

**Greetings!**

It is a brand new year and FishWise is already experiencing some exciting new changes. This month we highlight our involvement with Santa Monica Seafood's RSVP program, present a FishWise staff update, note Mariah's attendance at the 8th International IUU Fishing Forum and introduce our newest FishWise team member, Arias Aguirre.

Enjoy!

**Quick Links**

[Santa Monica Seafood's RSVP Program](#)

[FishWise Staff Update](#)

[8th International IUU Forum](#)

[New Team Member](#)

[In Case You Missed It...](#)

**Feature Article: Santa Monica Seafood's RSVP Program**

**SANTA MONICA**  
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It's not often that seafood companies put their money where their mouth is in regards to their sustainable seafood commitments, however, Santa Monica Seafood one of the largest seafood distributor in the southwest United States has done just that. At the cutting edge of sustainability Santa Monica Seafood supports conservation efforts throughout the world's oceans through their [Responsible Sourcing Vendor Partner \(RSVP\) Program](#). The RSVP program was created by Santa Monica Seafood to apply a percentage of their seafood purchases towards projects relating to marine science & research, conservation, aquaculture, habitat restoration, fisheries management, education and improvement of fishing gear & techniques. Now in it's third year of operation, this unique program funds valuable work that helps to ensure sustainable seafood for Santa Monica Seafood customers for years to come. To help maintain the integrity of the program, Santa Monica Seafood brought FishWise on as a third-party manager of their RSVP program.

Since it's inception, 15 projects have been funded through the RSVP program with several of them receiving repeated annual funding. In the last year, a total of 11 projects were supported with RSVP funds to protect important marine species, develop sustainable aquaculture techniques, conduct science to inform sound management, educate the next generation of seafood consumers and support the meeting of seafood industry players to discuss how best to conserve our marine resources for the future.

On the conservation front, the [Bird's Head Leatherback Turtle Project](#) was brought on in November, focusing on conserving the critically endangered Pacific Leatherback sea turtle and its nesting beaches on the Bird's Head peninsula in Papua Barat, Indonesia. This area is a fertile nesting ground for the species and is one of the last places like it in the world. [The Fish Reef Project](#) in southern California is dedicated to constructing artificial reefs off our coast to provide new habitat for fishing and diving opportunities and in turn taking pressure off nearby heavily fished areas. Plans for multiple 5-acre reefs are currently in development. [Trout Unlimited](#) completed a study of genetic diversity among salmon in the headwaters of Bristol Bay, Alaska - emphasizing the importance of conserving the area's salmon breeding grounds. This region is under threat of

development of a large gold, copper and molybdenum mining operation that could have disastrous consequences for the local salmon fisheries, considered to be one of the most robust in the world. The [Sustainable Fisheries Partnership](#) (SFP) has a Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) surrounding the [Gulf of California trawl-shrimp industry](#). RSVP funds are supporting an initiative to improve the trawling gear by including fish exclusion devices in order to reduce bycatch, therefore taking steps towards making the fishery more sustainable.

In the world of aquaculture, the [Alaska King Crab Research, Rehabilitation, and Biology Program](#) (AKCRRAB) has made headway with their mission of developing culturing techniques for blue and red king crabs in order to provide stock enhancement opportunities for Alaska's dwindling wild king crab populations. In the past year, new high-density captive rearing techniques for blue king crabs have led to a survival rate of over 89% - which will lead to greater success in the future. In southern California, the [Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute](#) has a long running aquaculture program focused on White Sea Bass breeding and restocking, with an acoustic monitoring component in place for post-release tracking.

The vast network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) on the west coast of the U.S. has brought about questions of efficacy in regards to the abundance of fish stocks and health of marine ecosystems. In it's second year with RSVP, the California Sea Grant [California Collaborative Fisheries Research Project](#) serves as a collaborative effort between researchers, marine scientists, and commercial fishermen. Important management data is gathered on commercially important species through commercial live trap surveys and volunteer angler hook-and-line sampling trips where thousands of fish have been caught and tagged for monitoring purposes. In Baja California, Mexico, the Magdalena Bay fishing cooperative and [COBI](#) (non-profit Comunidad y Biodiversidad) have created a MPA designed to foster the recovery of declining finfish, abalone, and spiny lobster populations. Members of the fishing cooperative are invested in the project and have been instrumental in monitoring data relating to the MPA. This project also focuses on fair trade issues for the local fishermen, ensuring that they are receiving fair prices for their catch and improving the management of their supply chain.

