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International Certification for the Quality
and Sustainability of Marine Aquarium Organisms ...
from Reef to Retail

MAC News

4th Quarter 2003

Director's Note

MAC Certification starts at the reef. It is only natural, therefore, that our single largest operational focus by far involves building the capacity of collectors and their communities to achieve certification in relation to resource management and use. In doing so, we increase the amount of MAC Certified supply and achieve the associated results of coral reef management and conservation. Working with the collectors and their communities requires patience and understanding, as the process is complex and time-consuming. Community interaction to develop management plans must be facilitated. The training and skills development of fishers in net collecting and post-harvest handling must be ensured. While it is frustrating that a large supply of MAC Certified marine ornamentals is not immediately available, this supply will grow rapidly. MAC spent much of 2003 locating the resources for improving and expanding MAC supply side activities. As we report below, these preparatory efforts are paying off. Significant new supply is available, and major new MAC Certified supply development projects have been launched.

Supply of MAC Certified Organisms Boosted with First MAC Certification in the Pacific

In December 2003 Walt Smith International (WSI) in Fiji was successfully assessed against all three MAC Core Standards: Ecosystem and Fishery Management (EFM); Collection, Fishing and Holding (CFH); and Handling, Husbandry and Transport (HHT). WSI is the first MAC Certification in the Pacific. The company's certification includes four collection areas managed under a traditional custodial ownership structure. This type of reef management is common in Fiji and substantial parts of the Pacific. The collectors operating in these areas have been certified, as has the export facility. The certification of WSI collection areas, collectors and facilities increases dramatically the availability and diversity of MAC Certified supply. Many of the fish species, invertebrates and corals will be available with MAC Certified status for the first time.

Progress towards More MAC Certified Supply from the Pacific

Companies in a number of Pacific Island countries are increasingly interested in becoming MAC Certified. A second company in Fiji and one in Vanuatu are preparing to be assessed for certification during the first quarter of 2004. In Kiribati, MAC was a key participant in a major workshop on sustainable marine aquarium fisheries for Christmas Island that involved all the island's collection and export operations, as well as government officials and international experts. MAC efforts are also continuing or beginning in the Solomon Islands and Tonga.

Work Underway in 21 Villages to Prepare North Bali, Indonesia, for MAC Certification

MAC and its non-government organization (NGO) partners are working in 21 villages to develop collection area management plans (CAMPs) in two sub-districts in north Bali, Indonesia. Resort owners who were previously opposed to the ongoing collection of fish for the aquarium trade near their resorts now also want to play an active role in CAMP development by supporting the establishment of resource management plans. Several exporters and importers visited the fishermen working in these areas and expressed interest in buying fish from them when the fisheries can verify that they are responsible and well managed. Post-harvest training will be conducted with support from the exporters, starting in mid

February. MAC's NGO partners are facilitating the establishment of two fishermen's associations in the area. These two groups of fishermen are interested in adopting the MAC Standards and working with MAC and its NGO partners to achieve certification.

MAC Philippines to Prepare Multiple Areas and Collectors Groups for Certification in 2004 and Beyond with USAID Support

MAC's efforts to build the capacity of collectors and their communities in the Philippines to prepare for MAC Certification received a major boost with the recent awarding of a three-year grant from the Global Development Alliance program of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Key outputs will be an increase in not only supply of MAC Certified marine ornamentals but also coral reef areas under management and zoned for conservation. To get the project underway, the MAC Philippines office convened a workshop in late 2003 in Manila to review and plan MAC's efforts. Reef Check, which assists in the resource and fishery assessment and monitoring of collection sites, participated in the discussions. A work plan for 2004 and an overall implementation plan for MAC activities in the Philippines were developed. To further meet the objectives of the USAID-supported program, MAC hired Vince Adajar to fill the critical position of MAC Supply Development Manager (SDM) in an acting capacity. A veteran field operations practitioner, Vince has more than 12 years experience in community-based coastal resource management. His primary responsibilities are to identify, select and develop new sources of MAC Certified marine ornamentals.

Hawaii Collectors Commit to Becoming MAC Certified

In November and December 2003, MAC and the marine ornamentals collectors and wholesalers in Kailua-Kona held discussions on the island of Hawaii. Mark Schreffler of The Reef Shop (MAC Certified retailer) attended one of the sessions and gave a presentation on his experience in preparing for MAC Certification. Interest in becoming MAC Certified has grown strongly in 2003 among the collectors and wholesalers, and a number of them have submitted Statements of Commitment signaling their intent to pursue MAC Certification.

New Certification Update Service for MAC Certified Companies to Be Launched in March 2004

A new quarterly newsletter will be launched in March 2004 for those that are MAC Certified (i.e., certified companies, collectors groups and those responsible for the EFM certification, such as Collection Area Management Plan committees) and for MAC Accredited certifiers. The *MAC Certification Update* will communicate adjustments and interpretations to the MAC Standards, feature requirements of certification and explain them in detail, and post projected increases in the supply of MAC Certified organisms and industry participants to facilitate the effective implementation of MAC Certification across the chain of custody. There will also be a Q&A section. Those who are MAC Certified are encouraged to email suggestions for the first issue to update@aquariumcouncil.org.

