MarinTrust Whole fish fishery assessment report

Document TEM-002 (prev. FISH2) - Version 3.0

Issued June 2024 – Effective June 2024

South African multispecies - FAO 47

Surveillance
W11

Table 1: Whole fish fishery assessment scope

Fishery name	**South African multispecies - FAO 47**
MarinTrust report code	**WF11**
Type 1 species (common name, Latin name)	*European anchovy (Engraulis encrasicolus)* *Redeye Round herring (Etrumeus whiteheadi)* *Pilchard/Sardine (Sardinops sagax)*
Fishery location	*FAO 47 – Atlantic, Southeast South Africa*
Gear type(s)	*Purse seine & Midwater Pelagic Trawl*
Management authority (country/state)	*Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DFFE), South Africa*

Table 2: Applicant and Certification Body details

Application details			
Applicant(s)		*Pioneer Fishing (Pty) Ltd, West Point Processors, Amawandle Pelagic (Pty) Ltd, St Helena Bay (Lucky Star Ltd)*	
Applicant country		*South Africa*	
Certification Body details			
Name of Certification Body		LRQA	
Contact Information for CB (e.g. email address/address/telephone number)		fisheries-ca@lrqa.com	
Fishery Assessor name		Jose Peiro Crespo	
CB Peer Reviewer name		Phoebe Schouten	
Number of assessment days	2.5	**Assessment period (mm/yyyy to mm/yyyy)**	July 2026 to July 2027

Table 3: Assessment outcome

Assessment outcome **(See Table 4 for a summary of assessment determination)**		*Approve*
Approval validity	Valid from *(07/2026):*	Valid until *(07/2027):*
CB peer reviewer evaluation		*Agree with assessment determination*
Fishery Assessment Peer Review Group external peer reviewer evaluation		*Agree with assessment determination*

Table 4: Assessment determination

Assessment determination **Summary of assessment and outcome**

There have been no substantial changes to the status or management of this fishery since the 2025 Surveillance Assessment. The client provided updated catch data for the year 2026; however, review of these data confirmed that no changes to the species categorisation were required. All Type 1 and 2 species are classified by the IUCN as Least Concern and none are listed in the CITES Appendices. Consequently, all remain eligible for certification under the MarinTrust Whole Fish Standard v3.0.

At the request of the auditor, the client provided updates and clarifications on specific aspects of the management system. These confirmed that the management framework and its implementation remain unchanged since the previous assessment. The fishery continues to meet all applicable management clause requirements, with the additional information serving to update and clarify specific aspects of the assessment. A well-established management framework and Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) system remain in place, incorporating Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and Automatic Identification System (AIS) tracking, catch monitoring, landing inspections, permit verification, logbook checks and routine compliance inspections. Together, these measures provide effective oversight of fishing activities, support catch traceability and enforcement, and minimise the risk of non-compliance and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The Type 1 species included in this assessment are European anchovy* (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), round herring (Etrumeus *whiteheadi) and sardine (Sardinops sagax). No new analytical stock assessments have* been published since the 2025 assessment cycle. The most recent assessments remain those completed in 2025 using data up to 2024 (and commercial catch information through early 2025) for anchovy and sardine, while round herring continues to be monitored through regular hydro-acoustic surveys and the existing management procedure. During 2026, management has been guided by interim recommendations from the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group (SWG-PEL), which were developed following the postponement of the November 2025 biomass survey due to operational constraints. Interim TACs, TABs and the Precautionary Upper Catch Limit (PUCL) were adopted using the latest available fishery-dependent and fishery-independent information to ensure a precautionary approach until updated survey results became available. Consequently, the stock status information presented in the previous surveillance assessment remains valid. The available evidence indicates that anchovy, sardine and round herring continue to be managed under robust Operational Management Procedures, with all three stocks remaining above their respective biological limit or proxy reference points and continuing to support sustainable exploitation, although some concerns for the anchovy stock have been highlighted.

The Type 2 species included in this assessment are Atlantic chub mackerel (*Scomber colias*) and Cape horse mackerel (*Trachurus capensis*). Both species were assessed under Category D using a Productivity Susceptibility Analysis (PSA), and both achieved a passing outcome.

Similarly, there have been no material changes in the understanding or management of the fishery's impacts on Species of Special Interest (SSI) and endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species and habitats. At the client's request, CapMarine provided an updated report covering observed ETP interactions during 2025 and 2026 up to June. The report indicates that most recorded interactions involved Cape fur seals, although associated mortalities were rare. As the assessed fishery is pelagic, interactions with benthic habitats are also considered very limited, if any.

Potential indirect ecosystem impacts, particularly those associated with the availability of forage fish for dependent predators such as the African penguin, continue to be recognised and managed through South Africa's ecosystem-based fisheries management framework. Since the

previous surveillance assessment, management has been further strengthened through the adoption of the revised African Penguin Biodiversity Management Plan and the implementation of permanent fishing exclusion zones around six key breeding colonies following a court-approved settlement between the South African Government, conservation organisations and the fishing industry. Together with the existing network of Marine Protected Areas and precautionary harvest control measures, these actions provide enhanced protection for African penguins while balancing the sustainable management of the small pelagic fishery. Accordingly, the available evidence indicates that ecosystem impacts continue to be appropriately managed and minimised, and the fishery continues to meet all applicable ecosystem clause requirements. * ***Note on anchovy species identification: Both European anchovy (Engraulis encrasicolus) and Southern African anchovy (Engraulis capensis) are reported to occur in the region. However, DFFE fisheries reports and the stock assessment documentation reviewed for this assessment refer to the managed anchovy stock as E. encrasicolus, and no separate records of E. capensis landings have been identified. Available information suggests that, if E. capensis is caught by the assessed fishery, its contribution to total anchovy catches is very limited. Consequently, for the purposes of this assessment, European anchovy (Engraulis encrasicolus) is the only anchovy species considered and assessed as a Type 1 species.***	
Summary of CB peer review	*The assessor has reviewed all changes and updates to the fishery since the last surveillance audit, and has incorporated them into this surveillance report.* *There are some inconsistencies with the naming of the Anchovy species, with the species categorisation table listing it as European Anchovy (Engraulis encrasicolus), while in the category A scoring tables it is referred to as South African anchovy (Engraulis capensis).* *The assessor should review these inconsistencies, but otherwise the peer reviewer agrees with the determination reached by the assessor.*
Summary of external peer review (see Appendix 1 for the full peer review report)	The assessment report provides comprehensive justification to maintain the approval status of the South Africa Small Pelagic Fishery. The assessment demonstrates that the fishery continues to be managed in accordance with MarinTrust Fishery Approval criteria.
Notes for on-site auditor	*N/A*

Table 5: General results

Section	Outcome (Pass/Fail)
M1 - Management Framework	Pass
M2 - Surveillance, Control and Enforcement	Pass
E1 - Impacts on ETP Species	Pass
E2 - Impacts on Habitats	Pass
E3 - Ecosystem Impacts	Pass

Table 6: Species-specific results

See Table 7 for further details of species categorisation.

Category	Species name (common & Latin name)	Outcome (Pass/Fail/n/a)	
Category A	European anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*)	A1	Pass
		A2	Pass
		A3	Pass
		A4	Pass
	Redeye Round herring (*Etrumeus whiteheadi*)	A1	Pass
		A2	Pass
		A3	Pass
		A4	Pass
	Pilchard/Sardine (*Sardinops sagax*)	A1	Pass
		A2	Pass
		A3	Pass
		A4	Pass
Category B	n/a		
Category C	n/a		
Category D	Atlantic chub mackerel *(Scomber colias)*	Pass	
	Trachurus capensis *(Cape horse mackerel)*	Pass	

Table 7: Species categorisation table

List of all the species assessed. Type 1 species are assessed against Category A or Category B. Type 1 species must represent 95% of the total annual catch. Type 2 species are assessed against Category C or Category D. Type 2 species may represent a maximum of 5% of the annual catch. Species that comprise less than 0.1% of the catch are not required to be assessed or listed here.

Species name (common & Latin name)	Stock	CITES listed yes/no	IUCN Red list Category	% catch composition	Management (Y/N)	Category (A, B, C or D)
European anchovy (Engraulis encrasicolus)		Not evaluated	Least Concern	32.65%	Y	A
Redeye Round herring (Etrumeus whiteheadi)		Not evaluated	Least Concern	44.97%	Y	A

Pilchard/Sardine (Sardinops sagax)		Not evaluated	Least Concern	20.03%	Y	A
Mackerel (Scomber colias)		Not evaluated	Least Concern	1.90%		D
Horse mackerel (Trachurus capensis)		Not evaluated	Least Concern	0.29%		D

Rationale

Catch data for the target species are reported in DFFE (2025) and formed the basis for the species categorisation in the previous surveillance assessment. Updated catch data, covering the period to June 2026, were also provided by the client for this surveillance.

Although the proportional contribution of each species varies between years, the data confirm that the combined catches of the three target species consistently account for approximately 95% or more of the total catch, supporting their categorisation as Type 1 species. The percentages presented above are based on the client-provided catch data for the period 2022–2026.

Sardine is harvested both as a targeted species and as bycatch in the anchovy and redeye round herring fisheries. Accordingly, the reported sardine percentages include both targeted catch and bycatch. Lanternfish (family Myctophidae) is also occasionally caught; however, it represents less than 0.01% of the total catch and have therefore been excluded from the summary presented above.

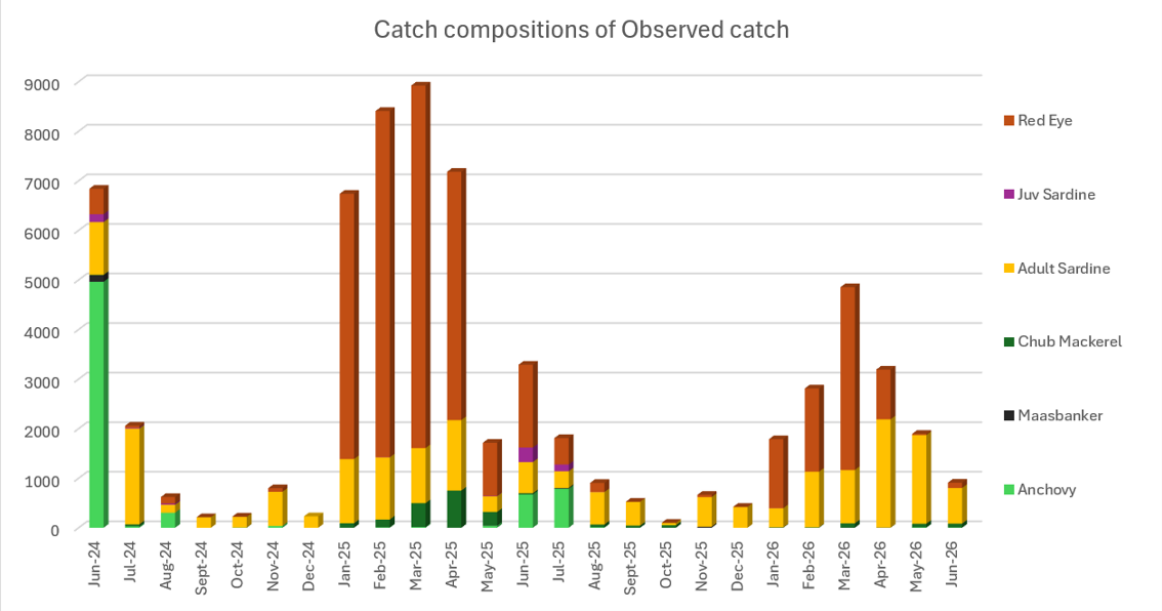


Figure 1. Graph showing catch composition of observer samples raised to estimated bag weights, summarized by month from June 2024 to June 2026 (Source: CapMarine 2026).

