



## PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SFP Fisheries Improvement Partnership reports progress by Russian Sea of Okhotsk pollock fishery**

The Russian pollock Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) Partnership discussed its progress today with participants at the International Fishery Congress in Vladivostok.

Russian pollock fisheries take place in the West Bering Sea and Sea of Okhotsk, two of the most productive and diverse seas on earth. The Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) launched an improvement dialog between Russian pollock customers, suppliers and producers in 2006. The FIP Partnership was announced one year ago to improve the sustainability of Russian pollock fisheries, and specifically to provide expertise and support to the Pollock Catchers Association (PCA) in their efforts to meet the requirements of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). The FIP is led by BAMR, BirdsEye-Iglo Group and SFP, together with FRoSTA, Royal Greenland, Findus Group, Pickenpack, Delmar, High Liner and the Fishin' Company.

Highlights of the FIP review included improved transparency in stock assessment methods and data, which confirmed the continued impressive rebuilding of Sea of Okhotsk stocks to well above the target sustainable levels required by the MSC. The rebuilding of the fishery has been aided by conservative TAC setting and reductions in illegal fishing. A detailed report on the status of the Sea of Okhotsk pollock fishery is freely available on [www.fishsource.org](http://www.fishsource.org).

Despite this clear progress, a number of critical issues remain unclear or unresolved. These include clarifications of assumptions and statistical testing to improve confidence in the accuracy of stock assessments and the robustness of the management strategy. Although by-catch in the fishery is reported as relatively low, by-catch monitoring and formal limits on its potential impact may still be required. MSC certification is not certain unless these additional issues are resolved.

Over the past year, the FIP has held two International Science Meetings, bringing together top Russian pollock scientists and international stock assessment experts. The FIP has also provided the (PCA) with technical advice and reviewed government and private sector monitoring, control and surveillance systems. The PCA today also announced a revised timetable for the completion of the MSC certification process for the Sea of Okhotsk pollock resource, which anticipates a final report in late 2010.

A spokesperson for industry participants in the FIP said :

"It is vitally important that the Russian pollock fishery continues its drive towards certification. The consumer confidence that will flow from this in many of our major markets will benefit everyone in the industry, from catchers to processors and retailers. All those contributing to the SFP project are happy to play a role in achieving that aim".

"We are encouraged to see that the Russian fishery is grasping some of the issues required to achieve certification, but at the same time further measures need to be quickly taken to ensure the fishery comfortably meets the MSC standards".

Jim Cannon, CEO of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership concurs "industry and supply chain support and innovation have delivered improvements in the fishery in the past two years. The FIP Partnership model is a way for producers and major suppliers to work together to help fisheries improve, and explain progress to major customers."

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*Note to editors:*

*The mission of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership is to maintain healthy ocean and aquatic ecosystems, enhance fishing and fish-farming livelihoods and secure food supplies. Learn more at [www.sustainablefish.org](http://www.sustainablefish.org)*