



Contact

Nick Kordesch
+1.510.452.8035
nkordesch@scscertified.com

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SCS Certifies Mexican Gulf of California Pacific Sardine Fishery to Marine Stewardship Council Standard Certification Demonstrates Successful Stakeholder Engagement

July 21, 2011 - Emeryville, CA – Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) has awarded certification to the Gulf of California Pacific Sardine fishery in Mexico under the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) standard for well-managed and sustainable fisheries.

The Gulf of California sardine fishery is Mexico's largest fishery by volume. In the 2009/2010 season landings of Pacific sardines were 256,000 metric tons in the Gulf of California. Packaged sardines from Cámara Nacional de la Industria Pesquera, Delegación Sonora may now bear the widely recognized MSC ecolabel.



The fishery's certification was examined by a wide range of stakeholders in accordance with the MSC framework. SCS held a series of consultations with stakeholders and the client, to address concerns raised in a formal objection submitted by Comunidad y Biodiversidad (COBI) A.C., a Mexican marine conservation organization, on behalf of several non-governmental organizations and scientists from the region. These meetings resulted in an agreement about necessary steps and modifications to the fishery's action plan.

The final action plan includes a commitment by the fishery to provide the opportunity for the stakeholders to participate in the design and execution of the fishery improvements required as part of the certification. It also includes a rigorously designed monitoring and reporting system, as well as higher coverage of the fishing fleet with on-board observers to record bycatch and interactions with endangered, threatened and protected species.

"The certification of this fishery demonstrates the important role of stakeholder engagement, a core part of the MSC mission," said Dr. Sabine Daume, Sustainable Seafood Manager at SCS.

"A group of Mexican marine conservation NGOs and scientists followed this process closely and reached an agreement in the last phase of this assessment to collaborate, welcoming the invitation of Cámara Nacional de la Industria Pesquera to be more involved with the fishery," said Dr. Luis Bourillon, Mesoamerican Reef director for Comunidad y Biodiversidad, A.C. "This opens a new phase of collaboration to ensure that the largest fishery in Mexico will be sustainable for generations to come."

"The certification of the sardine fishery in the Gulf of California is a great achievement for the members of this industry and the communities involved," said Priciliano Melendrez, undersecretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture of the State of Sonora. "This certification reaffirms the State of Sonora as a national leader, not only in fish production, but in sustainability, which has been an objective of the present administration. We will continue to support fishermen who decide to undertake sustainability projects, and we will keep working with NGO's like COBI. We are currently in talks to support the certification process of other fisheries in the State of Sonora."

Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) has been providing global leadership in third-party sustainability and environmental certification, auditing, testing and standards development for more than 25 years. SCS programs span a wide range of industries including green building, product manufacturing, food and agriculture, forestry, retailing and more.

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