References

CapMarine (2025). SAPFIA SCIENTIFIC DATA COLLECTION PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT. Prepared for the South African Pelagic Fishing Industry Association. June 2026. 6 pp.

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) (2025). Status of the South African

Marine Fishery Resources 2025. Cape Town: DFFE.

Catch data provided by the client (available on demand).

Management requirements

This section, or module, assesses the general management regime applied to the fishery under assessment. It comprises two parts, M1, which evaluates the management framework, and M2, which evaluates surveillance, control and enforcement within the fishery.

1.6. All management criteria must be met (pass) for a fishery to pass the Management requirements.

1.6.1. The sub-criteria offer a structured evidence base to demonstrate that the fishery sufficiently meets the management criteria. It is not expected that sub-criteria are assessed independently of the main criterion.

M1 Management framework

M1.1	**M1.1 There is an organisation responsible for managing the fishery.** *In reaching a determination for M1.1, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	M1.1.1 The management and administration organisations within the fishery are clearly identified.
	M1.1.2 The functions and responsibilities of the management organisations include the overall regulation, administration, science and data collection and enforcement roles, and are documented and publicly available.
	M1.1.3 Fishers have access to information and/or training materials through nationally recognised organisations.
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

No changes have occurred since the previous surveillance assessment.

The South African small pelagic fishery is managed by a clearly identified competent authority. Overall administrative and institutional responsibility lies with the Fisheries Management Branch of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE).

The functions and responsibilities of the DFFE and its Fisheries Management Branch are clearly defined, documented and publicly available. These responsibilities encompass the key elements of fisheries management, including regulation, administration, scientific research, stock assessment, data collection and enforcement. Within the Fisheries Management Branch, these functions are delivered through six sub-programmes (directorates) (https://www.dffe.gov.za/fim_home):

1. Office of the Deputy Director-General – strategic leadership and overall management of the branch.
2. Monitoring, Control and Surveillance – enforcement of fisheries legislation and regulations.

3. Fisheries Research and Development – fisheries research, monitoring and stock assessment.
4. Marine Resources Management – development and implementation of fisheries management measures and regulations.
5. Marine Living Resources Fund – administration and financial support for the sustainable development of South Africa's fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
6. Aquaculture Development and Freshwater Fisheries – technical and scientific support for the aquaculture and freshwater fisheries sectors.

The client provided evidence that fishers have access to training and information through a range of nationally recognised maritime training organisations and programmes in South Africa. These include the Sea Safety Training Group (SSTG), a SAMSA-accredited provider of STCW and STCW-F maritime safety training with training centres across South Africa; the Oceana Maritime Academy, which delivers accredited sea-based, land-based and small-scale fisher training programmes in partnership with SAMSA, FoodBev SETA and other recognised organisations; FoodBev Manufacturing SETA, which supports nationally recognised learnerships, apprenticeships, skills programmes and workplace training; Project Maritime Training, a SAMSA-accredited maritime training provider; SAMTRA (South African Maritime Training Academy), which provides SAMSA-approved maritime education and simulator-based training; and the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA), which regulates maritime training, accredits training providers and certifies seafarers. These programmes cover areas such as maritime safety, fishing operations, food safety, first aid, firefighting, navigation, regulatory compliance and professional development, ensuring that fishers have access to appropriate training materials and nationally recognised qualifications. The information provided demonstrates that appropriate training opportunities are available to fishers through recognised national organisations.

The management organisations responsible for the fishery are therefore clearly identified, with documented and publicly available functions that cover all key aspects of fisheries management. In addition, recognised mechanisms are in place to provide information and training to fishers. Accordingly, the requirements of **Clause M1.1 are met.**

References

DFFF (2026). Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. Republic of South Africa. Available at: https://www.dffe.gov.za/fim_home

FoodBev Manufacturing SETA. Learning Programmes. Available at: https://foodbev.co.za/what-we-do/learning-programmes (Accessed July 2026).

Sea Safety Training Group (SSTG). Official website. Available at: https://www.sstg.co.za/ (Accessed July 2026).

Oceana Maritime Academy. Available at: https://oma.oceana.co.za/training (Accessed July 2026)

SAMTRA (South African Maritime Training Academy). Available at: https://samtra.co.za/ (Accessed July 2026)

M1.2	**M1.2 Fishery management organisations are legally empowered to take management actions.** *In reaching a determination for M1.2, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	M1.2.1 There are legal instruments in place to give authority to the management organisation(s) which can include policies, regulations, acts or other legal mechanisms.
	M1.2.2 Vessels wishing to participate in the fishery must be authorised by the management organisation(s).
	M1.2.3 The management system has a mechanism in place for the resolution of legal disputes.
	M1.2.4 There is evidence of the legal rights of people dependent on fishing for food or livelihood.
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

The South African small pelagic fishery continues to operate under a comprehensive legal framework centred on the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (MLRA), which provides the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) with the authority to regulate, manage and enforce fisheries. Participation in the fishery remains subject to statutory authorisation through fishing rights, vessel licences and other required permits, while foreign fishing vessels may only operate under specific authorisation.

The legal framework continues to provide mechanisms for administrative appeals, alternative dispute resolution and judicial review through the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) and the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA). It also recognises and protects the rights and interests of fishing communities, including through the Policy for the Small-Scale Fisheries Sector in South Africa (Republic of South Africa 1998 and 2000).

To demonstrate that these mechanisms are functioning in practice, the client provided examples of recent fisheries-related legal disputes. These include the 2018 West Coast Rock Lobster case, involving WWF South Africa and the West Coast Rock Lobster Small-Scale Fishers Collective, and the African penguin closure case, involving BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) and the South African Pelagic Fishing Industry Association (SAPFIA). The latter resulted in amendments to the size and configuration of the interim fishing closures to enhance protection of the critically endangered African penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*) (High Court Order: Case 2024-029857). These examples demonstrate that the legal framework provides effective mechanisms for resolving fisheries-related disputes and reviewing management decisions.

The legal framework therefore continues to provide the management authority with the necessary powers to manage the fishery, regulate access, resolve disputes and recognise the legal rights of stakeholders. **The requirements of Clause M1.2.1, M1.2.2., M1.2.3 and M1.2.4 continue to be met.**

References

DFFE (2026). Environment Sector Conflict and Dispute Resolution. Available at: https://www.dffe.gov.za/environment-sector-conflict-and-dispute-resolution.

High Court Order: Case 2024-029857. African penguin protection closures.

Republic of South Africa. (1998). Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998). South African Government. Available at: https://www.gov.za/documents/marine-living-resources-act-27-may-1998-0000 (Accessed July 2026).

Republic of South Africa. 2000. Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act No. 3 of 2000). Government Gazette No. 20853, 3 February 2000.

M1.3	**M1.3 There is an organisation responsible for collecting data and (scientifically) assessing the fishery.** *In reaching a determination for M1.3, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	M1.3.1 The organisation(s) responsible for collecting data and assessing the fishery is/are clearly identified.
	M1.3.2 The management system receives scientific advice regarding stock, non-target species and ecosystem status.
	M1.3.3 Scientific advice is independent from the management organisation(s) and transparent in its formulation through a clearly defined process.
Clause outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

No changes have occurred since the previous surveillance assessment. The organisation responsible for collecting fishery data and undertaking scientific assessments remains clearly identified. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) is responsible for fisheries research and monitoring, while the Marine Resource Assessment and Management Group (MARAM) at the University of Cape Town provides independent quantitative stock assessments and scientific advice under contract to the DFFE.

The management system continues to receive scientific advice on stock status, non-target species and ecosystem impacts through MARAM's assessments, scientific publications and the Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources reports. Although funded in part by the DFFE, MARAM operates within an academic institution, receives additional funding from independent sources, and publishes its research in peer-reviewed scientific journals. This provides assurance that scientific advice is developed through a transparent process and remains independent of fisheries management.

The requirements of M1.3.1, M1.3.2 and M1.3.3 continue to be met.

References

Marine Resources Assessment and Management Group (2026). Available at:

https://science.uct.ac.za/maram *(Accessed July 2026)*

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) (2025). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025. Cape Town: DFFE.

M1.4	**M1.4 The fishery management system is based on the principles of sustainable fishing and a precautionary approach.** *In reaching a determination for M1.4, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	M1.4.1 A policy or long-term management objective for sustainable harvesting based on the best scientific evidence and a precautionary approach is publicly available and implemented for the fishery.
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

No changes have occurred since the previous surveillance assessment. The South African small pelagic fishery continues to be managed under a policy framework that is founded on the principles of sustainable utilisation and the precautionary approach. The Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (MLRA), and the Marine Living Resources Amendment Act, 2014, establish long-term objectives for the conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources, explicitly requiring the application of precautionary management, ecosystem protection, biodiversity conservation and the sustainable utilisation of resources based on the best available scientific information.

These principles continue to be reflected in the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment's (DFFE) mission to ensure the sustainable use of, and orderly access to, marine living resources through effective management and regulation.

The policy framework therefore continues to provide a publicly available and implemented long-term management objective for sustainable harvesting based on the best available scientific evidence and the precautionary approach. **The requirements of Clause M1.4.1 continue to be met.**

References

Republic of South Africa. (1998). Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998). South African Government. Available at: https://www.gov.za/documents/marine-living-resources-act-27-may-1998-0000 (Accessed July 2026).

Republic of South Africa. (2014). Marine Living Resources Amendment Act, 2014 (Act No. 5 of 2014). South African Government. Available at: https://www.gov.za/documents/marine-living-resources-amendment-act-0 (Accessed July 2026).

M1.5	**M1.5 There is a clearly defined decision-making process which is transparent, with processes and results made publicly available.** *In reaching a determination for M1.5, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	M1.5.1 There is participatory engagement through which fishery stakeholders and other stakeholders can access, provide information, consult with, and

	respond to, the management systems' decision-making process.
	M1.5.2 The decision-making process is transparent, with results made publicly available.
	M1.5.3 The fishery management system is subject to periodic internal or external review to validate the decision-making process, outcomes and scientific data.
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

Stakeholder participation in the management system continues through established consultation mechanisms, including the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group (SWG-PEL), Resource Management Working Groups (RMWGs), and direct engagement between the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and relevant stakeholders, including industry organisations such as the South African Pelagic Fishing Industry Association (SAPFIA). The SWG-PEL includes scientists from DFFE, MARAM and other research institutions, and its recommendations inform management decisions on TACs and other harvest measures.

