

MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL NEWS RELEASE



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Final Report Available on the Environmental Review of Alaska Pollock Fisheries Scientists determine the fisheries meet the MSC's Environmental Standard

Seattle, WA – After conducting a three year scientific review, Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) in Emeryville, California has released a report in which it determines that the Alaska pollock fisheries – Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska – have met the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing.

This Determination does not constitute a final decision on the assessment but instead signals the commencement of the next stage of the process - a 21 day period during which organizations opposed to the recommendation may signal their plans to file an objection. Only when the required MSC objections procedure is completed will a decision be made about whether the fisheries will receive certification and have the right to display the MSC logo on seafood products.

After 21 days, if no objection is received, the Determination becomes the final result and the fisheries will be awarded certification. If an "intent to object" is received, the Objections Procedure begins. The intent is acknowledged then the objecting party has 30 days to submit its detailed objection to the Certification Body (SCS). The Certification Body then has 30 days to respond in detail. If the objecting party is unsatisfied with the response, it will file an objection with the MSC which will either dismiss the objection as patently frivolous or otherwise spurious or it will convene an independent objections panel to further examine the concerns.

The At-Sea Processors Association (APA) is seeking certification of the two pollock fisheries which together constitute the world's largest whitefish fishery. The Alaska pollock fishery is a mid-water trawl fishery which accounts for approximately 30 percent of all fish harvested by volume in the United States. The assessment process began in January 2001 with the draft report for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island portion released in September and the draft report on the Gulf of Alaska fishery posted in November 2003. The Final Report released today is available on the MSC website: www.msc.org.

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Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

The MSC was founded in 1997 by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Unilever as a way to reward responsibly managed fisheries around the world. Today, the organization is independent of its founders and operates offices in London, Seattle and Sydney, Australia. The MSC is an accreditation body that accredits independent certification bodies to assess applicant fisheries to determine whether they meet the MSC's Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing. Through its certification and eco-labeling program, the MSC uses market-based incentives to encourage responsibly managed fisheries around the world. Ten fisheries have been certified under the MSC program to date and 13 others are currently undergoing full assessment including Alaska halibut and sablefish, British Columbia salmon, California Troll-caught King salmon and Oregon Dungeness crab. Visit www.msc.org for more information.

Interview Arrangements/Media Inquiries/Contact Information

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