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LETTER FROM THE VP

Dear Wavemakers,

There's been no shortage of dramatic developments in Belize over the last twelve months. But the sensational constant throughout the highs and lows of 2016 has been the collective consciousness and patriotic perseverance of Belizeans to remain committed and vigilant on key national issues.

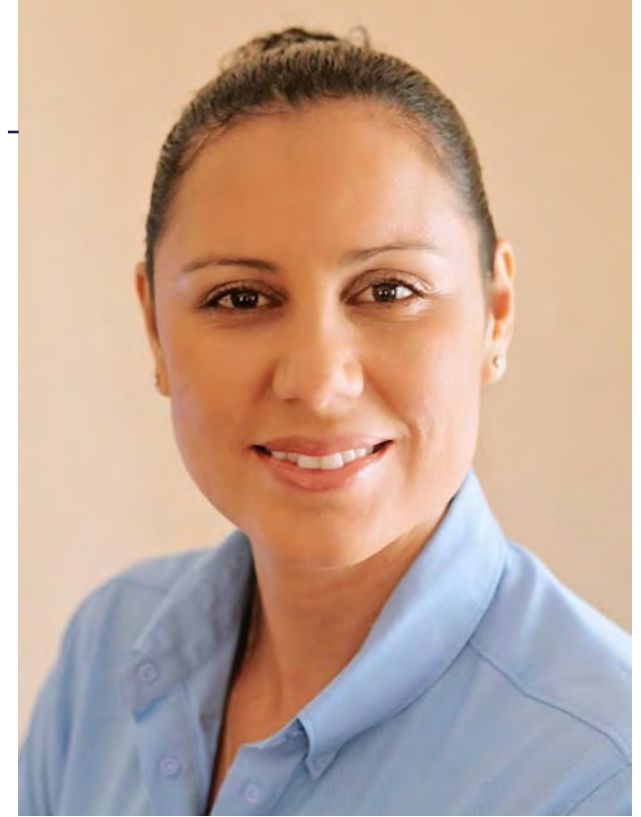
For much of this year, based on public declarations by the Prime Minister of Belize, we were confident that we were close to getting a legislated position on offshore oil. We'd trusted his stated pledge to formalizing the moratorium and legislating a permanent ban along the Belize Barrier Reef and World Heritage Sites. But in late September, we all felt blind-sided and betrayed when it was exposed that the Government of Belize had approved offshore oil exploration (multi-beam and seismic surveys) for our deep sea and Exclusive Economic Zone.

The salt in the wound was that the Government had approved all of this without any prior disclosure; active, participatory public consultations; or even the benefit of an Environmental Impact Assessment. These surveys were going to be done by a Houston based company called TGS, for and on behalf of the petroleum industry. Talks had been going on between the Government and TGS for three years; and the public was kept in the dark the entire time. As for the monies that the company would have spent (3 million US dollars), TGS would have been recovered its expenses through the sale of the data to petroleum companies; that's right, with the Government of Belize's blessing, TGS

would have been allowed to actively push petroleum companies to come to Belize to explore for oil.

That's the reality we took to you. We shared pictures, videos and ship tracking paths of the live threat. You got angry. You stood up. And you let your voices be heard. Because of public outcry, because thousands signed petitions, wrote emails and made phone calls to national leaders, both surveys were stopped. We all breathed a little easier watching those vessels leave Belizean waters. This risk, this time, is gone. But as long as here's even a hint of interest from this Government or any future administration, our marine and coastal resources will always be in danger.

That's why Oceana, the Belize Coalition to Save Our Natural Heritage and allies are pushing for transparency and legislation as next steps. We've written to the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister to ask if he intends to keep his promise to hold a national referendum on offshore oil. It does not bolster confidence that even the legislation to permanently ban offshore oil activity along the Belize Barrier Reef and the World Heritage Sites has not been implemented a full year after it was announced. We therefore continue to ask his administration to formalize the moratorium on offshore oil. Right now the moratorium is only a verbal promise. If the moratorium was ever lifted, approximately 85% of Belize's marine resources would be at risk. That's too great an area not be protected by a law with conditions and safeguards; that's what our draft bill Clean Oceans, Safe Tourism is designed to do.



All too often in the face of such scenarios, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and intimidated. But as the tourism and fishing stakeholders reminded us this year, people power is real. At that historic meeting in San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, many stood as one. Together we highlighted that the issue of offshore oil has transcended and overcome all the traditional divisive tactics. We underscored that when we put national interests first, national good prevails. We emphasized that the health and management of coastal and marine resources is a bread and butter issue to more than 190,000 Belizeans. And so as we prepare for what lies ahead in 2017, we do so motivated and emboldened by your unwavering commitment to love and protect Belize.

Janelle Chanona

OCEANA APPROACH

HOW WE WORK

The good news is that we can restore the oceans to their former glory. Since its founding, Oceana has won more than 100 victories around the globe and protected more than one million square miles of ocean.

Oceana has the tools to win. We are-

CAMPAIGN-DRIVEN: We channel our resources towards strategic, directed campaigns to achieve measurable outcomes that will protect and restore our oceans to former levels of abundance.

