

# SLOW FISH 2024 CREW TOGETHER

NOV 1-3



2024

## SLOW FISH

CHARLESTON SC

# EVENT REPORT

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Slow Fish 2024: Charleston would not have happened without the commitment and energy from the various planning teams that dedicated significant time, energy and creativity over a year of meetings, emails and multiple phone calls. Huge thanks to those who crewed together to make the event sing, including: Ana Shellem, Ashley Hay Mitchell, Amanda Wlaysewski, Ashley Watts, Bilal Sarwari, Brett Tolley, Brian Solem, Carrie Larson, Colles Stowell, Feini Yin, Jennifer Halstead, Karen Stark, Kate Masury, Kerry Marhefka, Kurt D'Aurizio, Laughton Elliott DeAngelis, Mara Welton, and Melanie Brown.

We'd also like to thank our Key Chord speakers, including Buck Jones, Captain Charlie Abner, Dana Honn, Kerry Marhefka and Captain Kindra Arnesen.

Additionally, we want to acknowledge the coordination and guidance of the Deep Dive session leaders, including Ashley Hay Mitchell, Elizabeth Dubovsky, James Mitchell, Kevin Scribner, Mara Welton, and Melanie Brown. Sincere thanks go to the Sunday morning strategic breakout session guides, including Ana Shellem, Bilal Sarwari, Brett Tolley, Kevin Scribner, and Niaz Dorry.



Sincere thanks to Melanie Brown for providing an Indigenous land acknowledgement and to Queen Quet, Chieftess of the Gullah Geechee Nation, for welcoming us to the community's lands and waters via words, songs and visual imagery.



We express deep thanks to our partners and hosts with Slow Food Charleston, including Ashley Hay Mitchell, Angie Pitts, Carrie Larson, Jessica Diaz, Julie Shaffer, Kellie Holmes, Michael Tuohy and the entire community. Their collective efforts were indispensable in securing the partnership with the College of Charleston, the development of the Slow Fish City Guide to restaurants, the coordination of local food, the logistics for the Sunday gathering at Bowen's Island, and especially the food, music and community outreach for the Slow Fish Festival to wrap up the weekend. We joined Slow Fish Charleston in celebrating its 20th Anniversary.

The celebration soared in part because of the creative, delicious seafood tastes prepared by Charleston area chefs and the on-the-dock fun provided by Tia Clark of Crabbing with Tia.



Deep gratitude goes to our sponsors, including those who donated local, sustainable seafood, including Anna Marie Seafood, Chatham Harvesters Cooperative, Downeast Dayboat, Gulf of Maine Conservas, Pride of Bristol Bay, Seafood Producers Cooperative, Shell'em Seafood, and Wild for Salmon. Sincere thanks also goes to GrowFood Carolina for donating the produce for Saturday's meals at the College of Charleston and the chefs' seafood preparations for the Slow Fish Celebration on Bowen's Island. We also thank the College of Charleston Charleston's Culinary Group for sourcing local food and seafood with values for breakfast, lunch and snacks during the weekend.

Finally, immense gratitude goes to Niaz Dorry and Brett Tolley for stepping in last-minute to emcee the opening ceremony and deliver the plenary presentation in Colles' absence, and to Mara Welton, for organizing day-of logistics and ensuring things ran smoothly despite the many unexpected curve balls that add to the beautiful, and at times chaotic, nature of the Slow Fish network.



# SPONSORS



11th Hour Project

The Schmidt Family Foundation



**DON'T CAGE**  
OUR OCEANS



GULF OF MAINE CONSERVAS



**ONE FISH**  
FOUNDATION



**WILD FOR SALMON**





# INTRODUCTION

The theme for Slow Fish 2024: Charleston was “Crew Together: Catch the Rising Tide!” That notion of working together to support community-based fisheries and seafood with values has been the driving force behind the Slow Fish North America network since its inception some time after 2012. The grassroots, horizontal nature of the network since then has empowered folks to build relationships, organize around common issues facing fisherfolk, and work toward a more equitable and just seafood system.



## **SLOW FISH** **RISING TIDE**

What we couldn't know when we set that theme in the summer was just how relevant that sentiment would be during the event on Nov. 1-3, 2024. This was the first in-person event for the entire Slow Fish North America network in six years. We had to cancel a fully planned event set for March of 2020 at the University of New Hampshire due to Covid. Every other gathering since then has either been virtual (see the [Crew Together Webinar series](#) and the [Slow Fish North America 2021 Virtual Gathering](#)), or locally focused and in person (see the Rising Tide Program events).

So the 2024 Planning team and the Slow Fish North America Oversight team created an event that would reignite the unifying spark that is Slow Fish for this year's gathering in Charleston. The Planning team, Oversight team and the network had to Crew Together when three integral players to the event's production were either unable to attend the event in Charleston or had to leave early.

The result? Attendees left Charleston energized, motivated, and ready to collaborate on a host of issues affecting local seafood systems such as consolidation, industrialization, privatization, limited processing, and limited transparency. Throughout the event, from Friday's opening gathering to Saturday's Deep Dive discussions and Sunday's network strategy discussions, attendees strengthened existing relationships, forged new friendships, and found ways to Crew Together.

Even after six years, Slow Fish 2024 was indeed an extension of the momentum and energy we've built since our last in person events in San Francisco in 2018 and New Orleans in 2016. We had nearly 80 fishers, fishmongers, retailers, chefs, scientists, educators, advocates and community leaders from across the country, spanning from Maine to Hawaii. More than 350 people from the Charleston community and beyond joined Slow Fish 2024 attendees to celebrate local seafood with values prepared by local chefs for the Slow Fish Festival co-hosted with Slow Food Charleston and Slow Food USA.

We'll continue to build on that momentum. We'll continue to build relationships, which are our greatest resource, and which fuel our unity around the shared set of values of supporting seafood that is good, clean and fair. And we'll continue to engage more communities in embracing local seafood systems that support local fisherfolk and other seafood producers.

This report gives an overview of the event, from the planning process to the opening ceremony, the Deep Dive discussions, the breakout strategy sessions, the Slow Fish Festival and the survey feedback we received. We'll use feedback from the surveys and the event to help shape future events. Additionally, this report shares next steps for Slow Fish North America and its mission, collectively generated during and after the event. These ideas will be a critical foundation for the Oversight Team as it develops a Strategic Plan for the network for the future. That plan, rooted in the great brainstorming in Charleston, and which we will share with the network for feedback, will be our North Star for the future.



# NEXT STEPS

1. Develop a strategic plan (led by Slow Fish North America Oversight Team) for the next year based on the thoughtful dialogue during the Sunday morning strategy sessions on Bowen's Island. The team will share that plan with the network for feedback and finalization.
2. Expand the Rising Tide program
  - a. Create a more visible and informative online presence on the Slow Food USA website under the Slow Fish North America page to provide information about the program, its goals and results.
  - b. Build out a calendar of Rising Tide events with already interested communities.
  - c. Develop a BaitBox with thorough guidance on how to host and execute a successful Rising Tide event.
  - d. Continue collaboration with international communities interested in hosting Rising Tide events. This thread extends from Slow Fish North America presentation to the Slow Fish Global Assembly and ensuing conversations at Slow Food Terra Madre in Italy last September.
3. Add new members to the Slow Fish North America listserv, including those who attended Slow Fish 2024.
4. Explore the possibility of creating an online marketplace where folks in the network can market their seafood products. This will not be a sales transaction destination. This will be an online connection point.
5. Work with sister organizations like Local Catch Network, North American Marine Alliance and Don't Cage Our Oceans to provide online and in-person forums to dive deeper into the conversations we held in Charleston, namely: aquaculture with values; zero waste seafood; better representation of Indigenous voices in fisheries policy; seafood in the Farm Bill; and local processing.
6. Explore more ways to grow the network, including education about seafood with values at a public and professional level.

