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# Global aquaculture sustainability highlighted with 2024 tours

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*The ASC closed 2024 with a remarkable five-day exploration of Southern Chile's salmon farming industry. Photo by Alexander Gold*

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**T**he **Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)** closed 2024 with a remarkable five-day exploration of Southern Chile's salmon farming industry during the final leg of its ASC Discovery Tour, December 2-6.

What began in 2018 as a one-time trip to observe responsibly farmed Thai Shrimp has evolved into a multi-part educational "ASC Discovery Tour" series guiding major retail and foodservice companies to unique sites across the globe where in-demand seafood species like salmon, shrimp, and sea bass are being raised according to the world's

globe, where in demand seafood species like salmon, shrimp, and sea bass are being raised according to the world's strictest standards by ASC certified farms.

December's trip marked the third and final Discovery Tour of 2024 and only the second to Chile in the organization's history, following earlier tours in [Norway](#) and [Greece](#). North American representatives from Sam's Club, Sysco, Holland America, and High Liner Foods joined ASC amid a backdrop of snow-capped volcanos for an action-packed agenda covering the full farm to fork journey of ASC-labeled Chilean salmon, including:

- Farm site visits to Marine Farms and Cermaq
- Nursery and hatchery tour of Salmones Blumar
- Farm site visit to Mowi Chile
- Indoor post-nursery grow station and processing facility tours at Multi X
- ASC farmer workshop, dialogues and more

### **As Seafood Production Increases, So Do Risks**

"The rapid increase of seafood farming can lead to pollution, environmental damage and poor working conditions," said Willem de Bruijn, Sr. Director, Markets and Communications, ASC. "Yet farmed seafood provides livelihoods and affordable protein for billions of people. That's why it is crucial to ensure seafood is farmed responsibly, with care for people and the planet."

Chile supports one of the world's [largest salmon industries](#), supplying almost a third of all farmed salmon and over half to the U.S. alone. In an industry that employs over 70,000 people with annual exports near \$4 billion, it is critical to demonstrate that environmentally sustainable and socially responsible farming practices can still be done. Not all farmed seafood is equal, and the Discovery Tour experience showcased the dedication and care that ASC certified farms expend to meet ASC's rigorous [Salmon Standard](#).

"At BluGlacier, we uphold the highest standards in both our farming practices and community efforts, proudly representing Blumar and Ventisqueros in the U.S." notes Sebastian Goycoolea, CEO, BluGlacier. "Our ASC certification reflects our unwavering commitment to sustainability and excellence. Visits like this offer our partners a firsthand look at the care and integrity we bring to every aspect of our work."

### **Providing Stakeholders a Front Row Seat**

"The ASC's commitment to responsible fish farming has significantly advanced salmon aquaculture in Chile," said Morkel Van Wyk, Fleet Manager, GEPD Environmental Compliance, Holland America Line. "Gaining insight into Chilean fish farming provides Holland America Line with a deeper understanding of sustainable seafood practices. By witnessing the dedication to sustainability, from clean farming operations to responsible resource management, we can enhance our role as ambassadors for sustainable seafood consumption, ensuring our guests enjoy responsibly sourced seafood while supporting the health of marine ecosystems."

"Consumer demand for responsibly farmed salmon continues to be very important. ASC certification plays a significant role in the future of sustainable salmon farming," adds Michael Cochran, Sr. Merchant – Fresh & Frozen Seafood, Sam's Club. "It was clear to me visiting multiple salmon farm sites in Chile that ASC-certified farms had more visibly active and healthier salmon. The trip reinforced my belief that ASC-certified farms are a gateway to improving environmental conditions, helping introduce more sustainable farming practices, and deliver a more responsible aquaculture outcome."

### **The Evolution of ASC Discovery Tours**

Initially a North American endeavor, the ASC Discovery Tours have since opened to global attendance, with June and September's tours welcoming retailers from Switzerland, Belgium, France, Korea, the UK, the U.S., and Canada. Demonstrating demand for ASC products in major seafood markets to producers, farming communities and local organizations has become a singular opportunity to increase the production of responsibly farmed, ASC-labeled products.

The Discovery Tours' success has spurred the addition of new locations and species each year, with plans to continue innovating and expanding the Tour's scope in 2025. ASC will likely touch down in Ecuador, India, Scotland and Turkey with final Discovery Tour locations and dates to be announced in the new year.

### **About the Aquaculture Stewardship Council**

Responsible seafood starts at the farm. ASC's sea green label assures shoppers that:

- The strictest standards are in place to improve farm practices.
- Certified seafood in stores actually comes from certified farms.
- Certified farms continue to meet the highest standards.
- We are constantly working toward greater sustainability.

ASC is the only certification program that can verify that your farmed seafood is what it claims to be, where it came from, how it was raised, and how it got to you. Learn more at [SeaGreenBeGreen.com](https://SeaGreenBeGreen.com) and follow [@asc.usa](https://twitter.com/asc.usa)

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