

Correction From Marine Stewardship Council on Greenpeace NZ Press Release Published By Scoop

Monday, 11 May 2020, 1:03 pm

Press Release: [Marine Stewardship Council](#)

Anne Gabriel, Programme Director, Oceania and Singapore at the Marine Stewardship Council:

The paper published in Plos One referenced by Greenpeace NZ fails to consider the full breadth of the MSC's work and the diversity of the fishing sector.

The main accusation is that the MSC has used imagery to present a false picture of our work to the world. This is wholly untrue. We do not consider analysis of the photographs used on the MSC's Facebook account to be a relevant or credible indicator for evaluating a science-based certification programme. The MSC works with and promotes sustainability for all types and sizes of fisheries. This is vital if we are to address the global challenge of overfishing.

The percentage of small-scale fisheries achieving MSC certification (currently around 16%) does not reflect the breadth of the MSC's work to support these fisheries. Given their social, economic and environmental importance, we provide small-scale fisheries with funding, training and tools to help them improve their sustainability. It may take many years for most to achieve certification, but we're focused on the long-term.

As anyone working in this sector will understand, the sustainability of a fishery is not determined by its size or fishing gear. All fishing gear can have negative impacts on marine biodiversity if poorly managed. The important thing is to make sure that whatever the gear and the size of the boat, it is managed and used in such a way as to respect stocks, habitats and all the surrounding marine species. These are two of the three pillars of our standard that fisheries must meet to be MSC certified.

The social and economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic underline the importance of balancing the needs of businesses, fishermen and citizens within the limits of what our planet can sustain. The MSC has spent the past 20 years working together with the entire fishing industry, scientists, government and NGOs to strike this balance. Our ultimate objective is for all fishing to be sustainable. This is why we work with fisheries of all sizes: from the smallest to the largest.

The MSC complies with the highest levels of credibility, transparency and best practice in standards setting. This has been demonstrated through our compliance to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation's guidelines for certification and ecolabelling and ISEAL codes for standard setting, assurance and impacts. In 2019, the UK government enquiry into Sustainable Seas found the MSC is the "most rigorous certification in the seafood sector" and a study on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality ranked MSC in the top 10 sustainable food labels in the Netherlands. These reviews take a far more comprehensive review of the MSC's practices than the report presented by Bloom.

To conclude, seafood which carries the blue MSC label comes from fisheries which have been independently scrutinised by experts as meeting internationally recognised standards of best practice in sustainable fishing, no matter where it came from.

Additional information:

- Further background on why both large and small scale fishing can be sustainable, can be found on [msc.org](https://www.msc.org).
- Details of all fisheries in the MSC programme are publicly available on fisheries.msc.org. Each is listed with its size and fishing gear clearly identified.
- The MSC's communications seeks to represent the diversity of the fishing sector and the organisations that we work with. Within both contexts, there are many more smaller fishing vessels than large ones.
- Small scale fisheries account for roughly **90% of fishers** and 50% of the global seafood catch intended for human consumption.
- Around 16% of MSC certified fisheries are currently considered to be small scale. These fisheries alone support the livelihoods of more than 80,000 small scale fishers. More information on our work with small scale fisheries is available in the report "[Making Waves](#)", published in 2019.
- The MSC supports small-scale and developing world fisheries by providing funding through its [Ocean Stewardship Fund](#) and [Pathway to Sustainability](#) projects, for which it receives joint funding. The MSC also provides [training and tools](#) to allow fisheries to track their progress towards sustainability as part of credible [Fisheries Improvement Projects](#).
- The MSC is recognised by GSSI and ISEAL for [best practice](#) in both sustainable seafood ecolabelling and international standards setting.
- In 2019, the UK Government's Environmental Audit Committee concluded a year-long review into the MSC as part of its [Sustainable Seas enquiry](#).
- Also in 2019, a [benchmarking study](#) by Milieu Centraal, a Dutch environmental information and education foundation, on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality awarded the title "top keurmerk" (top ecolabel) to the MSC giving it full marks for credibility and transparency. The MSC was one of only 10 out of 100 ecolabels to receive this recognition.