



MarinTrust Standard V2

By-product Fishery Assessment GBR02 – European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) in ICES Subareas 4, 6 and 7, and Divisions 3a, 8a-b, 8d

MarinTrust Programme

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Table 1 Application details and summary of the assessment outcome

Fishery Under Assessment	Species:	European hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>)
	Geographical area:	FAO27, Northeast Atlantic
	Country of origin of the product:	UK & Ireland
	Stock:	ICES Subareas 4, 6 and 7, and Divisions 3a, 8a-b, 8d (Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, and northern Bay of Biscay)
Date	March 2024	
Report Code	GBR02	
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): Lunar FPR Ltd, Killybegs (Pelagia), Aberdeen (Pelagia)			
Country: UK			
Email address:		Applicant Code:	
Certification Body Details			
Name of Certification Body:		Global Trust Certification Ltd. / NSF	
Assessor	Peer Reviewer	Assessment Days	Initial/Surveillance/Re-approval
Sam Peacock	Matthew Jew	0.2	Re-approval
Assessment Period	March 2024 – March 2025		

Scope Details	
Main Species	European hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>)
Stock	ICES Subareas 4, 6 and 7, and Divisions 3a, 8a-b, 8d (Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, and northern Bay of Biscay)
Fishery Location	FAO27, Northeast Atlantic
Management Authority (Country/ State)	UK, EU
Gear Type(s)	Longline, gillnet, 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 IUCN’s Red List, or if it appears in the CITES appendices, it cannot be approved for use as Marin trust raw material. European hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>) does not appear as Endangered or Critically Endangered on IUCN’s Red List, and does not appear in CITES appendices; therefore, <i>Merluccius merluccius</i> is eligible for approval for use as Marin trust by-product raw material.</p> <p>An EU Multiannual Plan (MAP) has been established for this stock, but has not been adopted by Norway or the UK. As there is a management regime in place and reference points are defined, this stock is assessed under category C.</p> <p>The stock is subject to regular stock assessment by ICES, most recently in 2023. The assessment incorporates all catches and discard data, and meets C1.1. The outcome of the most recent assessment indicated that hake SSB is considerably higher than the target reference point level, and therefore C1.2 is met.</p> <p>Therefore, European hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>) in ICES Subareas 4, 6 and 7, and Divisions 3a, 8a-b, 8d 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 European hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>) in FAO 27, ICES 3.a, 4, 6, 7, 8.a, b, d Northern stock as Category C, the stock is subject to a specific management regime and reference points are defined.</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, because the stock has biomass above target reference point, it is considered to have biomass above the limit reference point.</p> <p>European hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>) in FAO 27, ICES 3.a, 4, 6, 7, 8.a, b, d Northern stock (Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, and the northern Bay of Biscay) 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
European hake	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	ICES Subareas 4, 6 and 7, and Divisions 3a, 8a-b, 8d (Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, and northern Bay of Biscay)	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/198562/45792063>

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		European hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</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>European hake in ICES Subareas 4, 6 and 7, and Divisions 3a, 8a-b and 8d is subjected to regular stock assessment by the ICES Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Waters Ecoregion (WGBIE). The most recent assessment was conducted in 2023, and used a length-based and sex-disaggregated model which incorporates landings and discards in the assessment and forecast. The stock assessment also utilised five survey indices, constant maturity, and sex- and age-dependent natural mortality. Discard estimates are also included (ICES 2023)</p> <p>The 2023 catch advice states, “ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2024 should be no more than 72 839 tonnes. ICES notes the existence of a precautionary management plan developed and adopted by one of the relevant management authorities for this stock” (ICES 2023).</p> <p>The most recent assessment was a length-based and sex-disaggregated stock synthesis model, which uses landings and discards in the assessment and forecast. The input data considered in the last stock assessment are the following: commercial catches; five survey indices including the French Southern Atlantic Bottom trawl survey(EVHOE-WIBTS-Q4 [G9527]), the Spanish Porcupine Bottom Trawl Survey (SpPGFS-WIBTS-Q3 [G5768]), the Irish Groundfish Survey (IGFS-WIBTS-Q4 [G7212]), the Irish Anglerfish and Megrim Survey (IE-IAMS[G3098]), and French surveys in the Bay of Biscay (FR-RESSGACQ [G2537]); constant maturity, and sex-and age-dependent natural mortality” (ICES, 2023).</p> <p>Catches are presented in the figure below:</p>			