FACT-BASED: We believe in the importance

of science in identifying problems and solutions for the oceans.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY AND EXPERT: Our scientists work closely with our teams of economists, lawyers, communicators and advocates to achieve tangible results for the oceans.

SUPPORTED BY CITIZENS AND ALLIES: Oceana has a base of close to one million supporters, including 712,000 Wavemakers globally. Our Ocean Council is a select group of academic, business, policy and philanthropic leaders who represent and support Oceana's efforts on the global stage. Locally, Oceana is supported by 4,000 Belizean Wavemakers.



OCEANA WAS CREATED TO IDENTIFY PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND MAKE THEM HAPPEN

CAMPAIGNS AND VICTORIES

Oceana's long-term vision for the Belize Barrier Reef is a thriving ecosystem, capable of producing abundant, healthy marine resources that support a vibrant and sustainable local economy for Belizeans. Specifically, the goals of Oceana in Belize's campaigns are by 2017 to establish:

- A national ban on offshore oil exploration and drilling in Belize;
- A national ban on the use of gillnets in Belize; and
- Establish legally enforceable catch size limits for three fish species with high levels of juvenile catch rates: snapper, grouper, and mackerel.

We have made significant progress on these goals.

In 2015, the Government of Belize announced a moratorium on offshore oil exploration in Belizean waters, and in December, a permanent ban on offshore oil exploration along the Belizean barrier reef system and within the country's seven World Heritage Sites. In the context of the moratorium, the ban means that for the foreseeable future, Belize's marine environment is protected from the inherent dangers of offshore oil. We have worked on this campaign for five years and we continue to work diligently to ensure that the government's intention becomes institutionalized.

Additionally, as a result of many years of advocacy and pressure, our campaigns to ban gillnets and increase protection for juvenile fish species has been endorsed by other conservation groups and are now part of a consolidated package of policy proposals created by Oceana Belize, The Nature Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Society. We have ensured that these proposals are supported by a broad constituency, from sports and local commercial fishers to restaurant owners.



CLEANENERGY CAMPAIGN

Oceana achieved an effective ban on offshore oil activities in 100 percent of Belize's marine territory when the Prime Minister of Belize announced a moratorium on all oil activities within Belizean waters in April 2015. Subsequently, on December 1, 2015, the Prime Minister announced a permanent ban on a kilometer wide range along the Belizean barrier reef system and within its World Heritage Sites, amounting to 13 percent of the offshore area or 1,316 square miles.

However, on October 12, the Prime Minister of Belize informed Oceana that the government had approved multibeam and seismic surveying in October and November by a seismic data collection company, TGS, in the waters outside of the barrier reef and Belize's three atolls beyond a one kilometre buffer zone. This was based on the Department of the Environment's advice that seismic activity does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment. Although multibeam surveys are the least invasive methods of gathering important data about the seafloor that doesn't mean it's a "good thing; there is data from reputable scientific sources which indicate that seismic air gun noise should be considered a serious marine environmental pollutant, causing physical damage to marine deafness, disturbance to communications, and disruption in migration patterns. And studies have also shown the survey negatively impacts catch rates for fishers, too.

Oceana and its allies immediately responded. We took a clear, public position against this approval, requested relevant documents from the government to understand why an environmental impact study was not done, held a press conference, and urged the government to put a hold on this activity until NGOs, fishing communities and other impacted communities could submit material and studies.

On the day the surveying was to begin, October 20 2016, the CEO of the Ministry of Energy, Science & Technology, and Public Utilities posted on Facebook that the Government of Belize would immediately halt seismic activities due to the many concerns raised by citizens and the fact that they did not consult "a wider group of stakeholders" before making their decision to allow surveying.

This is an important indication that Oceana has built strong resistance to offshore oil interests, but also that there is much work to do to prevent offshore oil exploration and drilling. What is clear is that there is a need for continued vigilance, advocacy and action.

Oceana continues to campaign to ensure that the moratorium becomes law. Specifically, we seek legal protection of marine resources for the entire EEZ and Territorial sea, and the inclusion of meaningful safeguards should the moratorium be lifted.



Photo Courtesy Ambergris Today

As Oceana in Belize's Vice President Janelle Chanona stated " ... this is about making about sure that we are safeguarding our economic strongholds, and safeguarding the things that make our lives possible, our jobs possible, our food possible. And that's all we're asking for, transparency, disclosure, consultation. So that as we go into this all of our eyes are wide open to what may be down the road." (7 Newsbelize.com. 10/13/16).

Additionally, given the recent revelation of seismic surveying activity, the position of the government on exploration zones and guidelines is unclear. In June, Oceana met with the Inspector of Petroleum. This meeting established the status of the guidelines. The Inspector indicated that his office was writing to the Commonwealth secretariat to provide "advice" on completing the guidelines. Based on his description of their process, it appeared that they would completely overhaul the document they presented last year. He also suggested that many of the Oceana's proposed conditions for lifting the moratorium, such as a mitigation fund, separation of marine and terrestrial protocols, and Environment Impact Assessments (EIAs) for each stage of development, were likely to be among their recommended changes. The entire process for completing the guidelines was expected to be finished by February 2017 with the government agreeing to hold off any concessions on shore until the revision of the petroleum laws.

