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Fish for thought

The Gansbaai /Pearly Beach area is known for its great recreational fishing spots and its successful fishing industry. Today we are encouraged to eat what is locally produced, but when it comes to seafood, as with other foods, we should be selective nonetheless. As consumers we have a responsibility to make sure that the food we eat is sustainably (volhoubaar) fished or farmed. In other words, we should make sure that our seafood comes from a source that is capable of restoring itself continuously.

It is very satisfying to catch a tasty fish to make a family meal. But we should make sure that our children will also have this opportunity once they have their own families. Certain types of fish that are caught today, however, may die out if they are overfished, leaving nothing for future generations. That is why we are all called upon today to treat food from the sea with great respect: those who have fishing permits should use them responsibly; restaurateurs and shop owners who serve or sell fish should make sure that it comes from a sustainable source and it is the duty of customers to request and buy only seafood that is sustainably caught or farmed.

The Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) provides a helpful list for seafood buyers to help identify the seafoods that are doing well and others that are in trouble. The list is divided into a green, orange and red section. The seafood in the green section (e.g. Angelfish, Dorado, Gurnard, Hake, Snoek, Oysters, Mussels, West Coast Rocklobster, Yellowtail) can be eaten with a good conscience. Buying or ordering fish from the orange section (e.g. Kingklip, Kob, Red Roman, Cape Salmon) should be carefully considered. The seafood in the red section (e.g. Black and White Musselcracker, Red and Cape Stumpnose, Galjoen, Red and West Coast Steenbras) is truly endangered and must not be bought or sold. It may, however, be personally enjoyed by recreational fishers.

Our choices can help to determine the health and productivity of our oceans for the future. For more information, visit www.wwf.org.za/sassi. Alternatively, you can check the status of any fish, by texting its name to 079 499 8795.

Wrieen by Susanne Fuchs on behalf of the Pearly Beach Conservancy.

VIR PLASING GEDURENDE MARCH 2013