



## MarinTrust Standard V2

# By-product Fishery Assessment GBR11 – Lemon Sole (*Microstomus kitt*) in ICES Subarea 4 and Divisions 3a & 7d

### MarinTrust Programme

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**Table 1 Application details and summary of the assessment outcome**

Fishery Under Assessment	Species:	Lemon Sole ( <i>Microstomus kitt</i> )
	Geographical area:	North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, eastern English Channel
	Country of origin of the product:	UK & Ireland
	Stock:	ICES Subarea 4 and Divisions 3a & 7d
Date	April 2024	
Report Code	GBR11	
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), Grimsby (Pelagia)			
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	Léa Lebechnech	0.2	Re-approval
Assessment Period	April 2024 – April 2025		

Scope Details	
Main Species	Lemon Sole ( <i>Microstomus kitt</i> )
Stock	ICES Subarea 4 and Divisions 3a & 7d
Fishery Location	North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, eastern English Channel
Management Authority (Country/ State)	UK & Ireland / EU
Gear Type(s)	Otter trawl, beam trawl, seine, gillnet
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. Lemon Sole (<i>Microstomus kitt</i>) does not appear as Endangered or Critically Endangered on IUCN’s Red List, and does not appear in CITES appendices; therefore, <i>Microstomus kitt</i> is eligible for approval for use as Marin trust by-product raw material.</p> <p>The EU Multi-annual Plan for the North Sea covers bycatches of this lemon sole stock.</p> <p>The stock is subject to annual assessment by ICES, which incorporates all catch and discard data, meeting C1.1. The most recent stock assessment, conducted in 2023, concluded that stock relative SSB is above the target reference point level, meeting C1.2.</p> <p>Therefore, lemon Sole (<i>Microstomus kitt</i>) in ICES Subarea 4 and Divisions 3a &amp; 7d should be <b>RE-APPROVED</b> 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 lemon Sole (<i>Microstomus kitt</i>) in ICES Subarea 4 and Divisions 3a &amp; 7d (North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, eastern English Channel) under Category C, the stock being subject to a specific management regime and reference points are defined.</p> <p>Fishery removals are considered in the stock assessment process and the most recent stock assessment shows that the stock is above target reference point. Therefore, the stock is considered to satisfy C1.1. and C1.2.</p> <p>In conclusion, lemon Sole (<i>Microstomus kitt</i>) in ICES Subarea 4 and Divisions 3a &amp; 7d (North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, eastern English Channel) passes both clauses (C1.1 and C1.2) 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 <sup>1</sup>	CITES Appendix 1 <sup>2</sup>
Lemon Sole	<i>Microstomus kitt</i>	ICES Subarea 4 and Divisions 3a & 7d	Yes	C	Least Concern <sup>3</sup>	No

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>

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

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/18227047/162705396>

## 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		Lemon Sole ( <i>Microstomus kitt</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.**

Lemon sole in ICES Subarea 4 and Divisions 3a and 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 to produce a stock size indicator, and utilised commercial catches, two survey indices, and fixed maturity estimates from three surveys. Discarding has been quantified for the period 2002 – 2022 and was included in the assessment.

The 2023 catch advice states that “ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2024 should be no more than 2 072 tonnes. The use of a combined species TAC for lemon sole and witch flounder prevents effective control of the single-species exploitation rates and could lead to the overexploitation of either species. ICES advises that management should be implemented at the species level and cover the entire stock distribution area (Subarea 4 and divisions 3.a and 7.d)” (ICES 2023).

