**Attention: Assignment Editors**

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HUBBS-SEAWORLD RESEARCH INSTITUTE CELEBRATES MILESTONE

RELEASE OF TWO-MILLIONTH WHITE SEABASS

*Paxson Offield, Chairman of Catalina Seabass Fund, and Don Kent, President/CEO,*

*Send Historic Fish to Sea*

# San Diego, CA. - Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (HSWRI) released into the coastal waters of southern California the two-millionth tagged white seabass produced by the Ocean Resources Enhancement and Hatchery Program (OREHP) on Wednesday August 21st, 2013. The two millionth fish along with about 300 of its siblings were released from the Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute corporate offices’ east patio into Mission Bay San Diego by event Honorary Chair, Paxson Offield and HSWRI’s Don Kent.

# According to Don Kent, President/CEO of HSWRI, “Yesterday’s release of the two millionth tagged white seabass marks a second extraordinary milestone for the Program. Because so many of our coastal fisheries either are fully exploited or are severely depleted, it is critical to use the most responsible and environmentally sound practices to rebuild them, and the Ocean Resources Enhancement and Hatchery Program does just that.”

# OREHP is a proactive conservation research program designed in collaboration with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to specifically counteract the alarming decline of certain vital marine fish stocks. Since 1983, HSWRI scientists and their collaborators have developed culture techniques to rear and release white seabass, a commercially and recreationally important coastal marine fish species.

The program is one of the nation’s largest marine fish enhancement programs, the only program of its kind on the west coast of North America and one of the few stocking programs that assesses the biological and economic impacts of its releases.

OREHP is a unique partnership between the California State Resources Agency, public utility companies, volunteer sportfishing groups and the scientific community that has led to the successful release of two million healthy, juvenile white seabass. The collaboration has enabled the white seabass program to benefit the California fishing community and the state’s resource management agency by providing an economically effective tool for sustaining and recovering depleted stocks.

Recreational fishing contributes over $2 billion annually to the California economy, but the decline in fish populations threatens to derail this valuable economic engine. Under the umbrella of the United Anglers of Southern California, the sport fishing industry contributes over 20,000 volunteer hours annually to help grow the seabass to a larger size at as many as 12 different cage growout facilities. Cage systems allow the seabass fingerlings to be reared at sea to a larger size, which dramatically increases the potential for fish survival after release. One of the OREHP’s largest cage systems is also used to temporarily hold broodstock and this facility has been underwritten by philanthropist Paxson Offield, Chairman of the Catalina Seabass Fund for the past decade.

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HUBBS-SEAWORLD RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO CELEBRATE MILESTONE

Releasing the two millionth tagged white seabass coincides with another monumental benchmark in the Institute’s history – its 50th anniversary in 2013. Peggie and Milt Shedd & family will be recognized as Honorary Chairs at HSWRI’s upcoming special event, *Fins Flukes & Feathers*, on September 7th at SeaWorld. Bill Shedd, son of Milt Shedd and current HSWRI Board Chair stated that “our family is beyond proud to have founded the Institute with the Hubbs family in 1963. We are ecstatic at not only reaching this important Two Millionth fish release milestone, but also about the incredible impact it is having on rebounding white seabass populations, a true *sea life solution*.”

The Leon Raymond Hubbard, Jr. Marine Fish Hatchery was dedicated in 1995 and is capable of producing more than 350,000 juvenile white seabass annually. The 22,000-square-foot hatchery was built on land donated by San Diego Gas & Electric adjacent to Agua Hedionda Lagoon in Carlsbad, California. The hatchery’s property is now owned by NRG Energy, which continues to support the program through use of the property. There are a total of 12 grow-out facilities along the California coast where the white seabass are reared and released.

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HSWRI is a nonprofit research foundation established in 1963, dedicated to studying the world’s natural resources, with an emphasis finding *sea life solutions* to mitigate human impacts on marine and coastal environments. Through a commitment to innovative scientific research, the Institute contributes to the understanding and conservation of the marine world. For more information: www.hswri.org

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