# KEY MESSAGES & THEMES

The goals of Slow Fish 2024 were clear: gather, unite as a force, brainstorm solutions to common challenges, and harness our collective energies to move Slow Fish North America forward. And we did just that!

Several key themes arose throughout the gathering, reinforcing Slow Fish North America's values and the strength of our community. Some – by no means all – of these common threads include:



CREW TOGETHER!



FOSTER CONNECTIVITY AND  
COLLABORATION WITHIN THE  
NETWORK



INCREASE NETWORK  
ENGAGEMENT



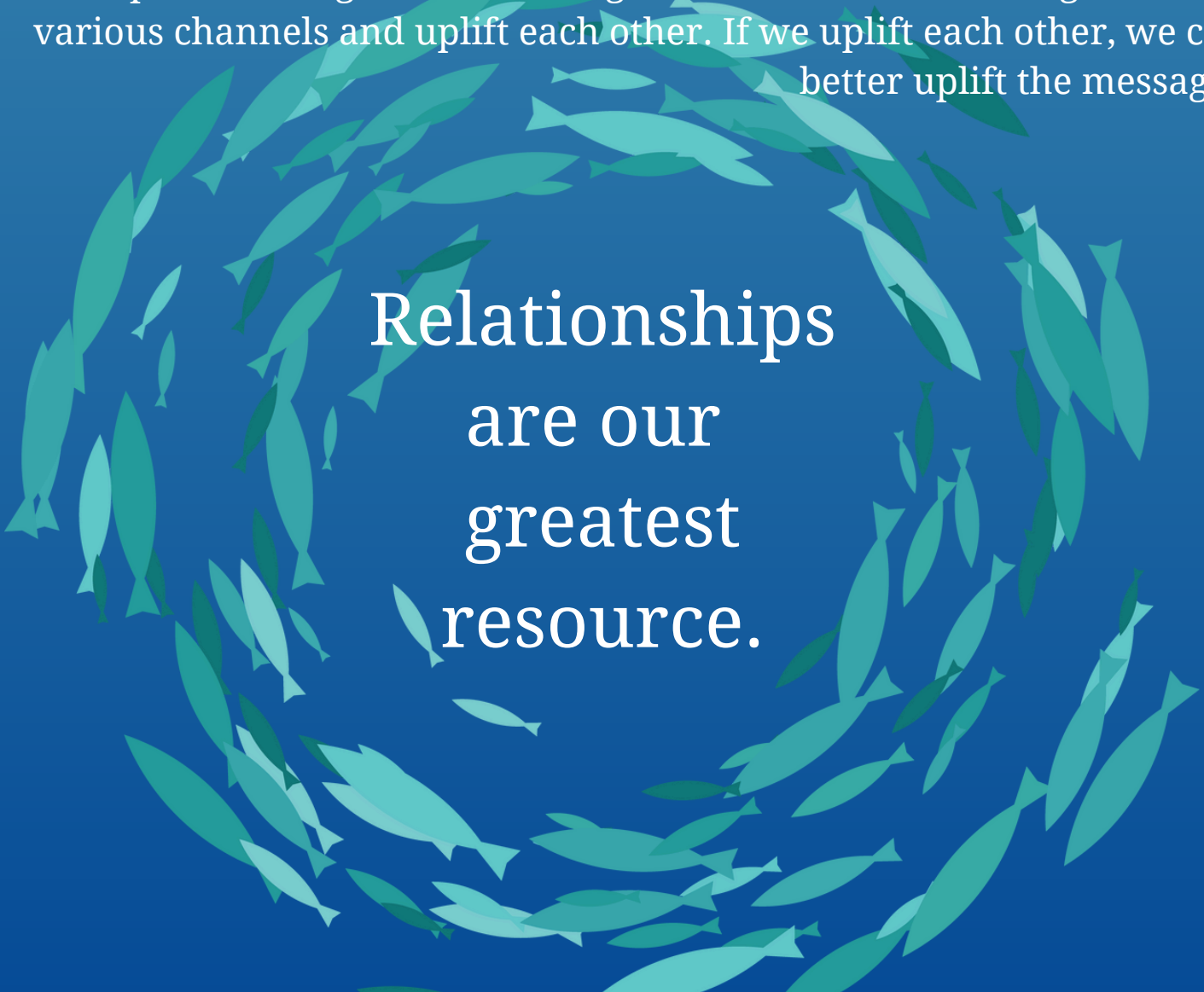
COMMUNICATE THE MESSAGE  
CLEARLY – EDUCATION IS  
ESSENTIAL



# CREW TOGETHER!

The overarching theme for the weekend was “Crew Together! Catch the Rising Tide!” This mantra proved to be far more apropos of the weekend than the Planning Team envisioned when it settled on the theme last summer. Three folks central to either leading discussions or coordinating preparation or on-site logistics either had to cancel their flights at the last minute or had to leave early. However, the rest of the team stepped up and crewed together and ensured everything went beautifully.

Collaboration and relationship building were at the heart of the many conversations throughout the weekend. That aspect of crewing together to problem-solve common challenges, envision what a better seafood system could look like, and strategize how to achieve those goals was our compass heading. If we work together, we can affect change through various channels and uplift each other. If we uplift each other, we can better uplift the message.



Relationships  
are our  
greatest  
resource.

# FOSTER CONNECTIVITY AND COLLABORATION WITHIN THE NETWORK

Throughout the gathering, and in the survey results, attendees identified the need for the network to continue connecting and collaborating and further deepen those relationships. For some, that means sharing ideas on how to secure critical USDA funding to help their businesses grow. For others, it means finding key partners to help influence regulatory bodies that decide how fisheries are managed. Still more folks wanted to know how to connect with other small seafood processors in the network and link together to better collaborate on developing solutions and securing finances so they could grow their own businesses.

Many new connections made in Charleston are sparking conversations that could lead to producers selling their product to new customers in new geographies.



Photo: Ruta Smith



# INCREASE NETWORK ENGAGEMENT

We have a strong network of fishermen, mariculturists, producers, fishmongers, chefs, educators, advocates, and seafood eaters across the continent. Within the network, there are opportunities for engagement across a wide spectrum of ideas, questions, needs, and more.

The Slow Fish Rising Tide program set out two years ago to bring Slow Fish values, storytelling and content to Slow Food communities across the country. In two years, we've reached nearly 1,300 people in 13 communities from coast to coast to coast. We hosted interactive, educational, and experiential community engagements such as KNOW FISH Dinners<sup>®</sup>, Chefs Camps and Seafood Throwdowns to bring the Slow Fish values message to folks throughout the seafood supply chain, from producers to chefs to consumers. In the end, we convinced folks why they should care about where their seafood comes from.


We want to continue that progress with more Rising Tide engagements in more communities across the continent. Some of the ideas percolating from the weekend include:



- engaging with culinary schools and high schools**



- developing an online portal to a marketplace where folks in the network can market their wares**



- creating an online FAQ resource page to explain what “sustainable seafood” means via the Slow Fish values prism, and how curating Rising Tide events can help spread that message.**

These were just a few of the many ideas to broaden our connections with communities to spread the message of good, clean, fair seafood.

