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Intertek Fisheries Certification (IFC)

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Surveillance Report
Dutch Oyster Association Oyster Fishery

Certificate No.: MML-F-147

Intertek Fisheries Certification Ltd
February 2015

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1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

Scope against which the surveillance is undertaken: MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing as applied to the Dutch Oyster Association Oyster Fisheries, comprising four units of certification as defined below

UoC 1

Species: Pacific Oyster *Crassostrea gigas*

Gear: Oyster dredge

Area: Oosterschelde (Eastern Scheldt)

Management: Dutch Oyster Association (NOV)

Client Group: Members of Dutch Oyster Association

UoC 2

Species: Pacific Oyster *Crassostrea gigas*

Gear: Oyster dredge

Area: Lake Grevelingen (Grevelingenmeer)

Management: Dutch Oyster Association (NOV)

Client Group: Members of Dutch Oyster Association

UoC 3

Species: Native Oyster *Ostrea edulis*

Gear: Oyster dredge

Area: Lake Grevelingen (Grevelingenmeer)

Management: Dutch Oyster Association (NOV)

Client Group: Members of Dutch Oyster Association

UoC 4

Species: Native Oyster *Ostrea edulis*

Gear: Oyster dredge

Area: Oosterschelde

Management: Dutch Oyster Association (NOV)

Client Group: Members of Dutch Oyster Association

Date of Surveillance Visit:	26 February 2015			
Initial Certification	Date: 28 Feb 2013		Certificate Ref: MML-F-147	
Surveillance stage	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Surveillance team:	Lead Assessor: A.R Hough			
	Assessor(s): A.R. Brand			
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2.0 RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report contains the findings of the **second** surveillance cycle in relation to this fishery.

The client's response to the Conditions of Certification was set out in a Client Action Plan (CAP), which was appended to the Public Certification Report. Progress associated with the actions set forth in the CAP was examined as a part of this surveillance audit. For each Condition, the report sets out progress to date. This progress has been evaluated by the Intertek Fisheries Certification (IFC) Audit Team (set out below as 'Observations' and 'Conclusion') against the commitments made in the CAP. This assessment includes a re-evaluation of the scoring allocated to the relevant Performance Indicators (PIs) in the original MSC assessment. Where the requirements of a Condition are met, the PI is re-scored at 80 or more and the Condition is "closed out".

The surveillance audit methodology, as defined in the version 1.3 of the MSC Certification Requirements is followed in this audit. According to this requirement, the first and second surveillance audits are on-site audits. However, the next audit will be undertaken according to MSC CR v2.0 in determining the level of surveillance audit that the fishery requires (see Annex 3).

Information Sources:

Meetings

(NB all stakeholder from the full assessment were contacted prior to the surveillance audit taking place)
DOA representative, Bert Keus (Jaap de Rooij by telephone). 26/2/15, Amsterdam.

Reports etc

Den Heijer Producties (2015). By-catch sampling in the Dutch oyster fishery. Report to DoA.

Standards and Guidelines used:

1. MSC Principles and Criteria
2. MSC Certification Requirements v1.3
3. Guidance to the MSC Certification Requirements, v 1.3
4. MSC Certification Requirements v2.0 (in determining future audit requirements).