We continue to lead national and grassroots level conversations and activities about the impacts of offshore oil to Belize and work with other NGOs and constituency groups to



present a unified voice on the issue of clean energy and its importance to Belize. Despite a notable increase in support for Oceana's clean energy goals, the Government has not formalized its policy positions. We will continue to engage with the Ministry of Petroleum to get an official position on the status of the Guidelines.

This past year, Oceana also increased the number and actions of Belizeans who are part of an active ocean constituency. Building a knowledgeable public that can pressure the government to take action is an essential component of policy change in Belize, where good governance, transparency and leadership at the highest levels of government in Belize is lacking.

The recent move by the Government of Belize to allow TGS to survey for oil in Belizean waters and then its turnaround was a reflection of the impact of our advocacy and the strong ocean constituency that we continue to build. It is yet another indication of how quickly things can change in Belize and how important it is to have a constituency established that can be activated in defense of Belize's marine resources.

Oceana continues to work alongside and behalf of the tens of thousands of Belizeans who continue to support the common cause of protecting our marine resources. Belizeans must remain active and proactive in this process. That is the only we can determine the future of the people and places that make us who we are.

The Energy of Nature vs the Nature of Energy Conference

To promote informed decision-making on a greener development approach as well as a climate-resilient future for Belize and its marine resources, Oceana and the WWF Belize Saving our Shared Heritage presented a second set of presentations as part of “The Energy of Nature vs. the Nature of Energy” conference series. The conference brought together Belizean experts to provide academically informative and objectively provocative information about this nationally important issue from the perspective of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Belize is one of 155 countries that has committed to signing the Paris Agreement which was approved on December 12, 2015 by the 196 parties to the UN’s Framework Convention on Climate Change. Under this agreement, countries have committed to work towards goals that will limit the temperature rise overall below two degrees Celsius while aiming to achieve a rise below one point five degrees Celsius. Oil exploration and extraction in marine areas is incompatible with Belize’s commitment to reduce its use of fossil fuels. In its contribution to the climate change targets set out by the Paris Agreement in 2015, Belize committed to shifting its “energy matrix away from fossil fuels (especially oil).” Investing in oil, rather than renewable energy, would undermine this commitment.

Presenters Mr. Carlos Fuller, Mrs. Carolyn Trench-Sandiford, Dr. Patricia Majluf, Mr. Roberto Pott, and Mr. Ansel Dubon shared their professional experiences as it relates to macro-economic planning for a clean

energy, sustainable future. The moderator of the panel discussion was popular Belizean talk show host, Mr. Evan ‘Mose’ Hyde of KREM Radio.





Love Letter Campaign

The People's Referendum, organized by the conservation community and supported by both the business sector and general public alike remains the only national poll ever taken on any issue in Belize. That is was an environmental issue—that of offshore oil—remains significant in Belize. Almost thirty thousand Belizeans voted in the referendum and the results were clear. An overwhelming majority (approximately 90%) voted no to offshore oil in Belize.

To commemorate the third anniversary of The People's Referendum, in February 2015, Oceana invited the public to enjoy a free concert showcasing the brightest Belizean musicians. The line-up was historic as the event brought these artists together for the first time. The stellar line- up that rocked the "Rock the Vote" stage included the Garifuna Collective; Tanya Carter; Melonie Gillett; Positive Vibz; Young C; Consigo; TR Shine, Nello Player backed up by Verge of Umbra and Jacki Castillo.

These amazing artists added their voices to the tens of thousands of Belizeans who continue to say "NO" to offshore oil in order to protect Belizean jobs in fishing and tourism; quality and way of life as well as Belize's economically and ecologically significant marine resources.



Hands Across the Sand

Every year, activists and ocean-lovers host Hands Across the Sand events round the world to “draw a line in the sand,” and say “NO” to dirty fossil fuel projects, as well as call for a shift to clean, renewable energy like offshore wind and solar power.

On May 21st at noon, Belizeans around the country joined hands on beaches, across bridges, along sea walls and in other public areas to stand in solidarity against offshore oil development in Belize’s economically important marine environment.

2016 marked the sixth anniversary of one of the worst environmental disasters in the world: the BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster

in the Gulf of Mexico. That tragedy and other accidents in our region and around the world, continue to serve as grim reminders of just how deadly and dangerous offshore oil is and highlights the economic risks and environmental hazards posed by the activity to countries like Belize.

“This symbolic event demonstrated unwavering commitment by Belizeans to protecting our natural wealth from the inherently dirty hazards of offshore oil to ensure our collective benefit now and in the generations to come.” said Alyssa Carnegie, Oceana’s Communications Director.



