

First octopus fishery achieves MSC certification

Four artisanal fishing guilds from western Asturias have obtained the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for their octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*) fishery. This is the first octopus fishery to achieve this worldwide ecolabel.

The four fishing guilds from Asturias, Nuestra Señora de la Atalaya de Puerto de Vega, Nuestra Señora de la Caridad de Ortiguera, Santo Angel de la Guarda de Viavlez and San Pedro de Tapia de Casariego, jointly entered MSC full assessment to demonstrate the sustainability of the resource and their fishing practices.

The certification client is made up of 27 boats that catch octopus from December to July. This fleet is exclusively dedicated to small-scale fishing using pots, a fishing trap art that captures the octopus remaining static at one point on the seabed with a bait inside.

The guilds have decided to establish an open certificate that will allow them in the future, to share the certification with other vessels and landing sites included in the Octopus management plan of Asturias. That is the case of the guilds of Cudillero, Oviñana, Luarca and Figueras.

The common octopus is an iconic and highly valued species especially in the Mediterranean. It is also one of the most important fisheries in the territory of Western Asturias, because the volume of landings, its economic value and social impact on coastal populations in the region.

Octopus, like other species of cephalopods, presents many challenges for managing its catch because of the uniqueness of its biology.

Among other things, this species breeds only once during its short life of only two years, which is affected by a variety of environmental conditions. That is why, an MSC certification of the first octopus fishery in the world has a very important meaning, because it is a gateway to cephalopod certification, which were not represented in the programme so far.

Source : <http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=82286>