SAPFIA provides an important mechanism for industry participation in the management process. Its functions include representing its members in negotiations with government and making representations on matters affecting the small pelagic fishing industry. Evidence of interaction between DFFE and industry stakeholders is also provided through public communications concerning issues such as the finalisation of small pelagic fishing-right appeals and permit validity. DFFE – Finalisation of small pelagic appeals

Stakeholders are also consulted through targeted engagement processes on specific management measures and policy developments. For the 2026 fishing season, the SWG-PEL developed scientific recommendations that informed subsequent management decisions, demonstrating the continued operation of participatory and evidence-based consultation processes within the fishery management system (SWG-PEL, 2025).

Management decisions, regulatory amendments and consultation notices continue to be made publicly available by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), ensuring transparency. Scientific advice and stock assessment outputs produced by the Marine Resource Assessment and Management Group (MARAM) remain publicly available and subject to external peer review, while Operational Management Plans continue to be periodically evaluated through the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process (de Moor, 2022).

The fishery management system therefore continues to provide effective stakeholder engagement, transparent decision-making and periodic review of management processes and scientific advice. **The requirements of Clauses M1.5.1, M1.5.2 and M1.5.3 continue to be met.**

References

Carryn L de Moor, Douglas S Butterworth, Susan Johnston, Learning from three decades of Management Strategy Evaluation in South Africa, ICES Journal of Marine Science, Volume 79, Issue 6, August 2022, Pages 1843–1852, https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsac114

Marine Resources Assessment and Management Group (2026). Available at: https://science.uct.ac.za/maram (Accessed July 2026)

SWG-PEL (2025)

M2 Surveillance, control and enforcement

M2.1	**M2.1 There is an organisation responsible for monitoring compliance with fishery laws and regulations.** *In reaching a determination for M2.1, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*	
	M2.1.1 There is an organisation responsible for monitoring compliance with specific monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) mechanisms in place.	
	M2.1.2 There are relevant tools or mechanisms used to minimise IUU fishing activity.	
	M2.1.3 There is evidence of monitoring and surveillance activity appropriate to the intensity, geography, management control measures and compliance behaviour of the fishery.	
Outcome	*Pass*	

Rationale

The client provided updated information on the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) programme for the South African small pelagic fishery. Monitoring, control and surveillance of the South African small pelagic fishery is undertaken by the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Sub-programme of the Fisheries Branch within the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). Under the Marine Living Resources Act (MLRA), the DFFE has the authority to appoint fisheries control officers and observers, supported where necessary by the South African Police Service, Navy and Coast Guard. The information confirms that the MCS framework and its implementation remain unchanged since the previous assessment. Monitoring activities continue to be undertaken through a combination of Fisheries Control Officers (FCOs), Catch Data Monitors (CDMs) and industry representatives, with all landings subject to notification, permit verification, inspection and catch validation. Fisheries Control Officers also inspect weighing systems, verify calibration certificates, confirm the integrity of catches and bycatch records, and monitor compliance with permit conditions and the Marine Living Resources Act (MCS 2026).

Compliance activities continue to be supported by the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), the Automatic Identification System (AIS), vessel and landing inspections, logbook verification, fish processing establishment inspections and port patrols. Inspection reports and enforcement actions are reviewed regularly to monitor compliance trends and support future enforcement activities, while individual landing records provide traceability from vessel to landing and into the fisheries data system. During the 2025/26 financial year, the Department conducted approximately 524 inspections within the small pelagic sector, demonstrating the continued implementation of an effective monitoring and enforcement programme (MCS 2026).

Therefore, the evidence demonstrates that a competent authority is responsible for monitoring

compliance, effective mechanisms are in place to minimise IUU fishing, and monitoring and surveillance activities are appropriate to the scale and management of the fishery. **Accordingly, Clause M2.1 is met.**

References

CapMarine (2025). Fisheries Observers. National Observer Programmes. Available at: https://capmarine.co.za/fisheries-observers/

DFFE (2024). PERMIT CONDITIONS: PELAGIC FISH SARDINE/PILCHARD FISHERY: 2024 Fishing season: 2024 DATE OF APPROVAL: 17 JANUARY 2024.

DFFE (2025). Fisheries Management. Available at: https://www.dffe.gov.za/FisheriesManagement

MCS (2026). Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Report for the Small Pelagic Sector. DFFE. 4 pp.

M2.2	**M2.2 There is a framework of sanctions which are applied when infringements against laws and regulations are discovered.** *In reaching a determination for M2.2, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*	
	M2.2.1 The laws and regulations provide for penalties or sanctions that are adequate in severity to act as an effective deterrent.	
	M2.2.2 There is no evidence of systematic non-compliance.	
Outcome	*Pass*	

Rationale

There have been no significant changes to the enforcement framework since the previous surveillance assessment. The Marine Living Resources Act (MLRA) continues to provide a comprehensive legal framework of sanctions for infringements of fisheries legislation and licence conditions.

The MLRA establishes a range of penalties that are proportionate to the severity of the offence and are considered sufficient to deter non-compliance. These include substantial financial penalties and imprisonment for offences related to licensing, illegal fishing activities, prohibited fishing methods, foreign fishing vessels and high seas fishing. The Act also empowers fisheries control officers to seize vessels, fishing gear, equipment, cargo and catches where there are reasonable grounds to believe that an offence has been committed.

Although no updated information on inspections or sanctions applied specifically to the small pelagic fishery was provided during this surveillance, compliance continues to be monitored through inspections at landing sites, vessel monitoring systems and an observer programme. During the 2025/26 financial year, the Department conducted approximately 524 inspections within the small pelagic sector (MCS 2026). No evidence of systematic non-compliance was identified during the assessment.

The available evidence indicates that an effective framework of sanctions is in place and that there is no indication of widespread or systematic non-compliance within the fishery. **Accordingly, Clause M2.2 is met.**

References

MCS (2026). Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Report for the Small Pelagic Sector. DFFE. 4 pp.

M2.3	**M2.3**	**There is substantial evidence of widespread compliance in the fishery, and no substantial evidence of IUU fishing.** *In reaching a determination for M2.3, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	M2.3.1	The level of compliance is documented and updated routinely, statistically reviewed and available.
	M2.3.2	Fishers provide additional information and cooperate with management/enforcement agencies/organisations to support the effective management of the fishery.
	M2.3.3	The catch recording and reporting system is sufficient for effective traceability of catches per vessel and supports the prevention of IUU fishing.
Outcome	*Pass*	

Rationale

The Department continues to implement a comprehensive programme to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Monitoring and enforcement are supported by the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and Automatic Identification System (AIS), vessel and catch inspections, permit verification, monitoring of fish landings, inspections at fish processing establishments, verification of logbooks and landing declarations, and port patrols. Catch Data Monitors deployed at landing sites verify that catches correspond with permits and collect biological samples to support compliance monitoring. Where offences are detected, enforcement action is taken in accordance with the Marine Living Resources Act.

Fishers continue to cooperate with management by complying with landing notification requirements, providing catch logbooks and landing declarations, and facilitating inspections throughout the landing process. Each vessel landing is recorded separately and submitted to the Fisheries Research and Development section, providing traceability from vessel to landing and into the fisheries data system. This system supports effective catch verification and contributes to the prevention of IUU fishing.

South Africa also continues to implement Operation Phakisa, a multi-agency compliance and enforcement initiative established to strengthen the protection of marine resources, support enforcement within Marine Protected Areas, improve coordination between enforcement agencies, and enhance national monitoring, control and surveillance capabilities. The programme provides an additional layer of oversight to reduce illegal fishing and improve maritime compliance (MCS 2026).

The available evidence indicates a high level of compliance within the fishery, and no substantial evidence of widespread non-compliance or IUU fishing was identified. Accordingly, **Clause M2.3 is met.**

References
MCS (2026). Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Report for the Small Pelagic Sector. DFFE. 4 pp.

Species requirements

This section, or module, comprises of four species categories. Each species in the catch is subject to an assessment against the relevant species category in this section (see clauses 1.2 and 1.3 and Table 6).

Type 1 species can be considered the 'target' or 'main' species in the fishery under assessment. They make up the bulk of the catch and a subjected to a detailed assessment. Type 1 species must represent 95% of the total annual catch. If a species-specific management regime is in place for a Type 1 species, it shall be assessed under Category A. If there is no species-specific management regime in place for a Type 1 species, it shall be assessed under Category B.

Type 2 Species can be considered the 'non-target' species in the fishery under assessment. They comprise a small proportion of the annual catch and are subjected to a relatively high-level assessment. Type 2 species may represent a maximum of 5% of the annual catch. If a species-specific management regime is in place for a Type 2 species, it shall be assessed under Category C. If there is no species-specific management regime in place for a Type 2 species, it shall be assessed under Category D.

Species that comprise less than 0.1% of the catch are not required to be assessed or listed here.

Category A species

2.1. All clauses must be met for a species to pass the Category A assessment.

2.1.1. If a species fails any of the Category A clauses, it should be re-assessed as a Category B species.

European anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), sardine (*Sardinops sagax*) and round herring (*Etrumeus whiteheadi*)

A1 Data collection

A1.1	**A1.1 Landings data are collected such that the fishery-wide removals of this species are known.**
Outcome	*Pass*
Rationale There have been no significant changes since the previous surveillance assessment.	

Comprehensive stock assessments for the principal target species are undertaken biennially, with the most recent assessments completed in 2025 using data up to 2024 (and commercial catch data through March 2025). Management decisions for the 2026 fishing season were informed by interim advice from the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group (SWG-PEL), based on the latest fishery monitoring information and hydroacoustic survey results. Consequently, the information presented in the previous surveillance assessment remains valid and is summarised below.

Commercial landings are recorded by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and reported in the Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources (DFFE, 2025). The reports provide annual landings for European anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), sardine (*Sardinops sagax*) and round herring (*Etrumeus whiteheadi*). Reported sardine landings include both directed catches and juvenile sardines landed as bycatch in the anchovy fishery, reflecting the mixed schooling behaviour of the two species.

