



MarinTrust Standard V2

By-product Fishery Assessment

GBR20

Whiting (*Merlangius merlangus*) in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d

MarinTrust Programme

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Table 1 Application details and summary of the assessment outcome

Fishery Under Assessment	Species:	Whiting (<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>)
	Geographical area:	FAO 27 northeast Atlantic Ocean
	Country of origin of the product:	UK & Ireland
	Stock:	Whiting in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d
Date	May 2024	
Report Code	GBR20	
Assessor	Sam Peacock	
Country of origin of the product - PASS	UK & Ireland	
Country of origin of the product - FAIL	n/a	

Application details and summary of the assessment outcome			
Company Name(s): Aberdeen (Pelagia), Lunar FPR Ltd			
Country: UK			
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
Sam Peacock	Matthew Jew	0.2	Surveillance 1
Assessment Period		May 2024 – May 2025	

Scope Details	
Main Species	Whiting (<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>)
Stock	Whiting in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d
Fishery Location	FAO 27 northeast Atlantic Ocean
Management Authority (Country/ State)	EU and Iceland
Gear Type(s)	Demersal trawls and seines
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 IUCN’s Red List, or if it appears in the CITES appendices, it cannot be approved for use as Marin trust raw material. Whiting (<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>) does not appear as Endangered or Critically Endangered on IUCN’s Red List, and does not appear in CITES appendices; therefore, <i>Merlangius merlangus</i> is eligible for approval for use as Marin trust by-product raw material.</p> <p>Whiting in Subarea 4 and Division 7d is managed under a Multiannual Plan put in place by the EU, but there is no agreement with the UK or Norway to use this plan and it is not used as a basis for ICES advice. The stock is managed relative to reference points and was assessed under Category C.</p> <p>Whiting is subject to annual stock assessment by ICES. The most recent stock assessment incorporated catch and survey data, and bycatch and discards. C1.1 is met. Stock biomass was estimated to be substantially higher than the limit reference point level, and C1.2 is met.</p> <p>Therefore, Whiting (<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>) in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d is APPROVED for the production of fishmeal and fish oil under the current MarinTrust v2.3 by-products.</p>
Fishery Assessment Peer Review Comments
<p>The assessor correctly classified whiting (<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>) in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d as Category C, the stock is subject to a specific management regime.</p> <p>Fishery removals are considered in the stock assessment process. The most recent stock assessment shows that the stock is above MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{pa}, and B_{lim}. Therefore, the stock is considered to have biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy). It passes Category C.</p> <p>Whiting (<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>) in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d passes both clauses (C1.1 and C1.2) and therefore should be approved under the MarinTrust Standard v.2.3</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 an 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
Whiting	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>	ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d	Yes	C	Least Concern ³	No

¹ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>

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

³ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/198585/45097610>

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		Whiting (<i>Merlangius merlangus</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

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.

Whiting in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d is subjected to annual stock assessment by the ICES Working Group on the Assessment of Demersal Stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak (WGNSSK). The most recent assessment was conducted in 2023, implementing an age-based analytical assessment using catches in the assessment and forecast. The stock assessment incorporated commercial catches, two survey indices, time-varying maturity data and time-varying natural mortality rates. Discards and bycatch were included. Below Minimum Size landings were also included to the extent they were available.

The 2023 catch advice states that “ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2024 should be no more than 128,290 tonnes.” (ICES 2023).

Catches are presented in the figure below:

