

## **MSC MAINE LOBSTER LICENSES NOW AVAILABLE TO MAINE DEALERS**

Maine lobster dealers can now take advantage of the prestigious Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification, a globally recognized seal of approval sought by the growing number of people worldwide who prefer sustainably harvested seafood.

In March of this year, Governor Paul R. LePage announced that Maine's lobster fishery had achieved MSC certification after a thorough, six-year certification process administered by the Fund for the Advancement of Sustainable Maine Lobster. The Fund, a group of Maine lobster industry stakeholders who came together to administer the certification, has completed the initial process necessary for Maine lobster dealers and processors to use the MSC logo, also referred to as an ecolabel, in their marketing. "The MSC ecolabel will tell the world that Maine lobster is not only the best tasting, but is also a resource that meets the most stringent international standards for sustainability," said Governor LePage.

The Marine Stewardship Council is widely recognized as the world's most respected certifier of sustainable, traceable fisheries products. Because of its exacting standards and rigorous certification process, consumers know products bearing the MSC ecolabel come from and can be traced back to a sustainable, responsible fishery.

The Fund worked for six years with industry members, the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and scientific experts to prove that Maine's iconic industry met each of the MSC's 31 principles of sustainability. "This was not an easy process," said John Hathaway, who organized the Fund, "but MSC certification offers a great competitive advantage in today's marketplace."

Hathaway explained the traceability component of the MSC ecolabel can help protect and strengthen the Maine lobster brand. "The MSC ecolabel will indicate that lobster came from our sustainable one-man, one-boat, trap fishery in the pristine Gulf of Maine waters," said Hathaway. "No other fishery can compete with the Maine lobster industry's history of sustainable harvesting practices. I believe MSC certification will help to bring that story to the world."

"Timing is perfect for this announcement," said Patrick Keliher, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Marine Resources. "The new Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, established by the legislature to undertake an aggressive, global marketing effort, will be convened soon."

The prestigious MSC certification will provide a unique marketing advantage for Maine lobster as the MLMC seeks to target the growing number of consumers around the world who seek out sustainably harvested food.”

The Fund is now offering a licensing agreement to all Maine lobster dealers so they can become eligible to display the ecolabel. “It took a long time to achieve this certification” says Hathaway “We want to make sure everyone in the Maine lobster industry can share in the many benefits MSC certification offers.”

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