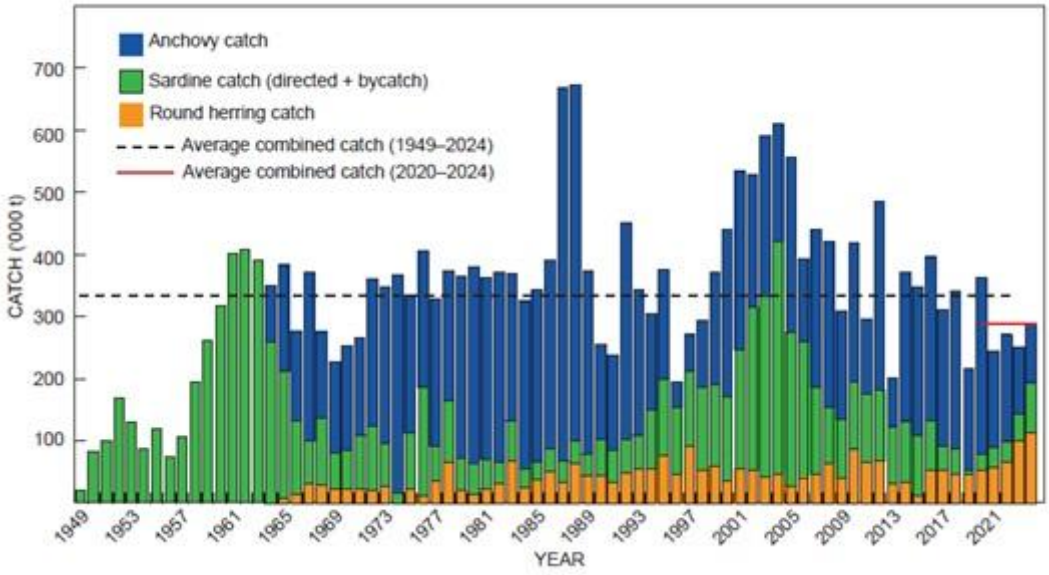


Figure 2. The annual combined catches of anchovy, sardine and round herring by the small pelagic fishery, 1949–2024. Also shown is the long-term average combined annual catch (black dashed line) and for the past five years (2020–2024; red solid line) (Source: DFFE, 2025).

The 2025 stock assessment documents confirm that the assessments are based on comprehensive fishery-dependent data, including commercial catch tonnages and length-frequency information collected between January 2024 and March 2025 (de Moor, 2025). Similar datasets were used for the assessments of the other target species, ensuring consistency across the stock assessment process.

Catch data are collected through mandatory vessel logbooks and verified through inspections at landing sites. In addition, the client provided the most recent landing data for the fishery, which will be incorporated into the next stock assessment cycle. Taken together, these data sources provide a comprehensive and reliable record of fishery-wide removals for the target species and are considered sufficient to support stock assessment and management. Accordingly, **Clause A1.1 is considered to be met.**

References

de Moor, C.L. Assessment of the South African anchovy resource using data up to 2024. DFFE Branch Fisheries document. FISHERIES/2025/OCT/SWG-PEL/55 (IWS/2025/Sardine/BG7): 46 pp

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) (2025). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025. Cape Town: DFFE.

A1.2	**A1.2 Sufficient additional information is collected to enable an indication of stock status to be estimated.**
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

There have been no significant changes since the previous surveillance assessment.

The South African small pelagic fishery is supported by an extensive fishery monitoring and research programme. Fishery-independent information is collected through biannual hydro-acoustic surveys, which estimate the biomass and distribution of anchovy, sardine, round herring and other schooling pelagic species. These surveys also collect biological and environmental information required for stock assessments and the Operational Management Procedures (OMPs), including recruitment estimates, species distribution and environmental variables (DFFE, 2025a).

Additional fishery-dependent information is obtained from commercial catches through mandatory catch reporting, biological sampling and landing inspections. Data collected include catch tonnage, species composition, catch location and date, length-frequency distributions, sex ratio, maturity stage and fish condition, all of which are incorporated into species-specific stock assessment models (Coetzee et al., 2022; DFFE, 2025a).

Research also continues on population structure, biology, ecology, catch patterns, species distribution and behaviour, as well as the development and refinement of stock assessment models and Operational Management Procedures. The outputs of these research programmes are incorporated directly into fisheries management and annual stock assessments (DFFE, 2025).

The most recent advice from the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group (SWG-PEL) confirms that the biomasses of South Africa's small pelagic fish stocks have been monitored since 1984 through a long-term programme of hydro-acoustic surveys. These surveys provide estimates of adult biomass (November) and recruitment (May/June) and form the basis for the sustainable management of anchovy, sardine and round herring, supporting the annual setting of TACs, TABs and PUCLs (DFFE, 2025b).

Although some hydro-acoustic surveys have been delayed in recent years because of operational constraints associated with the research vessel FRS Africana, sufficient fishery-dependent and fishery-independent information has continued to be collected to support robust stock assessments and management decisions. For example, the November 2025 biomass survey was postponed because of vessel repairs, and interim TACs, TABs and PUCLs were recommended until biomass estimates from the January–March 2026 survey became available, demonstrating that management adapts to temporary data limitations while maintaining a precautionary approach (DFFE, 2025b).

Accordingly, the available monitoring and research information is considered sufficient to provide reliable estimates of stock status and to support the sustainable management of the target stocks. Therefore, **Clause A1.2 is considered to be met.**

References

DFFE (2025a). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025. DFFE: Cape Town

DFFE (2025b). Interim Recommendations of the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group for the Sustainable Management of Small Pelagic Resources for the Season 2026. FISHERIES/2025/DEC/SWG-PEL/80

A2 Stock assessment

A2.1	**A2.1**	**A stock assessment is conducted at least once every 3 years (or every 5 years if there is substantial supporting information that this is sufficient for the long-term sustainable management of the stock) and considers all fishery removals and the biological characteristics of the species.**
Outcome	*Pass*	

Rationale

There have been no significant changes since the previous surveillance assessment. Stock assessments for the three principal target species—European anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), sardine (*Sardinops sagax*) and round herring (*Etrumeus whiteheadi*)—are undertaken on a regular basis by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), with scientific support from the Marine Resource Assessment and Management Group (MARAM). The most recent assessments were completed during 2025 using data up to 2024 (and commercial catch information through March 2025), thereby exceeding the MarinTrust requirement for stock assessments to be conducted at least every three years (de Moor, 2025a; de Moor, 2025b; de Moor & Coetzee, 2025).

The assessments are based on comprehensive fishery-dependent and fishery-independent datasets. Fishery-dependent information includes commercial catch tonnages, catch-at-length data, biological sampling, mandatory vessel logbooks and landing inspections, while fishery-independent information is obtained from annual hydroacoustic surveys undertaken by DFFE. These datasets provide estimates of stock abundance, recruitment, age and size structure, and spatial distribution, and are used to evaluate stock status and support management advice (Coetzee et al., 2022; DFFE, 2025).

The stock assessments explicitly account for all known fishery removals. Commercial landings of anchovy, sardine and round herring are recorded by DFFE, while sardine catches include both targeted landings and juvenile sardines taken as bycatch in the anchovy fishery, reflecting the mixed schooling behaviour of the two species. The resulting catch datasets are incorporated directly into the assessment models to estimate fishing mortality and stock biomass (de Moor, 2025a; de Moor, 2025b).

The biological characteristics of each species are also explicitly considered within the assessment process. Parameters including growth, recruitment, natural mortality, maturity, stock structure and species-specific life-history characteristics are incorporated into the assessment models and Operational Management Procedures (OMPs) used to develop annual management advice. This ensures that stock status and harvest recommendations reflect both observed fishery removals and the biological dynamics of the target populations.

Accordingly, the available evidence demonstrates that comprehensive stock assessments are

undertaken well within the required assessment interval, consider all significant fishery removals, and incorporate the biological characteristics of the three target species. Accordingly, **Clause A2.1 is considered to be met.**

References

Coetzee, J.C. et al. (2022). The South African small pelagic fishery: monitoring, surveys and stock assessment. (Use the full citation already included elsewhere in your report.)

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). (2025). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025.

de Moor, C.L. (2025). Assessment of the South African anchovy resource using data up to 2024. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/OCT/SWG-PEL/55.

de Moor, C.L. (2025). An update to the sardine assessment using data from 1984–2024, with associated implications for 2025 management recommendations. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/MAY/SWG-PEL/26.

de Moor, C.L. & Coetzee, J.C. (2025). Sensitivity of the prior distribution for hydro-acoustic survey bias of the South African round herring population to errors associated with target strength dependence on depth. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/MAR/SWG-PEL/10.

A2.2	**A2.2 The assessment provides an estimate of the status of the biological stock relative to a reference point or proxy.**
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

Note: South Africa manages the small pelagic stocks using Operational Management Procedures (OMPs), where the decision variables and harvest control rules function as proxy biological reference points, rather than adopting conventional target and limit reference points such as BMSY or Blim.

There have been no significant changes since the previous surveillance assessment. Stock assessments for European anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), sardine (*Sardinops sagax*) and round herring (*Etrumeus whiteheadi*) continue to provide quantitative estimates of stock status that are evaluated against the decision rules incorporated within their respective Operational Management Procedures (OMPs) and management procedures.

Although explicit biological reference points such as BMSY and Blim have not been formally adopted for these stocks, the assessment models estimate stock biomass, recruitment and fishing mortality, and these outputs are evaluated against predefined management thresholds and harvest control rules embedded within the OMPs. These decision variables therefore act as proxy reference points for determining stock status and guiding annual management advice (de Moor, 2025a; de Moor, 2025b).

For anchovy, the 2025 assessment estimated spawning biomass and recruitment using commercial catch data, catch-at-length information and hydroacoustic survey estimates. The assessment concluded that, despite lower-than-expected survey estimates during 2025, the stock remained within the range managed by the OMP, although interim management measures were recommended while additional analyses were undertaken (de Moor, 2025a; de Moor, 2025c).

For sardine, the updated assessment estimated stock biomass under revised stock structure

assumptions and evaluated the stock relative to the harvest decision framework underpinning the developing Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE). The assessment indicated that the stock remains at relatively low biomass compared with historical levels, supporting the continued application of precautionary management measures (de Moor, 2025b).

For round herring, the assessment provides estimates of stock abundance based on hydroacoustic survey information and commercial fishery data. Stock status is evaluated through the management procedure supporting the Precautionary Upper Catch Limit (PUCL), with ongoing refinement of assessment methods and management procedures to improve future advice (de Moor & Coetzee, 2025; Butterworth & Ross-Gillespie, 2025).

Accordingly, the available assessments provide quantitative estimates of stock status relative to established management reference points or suitable proxy reference points incorporated within the Operational Management Procedures. Accordingly, **Clause A2.2 is considered to be met.**

References

Butterworth, D.S. & Ross-Gillespie, A. (2025). Towards a simple MP for round herring. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/JUN/SWG-PEL/30.

de Moor, C.L. (2025a). Assessment of the South African anchovy resource using data up to 2024. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/OCT/SWG-PEL/55.

de Moor, C.L. (2025b). An update to the sardine assessment using data from 1984–2024, with associated implications for 2025 management recommendations. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/MAY/SWG-PEL/26.

de Moor, C.L. (2025c). OMP-18rev calculated final anchovy TAC for 2025. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/AUG/SWG-PEL/47.

de Moor, C.L. & Coetzee, J.C. (2025). Sensitivity of the prior distribution for hydro-acoustic survey bias of the South African round herring population to errors associated with target strength dependence on depth. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/MAR/SWG-PEL/10.