Reef Week 2016

More than 200,000 Belizeans living in Belize's coastal and island communities earn their livelihoods from tourism, making that industry account for almost 25% of the country's gross domestic product. Another 15,000 Belizeans are directly dependent on Belize's fisheries for their livelihoods. Therefore, efforts to ensure protection of those natural resources ensure economic sustainability for almost two thirds of Belize's population.

Within such context, every year members of the non-governmental and environmental community as well as Government entities organize a series of events over the course of a week to recognize the incalculable contribution of the Belize Barrier Reef System to the national economy and the nation's cultural identity.

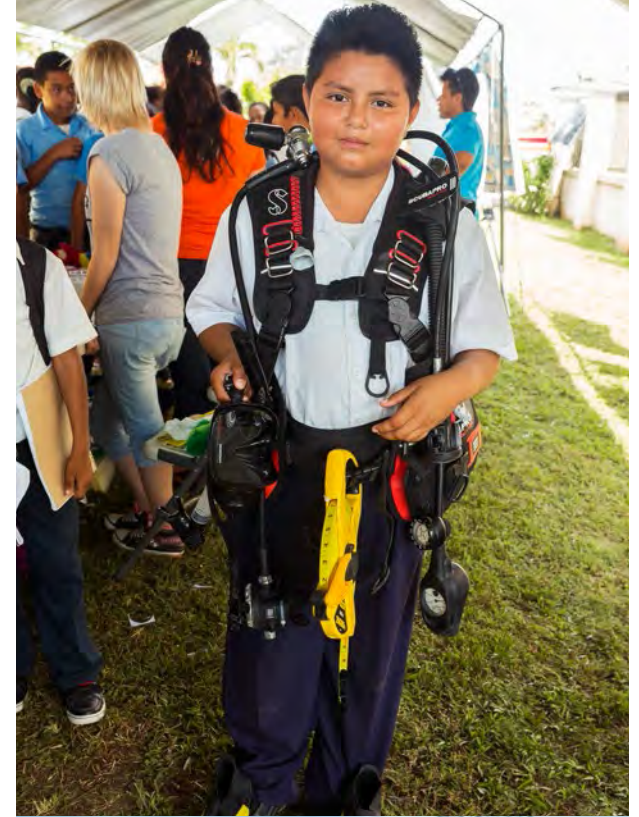
Between March 6th and March 13th 2016, Belizeans across the country gathered to celebrate Reef Week under the theme, "Not just my reef, it's our way of life!"

In 2016, the Reef Week committee was proud to partner with the Belize Tourism Board, the Belize City Council, the Fisheries Department and the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute, along with members of the business community and members of the general public whose in-kind and cash support helped to make Reef Week 2015 a success.

Organized activities included classroom presentations, field trips to marine destinations, clean up campaigns underwater

and along Belize's shoreline and waterways, the annual swim across the historic English Caye Channel, a science symposium, open days, poetry, art and Instagram competitions, lionfish culling competition, a bike ride from the National Assembly building in Belmopan to BTL park in Belize City, informational fairs, and morning shows broadcast live from Sarteneja.

Participating organizations included: the Toledo Institute for Research and Development, the Belize Audubon Society, Oceana in Belize, Healthy Reefs for Healthy People, MarAlliance, the World Wildlife Fund, the Forest and Marine Reserves of Caye Caulker, Fragments of Hope, the National Protected Areas System, the Wildlife Conservation Society, Krem WUB, the Belize City Council, the Belize Coalition to Save our Natural Heritage, Blue Ventures Belize, the Solid Waste Management Authority, the Belize Fisheries Department, Hol Chan Marine Reserve, the Association of Protected Areas Managers, The Nature Conservancy, the Belize Bird Rescue, the University of Belize's Environmental Research Institute, the Southern Environmental Association, Sea2Shore Alliance, the Belize Volunteers Club, the Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association, Aldebaran and the Belize Tourism Industry Association.



FISHERIES CAMPAIGN

Since 2010, Oceana has been promoting the importance of protecting Belize's natural resources, encouraging healthy fisheries and highlighting the impact of destructive fishing gear in Belize. Our long-term vision for the Belize Barrier Reef is a thriving ecosystem, capable of producing abundant, healthy marine resources that support a vibrant and sustainable local economy for Belizeans.

Belize depends heavily on the ecosystem services provided by its marine environment. Tourism directly employs 1 in every 4 persons in Belize, and represents approximately 25% of the total GDP. The strength of this sector is directly dependent on the quality of the tourism offer, which for Belize, is largely



made up of experiences centered on marine based/related activities. It follows then that sound conservation and management of Belize's natural capital makes economic sense in view of the overall national objectives of maintaining the global attractiveness and competitiveness of the tourism sector and increasing and enhancing its contribution to the national economy.

Commercial fishing is responsible for injecting approximately US\$14 – \$16 million annually into the national economy. In terms of employment, government reports estimate that 15,000 Belizeans benefited directly or indirectly from fishing activities. Licensed commercial fishers number approximately 4,500 Belizeans while sports fishing account for more than 2,200 jobs. According to a regional game fish association, the Bonefish Tarpon Trust, sport fishing generates more than \$100 million annually.

