



First halibut fishery receives MSC certification

26 April, 2006 - THE Pacific halibut fishery in Alaska, Washington and Oregon has become the first halibut fishery in the world to receive Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification.

Pacific halibut joins 16 other fisheries worldwide that are currently certified to the rigorous MSC environmental standard for well-managed and sustainable fisheries. Fish products resulting from the certified fishery can now carry the MSC's blue eco-label on retail packaging. The eco-label can be found on more than 300 seafood products sold in retail chains in 26 countries. In total, 40 fisheries worldwide are engaged in the MSC environmental programme, representing over three million tons of seafood.

A comprehensive assessment led by independent certification body Scientific Certification Systems, Inc. (SCS) has ensured that all aspects of the fishery meet the MSC environmental standard. SCS and an independent expert team examined the status of the fish stock; the impact fishing has on the marine environment and the effectiveness of the fishery management system. The certificate has been awarded to a non profit corporation sponsored by Fishing Vessel Owners Association (FVOA) and the Deep Sea Fishermen Union, both of which represent longline crews and vessel owners.

"We are delighted to see the first halibut fishery receive MSC certification. It provides the fishers with recognition of their good management and an opportunity to add real value to their product in an increasingly competitive market place," said Rupert Howes, MSC's Chief Executive.

Bob Alverson, executive director of FVOA, added: "We see this as something American citizens want over time. Ninety percent of the halibut caught by the fishery is consumed in North America and we aim at securing long-term sales by becoming MSC certified."

Many of FVOA's members are third and fourth generation fishermen operating small family owned boats. They fish using bottom hook and line gear and catch around 27,000 tonnes of halibut a year.

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