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“Guilt Free” Chilean Seabass

A Chilean Seabass (Patagonian toothfish) cast is travelling to Boston, USA, to become a centre piece of the COLTO booth at the Seafood Expo North America show, from 16 to 18 March. The cast will be given away as a prize during the show.

The Coalition for Legal Toothfish Operators (COLTO) will showcase the astounding turnaround for toothfish (aka Chilean Seabass) fisheries globally, and inform people of how successful recent measures have been at ensuring sustainable toothfish fisheries.

Chilean Seabass is back in restaurants, and customers can eat the delicacy ‘guilt free’, following elimination of the plunder from pirates and illegal fishermen, and improvements in tracking toothfish products to ensure they come from legal sources, said COLTO Chair Martin Exel.

Patagonian Toothfish were threatened by illegal fishing from 1995 to 2005, but that’s no longer the case. Collaboration amongst legal industry, conservation groups, scientists, governments, and the international Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), virtually eliminated illegal fishing of toothfish from Exclusive Economic Zones by 2005.

Fisheries were restricted to allow recovery of stocks and, at the same time, devised world leading seabird protection measures which dramatically reduced seabird bycatch by over 99%, and have saved tens of thousands of seabirds as a result.

Martin said today that Toothfish fisheries were increasingly sustainable, healthy and legal – as demonstrated through CCAMLR, Government agencies and also, for a number of fisheries, as independently certified by the Marine Stewardship Council and the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Program.

“That said, there’s always work to be done...” he said “... and COLTO members remain committed to ensure sustainability of all toothfish fisheries. There are still a few illegal operations on the high seas, and we’re working to eliminate those activities also.”

He invited everyone to visit Booth 187 at Seafood Expo North America, and take their chance at winning the replica toothfish cast.

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Background

The replica comes from a 13 kilogram Patagonian Toothfish caught in June 2013 from the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone, in sub Antarctic waters around Heard Island and McDonald Islands.



There are two species of Toothfish - Patagonian Toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) and Antarctic Toothfish (*Dissostichus mawsoni*) which are very similar. Both of them are marketed in North America as “Chilean Seabass” and are also known variously around the world as Toothfish, Mero, and Bacalao de Profundidad.

Toothfish live for up to 45 years, and reach a maximum size of around 100 kilograms, living in depths down to 3,000 metres in the Southern Oceans.

COLTO members represent approximately 80% of the world’s toothfish fishermen and supporters operating from 11 different countries including Argentina, Australia, Chile, Falkland Islands, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, South Africa and the United States of America.

More details and fact sheets for Chilean Seabass can be found at www.colto.org, along with independent assessments of fisheries at www.ccamlr.org, www.msc.org and www.seafoodwatch.org.

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