



MarinTrust Standard V2

By-product Fishery Assessment

ARG14

Argentine hake (*Merluccius hubbsi*)

In FAO 41, south of 41°S

MarinTrust Programme

Unit C, Printworks

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Table 1 Application details and summary of the assessment outcome

Fishery Under Assessment	Species:	Argentine hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>)
	Geographical area:	FAO 41, south of 41°S
	Country of origin of the product:	Argentina
	Stock:	Argentine hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>) in south of 41°S
Date	December 2024	
Report Code	ARG14	
Assessor	Ana Elisa Almeida Ayres	
Country of origin of the product - PASS	Argentina	
Country of origin of the product - FAIL	NA	

Application details and summary of the assessment outcome			
Company Name(s): Agustiner SA			
Country: Argentina			
Email address:		Applicant Code:	
Certification Body Details			
Name of Certification Body:		NSF / Global Trust Certification Ltd.	
Assessor	Peer Reviewer	Assessment Days	Initial/Surveillance/Re-approval
Ana Elisa Almeida Ayres	Matthew Jew	0.5	Surveillance 2
Assessment Period	December 2024 – December 2025		

Scope Details	
Main Species	Argentine hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>)
Stock	Argentine hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>) in south of 41°S
Fishery Location	FAO 41, south of 41°S
Management Authority (Country/ State)	<i>Instituto Nacional de Investigacion y Desarrollo Pesquero (INIDEP), Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca</i>
Gear Type(s)	Demersal trawl
Outcome of Assessment	
Peer Review Evaluation	Agree with assessor's recommendation
Recommendation	APPROVED

Table 2. Assessment Determination

Assessment Determination
<p>If any species is categorised as Endangered or Critically Endangered on Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species - IUCN's Red List, or if it appears in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora - CITES appendices, it cannot be approved for use as MarinTrust raw material. Argentine hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>) is not categorised as Endangered or Critically Endangered on IUCN's Red List and does not appear in CITES appendices; therefore, Argentine hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>) is eligible for approval for use as MarinTrust by-product raw material.</p> <p>The Joint Technical Commission of the Maritime Front - CTMFM ("<i>Comisión técnica mixta del frente marítimo</i>", in Spanish), a binational entity from Argentina and Uruguay, is responsible for establishing catch levels for Argentine hake within the Common Fishing Zone (ZCP) and distribute this determined value among both countries. The southern stock (south of 41°S) is distributed outside the ZCP and completely inside the exclusive economic zone of Argentina. <i>Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca</i> works with <i>Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo Pesquero</i> (INIDEP) to determine the target biological point of the stock. Thus, the stock is subject to a specific management regime and reference points are defined, therefore it was assessed under Category C.</p> <p>There is a Fishery Improvement Project -FIP for the Argentina hake bottom trawl- freezing fleet since April 2022 with the goal of achieving a certifiable status of the fishery against the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard by March 2025.</p> <p>Fishery removals are included in the stock assessment, and it PASSES Clause C1.1. The stock is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have biomass above the limit reference point, it PASSES Clause C1.2.</p> <p>Therefore, Argentine hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>) in south of 41°S is APPROVED for the production of fishmeal and fish oil under the current MarinTrust v2.3 by-products standard.</p>
Fishery Assessment Peer Review Comments
<p>The internal peer reviewer agrees with the assessor's determination, who correctly assessed Argentine hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>) in FAO 41 under Category C, as reference points are defined to assess status of stock relative to, and there is a specific management regime in place.</p> <p>Fishery removals are included in the stock assessment and the stock is considered, in its most recent assessment, to have biomass above the proxy biomass reference point, so it PASSES Clauses C1.1 and C1.2</p> <p>Therefore, Argentine hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>) in south of 41°S in FAO 41 is APPROVED.</p>
Notes for On-site Auditor
N/A

Species Categorisation

NB: If any species is categorised as Endangered or Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, or if it appears in CITES Appendix 1, it **cannot** be approved for use as a MarinTrust raw material.

IUCN Red list Category

By-product material from a species listed by IUCN (the International Union for Conservation of Nature) under the Red List for the following categories shall immediately fail the assessment;

- EXTINCT (E) AND EXTINCT IN THE WILD (EW)
- CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (CR) facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.
- ENDANGERED (EN) facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.

By-product material may be used from the following categories provided that all clauses in the MarinTrust standard are passed.

- VULNERABLE (VU) facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.
- NEAR THREATENED (NT) does not qualify for above now, but is close or is likely to qualify for, a threatened category in the near future.
- LEAST CONCERN (LC) Widespread and abundant.
- DATA DEFICIENT (DD) and NOT EVALUATED (NE)

Table 3 Species Categorisation Table

Common name	Latin name	Stock	Management	Category	IUCN Red List Category ¹	CITES Appendix 1 ²
Argentine hake	<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>	Argentine hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>) in south of 41°S	Yes	C	NE	No

¹ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>

² <https://cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php>

CATEGORY C SPECIES

In a by-product assessment, Category C species are those which are subject to a species-specific management regime and are usually targeted species in fisheries for human consumption.

