

MSC - Continued from page 2

On eco-labeling, the MSC and us

by Ussif Rashid Sumaila, Tony Pitcher and Daniel Pauly



Certified fisheries: the Cornwall handline mackerel fishery (England) and the Alaskan salmon fishery (USA).

Lower photo by Rupert Howes

overall sustainable procurement policy. With over 40 fisheries now engaged in the programme (representing over 3 million tonnes of seafood), and more than 300 labelled products now available in over 20 countries, we sense that the MSC could be approaching a tipping point in key markets.

The Governance Review strengthened key structures within the organisation including our Technical Advisory Board and Stakeholder Council and a major piece of work is currently underway – the Quality and Consistency Project – to look at key aspects of the methodology including how the precautionary approach can be applied in fishery assessment, the development of so called ‘fatal flaw indicators’ and other areas to do with how the standard is interpreted and applied in individual fishery assessments. The MSC welcomes the Fisheries Centre’s renewed interest in this important work (see article by Sumaila *et al.*, in this issue of *FishBytes*), which we hope will lead to more fisheries becoming sustainable.



Eco-labeling based on prior certification, which is the business of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), is a market-based management tool. An environmental certification program is a seal of approval which shows that a product meets a certain standard. It provides customers with visible evidence of the product’s desirability from an environmental perspective. If properly implemented, this tool can provide many benefits. It will inform consumer choice by providing them information about the environmental impacts of selected products and the choices they can make. It can empower people to discriminate between products that are harmful to the environment, and those more compatible with environmental objectives. In this way, consumers can have direct impact on the supply of environmentally benign products through their demand for such goods. A dynamic market for eco-labeled products forces corporate commitment to continuous environmental improvement. It also serves an educational role for consumers, and promotes competition among producers and/or suppliers.

In theory therefore, there is no doubt about the potential of eco-labeling and certification. This explains why the idea of using eco-labeling and certification to support sustainable use of fishery resources should be attractive to fisheries scientists and managers. The challenge, however, lies in designing a functioning eco-labeling program in practice. Key issues include those related to inconsistency in testing and certification methods: should the label represent an overall assessment of a product’s environmental burden over its entire life cycle, or some subset of it? Who determines what specific

environmental impacts are the most important? What criteria are relevant in rating impacts? Credibility and trust are crucial for the success of an eco-labeling program, and this is largely an issue of transparency.

As mentioned in Rupert Howes’ article, the Fisheries Centre supported and encouraged the formation of the MSC from its inception, for the reasons stated above. In fact, we were one of the few fishery research institutions to allow the MSC to place our logo on its website and literature. Unfortunately, lack of transparency in scoring of the first fisheries accreditation decisions did not seem to accord with the methodological scientific standards we would wish to uphold in the FC, and this led to the open letter in 2001 withdrawing the Fisheries Centre’s corporate support.

Subsequently, following several representations from the MSC encouraging us to reconsider, we did just that in 2002/3 by holding a series of four internal workshops, attended by over a dozen FC students, postdocs and faculty. At these workshops, volunteers led us, fishery by fishery, through all of the publicly-available information about accreditation by the MSC. We immedi-



Daniel Pauly with Sidney Holt (one half of Beverton and Holt) at one of the earliest MSC meetings, outside Airlie House where, in 1998, the MSC’s principles and criteria were codified.

Continued on page 4 - MSC and FC

MSC and FC - Continued from page 3

ately hit an important methodological issue: almost no information could be found about fisheries that had failed accreditation. Moreover, it was impossible to find information that had led to the scores for each factor considered by the MSC, and scoring issues and methods appeared, as far as could be discerned, to follow a completely different scheme for each fishery.