The stakes are very high for tourism and fisheries. Like the rest of the world, Belize's tourism and fisheries are not immune to external shocks. Climate change effects such as warming seas and sea level rise are expected to have deleterious impact on both these industries. A lack of/or poorly enforced natural resource management would contribute to the sectors' increased vulnerability and could threaten their competitiveness and development. As a result, the country's economic growth and welfare would be negatively impacted.

It is within this context that we maintain that the indiscriminate fishing practice of commercial gillnets compromises the health

of commercial fish stocks, abundance of protected and/or endangered species and thereby, the economic benefits of both commercial and recreational fisheries. It also threatens the health of the reef system, which is a major source of employment, enjoyment and food for the people of Belize.

In response to this, Oceana Belize's Responsible Fishing Campaign is advancing policy changes in Juvenile Fish Protection. In 2016, we advocated and put forward a policy recommendation for a phase out on the use of Gillnets in Belizean waters by 2018.

Oceana's policy position against gillnets is based on ongoing consultations with commercial, recreational and subsistence fishermen from across Belize since we launched our fisheries work in 2010.

Although there are less than 200 licensed gillnet fishermen in Belize, the use of this gear negatively impacts fishing opportunities for more than 3,000 Belizean fishermen using hand lines and other gears; the legally protected and lucrative game fish species that another 1500 Belizeans depend on; as well as the overall abundance and health of Belize's marine ecosystems.



Our ongoing consultations in fishing communities such as Dangriga, Sarteneja, Belize City, Hopkins, Monkey River, Punta Gorda and Riversdale continue to reveal several key findings, namely:

- a) Most fishermen agree gillnets are indiscriminate/destructive
- b) Most fishermen agree fishing methods must change to ensure the sustainability of fishing as a source of food and the viability of fishing as a livelihood
- c) Fishermen require support in the transition to clean fishing gear and alternative livelihoods.

Oceana's gillnet campaign and proposed policy recommendation received public endorsement from notable local and international organizations and agencies, including the Belize Coast Guard, the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Sea 2 Shore Alliance, The Bone Fish Tarpon Trust and the Belize Game Fish Association. By stopping the use of gillnets, Belize would take a great step to protect the traditions and livelihoods of thousands of fishers, and its source of affordable, nutritious fish for generations to come.

In August 2016, Oceana also released a report entitled, An Introduction to Fishing Methods in Belize. The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive and detailed description of the fishing methods used in Belize. It is important to understand the methods used by local fishing communities in order to appreciate the effects of fishing on the marine environment. Informal interviews were conducted in local fishing communities

around Belize, with fishers and their family members. This report aims to provide information on local fishing techniques in Belize that can be used as a reference when discussing management strategies and alternative fishing practices.

On our juvenile fish campaign, Oceana has conducted a number of successful public awareness and outreach activities to increase public knowledge on the negative impacts of catching and consuming juvenile fish. Our team in Belize has also participated in a number of gatherings throughout Belize and globally to share data and scientific information on the devastating effect of the consumption of juveniles to fish populations. Our outreach included the support of popular, local chefs, Sean Kuylen and Jeannie Staines, who encourage chefs and cooks across the country to not purchase or use juvenile fish in the preparation of their dishes. Both chefs remain extremely supportive of this initiative and command a large following of foodies.

On January 26th 2016, fishers, NGO's, Government Officials and Private Sector representatives gathered to launch the program brand and certification mark of "Fish Right, Eat Right", a market-based program backed by an education campaign that will provide incentives for fishers, retailers, restaurants, and consumers to promote and support the harvest, trade and consumption of sustainably and legally caught seafood.

Over 100 restaurants and resorts have signed on to the Fish Right, Eat Right certification program. This program exemplifies how Oceana is constructively engaging with the

Belize Fisheries Department on our shared objectives of encouraging the consumption of sustainably caught fish, including the invasive lionfish, and establishing catch size limits. We are in the process of gradually transitioning ownership of the program to the Fisheries Department and the Belize Tourism Board, which will help ensure its implementation and sustainability.

In this regard, we've also revised and updated the Fish Ruler, which has been sent to the Fish Right, Eat Right Steering Committee for feedback after which it will be distributed nationally under the program as a best practice. The ruler has also been sent to the Fisheries Department for their information and feedback. We anticipate national electronic distribution by mid-2017.



Fish Right, Eat Right

The goal of this certification program is to curb illegal fishing and promote best practices in fisheries by providing marketing incentives throughout the supply chain via the promotion of responsible seafood consumption. Those establishments that demonstrate knowledge of and compliance with the Fisheries Regulations will receive special recognition, and responsible fishers who comply with the Regulations will have preferential access to these reliable markets. **Fish Right, Eat Right** is initially targeting restaurants and hotels, and will expand to include cooperatives, fish markets, supermarkets and other seafood purveyors in the future. To date, **Fish Right, Eat Right** has garnered the support and commitment of 100 restaurants to participate in the pilot phase of the program.

An advertising campaign for tourists and the general public to support these compliant, recognized establishments is being designed. For restaurants, this program will help match consumer demand for sustainable, healthy products with a supply chain that will deliver. The program will also help restaurants identify alternative seafood options for consumption that can help reduce fishing pressure on species that are overexploited, threatened, or endangered.

