

Slow Food Campaign: Understanding the Oceans

In the context of privatization, it is encouraging to see that oceans and their resources as common goods remain at the core concept of Slow Fish, both as a network and as campaign. By moving from “What is wrong with the sea?” towards a more positive storytelling, the network has embraced the notion of blue commons as the narrative they want to fight for.



Report by von Paula Barbeito

Blue commons is a concept embraced by the Slow Fish network to oppose the blue economy narrative which transfers the current and destructive large scale industrial exploitation logic used on land to the ocean.

[Events and Networking Events](#)

Within the Slow Food community, Slow Fish is a multidisciplinary, collaborative, global network of seafood harvesters, fishmongers, chefs, scientists, advocates, teachers, seafood eaters and others, whose primary mission is to support the diversity and resilience of coastal cultures and communities. This entails embracing complex issues, and promoting resilient practices and relationships, so that community-based fisheries can provide good, clean and fair access to seafood for all. The rising number of events around the

globe, demonstrates that the Slow Fish network is growing globally to counter industrial ocean exploitation systems, which are privatizing our blue commons.

[Europe](#)

Italy, Slow Fish 2019 “The Sea: A Common Good” (Genova, 9th-12th May) has been a crucial event. It hosted 80 delegates from over 20 countries to reflect on the future of the oceans, rivers and lakes as well as the food that come from them. The Slow Fish network has challenged the blue economy narrative by favouring the idea of the blue commons. Some elements of this alternative narrative have been already identified: Fish as food, interconnection of ecosystems, governance of the oceans and its resources in co-responsibility, dignification of fisher profession, and consumer awareness about the bounty of the ocean.

Slovenia, participation on the workshop LabMAF – Developing a Labelling Scheme for Mediterranean Small- scale and Artisanal Fish Products (Liubiania, 14th-16th May) – which seeks to develop a tool for increasing the visibility of low-impact small-scale fisheries products with the aim of engendering a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable small-scale sector in the Mediterranean. Slow Fish was invited to introduce the Slow Food Coastal Presidium projects.

Africa

Morocco, the association AMOUD and the local Slow Food network held the sixth edition of Slow Fish Tigri 2 - 3 (Sidi Bou Nouar, 6th -8th December) to raise awareness of the cultural, and environmental resources, and the work of fisherwomen. The event involved the whole village of Sidi Bou Nouar, with the participation of more than 1 000 people and the coverage for 2 days of Amazigh television (the second most followed in Morocco).

The festival is in its sixth edition as “Tigri Festival” and in its second edition as “Slow Fish Tigri”. Many people recognize the evolution of the festival, which since it became “Slow Fish” has become a real moment of education and awareness, as well as of celebration. This year, for the first time, among the thirty-eight seafood dishes

of the competition there were at least fifteen that took up dishes considered “poor” now disappeared of the local cuisine. Since last year only genuine local and traditional dishes won, this year the “rich” dishes (with rare fish and imported products) disappeared from the festival and much more attention was paid to the origin of the ingredients. Beyond the gastronomic context, there were three conferences, each with a full hall (fifty to sixty people), with 1) the oldest and most experienced fishermen; 2) with Tigri women for the recognition of her seafood harvesting and processing and; 3) with fisherfolks’ cooperatives.

Republic Democratic of Congo, Terra Madre Grand Lacs (Goma, 12th – 14th December) has been celebrated with a special emphasis in the Slow Fish campaign dedicated to the defence of Lake Tanganyika and its fish resources. Discussion centred on advocacy, protecting the lake environment, access to resources, and communication, with participants from Rwanda, DR Congo, Tanzania and Burundi.

It is relevant to highlight the interest that many Slow Fishers from this continent have shown in the creation of a Slow Fish Africa event.



Blue Commons is the idea that marine resources are part of a common heritage, a „common good“, as the motto of Slow Fish 2019 puts it. Slow Fish events provide an opportunity to explore the topic in depth and hear some inspiring examples of how other communities are revitalizing the idea of community.

Americas

USA, Local Catch Seafood Summit. Under the title “Adding Value(s) to a Transforming Seafood System” 4 the network has celebrated the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of small-scale and community-based seafood businesses committed to building a different kind of seafood system that strengthens our local, regional, and national food systems. Slow Food Cascadia included a series of talks regarding wild salmon in the Columbia river. During Slow Food Nations three events



At the classic and popular dinner dates at Slow Fish 2019, visitors had the opportunity to choose between a „top“ or a „pop“ dinner.

regarding fish have taken place.

Canada, members from Slow Fish Canada have had a relevant role in “Fish Are Food” The Food Connections Conference in Campbell River (Campbell River, BC, 28th November), put on by Greenways Land Trust. More than 70 people have participated to ensure that local fisheries continue to benefit coastal communities. Our network has been invited to participate as keynote speaker as well as to present on fisheries policy and food security, particularly, on the tangible and intangible benefits that local fisheries and fish harvesters bring to the coast — and the benefit is much more than just the landed value associated with fishing.