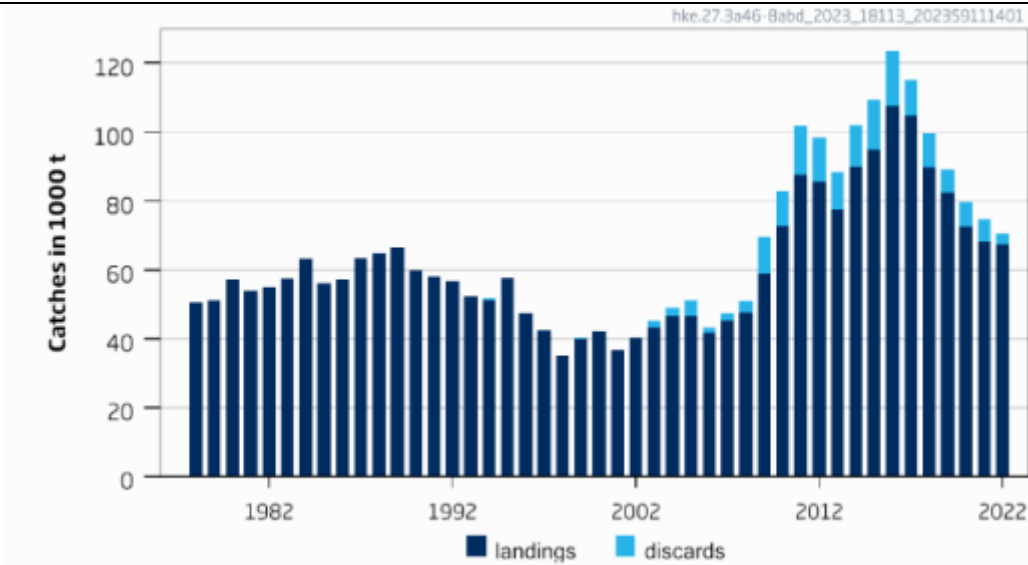


Figure 1. European hake in ICES Subareas 4, 6 and 7, and Divisions 3a, 8a-b and 8d, catches (ICES 2023)

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 catch advice provides an indication of the status of the stock relative to the established reference points. The target reference points MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{pa} , and MAP MSY $B_{trigger}$ have been set at 78,405t. The limit reference points B_{lim} and MAP B_{lim} have been set at 61,563t. The 2023 stock assessment produced a short-term projection for female-only SSB in 2024 of 147,052t, substantially larger than the target reference point level.

The 2023 ICES catch advice states, “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.

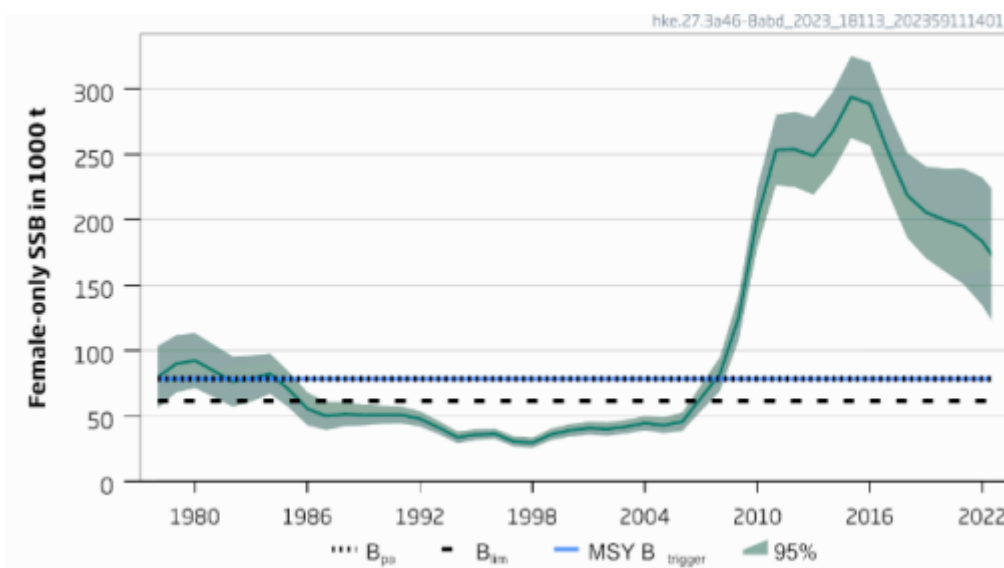


Figure 2. European hake in ICES Subareas 4, 6 and 7, and Divisions 3a, 8a-b and 8d, female-only SSB relative to current reference points (ICES 2023).

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). Hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) in subareas 4, 6, and 7, and in divisions 3.a, 8.a–b, and 8.d, Northern stock (Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, and the northern Bay of Biscay). ICES Advice: Recurrent Advice. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21840852.v1>

Links

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