



**for a living planet**

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Press Release

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## Seafood restaurants join WWF in fight for healthy fish stocks

Today, 31 October 2007, WWF, the conservation organisation, launched its Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) Restaurant Participation Scheme at John Dory's Fish and Grill, Monte Casino, Johannesburg. The fish and grill franchise is the first restaurant chain to join the participation scheme.

Since its inception SASSI has helped consumers, wholesalers, restaurateurs, fishers and others involved in the seafood trade to make better informed, sustainable choices. Funded by the Green Trust and Pick 'n Pay, SASSI has created a set of guidelines which classify species as Green, Orange or Red. The Green list comprises the most sustainable choices. Fish on the Orange list are under some pressure and consumers are urged to consider alternatives. The Red list comprises species which may never be sold.

"Never before have our oceans and their rich bounty been under as much pressure as at present. In order to prevent a wholesale collapse of these resources we all need to act now. Through our Participation Scheme SASSI is now giving all purveyors of seafood the opportunity to join in the global movement towards sustainable seafood," explains SASSI spokesperson Timony Siebert.

On joining the participation scheme restaurants can choose between two levels of involvement: SASSI Aware and SASSI Champion. SASSI Aware level restaurants stock and sell both Green and Orange species on the list, while SASSI Champion level restaurants choose to only deal with Green species. Both levels of participation require the restaurant to voluntarily adhere to the following guidelines:

- Always buy seafood from legal sources;
- Never buy or serve SASSI Red-listed species;
- Always have Green-listed species available for sale;
- Never promote Orange-listed linefish species (and not sell any Orange-listed species for Champion level);
- Supply customers with the correct name, place of origin and production method (farmed or wild-caught) of the seafood served, as well as indicate the fishing method used for the wild-caught species.

Restaurants that wish to participate are also required to attend a SASSI workshop before becoming a participant and must also commit to displaying SASSI materials for their customers. Participation lasts for one year, after which restaurants need to re-apply.

### **John Dory's takes the lead:**

Restaurant franchise John Dory's Fish & Grill has come on board as the first South African seafood franchise to adopt these guidelines. The franchise has joined the programme on a SASSI Aware Level which will see it only stocking Green and Orange list species.

"A lot of people won't knowingly eat a crispy fish fillet if they know that it came from an overfished species, or contributed to the deaths of endangered animals such as turtles and

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albatrosses. As sellers of seafood we have a responsibility towards our customers to provide them with more sustainable options. Also, our business depends on healthy oceans” ” says Stamatis Kapsimalis, MD of John Dory's Fish and Grill.

John Dory's Fish and Grill currently operates 20 outlets in five provinces across South Africa. “As a SASSI Aware chain of restaurants, John Dory's Fish & Grill is excited and committed to contributing to the environment in such a positive way,” emphasises Kapsimalis.

**Consumer pressure:**

Last year SASSI launched its highly successful SASSI FishMS line, which enables consumers to SMS 079-499-8795 for instant information on whether a seafood species can be eaten freely, is best avoided, or is illegal to catch or sell. This enables consumers to make the right decisions when choosing a meal and this in turn goes a long way in conserving the precious resources in Southern African oceans.

“We're very encouraged by the support that the public have given to this initiative. Consumers are increasingly aware of the health benefits of seafood, but they're also more aware that their spending power can be a force for changing the way things are done all the way up the supply line,” Siebert concludes.

The guidelines are available in a booklet and wallet cards and can be downloaded from [www.wwf.org.za/sassi](http://www.wwf.org.za/sassi)

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