Slow Fish Caribe, Honduras. In collaboration with the Center for Marine Studies (CEM) and the

School of Gastronomy of the Universidad Tecnológica Centroamericana (UNITEC), it was celebrated the fair “El Sabor del Mar” (Puerto Cortés, 16th March) with the aim of promoting the direct sale of seasonal fish with a special emphasis on less commercially popular whitefish. The event was the first of this kind in the country and beyond tastings and exchanges of knowledge between national and international chefs, artisanal fishers, biologists, gastronomy and culinary students, artists and the public; a forum on the im-



The Providencia black crab is an endemic species and of great importance for the culture of the Raizal people and important contribution to their livelihood.

portance of responsible consumption to fishery sustainability and marine governance was held. Slow Fish Caribe, Colombia, islands of San Andrés and Providencia have celebrated various events concerning local gastronomy and indigenous peoples (“IV Feria Bio Caribe 2019”, 25th November, participation of Slow Food community FI WI Old Providence & Ketlina Good Food at “II Feria de Procesos Sociales y Ambientales” organized by ASOCRAB, participation of the first raizal fair organized by the Foundation for the Islands of Old Providence and Santa Catalina FLOPSC, 2nd September). In continuation with the work on creating awareness about the importance of eating invasive species, this year took place another edition of the lionfish contest, as well as an exchange between fishers from Colombia and Curaçao. In addition, Providence Black Crab has been awarded with a denomination of origin.

Slow Fish Caribe, Mexico. Different gatherings have been celebrated: “Festival Sabor” to promote Riviera Maya’s gastronomic value through the creation, strengthening and consolidation of links between society, culinary culture, environment and sustainable tourism; and the I edition of “Spiny Lobster Festival at Punta Allen”, (Quintana Roo, 16-17 August) to increase the value of Slow Food Spiny Lobster Presidium. Additionally, a traceability system⁵ for the spiny lobster has been launched (Quintana Roo, November 29th)



Chopped fish San Andrés style. The Slow Fish Caribe project was launched in 2017 to promote the sustainable use of coastal resources in the Caribbean.

Asia and the Pacific

Slow Food South Korea has hosted the “International Island Forum in Yeosu” (South Korea, 25th-27th September) in collaboration with the city of Yeosu. The main goal of this congress was to identify possible alternatives for the future economy of the islands. Particular attention was given to the future of small-scale fisheries and the value of an articulated network as Slow Fish.

Networking: Slow Food Communities In order to face the challenges linked to the unsustainability of the prevailing food system, Slow Food is now transitioning towards communities, an open and more inclusive organizational model rooted in local areas but with internationally shared objectives (Congress in Chengdu, China, September-October 2017). New Slow Food communities with specific interests in the Slow Fish campaign comprehend: Sopey Diamalahi pour la biodiver-

sité du Cap Vert (Senegal); Takoradi Pipe Ano Peekath Fish and Food group (Ghana); Eja Lonibu fish farmers of Imosan for creating sustainable livelihoods (Nigeria); Fi wi Old Providence & Keti-lina Good Food (Colombia); Pesca sostenible de Bocachica (Colombia).

Grassroots projects

Slow Food Presidia

Some initial steps to create a Slow Fish international panel for advisors have been done where



About 200 kg of lobsters were prepared for the Slow Fish Local Lobster Party and more than 230 participants could taste this Caribbean delicacy.

the main task will be to develop new guidelines for Slow Food coastal Presidium projects.

Europe

The updating of protocol of production of Slow Food Mediterranean Prud’homies Presidium and the modification of protocol of production of Slow Food Orbetello Bottarga Presidium have been done. Slow Food Tuscan Sea Palmita has been closed.

Americas

Within the Slow Fish Caribe project, an exchange between Slow Food Black Crab of Providence and Blue Crab of Ecuador Presidia projects has taken place at Providence, Colombia. Besides this activity is within the FIDA project, it has positive impacts to Slow Fish Caribe.

Africa

Morocco, Sidi Bou Nouar and Daira represent two of the seven villages on the Souss-Massa coast, an area of Amazigh culture, where the population lives mainly on fishing. The idea is to create a community and a Presidium that progressively involves all the villages, starting with the women of Sidi Bou Nouar and Daira so that they can support each other (the women of Sidi Bou Nouar are numerous but need training, those of Daira are very competent but need to increase the quantity of mussels received by their mussel harvesting and processing unit). Some next steps have been already identified: the Tigri women have undertaken to discuss the founding declaration and to define together the commitments they will make as a Slow Food community (work at the Presidium, organize an outing during the week to collect plastic at sea...).

