



# Local Catch: Sea Grant is Helping Fishermen Thrive in a Challenging Economy

## Sea Grant's Economic Contributions: Highlights from across the Nation



Seafood at Wooster Square Farmers' Market in CT, above, (credit: CT Sea Grant). Sea Grant is expanding its research and extension into edible seaweed aquaculture, right, in ME, CT and other states (credit: ME Sea Grant).



### What is Sea Grant?

A national network of 32 university-based programs dedicated to enhancing the practical use and conservation of coastal, marine and Great Lakes resources to create a sustainable economy and environment.

### Did You Know?

Sea Grant helped create and retain businesses and jobs in coastal and Great Lakes states throughout the nation (2010):

**73** Businesses created

**691** Businesses retained

**621** Jobs created

**3,754** Jobs retained



**\$78,652,850** Economic (market and non-market) benefits derived from Sea Grant activities.

Sea Grant's ability to **leverage federal funding**, generate powerful **partnerships** and provide **technical assistance** to industry, enabled the Program to contribute this estimated benefit to the nation.

### What is Sea Grant Doing to Support the Fishing Industry?

#### Local Catch: Market Development and Branding

Sea Grant programs are [helping commercial fishermen develop innovative business models and practices](#) that are generating new revenue streams, ensuring a safe and sustainable supply of seafood to local consumers, and revitalizing the fishing industry. Sea Grant is working to keep fishermen in business by:

- **creating new marketing enterprises for seafood products,**
- **offering training and technical assistance to increase profitability and improve efficiency, and,**
- **educating consumers about safe, local, sustainable seafood choices.**

These efforts are creating competitive advantages over foreign producers, preserving valuable fishing jobs, maintaining a proud cultural heritage and way of life, and adding value to our nation's fisheries.

### Highlights of Sea Grant Activities by Region

#### New England

##### Sea Grant Develops a Local Seafood Brand and Markets in New Hampshire

Sea Grant partnered with fishing associations, seafood groups, restaurants and fish markets to develop [a local brand for seafood](#) called [N.H. Fresh and Local](#). The brand provides locally harvested products, such as shrimp, lobster, fish, and other sustainably managed stock species, and supports the state's commercial fishing industry.

The **Maine, Massachusetts (MIT Sea Grant)** and **New Hampshire Sea Grant** programs have also played a pivotal role in building capacity to [initiate Community Supported Fisheries \(CSF\) Programs—programs](#) designed to financially support fishermen by connecting consumers with fresh, locally grown and harvested seafood (see sidebar at right for more).

**Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maine** Sea Grant are exploring [seaweed farming](#) as a means of diversifying the region's aquaculture industry and helping fishers supplement their incomes. A highly nutritious food source, seaweed also holds promise as a biofuel and cleans offshore waters of pollutants. (continued)



Crawfish and shrimp are now sold on MarketMaker, more on p. 2 (credit: LA Sea Grant)

#### Sea Grant Helps Develop Community Supported Fisheries Programs

Based on the community supported agriculture model, Community Supported Fisheries (CSF) members purchase shares, providing the fishing community with financial support in advance of the season. Fishermen then provide a weekly share of seafood during the harvest season. Sea Grant programs in **Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Maine, Massachusetts and California** are either investigating the feasibility of CSFs or have helped to establish a CSF in their state.



# Sea Grant Accomplishments

## Mid-Atlantic

### Sea Grant Seafood Marketing Efforts Result in Successful State Brand Identities

Sea Grant has helped [launch four local seafood-branding initiatives](#) in **North Carolina** while also laying the foundation for [Community Supported Fisheries \(CSF\)](#) programs through social science market research. Sea Grant marketing workshops for local fishers and industry resulted in the *Brunswick Catch* and *Ocracoke Fresh* brand identities, and the program was instrumental in establishing the *Carteret Catch* and *Outer Banks Catch* brands. These brands are generating a demand for local seafood and helping to ensure that seafood products are a cornerstone of the state's coastal economy.

