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PRESS RELEASE

EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE TOOTHFISH LONGLINE FISHERY

A full review of the stock assessment and management of the longline toothfish fishery in the Falkland Islands was conducted in 2018 by Dr Mike Bergh of OLSPS Marine for the Falkland Islands Government.

The objective of the review was to provide an independent and external perspective on the current status of the toothfish fishery and management system, to identify priorities for research, to ensure that standards of sustainability and transparency are met, and to offer recommendations for improvement. Finally, the effectiveness of the stock assessment and management system for the toothfish fishery was assessed against the stated goals and objectives of the Falkland Islands Fisheries Department and the Falkland Islands Government.

In summarizing his findings, Dr Bergh noted that the stock assessment and management approach for the local toothfish stock is based on a modern data collection programme, a cutting-edge and modern stock assessment approach, impressive procedures and a well-developed set of Harvest Control Rules.

To further improve the model, Dr Bergh made several specific recommendations, including that the presently implicit stock structure assumption underlying the stock assessment be clarified and that the consistency of all sources of catch data, reported or IUU, and whale depredation values with the stock structure assumption be reviewed. As the stock assessment model is refined by the Falkland Islands Fisheries Department over the next few years, these recommendations will be addressed and integrated, further bolstering the information system on which toothfish management is based.

As the unique quota holders in the fishery, Consolidated Fisheries Ltd are extremely pleased with the positive outcome of the report and the clear indication that an objective evaluation has concluded that the stock assessment modelling and management systems in relation to the fishery support long-term sustainable utilization of the resource. For John Barton, Director of Natural Resources in the Islands, Dr Bergh's findings represented objective validation of the work the Falkland Islands Fisheries Department puts into ensuring that sound environmental principles govern the management of the toothfish fishery and comply with the Falkland Islands Fisheries Ordinance's stated objectives for sustainable management.

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