A2.3	**A2.3 The assessment provides an indication of the volume of fishery removals which is appropriate for the current stock status.**
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

The most recent advice issued by the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group (SWG-PEL) includes the following observations regarding the target stocks (DFFE, 2025b):

1. The record low anchovy biomass and recruitment measured in 2025 is of considerable concern. To allow this resource to recover, industry must not target anchovy and must avoid bycatches of anchovy as far as possible. Exceeding the recommended anchovy catch limits will lead to premature closure of the fishery and hence industry associations must ensure that appropriate steps are taken to keep anchovy catches as low as possible.
2. The low sardine population size observed in recent years has also been of considerable concern and although the most recent two pelagic biomass survey results were positive in comparison to the immediately preceding years, a cautious approach in managing this resource remains required.
3. The by-catch of both juvenile and adult sardine resulting from round herring fishing

should be closely monitored. The difficulty experienced by the fishery in targeting "clean" round herring shoals leads to unavoidable by-catches of sardine. Adaptive management measures should, however, be put in place by the industry to try to avoid areas of high sardine by-catch to keep the sardine by-catch as low as possible.

4. The Industry is encouraged to target round herring instead of anchovy given the former's high abundance, at least until more information is available from the planned biomass survey. Bycatches of >14cm sardine with round herring fishing can be deducted from sardine right holders' individually allocated interim >14cm sardine TAC once the interim > 14 cm sardine bycatch pool for round herring fishing is reached. Industry associations should, however, ensure that this > 14 cm sardine bycatch pool for round herring fishing is managed in such a way that anchovy-only right holders are not precluded from targeting round herring.

The Scientific Working Group subsequently recommended interim TACs and TABs for sardine and anchovy, and a PUCL for round herring for 2026, to be reviewed following the availability of the January–March 2026 pelagic biomass survey results (DFFE 2025b).

Table 1. Interim TACs, TABs and PUCLs for the target species (Source: DFFE, 2025b).

Interim directed >14cm sardine TAC (maximum of 15 000 t to be caught west of Cape Agulhas and maximum of 15 000 t to be caught east of Cape Agulhas):	30 000 t
Interim initial directed anchovy TAC:	1 000 t
Interim ≤14cm sardine TAB with directed anchovy fishing:	0 t
Interim ≤14cm sardine TAB pool with directed sardine and round herring fishing:	1 300 t
Interim >14cm sardine TAB pool with directed round herring fishing:	5 000 t
Interim anchovy TAB:	1 000 t
Interim round herring PUCL:	160 000 t
Final mesopelagic fish PUCL (for the full year):	25 000 t
Final horse mackerel PUCL (for the full year):	13 868 t

Therefore, the assessment (and posterior reviews) provides an indication of the volume of fishery removals which is appropriate for the current stock status, **Clause A2.3 is met.**

References

DFFE (2025a). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025. DFFE: Cape Town

DFFE (2025b). Interim Recommendations of the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group for the Sustainable Management of Small Pelagic Resources for the Season 2026. FISHERIES/2025/DEC/SWG-PEL/80

A2.4	**A2.4 The assessment is subject to internal or external peer review.**
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

It is understood that the stock assessments are subject to scientific review through both the MARAM assessment process and the relevant Scientific Working Group (SWG), providing both internal peer review prior to the adoption of management advice.

References
MARAM (2026). Research overview. Available at: https://science.uct.ac.za/maram/2025-workshop

A2.5	A2.5 The assessment is made publicly available.
Outcome	*Pass*
Rationale	All stock assessments and associated analyses are publicly available through the MARAM website (https://science.uct.ac.za/maram) with a specific reference to "Research for DFFE". Additional information on stock status and fishery performance is provided in the periodically published Status of the South African Marine Fisheries Resources reports (DFFE 2025a). According to the client, the next edition of the DFFE Status Report is expected to be published in September 2026. Therefore, it is concluded that stock assessments and supporting information are publicly available. Although these documents are not always straightforward to locate, sufficient information is accessible to satisfy the transparency requirements of the Standard. Accordingly, **Clause A2.5 is met.**
References	*MARAM (2026). Research overview. Available at: https://science.uct.ac.za/maram/overview*

A3 Harvest strategy

A3.1	A3.1 There is a mechanism in place by which total fishing mortality of this species is restricted.
Outcome	*Pass*
Rationale	As reported in the previous surveillance assessment, all three Type 1 species are managed through limits on total fishery removals. Anchovy and sardine are each subject to a Total Allowable Catch (TAC), with sardine also managed through a Total Allowable Bycatch (TAB), while redeye round herring is managed under a Precautionary Upper Catch Limit (PUCL). Historically, catches have remained below these management limits (DFFE 2025a) (see A3.2). Under normal management arrangements, TACs are set in two stages, with an initial TAC based on the first hydroacoustic survey and a revised TAC determined following the second survey and updated biomass estimates. However, the November 2025 pelagic biomass survey was postponed until January–March 2026 to allow repairs to the FRS Africana. As these survey results provide the primary input for setting TACs, TABs and the PUCL, the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group (SWG-PEL) recommended interim catch limits for the period January–March 2026 based on recent catches, biomass estimates, existing catch limits and available projections (FISHERIES/2025/DEC/SWG-PEL/73rev). These interim limits will be reviewed once the results of

the January–March 2026 biomass survey become available (DFFE 2025b).

References

DFFE (2025a). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025. DFFE: Cape Town

DFFE (2025b). Interim Recommendations of the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group for the Sustainable Management of Small Pelagic Resources for the Season 2026. FISHERIES/2025/DEC/SWG-PEL/80

A3.2	**A3.2 Total fishery removals of this species do not regularly exceed the level indicated or stated in the stock assessment. Where a specific quantity of removals is recommended, the actual removals may exceed this by up to 10% ONLY if the stock status is above the limit reference point or proxy.**
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

Historical catches and management allocations for the target species are presented in DFFE (2025a). As reported in the previous surveillance assessment, total removals of each species have consistently remained below their respective management allocations, including the Total Allowable Catch (TAC), Total Allowable Bycatch (TAB), and Precautionary Upper Catch Limit (PUCL).

The most recent information on catches of the three target species for 2025 is provided in the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group (SWG-PEL) report (DFFE 2025b) and is summarised in the table below. As shown, catches of all three species remained below their respective Total Allowable Catches (TACs). Catches of sardine and redeye round herring were, however, close to their respective TACs, while anchovy catches remained well below the allocated limit.

Table 2. Small pelagic TAC/TAB/PUCLs and landed catches for 2025 (as of 1st December 2025 and subject to verification). All figures are in tonnes (t) (DFFE, 2025b).

Small pelagic species	Interim/Initial TAC/TAB	Final TAC/TAB/ PUCL	Total landed catch
Directed >14 cm sardine TAC	30 000	44 000	36 808†
Directed anchovy TAC	35 000	35 000	14 156‡
≤14cm sardine TAB with directed anchovy fishing	2 500	2 500	980
≤14cm sardine TAB pool with directed sardine and round herring	1 300	1 300	1 229
>14cm sardine TAB pool with directed round herring and anchovy	5 000	11 500	11 353
Anchovy TAB for sardine only right holders	100	100	<1
Round herring PUCL	85 000	200 000	191 777
Horse mackerel PUCL	13 391	13 391	523
Mesopelagic PUCL	25 000	25 000	47

References

DFFE (2025a). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025. DFFE: Cape Town

DFFE (2025b). Interim Recommendations of the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group for the

Sustainable Management of Small Pelagic Resources for the Season 2026. FISHERIES/2025/DEC/SWG-PEL/80

A3.3	**A3.3 Commercial fishery removals are prohibited when the stock has been estimated to be below the limit reference point or proxy (small quotas for research or non-target catch of the species in other fisheries are permissible).**
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

Harvest Control Rules (HCRs) are in place for all three target species and require fishing allocations to be reduced when stock biomass falls below a specified threshold (Bcrit). For anchovy and redeye round herring, the HCR reduces the fishing allocation to zero when biomass is estimated to fall below 25% of Bcrit. Under the anchovy-only Operational Management Procedure (OMP-18rev), adopted in 2021, both the initial TAC (based on the delayed November 2024 survey) and the final TAC (incorporating the record-low recruitment estimate from the July 2025 survey) were calculated as 0 t.

As no survey estimate of anchovy abundance was available before mid-March 2026, the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group (SWG-PEL) recommended that targeted anchovy fishing should not be permitted until updated survey results became available. A provisional TAC of 1,000 t was nevertheless recommended to enable the issuing of permits to anchovy right holders, thereby allowing them to target redeye round herring during 2026 (DFFE 2025b). For sardine, a minimum TAC of 10,000 t is maintained to support the fishery-dependent sampling programme.

Commercial fishery removals are therefore prohibited, or reduced to the prescribed minimum where applicable, when stock biomass is estimated to be below the limit reference point or its proxy. Accordingly, **clause A3.3 is met**.

References

DFFE (2025a). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025. DFFE: Cape Town

DFFE (2025b). Interim Recommendations of the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group for the Sustainable Management of Small Pelagic Resources for the Season 2026. FISHERIES/2025/DEC/SWG-PEL/80

A4 Stock status

A4.1	**A4.1 The stock is at or above the target reference point; OR IF NOT: the stock is above the limit reference point or proxy and there is evidence that a fall below the limit reference point would result in fishery closure; OR IF NOT: the stock is estimated to be below the limit reference point or proxy, but fishery removals are prohibited.**

Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

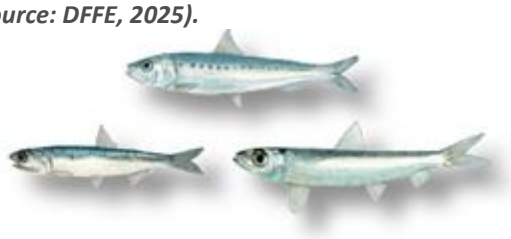
As indicated previously, explicit target and limit biomass reference points have not been formally established for the South African anchovy, sardine and round herring stocks. Instead, these fisheries are managed using Operational Management Procedures (OMPs) and associated harvest control rules, in which stock assessment outputs and predefined decision variables act as proxy reference points for management.

The most recent stock assessments indicate that all three target stocks remain above the biomass levels that would trigger fishery closure or prohibit removals under the respective management procedures (de Moor, 2025a; de Moor, 2025b; Butterworth & Ross-Gillespie, 2025). Although the 2025 hydroacoustic survey estimated a lower-than-expected anchovy biomass, the stock remained within the range covered by the OMP, and management responded through precautionary interim TAC recommendations while additional analyses were undertaken. Similarly, the updated sardine assessment confirmed that the stock remains at relatively low biomass compared with historical levels but continues to support a precautionary fishery under conservative harvest controls. Round herring continues to be considered a healthy stock, supporting the current Precautionary Upper Catch Limit (PUCL).

