



Renowned fishing expert Daniel Pauly is worried about the certification of the Peruvian anchovy fishery. (Photo: Stock File)

Scientists criticise MSC



AUSTRALIA

Monday, September 28, 2009, 16:40 (GMT + 9)

The 50 fisheries approved by the [Marine Stewardship Council](#) (MSC) jointly produce over 5 million tonnes of seafood. With another 100 fisheries in assessment and the MSC is poised to evaluate Antarctic stocks, concerned scientists are questioning the method used to certify fisheries.

British fisheries science leader Sidney Holt expressed alarm at current plans to have the MSC certify Antarctic fisheries, *The Age* reports.

"The MSC, which started as a good idea, has become a danger to conservation and sustainable management," he contended.

Global authority on fish stocks Daniel Pauly is concerned by a plan to have the MSC certify Peruvian anchovy used for fishmeal.

"The MSC is making a mistake. The issue is not whether the fishery is well managed, but what we do with the fish," he recently wrote.

The [United Nations'](#) (UN) [Food and Agriculture Organisation](#) (FAO) believes human consumption of fish will reach a tipping point by 2010. And scientists fear the MSC label may be counterproductive, encouraging fisheries depletion.

About 90 per cent of big predatory fish in the sea such as marlin, swordfish and sharks are already gone, said American marine scientist Sylvia Earle. Expensive tuna populations such as southern bluefin have also been decimated.

The MSC, formed by the [Unilever Corporation](#) and [World Wildlife Fund](#), has seen its popularity grow through recent partnerships with companies such as retail chain [Wal-Mart](#).

"I think you are seeing a consumer groundswell in the way people think about the fish they buy," said MSC Deputy Chief Executive Chris Ninnis.

A group of 30 marine scientists rebuked a draft MSC approval recommended by certifier [Moody Marine](#) for Antarctic toothfish in the Ross Sea in Antarctica.

"If it is true ... that very little is known about the life history and movements of the species, this in itself is enough to render any sustainability certification process entirely inappropriate," the scientists stated.

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