# COMMUNICATE THE MESSAGE – EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL

Slow Fish North America prioritizes the values of good, clean, and fair seafood, and we hold each other accountable to those values. Let's cultivate a deeper appreciation and better understanding of what slow looks like throughout the supply chain. What does slow seafood processing look like when considering the many logistics and variables that each processor must navigate on a regular basis? How do we best communicate the message of good, clean, and fair seafood to consumers? How do we share the science around things like industrial aquaculture in a digestible manner?

**How do each of us show up as educators to our varying audiences?**



**Fisherfolk:** How do I tell my story so folks in and around my community learn what I do, how I do it, why I do it, and why they should trust me?

**Fishmongers:** How to tell the story of where the seafood comes from, who caught it where and when, and why folks should trust me?



**Chefs:** I'm telling stories through the seafood I serve. I want to tell you why I'm serving this seafood, where it comes from and who caught it. That story is the value of the seafood you're eating.



**Consumers:** I ask questions because I want to learn the story of the seafood I eat. I want to own my relationship to seafood. Why should I care?

**Students:** "What's my relationship to seafood, even if I don't eat it? How do my decisions affect marine ecosystems? Why should I care?"



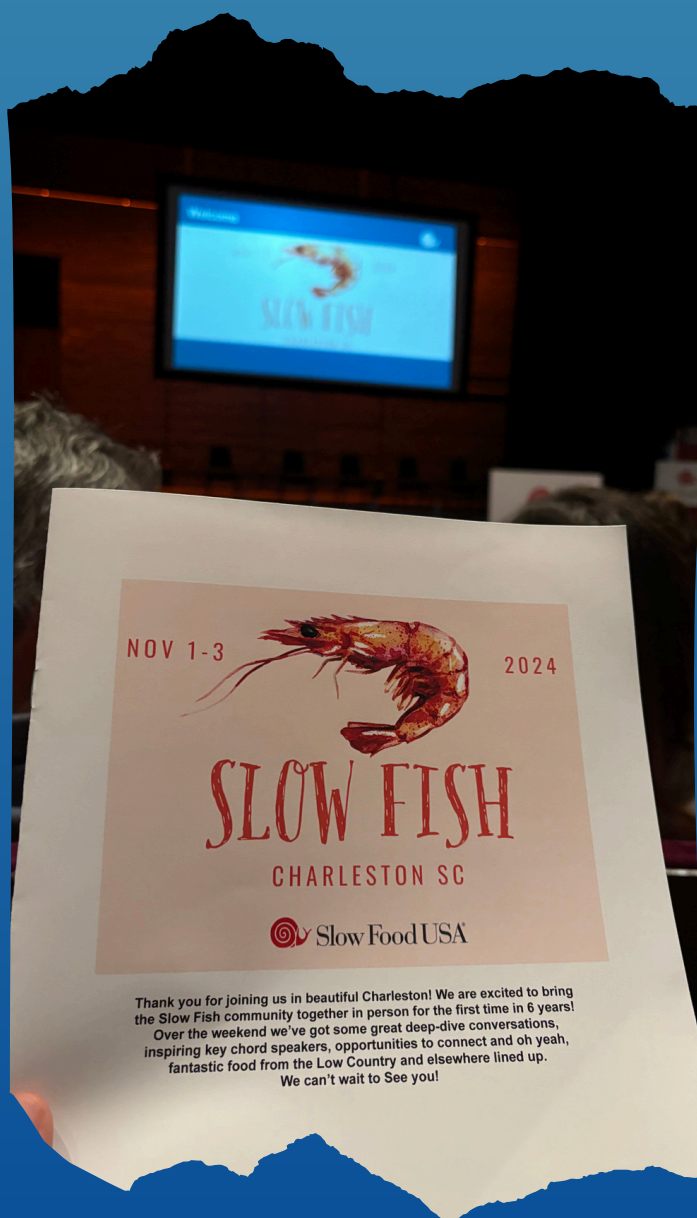
# SESSION SUMMARIES

## Friday, November 1

### Welcome Ceremony

Slow Fish 2024 kicked off with an Indigenous land acknowledgement given by Melanie Brown, Yup'ik commercial fisherwoman from Alaska, and a spiritually grounding welcome ceremony led by Queen Quet, Chieftess of the Gullah-Geechee Nation.

Brett Tolley and Niaz Dorry set the table for the rest of the conference by discussing where Slow Fish North America has been, where it is now, and where it is headed. Brett described the importance of relationships and community building to the work that we do, and how those relationships have helped grow and sustain the network since the first in-person event in 2016 in New Orleans. He also explained how those relationships, built on trust, are the foundation of community-level engagement such as the Rising Tide KNOW FISH Dinners and Chefs Camps. Rising Tide events will play a crucial role in Slow Fish North America's future growth. Brett said relationship building will be a common thread throughout the weekend's discussions.







# Saturday

## November 2

### College of Charleston

Below are descriptions of the Deep Dive discussions hosted throughout the day on Saturday. These sessions were shaped in part by the network, after we polled the community to find out what topics folks would like to discuss at the event. Experts within the network coordinated the planning, the panels and the flow of each session. You'll see we list the topic, the session leaders and the panelists prior to describing the conversation focus and any key takeaways.



# Slow Fish 101

## Session Leaders:

- Mara Welton, Slow Food USA
- Ashley Hay Mitchell, Slow Food Charleston

Because we welcomed several newcomers to our space in Charleston, we hosted a discussion on what seafood with values really means, and why we should all care about where our seafood comes from.



The discussion also highlighted the Slow Fish North America Rising Tide Program, exemplifying how it is engaging communities across the country in sustainable seafood conversations via unique events that bring together seafood eaters, chefs, local seafood producers, and more.

We talked about the importance of letting the host community guide event planning toward the type of event they want to curate for their specific communities. We talked about the different types of engagements aimed at different audiences along the seafood supply chain, including:

- **Chefs Camps:** Chefs, fishermen, fishmongers, retailers and distributors gather to talk about building direct relationships and trust to highlight local seafood on menus.
- **KNOW FISH Dinners:** Communities hear the story of the seafood they're eating directly from the producer, creating direct connections to the story and the person who harvested it.
- **Seafood Throwdowns:** Two chefs. One mystery fish. One hour. Chefs share their personal narratives on their connection to the fish and local seafood and why they care. The audience picks the winner.

We showed how folks can work with Slow Fish North America to host Rising Tide events and bring Slow Fish values, content and storytelling to their communities. Session participants left motivated to help spread the message about seafood with values.

# Aquaculture with Values

## Session Leader:

- James Mitchell, Don't Cage Our Oceans

## Panelists:

- Dr. Gideon Mordecai, University of British Columbia
- Melanie Brown, SalmonState
- Brett Tolley, North American Marine Alliance
- Dana Honn, Carmo restaurant
- Cassandra Loftlin, Goodness Gracious Grocery
- Captain Charlie Abner, Atlantic Seafood Harvesters Co-op
- Captain Kindra Arnesen, Women's Southern Fisheries Alliance
- Frank Salustri, South County Fishmonger
- Lance Nacio, Anna Marie Shrimp
- Mia Gover, Inland Ocean Coalition
- Amanda Swinimer, Dakini Tidal Wilds
- Faye Matthews, Taproot Earth
- Ashley Watts, Local l'a Seafood
- Andrew Evans, Local l'a Seafood



During the Aquaculture with Values session, we heard from a variety of individuals working to bring healthier seafood to tables while rejecting the notions of privatization of our public resources and the harms caused by industrial netpen fish farming, also known as CAFOs (concentrated animal feed operations). James Mitchell described the legislative seascape around aquaculture and outlined some of the challenges and successes in opposing industrial aquaculture. He explained that high density farming depletes forage fish populations and leads to pollution, privatization, user conflicts, harm to wildlife, and the risk of widespread disease among wild fish populations. One of his key messages: Instead of hating all aquaculture, we should focus on supporting aquaculture with values.



