that continue to succeed because of the collaboration within and among communities along those rivers, regardless of political borders. The message from the panelists was clear: to protect our rivers is to protect our land at large.

Moderator

Gary Granata, Ph.D.

Storytellers

Tiberiu Cazacioc, Romania, Slow Food Convivium Leader

Dune Lankard, AK, Copper River Wild Salmon Co.

Sally Barnes, Ireland, Woodcock Smokery

Tammy Greer, Ph.D., MS, University of Southern Mississippi

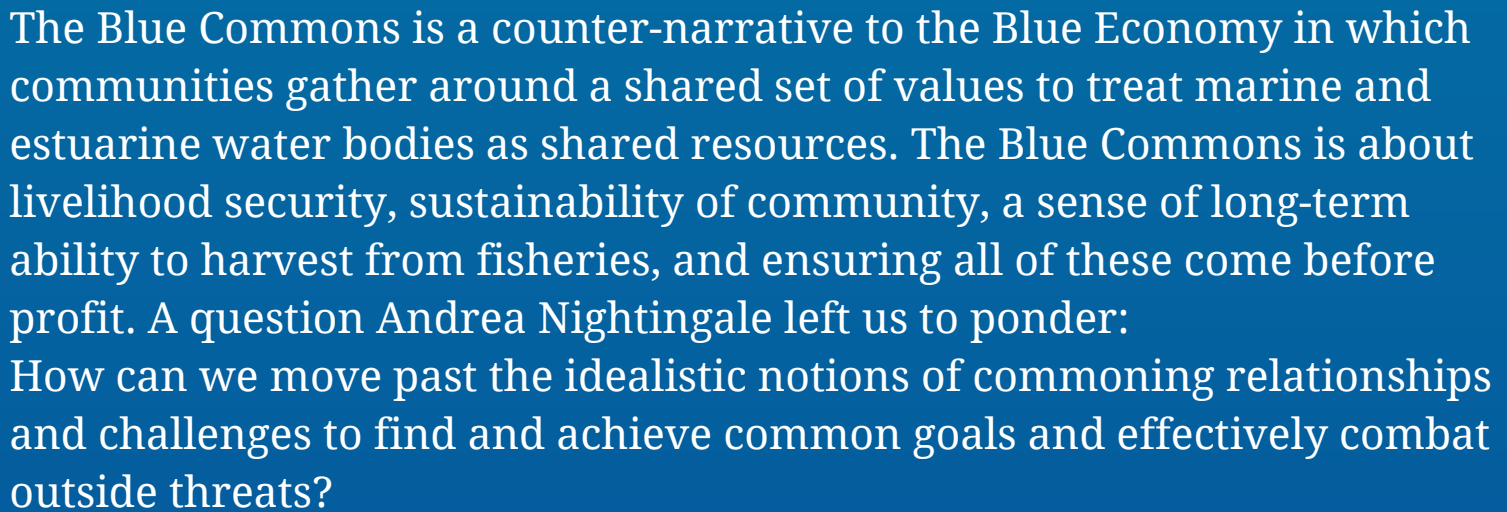
Eugenio Berra, Serbia, ViaggieMiraggi

Blaise Pezold, LA, Arlene and Joseph Meraux Charitable Foundation



Photo by David Kovalenko on Unsplash

The Blue Commons Deep Dive explored how the industrial-scale development of the Blue Economy typically saps the lifeblood from coastal communities and their local economies, and cripples the independent fish harvesters living in those communities.



Jes Hathaway, ME, National Fisherman

Jason Jarvis, RI, Commercial Fisherman

Ryan Benson, Okanagan Nation, Okanagan Nation Alliance
Linda Behnken, AK, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association
Stephen Rhodes, AK, Seafood Producers Cooperative

Seth Macinko, RI, University of Rhode Island

Andrea Nightingale, Norway, University of Oslo

David Bollier, MA, Schumacher Center for a New Economics

APPENDIX



Slow Fish 2021 Virtual Gathering

Agenda

Find more details for each of these sessions on the [Hopin Event Page](#)

All times listed are in EDT

[Session names are listed in orange brackets]

Thursday, March 18

12:15 pm -12:30 pm

Pre-Welcome [Welcome]

Join us a few minutes early to get comfortable and enjoy some music from [Wade Fernandez](#)

12:30 - 1:15 pm

Welcome [Welcome]

During this time we'll hear some updates from Slow Fish and Slow Food, go over some Ground Rules, Jim Embry will walk us through Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (EIJ) principles and Denisa Livingston will lead us in an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement.

1:20 - 1:40 pm

Keynote [Keynote with Buck Jones]

Keynote: Buck Jones, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

1:50-2:50

Seascape World Cafe [Seascape World Cafe]

Join us in our main session [Seascape World Cafe] to hear about the flow of the session before we send you off to generate ideas for strengthening our Slow Fish network and commitment to good, clean, and fair for all. Cafe Sessions will include:

Cafe: Growing the Network

[World Cafe: Growing the Network]

This session will focus on strengthening the Slow Fish community and best practices for engaging with Slow Food and other like-minded groups.

Cafe: Advocacy & Action

[World Cafe: Advocacy & Action]

This session will focus on ways that Slow Fish can boost its collective voice around advocacy and policy.

Cafe: Young Fish Harvesters

[World Cafe: Young Fish Harvesters]

This session will highlight the challenges and opportunities facing young fish harvesters and potential ways Slow Fish could offer support.

2:50-3:00

Wrap Up & Transition [Seascape World Cafe]

Join us again in the main session to wrap-up before we gather for Marketplace of Ideas.

3:00-4:00

Marketplace of Ideas & Happy Hour

[Marketplace of Ideas and Happy Hour]

Attendees [sign up in advance](#) to take 1-minute to tell everyone a bit about themselves and share an idea, project, and/or challenge they are facing and then present an “ask” to the group.