Fish Right, Eat Right establishes a local brand that will highlight establishments sourcing seafood responsibly and fishers harvesting seafood sustainably. This will help make it easier for consumers to make sustainable choices that ensure the health of our oceans.

PROGRAM BRAND:

The Fish Right, Eat Right symbol on a menu



is Belize's assurance that your seafood has been responsibly sourced – that is, caught legally, following sustainable fishing practices, and eventually fully traceable.

CERTIFICATION MARK:

Initial Requirements for Receiving Recognition through the Fish Right, Eat Right Certification:

- Education: knowledge of Belize fisheries regulations and sustainable fisheries management
- Compliance & Transparency: compliance with the Fisheries Regulations and participation with the data collection program of the Fisheries Department
- Promotion & Awareness: promotion on menu of sustainable seafood options

and display of educational material that highlights the Fisheries Regulations and other sustainable fisheries management initiatives

- Purchase of responsibly-sourced seafood

Fish Right, Eat Right is being implemented by Belize Tourism Board (BTB), Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA), Belize Fisheries Department (BFD) and supported by Oceana, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Environmental Defense Fund (EDF).

**Fish Right
Eat Right** 

A COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

Lionfish... Eat them to Beat them!

Lionfish, an insatiable predator native to the Indian and Pacific oceans, was accidentally introduced to the western Atlantic near Florida in the 1980s. This voracious fish has been devouring its way through much of the region's marine biodiversity ever since, wreaking ecological havoc across Caribbean reefs.

Wherever they go, lionfish vacuum up just about anything that fits in their mouths: colorful reef fish, juveniles of commercial species including snapper and grouper, and algae grazers like parrotfish that allow corals to thrive.

Alongside its all-you-can-eat appetite, an absence of known predators in the Atlantic

creates ideal breeding conditions for lionfish. This, coupled with the remarkable fecundity of female lionfish—producing up to two million eggs each year—means populations are exploding.

But hope for Caribbean reefs is not lost. If these invaders have an Achilles heel, it's the fact that they taste great. Firm-fleshed and mild, lionfish have been compared to more familiar species like grouper, snapper or even lobster.

Across Belize, conservationists, fishers, and restaurateurs are cultivating new domestic and international markets for this surprisingly delicious fish. Our goal is to manage lionfish by eating them!

Oceana In Belize, Pan American Development Foundation, Fisheries, South Water Caye



Marine Reserve, Hamanasi Resort and Blue Ventures planned and organized the first Lionfish Tournament in Dangriga. The Theme "Mek We Ketch Dem Fish" Tournament opened on Friday 15, July 2016 at the BTL Park in Dangriga with music and video shows on how to cull and prepare the tasty Lionfish. On Saturday morning, eight participants of the Tournament headed out to sea to "ketch dem fish". Over 500 lionfish were caught totaling to about 200 pounds.

Team 'Piggy Bank' took the prizes for smallest lionfish caught weighing 3 grams, the most lionfish caught - 111, most poundage 42.67 and the youngest fisher folk. While 'Tobacco Caye Strikers' took the largest lionfish weighing 640 grams or 1.4 pounds.

A cook out demonstration showing the many ways lionfish can be prepared to enjoy was shown by staff of Hamanasi Resort. Later, the cook out competition was won by Shantel Lemoth, second place by Clara Salman, while third and fourth went to Ansel Diego and Shevana Jackson respectively.

The Belioness Team of Sarteneja Village, Corozal also held a training session where several women learned to make jewelry from the Lionfish spines and tails.



Lone Wrasse Artistic Fish

With the assistance and partnership of David Matus, the Titans Mas Camp, our Wavemakers and the Oceana team, the art piece "Lone Wrasse" came to life. The free standing 'fish' was named "Lone Wrasse": -"Lone" because at the rate we're going (3 billion pounds annually) plastic might soon be the only thing you see in the sea; and "Wrasse" because plastic confuses marine life and they end up ingesting it. Several types of the Wrasse fish are found along Belize's barrier reef.

Lone Wrasse made its debut in Belize's September Carnival Parade. The art piece was made completely from marine debris and recycled materials. No doubt, Lone Wrasse is beautiful, however, it was created to highlight the negative impacts that plastic and foam can have on our marine environment. We hope the art piece will also move others to action to be a part of Belize's solution not pollution. Lone Wrasse is now on display at the Oceana office in Belmopan.



ONLINE AND IN THE NEWS

In 2016, Oceana built a supporter base of nearly 30,000 supporters, including 4,000 Wavemakers, 14,200 followers on Facebook and 10,700 followers on Instagram.

In April, we were happy to welcome social media sensation, Logan Paul. During his stay, he visited the Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Shark Ray Alley where he did the first ever underwater livestream on Facebook with special appearances by nurse sharks. Through his visit, we were able to introduce Oceana and our Belize campaigns to an entirely new audience. Not only did this build significant social traction for both the Belize and US social sites, it also gave us material to build PSA's around. These PSA's will be launched later this year.

