

MSC Fishery Fact Sheet: Danish blue shell mussel fishery, Limfjord



Latin name	<i>Mytilus edulis</i>
Deutsch	Miesmuschel
English	Blue mussel
Español	Mejillon
Français	Moule
Nederlands	Mossel

Basic information

Location	Limfjorden, Denmark
Fishing gear	Dredge (approx. 2 m wide)
Season	March - June September – December
Catch	~30 000 MT
Products	The mussels are sold ready-shelled, cooked and frozen, or as whole live mussels to markets all over Europe.
Date certified	January 2010

Background information

The Limfjord is the most important waters for mussel fishing in Denmark. The mussel fishery here can be dated back to the start of the last century when mussels were primarily fished for use as bait in long-line fisheries. Today Denmark is one of the most important producers of processed mussels in Europe with 90% of the landings exported as single frozen mussels or canned commodities.

51 vessels have a license to dredge blue mussels in the Limfjord using one or two dredges on each vessel. Mussels are a key component of many marine communities and form mussel beds of interconnected mussels and dead shells on the soft bottom area of the Limfjord.

MSC webpage www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/certified/north-east-atlantic/denmark-blue-shell-mussel



Vessel targeting blue mussels in Limfjord



Sustainability notes

Stock levels

The stock is currently healthy. A comprehensive range of information is collected and used in the management of this fishery and indicates that the harvest rate of mussels is low compared to their capacity for reproduction.

Environmental Impact

Management strategies make extensive use of closed areas so that only 5% of the Limfjord is fished annually, reducing the risk of harm to bycatch populations. There is a high degree of certainty that retained species are also within biologically based limits. The fishery poses little risk to bycatch species based on published evidence that densities of invertebrate bycatch species are not significantly affected by fishing. There are no apparent direct effects on endangered or protected species and possible indirect effects, such as harvesting of mussels fed on by aquatic birds, are kept to a minimum by strict limits on fishing effort.

Management plan

The management of the fishery is supported by a comprehensive monitoring, control and surveillance system and there is good cooperation and communication between scientists, management and the fishery. This system is transparent and all documentations are in the public domain. The fishery receives no direct subsidies and there are no incentives that contribute to unsustainable fishing or ecosystem degradation.

Fishery Improvements

Within the first year of certification the fishery management plans, which currently are only fully applied to *Natura 2000* areas, should be extended across the entire fishery. Also within this year, VMI has to prepare an action plan for research into indirect effects the fishery has on fish-eating birds. Finally, VMI will develop an action plan for research to determine the risk posed to habitat types as a result of the fishery. Both action plans will be implemented within two years of certification and completed with five.

Useful websites

Suppliers: www.msc.org/where-to-buy/find-a-supplier
FAO factsheet: www.fao.org/fishery/species/2688/en

Certificate holder

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Last updated February 2010