

MSC responds to allegations of illegal fishing in nephrops fishery

The [Marine Stewardship Council](#) (MSC) has responded to allegations made by the international organisation [The Black Fish](#), which denounced illegal fishing activities taking place in the nephrops (Norwegian lobster) fishery off the Swedish and Danish coasts.

The environmental group claimed that they carried out over 100 inspections in Swedish fishing ports last August and found "multiple illegally modified trawl nets, which enable fishers to illegally catch cod fish".

In response, a spokesperson for the MSC stated, "In addition to meeting our demanding standards for environmental sustainability, MSC certified fisheries must comply with all local, national and international laws.

"The Danish and Swedish nephrops fishery was certified following an 18 month assessment by independent third party auditors who scrutinised its fishing practices. Black Fish was encouraged to submit evidence as part of this assessment. However, the certifier did not receive any evidence of illegal fishing for consideration during the assessment and there were no objections raised."

"The fishery will now be audited annually to ensure that it continues to meet the MSC standard – including compliance with all relevant laws. We encourage Black Fish and any other stakeholders to present their evidence to the certifier so that it can be considered as part of this audit. If, after considering all of the information available, the certifier finds evidence of systematic illegal activity it will take appropriate action.

"We welcome third party input into all assessments to the MSC standard. This is fundamental to ensuring a transparent and thorough assessment of a fishery's sustainability."

Regarding the fishing gear used by the Danish and Swedish nephrops fishery, the MSC clarified that the fishing techniques used by this fishery have been specifically developed to minimize by-catch of cod. One example is a selective fishing technique known as "The Swedish grid" which results in close to zero bycatch of cod in Kattegat and Skagerak.

Other fishing techniques used are traps, which do not result in any bycatch of cod, and selective trawl which has been designed to release cod and undersized nephrops.

Source : [http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=74531\(11/02/15\)](http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=74531(11/02/15))