clearwater sustainability profile

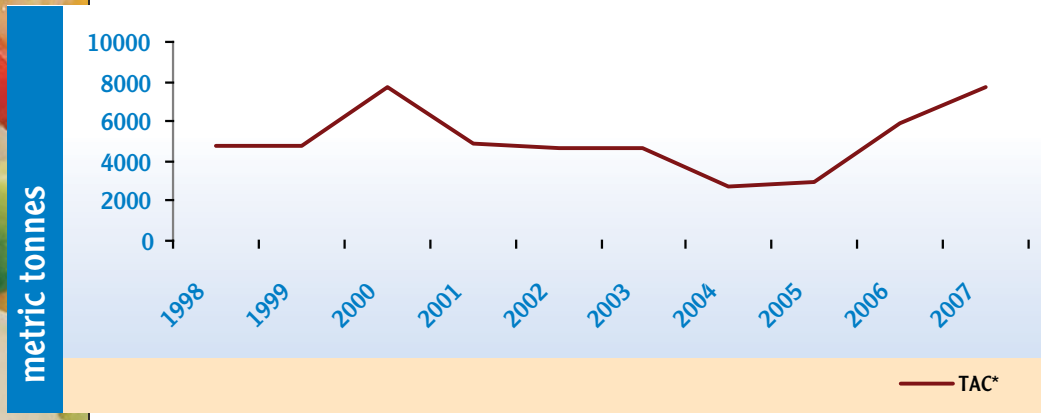
argentine scallop

Species Name: *Zygochlamys patagonica*

Certification(s): Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certification

Harvest Area / Season: Argentine scallops are fished in the southwest Atlantic (FAO Area 41). The fishery takes place on the Argentine continental shelf in water depths of 60-120 meters. The fishery operates from May 1st to April 30th in the North Management Area and July 1st to June 30th in the Southern Management Area.

***TAC for traditional beds only**



Quota Systems: This fishery is one of Argentina's first limited entry fisheries with entry being limited to four licences. Clearwater, through its 80% owned subsidiary Glaciar Pesquera S.A., owns two of the four licences. The resource status of Argentine scallops is healthy and quota has fluctuated around an average of 5,100 tonnes. The annual harvest projections are a combination of catch from the traditional beds, which are managed by a TAC (Total Allowable Catch), and harvest outside the quota area on an exploratory basis. Any information gathered during the exploratory fishing is provided to the National Institute for Fisheries Research and Development (INIDEP), the Argentine equivalent to Canada's DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans). Exploratory beds are brought into the quota management system when adequate information is collected to establish a quota for the area.

This product comes from a fishery which has been certified to the Marine Stewardship Council's environmental standard for a well-managed and sustainable fishery. TV1-C-07010
www.msc.org

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Biomass Assessment: Depending on the area, annual random sampling or grid sampling of the two management units are used to estimate biomass. Fishery independent and fishery dependent data are incorporated into biomass assessments. A conservative harvest rate of <40% of commercial sized scallops is used when setting the TAC.

Participation in Research: Clearwater works closely with the Argentine Government through INIDEP to ensure a sound scientific program and sustainable management of the scallop resource. The annual biomass surveys are funded by industry.

Conservation / Management Measures: In order to ensure conservation of the resource, industry has worked with management bodies to develop minimum size restrictions (all scallops under 55 mm must be returned to sea) and no-take zones for parent stock conservation and research purposes. In addition, bed-specific TACs are set to ensure no single area is over exploited and fishing effort is rotated among 8 different scallop beds, allowing individual beds to recover quickly from fishing activity. Areas where juveniles comprise more than 50% of the population (by number) are closed to fishing in order to protect recruitment.

Catch Monitoring: Vessels are subject to 100% observer coverage and are required to complete logbooks that record each haul. Fishing companies keep comprehensive records with high temporal and spatial precision of each bed fished. These data are cross-referenced with observer data. In addition, a separate log is required to be submitted every 24 hours via fax or email from the fishing vessel to the fishing authority in order to monitor catches.

Practices to Minimize Bycatch: Studies carried out on the bycatch of the fishery indicate the majority of the catch is made up of scallops, other benthic invertebrates and shell debris. Once brought aboard, this catch is sorted in washing drums to allow undersized scallops and other shellfish to pass through and return to the sea floor within the first 10-20 minutes of the haul. Studies have shown there is a 96% survival rate for scallops returned to sea in this manner, and the washing process used removes 98% of the juvenile scallops that adhere to the commercial scallops' shells. No reptiles, birds or mammals have been caught and very few finfish have been captured.

Fishing Method: The scallop fishery in Argentina uses benthic otter trawl nets. In order to harvest scallops in an offshore environment, fishing companies must employ modern and sophisticated vessels that are capable of deploying mobile fishing gear into depths up to 100 meters. Dive capture is not feasible in this environment.

The physical nature of the seafloor has been mapped using multibeam sonar analysis in the area of the scallop beds. Video recordings by the Remotely Operated Tow Vehicle (ROTV) show very little biogenic benthic structure exists in the scallop bed areas. Scallop fishing takes place in a limited area of the available habitat, leaving large areas of the shelf untouched. Scallop tows are approximately 15 minutes in duration, meaning the fishery is highly targeted to scallop concentrations.

The same gear has been used since the inception of the fishery (10 years) and scientific monitoring has indicated there has been no change to the sea floor structure or habitat.

Traceability: Information on catch and processing are monitored on board the two vessels, Atlantic Surf I and Atlantic Surf III, as well as at the Clearwater fleet office in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. Scallops leave the vessels ready for market and are loaded from the deck to containers that go directly to markets around the world, or to plants in Canada and France for further processing and distribution. Clearwater scallops can be traced to day and area of catch.

***Additional information regarding the measures taken to ensure sustainability of this fishery can be found at the MSC website (http://www.msc.org/), in the* Certified Fisheries *section, under* Patagonian Scallops.

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