# Aquaculture with Values (cont.)

We heard from Dr. Gideon Mordecai about how easily highly virulent pathogens can spread throughout a salmon farm and into wild populations with disastrous impacts. We heard from others about the impacts of industrial fish farms on Native fishing communities, and learned about what values-based aquaculture looks like.



Chefs and fishermen shared stories of challenges and victories in getting fresh, local, values-based seafood to customers despite the heavy pressure from heavily financed corporate entities selling farmed fish and shrimp at cheap costs. Breakout groups gave attendees the opportunity to share ideas about communicating the science, advocacy, addressing chef and producer sourcing challenges, and aquaculture with values. Education is key, especially when communicating the science that illustrates the dramatic ecological and socio-economic toll of industrial aquaculture.

Attendees left this session with a much broader understanding of what responsible aquaculture looks like, the challenges we face in uplifting aquaculture with values while opposing industrial aquaculture, and an interest in continued collaboration to spread the message.

# Considering Indigenous Fish Spaces in Policy and Regulation Making

## Session Leader:

- Melanie Brown, Salmon State, Bristol Bay Fisher, Unangan, Sugpiaq, Yup'ik and Iñupiaq

## Panelists:

- Amy Sparck, Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, Yup'ik
- Justin Solet, LA Fisherman, Houma Nation
- Buck Jones, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Cayuse

U.S. fisheries management doesn't adequately account for the true meaning and value of subsistence fishing, the legal term assigned by the Federal Government to encompass traditional and customary practices of Indigenous people that existed long before fishing was monetized.



Photo: Colles Stowell

During the session, Amy Sparck described the sluggish response of the Pacific Fishery Management Council to precipitous drops in chum and chinook salmon runs on the Kuskokwim River, where she lives and fishes. She described how the closure of the subsistence fishing for chinook and chum over the last two years has upended ways of life that have existed for millenia. Reasons for the decline are varied and complex, but scientists and folks in Native communities along the Kuskokwim and Yukon rivers point to climate change and the massive bycatch from the Pacific pollock trawl fleet.



# Considering Indigenous Fish Spaces in Policy and Regulation Making (cont.)

Justin Solet shared the story of his people being forced to a coastline from the North, and how the oil and gas industry now disrupts their fishing practices. Finally, Buck Jones shared the work that is happening throughout the Columbia River basin to uphold treaty rights. The session highlighted the need for fisheries management and policy to create the conditions for fish to return to the people who have had a relationship with that species, not only ensuring that the cultural practices of the people will continue, but that there will be fish for all user groups in the future.



Folks left this session with more context around the need for better representation of Native voices in fisheries management decisions, especially around subsistence and traditional and customary practices. This will be an ongoing conversation as we explore more ways to support Indigenous fishing communities.



# More Fish Value for Fish With Values

Session Leader:

- Kevin Scribner, Forever Wild Seafood

Panelists:

- Amanda Wlaysewski
- Jhana Young, Conservation International/Hawai'i
- Ashley Watts, Local I'a Seafood
- Dana Honn, Carmo restaurant



This session focused on zero fish waste initiatives underway in New Orleans, Honolulu, and Portland, OR, informed by Iceland's 100% Fish initiative, plus traditional and innovative practices. Kevin Scribner set the table by describing why minimizing fish waste is so important given how much fish is typically wasted during processing. He then shared information about the Iceland Ocean Cluster, which supports businesses that aim to use 100% of harvested fish.

Jhana Young shared about The Ta'ape Project, which targets invasive Blue Snapper to boost local food security, support sustainable fishing and business practices, and decrease fishing pressure on native fish species.



Ashley Watts provided samples of fish leather and fish jerky as examples of starting small and asking “what can we do right now?” Chef Dana Honn shared his experiences in New Orleans with the Gulf Sushi Grade project and Full Catch, which focuses on expanding the definition of commercially-viable species in the Gulf. Finally, Kevin Scribner shared the Zero Waste Project in Portland, OR, which suggests products based on consumer interest to ensure 100% consumption where possible.

Attendees left inspired by the possibility of finding ways to increase value and usage of the fish they harvest, process, sell and cook.

# USDA and Seafood - success stories, lessons, and opportunities



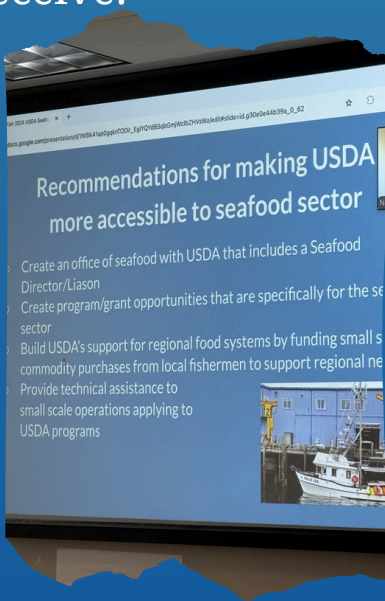
Session Leader:

- Elizabeth Dubovsky, Feeding Change Consulting

Panelists:

- Joshua Stoll, Local Catch Network
- Buck Jones, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
- Natalie Sattler, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association
- Captain Kindra Arnesen, Women's Southern Fisheries Alliance

America's fisheries generate millions of pounds of nutritious protein, billions of dollars in revenue for our country's economy, sustain thousands of domestic jobs, and support coastal and Indigenous communities from the Atlantic to the Pacific. And yet, seafood only receives a fraction of funding from the USDA that agricultural foods receive.



This conversation focused on the USDA and similar programs available to the seafood sector with a focus on gaps and opportunities for expanding access to the seafood sector in the future. Elizabeth Dubovsky provided an overview of the Farm Bill and its mission, and how seafood's primary inclusion in any Farm Bill language has been focused on aquaculture since to some people, that has the most direct correlation with agriculture.

Josh Stoll zoomed in from Denmark to explain that there is funding available to support seafood projects, but that funding is limited, and that a majority of USDA grants go to land-based projects. Natalie Sattler provided examples of different USDA grants that have been applied to seafood-specific projects aimed at supporting local seafood systems and fisheries in Alaska.



# USDA and Seafood - success stories, lessons, and opportunities (cont.)

## FARM BILL SEAFOOD PROVISIONS:

### AQUACULTURE

#### Senate Majority (Democratic) Farm Bill

- Creates an Aquaculture Liaison in the U.S. Department of Agriculture that then supports aquaculture activities.
- Aquaculture Assistance Program: Increases the authorization of appropriations to \$15 million for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029 and allows for a 30% indirect cost cap for the aquaculture assistance program.
- Includes aquaculture as a high-priority research area.

#### Senate Minority (Republican) Farm Bill

- Expands access to all standing disaster programs and makes bipartisan improvements to address drought, losses for producers who rely on acequia (water ditch) systems, livestock depredation and accuracy of indemnity rates for livestock and honey-bees, and makes enhancements to the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and the Tree Assistance Program.
- Ensures program eligibility for producers who derive 75% or more of their income from farming, ranching and forestry.
- Establishes clear eligibility for producers of farm-raised fish experiencing economic losses associated with bird depredation under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm Raised Fish.

