

HISTORIC TOTOABA RE-STOCKING IN BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR: A UNIQUE GOVERNMENT-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES

CONAPESCA, SEMARNAT and the state of Baja California Sur work together with Earth Ocean Farms, a pioneer in sustainable open water aquaculture, advancing Mexico as leader in sustainable mariculture

LA PAZ, B.C.S, Mexico, December 14, 2015 – This week, SEMARNAT, CONAPESCA and the Baja California Sur Governor's office join forces with Earth Ocean Farms to release 1,500 juvenile totoaba fish (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) into the Sea of Cortez, as part of a historic restocking program. Once the target of uncontrolled fishing, the totoaba is now protected by the federal government. The public is invited to attend the release which will take place in Santispac (Km 115 Ctra Loreto-Sta Rosalia) in the municipality of Mulegé, B.C.S on December 16, 2015 at 3 pm.

The totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*), which was once abundant in the waters of the Sea of Cortez, is being sustainably bred and raised by the La Paz-based mariculture company Earth Ocean Farms, as part of a ground-breaking plan that helps the totoaba recover and generates jobs and value for the state.

"Our vision is to protect this species for future generations and develop a mariculture industry that will create jobs for Baja Sur. With the leadership of SEMARNAT, CONAPESCA, and the state of BCS, Mexico will be able to generate jobs in aquaculture, bring an important protein source to Mexican tables, and contribute to conservation of an endangered species," says Mr. Pablo Konietzko, Director of Earth Ocean Farms, a member of the InnovacionesAlumbra family of companies.

Projects like these require the support and coordination of multiple federal and state government agencies, academics, and other scientific experts. The science-based restocking plan is implemented by the University of Baja California (UABC), Aquaculture Institute of the State of Sonora (IAES), and Earth Ocean Farms. CONAPESCA, SEMARNAT, and the state of Baja California Sur are critical visionaries and supporters of the project.

This restocking program is part of the *Integral Strategy for the Recovery of the Vaquita and Totoaba* in the Upper Gulf of California, which was announced this year by President Nieto. The program allocates significant resources to the conservation of these endemic species and installs important measures to protect them, including the temporary suspension of gill-net and long-line fishing in the protected areas which cover nearly 1.2 million hectares.

Mario Aguilar, National Commissioner of Aquaculture and Fisheries, commented about the upcoming release, "Mexico is and will be a leader in sustainable mariculture, and these kinds of innovative projects and partnerships are exactly the kinds of programs we want to promote in Mexico. We are pleased to be able to pioneer sustainable aquaculture partnerships with Earth Ocean Farms, SEMARNAT and other involved institution and agencies."

"Without the vision of leaders in the government, this would not be possible," continues Mr. Konietzko.

About CONAPESCA

<http://www.conapesca.gob.mx>

About SEMARNAT

<http://www.gob.mx/semarnat>

About Earth Ocean Farms

Baja-based Earth Ocean Farms (EOF) is a marine aquaculture company focused on bringing environmentally-farmed fish to market using advanced offshore technologies in fish farming. For more information, please visit <http://earthoceanfarms.com/>. Earth Ocean Farms is a member of the Innovaciones Alumbra family of companies which are working to promote a flourishing Baja California Sur.: <http://www.ialumbra.com/>

