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Intelligence

A seat at the table: Fed By Blue team says aquaculture needs a stronger voice

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By Jen A. Miller

In Fed By Blue, a Hollywood producer, a celebrity chef and a women-led production team aim to change the conversation about farmed seafoods

In the global conversation about how to meet the already-high and ever-rising need for sustainable food production, blue foods – products derived from the water, particularly farmed sea plants and animals – are often left off the table.

In an effort to change that, a well-connected consortium of advocates, activists and entertainers launched Fed By Blue (<https://www.fedbyblue.org/>), a communications initiative, at the SXSW conference in Austin, Texas, USA, in March.

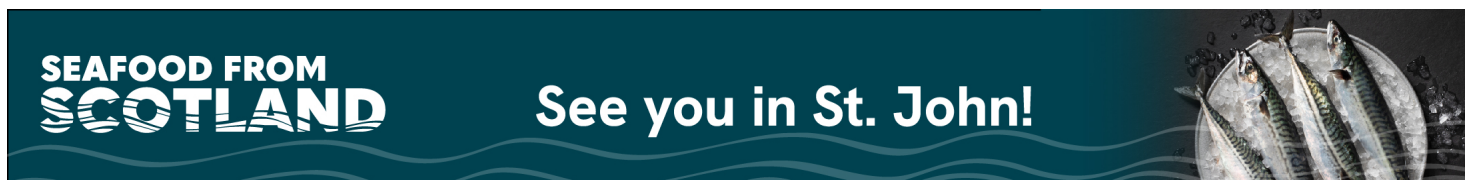
“For all the dialogue about land-based solutions, as we look to the future of food, blue foods are rarely represented,” said Jennifer Bushman, a self-described ocean champion, consultant and cookbook author. This is astounding, she added, because of the importance of blue foods: 3 billion people get nutrients and 20 percent of their animal protein from blue foods, [according to Blue Food Assessment](#)



Fed By Blue's message is clear: Blue foods are the future. Courtesy photo.

(<https://bluefood.earth/>). "It's almost as if we have taken for granted that blue foods will always be there."

She points to an October 2020 executive order from California Gov. Newsom, **to initiate strategies to fight climate change, conserve biodiversity and boost climate resilience** (<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/10/07/governor-newsom-launches-innovative-strategies-to-use-california-land-to-fight-climate-change-conserve-biodiversity-and-boost-climate-resilience/>), that didn't include blue foods as part of the discussion behind the action.



(<https://events.seafoodfromscotland.org/>).

"That is a communication problem," she said. "Before we started our campaign, every search for blue foods on Google, blueberries came up." That's partly because it's a relatively new term and there hasn't been "the investment to date with the nuanced approach as say, the California Avocado Board," she added.

Fed By Blue is led by Bushman, Jill Kauffman Johnson, managing director at the Erol Foundation, and Katherine Bryar, global marketing director at BioMar. Their goal is to inspire other thought leaders, activists, conservationists, foodies and consumers with knowledge and material to help them protect and participate in a responsible blue food system.

The trio comes from different backgrounds, which they think is a major strength of their collaboration. Bushman got into blue foods via the success of her cookbooks and work in the food world. Johnson is marine conservation advocate who was past president of the Algae Biomass Organization. Bryar grew up on a dairy farm in Australia, and worked in eggs, dairy and seafood initiatives.



Fed By Blue (from left to right): Katherine Bryar, Jill Kauffman Johnson, Jennifer Bushman, David E. Kelley and Andrew Zimmern.

“We really want to support work in this field and tell the story about good and responsible aquaculture, responsible fishing and marine conservation in general,” Bushman said.

The project also seeks to amplify work already being done in these spaces, and bring new pathways and dialogue with the goal of making fish and seafood part of the global answer to increasing hunger while also protecting the homes that make such bounty possible.

“Blue foods has to have a seat at the table. Its critical role is not communicated and talked about enough at the policy level, at the dinner table, or within the NGO community,” said Kauffman Johnson, who has also previously worked in the NGO space and was most recently the head of global development for microalgae producer Corbion until last year.

The project will include *Eating Up the Oceans: How Do We Save Our Seas?* a six-part docuseries to be produced by Andrew Zimmern, an Emmy-winning and four-time James Beard Award-winning TV personality, chef, writer and teacher; and David E. Kelly, a powerhouse television producer who is also a fly fisher and founder and chair of **Riverence Holdings** (<https://www.globalseafood.org/advocate/from-the-hollywood-hills-to-the-raceways-of-riverence/>), the largest trout producer in the United States, with locations in Washington and Idaho. After finding popular and critical success in shows like “Doogie Howser,” “Ally McBeal” and “Big Little Lies,” this will be his first non-fiction project. It’s slated for release in 2023.

“It’s time to tell the stories of the inspiring visionaries, the water farmers, fishers, scientists and activists that are already creating pathways to restore abundance to our oceans,” **Kelley said at SXSW** (<https://deadline.com/2022/03/david-e-kelley-non-fiction-natural-history-series-1234977336/>), according to Deadline.

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“We have the power to course our path by reconsidering behaviors that can help restore our delicate balance,” added Zimmern at the same conference panel. “David and I share a passion for food and the health of our marine ecosystems and are conveying a message of hope through this series: We absolutely can replenish our oceans while also sustainably nourishing the world.”

While the documentary is a key part of the initiative (and has been generating headlines) it’s not the only one. Fed by Blue also includes educational programs, community toolkits, policy and advocacy plus work in the arts, music and food worlds. Together these efforts “leverage the facts that are out there and build on what people can do going forward,” said Kauffman Johnson.

“We are hyper-focused on this with a mass media lens as the anchor, so that we can have dialogue and conversations with those thought leaders who are creating those narratives,” Bushman added.

The docu-series is in pre-production and expected to start filming this summer. The initiative is being funded by private sources, said Bushman, and will eventually include a partnership with a streaming platform, though which has not been finalized as of press time. “While we cannot share what the episodes specifically will cover or which celebrity narrator will be in them, we can tell you that there will be multiple countries and multiple stories represented,” Bushman added.

The **Fed By Blue** (<https://www.fedbyblue.org/>) website is live, as are related **Instagram** (<https://www.instagram.com/fedbyblue/>), **Twitter** (<https://twitter.com/fedbyblue>), **Facebook** (<https://www.facebook.com/WeAreFedByBlue>) and **LinkedIn** (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/fedbyblue/>) pages. Bushman and Johnson said that anyone interested in learning more or supporting the project can reach out to them via those platforms, or through the **[contact page on the website](https://www.fedbyblue.org/contact)** (<https://www.fedbyblue.org/contact>).

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