The harvest control rules incorporated within the Operational Management Procedures provide clear evidence that fishing mortality is progressively reduced as stock abundance declines, with TACs, TABs or PUCLs adjusted accordingly. Should stock biomass decline to levels considered biologically unacceptable under the management procedures, fishing opportunities would be substantially reduced or suspended. This precautionary approach is demonstrated by the 2025 anchovy assessment, in which the Scientific Working Group considered recommending a zero TAC under the Exceptional Circumstances provisions following unexpectedly low survey estimates before subsequently adopting revised catch limits based on updated analyses (de Moor, 2025c).

Accordingly, although explicit target and limit reference points have not been formally adopted, the available evidence indicates that the three target stocks remain above the proxy reference points incorporated within the Operational Management Procedures, and that the harvest control rules provide an effective mechanism to reduce or prohibit fishing should stock status deteriorate. Accordingly, **Clause A4.1 is considered to be met.**

Table 3. Stock status target species (small-pelagic fishery) (Source: DFFE, 2025).



Stock status	Unknown	Abundant	Optimal Anchovy Sardine Round herring	Depleted	Heavily depleted
Fishing pressure	Unknown	Light	Optimal Anchovy Sardine Round herring	Heavy	

References
DFFE (2025a). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025. DFFE: Cape Town *DFFE (2025b). Interim Recommendations of the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group for the Sustainable Management of Small Pelagic Resources for the Season 2026. FISHERIES/2025/DEC/SWG-PEL/80*

Category B species

Category B species are assessed using a risk-based approach.

2.2. The risk matrix in Table B(a) shall be used when assessing a Category B species when estimates of Fishing mortality (F), Biomass (B) and reference points are available.

2.3. The risk matrix in Table B(b) shall be used when assessing a Category B species when no reference points are available.

B1	**A3.3**	**Commercial fishery removals are prohibited when the stock has been estimated to be below the limit reference point or proxy (small quotas for research or non-target catch of the species in other fisheries are permissible).**
Table used B(a) or B(b)		
Outcome	Choose an item.	
Rationale		
References		

Category C species

2.4. All clauses must be met for a species to pass the Category C assessment.

2.4.1. Where a species fails this Category C clause, it should be assessed as a Category D species instead, except if there is evidence that the species is currently below the limit reference point.

C1.1	**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.**
Outcome	Choose an item.	
Rationale		
References		

C1.2	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.
Outcome	Choose an item.
Rationale	
References	

Category D species

Category D species are assessed against a risk-based approach.

2.5. The Productivity-Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) in Table D(a) shall be used when assessing Category D species.

2.6. Table D(b) shall be used to calculate the overall PSA risk rating for the Category D species.

2.7. Should the PSA indicate a high risk, further assessment shall be completed against the requirements in Table D(C).

Productivity Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) and scores

Table D(a) provides detailed values and scores for the species productivity and susceptibility attributes and attributes, the assessor shall use Table D(a) to the PSA table.
Table D(b) is used to calculate the overall PSA risk rating for the Category D species.

Species name	Atlantic chub mackerel (*Scomber colias*)	
Productivity attributes	**Value**	**Score**
Average age at maturity	1 year	1
Average maximum age	20 years	2
Fecundity	41,325 – 494,500	1
Average maximum size	55 cm	1
Average size at maturity	21.6 cm	1
Reproductive strategy	Broadcast spawner	1
Mean Trophic Level (MTL)	3.9	3
Density dependence (to be used when scoring invertebrate species only)		
Susceptibility attributes		
Areal overlap (availability): Overlap of the fishing effort	Wide distribution in the	1

with a species concentration of the stock	Atlantic <10%	
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	Pelagic, high overlap	3
Selectivity of gear type: Potential of the gear to retain species	High overlap with the fishing gear	3
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	The species is retained	3
Average productivity score		1.43
Average susceptibility score		2.5
PSA risk rating (from Table D(b))		PASS
Compliance rating		PASS
References *FishBase – Atlantic chub mackerel. Available at:* https://fishbase.de/summary/Scomber_colias.html *[Accessed 13th July 2026]*		

Species name	Cape horse mackerel (*Trachurus capensis*)	
Productivity attributes	**Value**	**Score**
Average age at maturity	2	1
Average maximum age	10	2
Fecundity	Unknown	3
Average maximum size	60 cm	1
Average size at maturity	32.5 cm	1
Reproductive strategy	Broadcast spawner	1
Mean Trophic Level (MTL)	3.5	3
Density dependence (to be used when scoring invertebrate species only)	-	-
Susceptibility attributes		
Areal overlap (availability): Overlap of the fishing effort with a species concentration of	>30% overlap	3

the stock		
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	Pelagic, high overlap	3
Selectivity of gear type: Potential of the gear to retain species	High overlap with the fishing gear	3
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	The species is retained	3
Average productivity score		1.71
Average susceptibility score		3
PSA risk rating (from Table D(b))		PASS
Compliance rating		PASS

References

Mc Laverty, K. (2012). A re-evaluation of the life history strategy of Cape horse mackerel, Trachurus capensis in the southern Benguela. http://hdl.handle.net/11427/12101

Hecht, T. (1990). On the life history of Cape horse mackerel Trachurus trachurus capensis off the south-east coast of South Africa. South African Journal of Marine Science, 9(1), 317–326. https://doi.org/10.2989/025776190784378907

FishBase (2025). Cape horse mackerel. Available at: https://fishbase.de/summary/Trachurus_capensis.html [Accessed 13th July 2026]

Further assessment for Category D species

Should the PSA indicate a high risk, further assessment shall be completed against the requirements D1 and D2 – Table D(c).

D1	**D1. The potential impacts of the fishery on this species are considered during the management process, and reasonable measures are taken to minimise these impacts.**
Outcome	Choose an item.
Rationale	
References	

D2	**D2. There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on the species.**

Outcome	Choose an item.
Rationale	
References	

Ecosystem requirements

This section, or module, assesses the impacts that the fishery under assessment may have on key ecosystem components: ETP species, habitat and the wider ecosystem.

3.1. All ecosystem criteria must be met (pass) for a fishery to pass the Ecosystem Requirements.

3.1.1. The sub-criteria offer a structured evidence base to demonstrate that the fishery sufficiently meets the ecosystem criteria, it is not expected that sub-criteria are assessed independently of the main criterion.

E1 Impact on Endangered, Threatened or Protected species (ETP species)

E1.1	**E1.1 Information on interactions between the fishery and ETP species is collected.** *In reaching a determination for E1.1, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	E1.1.1 ETP species which may be directly affected by the fishery have been identified.
	E1.1.2 Interactions between the fishery and ETP species are recorded and reported to management organisations.
	E1.1.3 Collection and analysis of ETP information is adequate to provide a reliable indication of the impact the fishery has on ETP species.
Outcome	*Pass*
Rationale An observer programme operated by CapMarine is in place to monitor and record incidental interactions with Species of Special Interest (SSI), including endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species. In addition, vessel licence conditions require any incidental catches of these species to be reported to the relevant authorities at the time of landing. The client provided observer data on interactions with ETP species for 2025 and for 2026 (up to June). The information provided (see Tables X below) is considered sufficient to assess the fishery's impacts on ETP	

species. Accordingly, **Clause E1.1 is met.**

Table X. Interactions of the South African small pelagic fishery with SSI species (Source: Adapted from CapMarine 2026).

Interactions with SSI species					
Year 2025					
Species	**South African fur seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus*)**		**Sunfish (*Mola spp.*)**		**Black-browed albatross (*Thalassarche melanophrys*)**
Fate	**Alive**		**Alive**		**Alive**
Interaction	**Net**	**Vessel**	**Net**		**Other**
Jan	969	6	1		
Feb	2449	24			
Mar	2646	54			
Apr	3171				
May	1098				
Jun	1563				
Jul	857				
Aug	421				5
Sept	154				
Oct	98				
Nov	1399				
Dec	342				
Year 2026					
Species	**South African fur seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus*)**		**White-chinned petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*)**	**Hammerhead sharks nei (*Sphyrna spp.*)**	**Indo-Pacif. bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*)**
Fate	**Alive**		**Alive**	**Dead**	**Alive**
Interaction	**Net**	**Vessel**	**Net**	**Pump**	**Net**
Jan	1059				
Feb	1979				
Mar	2351				
Apr	1776	70			
May	2010		12		30
Jun	733		50		

References

CapMarine (2026). Summary Report: Interactions with ETP Species and SSI. January 2025 to 30 June 2026. Prepared for the South African Pelagic Fishing Industry Association. 4 pp.

E1.2	**E1.2 The fishery has no significant negative impact on ETP species.** *In reaching a determination for E1.2, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	E1.2.1 The information collected in relation to E1.1.3 indicates that the fishery does not have a significant negative impact on ETP species.
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

As described under Clause E1.1, CapMarine operates an independent observer programme that records interactions with Species of Special Interest (SSI), including endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species. Observer data for 2025 and 2026 (up to June) were provided by the client and are considered sufficient to assess the fishery's impacts on these species.

The observer reports conclude that the majority of recorded interactions involve South African (Cape) fur seals. These animals are typically observed swimming around purse seine nets during fishing operations and, in all observed cases, avoided entanglement or accidental capture. Interactions with other ETP and SSI species were infrequent, occurred in very low numbers and generally did not result in mortality. During the reporting period, only a single mortality was recorded, involving a hammerhead shark that was accidentally caught in the fish pump during pumping operations. In addition, a southern right whale was observed near a net during setting in March 2026, but no interaction with the fishing gear occurred (CapMarine 2026).

The available observer information indicates that interactions with ETP species remain rare and result in negligible levels of mortality. Continued independent observer monitoring provides transparent information to support fisheries management and conservation objectives while demonstrating the industry's commitment to sustainable fishing practices. Accordingly, the fishery is not considered to have significant adverse impacts on ETP species, and **Clause E1.2 is met.**

References

CapMarine (2026). Summary Report: Interactions with ETP Species and SSI. January 2025 to 30 June 2026. Prepared for the South African Pelagic Fishing Industry Association. 4 pp.

E1.3	**E1.3 There is an ETP management strategy in place for the fishery.** *In reaching a determination for E1.3, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	E1.3.1 There are measures applied to the fishery which are designed to manage the impacts of the fishery on ETP species.
	E1.3.2 The measures are considered likely to achieve the objectives of regional, national and international legislation relating to ETP species.
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

Although it is understood no fishery-specific ETP management strategy has been developed for the small pelagic fishery, a range of management measures are in place to minimise potential

interactions with protected species.

Vessel licence conditions require any incidental catches to be reported to the authorities and surrendered to Fishery Control Officers or Catch Data Monitors upon landing. Compliance with these requirements is supported by an observer programme, which records incidental interactions and mortalities of Species of Special Interest (SSI). To date, observer reports indicate that interactions with ETP species in the purse-seine fishery are negligible (CapMarine 2026).

