

Marine Stewardship Council

Press Release



Atlantic deep-sea red crab fishers earn MSC certification for sustainability First New England fishery attains MSC ecolabel

Sept. 3, 2009 (Seattle, WA)—Today the Atlantic deep-sea red crab fishery has been awarded Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for being a sustainable and well-managed fishery.

Atlantic Red Crab Co., the fishery's new processing plant, also has become MSC Chain of Custody-certified, meeting MSC's strict standard for seafood traceability. The plant, located in New Bedford, MA, can process the red crabs as whole leg meat, scored arm and claw meat, salad meat, whole crab and customized products.

"The red crab industry is very proud to have earned the distinction of becoming the first MSC-certified fishery on the east coast of the United States. The MSC ecolabel demonstrates the industry's long term commitment to fishing sustainably and its proactive approach to working with fishery managers. We are very excited to have achieved this milestone as it is an assurance to the viability of red crab products in the seafood marketplace, and the ecolabel is an emblem of pride for our fishermen," said Jon Williams, president of the New England Red Crab Harvesters' Association, the client for the fishery's assessment.

The deep-sea red crab (*Chaceon quinque-dens*) fishery consists of four vessels that cover an area within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone from Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, northward to the U.S./Canada border; all four vessels are included in the MSC certification. The crabs are captured at 400 to 800 meters of depth with crab pot traps. Approximately 3.1 million pounds of crab were caught in the 2008 season, which are processed into nearly 1 million pounds of raw product that are sold primarily into the U.S. foodservice market, as well as European retail and foodservice markets.

Nova Seafood in Portland, Maine is a major distributor of red crab. Angelo Ciooca, CEO of Nova Seafood, said, "We are very pleased to market MSC-certified sustainable Atlantic red crab. The timing of this certification process could not be any better as many of our customers are requesting MSC-certified seafood products. The Atlantic red crab industry has long been a leader in sustainable fishing practices, and we hope that red crab is just the first of many species to be MSC-certified as sustainable in the U.S. North Atlantic."

Brad Ack, director of MSC's Americas region, said, "I want to congratulate the Atlantic deep-sea red crab fishery on becoming MSC-certified. This is an important milestone as the first fishery on the east coast of the U.S. to achieve MSC certification. It is the second crab fishery in the world to become certified, and this new supply of MSC-certified crab will be a welcome asset to meet the sustainable seafood needs and commitments of foodservice and retail operations."

MSC operates the world's leading certification and ecolabel program for sustainability in wild-capture fisheries. In accordance with the MSC standard, the assessment of the red crab fishery entailed analyses of the status of the red crab stock, the impacts that the fishery has on the marine environment and the effectiveness of the management system overseeing the fishery.

The assessment, conducted by independent certifier Scientific Certification Systems, took 15 months to complete. Additional information about this MSC-certified fishery can be found at <http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/certified/north-west-atlantic/Atlantic-deep-sea-red-crab>.

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Photos available upon request.

About Atlantic Red Crab Co.:

Atlantic Red Crab Co. is the processor for all New England deep-sea red crab. The plant began operating on Aug. 11, 2009. More information is available on the company's website at www.atlanticredcrab.com.

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 ecolabeling 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. The FAO "Guidelines for the Eco-labelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries" require that credible fishery certification and ecolabeling schemes include:

- Objective, third-party fishery assessment utilizing scientific evidence;
- Transparent processes with built-in stakeholder consultation and objection procedures;
- Standards based on the sustainability of target species, ecosystems and management practices.

The MSC has offices in London, Seattle, Tokyo, Sydney, The Hague, Edinburgh, Berlin and Cape Town.

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. The fisheries currently undergoing full assessment catch a further 2.85 million metric tons of seafood—approximately three percent of the total global capture production. Worldwide, more than 2,500 seafood products—which can be traced back to the certified sustainable fisheries—bear the blue MSC ecolabel.

For more information, visit www.msc.org.

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