Catches are presented in the figure below:

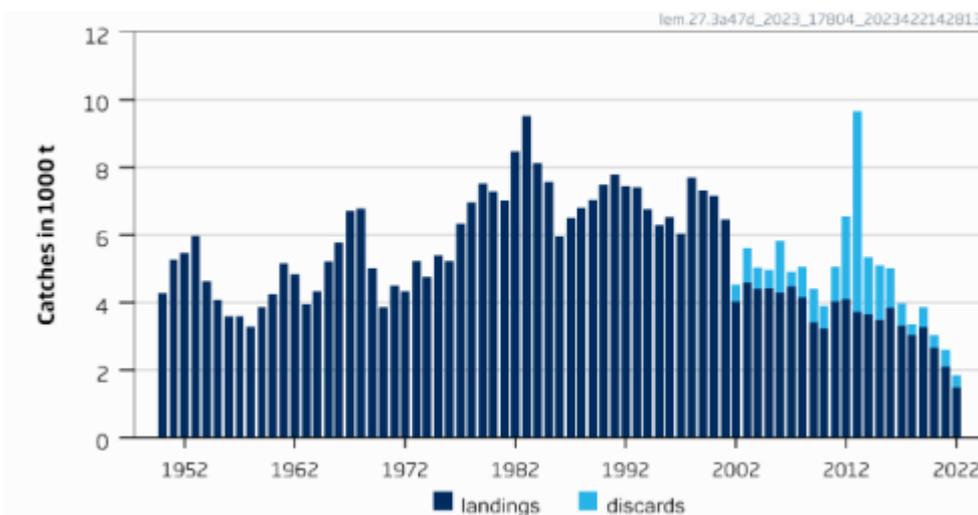


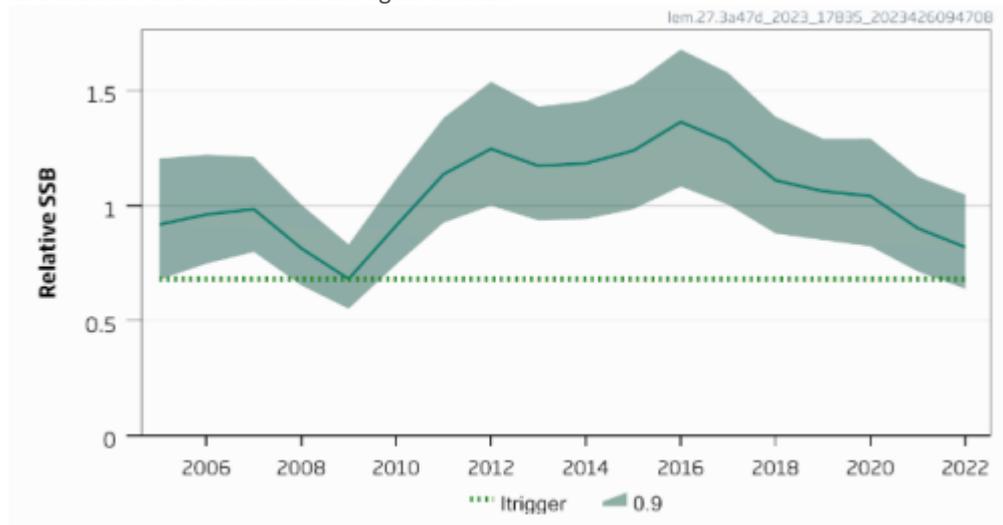
Figure 1. Lemon sole in ICES Subarea 4 and Divisions 3a and 7d, landings including discards (ICES 2023)

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 2023 catch advice provides an indication of the current status of the stock relative to established MSY-based reference points. Although no limit reference point has been defined, a target reference point  $I_{trigger}$  has been set based on the stock assessment outputs.

The 2023 catch advice states that “Fishing pressure on the stock is below the  $F_{MSY}$  proxy, and the stock size indicator is above  $I_{trigger}$ ” (ICES 2023). This means that the stock size is above the target reference point level, and therefore also above any possible limit reference point. Relative SSB is shown in the figure below.



**Figure 2.** Lemon sole in ICES Subarea 4 and Divisions 3a and 7d, stock size indicator (relative SSB) compared to current target reference point (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). Lemon sole (*Microstomus kitt*) in Subarea 4 and divisions 3.a and 7.d (North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, eastern English Channel). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023. ICES Advice 2023, lem.27.3a47d. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21840915>

**Links**

<b>MarinTrust Standard clause</b>	1.3.2.2
<b>FAO CCRF</b>	7.5.3
<b>GSSI</b>	D.3.04, D5.01