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OCEANA WARNS ABOUT LOOPHOLES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION FIGHT AGAINST IUU FISHING

The international conservation organization Oceana welcomes yesterday's publication of EU regulation 1010/2009 that lays out rules for the implementation of a community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The EU regulation against IUU fishing foresees that fish imports to the European Union must be accompanied by catch certificates, validated by the flag state of the fishing vessel and certifying that the fish on board has been caught legally.

Oceana is concerned however about the exclusion of fresh and frozen Atlantic and Pacific salmon from the provisions of the IUU regulation.

In a new study by marine scientist Shelley Clarke, published in 2009, scientists estimated legal and illegal catches of Russian sockeye salmon. They found that in the years 2003–2005, the average quantities of annual IUU catches were estimated to range from 8000 to 15 000 tonnes, representing a value of US\$40–74 million and demonstrating that actual catches are 60–90% above reported levels.^[1]

In 2008, the European Union imported hundreds of tonnes of Pacific salmon from countries outside the European Union, including Russia, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand.

"It is a well known fact that IUU salmon fisheries occur, and therefore salmon should not be excluded from the IUU regulation", explains Oceana economist Anne Schroeer. "In general, there should be no exclusions for any fish products as the false labeling of fish is one typical case in IUU fisheries."