



Global Marine Programme

Restoring the balance

Working the Market

Milestone 2.3 - Market Incentives

Economic incentives, consumer initiatives and trade management measures are promoted and adopted at national, regional and/or international levels to encourage sustainable fisheries, including in ten G200 marine ecoregions by 2007.

Increasing Demand for Sustainable Fish

More than three quarters of the world's fish stocks are considered to be overfished, fully fished or recovering from overfishing. The state of the planet's marine resources is critical. Increasingly, consumers across the world are recognizing this crisis and are asking for sustainably caught fish and seafood products.

WWF aims to harness and increase this consumer awareness and make the market work to foster more sustainable fisheries. The road to market reform goes via the consumer. If you and I ask questions about where the fish we buy comes from and actively choose not to buy unsustainably caught fish, the market will slowly change to provide the kind of fish we want.

To make the market work in favour of sustainable fisheries, WWF works with a three-pronged approach, by promoting certification schemes for fish and seafood products, creating economic incentives through positive fishing subsidies and via trade management measures that allow tracking sustainable products from the fishery to the marketplace.

WWF works to harness the market through a range of activities, including:

- Promoting Marine Stewardship Council certification
- Promoting Marine Aquarium Council certification



The Marine Stewardship Council has certified the Alaskan salmon fishery, to provide guidance for consumers and retailers on finding sustainably sourced fish. The MSC salmon products can be found in fish counters as far away as Switzerland.



In many countries, WWF has published consumer guides for fish and seafood, to help buyers find sustainable fish in the shops, and to put pressure on retailers as well as the fishing and aquaculture industries to become more sustainable.

- Establishing retailer buyers' groups supporting sustainable seafood
- Establishing and promoting consistent consumer guidance (e.g. seafood guides) for sustainable seafood choices
- Establishing new rules with the World Trade Organization that discipline harmful fishing subsidies
- Promoting catch documentation schemes to track legal products, and using CITES to ensure sustainable trade of CITES listed products

Certification Points the Way

To provide consumers with a choice for the environment and to encourage consumer demand for sustainable fisheries products, WWF and Unilever teamed up in 1996 to form the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). The MSC provides a mechanism for identifying and certifying sustainable fisheries, giving consumers a guaranteed label to look for when shopping for seafood products.

To date, eleven fisheries have been certified through the MSC, covering seven of WWF's marine ecoregions in Asia, Europe and Latin America. These fisheries provide consumers in 22 countries with a choice of 220 MSC-certified fish products, covering whitefish, salmon and crustaceans. Many more fisheries around the world are undergoing the certification process at this time and, if all fisheries in the process receive certification, 4% of the world fisheries supply will be certified in a few years' time.

More than 100 major seafood buyers have pledged to purchase MSC-certified seafood products, including major supermarket chains in France, Germany, Switzerland, the UK and the US.

Baja California Spiny Lobster Certified



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The world's first MSC-certified community-based fishery in a developing country, the Baja California spiny lobster fishery on the Pacific coast of Mexico, was certified by the MSC in April 2004. This fishery's certification has been fully supported by WWF as a global model for community-based MSC certification.

The MSC certification of the Baja California spiny lobster fishery means that consumers and suppliers have a new and important opportunity to support sustainable fishing practices in the developing world. The federation of fishing cooperatives, FEDECOOP, first passed the rigorous, independent review for compliance with global criteria for sustainable and well-managed fisheries and subsequently successfully completed the MSC assessment process.

Since 2001, WWF and Comunidad y Biodiversidad (COBI, a local non-governmental organisation) have been working closely with the Mexican authorities and the fishing communities organized under FEDECOOP to achieve MSC certification. Five hundred fishers belonging to nine fishing cooperatives in central Baja California are part of it.

"Conservation is good business because sustainable fisheries translate into sustainable human communities," said Omar Vidal, director of WWF-Mexico.

"Good management of fisheries ensures that fishing remains a way of life for coastal communities. By achieving the MSC certification, this fishery will become a successful model for small fisheries around the world."

Towards A Sustainable Subsidies Regime

At the 2001 World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial, WWF was instrumental in making the WTO agree to address the harmful fishing subsidies regimes. As the trade negotiations are now underway, WWF is stepping up its efforts to ensure that the WTO follows through on its commitment to improve trade disciplines on fishing subsidies.

WWF has now tabled detailed proposals to eliminate harmful fishing subsidies. This breaks new ground by offering specific technical suggestions for resolving the most difficult problems confronting subsidies negotiators in the WTO. They include regulating subsidies programmes on a fishery-by-fishery basis, balancing subsidies reform with the special needs of developing countries, and introducing bold institutional reforms to share authority over subsidies between the WTO and other intergovernmental organizations and regional fisheries management bodies.

WWF's Sustainable Seafood Initiative

By choosing seafood from sustainably, or at least well managed, sources and declining products from badly managed stocks, companies and the public can be an important economic driver for change. This also makes good business sense in terms of supply chain security, procurement leverage, marketing and branding.

WWF has recently launched a high profile initiative aimed at the seafood market, retailers and consumers. We work to promote certification of sustainably sourced products through the MSC, as it remains the only ecolabel for well-managed wild fisheries.

The Oak Foundation, with WWF's support, has also initiated a partnership with key NGOs in Europe and the US, with a view to increase the strength of our seafood work and to achieve a consistent approach and voice. The partnership is designed to determine consistent criteria to guide consumers towards the better choice for the marine environment and to raise the world-wide profile of sustainable seafood, supporting well managed fisheries and proactive retailers.

WWF hopes these efforts will enable consumers and retailers to make the right choice for a brighter future for the sea.

CITES Ensures Sustainable Trade

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) works to ensure trade in wildlife and plants is not a threat to the conservation of nature. At the 2004 CITES CoP13, the highly prized giant coral reef fish, humphead wrasse, was added to the Appendix II, requiring importing and exporting countries to ensure that trade is sustainable and legal.



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Boats returning to Newlyn, Cornwall, UK, laden with MSC-certified mackerel caught on hand lines. Fishing communities can benefit from certification of their fisheries through a competitive advantage in the market as consumers grow more eco-conscious.

MSC-Certified Fisheries

Alaska pollock, Alaskan salmon, Burry Inlet cockles, Loch Torridon nephrops, Mexican Baja California red rock lobster, New Zealand hoki, South African hake, South Georgian toothfish, Southwest England handline-caught mackerel, Thames herring and the Western Australia rock lobster fisheries.

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