

## Overview of the Orange Roughy Certification Project



Source: CSIRO

Concern has been expressed about the sustainable management of New Zealand's orange roughy (ORH) fisheries, much of which has been ill-informed. In 2008 and 2009 quota owners contracted Moody Marine to undertake initial assessments and detailed pre-assessments of selected fisheries against the Marine Stewardship Certification (MSC) Fisheries Standard.

Based on these pre-assessments, the Deepwater Group Limited (DWG, representing the quota owners) and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) implemented a staged programme to improve the science and management of selected ORH fisheries with the objective of aligning fisheries management performance with the MSC Fisheries Standard. The purpose of the Fisheries Certification Project is to obtain MSC Certification for selected ORH fisheries.

**Table 1: ORH Fisheries Certification Project Stages and Timelines**

Stages	Deliverables and Outcomes	Timeline
1	<b>MSC Pre-assessment:</b> Contract Moody Marine to undertake pre-assessments of selected deepwater fisheries.	Sep 2009
	<b>Implement ORH Fisheries Improvement Plan:</b> Develop and implement an action plan to address non-conformities and information gaps, including deliverables, timelines, milestones & systems for monitoring progress against this plan.	2009 - ongoing
	<b>Assessment of the Environmental Effects of ORH Fishing (AEEF):</b> Develop AEEF methodology; assemble expert panel; invite participants; hold workshop to assess performance against the MSC P2 80SG, produce final ORH AEEF report, and make this publically available.	Jul – Oct 2013
2	<b>MSC Pre-assessments:</b> Contract MRAG Americas to undertake further MSC pre-assessments of each of the four selected ORH fisheries in open consultation with MSC Stakeholders.	Jul 2013 – Jan 2014
3	<b>Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP):</b> Based on MRAG's pre-assessment findings, implement further remedial management actions within agreed and time-bound FIPs using the MSC Monitoring and Benchmarking FIP Template.	Jan 2014 - ongoing
4	<b>MSC Assessment:</b> Undertake formal assessments of selected ORH fisheries against the MSC Fisheries Standard.	Jul 2014
5	<b>MSC Certification:</b> Achieve MSC Certification against the MSC Standard.	Jun 2015

### Stage 2: MSC Pre-assessments

In 2013, following advice from WWF-US, the decision was made to contract MRAG-Americas to undertake further pre-assessments of each of four ORH fisheries against the MSC Standard:

- Orange Roughy Mid East Coast (ORH MEC)
- Orange Roughy 3B North West Chatham Rise (ORH3B NWCR)
- Orange Roughy 3B East & South Chatham Rise (ORH3B ESCR)
- Orange Roughy 7A (ORH7A)

MRAG's pre-assessment report and the background papers are posted on DWG's website (<http://www.deepwater.co.nz/our-species/orange-roughy/msc-pre-assessment-of-new-zealand-orange-roughy-fisheries/>).

### Stage 3: Fisheries Improvement Plans

After consideration of the options, the decision was made to implement four public, time-bound Fisheries Improvement Plans (FIPs) using templates and tools developed by MSC (including the [MSC Benchmarking and Tracking \(BMT\) Tool](#)).

The key objectives of these FIPs are: to improve biomass estimation; to undertake stock assessments; to document and to test agreed harvest strategies; and to better assess and document environmental impacts. These FIPs are posted on DWG's and SFP's websites (<http://www.deepwater.co.nz/our-species/orange-roughy/fisheries-improvement-projects/> or <http://www.fishsource.com>) and use the search engine feature to locate our four ORH FIPs).

## How are the fisheries progressing to date?



Source: NIWA

The AEEF, the pre-assessments, the fisheries improvement analyses and the four FIPs have been completed and the remedial work and preparation to progress these fisheries to full MSC assessment is nearing completion.

### MSC Principle 1: Status of the Stock

The following remedial programmes have been completed or are nearing completion:

- Biomass surveys for each ORH fishery using new acoustic technologies have been completed,
- Stock assessments for each ORH fishery have been completed with the outcomes:
  - ORH MEC stock status ~14%  $B_0$ , is unlikely to meet MSC P1 Requirements, is increasing in size at current catch and will remain within the FIP and be subject to a formal rebuilding plan,
  - ORH3B ESCR stock status is ~30%  $B_0$ , is likely to meet MSC P1 requirements, is increasing in size at current catch and will continue to be rebuilt to ~35%  $B_0$ ,
  - ORH3B NWCR stock status is ~37%  $B_0$ , is increasing in size at current catch and is likely to meet MSC P1 requirements,
  - ORH7A stock status is ~42%  $B_0$ , is increasing in size at current catch and is likely to meet MSC P1 requirements.
- These stock assessments and results will be considered by MPI Plenary in early May.
- Simulation modelling to test the harvest strategies and control rules against the MSC Standard will be completed by June. Changes will be made by managers if required.
- Revised management measures, based on the above scientific information, will be considered prior to the next fishing year, commencing on 1 October 2014.

### MSC Principle 2: Ecosystem Management

The following remedial programmes have either been completed or are nearing completion:

- A risk assessment of fisheries performance against the MSC P2 80SG Standards has been completed in full consultation with MSC Stakeholders. The final report and papers are posted on DWG's website (<http://www.deepwater.co.nz/our-species/orange-roughy/assessment-of-environmental-effects-of-fishing-2/>).
- Further analyses of the main and secondary bycatch species in each ORH fishery are being undertaken to better inform P2 performances.
- Further information is being collated on the distributions of protected coral species within the ORH fisheries and the EEZ, including a quantitative assessment of the nature and extent of impacts on protected corals species by ORH fisheries and a management strategy to ensure there are no adverse effect on ETP coral species.
- An assessment of the nature and extent of impacts by ORH bottom trawls on the structure and function of benthic habitats that overlap these fisheries, along with a summary of the strategy for managing benthic habitats that overlap with the ORH fisheries, are being prepared.

## Stage 4: Assessment against the MSC Fisheries Standard

Full assessments against the MSC Fisheries Standard by MRAG-Americas are scheduled for mid-July 2014.

Given MSC timelines we anticipate those ORH fisheries that meet the MSC Fisheries Standard to be Certified by mid-2015.

## More Information

Should you require further information, please contact the CEO of the Deepwater Group Limited:

Email: [george@deepwatergroup.org](mailto:george@deepwatergroup.org)

Website: [www.deepwatergroup.org](http://www.deepwatergroup.org)