

MSC-certified supply chains see accelerated growth

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) has said accelerated growth in certified supply chains shows the growing demand for traceable seafood.

The volume of MSC-certified catch has increased by 6% since 2014-15, while the MSC certified supply chain has climbed 16% over the same period, it said.

Between April 2015 and March 2016, the number of processors, restaurants and caterers with MSC chain of custody grew from 2,879 to 3,334 companies, operating in 37,121 sites across 82 countries.

More than 20,000 products now carry the blue MSC label and can be traced back to fisheries which meet the MSC's standard for sustainable fishing.

"Accelerated growth in the MSC certified supply chain, and more MSC labelled products, demonstrate a growing demand for traceable, sustainable seafood,"

said MSC CEO, Rupert Howes.

"More retailers and brands are choosing to use the MSC label to communicate their commitment to sustainability. Their leadership is helping to drive a chain reaction, from ocean to plate. From certified fishers to seafood consumers, everyone plays a vital part in ensuring that our oceans are thriving for generations to come."

The MSC's 2016 consumer study highlights some of the commitments made by leading retailers. These include Lidl Germany's extended range of MSC labelled products, along with initiatives from Sainsbury's, Carrefour, Migros, Coles and Aeon.

MSC certified fisheries caught more than 9.3 million metric tons of seafood in 2015-16, representing almost 10% of the total global wild caught seafood by volume. MSC data shows that 83% (2.6 million tons) of seafood caught in the Northeast Pacific and 40% (3 million tons) of wild catch in the Northeast Atlantic is now MSC certified. As of March 31 2016, 286 fisheries were MSC certified.

There were 38 newly certified fisheries in 2015-16 including some significant firsts: the Spanish Asturian fishing guilds became the first octopus fishery to gain MSC certification, while the China Southern Fishing Company was the first MSC certified tuna fishery in China. Canada also realised a major milestone with certification of the country's first Atlantic cod stock. Certification of the 3Ps cod fishery marks a new chapter in the history of cod in Canada.

Alaska Pollock – one of only 10 fisheries worldwide to have been certified three times – along with African hake, Antarctic krill and Norway's North East Arctic cod and haddock fishery were recertified in 2015.

“Increasing accessibility of the MSC program to developing world and small-scale fisheries is also critical to achieving our mission,” added Howes. “The MSC's Global Fisheries Sustainability Fund, along with new tools and initiatives are aimed are helping more fisheries take their first steps on the road to environmental improvements.”

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