### House

Committee on Agriculture approved a bill that includes the following:

- Creates an Aquaculture Advisory Committee under the National Aquaculture Act of 1980 based on a concept from H.R. 3951 (Sustaining Healthy Ecosystems, Livelihoods, and Local Seafood Act — a bipartisan bill introduced by Bonamici)
- Expands support for disaster programs that benefit aquaculture

### COMMERCIAL FISHING/WILD FISHERIES

#### Senate Majority (Democratic) Farm Bill

- NO Commercial Fishing/Wild Fisheries provisions

#### Senate Minority (Republican) Farm Bill

- Establish a seafood liaison in the USDA Office of Chief Economist.
- Require Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) for certain processed crab and salmon products.
- Direct the USDA to conduct a study on the feasibility of expanding seafood processing in coastal communities.
- Incorporate Buy American language into nutrition program purchases — 5 percent cap on non domestic purchases for each of the food categories, including Fish and Other Seafood.
- Open Agricultural Credit programs (low-cost loans) to fishing industry businesses, providing access equivalent to other food producers.

### House

- NO Commercial Fishing/Wild Fisheries provisions

Buck Jones described the work the Native Farm Bill Coalition (170 tribes and intertribal groups and organizations) has done to boost food security, infrastructure and sovereignty for tribes via the Farm Bill and other paths.

He said the USDA is the largest source of federal funds for Native communities. And yet, there needs to be more paths toward federal funding to help support Indigenous seafood communities.

Captain Kindra Arnesen talked about how consolidation in the seafood industry has robbed fishing communities of access to critical local infrastructure such as processing facilities, ice houses and working waterfront docks, etc. The group discussed the need for some advocacy at the federal level to improve the chances of federal funding to support local fishing communities.



Attendees left the session feeling energized to connect and learn more about different experiences with USDA funding and how to get involved with advocacy efforts to increase the presence of seafood in the Farm Bill.



# Processing

Session Leader:

- Elizabeth Dubovsky

Panelists:

- Amanda Wlaysewski, Kvichak Fish Co
- Seth Stewart, Yakobi Fisheries

A thriving local and regional seafood system can only be achieved when many barriers are overcome. One such barrier is the lack of community-based processing infrastructure that works in partnership with harvesters to produce high-quality, and durable products for market. Whether harvesters are offering their bounty fresh, frozen, or shelf-stable, access to processing infrastructure is key.



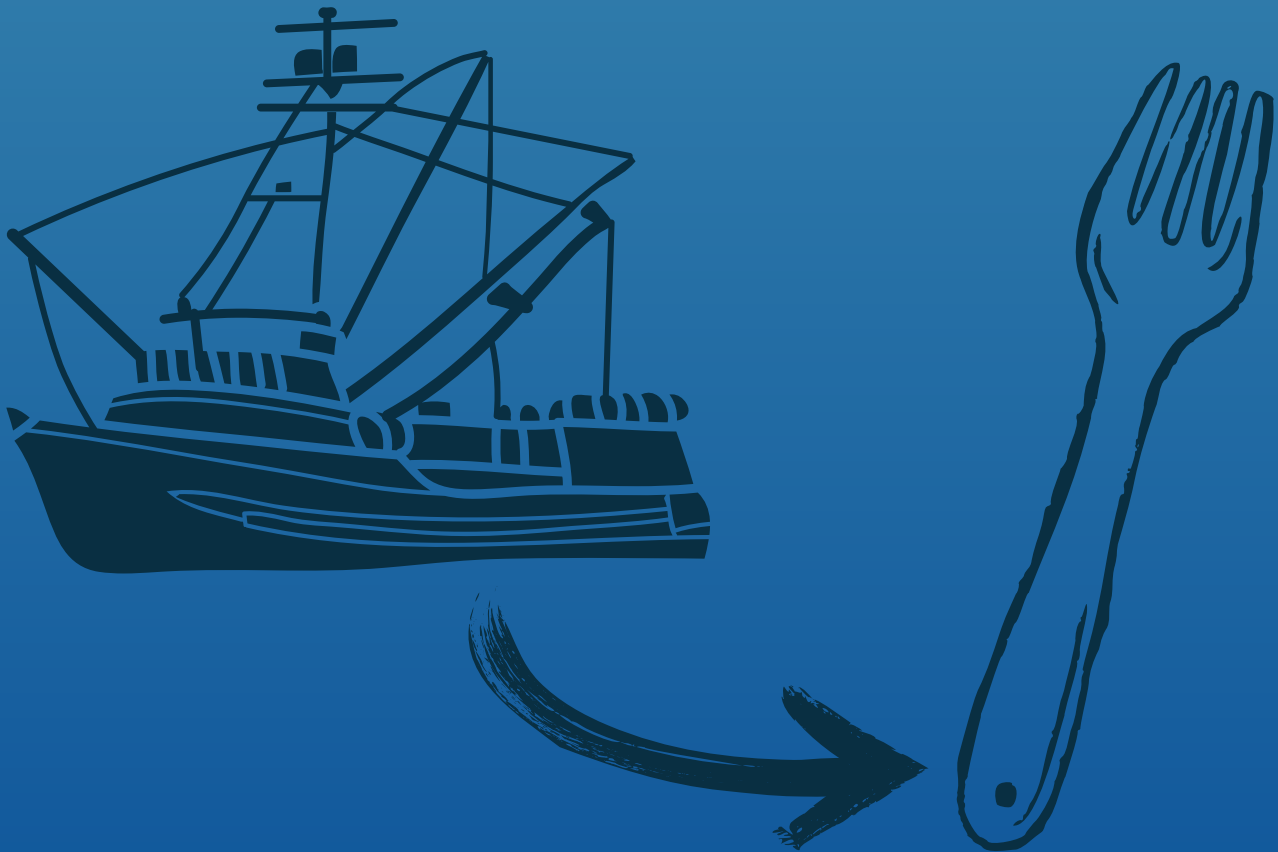
Access is becoming increasingly hard as consolidation and corporatization of the seafood industry means large, well funded operations are buying up smaller, local facilities. The result is that local fishermen are often denied access to critical infrastructure such as processing facilities, ice houses, etc.

Seth and Amanda discussed some of the realities of processing in Alaska. Seth talked about the reality that large processing operations play a critical role in Alaska's seafood industry. For example, in Bristol Bay, independent fishermen typically work with larger processors to offload their catch to tender boats to maximize their fishing window. The processor cuts and packages the fish with custom labels, saving the fishermen the time and effort.

## Processing (cont.)

Both Amanda and Seth shared their experiences in “slow” processing, including taking care of both the product and the employees to ensure everyone is on the same page about bringing seafood with values to market.

Attendees left the session with a deeper appreciation and better understanding of what it looks like throughout the many logistics and variables that processors navigate on a regular basis.







# Sunday

## November 3

### Bowen's Island

Below are descriptions of the three synthesis breakout sessions we hosted on Sunday on Bowen's Island. The sessions were set up as forums for everyone to share ideas on how to move the network forward. Results of these sessions are reflected below and in the Next Steps section.



# Slow Fish Stewardship

Stewarding the Slow Fish North America network is essential to its continued growth and success. So, how do we best do that? The group identified four key steps that are essential to steward the network:

- Clarify the Slow Fish North America organizational structure.
- Establish a plan for seeking funding that ensures continuity of the network.
- Create a framework for collaboration.
- Encourage engagement.

## Slow Fish Storytelling

During the Slow Fish Storytelling breakout session, attendees discussed how to best use storytelling to communicate Slow Fish values. Each link in the supply chain stands in a unique position to educate the public. For example, fishmongers can advocate for sustainable and equitable sourcing. Along with this, attendees identified the need for clear communication of the science that equips us with knowledge that we can pass on throughout the supply chain, ultimately to the consumer. Finally, it is important for us to utilize varying platforms and mediums to communicate with different audiences.

