

## SEYCHELLES

# Traceability system in Indian Ocean fishery

**S**eychelles hook and line fishermen have launched a programme to promote responsible fishing technique and 'Seychelles line caught fish'.

To demonstrate their own responsible approach to fishing, the quality of Seychelles line caught fish on the seafood market and to promote responsible fishing methods, the hook and line fishermen of the Seychelles Fishing Boat Owners' Association (FBOA) have set up a labelling programme in partnership with the French Sea Bass Association (Association des Ligneurs de la Pointe Bretagne).

The programme has been established under a partnership with the French Sea Bass Liners (Association des Ligneurs de la Pointe Bretagne). The French fishermen provided expertise and technical assistance to the FBOA on the methodology to apply and develop such a program and to enhance the image of Seychelles line fishermen and their fish.

The programme has been designed to satisfy several features of the fisheries sector and seafood markets. The program considers the needs of the consumers who have become increasingly sensitive about the seafood they eat and are now perpetually seeking guarantees that the fish they purchase and consume has been caught using responsible fishing methods, thereby safeguarding the sustainability of the marine resource.

The foundation of the label programme remains on the emphasis placed on the main characteristics of the fishing technique and the products: selectivity (hook and line), origin, traceability and respect for the environment. These attributes provide to the consumer a premium fish product from Seychelles claimed to be "unique to international seafood markets."

The structure of the programme is based on three types of tagging scheme. The Emperor red snapper campaign aims to label eight line-caught bottom-dwelling tropical fish species. The Tuna campaign aims to label three line-caught highly migratory tropical fish species. The Trevally campaign aims to label two line-caught pelagic tropical fish species.

The commitment of the fishermen operating under the



programme is defined in a code of conduct, which includes standards criteria. These standards are the foundation of the programme and convey the commitment of fishermen operating under the scheme.

Beatty Hoarau, manager of the Label Project, explained: "In the Seychelles, the hook and line fishing method is a traditional technique. This is recognised to be one of the most selective techniques in harvesting wild fish."

"For this reason our line fishery has a very low level of by-catch. Discarding of fish does not occur and there is no damage inflicted on marine habitats."

"Our fishermen catch mostly larger fish that have already reproduced. Another advantage is that

we use circle hooks which reduce damage to turtles or birds tempted to try to take the bait," he said.

The quality criteria of the tagging scheme is achieved by setting high standards regarding handling, processing, storage and tagging practices on board the fishing vessels.

Line fish are caught live, gutted and washed as soon as they are landed on board. They are then labelled and placed in ice immediately after cleaning.

Traceability aims to guarantee the origin of the fish to the consumer and make the fish easily identifiable on the market. Seychelles line-caught fish are labelled with a tag bearing the reference code of the fishing boat, individual to each of the participating fishing boats.

Entering this code on the web page (<http://seychelles-hookandline-fishermen.org/>) enables



the full traceability of fish. The customer will know where, by who, and how the fish were caught and will be able to retrieve information about the fishermen, crew, boat, fishing ground and fishing methods used.

The Seychelles hook and line fishermen have also committed

**TRACEABILITY:** The programme is aimed at consumers with sustainability concerns

to respect the environment under the programme. Only biodegradable wastes are disposed of at sea.

Boats are equipped with storage for non-biodegradable wastes which are unloaded onshore.

According to Beatty Hoarau, the initiative is a significant step towards ensuring responsible fishing. "Consumers can be assured that Seychelles line-caught fish meet the established standards and requirements with regards to fishing, environmental and quality aspects."

"There are many benefits of the label for the consumer: it provides information about the origin of the fish and it



8

criteria in the Seychelles Bureau of Standards certification process for responsible fishing techniques

20

requirements for Seychelles hook and line fishermen to show commitment to their catch labelling programme

**ENVIRONMENT:** The hook and line fishery, using inshore vessels, is selective and has very few discards



guarantees quality, also the use of the hook and line responsible fishing technique.

"It allows the consumer to source a premium and unique product fished in an exceptional environment and to support responsible fishing techniques, enabling people to make an honest and fair living, from a noble profession and support sustainable fishing for future generations."

The certification process is performed by the independent Seychelles Bureau of Standards (SBS) and with a decision-making process insulated from vested interests of the Seychelles Fishing Boat Owners' Association. SBS offers guarantees of competency, independence and impartiality.

SBS rules and procedures have been established allowing the bureau to assess the commitment in relation to established

standard criteria and requirements.

The certification process covers eight standards criteria and 20 requirements for Seychelles fishermen to show their commitment to the labelling program.

Hotels, restaurants and fish retailers now have the opportunity to join this initiative and pledge their commitment by signing a letter of agreement. A display certificate is delivered to certify their commitment to the program. They become official partners of Seychelles fisherman.

The Seychelles Fishing Boat Owners' Association is working in partnership with the two main fish processors operating in Seychelles, Oceana Fisheries and Sea Harvest. They both comply with EU sanitary and hygiene legislation and also have the capacity and agreement to export worldwide.



## Nor-Fishing 2010

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION  
17-20 AUGUST TRONDHEIM NORWAY

NOR-FISHING - The important international venue for the fishing industry through a period of 50 years!

More than 500 suppliers will introduce novelties in the fields of vessels, fishing gear, research and services for the fishing industry. Decision makers from more than 50 nations will be there.

Potential exhibitor or visitor?

More information available at:  
**www.nor-fishing.no**

THE NOR-FISHING FOUNDATION

Klostergt. 90 NO-7030 Trondheim Tel +47 73 56 86 40 fax +47 73 56 86 41 mailbox@nor-fishing.no