

JUNE 8, WORLD OCEANS DAY

# RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX CHEFS LAUNCH AN SOS FOR BIODIVERSITY

AND SEND A CALL-TO-ACTION TO STOP CONSUMING  
OVEREXPLOITED MARINE SPECIES.



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**RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX**, the Association of 580 exceptional restaurants and hotels located in 65 countries, is launching a collective appeal to preserve marine biodiversity. Having partnered with Ethic Ocean since 2009 for the preservation of marine resources, the Association, whose members operate 800 restaurants with 370 Michelin stars and 34 green stars, is alarmed by the unsustainable depletion of critical stocks and species.

For that reason, Relais & Châteaux is launching a new awareness campaign to highlight to diners and chefs globally the need to stop sourcing and serving overexploited species.

**Mauro Colagregco (Mirazur, Menton, France), Vice President, Chefs of Relais & Châteaux**, said: *"It is urgent and vital to serve guests species which are not overfished, or which have been responsibly farmed with respect to the environment, the animals and the people involved."*

## **World Oceans Day - Relais & Châteaux chefs campaigning since 2009**

This June 8, 2024 will serve once again as an opportunity to celebrate the global importance of aquatic ecosystems to the health of the planet, to question our behavior and ask ourselves: how are we protecting the ocean and its resources?

For the ninth consecutive year, Relais & Châteaux members will participate in World Oceans Day by responding to this year's United Nations theme, 'Awaken New Depths,' with an SOS for Biodiversity. The Association's properties are run by independent entrepreneurs, most often families, who are passionate about their craft and dedicated to protecting and promoting the world's culinary and hospitality traditions, preserving local heritage and protecting the environment. These values were articulated in the Association's Vision presented to UNESCO in November 2014.

Originally instigated by the Association's former Vice President Olivier Roellinger (Maisons de Bricourt, Cancale, France) and former President Philippe Gombert (Château de la Treyne, France), this Vision is now spearheaded by President Laurent Gardinier (Le Taillevent, Domaine Les Crayères, France) and Vice President, Chefs, Mauro Colagreco.

Mauro Colagreco said: *"As an Association, we can have a major influence on global culinary culture. We must offer our guests ethical cuisine, with total respect for our resources. As chefs, we can really help preserve our planet: it's about making the right choices to significantly improve our relationship with life on a daily basis. Our commitment to eel is an excellent example; we must change our behavior in order to save this species, along with all other red-listed species."*

Relais & Châteaux joined Ethic Ocean's #eelnothankyou campaign ([www.ethic-ocean.org](http://www.ethic-ocean.org)) at the end of 2023, to mobilize chefs around the world to save this species that is disappearing before our eyes.

### **In the same boat**

Embodying the expression, 'actions speak louder than words,' Relais & Châteaux chefs have long been closely tied to their local communities. With 20% of properties located directly next to a body of fresh or salt water, the success of their cuisine depends on collaborating with small, local and eco-conscious producers. In sharing the same concerns and similar local struggles, the chefs join forces with fishers and farmers globally, including in some of the most fragile areas of our planet.

This World Oceans Day, the Association will encourage its members to create special menus, convene celebratory dinners and share simple and inspiring recipes with the general public, all celebrating sustainable seafood. Chefs will also be invited to serve vegetarian menus, in honor of June 8, throughout the entire month. They can also curate experiences for guests such as cooking classes or eco-certified aquaculture farm visits that highlight the key issues. All activities will be amplified on social media.

### **Red-listed species**

The figures are relentless: 35.4% of marine resources are overfished; illegal fishing represents 20% of global catch (between 11 and 26 million tons per year); and 35% of the world's catch is rejected and released, often resulting in the animal's death. (Source: FAO).

Numerous species are facing critical situations.

## WILD

- various species of eels have already collapsed
- various species of wild salmon have become rare all over the world, due to intensive fishing, habitat alterations and climate change
- the cod population of Newfoundland, off Canadian coast, has never recovered, 30 years after its collapse, despite the cessation of fishing
- fishing for certain tuna species presents numerous challenges at a global level (overexploited stocks, captures of juveniles with fish-aggregating devices, etc.).

## FARMED

- shrimp farming in tropical areas is responsible for profound ecological imbalances: massive mangrove destruction (a biotope essential for maintaining coastal biodiversity), 'dead zone' creation and freshwater pollution and waste (with freshwater supplies already a rare resource in many tropical regions). Even if some progress has been made in recent years, the aquaculture sector still faces profound environmental and social hurdles.

## **Relais & Châteaux and Ethic Ocean: a partnership that makes sense**

Relais & Châteaux has been celebrating World Oceans Day for many years in order to mobilize its members around key issues and promote more sustainable practices.

In 2024, despite efforts made over recent decades all around the world, marine resources need our attention more than ever. There is an urgent need to act and accelerate the movement: Relais & Châteaux is therefore launching an 'SOS for biodiversity' alongside Ethic Ocean.

The Association aims to remove all red-listed species from their menus, starting with eel.

**Laurent Gardinier, President of Relais & Châteaux**, said: *"Relais & Châteaux members are united around their commitment to making the world a better place through cuisine and hospitality. If our chefs are made aware every day about sustainable fishing, our participation in World Oceans Day gives a stronger and more impactful scope to their action, highlighting the role we can have as an Association present on five continents."*



## Chefs in Action

**Pedro Subijana of Relais & Châteaux Akelarre (San Sebastian, Spain)** and elected member of Relais & Châteaux's World Culinary Council: *"Typical Spanish dishes—such as those with elvers [juvenile eel]—are very important to our culture and heritage. But responsibility must go hand-in-hand with tradition. We must all pause serving and eating eel now to preserve it for future generations."*



**Vicky Lau of Relais & Châteaux Tate Dining Room (Hong Kong)** and elected member of Relais & Châteaux's World Culinary Council: *"Many people think farmed eel is different from wild eel, when, in fact, wild juvenile eels are caught and then taken to be grown on farms. With the critical status of eels all over the world, this form of aquaculture can't be considered sustainable."*



**David Toutain of Relais & Châteaux Restaurant David Toutain (Paris, France):** *"Our iconic dish has been eel since we opened the restaurant in 2013, but now we've replaced it with smoked herring. Fishing and all other causes of the European eel's decline are issues that we need to be aware of in order to take action."*

**Michael Cimarusti of Relais & Châteaux Providence (Los Angeles, California, USA):** *"Eel is something that we have had on the menu from time to time at Providence but being a member of Relais & Châteaux and understanding the importance of protecting any species that's endangered, we signed the pledge and decided to stop serving eel. Wild harvested eels are red listed pretty much all over the world."*





# RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX

A MOVEMENT WITH MEANING

**ESTABLISHED IN 1954**, Relais & Châteaux is an association of 580 unique hotels and restaurants throughout the world, owned and operated by independent entrepreneurs – most often families – who are passionate about their craft and deeply committed to forging warm, lasting relationships with their guests.

Relais & Châteaux members protect and promote the wealth and diversity of the world's culinary and hospitality traditions, to ensure they continue to thrive. They are equally dedicated to preserving local heritage and the environment, as articulated in the association's Vision presented to UNESCO in November 2014.

## ABOUT ETHIC OCEAN

Ethic Ocean works with all professionals in the fishing and aquaculture sector by encouraging best practices to help preserve the ocean and its resources. The non-governmental organization joins forces with fishers, fish farmers, wholesalers, suppliers, retail chains, fishmongers, chefs and restaurateurs, supporting them in implementing sustainable seafood-supply practices.

## CONTACTS

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[www.relaischateaux.com](http://www.relaischateaux.com)

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