

**Press Statement: For Immediate Release
December 19, 2013**



Objection to the sustainable certification of Gulf of Maine scallops dismissed by Marine Stewardship Council

In an attempt to close a management loophole that threatens the viability of the Northern Gulf of Maine scallop fishery, Togue Brawn of Maine Dayboat Scallops, Inc. with the support of the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, filed an objection to the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) proposed certification of sustainability for the US Atlantic scallop fishery. The certification was sought by the American Scallop Association which represents companies and individuals involved with the Limited Access scallop fleet. The Limited Access scallop fleet is responsible for over 95% of northeastern US federal scallop landings, a lucrative fishery worth over \$550 million in 2012.

The objection by Brawn, a longtime advocate for the sustainable harvest of Gulf of Maine scallops, was in response to a management loophole which exempts Limited Access permit holders from regulations aimed at rebuilding and protecting the scallop resource in the Gulf of Maine. Currently the Northern Gulf of Maine scallop management area is governed by a Total Allowable Catch set by a survey of the area, a 200 pound daily possession limit, and a 10.5' maximum dredge size. Limited Access permit holders are not bound by any of these regulations which could allow for excessive harvest to a slowly rebuilding resource.

The regulations in the Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area were established to preserve opportunities for small vessels that would have otherwise lost access to the scallop resource. The conservative possession limit and dredge size restriction are designed to prevent overfishing on the scallop resource as it rebuilds.

An Independent Adjudicator, assigned by the Marine Stewardship Council, dismissed the objection brought by Brawn, citing the fact that Limited Access vessels' fishing activity in the NGOM is controlled by a limited number of days they can fish, and that the overfishing scenario predicted by Brawn is yet to take place.

“I am very disappointed that the Marine Stewardship Council would certify a fishery that contains no real measures to prevent overfishing in the Northern Gulf of Maine” said Togue Brawn. “This decision deals a significant blow to the integrity and validity of the MSC ecolabel.”

“The Gulf of Maine scallop fishery is important to me and to a lot of Maine fishermen” said Alex Todd, a scallop fishermen from Chebeague Island, Maine, “This decision by the Marine Stewardship Council is putting the future of the scallop fishery in Maine at risk and is incredibly shortsighted.”

This decision is a lost opportunity to enhance the sustainability of the economically important NGOM scallop fishery.

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Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association

The Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association (MFCFA) is a fishermen led non-profit organization that identifies and fosters ways to restore the fisheries of the Gulf of Maine and sustain Maine’s iconic fishing communities for future generations. As stewards of the marine ecosystem, MCFA fishermen promote the ecological and financial sustainability of fisheries through balancing the needs of the current generation of fishermen with the long-term environmental restoration of the Gulf of Maine. MCFA works to achieve these goals through advocacy, education, outreach, and collaborative research projects.

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Other points of reference:

Marine Stewardship Council:

The mission of the Marine Stewardship Council is to use our ecolabel and fishery certification program to contribute to the health of the world’s oceans by recognizing and rewarding sustainable fishing practices, influencing the choices people make when buying seafood, and working with our partners to transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis. The MSC is a registered charity and non-profit (501c3) and relies to a large extent on financial support from donors with an interest in protecting sustainable fishing. The majority of this income is received in the form of grants from private foundations, as well as some more limited support from governments, companies, other NGOs and individual supporters. Additional

revenue is also generated from MSC International (the trading arm of the MSC) which administers a fee structure for use of the MSC ecolabel, helping the MSC to become more financially independent and reduce its dependence on charitable donations. The only cost in the program that is paid directly to MSC is for voluntary use of the MSC logo on a product. (from <http://www.msc.org/>)

American Scallop Association

The American Scallop Association is comprised of many companies and individuals directly related to the Northwest Atlantic Sea Scallop Industry. The ASA's members are processors and support businesses with facilities located up and down the East Coast of the United States.

The goal of our organization is to monitor and develop legislation and manufacturing practices pertinent to our processing businesses. The ASA proudly utilizes the expertise of legal counsel, the marine science community and a full spectrum of industry professionals. It is the direct involvement of companies and personell from the packaging, processing, harvesting, and regulatory agencies that make the ASA an authority on successful management practices. (<http://www.american-scallop-association.com/about-1/>)