

Pioneering cod sustainability agreement reached

An industry group of global fishing stakeholders, including the catching sector, processors, retailers and foodservice, have come together to help further protect the marine environment in the Barents and Norwegian Seas, as part of their continued commitment to source fish responsibly. The news follows Greenpeace's report *This Far, No further* which highlighted concerns that the sea ice melt due to climate change has the potential to allow fishing boats to operate in previously unfished areas around the Svalbard Archipelago, running the risk of harming vulnerable marine habitats.

The cod and haddock fisheries in the Barents and Norwegian Sea are considered to be some of the best regulated fisheries in the world and are independently certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). In order to safeguard the sustainability of these fisheries, fishermen have now agreed the need to take a precautionary approach to fishing in areas that have not been fished before and to take further steps to protect vulnerable marine life in the areas where they currently operate.

The agreement, which is in force immediately, will mean that fishermen will not expand their cod fishing activities with trawl gear into those areas where fishing has not taken place before, until robust and independent scientific research demonstrates that it will not cause serious harm to the marine environment.

The agreement also commits that fishermen will accelerate their current plans to ensure that the fishery is condition-free under the MSC certification – the highest possible standard of fisheries sustainability – by strengthening their work to identify and avoid Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems, including coral and sea pens.

The agreement makes possible the formation of a Roundtable where Government agencies, scientists, NGOs and industry will work together to develop a plan for how the long-term sustainability of cod fishing in the Barents Sea can be maintained.

Once formed, the Roundtable will work with the Norwegian Government which is undertaking a comprehensive ocean floor mapping programme (MAREANO) that is providing unprecedented information about marine habitats. The Norwegian Industry has, on a voluntary basis agreed to accelerate its protective measures, committed to adding to the 74,000 Km² Marine Protected Area (MPA) around the Svalbard archipelago and 19 no-trawl zones in the Barents and Norwegian Seas, in areas where scientific research and advice shows that further protection is needed.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

Industry group members:

- Asda
- Espersen
- fiskebat
- Icelandic Seachill
- Karat
- Marks and Spencer
- McDonald's
- Morrisons
- Nomad Foods Europe
- Sainsbury's

- The Saucy Fish Co.
- Tesco
- Young's Seafood Limited

About the Barents Sea

The Barents Sea is recognised as one of the most well-managed regions in the world. MSC certified fisheries in the Barents Sea are some of the most heavily-monitored, research and well-understood fisheries globally.

Key statistics include:

- **74,000km²**: the size of the Marine Protected Area (MPA) around Svalbard. This is the same size as Denmark and the Netherlands combined
- **19** no-trawl zones in the Barents and Norwegian Seas to protect corals, with 36 more under consideration
- **Over 1 billion Norwegian Krone** invested in marine habitat research in Norwegian waters

For further information, please contact:

McDonald's Europe Press Office

+44 (0) 207 800 4884

European.pressoffice@eu.mcd.com

Blue Rubicon

Katie Shaw / Sabrina Gill

+44 (0) 207 260 2700

katie.shaw@bluerubicon.com / sabrina.gill@bluerubicon.com

Company press contacts

Asda:

Espersen: Klaus Nielsen, CEO: +45 4030 1462; klaus.nielsen@espersen.com

fiskebat: Oddbjørn Skarbøvik, Head of Communications, +47 91 51 11 30, +47 70 10 14

Icelandic Seachill: Sam Jones, Head of PR at Amaze, +44 (0) 7817 464 455; s.jones@amaze.com

Marks & Spencer: Daniel Himsworth, Senior Corporate PR Manager, Corporate Communications, +44 7827 858655; daniel.himsworth@marks-and-spencer.com

McDonald's: Sanjay Mistry, +44 (0) 7714 916578; Sanjay.Mistry@uk.mcd.com

Morrisons: James French, 0845 611 6367; jame.french@morrisonspc.co.uk

Nomad Foods Europe: Sinead Noble, Director of Corporate Comms and PR: 020 8918 3262; Sinead.Noble@iglo.com

Sainsbury's: Josephine Simmons, +44 (0)207 695 7211; Josephine.simmons@sainsburys.co.uk

The Saucy Fish Co:

Tesco: Alasdair.Gee@uk.tesco.com

Young's Seafood: Fran O'Leary, fran.oleary@lodestonecommunications.com