Stock status and Catch Data

<p>Update on Stock Status</p>	<p>Research Institute IMARES, part of Wageningen-UR, was commissioned by the Ministry of Economic affairs to estimate the surface area of Pacific oyster (<i>Crassostrea gigas</i>) beds in the littoral part of the Wadden Sea, Oosterschelde and Westerschelde estuaries in 2014. This is one of the shellfish inventories that are carried out annually by IMARES in collaboration with the fishing industry and the ministry. The surveys are designed to substantiate the policy of the shellfish fisheries and are an important source of information for further ecosystem and impact studies. An estimate was made of the total stock size in the littoral.</p> <p>Surface area Mapping of oyster beds mainly takes place on foot during low tide; the position of the beds is logged with GPS equipment. Within the time available, as many beds as possible are visited. The area of beds not visited is estimated from data of earlier years. Prior to the surveys in the Wadden Sea and Oosterschelde estuary an inspection flight was made. Newly appeared, disappeared or changed beds were compared with last year's information and locations where much has changed were visited on foot with priority. In the Oosterschelde and Westerschelde estuaries also aerial photographs were used to localize beds. For the Oosterschelde estuary the area of Pacific oyster beds is estimated at 652 ha. Of this, 416 ha were visited in person and 236 ha was reconstructed based on previous years. At least 477 hectares can be characterized as mixed mussel / oyster beds.</p> <p>Biomass The biomass in the surveyed beds is quantified based on a stratified grid. In the Oosterschelde estuary, 172 stations were sampled and the total fresh weight on the littoral beds was estimated at 25.7 million kg. This is some 3.9 million kg less than last year but the survey was conducted later in the year so there could be seasonal changes.</p>
<p>Total Allowable Catch (TAC) in most recent fishing year</p>	<p>The survey above estimated 25.7 million Kg of oyster in the littoral beds alone, equating to 266 million oysters in littoral beds that are not fished, since fishing takes place in the sublittoral zone.</p> <p>As fishing is mostly a culture process in plots owned by fishers, no TAC is set.</p>
<p>Unit of Certification share of TAC</p>	<p>All fishing takes place by members of DOA.</p>
<p>Client share of TAC</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Green Weight¹ of catch taken by client group</p>	<p>Most recent calendar year (2013) in numbers of oysters:</p> <p>Pacific Oyster <i>Crassostrea gigas</i>: 27,510 (primarily from Oosterschelde)</p> <p>Native Oyster <i>Ostrea edulis</i>: 2,710 (primarily from Grevelingen)</p> <p>Previous year (2012):</p> <p>Pacific Oyster <i>Crassostrea gigas</i>: 23,274 (primarily from Oosterschelde)</p> <p>Native Oyster <i>Ostrea edulis</i>: 2,121 (primarily from Grevelingen)</p>

¹ The weight of a catch prior to processing

Condition 1	<p>Information on by-catches in the fishery should be collected so as to allow quantification of the main by-catch species (including plots, but concentrating on free-ground fishery in the Oosterschelde). Factors which may increase the risk to main bycatch species should be identified (e.g., due to changes in the status of bycatch populations or the operation of the fishery or the effectivity of the management strategy) and monitored at a suitable frequency.</p> <p>A by-catch sampling strategy should be in place by the first anniversary of certification (Score 65)</p> <p>Quantification of main by-catch species should be carried out by second anniversary of certification (Score 75).</p> <p>Factors which may increase the risk to main bycatch species, and a suitable frequency for monitoring these should be identified and monitoring implemented by the third anniversary of certification (Score 80).</p>
PI	2.2.3
SG 60	<p>Qualitative information is available on the main bycatch species affected by the fishery. Information is adequate to broadly understand outcome status with respect to biologically based limits. Information is adequate to support measures to manage bycatch.</p>
SG 80	<p>Qualitative information and some quantitative information are available on the amount of main bycatch species affected by the fishery. Information is sufficient to estimate outcome status with respect to biologically based limits. Information is adequate to support a partial strategy to manage main bycatch species. Sufficient data continue to be collected to detect any increase in risk to main bycatch species (e.g., due to changes in the outcome indicator scores or the operation of the fishery or the effectivity of the strategy).</p>
SG 100	<p>Accurate and verifiable information is available on the amount of all bycatch and the consequences for the status of affected populations. Information is sufficient to quantitatively estimate outcome status with respect to biologically based limits with a high degree of certainty. Information is adequate to support a comprehensive strategy to manage bycatch, and evaluate with a high degree of certainty whether a strategy is achieving its objective. Monitoring of bycatch data is conducted in sufficient detail to assess ongoing mortalities to all bycatch species.</p>
Score	65
Scoring Rationale	<p>The SG80 requirements for this PI are only partially met. There is not qualitative information and some quantitative information available on the amount of main bycatch species affected by the fishery, nor does sufficient data continue to be collected to detect any increase in risk to main bycatch species (e.g., due to changes in the outcome indicator scores or the operation of the fishery or the effectivity of the strategy).</p>
Client Action Plan	<p>During the first year of certification an independent scientific research organisation or scientist will be contracted by DOV to estimate discard levels in the oyster fishery with emphasis on the fishery on the free grounds.</p> <p>Quantitative estimates of by-catch levels in the fishery will be presented to the team at the second surveillance visit. During the third year of certification the estimation of discard levels will be continued.</p> <p>The results of the first two years of monitoring will be analysed and main by-catch species will be identified. Factors that may increase risk to main by-catch species will be identified and a suitable frequency of an ongoing monitoring of discard levels will be discussed with the independent scientist or organization and implemented by the third surveillance visit.</p> <p>The results will be presented to the team at the third surveillance visit. After the third year of certification discards will be monitored on an ongoing basis and management measures will be implemented by the third anniversary of certification if considered necessary.</p>