## Join the Rising Tide

Slow Fish North America's Rising Tide has experienced great growth since its inception. The group created a wish list of how to grow and expand the program. Some key ideas include expanding the audience through outreach to tourism boards, engaging culinary schools and highschools, and increasing Slow Food USA chapter engagement. Along with this, attendees highlighted the opportunity to expand Rising Tide programming options by offering things like hands-on courses such as tastings and cooking classes.

# CONCLUSION

The Oversight Team and the Slow Fish North America community at large had big expectations for Slow Fish 2024. What else can you demand from an event that was six years in coming, especially after having come so close to convening together in 2020? Our mission was to reignite that spark that emanated from each of the previous two in-person gatherings. There is definitely something to be said for looking someone in the eye while sharing stories in person, sealing the newly formed relationship or strengthening existing friendships with a handshake or a hug.

That is the community we've built together, and that we will continue to grow, centered on a shared vision of what local seafood systems based on aligned values (good, clean, fair) should look like.

Did we achieve that goal in Charleston? Hell yes!

# ONWARD!

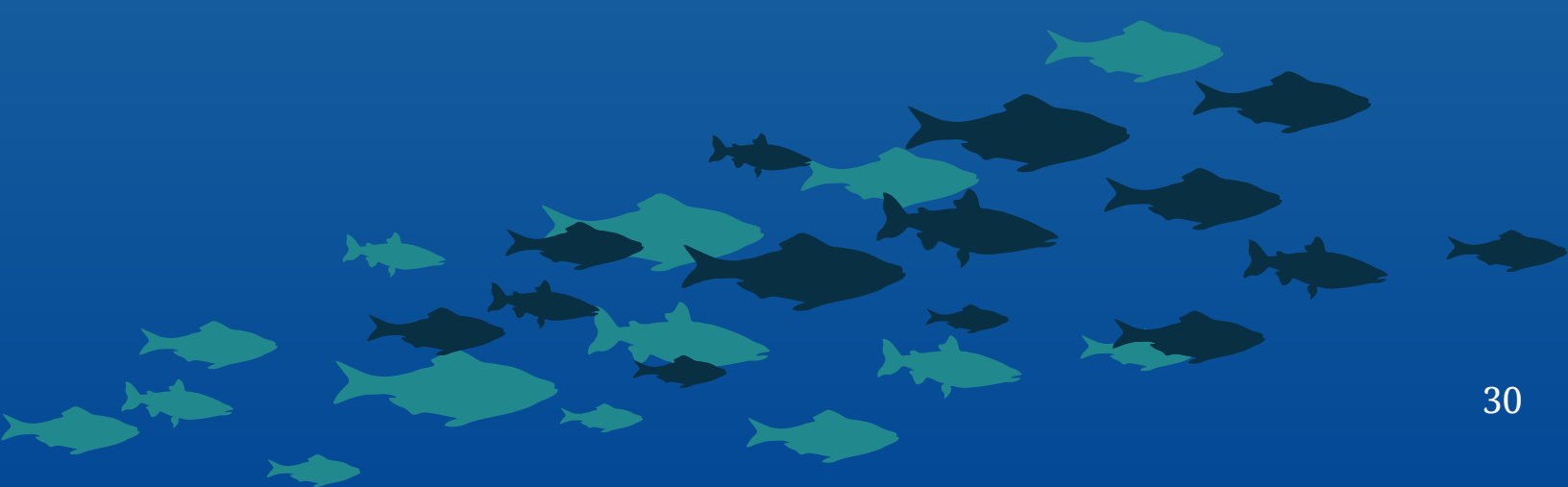


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# Slow Fish North America Oversight Team



The Slow Fish North America Oversight Team is an all-volunteer group of folks from diverse professional, cultural and geographic backgrounds committed to supporting values-based seafood and the local fishing communities that produce it. Since the Slow Fish 2018 gathering in San Francisco, the team has worked to grow the network, communicate and uphold our values, engage local communities in conversations about seafood with values, and spread the message about supporting independent seafood harvesters that produce seafood that is good, clean and fair. Building on the momentum from Slow Fish 2024: Charleston, the team will develop a strategic plan for the network to continue its mission and also provide a transparent process for folks who would like to join the team. Stay tuned!



Thank you for joining us in beautiful Charleston! We are excited to bring the Slow Fish community together in person for the first time in 6 years!

Over the weekend we've got some great deep-dive conversations, inspiring key chord speakers, opportunities to connect and oh yeah, fantastic food from the Low Country and elsewhere lined up.

We can't wait to See you!

*By entering an event or program of Slow Fish North America, you are entering an area where photography, audio and video recording may occur. Your entry and presence on the event premises constitutes your consent to be photographed, filmed, and/or otherwise recorded.*



**Friday, November 1, 2024**

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Location: Sottile Theater, [Campus Map](#)

Time: 2pm-6pm

2:00 - 4:00 PM	Attendee Check In	Lobby
4:00 - 6:00 PM	<p>Welcome Gathering</p> <p>Gather with us to kick off Slow Fish 2024! We'll hear from Slow Food USA and Slow Fish International. Queen Quet, Chieftess of the Gullah Geechee Nation, will welcome us, and we'll look at what Slow Fish North America has been up to over the last few years. Then, we'll hear from our Key Chords: Captain Charlie Abner, Buck Jones, Captain Kindra Arnesen, Chef Dana Honn, and Kerry Marhefka.</p> <p>Dinner in Charleston</p>	Theater
6:00 PM + on	<p>See the <a href="#">Slow Fish City Guide</a> restaurants around the city, courtesy of Slow Food Charleston. We encourage you to use this time to connect with friends, old and new, share ideas, and collectively envision what good, clean, fair seafood for all means. Don't feel like hitting the town? Grab a few friends and head back to your hotel or AirBnB with some takeout!</p>	

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## Saturday, November 2, 2024

Location: College of Charleston, Tate and Beatty Buildings, [Campus Map](#)

Time: 8:15am - 6pm

8:15 - 9:00 AM	Breakfast	Tate Gallery
9:00 - 12:15 PM	<p>Aquaculture</p> <p>Our 3-hour session features a panel of a mix of speakers, stories from chefs and seafood producers, and breakout groups. We'll dive into Big Ag ocean takeover attempts, the science of disease spreading, the impacts of fish farms to Native fishing communities, and what values-based aquaculture looks like.</p> <p>Slow Fish 101</p>	Beatty 115
9:00 - 10:30 AM	<p>Slow Fish curious? Join us for a frank discussion about what seafood with values really means, and why we should all care about where our seafood comes from. We'll also talk about the Slow Fish North America Rising Tide Program that is engaging communities across the country in sustainable seafood conversations via unique events that engage seafood eaters, chefs, local seafood producers, and more.</p>	Beatty 214
10:45 AM- 12:15 PM	<p>Considering Indigenous Fish Spaces in Policy and Regulation Making</p> <p>When it comes to managing fisheries there is not enough consideration given to people who fish outside of commercially driven spaces. 'Subsistence,' the legal term assigned by the Federal Government to encompass traditional and customary practices of Indigenous people, does not begin to cover the true meaning and value of cultural practices that existed long before fishing was monetized. Commercial fishery management and Traditional and Customary practices of Indigenous peoples are seen as interfering with each other. This discussion will center around fisheries being managed for the continuation and, in some cases, the restoration of fishing practices for all user groups.</p>	Beatty 216