Another possible future community in Morocco could be set up by the artisanal “cave fishermen.” A first meeting in 2017 had took place, but now the impression is that over time confidence has increased, thanks in part to Slow Fish Tigri. Beyond the community, they are also interested in working on slow tourism and gastronomy: recover recipes and techniques for drying/salting fish to preserve it all year round; propose experiences of cave lunches, with traditional recipes.

New Ark of Taste products

- Mali Ston Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*), Croatia
- Barrel-Salted Damsel fish (*Chromis chromis*), Croatia
- Venetian Lagoon Schia (*Crangon crangon*), Italy
- Pohoelice Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), Czech Republic
- Apalachicola Oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*), USA
- Santa Marinella Sea Urchin (*Paracentrotus lividus*), Italy
- Tajo-Salor-Almonte Tench (*Tinca tinca*), Spain
- Izu Peninsula Traditional Tokoroten, Japan
- Sugar kelp (*Saccharina latissima*), USA

Communication, Awareness raising, advocacy Communication

As result of the discussions held at the Fishers' House during the XI edition Slow Fish Genoa

“Sea: A Common Good”, the booklet “Fishing for Alternatives: The Blue Commons” was produced and translated into four languages (English, French, Italian, and Spanish). This booklet has been shared among the network and relevant institutions such as Ecotrust Canada, FAO, and Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE).

Eleven articles were published in the Slow Food international website. At least one article was published on Slow Fish Caribe specifically in the



The Moroccan network is a young start-up: in the first year there were already many initiatives, which will be supplemented and expanded by many more projects in 2019.

monthly newsletter. A total of 45 articles were published in the website of the event Slow Fish Genoa6. The Slow Food press office has sent 7 press releases on the campaign, during the event and throughout the year, and has counted almost 80 press mentions in print, on radio and on television. The Slow Fish International Facebook page continues growing with a current number of 1 696 followers. It is relevant to highlight that during the last years, new regional Facebook groups have emerged, those more relevant:

- Slow Fish North America – 685 followers,
- Slow Fish Spain – 82 followers,
- Slow Fish Caribe – 2 406 followers ,
- Slow Fish Istanbul – 1680 followers
- Slow Fish Netherlands – 138 followers.

The campaign website (<http://www.slowfood.com/slowfish/>) attracted 109,000 visitors, with

164,000 page views. Most of the visitors were English and Spanish speakers.

Slow Fish as a movement appears several times within the book *Governing Sustainable Seafood* (Simon R. Bush and Peter Osterberveer) edited by Routledge.

Awareness Raising

Slow Fish North America continues developing a webinar series in partnership with Local Catch,



Slow Fish North America's webinar series provides answers to seafood scams and violations of the principles of value-based fisheries.

NAMA, One Fish, and Ecotrust. A total of four webinars were organized this year to share a response to seafood fraud and violations of principles that support values-based fishing businesses.

Slow Fish Caribe. Mexico has published "Responsible Consumer Manual" for the Slow Food Banco Chinchorro and Sian Kaan Spiny Lobster Presidium; a traceability system for the spiny lobsters from the Slow Food Banco Chinchorro and Sian Kaan Spiny Lobster Presidium has been developed and launched.

Advocacy

Slow Fish Canada continues with the campaign and petition for reform of the Fisheries Act to address how the Canadian government is managing fishing grounds with policies that privatize

access to fish resources⁷. During Slow Fish Genova 2019, a video interview to John Crofts has been done where he explains what is currently happening with Canada fishery system.

Collaboration with institutions and associations Institutions

It has been signed a memorandum of collaboration between FAO and Slow Food which includes particular objectives under the Slow Fish campaign: awareness rising on the importance of cultural seascapes; providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets; and governance of the sustainable seafood value chain (Presidium projects, as an example) in line with FAO normative instruments (SSF Guidelines, Tenure Guidelines) and SDG 14.b.

Associations

At European level, Slow Fish and Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE) are creating a memorandum of collaboration between both networks; Mundus Maris (Brussels) has helped with some education activities during Slow Fish Genova 2019. Fundación Lonxanet for Sustainable Fishing (Spain) as strategic ally in Spain and Portugal, Portfolio Productions (France) with the filming of the diverse realities within the Slow Fish network. We are exploring the possibility of a joint workshop "Fish in the Food System" with the University of Wageningen (The Netherlands) that could take place in May 2020, within the agenda for the closing event of Slow Fish Caribe project.

At American level: NAMA (USA); Local Catch (USA); One Fish Foundation (USA); Wild Salmon Nation (USA); Ecotrust (Canada); CEM (Honduras); Fondo Acción (Colombia); Fundación ACUA (Colombia); Fundación Coralina (Colombia); ASK (Mexico); colectividad Razonatura (Mexico). Some initial steps to explore synergies with Fundación Mar Viva (Costa Rica, Panamá, Colombia) have been done.

At African level: AMOUD (Morocco); AGIR (Morocco); Club Bleu Artisanal (Tunisia); and in the process of creating a closer collaboration with Coastal Links South Africa (South Africa).

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