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MEDIA RELEASE

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Multiple Fisheries Attain Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certification "Firsts"

Five fisheries independently assessed by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS)

December 3, 2009 – Emeryville, CA – Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) announced certification of four fisheries completed recently, and one in progress, in accordance with the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) international standards for responsible fishery management. They include:

- The Atlantic deep-sea red crab fishery, the first MSC certified fishery on the east coast of the US;
- The Iturup Island pink salmon and chum salmon fisheries, the first two Russian-managed MSC fisheries;
- The Canada Pacific halibut fishery, the first in British Columbia to achieve the MSC certification;
- The Annette Islands Reserve (AIR) salmon fishery in Alaska is the first indigenous peoples-managed fishery to seek MSC certification.

For each client, SCS empanelled a multidisciplinary team of specialists to audit fishery management practices against MSC principles and criteria. During the assessment, the team analyzed written materials, conducted interviews with stakeholders and conducted field audits to determine: 1) the status of the fish stock 2) the impact of fishing on the marine ecosystem and 3) the effectiveness of the management system overseeing the fishery.

"The efforts undertaken by these certified fisheries provide important precedents for others to follow," said Sabine Daume, PhD., MSC Manager at Scientific Certification Systems.

To demonstrate ongoing compliance with the MSC standard and to foster an environment of continuous improvement, awards of certification typically include specific management tasks to further strengthen the fishery management system. "The Atlantic deep-sea red crab fishery, for example, will implement a more thorough data collection system to capture information on annual stock assessments," said Dr. Daume.

"We're pleased to have earned the valuable MSC certification," said Jon Williams, president of the New England Red Crab Harvesters' Association. "We have a very active research program in place, and the additional scientific information provided by the SCS team verified our best practices and will help improve our fishery as we move into the future." The association's four fishing vessels delivered about 3.1 million pounds of crab to the docks, resulting in one million pounds of Atlantic processed crab, fulfilling the growing demand for sustainable seafood.

Across the Pacific, the first two Russian managed fisheries qualified for MSC certification and sold domestically and exported to Europe, Asia and North America. The fisheries are managed by the Russian government and private seafood-processing and shipping company J.S.C. Gidrostroy. SCS also provided chain-of-custody verification to ensure that the MSC label is only displayed on seafood from MSC-certified fisheries.

Alexander Verkhovsky, president of J.S.C. Hidrostroy, said, “We are very proud to receive the MSC certificate, which validates our long-term commitment to sustainable resource management as part of a sound, long-term business strategy.”

The Asia-Pacific region collects, farms and consumes the most seafood globally; SCS has focused much of its work in this region. The Canada Pacific halibut fishery is the first in British Columbia to achieve the MSC certification seal. Pacific Halibut is a popular firm flat fish, like a flounder or sole, weighing upwards of 500 pounds and sold primarily in North America.

“We’re delighted that the B.C. halibut fishery has proven itself to be one of the best managed in the world by meeting the MSC standard,” said Jake van der Heide, president of The Pacific Halibut Management Association of B.C. (PHMA). “Our fishermen are fully accountable for their catch—both halibut and non-target species—and every vessel is monitored electronically.”

Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) is also now assessing the Annette Islands Reserve (AIR) salmon fishery, contracted by the Metlakatla Indian Community Council in conjunction with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). It is expected to take 12 to 14 months to complete and if certified, will complete the final section of salmon fisheries of Alaska to meet the MSC criteria for sustainable and well managed fisheries.

The AIR fishery includes five species: Pink Salmon, Chum Salmon, Coho Salmon, Sockeye Salmon and King Salmon. AIR fishers currently employ 53 gillnet vessels and 12 seine vessels which catch approximately 2,948 MT of salmon each year.

“It’s important to us to preserve the fishing legacy we inherited from our ancestors and manage it in a way that sustains this and future generations. Assessment to the MSC standard provides us with a valuable fishery management tool, and also helps us demonstrate to our customers that we are maintaining fish stocks and healthy habitat,” said Jeff Moran, fisheries manager for the Metlakatla Indian Community.

The number of fisheries that meet MSC eco-label standards has steadily increased. SCS was the first certifier to become accredited by MSC in 2000 and has since certified more than 2 million metric tons of seafood.

Wild fisheries in some regions of the world are improving, despite the prevalence of overfishing. The MSC runs the only certification and eco-labeling program for wild-capture fisheries. Strong, science-based catch limits, combined with better management and economic incentives, can prevent overfishing and restore marine ecosystems. For example, overall landings in Alaska and New Zealand have increased over the last 50 years and neither area is considered overfished (Worm et al., 2009).

About Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) SCS, an independent certifier of environmental, food quality and food purity claims, is the first MSC-accredited certification body. For over two decades, SCS has developed internationally recognized standards and certification programs aimed at spurring the highest level of environmental and quality performance. Its programs span a wide cross-section of the economy in agricultural production, food processing and handling, forestry, fisheries, energy, green building, consumer and business product manufacturing, and retail. SCS has evaluated hundreds of fisheries and certified over 2 million metric tons of fish. For more information about SCS, visit www.SCScertified.com or call 510-452-8000.

About Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is an international non-profit organization set up to promote solutions to the problem of overfishing. The MSC runs the only certification and eco-labeling program for wild-capture fisheries consistent with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards and the United Nations FAO guidelines for fisheries certification. In total, more than 150 fisheries are engaged in the MSC program with 53 certified and over 100 under full assessment. Another 40 to 50 fisheries are in confidential pre-assessment. Together, the MSC certified fisheries record annual catches of close to 4 million metric tons of seafood, representing approximately four percent of the FAO’s total recorded global capture production. Worldwide, more than 2,500 seafood products—which can be traced back to the certified fisheries—bear the blue MSC eco-label. For more information, visit www.msc.org.

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