12:15 - 1:00 PM	Lunch	Tate Gallery
1:00 - 2:30 PM	<p>More Fish Value for Fish With Values</p> <p>Panelists will describe full fish utilization and zero fish waste initiatives underway in New Orleans, Honolulu and Portland, OR, with a focus on how these initiatives can enhance the value of fisheries. Presentations will be informed by Iceland's 100% Fish initiative, plus traditional and innovative practices. Presenters will encourage attendees to replicate these initiatives in their own working waterfronts and communities. Seafood and the USDA - success stories, lessons, and</p>	Tate 315
1:00 - 2:30 PM	<p>opportunities</p> <p>America's fisheries generate millions of pounds of nutritious protein, billions of dollars in revenue for our country's economy, sustain thousands of domestic jobs, and support coastal and Indigenous communities from the Atlantic to the Pacific. And yet, seafood only receives a fraction of funding from the USDA that agricultural foods receive. This panel session will bring together experts and members of the local seafood community who will share their own experiences and lessons pursuing USDA funding as well as recommendations for making USDA funding more accessible to the local seafood community, including potential changes to the Farm Bill. Attendees will be invited to contribute their own perspectives and ideas for what a more seafood friendly USDA could look like.</p> <p>Break and Snacks</p>	Tate 207
2:30 - 2:45 PM	Processing	Tate Gallery
2:45 - 4:15 PM	<p>A thriving local and regional seafood system can only be achieved when many barriers are overcome. One of the large barriers that need to be addressed towards this end is the development of community-based processing infrastructure that works in partnership with harvesters to produce high-quality, and durable products for market. Whether harvesters are offering their bounty fresh, frozen, or shelf-stable access to processing infrastructure is key.</p>	Beatty 115



4:15 - 4:30 PM	Break and Snacks	Tate Gallery
4:30 - 5:30 PM	Wrapup with Group Join us as we wrap up the day, hearing quick recaps from each session, what the evening plans are, and details about what to expect Sunday morning before we head off to Bowen’s Island to shell-ebrate.	Beatty 115
Available All Day	Chill Out Room Not attending a session? Feel free to chill out! Dinner in Charleston	Beatty 220
6:00 PM + on	See the <a href="#">Slow Fish City Guide’s</a> list of recommended restaurants around the city, courtesy of Slow Food Charleston. We encourage you to use this time to connect with friends, old and new, share ideas, and collectively envision what good, clean, fair seafood for all means. Don’t feel like hitting the town? Grab a few friends and head back to your hotel or AirBnB with some takeout!	

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Sunday, November 3, 2024

Location: Bowen's Island, [Charleston Map](#)

Time: 10:00am - 5:00pm

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 10:00 - 10:15 AM | Conference Attendee Arrival<br>Make your way to Bowen's Island - Uber and Lyft and carpooling options abound!  |
| 10:15 - 10:30 AM | Large Group Gathers<br>Let's set the stage for the morning session, Breakout Discussions   |
| 10:30 - 11:30 AM | We covered a lot of ground yesterday, let's talk about how to carry it forward! We'll break into three breakout groups to discuss how. Slow Fish Stewardship: Ever wonder who keeps the Slow Fish ship moving forward and how they do it? The Slow Fish North America Oversight Team is a volunteer collective of folks deeply committed to the shared values and to seeing this grassroots network grow, thrive, and support local seafood systems. This is your chance to learn how you can get involved with helping to chart the Slow Fish North America course! Slow Fish Storytelling: Building a compelling narrative around Slow Fish and its mission is at the center of how the network has stayed strong for the last decade. However, telling the story about Slow Fish and seafood with values isn't always easy or straightforward. Come join a group-think to brainstorm ways to tell the story of seafood with values through your own work, and via the Slow Fish lens. Join the Rising Tide: We've seen how the Rising Tide program has built community around seafood with values via Chefs Camps, KNOW FISH Dinners, Seafood Throwdowns, and other programming. Come learn how you can bring this type of programming to your communities and join the programming team that coordinates Rising Tide events. |



- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM | <p>Large Group Report Back</p> <p>Share with the group findings from the breakout sessions.</p>  |
| 12:00 - 12:30 PM    | <p>Reflections</p> <p>We take some time to reflect on the weekend, where we are going as a group and share our biggest takeaways!</p> <p>Lunch</p>   |
| 12:30 - 1:30 PM     | <p>Catered BBQ lunch for conference attendees from some of Charleston's finest!</p> <p>Get ready to party!</p>   |
| 1:30 - 2:00 PM      |  |
| 2:00 - 5:00 PM      | <p>Party Time!</p> <p>Let's shell-ebrate! Slow Fish North America will join Slow Food Charleston and Slow Food USA for the <a href="#">Slow Fish Festival</a> in the afternoon on Bowen's Island!</p> <p>This free community gathering will feature seafood tastings from some of Charleston's top chefs, a Bowen's Island Oyster Roast, crabbing and fishing demos, outdoor adventures, music, fireside chats, local vendors, and so much more!</p> |

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# Survey Results

The majority of folks who filled out the attendee survey were first-time Slow Fish North America in-person gathering attendees - Welcome aboard! Along with this, the majority enjoyed their gathering experience, found the atmosphere to be respectful and inclusive, and felt the values expressed at the conference and demonstrated by attendees aligned with the Slow Fish values of good, clean, and fair. Additionally, responses indicate that each day's format was good, with Sunday being the favorite - but who can argue with that? The most heavily attended sessions were Processing, More Fish Value for Fish with Values, and Aquaculture. Folks indicated that they made important connections with new people at the gathering and left feeling motivated to be more involved in Slow Fish North America and their communities. Overall, most things about the event worked well, but attendees would like to see more breakout sessions and have more networking and engagement opportunities. Additionally, folks would prefer not to have simultaneous sessions at gatherings.



# Survey Results (cont.)

“I felt unbelievably inspired, seen by a community that I am so proud to be a part of- a community that uplifts each other. I learned so much and felt pride for our industry and the strength we share together.”



“It is invigorating to be amongst fish people who are looking to create solutions that are people-driven rather than corporate- and industry-driven. May the humanity of our food work prevail and lead us to thinking smaller while also remembering to honor the fish that feed us.”

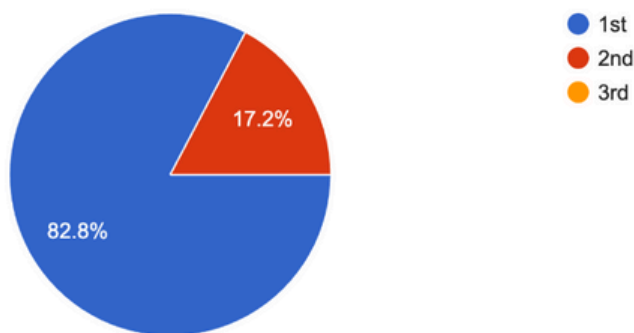
“It was wonderful. It was my first time and went in with no expectations, and was thoroughly impressed by the group of people that showed up. Inspiring.

Representative of all levels of the industry. And a great showcase of local food.”



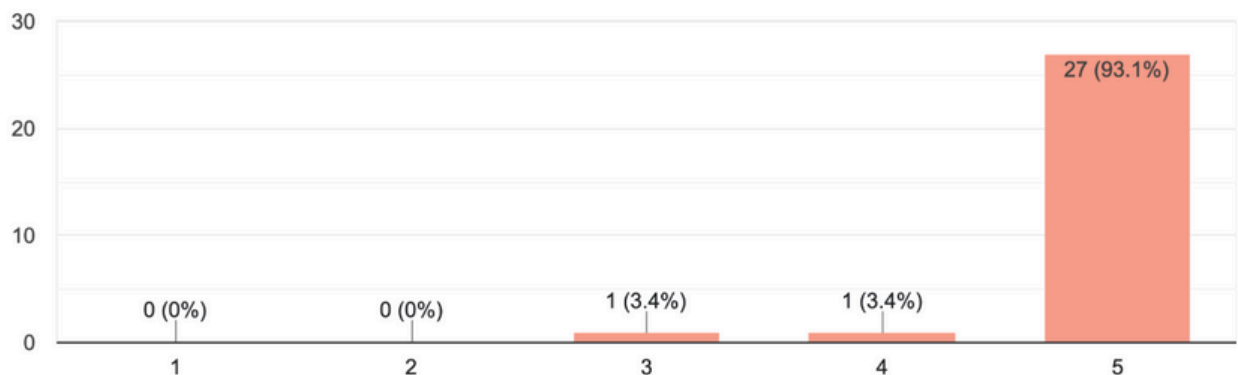
# Survey Results (cont.)

