

NEWS RELEASE



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First Baja Farmed Yellowtail Introduced to U.S. Market

Catalina Offshore Products and Baja Seas partner as a regional source for a new Baja hiramasa

SAN DIEGO, Calif., March 6, 2014—Catalina Offshore Products, one of Southern California’s premier seafood purveyors and San Diego’s only [exporter of sea urchin](#), has partnered with Baja Seas to bring a new yellowtail to the U.S. market. Baja Seas will officially introduce its [Baja farmed yellowtail](#) – also known as Baja hiramasa – at the Seafood Expo North America, March 16-18 in Boston, along with Catalina Offshore Products, who will be attending in part with the California Sea Urchin Commission and California Salmon Council. Catalina Offshore Products has been test marketing the fish and it has already appeared on menus from San Diego to Chicago with rave reviews.

The buttery texture and bright, mild flavor of the Baja farmed yellowtail (*Seriola lalandi*) is similar to Hawaiian kampachi (*Seriola rivoliana*), and provides a slightly less fatty alternative to Japanese hamachi (*Seriola quinqueradita*). The original stock was bred for Baja Seas from fingerlings produced at Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute – renowned for developing methods of raising high-value marine fin fish species and sustainable ocean practices. The fingerlings were transferred to Baja Seas’ state-of-the-art grow out facility on *Bahia Magdalena*, a pristine bay in southern Baja California. Future seed will be sourced from Baja Seas’ own hatchery, Ocean Baja Labs.



Baja Seas’ entire production is underscored by responsible technology. For example, it uses Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) to create a small water footprint by diminishing pollution and disease; fish are fed sustainable protein- and omega-rich meal derived from sardines in a low Fish In-Fish Out (FIFO) ratio; the fish are raised without antibiotics or paracitocides; and semi-automated feeders and feed cameras prevent overfeeding.

“With consumers demanding more seafood and pressures on wild harvests increasing, we believe aquaculture is the one true sustainable model, said Baja Seas Director General Luis C. Astiazarán. “Because of their growth rate when compared to other species, marine finfish are the future of aquaculture.”

A number of factors guided Baja Seas' decision to harvest yellowtail: the technology for it already exists; the fish is popular with consumers yet currently remains a niche market; and it's already a natural species for the region.

Yukito Ota, master sushi chef and owner of San Diego landmark, Sushi Ota, is pleased to be among the first chefs in Southern California to feature the new local yellowtail. "Many of our customers enjoy the Baja hiramasa as much as traditional hamachi," he said.

Catalina Offshore Products CEO Dave Rudie emphasized, "The debut of this Baja hiramasa is very exciting for us as it marks a major milestone for Mexico and for the U.S. It is not only a great, local alternative to Japanese or Hawaiian yellowtail, its presence in the domestic market will increase people's access to a highly valued food source while decreasing pressure on our wild populations."

For more information on Catalina Offshore Products, call 619-297-9797 or visit catalinaop.com. For more information on Baja Seas, call 011-52-664-683-5074 or visit bajaseas.com. Additional photos and video available upon request.

About Catalina Offshore Products

Founded in 1977, Catalina Offshore Products was once exclusively a sea urchin/uni wholesaler in both domestic sales and exports to Asia. Today Catalina Offshore Products is one of Southern California's premier seafood purveyors and San Diego's only exporter of sea urchins. As a primary receiver of fresh fish and shellfish, the company specializes mainly in wild and farmed species found along the California coast and Baja. Nearly 75 percent of the seafood Catalina Offshore Products sells is sustainable and much of it is sushi grade. In 2012, Catalina Offshore Products expanded by opening its Seafood Education and Nutrition Center featuring a walk-in fish market. For more information, visit catalinaop.com.

About Baja Seas

Founded in 2012, Baja Seas is the first complete cycle commercial yellowtail (*Seriola lalandi*) farm in the Americas. With a commitment to making the world healthier one fish at a time, Baja Seas' vision is to be a global leader in marine culture, respected for its use of aquaculture technology, innovation, harmony with the environment and social responsibility. Its state-of-the-art grow out facility sits *on Bahía Magdalena*, a pristine bay known for its marine life diversity and perfect conditions for yellowtail. Baja Seas' 26,909 square-foot hatchery, Ocean Baja Labs, is located south of Ensenada on the Baja peninsula. At full capacity, the hatchery will be able to produce 2 million Baja yellowtail fingerlings per year. For more information visit bajaseas.com.

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