Rupert Howes to speak at Fisheries Centre

Date: February 1st 2006
Time: 12 noon
Venue: AERL Rm 120

Title: *Promoting sustainable seafood - an overview of the Marine Stewardship Council's eco-labelling and certification programme.*

ALL WELCOME

Hence our conclusion, at that time, that MSC accreditations were not sufficiently transparent, standardised or replicable for the Fisheries Centre to endorse. The present MSC article (pp. 1-3) assures us that these issues have now been addressed. Given the growing importance of market-based approaches, we will re-initiate, at the Fisheries Centre, thorough discussions on the methodologies of the MSC and other certifying agencies. Indeed, such discussion is necessary given the proliferation of eco-labels.

This issue of proliferation was driven home when one of us [DPI] participated, on 17 November 2005 in Hamburg, in a symposium on eco-labeling in fisheries, sponsored by the German Environment Ministry, attended by the bulk of the German wholesale fish traders (plus some firms from Britain, The Netherlands and Switzerland), by powerful consumer groups and by the MSC and similar NGOs.

The overall impression one got – besides one of astonishing civility during the discussions – was that the

wholesale industry, responding to the 'green' German, British, Dutch and Swiss markets, wants as fast as possible most of the fish they sell certified as 'sustainable'. This offers great opportunities, e.g. for the MSC, but also carries great risk. Notably, there is a risk that the confusing variety of eco-labels now in existence include a number of meaningless labels, or worse, that these labels will gradually drive out those that do imply some measure of sustainability for the products that are certified.

Clearly these are difficult issues that need a lot of thinking, by as many interested parties as possible. It also requires, for the MSC, that it be willing and able to take good ideas from all possible sources to help it face these challenges. It appears to us that the current MSC leadership is open to new ideas, and therefore the Fisheries Centre is willing to turn a new page with the MSC. This also explains why one of us [URS] has accepted an invitation to serve on the MSC Stakeholder Council.



Salish Sea Gathering: towards ecosystem-based governance

by Mimi E. Lam

Held in the ancestral home of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe in Sequim, Washington, the British Columbia First Nations and western Washington Indian Tribes convened the Salish Sea Gathering 16-18 November, 2005. The traditional Coastal Salish Longhouse Gathering protocol was followed: "to explore issues, set directions, and solidify our purpose in one voice, to develop and recommend policies and actions to protect our Salish Sea homeland."

The Environmental Policy Conference identified priority environmental concerns, issues, and projects in the international trans-boundary region of the Salish Sea, comprised of the Georgia Basin in Canada, the

Puget Sound in the United States, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca shared by both countries. The First Nation (FN) Chiefs and U.S. Tribal Leaders invited government representatives from Environment Canada (EC) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and two faculty, Dr Mimi E. Lam, UBC FC Adjunct Professor, and Dr Roberto Gonzalez-Plaza, Northwest Indian College (NWIC): "to listen, respect, and respond to our environmental issues, decisions, and recommended policies."

Consensus-building, cultural sustainability, and traditional ecological knowledge informing North American Native habitat restoration and environmental management

efforts were emphasized.

Kurt Grinnell, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Council, and Brian Cladoosby, Swinomish Indian Tribal Chairman, opened the Gathering. Keynote addresses were delivered by Billy Frank, Nisqually Indian Tribe, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission Chairman, and Tom Sampson, Saanich Inlet, Coastal Salish Sea Initiative. An overview of the Treaty of Indigenous Peoples International (1994) and the Joint Statement of Cooperation on the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound Ecosystem (2000) set the tone of the Gathering, where Salish elders were honoured, as "stewards of our homelands." "Recommendations for long-term protective