Client Progress	<p>Bycatch sampling program Dutch Oyster Association 2014-2015</p> <p>The Dutch Oyster Association (DOA) has contracted the consultant Willem den Heijer of Willem den Heijer Productions (WHP) to conduct bycatch sampling in the Oosterschelde and Grevelingen oyster fishery.</p> <p>Willem den Heijer has previously worked at IMARES and since he is an independent consultant has also carried out by-catch sampling in the Dutch Razor Shell fishery and the Dutch gillnet fishery for sole.</p> <p>In accordance with the planned programme, two discard trips were carried out, in October 2014 and January 2015 in the Oosterschelde. On each trip, 10 hauls were carried out on plots, 10 on free grounds. It is noted that normal fishing operations are 80-90% concentrated on plots – fishing on free grounds may be carried out to collect smaller oysters for growing-on on plots.</p>
Observations	<p>The studies carried out by WHP in October 2014 and January 2015 have allowed the quantification of bycatch from fishing in plots and on free grounds. Much of the catch is comprised of empty shell, stones, algae etc. All live animal material was separated for investigation.</p> <p>The results show that on plots over 70% of the catch is oyster, 20% is the invasive species slipper limpet <i>Crepidula fornicate</i>. All other species are typical benthic species present in very low levels, with only sea squirts, sponges and starfish reaching over 1% by weight of bycatch. Apart from slipper limpets, no species exceed 5% by weight.</p> <p>A similar situation was found on free grounds, with oysters representing 61% of the catch, slipper limpets 34%. Only sponges and sea squirts exceeded 1% of the catch and apart from slipper limpets, no species exceed 5% by weight.</p> <p>In terms of bycatch species outcome, the results support the conclusion of the RBF analysis that the fishery would not pose a risk to any bycatch species within the Oosterschelde or Lake Grevelingen.</p>
Conclusion	<p>The condition remains on-schedule for completion according to the specified timescale. The availability of quantitative information allows the score to be raised to 75 according to schedule.</p>

Any complaints against the certified operation; recorded, reviewed and actioned.

No complaints have been reported in relation to the certified fishery.

Any relevant changes to legislation or regulation.

1. As reported in the last surveillance audit, there has been a move to optimise use of plots in the 'Kom' area of the Oosterschelde, particularly to utilise greater spatfall in the littoral zone, 31 existing plots (each of 5 ha) have been closed, and 31 new plots have been created. To access a new plot, a fisher must sacrifice one of their existing plots, which is then available for rent to another fisher (Although demand for these is low). An appropriate assessment has been carried out on this initiative under the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive. Licensing of these new plots is due to be confirmed on 15 March 2015.
2. The Dutch Fish Board (Productschap Vis) was closed as of 1 Jul 2013; some effects of this change were discussed at the last surveillance audit. In addition, it is noted that the reporting of landings is now being undertaken by the Central Bureau of Statistics. These changes are seen as being neutral with respect to MSC scoring.
3. There has been a move for DOA associated licensing of hand-gathering of oysters in the

Oosterschelde. This is also subject to an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive. As hand-gathering is currently not part of the Unit of Certification, this may need to be considered separately if it is to be MSC certified, possibly as an expedited audit. DOA is considering this.