Friday, March 19

12:15 - 12:30 pm

Welcome & Announcements

[Deep Dive: Seafood Supply Chain]

12:30-3:45 pm

Deep Dive: Seafood Supply Chain

[Deep Dive: Seafood Supply Chain]

Boat-to-customer. Boat-to-chef. Boat-to-market. Adapting to shifting markets, policies and climate often means seafood harvesters need to simplify their supply channels.

Harvesters, chefs, distributors, and others will discuss successes and challenges of creating more direct supply chains, built on transparency, trust, and fair pricing. How can we replicate these models elsewhere and help harvesters maximize their customer potential? How can we engage more chefs as the customer-facing storytellers?

Relationships are everything.

7:00

Last Man Fishing Screening

[Expo Booth: Last Man Fishing Movie]

To be followed by a live panel discussion from stakeholders, including Director J.D. Schuyler, and fishermen, Capt. Tim Rider, Capt. Eric Jordan and Capt. Aaron Longton.

Saturday, March 20

12:15-12:30

Welcome & Announcements

[Deep Dive: Indigenous Access to Food Sources]

12:30-3:45

Deep Dive: Indigenous Access to Food Sources

[Deep Dive: Indigenous Access to Food Sources]

In efforts to nurture partnerships and to preserve our ancestral food systems, the Slow Fish Deep Dive Indigenous Access Session will feature rich stories from coast to coast. These stories will take us on a journey to appreciate what has been, what has changed, and where we are heading. From the interconnectedness generated by the creation of the net that holds the fish, to the construction of the vessel for transport, to the development of commerce by trade routes that enriched the local economies, all of these activities inspired songs and stories. The recurring theme of the session will cover the lack of access to ancestral food sources in relation to culture and traditional ecological knowledge, as well as the synchronous bond between the health of the environment and our own physical and mental health. The community of fisher people will guide us, addressing concerns of protection and balanced stewardship, with the overarching issues of access and traditional teachings. We are honored to have an esteemed group of speakers and hope that you will find this to be an enriching Deep Dive.

3:45 - 3:55

Wrap-Up

7:00

The Wild Screening [Expo Booth: The Wild]

Followed by a live panel discussion from stakeholders, including Director Mark Titus, fish harvesters Melanie

Brown, Steve Kurian, Dr. Daniel Schindler, and Chef Tom Douglass.

Thursday, March 25

- 12:15-12:30** **Welcome & Announcements [Deep Dive: Aquaculture]**
- 12:30-3:45** **Deep Dive: Aquaculture [Deep Dive: Aquaculture]**
Participants will hear stories from a panel of experts that frame the broad, complex issues surrounding both aquaculture and wild-caught fisheries. We'll then dive deeper into facilitator-led, interactive group discussions, where we'll learn and share nuanced perspectives while building toward a cohesive narrative. Folks will walk away feeling better supported, reenergized, more knowledgeable about the issues, and poised to take more individual and collective action.
- 4:00-6:00** **Marketplace of Ideas, Happy Hour, & Networking Time [Marketplace of Ideas & Happy Hour]**
Attendees [sign up in advance](#) to take 1-minute to tell everyone a bit about themselves and share an idea, project, and/or challenge they are facing and then present an "ask" to the group.
-

Friday, March 26

- 11:15-11:30** **Welcome & Announcements [Rivers Connect the World]**
- 11:30 am - 1:00 pm** **Rivers Connect the World [Rivers Connect the World]**
Join our panel of voices from the Danube, Mekong, Mississippi Rivers as well as Salmon Rivers of the Pacific Northwest and Ireland as they discuss strategies to protect biodiversity and culture in their home river basin.

1:15 pm - 4:25 pm

Blue Commons 101 [Blue Commons 101]

Independent, small- and mid-scale fish harvesters around the world increasingly feel the devastating impact wrought by big ocean-based development like net-pen farming, oil and gas extraction, massive wind farms, and some marine conservation initiatives. These fish harvesters have little control over the health of the fisheries they depend on, which is made much worse by a coordinated global effort to commodify the ocean under the guise of the Blue Economy.

A panel of experts will dive into the global and localized impacts of the Blue Economy's widespread privatization and consolidation on community-based fisheries. We'll discuss the Blue Commons, a counter-movement that seeks a collaborative approach to managing the ocean as a shared resource providing equal and fair access to opportunities to fish for and grow seafood responsibly. In facilitator-led breakout discussions, we'll probe questions like how the Blue Commons values are already showing up in our communities when it comes to aquaculture and wild-caught fisheries? How can we weave this framework discussion into advocacy of policies and management that supports this vision?

Saturday, March 27

12:30-2:00

Synthesis [Synthesis & Closing Ceremony]

Join us as we look at the lessons, thoughts, and insights we've all shared throughout the week, and how this translates to Slow Fish swimming ahead.

2:00-3:30

Closing ceremony: music, celebration, and look ahead [Synthesis & Closing Ceremony]

IMPORTANT LINKS & RESOURCES

Session Recordings

All recordings are available on the Slow Food USA YouTube Page at youtube.com/SlowFoodUSA

- [Welcome](#)
- [Keynote with Buck Jones](#)
- [Seascape World Cafe](#)
- [Marketplace of Ideas](#)
- [Seafood Supply Chain](#)
- [Indigenous Access to Food Sources](#)
- [Aquaculture](#)
- [Rivers Connect the World](#)
- [Blue Commons](#)
- [Synthesis](#)

Resources

- [Participant Folder](#)
- [Resources Document](#)
- [Slow Food USA EIJ Manifesto](#)
- [Themes and Synthesis Document](#)

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