More broadly, South Africa has established national conservation measures for protected species, including National Plans of Action (NPOAs) for the conservation and management of sharks and for reducing seabird bycatch, which contribute to the management of ETP species across South African fisheries (DFFE 2022; Kerwath *et al.,* 2026). These measures are complemented by ongoing research undertaken by MARAM and the DFFE to monitor ecosystem interactions and inform fisheries management.

Given the negligible level of observed interactions and the management measures in place, the fishery is considered to have an appropriate strategy for managing potential impacts on ETP species. Accordingly, **Clause E1.3 is met.**

References

CapMarine (2026). Summary Report: Interactions with ETP Species and SSI. January 2025 to 30 June 2026. Prepared for the South African Pelagic Fishing Industry Association. 4 pp.

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). (2022). South Africa's Second National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA-Sharks II). Pretoria: Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

Kerwath, S., Makhado, A., Masotla, M.J., Cilliers, G., Angel, A., de Goede, J., Ryan, P. & Singh, L. (2026). National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Seabirds in South African Fisheries II. Thirteenth Meeting of the Seabird Bycatch Working Group Swakopmund, Namibia, 27 - 29 May 2026.

E2 Impact on the habitat

E2.1	**E2.1**	**Information on interactions between the fishery and marine habitats is collected.** *In reaching a determination for E2.1, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	E2.1.1	Habitats which may be directly affected by the fishery have been identified, including any habitats which may be particularly vulnerable.
	E2.1.2	Information on the scale, location and intensity of fishing activity relative to habitats is collected.
	E2.1.3	Collection and analysis of habitat information is adequate to provide a reliable indication of the impact the fishery has on marine habitats.
Outcome	*Pass*	

Rationale There have been no significant changes since the previous surveillance assessment. The South African small pelagic fishery uses pelagic fishing gears that have little or no contact with the seabed; consequently, direct interactions with marine habitats are considered minimal. Information on the location and intensity of fishing activity relative to these habitats is collected through Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS), Automatic Identification System (AIS) data, catch reporting and observer programmes (MCS 2026). Potentially affected habitats have been identified through DFFE reporting and research undertaken by MARAM. Given the limited potential for habitat impacts, the available information is considered sufficient to provide a reliable indication of the fishery's effects on marine habitats. **Accordingly, Clause E2.1 is met.**
References *MCS (2026). Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Report for the Small Pelagic Sector. DFFE. 4 pp.*

E2.2	**E2.2 The fishery has no significant impact on marine habitats.** *In reaching a determination for E2.2, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	E2.2.1 The information collected in relation to E2.1.3 indicates that the fishery does not have a significant negative impact on marine habitats.
Outcome	*Pass*
Rationale As noted above, the potential impacts of this pelagic fishery on marine habitats are minimal due to the nature of the fishing gear and its limited contact with the seabed. Consequently, the fishery is not considered to have significant adverse impacts on marine habitats. **Accordingly, Clause E2.2 is met.**	
References	

E2.3	**E2.3 There is a habitat management strategy in place for the fishery.** *In reaching a determination for E2.3, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	E2.3.1 There are measures applied to the fishery which are designed to manage the impact of the fishery on marine habitats.
	E2.3.2 The measures are considered likely to prevent the fishery from having a significant negative impact on marine habitats.
Outcome	*Pass*
Rationale Given the negligible interaction between the pelagic fishing gear and the seabed, no specific	

habitat management measures are considered necessary for this fishery. Accordingly, **Clause E2.3 is met.**
References

E3 Impact on the ecosystem

E3.1	**E3.1**	**Information on the potential impacts of the fishery on marine ecosystems is collected.** *In reaching a determination for E3.1, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*
	E3.1.1	The main elements of the marine ecosystems in the area(s) where the fishery takes place have been identified.
	E3.1.2	The role of the species caught in the fishery within the marine ecosystem is understood, either through research on this specific fishery or inferred from other fisheries.
	E3.1.3	Collection and analysis of ecosystem information is adequate to provide a reliable indication of the impact the fishery has on marine ecosystems.
Outcome	*Pass*	

Rationale

There have been no significant changes since the previous surveillance assessment. Information on the potential impacts of the fishery on the marine ecosystem continues to be collected through a comprehensive programme of fishery-dependent and fishery-independent monitoring, ecosystem research and stock assessment activities.

The key ecosystem components and ecological interactions relevant to the fishery are well understood and are subject to routine monitoring. The Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources report confirms that ecosystem considerations are explicitly incorporated into the management framework through the implementation of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), with key ecosystem indicators regularly monitored to assess ecosystem status and inform management decisions (DFFE, 2025).

The ecological role of the target species is well recognised. Anchovy, sardine and redeye round herring are important forage species supporting a wide range of predators within the Benguela ecosystem, and maintaining adequate biomass is recognised as a key ecosystem management objective. Particular attention continues to be given to the interactions between the small pelagic fishery and the critically endangered African penguin, for which sardine and anchovy constitute the primary prey. Research on this interaction has continued in recent years (de Moor 2025) and has informed the implementation of long-term no-take zones around key penguin breeding colonies, specified in the Fishery Permit Conditions (Fishery Permit Conditions 2026a and b) and other ecosystem-based management measures intended to improve prey availability while balancing the needs of the fishery.

Ecosystem considerations continue to be incorporated into fisheries management. Ecosystem

performance measures relating to African penguins remain explicit objectives within the Operational Management Procedure (OMP), and ongoing work to refine the OMP continues to consider broader ecosystem-based management objectives, including the use of ecosystem indicators and potential ecosystem-related exceptional circumstances in management decision-making.

Overall, the available ecosystem information is considered sufficient to identify and monitor the potential impacts of the fishery on the marine ecosystem and to support ecosystem-based fisheries management. Accordingly, **Clause E3.1 is met.**

References

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) (2025a). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025. Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Cape Town.

E3.2	**E3.2 There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on the marine ecosystem.** *In reaching a determination for E3.2, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:* E3.2.1 The information collected in relation to E3.1.3 indicates that the fishery does not have a significant negative impact on marine ecosystems.
Outcome	*Pass*

Rationale

The available information continues to indicate that the South African small pelagic fishery does not have a significant negative impact on the marine ecosystem. The fishery targets schooling pelagic species using purse seine gear that operates within the water column and has negligible contact with the seabed. Consequently, there is no evidence of adverse impacts on benthic habitats or benthic communities associated with fishing operations.

The fishery is supported by an extensive scientific monitoring and research programme, including annual hydro-acoustic surveys, stock assessments, ecosystem monitoring and research undertaken by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and the Marine Resource Assessment and Management Group (MARAM). The principal target species (anchovy, sardine and round herring) are assessed annually, and management advice explicitly considers their ecological role as forage species supporting higher trophic levels, including seabirds, marine mammals and predatory fish (de Moor, 2023; DFFE, 2025).

As part of South Africa's implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), ecosystem considerations have been further integrated into the management of the small pelagic fishery. In particular, a population dynamics model for the African penguin has been developed for use alongside the small pelagic Operational Management Procedure (OMP), allowing the potential impacts of alternative harvest strategies on penguin populations to be evaluated. Results from this work indicate that fishing is likely to have a relatively small influence on penguin population dynamics when compared with other factors, particularly the variable spatial distribution of sardine and broader environmental variability.

Observer programmes, scientific surveys and ongoing ecosystem research have not identified evidence that fishing activities are causing widespread ecosystem degradation or unacceptable impacts on associated species or ecosystem processes. While the decline of the critically endangered African penguin remains an important ecosystem concern, current evidence indicates that multiple interacting factors—including prey availability, environmental variability, predation and habitat conditions—contribute to the species' status. To further reduce uncertainty regarding the contribution of fishing, precautionary spatial fishing closures have been established around six major penguin breeding colonies following a court-approved settlement, complemented by the revised African Penguin Biodiversity Management Plan and the existing network of Marine Protected Areas. These measures, together with continued monitoring and adaptive management, strengthen the ecosystem-based management framework for the fishery (DFFE, 2025a; DFFE, 2025b).

Overall, the available scientific evidence indicates that the fishery is operating within a comprehensive ecosystem-based management framework and that there is no substantial evidence that current fishing activities are having a significant negative impact on the wider marine ecosystem**. Accordingly, Clause E3.2 is considered to be met.**

References

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) (2025a). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025. Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Cape Town.

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). 2024/2025. Biodiversity Management Plan for the African Penguin (Spheniscus demersus) in South Africa. Government Gazette / DFFE, Republic of South Africa. Available at: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/36966gon824.pdf

Birdlife South Africa and Another v Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and Others (2024-029857) [2025] ZAGPPHC 264 (18 March 2025). Available at: https://lawlibrary.org.za/akn/za-gp/judgment/zagpphc/2025/264/eng@2025-03-18

de Moor, C.L. (2023). Scientific basis for the management of the South African small pelagic fishery. Marine Resource Assessment and Management Group (MARAM), University of Cape Town. (Or the specific MARAM publication you have already cited elsewhere in the report.)

de Moor, C.L. (2025). Assessment of the South African anchovy resource using data up to 2024. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/OCT/SWG-PEL/55.

de Moor, C.L. (2025). An update to the sardine assessment using data from 1984–2024, with associated implications for 2025 management recommendations. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/MAY/SWG-PEL/26.

de Moor, C.L. & Coetzee, J.C. (2025). Sensitivity of the prior distribution for hydro-acoustic survey bias of the South African round herring population to errors associated with target strength dependence on depth. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/MAR/SWG-PEL/10.

de Moor, C.L., Coetzee, J.C. & de Goede, J. (2025). Recent targeting of round herring. DFFE Branch Fisheries document FISHERIES/2025/MAR/SWG-PEL/12.

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). (2025). Biodiversity Management Plan for the African Penguin (Spheniscus demersus). Government Gazette.

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). (2025). Minister welcomes court

order securing African Penguin protection settlement. Media Release, 18 March 2025.

