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MEDIA RELEASE

Consumers urged to double check WWF-SASSI status of fish on restaurant menus

Cape Town (9 April 2019). Consumers should scrutinise seafood menus closely to ensure that they are not being served fish that are red-listed by the WWF-Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative.

One example of a red-listed fish that is finding its way onto high-end restaurant menus is that of red stumpnose – also known as Miss Lucy. From a WWF-SASSI perspective, this is not an ecologically sustainable choice.

The effectiveness of the WWF-SASSI list lies in its simplicity:

- Green-listed fish are a consumer's best choice as these species are fished at ecologically sustainable levels and can handle current fishing pressure.
- Orange-listed species are of some concern and caution should be exercised when purchasing and/or eating these.
- Red-listed species should be avoided at all costs because there are major conservation concerns.

How is this list compiled?

The WWF-SASSI list is a snap-shot in time of the ecological sustainable status of a species, and listings are based on a thorough and in-depth review of all available data and publications.

Example of red-listed fish

Of particular concern are fish that are red-listed yet still find their way onto restaurant menus. A recent example is that of **red stumpnose or Miss Lucy**. While this is a popular eating fish it is extremely vulnerable to fishing pressure.

Some of the characteristics that put this species at risk are that it is a resident, reef-based fish with a long-lifespan (specimens of 50 years have been recorded) and consequently late maturing.

While red stumpnose is endemic to South Africa, occurring only between Cape Point and East London, it is already commercially extinct in places like False Bay, and now only forms a very small component of total linefish catches, highlighting its low level of abundance. There is also no effective management plan in place to improve the stock status of this iconic species.



From a WWF-SASSI perspective, this fish should never be served in a restaurant *no matter how or where it is caught*.

Says Pavitray Pillay, head of the WWF-SASSI programme: “Small actions by consumers and chefs can have far-reaching and lasting consequences, given all the pressures on our ocean resources. By making sustainable choices we have the power to determine whether we have seafood on our plates and in our oceans now and into the future. Our oceans literally breathe life into our planet but will only continue to do so if we protect them and use our resources sustainably. Every species in the sea has a role to play in a healthy, functioning ecosystem and every fish matters, especially the ones that are on your plate.”

Ends

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About WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organisations, with almost six million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

WWF South Africa

WWF South Africa is a national office that is part of the WWF network. We are a local NGO that for 50 years has worked towards the aim of inspiring all South Africans to live in harmony with nature, for the benefit of our country and the well-being of all our people.

WWF stands for the World Wide Fund for Nature

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