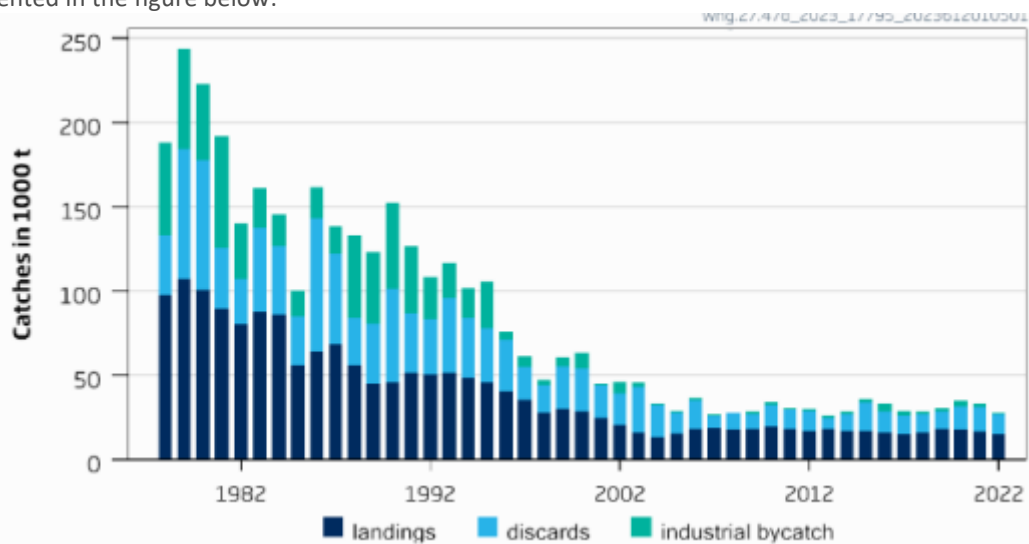


Figure 1. Whiting in Subarea 4 and Division 7d, catches, discards and bycatch (ICES 2023)

Therefore, fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process and therefore the stock 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 regular ICES catch advice provides an indication of the status of the stock relative to established reference points. The target reference points $MSY B_{trigger}$, B_{pa} and $MAP MSY B_{trigger}$ have been set at 148,888t. The limit reference points B_{lim} and $MAP B_{lim}$ have been set at 107,146t. The 2023 catch advice provides a projection of the SSB in 2024, which was estimated at 347,863t (ICES 2023)

The 2023 ICES catch advice states that “Fishing pressure on the stock is below F_{MSY} , and spawning-stock size is above $MSY B_{trigger}$, B_{pa} , and B_{lim} .” (ICES 2023). See figure 2, below.

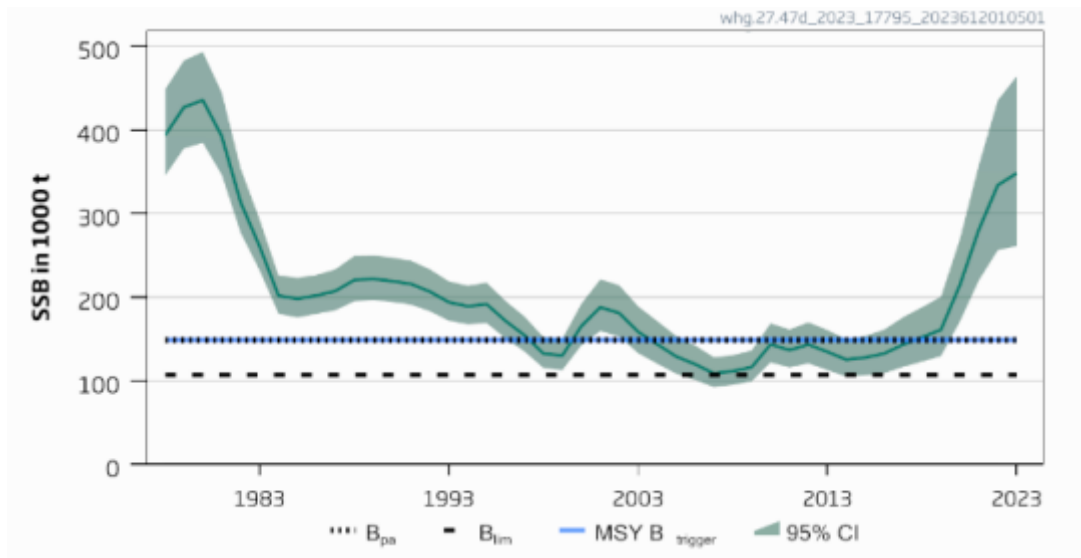


Figure 2. Whiting in Subarea 4 and Division 7d, estimated SSB over time (ICES 2023).

Therefore, the species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy) and it PASSES clause C1.2.

References

ICES (2023). Whiting (*Merlangius merlangus*) in Subarea 4 and Division 7.d (North Sea and eastern English Channel). ICES Advice: Recurrent Advice. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21864324.v1>

Links

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