Abalone

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Introduction to ASC certification

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) promotes responsibly farmed seafood through its certification and labelling programme. Working together with the aquaculture industry, seafood processors, retail and foodservice companies, scientists and conservation groups, it helps to guide the industry towards an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible future.

Fish farms that meet ASC's standards gain the right to sell their products bearing the ASC logo. This gives farms a public endorsement of their responsible practices, and gives consumers the reassurance that they're making an ethical purchase.

The ASC standards

The ASC farm standards were developed by more than 2,000 stakeholders globally. The standard development process adheres to ISEAL's[1] Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.

The ASC standards focus on both the environmental and social impact of farming.

- Environmentally, farms must show that they actively minimise their impact on the surrounding natural environment. This extends to careful management of the fish health and resources.
- Socially, farms must be a good and conscientious neighbour; that means operating their farm in a socially responsible manner, caring for their employees and working with the local community.

[1] ISEAL is the global membership association for sustainability standards, it defines what good practice looks like along with the core characteristics of credible standards. ISEAL members demonstrate their ability to meet ISEAL's Codes of Good Practice and accompanying requirements, as well as commit to learning and improving to deliver increased positive impacts.

The ASC Abalone Standard

Abalone may be considered a delicacy in many parts of the world, but farmers have to work hard to ensure that the conditions in which abalone is farmed meet high standards. ASC certification helps ensure that farms meet strict requirements from preserving the local environment, to ensuring workers are well treated:

- **Biodiversity.** ASC certified abalone farms minimise impacts on the local ecosystem in a number of ways, such as ensuring that farms are not sited in areas with key biological or ecological functions. No harm to threatened or endangered species or the habitat on which they depend is allowed. Escapes need to be minimised and solid management plans need to be implemented to ensure this.
- **Feed.** ASC certification requires abalone farms to adhere to strict limits to minimise use of wild fish as ingredient for feed. In addition, the standard requires farms to ensure full traceability back to a responsibly managed source, preferably certified, both for wild fish and sea weed (kelp).
- **Pollution.** ASC certified abalone farms are required to measure various parameters (nitrogen, sulphide, etc.) at regular intervals and remain within set limits.
- **Diseases.** ASC certified abalone farms must adhere to rigorous requirements to minimise disease outbreaks. A disease management protocol must be developed for health surveillance and disease response. In addition, the use of medicines before a disease is diagnosed (prophylactic use), is prohibited.
- **Social.** ASC certification imposes strict requirements based on the core principles of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), these include prohibiting the use of child labour or any form of forced labour. All ASC certified farms are safe and equitable working environments where employees earn a decent wage and have regulated working hours.

Why the ASC matters

ASC's standards set performance indicators across all of the criteria. Farms must not exceed metric-based limits to ensure their output meets all the requirements for certification. During the certification process the independent certifiers' reports are published for public consultation, which informs the certification decision.

Farms that meet the ASC standards deliver real benefits: a cleaner seabed, cleaner water and healthier fish. They also help to preserve local biodiversity, and work in a way that supports their community.

Through chain of custody certification, you can be sure that ASC labelled seafood can be traced back through every step of the supply chain to a well-managed farm that meets the strict requirements of the ASC standards.