

All Rowing Together ?

**A Western Australian Experience in
Implementing Third Party Eco-Certification on
a Jurisdiction-wide Basis**

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Policy Day, IIFET 2016, Aberdeen

All Rowing Together?

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The Other Way?



Overview of WA Fisheries

- ~ 50 commercial fisheries
- Highly regulated – limited entry, catch and effort controls, size limits, gear restrictions, closures etc
- Risk-based, Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management approach
- Single species fisheries eg. lobster, abalone
- Mixed fisheries eg. trawl and trap
- 2013/14 GVP in excess of AUD 400m
- Highly valued recreational sector





WA's Sustainability Performance

- Reported annually to WA Parliament
- 97% of WA's fish stocks not at risk from fishing
- Some stocks affected by environmental factors



Certification Adoption: Key Dates

March 2012 – Government decision to seek third-party certification of all WA's fisheries

- Linked to 'security of access' for fishers

September 2012 – Following due diligence process, MSC selected as preferred standard

- Long-term aim of all WA fisheries having opportunity to be MSC-certified

November 2015: First new fisheries certified

Why Certification?

Lack of 'cut through' with the community that Australian fisheries were managed sustainably.

Challenges to access: marine parks, recreational interests other users of marine environment.

Fishing Industry Council privately funded research found that neither government nor industry were trusted sources...but third NGOs were trusted sources.

Sustainability of fishing sectors	2013 (% agree)	2011 (% agree)
Farm fishing	76%	78%
Traditional fishing	58%	60%
Recreational fishing	69%	67%
Commercial fishing	30%	27%

Horvat, Peter and Michael Sparks, 'Community Perceptions of the Sustainability of the Fishing Industry in Australia' (Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, 2013)

Objectives of WA's Program

- Provide public confidence that WA's fisheries deliver sustainable seafood (**'social licence to operate'**)
- Meet the retail trend to serve fish from fisheries **independently assessed as sustainable** or in an improvement program
- Assess WA's fisheries against a **credible, third party, science-based standard** – seek continuous improvement

Why MSC

- **World-leading, gold standard**
- **Independent – truly third party**
- **Science-based**
- **Transparent**
- **Consumer-facing**
- **Local experience: Western Rock Lobster MSC certified in 2000 (15 years of continuous certification)**

Mutual Commitments

Government Funding of AUD 14.5 million to **boost capacity** and pay for **initial assessments**

- Pre-assessment of all WA fisheries is **mandatory** (Govt. as 'client')
- A fishery only **voluntarily** moves to full assessment

Department team dedicated to MSC program

Industry funded full time **Project Officer**

MSC staff member based in WA (at Fishing Industry Council Offices)

Lessons - Jurisdictional Approach

- Efficient and cost effective.... but steep learning curve.
 - Calibrating and transforming existing information and research into MSC language and assessment structures provided difficult in some areas
- Differing interpretation of technical aspects between the Department and Certifying Bodies and between CABs themselves became apparent when doing multiple concurrent certifications.

Economic Considerations



Those Left Behind? Economic Returns

To a company MSC is a risk/return exercise. Government co-investment lowers the investment bar and reduces costs (volume efficiencies). But still a company needs to think through:

- Advantages to resource certainty/resource access
- Structure of industry /market chain – who gets the reward? Are price premiums expected when all are involved. Export market impact.

Those Left Behind? Economic Returns

- Fishery dynamics...easier for rights based fisheries.
- Co-ordination costs...all those meetings
- Industry structure - fees to pay – if the free riders are not rowing you then have to run even harder!

Those Left Behind? Technical Issues

Some fisheries are identified well managed but the pre-assessment shows research gaps that are too difficult to close with available resources

- Consider other mechanisms, for example Fisheries Improvement Programs (FIPS). Next step for the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council.

Standards are still not suitable for all fisheries, for example well managed multi-species fisheries.

- WA is working with the MSC on revised technical standards using 'indicator species'

Problems/Frustrations

- Everything takes a bit longer than you hope!
- Buy in limited from retailers – still largely industry push, not yet truly market pull, especially from independent retailers.
- Bringing multiple systems and reporting requirements into harmony still a ‘work in progress’.
 - Some progress for example recognition of the MSC process in national level processes regarding endangered species protection.

New Solutions and Innovation

As a world first the Mandurah Crab fishery gained world first certification for a **Joint Recreational and Commercial MSC Certified Fishery** 23 June 2016.





Resources and Thanks

- Project Website:
http://www.wamsc.com.au/msc_plan/wa_fishing_industry_council.phtml
- Includes a link to: Horvat, Peter and Michael Sparks, 'Community Perceptions of the Sustainability of the Fishing Industry in Australia' (Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, 2013)

Thanks to Heather Brayford, Director General of the Fisheries Department in Western Australia, for allowing the use of some materials presented by her to a meeting of the Marine Stewardship Council in January 2016. Responsibility for these slides, the information in them and all comments and views, however, rests with the presenter, George Kailis.