4. There are also proposals for licensing of additional plots in Lake Grevelingen for native oyster; plots to be divided between DOA and former eel fishers in the lake.

Any relevant changes to management regime.

All changes considered above.

Overall Conclusions.

No changes in management have taken place that would detrimentally affect the performance of this fishery against the MSC standard. One score has increased – PI 2.2.3 has increased from 65 to 75.

The fishery continues to meet the requirements of the MSC Standard.

No destructive fishing practices or controversial unilateral exemptions to an international agreement have been introduced.

MSC Certification should therefore continue. Future surveillance requirements are to be determined according to MSC CR v2.0 as set out in Annex 3. The next audit will therefore be off-site and involve two auditors.

Annex 1

Written stakeholder submissions to the surveillance audit and IFC responses to points raised.

No submissions were received other than from the DOA – included in the report above.

Annex 2**Notification of surveillance audit**

**Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Fishery Certification Assessment
Dutch Oyster Association Oyster Fishery**

Certification Body: Intertek Fisheries Certification

Surveillance Audit

Following certification of this fishery, we are now continuing the process of annual surveillance audits of the fishery. These audits have two principal functions:

1. To review any changes in the management of the fishery, including regulations, key management or scientific staff, or stock evaluation
2. To evaluate the progress of the fishery against any Conditions of Certification raised during the Full Assessment

During the audit, or at separate meetings, we shall be speaking with representatives of the fishery and fishery management organisations. We expect to carry out meetings on **26 February 2015**.

Meetings will be held in Amsterdam, Netherlands and attended by Audit Team members:

Andrew Hough	L/A, P2	On site
Andy Brand	P1	On-site

(see details of the team membership below).

Should you have any information on this fishery that you feel should be considered in the assessment, please advise us. We may be available to meet with stakeholders as appropriate. If you would like to arrange a meeting, please advise us of:

- a) your name and contact details
- b) your association with the fishery
- c) the issues you would like to discuss (in order for us to arrange appropriate representation)
- d) where and when you would like to meet

Lead Assessor: Andrew Hough

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28 January 2015

Annex 3

Determination of surveillance level

The next (third) surveillance audit will be conducted according to MSC CR v2.0, which has different criteria for auditor attendance at site visits.

Relevant aspects of this fishery are:

1. This is the first certification of this fishery.
2. There is only one condition, relating to Principle 2
3. Information on meeting Conditions may be reviewed remotely, this being IMARES scientific reports on stock estimation and DOA sponsored studies on bycatch quantification and determination of risk factors.
4. Engagement with client and stakeholders through electronic media is widely available and used.

Two on-site surveillance audits have already been completed (2014 and 2015), and the fourth surveillance is expected to coincide with re-assessment of the fishery. Accordingly, it is proposed that the ongoing surveillance be undertaken accordance with Level 5, with the surveillance plan as follows:

Year	Surveillance Activity	No. Auditors	Rationale
1	On-site Audit 4014	2	First surveillance audit, undertaken according to CR v1.3
2	On-site Audit 2015	2	Current audit, undertaken according to CR v1.3
3	Off-site Audit 2016	2	Review progress against Condition and status of fishery generally (2 auditors). According to condition timescale, the condition should be closed, but available information is considered sufficient to do this remotely.
4	On-site Audit 2017	TBD	Conditions should be closed; if 'behind target' at Year 3, conditions would be evaluated at this audit. Assumed final surveillance audit to coincide with Re-Assessment audit.