



NEWS RELEASE

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BLUEFIN TUNA WILD CATCH SETS NEW RECORD – HAGEN STEHR

Southern Hemisphere bluefin tuna stocks are in good shape, according to Australian fishing industry and aquaculture pioneer, Mr Hagen Stehr AO.

The Chairman of listed aquaculture company Clean Seas Tuna Ltd says his tuna fishing fleet has had its best seasonal start ever, catching about two-thirds of its quota in the first two days of the Southern Bluefin Tuna fishing season.

“Our fleet is already on its way back to Port Lincoln from the Continental Shelf with about 200 tonnes of live SBT in tow – a journey which will take the fleet about 14 days to complete,” Mr Stehr said.

“Our skippers also report that the catch comprises larger than average fish of excellent quality.

“This is the best result I have seen in almost 40 years of fishing in these waters and is a credit to our industry and its respect for – and strict adherence to – the Southern Bluefin Tuna wild catch quota.”

Australia’s tuna quota stands at 5,265 tonnes a year – with fish caught under the quota grown out in the fresh cold waters of Boston Bay and Arno Bay, off South Australia’s Eyre Peninsula to approximately 10,000 tonnes for export to Asia and Europe.

This is in direct contrast to tuna fishing practices in the Northern Hemisphere where over-fishing has resulted in severe pressure on wild fish stocks. The organisation responsible for looking after tuna in the north-east Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea – the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna - recently agreed to reduce the total allowable catch of bluefin in these areas from 28,500 tonnes this year to 19,950 tonnes in 2010. Some countries, including Spain, had sought to have the fishery suspended altogether.

“The Australian industry – based in Port Lincoln – has pursued sustainable fishing practices for decades and has pioneered tuna farming as a means of maximising the economic and nutritional value of the tuna resource in response to steeply accelerating global demand for seafood against a background of a finite supply of wild fish,” Mr Stehr said.

“In addition, Clean Seas Tuna is well advanced in its quest to close the lifecycle of Southern Bluefin Tuna at its world leading, land-based breeding facility at Arno Bay with a view to meeting market demand for the fish without impacting on wild catch.



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Mr Stehr said that from a global perspective, successfully recreating the natural breeding cycle of one of the world's premier pelagic fish species would be a key step towards ensuring sustainability of this key species at a time when wild stocks are under significant pressure.

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