

SPSG and PFA North Sea herring fisheries retain prestigious MSC ecolabel standard

The North Sea herring fishery operated by vessels belonging to the Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group and the Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association (England, France, Germany, Lithuania and the Netherlands) has been recertified by the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) flagship ecolabel scheme, meaning that consumers can buy herring in the knowledge it comes from sustainable sources.

The Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association (PFA) and Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group (SPSG) North Sea herring fisheries have held the prestigious MSC standard since 2006 and 2008 respectively, and this is the third time they have been recertified under its programme of five-yearly assessments. The MSC standard provides independent confirmation that the fishery is sustainable and well-managed.

The news comes at a time when North Sea fishermen are urging the general public to eat more herring because it is packed full of heart-healthy Omega-3 fatty acids and essential vitamins and minerals.

Ian Gatt, secretary of SPSG, said: "This recertification is great news for the fishery and highlights the determination of our herring fishermen to ensure a sustainable future.

"Health experts recommend we should eat two portions of fish every week, one of which should be an oil-rich fish, which is why we should all be including fish such as herring or mackerel in our weekly shop."

Gerard van Balsfoort of the PFA said: "Our North Sea herring fishery was the first large European fishery of its type to be certified under the MSC label.

"This third certification of the iconic North Sea herring fishery shows how collaboration among scientists – including our own researchers – management authorities and the fishing industry can lead to successful and long term sustainable harvesting."

Acoura Marine undertook the assessment on behalf of the PFA and SPSG client group.

Ends

Notes to editors

The Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group (SPSG) was established in 2006 and represents all sectors of Scotland's pelagic industry, from catching and processing, to marketing. SPSG was established to oversee the certification of a number of pelagic stocks to the MSC standard and has been behind a

number of other sustainability initiatives. It was established with the unique vision of making the Scottish pelagic industry truly sustainable. More information at www.spsg.co.uk

The Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association (PFA) represents the interests of 9 European pelagic freezer-trawler companies that fish for human consumption. PFA members are family-run companies that currently operate 18 pelagic freezer-trawlers flagged in France, Germany, England, Lithuania and the Netherlands. More information at www.pelagicfish.eu.

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