MarinTrust Standard V2

By-product Fishery Assessment

Whiting, Division 6.a (West of Scotland)

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1. ICES Advice 2022, whg.27.6a. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.19457426.

Table 1 Application details and summary of the assessment outcome

Fishery Under Assessment	Species:	Whiting *(Merlangius merlangus)*
	Geographical area:	Division 6.a
	Country of origin of the product:	France
	Stock:	West of Scotland
Date	January 2023	
Report Code	FRA46	
Assessor	Vineetha Aravind	
Country of origin of the product - PASS	France	
Country of origin of the product - FAIL	None	

Application details and summary of the assessment outcome			
Company Name(s): BIOCEVAL SAS: Concarneau Copalis Industrie			
Country: France			
Email address:		Applicant Code:	
Certification Body Details			
Name of Certification Body:		LRQA	
Assessor	Peer Reviewer	Assessment Days	Initial/Surveillance/ Re-approval
Vineetha Aravind	Kate Morris	0.5	Re-approval
Assessment Period	Jan 2023 – Jan 2024		

Scope Details	
Main Species	Whiting *(Merlangius merlangus)*
Stock	West of Scotland
Fishery Location	Division 6.a
Management Authority (Country/ State)	France
Gear Type(s)	Bottom trawls
Outcome of Assessment	
Peer Review Evaluation	Pass
Recommendation	Pass

1. ICES Advice 2022, whg.27.6a. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.19457426.

Table 2. Assessment Determination

Assessment Determination
Whiting has been categorised as least concern by IUCN Red List data and does not appear in CITES appendices. Whiting in this area is managed by reference points and TAC[1] and was therefore analysed under Category C. ICES conducts annual stock estimates on the basis of commercial landings, estimated discards and age composition of catches. However, it was reported that due to Covid-19 interruptions there is a lack of data in 2021 and the discard data was underestimated. Fishing pressure on the stock is below F_{MSY} and spawning stock size is above MSY, $B_{TRIGGER}$, B_{PA} AND B_{LIM} (ICES 2022). Therefore, the by-product is assessed under Category C. According to ICES, when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2023 should be no more than 4155 tons. Therefore, the by-product passes Category C and should remain approved under MT standards.
Fishery Assessment Peer Review Comments
The by-product fishery under assessment here is the Whiting (*Merlangius merlangus*) fishery, pursued by vessels in FAO fishing area 27 ICES subdivision 6a. Whiting is managed by UK fisheries act. For this Marin Trust assessment, the Whiting stock is scored against Category C and passed. The species scoring table has been completed by the auditor with sufficient evidence presented to support their final determination. The peer review supports the auditor's recommendation to pass the FAO 27, ICES sub6a, whiting stock, pursued by the fishery under the Marin Trust IFFO RS v2.0 by-fishery standard for the production of fishmeal and fish oil.
Notes for On-site Auditor

1. ICES Advice 2022, whg.27.6a. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.19457426.

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	*Merlangius merlangus*	West of Scotland	Yes	C	Least concern	No

[1] https://www.iucnredlist.org/
[2] https://cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php

1. ICES Advice 2022, whg.27.6a. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.19457426.

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		*Merlangius merlangus*	
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**

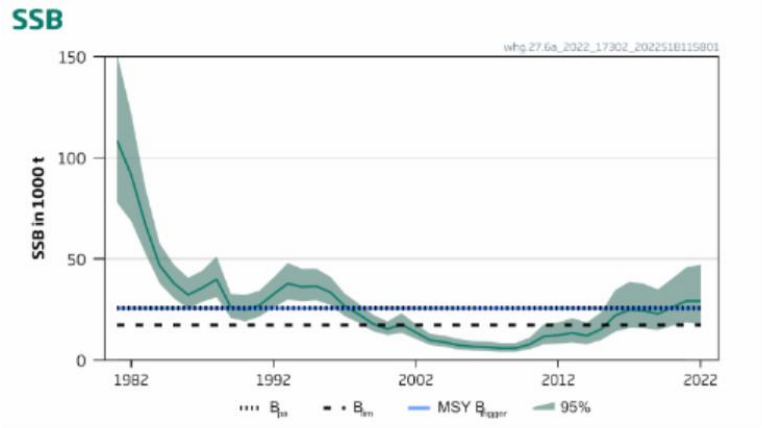
C1.1 Fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process, OR are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.

ICES working for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion (WGCSE) conducts annual stock assessment on the stock of West of Scotland. The most recent assessment was an age-based analytical assessment which utilised international catch data and catch-at-age sampling data. ICES notes that there is lack of discard sampling from *Nephrops* trawl fleet which resulted in inadequate sampling of total discards for ages 1 and 2 in 2021. Therefore, catch numbers for ages 1 and 2 for 2021 were estimated by the model. The report also notes that Sensitivity analyses indicated that these issues were likely to have minimum impact on the assessment.

