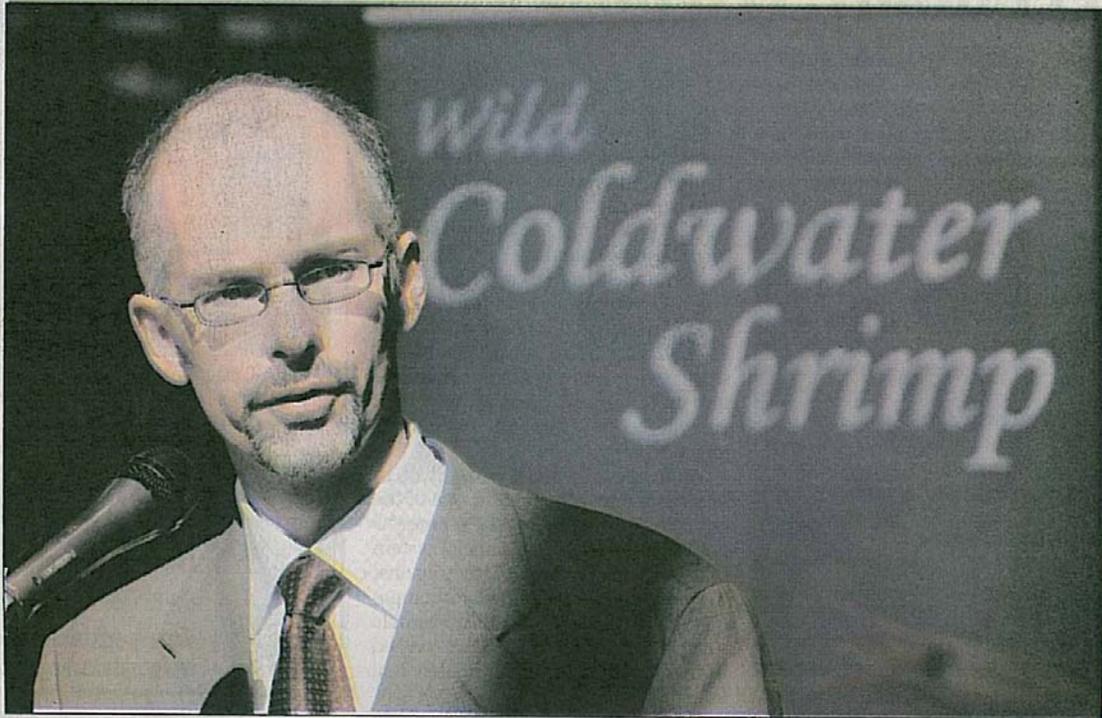


Business

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Derek Butler, head of the Association of Seafood Producers, spoke to the audience at a reception celebrating the certification of the Canadian Northern Shrimp Trawl Fishery at the Fairmont Newfoundland hotel Friday.— Photo by Rhonda Hayward/The Telegram

FISHERY/ENVIRONMENT

Shrimp harvest gets international nod as sustainable trawl fishery

By STEVE BARTLETT
THE TELEGRAM

It was a celebration of shrimp certification.

A group of industry players gathered with officials and dignitaries at the Fairmont Newfoundland Friday morning to commemorate a milestone for the northern shrimp trawl fishery.

The harvest has received international certification from the Marine Stewardship Council.

In a shrimp shell, that means the fishery has been deemed sustainable and well managed by an international group with a certification that is becoming more and more required by major retailers around the world.

The seafood is now eligible to bear the MSC blue label.

Rupert Howes of the Marine Stewardship Council says that mark is being used to help consumers make wise environmental choices.

"This is a global initiative," he said. "Seafood is the most traded primary commodity in the world, more than tea, coffee and cocoa combined."

Howes said the growing market

demand for MSC certification is now being seen in Canada.

Companies such as Loblaw's and Sobey's are beginning to develop sustainable seafood procurement policies, he noted.

Derek Butler, executive director of the Association of Seafood Producers (ASP) said the certification was an excellent step for the industry and the people who purchase its products.

"Simply put, the customer at the end of the day can have the assurance that our product comes from a sustainable environmentally sound and a well-managed fishery, and it does," he said.

The certification came after a detailed process.

ASP hired an independent company called Moody Marine to assess and certify the shrimp fishery.

That firm appointed scientists who examined stocks, the impact of the fishery on the marine ecosystem and the management systems being used.

For the fishery to be certified, the scientists had to determine that the fishery was sustainable.

Butler says the entire process took

about 22 months.

Trevor Taylor, acting provincial minister of Fisheries, commended the producers for subjecting themselves to the thorough audit process.

He noted government provided a \$50,000 grant for the initiative and that he now considered it money well spent.

"With increasingly discerning global seafood consumers, it is important for our fishing industry to take all the steps to be competitive in this global environment," Taylor said.

Federal fisheries ambassador Loyola Sullivan noted the importance of sound fishery practices.

"Without sustainability in the fishery, there can be no longer term prosperity," he said.

Butler hoped other fisheries in the province would seek the certification.

"I'd like to do more," he said in an interview after the ceremony. "I'd like to see all our top fisheries certified."

The northern shrimp trawl fishery is the first Canadian fishery and largest coldwater shrimp fishery in the world to obtain the status.

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