

clearwater sustainability profile

argentine scallop (Patagonian)



This product comes from a fishery that has been independently certified to the MSC's standard for a well-managed and sustainable fishery.

www.msc.org; MSC-C-51561 & MSC-C-50267

Species Name: *Zygochlamys patagonica*

Marine Stewardship Council Certified since December 2006

Harvest Area / Season: Argentine scallops are fished in the southwest Atlantic (FAO Area 41). The fishery takes place on the Argentine continental shelf in water depths of 60-120 meters. The fishery is conducted year-round commencing on January 1.

Sustainable Removals: This fishery is one of Argentina's first limited entry fisheries and is managed under the Precautionary Approach, ensuring the stock maintains high productivity and overfishing does not occur. The resource status of Argentine scallops is healthy and quota has fluctuated around an average of 6,500 tonnes. The annual harvest is made up of a combination of catch from the traditional beds, which are managed by a Total Allowable Catch (TAC), and harvested outside the quota area on an exploratory basis. Any information gathered during the exploratory fishing is provided to the National Institute for Fisheries Research and Development (INIDEP), the Argentine equivalent to Canada's Department of Fisheries and

Oceans (DFO). Exploratory beds are brought into the quota management system when adequate information is collected to establish a quota for the area. Clearwater, through its 80% owned subsidiary Glaciar Pesquera S.A., holds two of the four available licences in the fishery.



Assessing Stock Health: Depending on the area, annual random sampling or grid sampling is used to estimate biomass. Fishery independent and fishery dependent data are incorporated into biomass assessments. A conservative harvest rate of <40% of commercial sized scallops is used when setting the TAC.



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Participation in Research: Clearwater works closely with the Argentine Government through INIDEP to ensure a sound scientific program and sustainable management of the scallop resource. The regular biomass surveys are guided by scientists and funded by industry.

Conservation & Management Measures: In order to ensure conservation of the resource, the industry has worked with management bodies to develop minimum size restrictions (all scallops under 55 mm must be returned to sea) and no-take zones for stock conservation and research purposes. In addition, bed-specific TACs are set to ensure no single area is over exploited and fishing effort is rotated amongst scallop beds, allowing individual beds to recover quickly from fishing activity. Areas where juveniles comprise more than 50% of the population by number are closed to fishing in order to protect recruitment.

Monitoring Catch: Vessels are subject to 100% observer coverage and are required to complete logbooks that record each haul. These data are cross-referenced with observer data. In addition, a separate log is required to be submitted every 24 hours from the fishing vessel to the fishing authority in order to monitor catches.

Managing Bycatch: Clearwater takes an active approach to appropriately manage non-target species, or bycatch. Studies indicate the majority of the bycatch is made up of scallops, other benthic invertebrates and shell debris. Once brought aboard, this catch is sorted in washing drums to allow undersized scallops and other shellfish to pass through and return to the sea floor within the first 10-20 minutes of the haul. No reptiles, birds or mammals have been caught and very few finfish have been captured.

Fishing Method and Gear Type: The scallop fishery in Argentina uses benthic otter trawl nets. In order to harvest scallops in an offshore environment, fishing companies must employ modern and sophisticated vessels that are capable of deploying fishing gear into depths up to 100 meters. Dive capture is not feasible in this environment.

The seafloor has been mapped using multibeam sonar analysis in the area of the scallop beds. Video recordings by the Remotely Operated Tow Vehicle (ROTV) show very little benthic structure exists in the scallop beds. Scallop fishing takes place in a limited area of the available habitat, leaving large areas of the shelf untouched. The same gear has been used since the inception of the fishery in 1995 and scientific monitoring has indicated there has been no change to the sea floor structure or habitat.

Traceability: Information on catch and processing are monitored on board the vessels as well as at the Clearwater fleet office in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. Scallops leave the vessels ready for market and are loaded from the deck to containers that go directly to markets around the world, or to plants in Canada and France for further processing and distribution. The catch is entered into our traceability system and can be tracked throughout the entire Clearwater supply chain.



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