



## *Marine Stewardship Council*



**Funding:** The Marine Stewardship Council was originally founded by the World Wildlife Fund and Unilever, one of the world's largest seafood suppliers. Since going independent funds are collected from a combination of contributions from grants and members.

**Fisherman:** This organization has not been easy on the fishing industry. Through its certification program that applies to only 4% of fisheries world wide the MSC has had two very negative impacts. By refusing to certify aquaculture programs and creating an exclusive sustainability label they dramatically inflated the price of "sustainable fish". They also created a closed loop by eliminating businesses who wished to promote sustainable products but needed to do business with more than the 4% of the fisheries they have certified.

**Mission:** The purpose of the Marine Stewardship Council is to certify fish as sustainable complete with labels for consumers. The organizations design is known as "chain of custody". This means that in order to receive a sustainable label the fish product must come from a fishery, wholesaler, distributor and store or restaurant certified by the Marine Stewardship Council. Although this creates a strong system of checks and balances it is heavily criticized for cutting out many businesses along the way.

**History:** The Marine Stewardship Council began in 1996 and developed a system of certifying fisheries as sustainable based on principles taken from the U.N.'s FAO code of conduct. The actual certification is carried out by third party companies (Moody Marine Ltd., Travel Certifications Inc., and Scientific Certification Systems) and has come under great criticism. In 2004 the quality and legitimacy of MSC certification began to be questioned especially in relation to Alaskan pollock and salmon fisheries.

**Transparency:** The Marine Stewardship Council website is difficult to follow. It provides minimal information about certification principles and little about issues in regards to certification problems. There is no mention of current funding on the site and the ability of this non profit organization to generate funds through its 'chain of custody' design has been called into question by organizations representing parts of the seafood industry.

**Locally:** Other than Whole Foods markets there is no direct local impact from the MSC.



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