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## Future Of Fishing To Be Debated In Portsmouth Sept. 29

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DURHAM, N.H. -- In an effort to debunk some of the myths surrounding the current state of the world's fisheries and explore ways to ensure sustainable harvest practices, a series of discussions will be held in the region beginning Monday, September 29, 2008 in Portsmouth.

The guest speaker for the events is Philip MacMullen, head of environmental responsibility at the Sea Fish Industry Authority (Seafish), which works across all sectors of the United Kingdom seafood industry to promote sustainable seafood.

"I think people might benefit from a message that is perhaps a little bit more upbeat than we normally hear about our fishing and seafood industries," says Christopher Glass, director of the Northeast Consortium at the University of New Hampshire's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space (EOS). The Northeast Consortium, which brings fishermen and scientists together in collaborative projects, and the Yankee Fishermen's Coop are hosting the meeting at the Sheraton Harborside Portsmouth.

Glass asserts that many of the conventionally accepted truths or "myths" associated with general news about the world's fisheries and the fishing industry paint an unnecessarily dark picture often based on hearsay and misinformation. "For example, on a daily basis people are hearing that all fish available to us is not fished responsibly, that large fish suppliers are trashing the ocean, that all seafood stocks will have collapsed by 2048," he says.

True, tremendous damage has been done historically to fisheries on a global scale but, Glass says, there is also some good news associated with efforts undertaken to restore fisheries and continuing approaches to harvest the oceans in a more sustainable, responsible way.

Seafish's MacMullen will speak to some of these good-news items in his talk - from current sustainable harvesting practices by the fishing industry to ways consumers can ensure the seafood products they buy are harvested sustainably and/or are from a local source.

Says Glass, "I think one of the things Phil tries to argue is that the fishing industry has been fractured and doesn't speak well on its own behalf in a unified voice and that's part of why the public has these preconceived ideas - the other side is presented but the industry hasn't brought these facts to the table for discussion."

Depending on the mix of those assembled at the table for the Portsmouth meeting - people from the local fishing industry, buyers, processors, environmental groups - the discussion could get quite spirited as "myths" and "facts" are explored.

"We hope to generate fairly robust debate and discussion," Glass says.

The discussion at the Sheraton Harborside Portsmouth will take place between 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Monday, September 29. Similar discussions are scheduled for Wednesday, October 1 in Narragansett, R.I. and Thursday, October 2 in New Bedford, Mass. For more information contact Laurinda Sousa Smith at 603-862-0136.

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