MAC Public Awareness Campaign Successful Around the Globe

What do the US television program The Ellen DeGeneres Show, the international travel magazine Condé Nast, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the US Embassy in Tokyo have in common? They were among the many outlets that raised public awareness about MAC as the Disney-Pixar film *Finding Nemo* opened in theatres worldwide and was released on DVD. The MAC public awareness campaign's success was due in part to MAC partnerships with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and its World Conservation Monitoring Centre as well as with the young actor Alexander Gould (the voice of Nemo). Alexander has been promoting MAC during media interviews since he and his family became aware of MAC at the Hollywood premiere of the film in May 2003. MAC press releases were customized and translated for Dutch, French and German audiences as the film opened in Europe. During November, Alexander continued his support of MAC by narrating a public service announcement (PSA) that

promotes MAC Certification. Director Dirk Hagen volunteered his services during the videotaping of the PSA in Honolulu.

More MAC Outreach and Education

MAC Director of Americas and the Pacific David Vosseler staffed the MAC exhibit booth at the 37th Annual Pet Industry Christmas Trade Show, Oct. 10-12, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois (USA). Thirty-five retailers signed up for the *MAC News*. Most of them expressed interest in becoming MAC Certified.

MAC Certification Systems Director Peter Scott, MAC Board Members John Dawes and Lolita Ty and MAC European Liaison Director Svein Fossa attended Aquarama 2003, in Singapore, Oct. 30 to Nov. 2, 2003. Peter responded to significant interest in MAC from many of the visitors to the show and conference, which featured 199 display booths from 23 countries.

MAC Director of Americas and the Pacific David Vosseler gave a presentation on MAC followed by a question and answer period at a joint Cleveland Aquarium Society (CSA) and Cleveland Society of Enthusiastic Aquarists (C-SEA) meeting on Nov. 14, 2003. About 50 members were in attendance.

MAC Executive Director Paul Holthus was an invited participant at the China Recreational Fisheries and Aquarium Congress, Nov. 19-23, 2003, in Shenzhen, China. Paul gave a presentation entitled "Progress in Implementing MAC Certification for the Global Marine Aquarium Trade." Representatives of China's marine aquarium industry responded with substantial interest in the MAC Standards and Certification.

The organization Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management (STREAM) held a weeklong Workshop on Livelihoods Approaches and Analysis, Nov. 24-28, 2003, in Iloilo City, Philippines. MAC Philippines Program Officer Isabelle Cruz and MAC Community Organizer Monica Piquero attended the workshop, at the invitation of STREAM Director Graham Haylor. Organized by the Philippines Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), the workshop is an activity within a United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-funded Technical Cooperation Program (TCP).

Upcoming Events

March 2-4: Marine Ornamentals 2004 (Honolulu, Hawaii, USA) with plenary presentations by MAC Board Members Marshall Meyers and John Brandt and MAC Executive Director Paul Holthus; informal review of first draft working paper of the MAC Standard for the aquaculture of marine ornamentals; session on MAC Certification; and MAC exhibit booth. <http://www.hawaiiacquaculture.org/marineornamentals04.html>

March 17-19: America Pet Product Manufacturer's Association 46th Annual Pet Products Trade Show (New Orleans, Louisiana, USA) with MAC Americas and the Pacific Director David Vosseler at the MAC exhibit booth. http://www.appma.org/trade_show/trade_show_overview.asp

April 16-18, 2004: 16th Annual Pet Industry Spring Trade Show (Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA) with presentation on MAC Certification by MAC Americas and the Pacific Director David Vosseler and MAC Certified retailer Patrick Donston and the MAC exhibit booth. <http://www.hhbacker.com/>

May 13-16: InterZoo 2004 (Nurnberg, Germany) <http://www.wvpsa.com/i4a/calendar/details.cfm?id=147>

June 4-6: Second International Marine Aquarium Conference (Chicago, Illinois, USA)
<http://www.themac.org>

July 18-22: National Marine Educators Association 2004 Conference (St. Petersburg, Florida, USA)
http://www.floridamarine.org/education/category_main.asp?id=2088

Sept. 9-12: China International Recreation Fisheries and Aquaria 2004 Conference (Guangzhou Jinhua Exhibition Center, Beijing, China) Email: csfish@agri.gov.cn

Sept. 10-12: Marine Aquarium Conference of North America XVI (Boston, Massachusetts, USA) <http://www.macnaboston.com/>

Sept. 22-23: SuperZoo (Las Vegas, Nevada, USA) <http://www.wvpsa.com/i4a/forms/form.cfm?id=41>

Oct. 8-10: Backer's 37th Annual Pet Industry Christmas Trade Show and Educational Conference (Chicago, Illinois, USA) <http://www.hhbacker.com/>

Dec. 5-10: Sixth International Aquarium Congress (Monterey, California, USA) <http://www.iac2004.org>

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