



MarinTrust Standard V2

By-product Fishery Assessment FRA45 – 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:	North Sea and eastern English Channel
	Country of origin of the product:	France
	Stock:	Whiting in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d
Date	April 2024	
Report Code	FRA45	
Assessor	Sam Peacock	
Country of origin of the product - PASS	France	
Country of origin of the product - FAIL	N/A	

Application details and summary of the assessment outcome			
Company Name(s): Copalis Industrie			
Country: France			
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	Léa Lebechnech	0.2	Surveillance 2
Assessment Period	April 2024 – April 2025		

Scope Details	
Main Species	Whiting (<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>)
Stock	Whiting in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d
Fishery Location	North Sea and eastern English Channel
Management Authority (Country/ State)	France / EU
Gear Type(s)	Demersal trawls and others
Outcome of Assessment	
Peer Review Evaluation	Agree with the assessor’s determination
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>The stock is managed according to an EU Multiannual Management Plan, although this does not include the UK or Norway and the plan is not used as the basis for the ICES advice.</p> <p>The stock is subject to annual stock assessment which incorporates catches, discards and bycatch, meeting C1.1. The most recent stock assessment concluded that SSB is above the target and limit reference points, meeting C1.2.</p> <p>Therefore, whiting (<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>) in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d should remain 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 (North Sea and eastern English Channel) under Category C, as the stock is subject to a multiannual management plan with defined reference points.</p> <p>Clause C1.1 was met because fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process. Clause C1.2 was met too as SSB is above the limit reference points.</p> <p>In conclusion, whiting (<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>) in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d (North Sea and eastern English Channel) passes category C and therefore should be approved under the MarinTrust Standard v2.3.</p>
Notes for On-site Auditor

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 subject 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 and utilised an age-based analytical assessment which incorporated catches in the model and forecast, plus utilised international landings, discards and bycatch.

The 2023 ICES 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 notes the existence of a precautionary management plan, developed and adopted by one of the relevant management authorities for this stock. Management should be implemented at the stock level” (ICES 2023).

Catches are presented in the figure below:

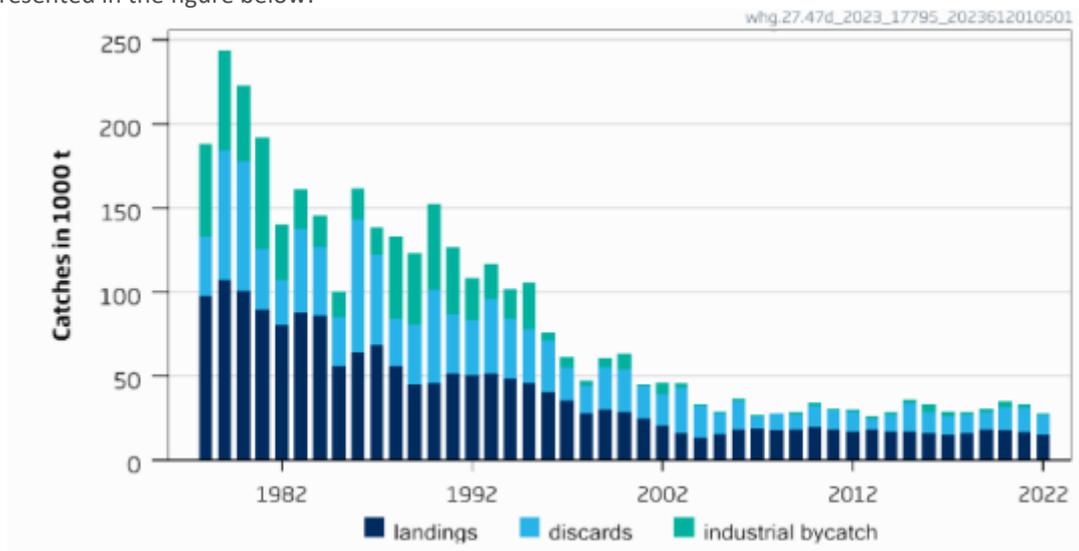


Figure 1. Whiting in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d, catches including landings, discards and bycatch (ICES 2023)

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 ICES catch advice provides an indication of the current status of the stock relative to the established reference points. The target reference points $MSY B_{trigger}$, B_{pa} , and $MAP MSY B_{trigger}$ are set at 148,888t. The limit reference points B_{lim} and $MAP B_{lim}$ are set at 107,146t. The most recent stock assessment projected that SSB in 2024 would be 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). Estimated SSB relative to the reference points is shown in Figure 2 below.

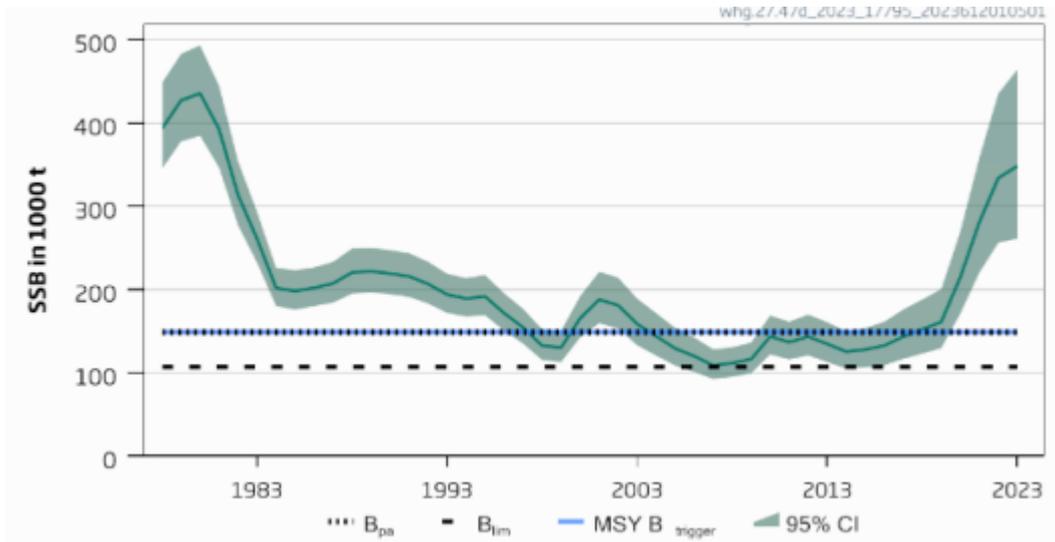


Figure 2. Whiting in ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7d, estimated SSB relative to current reference points (ICES 2023).

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). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023. ICES Advice 2023, whg.27.47d. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21864324>

Links

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