This is my (1st/2nd/3rd) Slow Fish North America in-person gathering (not including Rising Tide)  
29 responses



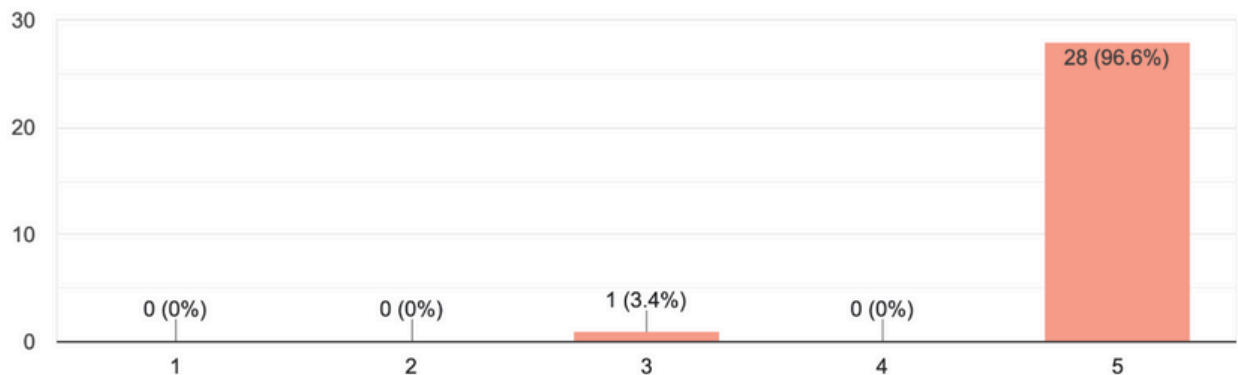
The values expressed at the conference and demonstrated by attendees aligned with the Slow Fish values of good, clean, and fair.

29 responses



The atmosphere at the conference was inclusive and respectful.

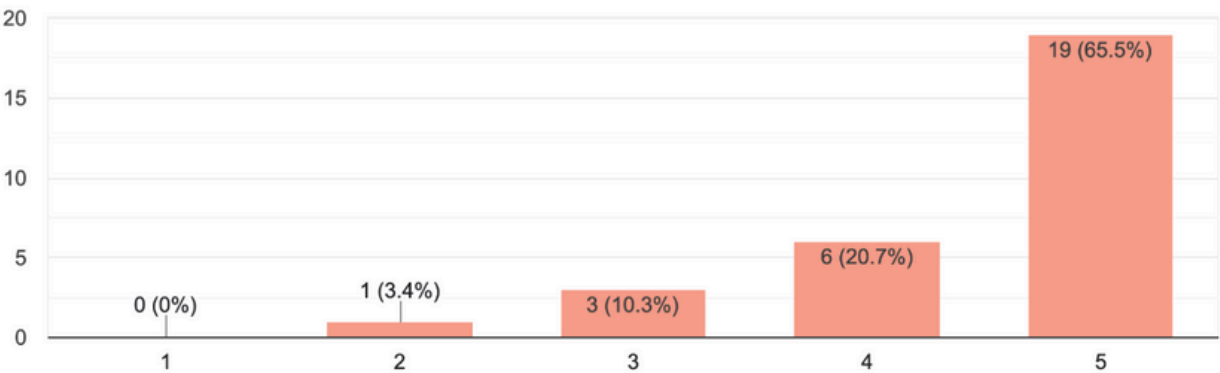
29 responses



# Survey Results (cont.)

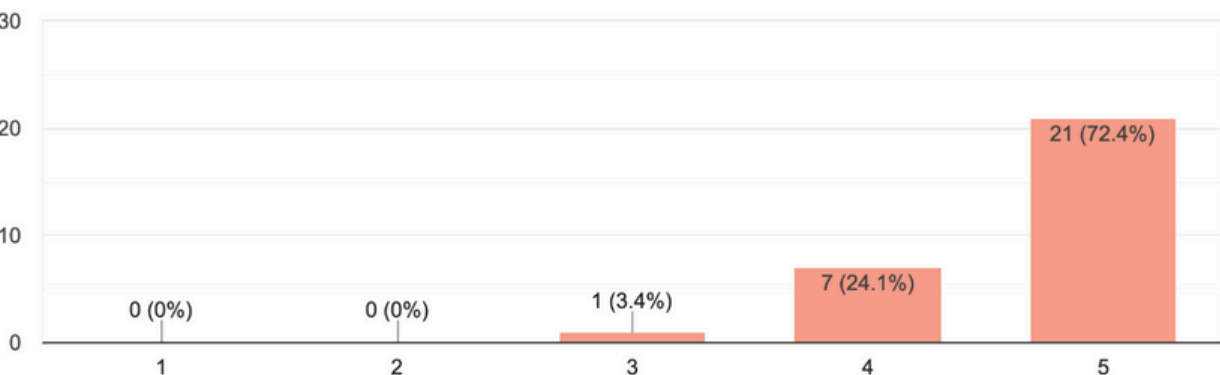
I made important connections with new people at the conference.

29 responses



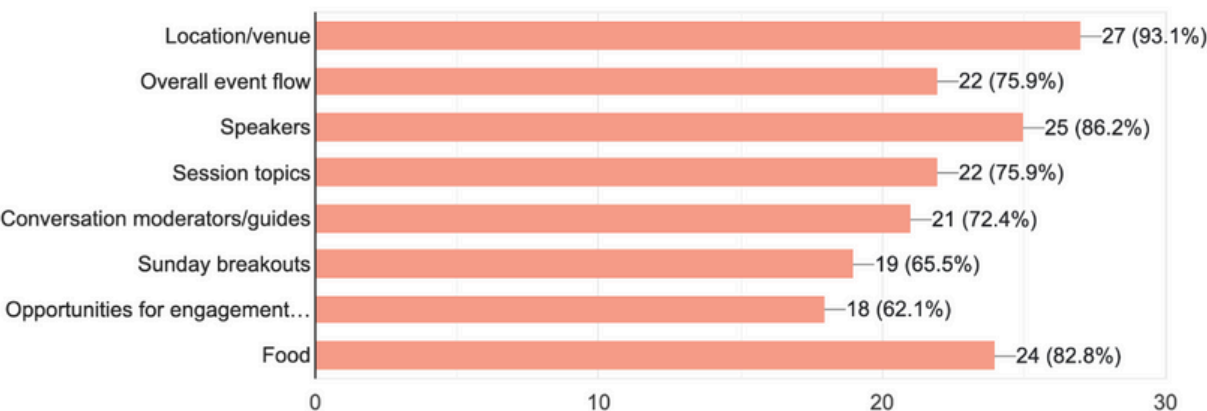
I left the event motivated to be more involved in SFNA and in my community

29 responses



What worked well?

29 responses







CREW TOGETHER!