As part of ongoing advocacy efforts to promote the use of sustainable fishing gear in Belize's marine environment, Oceana launched a social media component in the ARE WE DROWNING OUR FUTURE? | #stopthenets campaign. The photographs featured Belizean social media personalities and were designed to highlight the indiscriminate nature of gillnetting at sea. Gillnets compromise the health of commercial fish stocks, the abundance of protected and/or endangered species and the economic benefits of both commercial and recreational fisheries. The gear also threatens the overall health of the reef system, which is a major source of employment, enjoyment and food for the people of Belize.

The photo shoot took place in San Pedro,

Ambergris Caye. Once a sleepy fishing village, Ambergris Caye is Belize's number one tourism destination and a hotspot for recreational fishing. The photos were taken by Oceana's Alex Ellis and feature models Joyjah Estrada and Emaun Hyde entangled in a gillnet; in the same way many charismatic, protected and economically important species are trapped in this destructive gear.

In 2016, Oceana continued to promote the lionfish as a healthy and delicious seafood alternative. In addition to supporting and assisting in the organization of lionfish culling tournaments, we also created a promotional video on lionfish to guide fishers and seafood vendors on the handling of lionfish. Many Belizeans continue to believe the myth that the invasive species is poisonous. The video features a step by step "how-to" handle lionfish, an interview with Fisheries Administrator Beverly Wade as well as a cooking demonstration by locally celebrated Belizean chef Jennie Staines. Chef Staines

pioneered the use of sustainable seafood in Belize's dining scene.

Oceana's fisheries campaigns also got additional publicity and coverage after a series of photos of a recent shark kill near Lighthouse Reef sparked public outrage about the continued use of gill nets. Oceana's Vice President, Janelle Chanona, did several media interviews and appeared on several national morning shows where she spoke about the impact of gillnets as well as Oceana's advocacy efforts to get gillnets banned in Belize's waters.

World Ocean's Day was celebrated on Wednesday, June 8th 2016 under the theme: Healthy Oceans, Healthy Planet. To commemorate the day, Oceana along with the Belize Audubon Society spearheaded the Better Bag Initiative to lower the number of plastic bags that end up in the sea by using your reusable bags at stores.



Oceana and the Belize Coalition to Save Our Natural Heritage launched a national mural project depicting Belize's marine bounty in every major municipality. These murals were done by artists and volunteers from each community and supported by local businesses and individuals. The colorful displays showcase our natural wealth and act as reminders of the importance of remaining vigilant.

On July 7th, Oceana and the Belize Coalition to Save our Natural Heritage launched a Reef Policy Scorecard focusing on actions the government is taking to protect the reef and highlighting the areas where more can be done. While this event did garner significant press locally, more importantly, it resulted in the Ministry of Tourism asking us to a meeting to discuss ways they can improve their score.

To promote informed decision-making on a greener development approach as well as a climate-resilient future for Belize and its marine resources, Oceana and the WWF Belize Saving our Shared Heritage presented a second set of presentations as part of "The Energy of Nature vs. the Nature of Energy" conference series. The conference brought together Belizean experts to provide academically informative and objectively provocative information about this nationally important issue from the perspective of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Belize is one of 155 countries that has committed to signing the Paris Agreement which was approved on December 12, 2015 by the 196 parties to the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change. Under this



agreement, countries have committed to work towards goals that will limit the temperature rise overall below two degrees Celsius while aiming to achieve a rise below one point five degrees Celsius. Oil exploration and extraction in marine areas is incompatible with Belize's commitment to reduce its use of fossil fuels. In its contribution to the climate change targets set out by the Paris Agreement in 2015, Belize committed to shifting its "energy matrix away from fossil fuels (especially oil)." Investing in oil, rather than renewable energy, would undermine this commitment.

The presenters were Mr. Carlos Fuller, Mrs. Carolyn Trench-Sandiford, Dr. Patricia Majluf, Mr. Roberto Pott, and Mr. Ansel Dubon. The moderator of the panel discussion was Mr. Evan 'Mose' Hyde.

Oceana has celebrated Ocean Hero Awards since 2009 as a way to recognize and honor leaders in ocean conservation, education, and advocacy from around the world.

On Saturday, October 1st, at a ceremony held in Belize City, Oceana recognized two Belizeans for their selfless commitment to Belize's marine environment. We are pleased

to declare biologist/zoologist Janet Gibson and activist Wil Maheia as Belize's 2016 Oceana Ocean Heroes.

In her forty year (and counting) career, biologist and zoologist Janet Gibson has played an influential role in just about every marine conservation strategy or resource management strategy developed in Belize. Gibson was also a driving force in securing reserve status for two marine protected areas: Belize's first marine reserve, the Hol Chan Marine Reserve and the Glover's Reef Atoll, one of Belize's three atolls. She was also a key member of the Belizean team that worked to have seven sites within the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System declared World Heritage Sites. On accepting the award, Gibson shared, *"We all talk about sustainability and it's really something hard to explain and may seem unattainable. But I think it can be achieved if we valued our resources more highly. In the longer term, all Belizeans really have to have that behavioral change and attitude towards our marine environment and to really start valuing it properly. And not shutting it away, but using it sustainably."*

ARE WE DROWNING OUR FUTURE?



