

**2022 UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE
ONLINE STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING: INPUTS TO THE POLITICAL
DECLARATION ZERO DRAFT**

23 March 2022

10:30 – 11:30 AM (EDT, New York)

Intervention

Christine Xu (Aquatic Life Institute)

The Aquatic Life Institute supports the UN in achieving a healthy, safe and resilient ocean for sustainable development by 2030 and beyond. We urge the UN Ocean Conference Political Declaration to add a new point that is intersectional and cross-cutting: which is recognizing the importance of aquatic animals as key stakeholders in our ocean conservation efforts. That is, treating aquatic animals as sentient beings who are capable of suffering, and not just as 'stocks' to be exploited for food. Ocean conservation via an animal welfare lens will introduce humane capture and fish farming that help reduce overfishing, bycatch, injury and ultimately unnecessary mortality. Capture fisheries is the last food production system that does not take animal welfare into account. In fact, 2-3 trillion aquatic animals are caught in the wild each year for food, compared to 70 billion farmed land animals and 100 billion farmed aquatic animals. As such, to truly be responsible in our efforts to protect the oceans, we must include aquatic animals as a central focal point in this declaration.