On this basis the assessor concludes that even though not all discards have been included in sampling, the scientific authorities consider this to have a negligible impact on the accuracy of stock assessment and the fishery passes 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 June 2022 ICES catch advice provides a summary of the status of the stock. Several biomass-based reference points are established; the target reference points Bpa and MAP MSY Btrigger are set at 25,597 t, and the limit reference points Blim and MAP Blim are set at 17,286 t. The most recent stock assessment projected that SSB would be 28,727 t in 2023, above the target and limit reference points. The catch advice states that "spawning-stock size is above MSY Btrigger, Bpa, and Blim (ICES 2022). The stock biomass is currently considered to be above the limit reference point and the by-product meets C1.2.



Whiting in Division 6a current and historical SSB estimates relative to current reference points (ICES, 2022)

1. ICES Advice 2022, whg.27.6a. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.19457426.

References
ICES. 2022. Whiting (Merlangius merlangus) in Division 6.a (West of Scotland). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2022. ICES Advice 2022, whg.27.6a. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.19457426.

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

CATEGORY D SPECIES

Category D species are those which are not subject to a species-specific management regime. In the case of mixed trawl fisheries, Category D species may make up the majority of landings. The comparative lack of scientific information on the status of the population of the species means that a risk-assessment style approach must be taken.

D1	**Species Name**		
	Productivity Attribute	**Value**	**Score**
	Average age at maturity (years)		
	Average maximum age (years)		
	Fecundity (eggs/spawning)		
	Average maximum size (cm)		
	Average size at maturity (cm)		
	Reproductive strategy		
	Mean trophic level		
		Average Productivity Score	
	Susceptibility Attribute	**Value**	**Score**
	Availability (area overlap)		
	Encounterability (the position of the stock/species within the water column relative to the fishing gear)		
	Selectivity of gear type		
	Post-capture mortality		
		Average Susceptibility Score	
		PSA Risk Rating (From Table D3)	
		Compliance rating	
	Further justification for susceptibility scoring (where relevant) *For susceptibility attributes, please provide a brief rationale for scoring of parameters where there may be uncertainty affecting your decision*		
References			
Standard clauses 1.3.2.2			

1. ICES Advice 2022, whg.27.6a. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.19457426.

Table D2 - Productivity / Susceptibility attributes and scores.

Productivity attributes	High productivity (Low risk, score = 1)	Medium productivity (medium risk, score = 2)	Low productivity (high risk, score = 3)
Average age at maturity	<5 years	5-15 years	>15 years
Average maximum age	<10 years	10-25 years	>25 years
Fecundity	>20,000 eggs per year	100-20,000 eggs per year	<100 eggs per year
Average maximum size	<100 cm	100-300 cm	>300 cm
Average size at maturity	<40 cm	40-200 cm	>200 cm
Reproductive strategy	Broadcast spawner	Demersal egg layer	Live bearer
Mean Trophic Level	<2.75	2.75-3.25	>3.25

Susceptibility attributes	Low susceptibility (Low risk, score = 1)	Medium susceptibility (medium risk, score = 2)	High susceptibility (high risk, score = 3)
Areal overlap (availability) Overlap of the fishing effort with the species range	<10% overlap	10-30% overlap	>30% overlap
Encounterability The position of the stock/species within the water column relative to the fishing gear, and the position of the stock/species within the habitat relative to the position of the gear	Low overlap with fishing gear (low encounterability).	Medium overlap with fishing gear.	High overlap with fishing gear (high encounterability). Default score for target species
Selectivity of gear type Potential of the gear to retain species	a Individuals < size at maturity are rarely caught	a Individuals < size at maturity are regularly caught.	a Individuals < size at maturity are frequently caught
	b Individuals < size at maturity can escape or avoid gear.	b Individuals < half the size at maturity can escape or avoid gear.	b Individuals < half the size at maturity are retained by gear.
Post-capture mortality (PCM) The chance that, if captured, a species would be released and that it would be in a condition permitting subsequent survival	Evidence of majority released post-capture and survival.	Evidence of some released post-capture and survival.	Retained species or majority dead when released.

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D3		Average Susceptibility Score		
		1 - 1.75	1.76 - 2.24	2.25 - 3
Average Productivity Score	1 - 1.75	PASS	PASS	PASS
	1.76 - 2.24	PASS	PASS	TABLE D4
	2.25 - 3	PASS	TABLE D4	TABLE D4

D4	Species Name		
	Impacts On Species Categorised as Vulnerable by D1-D3 - Minimum Requirements		
	D4.1	The potential impacts of the fishery on this species are considered during the management process, and reasonable measures are taken to minimise these impacts.	
	D4.2	There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on the species.	
		Outcome:	

Evidence

D4.1: The potential impacts of the fishery on this species are considered during the management process, and reasonable measures are taken to minimise these impacts.

D4.2 There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on the species.

References

Links	
MarinTrust Standard clause	1.3.2.2, 4.1.4
FAO CCRF	7.5.1
GSSI	D.5.01

1. ICES Advice 2022, whg.27.6a. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.19457426.