RSVP funds also support education programs and industry meetings to help ensure that passion for marine conservation is passed down to younger generations and understood by key industry players. [Heal the Bay's](#) "Key to the Sea" program is in its third year of RSVP support. Providing engaging, hands-on marine education to low-income elementary students and teachers in the Los Angeles area, [Key to the Sea](#) has reached approximately 17,000 children since its inception through visits to participating aquariums. Students are taught about important issues surrounding watershed pollution, environmental stewardship, and sustainable fisheries. This past September, RSVP funds were given in support of the SeaWeb [Seafood Summit](#) - an international forum dedicated to improving ocean health by bringing together stakeholders from many different disciplines. Last year, the Seafood Summit marked its tenth year with a theme of "Evolving Solutions for New Horizons", focusing on sustaining the momentum that the sustainable seafood movement has gathered in the last few years.

With all of the great work being conducted towards the goal of healthier ocean ecosystems, the RSVP program and their funding recipients should be congratulated. Imagine if more organizations followed their lead. Keep up the good work Santa Monica Seafood!

To learn more about the RSVP program, please visit the RSVP [website](#) and [blog](#).

Former Managing Director, Matt Owens has officially transitioned away from FishWise responsibilities to begin a new career as Director of Environmental Policy & Social Responsibility with [Tri Marine](#). Tri Marine is a vertically integrated tuna supply company headquartered in Bellevue, WA that maintains a global network of fishing-related infrastructure. Matt will be targeting sustainability and public policy issues to enhance the long-term reliability and integrity of Tri Marine's supply chain solutions for its customers. As many of our partners know, Matt has a passion for seafood and for improving industry practices, so Tri Marine will be in good hands. FishWise will remain in close contact with Matt and we wish him the best in all of his future endeavors.



Change creates opportunity and FishWise is proud to announce that Meghan Frolli has been promoted to Project Director. As a Project Director, Meghan will now lead the Safeway partnership in addition to the many other responsibilities that she maintained in her former role as a Project Manager. Meghan has consistently produced top-quality work and has demonstrated the capacity to lead our longest standing, national retail partnership.



## 8th International IUU Fishing Forum - London



[The Chatham House](#) will be holding the 8th International Forum on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in London on February 11 & 12.

Mariah Boyle, FishWise Project Director, will be speaking on traceability in the North American seafood industry in Session 4 from 16:30-18:00 on the first day of the conference. If you are attending the event and want to schedule some time to chat with Mariah you can reach her [here](#).



Additional information on the conference can be found [here](#) and the [agenda](#) is available for download.

## FishWise Welcomes its Newest Team Member - Arias Aguirre



FishWise is proud to introduce you to our newest (and smallest) team member, Arias Moon Zovar Aguirre. While he is presently a man of few words, Arias is already making parents Tobias and Jessica very happy.

As for the product specs, Arias is a big, healthy baby boy weighing in at 9 lbs. 7 oz. In fact, Arias was a little shy at first, waiting until three weeks "past" the due date to make his official debut but when he was ready, Arias officially joined the team at 12:34pm on January 15th, 2013.

Said FishWise Executive Director (and proud father) Tobias Aguirre, *"What a wild, wonderful and challenging journey it has been. Jessica was incredibly courageous and strong, my love and respect for her is deeper than ever before."*

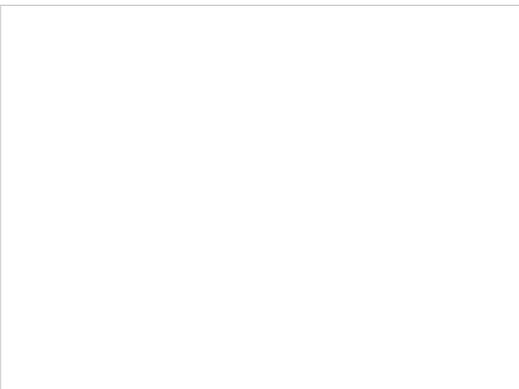
While the new family takes time to recover and bond, we here at the office imagine it is only a matter of time until Arias undergoes his official onboarding process at FishWise headquarters and brings new energy to the team.

In Case You Missed It...

Here is a great song that has been making its way around the internet and has thrust a immigrant fishmonger located in England onto the international stage. The first video is how he got his start and the second video is how far he has come. Check it out!



THE ORIGINAL... One 1 Pound Fish, Queens Market, Upton Park, London E13



One Pound Fish - ??1 Fish Man - O-Fish-AI Video

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to contribute to the FishWise Newsletter please don't hesitate to contact me!

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