## Southeast/Gulf of Mexico

### Sea Grant Provides Profitable Trainings to Seafood Businesses and Direct Marketing Opportunities to Commercial Fishermen

**Florida Sea Grant** recently completed its third annual *Shellfish School*, which taught "Best Management Practices" for product safety and marketing to shellfish buyers and seafood businesses representatives. Participants estimated that they [increased their business income by \\$10,000](#) each due to the school.

**Sea Grant** programs in **Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, South Carolina** and **Texas** are involved in *MarketMaker*, an interactive, web-based portal that promotes food products all over the country. With Sea Grant's support, this resource is now helping all sectors of the seafood industry identify new markets and connect with consumers in order to enhance profitability during tough economic times. When **South Carolina Sea Grant** and partners launched *MarketMaker* in the state, over 50 individual commercial fishermen and seafood and aquaculture businesses began promoting local seafood products. South Carolina *MarketMaker* won the 2011 National Food *MarketMaker* Innovation Award from Farm Credit for developing the national seafood component of this online resource. In 2011, just after the debut of the **Alabama MarketMaker** website, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission awarded a grant to fund an Alabama *MarketMaker* outreach coordinator position. This position works through **Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant** and is available to answer questions and to help ensure that seafood businesses are successful in joining the site.

In partnership with a **Louisiana** fishing community, Sea Grant launched Delcambre Direct, an online seafood farmer's market enabling the direct sale of their catch. The fishermen earned an [additional \\$600,000](#) (combined) in 2010 as a result of their participation. Now in its third year, participating shrimp fishermen can receive \$3 to \$3.25 per pound by selling directly to consumers (an extra \$2 per pound since the online direct marketing program was established). Based on its success, the Delcambre Direct model is [expanding across the coast](#), evolving into the Louisiana Direct Development of Coastal Seafood Marketing Network.

## Great Lakes

### Sea Grant's Technical Aquaculture Expertise Helps Bolster "Buy-Local" Food Production and Marketing Phenomenon

**Wisconsin Sea Grant** worked with the innovative "urban farm" developed by Will Allen, one of *Time Magazine's* 100 most influential people from around the globe. Allen, and his non-profit, Growing Power, has relied on Sea Grant's expertise on aquaponics, water quality, fin fish husbandry and biology to raise yellow perch. This fish is native to the region, but depleted in Lake Michigan so that no further commercial harvest is allowed in the lake. Growing Power's successful yellow perch model has been adapted into a for-profit called [Sweet Water Organics](#), which also [relies on Sea Grant technology](#) and biology. Sweet Water Organics founders [hired a workforce of 10](#) that they hope to triple by the end of 2012. Yellow perch raised there can command more than \$16 a pound in the marketplace. Last year, the business [sold 3,000 yellow perch](#).

## West Coast

### Sea Grant Enables Seafood Consumers to Buy and Track Local Seafood and Provides New Sources of Revenue

PacificFishTrax, a joint project of **Oregon Sea Grant**, Oregon State University and the Community Seafood Initiative, allows seafood consumers to scan the barcode on a fish product at a computer kiosk in the grocery store and learn about the fisherman who caught the fish and the processor who prepared it. At home, consumers can use the barcode on the PacificFishTrax website to pinpoint where and how the fish was harvested. The site has helped create a demand for locally caught seafood. Oregon Sea Grant is also working to ensure that new seafood products provide continuing and often new sources of revenue and jobs for local coastal communities and tribal members. [Innovations in packaging and product development](#) add an annual estimated [\\$4.67 million](#) to the economy and improve the quality of coastal seafood.

For more information, contact: **Jonathan Kelsey**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs

14<sup>th</sup> Street & Constitution Avenue, NW, Room 5225, Washington, DC 20230

Phone: 202.482.0809 Email: [Jonathan.Kelsey@noaa.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Kelsey@noaa.gov)