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Gulf of Mexico menhaden fishery gains MSC certification over objections from recreational fishermen, NGOs



Cliff White published in [Environment & Sustainability](#)



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The Gulf of Mexico menhaden fishery has received Marine Stewardship Council certification, a victory for Cooke Inc. subsidiary Omega Protein and Daybrook Fisheries, which fish and process Gulf menhaden into fishmeal, fish oil, and other products.

Independent auditor SAI Global [recommended the fishery for certification](#) in June, but the certification [was fought by environmental groups and recreational fishermen](#), including the Gulf Restoration Network, who lodged appeals with the MSC that were eventually dismissed.

More than 460,000 metric tons of menhaden was caught in the Gulf of Mexico in 2017. Omega Protein's Atlantic menhaden fishery [received MSC certification last month](#).

"The Marine Stewardship Council is a global icon in seafood sustainability, and fisheries that are MSC certified are recognized as some of the best managed in the world," Omega Protein CEO Bret Scholtes said in a press release. "Our fisheries have long operated according to sustainable practices, and this certification is just the latest recognition of it."

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SAI Global evaluated the fishery against 28 standards in three categories including the sustainability of the stock; efforts to minimize environmental impacts; and effective management.

"We're proud of the work that our industry has done to operate a healthy and sustainable fishery," Daybrook Fisheries Vice President of Sales and Marketing Scott Herbert Sr. said. "Consumers can now trust that all Gulf menhaden products meet the high management and conservation standards of the Marine Stewardship Council."

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