Clause C1 should be completed for each Category C species. If there are no Category C species in the fishery under assessment, this section can be deleted. Where a species fails this Clause, it should be assessed as a Category D species instead.

Species Name		Argentine hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>)	
C1	Category C Stock Status - Minimum Requirements		
	C1.1	Fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process, OR are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.	Pass
	C1.2	The species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy), OR removals by the fishery under assessment are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.	Pass
			Clause outcome: Pass
<p>C1.1 Fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process, OR are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.</p> <p>The stock is assessed using two models: a statistical model structured by age (ECE) and the analysis of virtual populations with survivor estimate (APV – XSA). Both models incorporate commercial landings from 1986-2022 into the model and forecast. The reported catches were corrected with information obtained by fishing research assistants and included the discard estimates of hake in the hake and lobster fleets. The catches of the foreign fleet that operates outside the exclusive economic zone and that which is carried out illegally near 48°S was also added.</p>			

Año	Argentina SAGPyA	Argentina Corr.DE	Otros países	Argentina Corr.+OP	CMP(t)
1986	147.908	197.210	15.657	212.867	-
1987	207.220	276.293	42.308	318.601	-
1988	234.358	312.477	64.759	377.237	-
1989	225.823	301.097	64.472	365.569	-
1990	278.147	347.684	96.576	444.260	-
1991	289.476	361.846	89.597	451.443	-
1992	251.836	314.796	68.382	383.177	-
1993	362.961	453.701	29.566	483.267	-
1994	363.270	454.087	35.254	489.341	-
1995	455.124	568.905	40.099	609.004	-
1996	485.174	606.467	30.597	637.064	-
1997	475.340	594.175	22.282	616.457	-
1998	386.495	483.119	19.328	502.446	-
1999	292.714	365.893	22.315	388.207	-
2000	172.006	215.008	21.757	236.765	-
2001	190.009	237.511	25.419	262.930	210.000
2002	256.718	320.898	15.045	335.943	250.000
2003	252.502	315.627	6.114	321.741	300.000
2004	380.251	475.313	19.117	494.430	330.000
2005	300.592	375.739	17.497	393.236	310.000
2006	327.198	408.998	20.584	429.582	309.400
2007	276.031	345.038	12.486	357.524	262.000
2008	200.180	250.225	16.271	266.496	207.000
2009	223.083	256.417	19.584	276.001	207.000
2010	245.094	275.386	27.022	302.408	290.000
2011	244.316	284.088	24.328	308.416	273.000
2012	230.154	258.600	30.965	289.565	273.000
2013	250.227	287.617	48.334	335.951	277.000
2014	232.947	250.481	57.731	308.212	290.000
2015	229.334	243.972	52.233	296.205	290.000
2016	240.124	252.762	57.237	309.999	290.000
2017	234.181	251.808	55.295	307.103	290.000
2018	231.656	254.567	77.962	332.529	290.000
2019	272.535	286.879	118.305	405.184	280.000
2020	239.752	257.798	87.321	335.119	290.000
2021	264.457	281.337	112.564	393.901	305.000
2022	260.042	260.824	116.212*	377.036	298.000
2023	248.000**	255.670	116.212*	371.882	310.000

Figure 1. Landings (t) of Argentinian hake in the south of 41° S (1986 - 2022) according to official statistics, corrected for erroneous declaration (DE) and from other countries (OP) and Acceptable Biological Catch (CMP). *Data estimated as average of the last two values reported by FAO. **Preliminary estimate with information on landings until September 2023 and projected at the end of the year considering the last quarter as the average of the last five years.

Therefore, fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process. The fishery PASSES clause C1.1.

C1.2 The species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy), OR removals by the fishery under assessment are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.

The Target Biological Point (PBO) established for the southern stock is the point where the Reproductive Biomass (BR) is greater than or equal to 600,000 t, which was the estimate stock biomass in the 1990's. The current BR, estimated in 2022, is around 720,000t, being above the PBO.

Therefore, the stock is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference points (or proxy). Thus, the fishery PASSES clause C1.2.

References

Santos B.A., Villarino M.F. 2023. Evaluación del estado de explotación del efectivo sur de 41° S de merluza (*Merluccius hubbsi*) y estimación de la captura biológicamente aceptable para 2024 (Informe Técnico Oficial, No. 53). Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo Pesquero (INIDEP). https://fisheryprogress.org/sites/default/files/indicators-documents/Inf_Tec_036_2023_LIB_DPP_SantosVillarino%20Eval%20Merluza%201986-2022_CBA2024.pdf#overlay-context=node/18322/improvement

Links

MarinTrust Standard clause	1.3.2.2
FAO CCRF	7.5.3
GSSI	D.3.04, D5.01