Wil Maheia founded one of the most important voices in conservation in southern Belize, the Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment (TIDE), in an effort to safeguard the resources he fell in love with as a child. And to ensure the fishermen he idolized would always be able to depend on the sea for a living, Maheia has simultaneously been a staunch advocate against destructive fishing gear such as gillnets as well as a facilitator of an alternative livelihoods such as fly fishing. Maheia says his motivation has been a desire to make sure future generations get to enjoy our marine resources. "And I just feel like, what my kids wah see. What my kids kids wah see? When we are surrounded by so much wealth in terms of natural resources, that if we no take a stand now, then who will?" asks Maheia.

Past Belizean recipients include Lionel "Chocolate" Heredia, Dr. Melanie McField, Lisa Carne, Jamal Galves, Miguel Alamilla and Captain Romi Badillo.

Fisher-folk can truly be described as the salt of the earth. Every day, they take to the sea, in all kinds of conditions, to put food on our plates and to make ends meet at home. In an effort to build appreciation for Fisheries contribution to the national economy, as well as to highlight fishers that employ sustainable fishing practices, Oceana launched a National Ad Campaign series entitled: Changing Tides, Making Strides. Our first two ads in this series featured fishers Levan Aldana from Belize City and Guadalupe Lampella from Riversdale.

OCEANA
#stopthenets

Oceana in Belize, the Scouts Association of Belize along with our partners and Wavemakers participated in the Annual River and Beach Clean-up, event which puts Belize on the list and map of countries who work to protect the ocean. This year the event was held on Saturday, 24 September 2016. We would like to express our gratitude to everyone for doing their part to make our country cleaner and healthier. To all past participants and new participants we look forward to continue working with you. Special thanks to Pelican Beach Resort, Chaleanor Hotel, Tropic Air Belize, Martha's Guest House, James Brodie & Co., Carpet Care Plus, the Solid Waste Management Authority, Cisco Construction, Aldebaran and the Wildlife Conservation Society who all helped to make the 25th Anniversary of the River and Beach Cleanup in Belize a national success.



You can access information about number of participants, distance covered, amount of trash, top trash collected etc. for Belize and other countries using the link below: <http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/>

Our Annual General Meeting of Wavemakers was held on Saturday 15 October 2016. Our Wavemakers from across the country gathered at the George Price Center in Belmopan where our Vice President, Janelle Chanona informed our sensational Wavemakers about the recent developments on seismic testing in Belize pointing out that such activity is a first step to offshore drilling. Belizeans have already taken a very public and a clear position on offshore oil and we must keep pushing for our voices to be heard.

We awarded several of our Wavemakers with certificates of appreciation for their outstanding work and dedication in 2016. Our Wavemakers of the year for 2016 all happen to come from San Pedro, Ambergris Caye. The family of travel bloggers, Dorain, Amber, and little Madison, which make up the iTravel Belize team was awarded for their dedication to discovering and boasting about Belize's richly rewarding experiences that make it unlike any country on the planet. The Phoenix Belize and Blue Water Grill were also awarded for their continuous community efforts involving toy drives, donations, scholarships, fundraising for different causes and charities, and of course their weekly beach clean-ups helping to protect and preserve Belize's marine resources.

Special guest speaker and Country Director

of Projects Abroad, Kristin Marin, shared her perspective on happiness and how it relates to sustainability and development. *"Let's take the Happy Planet Index - they have taken a bold step towards accessing the success of a country - the happiest countries are those that achieve high levels of wellbeing at the lowest cost to the environment,"* shared Kristin. *"By being a Wavemaker you are ensuring your ultimate happiness: conserving the environment to enjoy the outdoors, and volunteering. Do not let anyone sacrifice your personal happiness and the happiness of your kids, nieces, nephews, grandkids for political greed or for short term gains in gap at the expense of long term, sustainable wellbeing."*



DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT



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4,000+
WAVEMAKERS

OCEANA Protecting the
World's Oceans

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PLEASE GIVE TODAY TO HELP US REBUILD OCEAN ABUNDANCE

Each of us has the power to help save the oceans and feed the world. The support of people like you allows Oceana to carry out targeted campaigns to end overfishing, limit bycatch, protect habitats and curb ocean pollution.

With your help, Oceana can win victories that will help to restore the ocean's bio-diversity and abundance for generations to come. Become part of a growing circle of ocean advocates by joining Oceana today.

TAKE ACTION

Become a Wavemaker and join more than 700,000 Oceana supporters from around the world who have signed up with Oceana to save our oceans. Being a Wavemaker means you won't stand by while shrimp nets drown sea turtles and airgun blasts deafen dolphins to enable offshore drilling. With you by our side, we can fight these and other threats.

FOLLOW OCEANA

Follow Oceana on social media for breaking news from all over the world and insights into our research and campaigns.





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