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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **New Fish Guide launched today – WWF highlights need for eco-labeling as fish stocks are recovering**

WWF today launches a new version of its popular Fish Guide in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. Many years of consumers' activity is finally bearing fruit. For the first time since the first Fish Guide was published in 2002, there are signs of fish stocks recovering. Even the cod, which has seen record low numbers year after year, is now showing signs of recovery in some places.

The world's biggest cod fishery, the Barents Sea fishery, has seen a substantial improvement over the last years and is given a green light in the new Fish Guide. Cod from the eastern Baltic Sea gets a yellow light, implying that care still should be taken. Cod from the western Baltic Sea stock is still at very low numbers, and therefore maintains its red light distinction.

"We are very happy to see these improvements, although we are still far away from safe levels", says Lasse Gustavsson, CEO, WWF Sweden. "A growing number of consumers demand ethically and sustainably caught fish. This awareness and the stricter regulations that it has led to is now having a positive effect out there in the sea".

"Consumers have the power to make a difference by protecting depleted fish stocks through their purchasing decisions, and the seafood guide is meant as a tool to help consumers make a wise choice", says Inger Näslund, fish expert with WWF Sweden. "We all need to act responsibly to ensure that the oceans are not stripped bare for future generations,"

According to EU labeling regulations, seafood only has to be labeled with the "FAO zone" in which it was caught. The problem is that FAO zones cover very large areas. As an example, the Baltic Sea is included in the "North-East Atlantic" zone together with all the waters from the North Pole down to Gibraltar and the Azores.

"How should consumers tell a Baltic Sea cod from the western stock, threatened by extinction, from one from the much healthier eastern stock? That is impossible today", says Inger Näslund. "Therefore we recommend that the fish industry and consumers use the MSC certification label as a guarantee that the fish is sustainably caught."

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is an independent, non-profit organization that recognizes and labels, via its certification program, sustainable fisheries and their products. It has set an environmental standard to identify sustainable fisheries and consumers can spot seafood that meets this standard by looking for the distinctive blue MSC label.

MSC-labeled fish on the market in the Nordic countries include cod, saithe, haddock, herring, Alaska pollock and mackerel.



The WWF Fish Guides can be downloaded at:  
<http://www.wwf.se/source.php/1245181/Fiskguide2009.pdf>

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**Note to editors:**

**Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)**

After years of seemingly failed government attempts to halt the world fisheries crisis, in 1996 WWF and Unilever, one of the world's biggest buyers of frozen fish, launched an initiative to change the way fish are caught, marketed, and bought - and ensure the future of the world's fisheries.

Now an independent, non-profit organization, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) works with fisheries, retailers, and other stakeholders to identify, certify, and promote responsible, environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable fishing practices around the world.

To fulfill this ambitious task, the MSC has developed a standard for assessing and certifying fisheries. This standard - known as the MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing - is the only internationally recognized set of environmental principles to assess whether a fishery is well managed and sustainable. It is based on the best scientific data and the latest knowledge about the marine environment, and was developed in conjunction with relevant stakeholders in a two-year global consultation process.

Only products from fisheries assessed by independent certifiers as meeting the standard are able to use the MSC logo on their products. For the first time, this gives consumers a way to identify - and the choice to purchase - fish and other seafood from well-managed sources.

The MSC has witnessed an enormous groundswell of support, including from retailers, governments, non-governmental organizations, conservationists, and the fishing industry. Over 35 fisheries around the world are now certified, representing over 8% of global wild fisheries production for human consumption.

Another 75 or so fisheries are currently undergoing assessment, and over 100 major seafood buyers have pledged to purchase MSC-certified seafood products. MSC-certified products can now be found on the market in all countries around the Baltic Sea. Overall, there are currently around 1,900 MSC-certified fish products on sale in 40 countries - ranging from fresh, frozen, smoked, and canned fish to fish oil dietary supplements.