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[The 2010 Seafood Summit](#)

Posted by Casson on Feb 4, 2010 in [Fishing and Farming](#), [News and Announcements](#)



The rainy saison

Last week, the world's fish geek community converged on a frigid, misty Paris to form the [2010 Seafood Summit](#), an annual event organized by the [Seafood Choices Alliance](#) and designed to facilitate discussion about the current state of the seafood industry and the future of our planet's fish. Over 600 representatives of industry, academia, the environmental movement, government agencies, and intergovernmental bodies came together to exchange ideas, intelligence, and insults while firmly ensconced in a Parisian conference hotel.

A wide swath of topics was covered by a diverse medley of panels and presentations over the three days of the summit. Fisheries were analyzed, certification schemes were compared and contrasted, and environmentalists sparred with industry hardliners. Through it all, gossip ricocheted down the corridors of the conference center, partnerships were forged in the fires of crisis, and luminaries rained wisdom down on a parched audience.

Fortunately for seekers like myself, the conference was blessed by the attendance of the most illustrious group of aquatic icons since the cast reunion of Finding Nemo.



Pauly pulls no punches, people

[Dr. Daniel Pauly](#), preeminent fisheries scientist at the University of British Columbia, opened the event with a keynote speech that magnificently wove candor, charisma, and the statistical equivalent of howitzer fire together to illustrate the grave state of our oceans. He pulled no punches. Notable quotes from the address include: "Ladies and gentlemen, there is no such thing as a sustainable trawler," "[Carnivorous] aquaculture is robbing Pedro to pay Paul," and my personal favorite, "You are all too fat! You don't need to eat so much protein!"

The peaceful yin to Pauly's blood-and-thunder yang came at the end of the summit in a gentle, supportive, and passionate closing speech by [Julie Packard](#), the executive director of the [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) and a chairman of the ocean-worshipping Packard Foundation. Packard's words helped to sooth nerves rubbed raw by the energy and fervor that had electrified the Summit. Eco-freaks, ocean plunderers, and everyone in between sat in silence during the address, thankful for the clarity and the solace in Packard's words.



Clover combats culinary catastrophe

Charles Clover, author of [The End of the Line](#) and one of the planet's most valiant defenders of the bluefin tuna, brought his mission to the Summit as he engaged in any number of discussions with key figures from the industry, academia, and the environmental movement. His unique ability to meld the twin facets of his personality — “dashing eco-warrior” and “stodgy old tory” — into a surprisingly charming duality worked wonders as he promoted his newest venture, the environmentally-oriented restaurant review website [fish2fork](#).

There were a number of themes that influenced the general direction of discussion. [Target's decision to eliminate farmed salmon](#) was a major focus of discussion, as was the progress being made in France towards [the inclusion of Northern bluefin tuna under CITES Appendix 1](#). There was a great deal of interest in the emergence of new and lesser-known fisheries, such as salmon runs in the Russian Far East, and there were some powerful discussions comparing and contrasting various sustainable seafood “approval” schemes and certification systems — this proliferation of rankings, stickers, and seals is clearly one of the most important issues facing the industry today.

While some of the same old baggage was trucked in yet again — I found myself in yet another hard-headed shouting match with a salmon farmer, for example — there was actually a great deal of progress visible at this year's summit. People were actually discussing real issues. An entire day was devoted to tuna, and while some of the weaker industry-[WWF](#) collaborations (such as the [Marine Stewardship Council](#) and the [International Seafood Sustainability Foundation](#)) did receive an inordinate share of unjustified back-slapping, there was some positive, reality-oriented talk as well. No one stood up to defend [ICCAT](#) during the discussion on bluefin stock management, for example. One can only hope that those days are over.



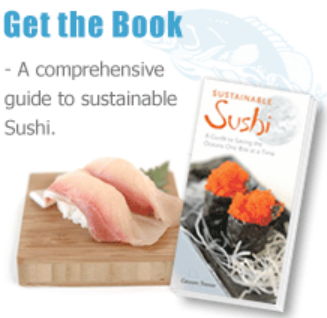
A light in the darkness

As we move forward into 2010, I am optimistic and full of hope. There was a genuine, palpable desire for change rippling through the attending body at the Summit. Our patience for the plausible (and implausible) denial of the changes our planet and our oceans are undergoing seems to be at its end. I sincerely believe that if we work together and challenge old, broken paradigms without fear, we will be able to capitalize on this desire for change, and rebuild the seafood industry into something that works.

Tags: [2010](#), [alliance](#), [aquaculture](#), [bluefin](#), [choices](#), [CITES](#), [clover](#), [conference](#), [fish2fork](#), [greenpeace](#), [ICCAT](#), [issf](#), [monterey](#), [msc](#), [nemo](#), [packard](#), [panel](#), [paris](#), [pauly](#), [seafood](#), [summit](#), [target](#), [UBC](#), [WWF](#)

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