Continued on page 5 - Salish

Salish - Continued from page 4

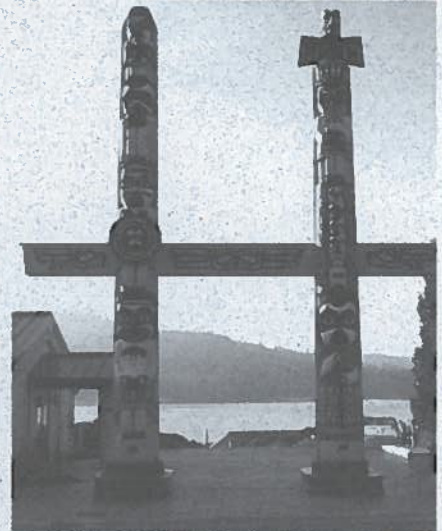
policies and actions to restore the viability of the Salish Sea ecosystem and insure the sustainability of our aboriginal cultures" included a Coast Salish Aboriginal Council, proposed by Terry Williams, Tulalip Tribes Fisheries and Natural Resources Commissioner, collectively discussed with Mary Beth Bérubé, EC-Georgia Basin Action Plan, and L. Michael Bogert and Mary Beth Clark, EPA Region 10, and resoundingly endorsed.

Mr Sampson then wound the Gathering's clock ahead sixteen hours and summoned Dr Lam, Andy Paul Jr, Homalco FN Council and Dr Gonzalez-Plaza to conclude the policy recommendations with "Ecosystem-based Governance of the Salish Bioregion," collaborative work with Leonard D. Dixon, Lummi Nation Planning Department and Phillip L'Hirondelle, EC-FN Liaison. The presentation was dedicated to Vine Deloria, Jr, Standing Rock Sioux and Professor Emeritus, University of Colorado, who sadly passed away on 13 November 2005. Dr Lam highlighted the strengths of an ecosystem-based governance approach to trans-boundary issues and collaborative projects involving WA Tribes, BC FNs, government, and academic

partners. Mr Paul Jr presented and endorsed: 1) the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by Fisheries Centre Director Daniel Pauly and NWIC President Cheryl Crazy Bull; 2) the Salish Sea Ecosystem Alliance (SSEA) the MOA established; and 3) Dr Lam's Environmental Leadership Program Activity Fund project with the Homalco FN to design community-based educational programmes and to serve as scientific liaison in treaty and consultation and accommodation negotiations. Conference participants were invited: 1) to dialogue on a collective vision of shared governance and resource management of the Salish bioregion; 2) to collaborate in a place-based educational and research initiative, "How do we Construct and Govern Sustainable Pacific Northwest Fisheries?"; and 3) to participate in a



Salish Traditional Knowledge Gathering, a SSEA initiative tentatively scheduled for Fall 2006/Winter 2007. The response was overwhelmingly positive from the BC FN Chiefs and WA tribal leaders, including the Gathering's co-Chair, Mr Sampson. A second, 3-day Salish Sea Gathering is being planned, to be hosted by a BC FN and to commence on National Aboriginal Day, June 21, 2006. For updates see www.salishseaconference.com



Above: Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Community Center, Sequim, Washington. Photo by Mimi E. Lam.

Left: Co-Chair, Tom Sampson and Mimi E. Lam at Salish Sea Gathering. Photo by Roberto Gonzalez-Plaza.

Thinking big: a global look at fisheries science

May 2nd, 2006, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

*A symposium to honour Professor Daniel Pauly
for the 13th International Cosmos Prize and his 60th Birthday*

Daniel Pauly is the perhaps most outspoken fisheries scientist of his generation, and his research and public policy work have been widely recognized. He has published more than 500 scientific papers and has authored or edited over 30 books and reports. He has recently been awarded the 13th International Cosmos Prize, in October 2005 in Osaka, Japan. UBC

is proud to host a celebratory symposium, on the occasion of Daniel's 60th birthday. Distinguished international colleagues will give invited lectures with focus on topics representing Professor Pauly's career, with further festivities at dinner. A student forum and public lectures will follow on Wednesday 3rd May, as will public lectures by Jeremy Jackson and Carl Safina.

Details of both events will be announced on www.fisheries.ubc.ca. Registration will be required. Further information can be obtained from Professor Villy Christensen (v.christensen@fisheries.ubc.ca); Professor Amanda Vincent (a.vincent@fisheries.ubc.ca); the conference organiser (paulysymp@fisheries.ubc.ca); or by checking the Fisheries Centre website.