E3.3	**E3.3 There is an ecosystem management strategy in place for the fishery.** *In reaching a determination for E3.3, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:*	
	E3.3.1	There are measures applied to the fishery which are designed to manage the impacts of the fishery on marine ecosystems.
	E3.3.2	The measures are considered likely to prevent the fishery from having a significant negative impact on marine ecosystems.
Outcome	*Pass*	

Rationale

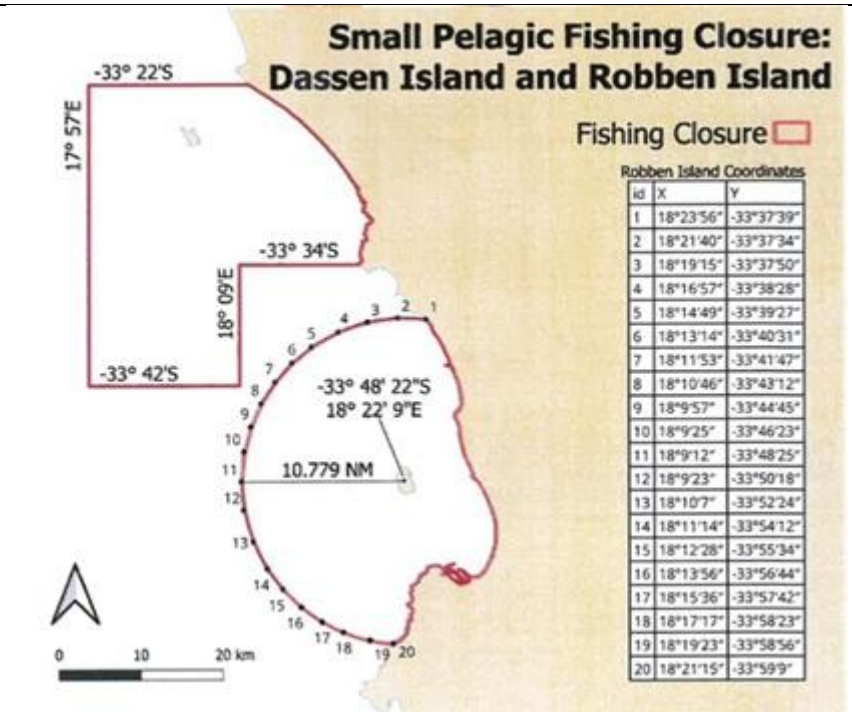
The South African small pelagic fishery continues to operate within an ecosystem-based management framework designed to minimise impacts on the wider marine ecosystem.

A range of management measures is in place to reduce ecosystem impacts, including precautionary harvest controls (TACs, TABs and PUCLs), the Operational Management Procedure (OMP), Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), seasonal and spatial fishing closures, and ongoing ecosystem monitoring (de Moor, 2023; DFFE, 2025). These measures are supported by scientific research programmes, observer coverage, and Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) activities to ensure compliance and facilitate adaptive management.

Protection of the critically endangered African penguin continues to be a key ecosystem management objective. The revised African Penguin Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) identifies the maintenance of adequate prey availability through fisheries management as one of the principal actions required to halt the species' decline and specifically recognises the need to implement and periodically review fisheries closures around important breeding colonies.

Consistent with these objectives, and following an extensive scientific review and a negotiated settlement between the fishing industry, BirdLife South Africa, SANCCOB and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), South Africa implemented long-term fishing closures around six major African penguin breeding colonies: Dassen Island, Robben Island, Stony Point, Dyer Island, St Croix Island and Bird Island (see figures below, reproduced from the fishery permit conditions). The agreement, formalised by a court order in March 2025 and subsequently incorporated into the fishery permit conditions, establishes no-fishing zones for anchovy and sardine for an initial period of ten years, subject to periodic scientific review. The closures were designed to protect colonies supporting approximately 76% of South Africa's African penguin population while balancing conservation objectives with the sustainable operation of the small pelagic fishery.

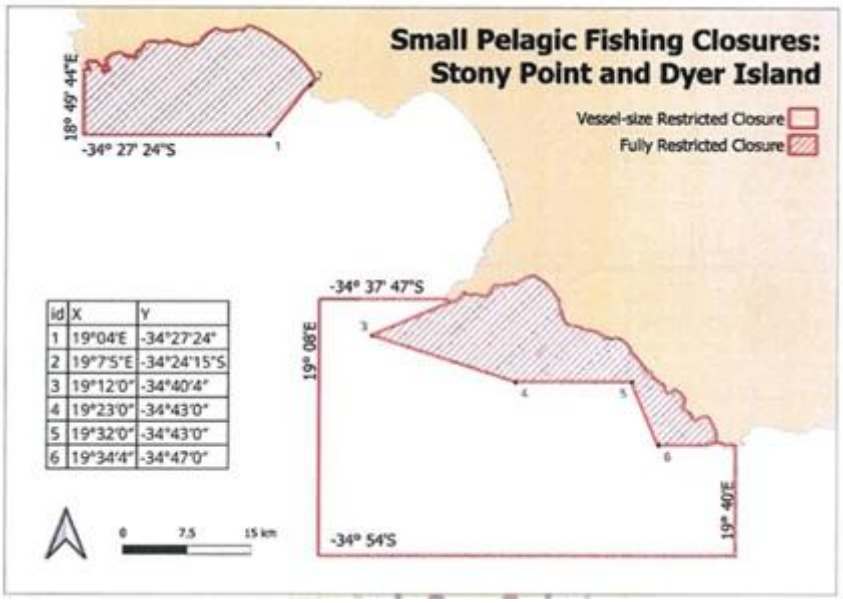
Together with the existing network of Marine Protected Areas, precautionary harvest controls and ecosystem monitoring programmes, these measures are considered likely to prevent the fishery from having significant adverse impacts on the wider marine ecosystem.



Robben Island Coordinates

id	X	Y
1	18°23'56"	-33°37'39"
2	18°21'40"	-33°37'34"
3	18°19'15"	-33°37'50"
4	18°16'57"	-33°38'28"
5	18°14'49"	-33°39'27"
6	18°13'14"	-33°40'31"
7	18°11'53"	-33°41'47"
8	18°10'46"	-33°43'12"
9	18°9'57"	-33°44'45"
10	18°9'25"	-33°46'23"
11	18°9'12"	-33°48'25"
12	18°9'23"	-33°50'18"
13	18°10'7"	-33°52'24"
14	18°11'14"	-33°54'12"
15	18°12'28"	-33°55'34"
16	18°13'56"	-33°56'44"
17	18°15'36"	-33°57'42"
18	18°17'17"	-33°58'23"
19	18°19'23"	-33°58'56"
20	18°21'15"	-33°59'9"

Figure 1. Dassen Island and Robben Island fishery closures (Source: Fishery Permit Conditions 2026a)



id	X	Y
1	19°04'E	-34°27'24"
2	19°7'5"E	-34°24'15"S
3	19°12'0"	-34°40'4"
4	19°23'0"	-34°43'0"
5	19°32'0"	-34°43'0"
6	19°34'4"	-34°47'0"

Figure 2. Stony Point and Dyer Island fishery closures (Source: Fishery Permit Conditions 2026a)

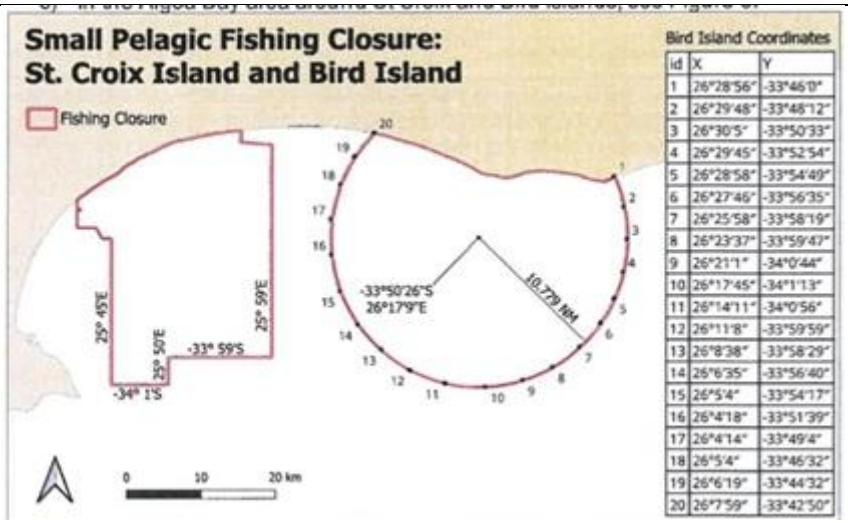


Figure 3. St Croix Island and Bird Island fishery closures (Source: Fishery Permit Conditions 2026a)

Collectively, the available evidence indicates that the current ecosystem management measures are appropriate and are likely to prevent the fishery from having significant adverse impacts on the marine ecosystem. Accordingly, **Clause E3.3 is met.**

References

de Moor, C.L. (2023). Operational Management Procedure for the South African Small Pelagic Fishery. Marine Resource Assessment and Management Group (MARAM), University of Cape Town.

DFFE (2025). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources. Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Pretoria.

DFFE (2025a). Minister George secures historic settlement to protect penguins. Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 12 March 2025.

DFFE (2025b). More good news for penguins: Minister Dion George implements immediate island closure measures to bolster penguin conservation. Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 25 March 2025.

DFFE (2025c). Biodiversity Management Plan for the African Penguin (Spheniscus demersus). Government Gazette.

DFFE (2025d). Minister George welcomes court order securing African Penguin protection settlement. 18 March 2025.

Fishery Permit Conditions (2026a). Permit Conditions Pelagic Fish: Anchovy Fishery 2026. Date approval: 13 January 2026.

Fishery Permit Conditions (2026b). Permit Conditions Pelagic Fish: Sardine/Pilchard Fishery 2026. Date approval: 13 January 2026.

Annex 1: External Peer Review report
Assessment and determination summary

Fishery name	**South Africa Small Pelagic Fishery**
MarinTrust report code	**WF11**
Type 1 species (common name, Latin name)	*Anchovy (Engraulis encrasicolus)* *Sardine (Sardinops sagax)* *Redeye round herring (Etrumeus whiteheadi)*
Fishery location	*South Africa EEZ*
Gear type(s)	*Purse seine, pelagic trawl*
Management authority (country/state)	*Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DFFE), South Africa*
Certification Body recommendation	*Approved*
FAPRG reviewer recommendation	Agree with CB determination

Summary of peer review outcomes

Summary *Provide any information about the fishery that the reviewers feel is significant to their decision. This summary is used by the Certification Body in the Fishery Assessment Report.*
The assessment report provides comprehensive justification to maintain the approval status of the South Africa Small Pelagic Fishery. The assessment demonstrates that the fishery continues to be managed in accordance with MarinTrust Fishery Approval criteria.
General comments on the draft report provided to the peer reviewer
The report is comprehensive and addresses each assessment clause. Comments are made concerning the reference to a conflict with both South African (Engraulis capensis) anchovy identified in the Cat A species assessment and European (Engraulis encrasicolus) identified at Table 7 in the report. The assessor may wish to clarify the species. Also, referring to the Type 2 species, chub mackerel; since the initial assessment in 2023 of the fishery, in some years, scomber japonicus is referenced and in others; scomber colias. Clarification may be required on which species or if both species are present in catches. Minor comments are also made on possible additional references that may be useful to support the evidence base at M, Cat A and E sections are noted.

Peer reviewers should review the fishery assessment report with the primary objective of answering the key questions listed in the table below. When the situation is more complicated, reviewers may answer "See Notes" instead.

1. Has the fishery assessment been fully completed, using the recognised MarinTrust fishery assessment methodology and associated guidance?	Yes
2. Does the Species Categorisation section of the report reflect the best current understanding of the catch composition of the fishery?	Yes
3. Are the scores in the following sections consistent with the MarinTrust requirements (i.e. do the scores reflect the evidence provided)?	Yes
Section M – Management Requirements	Yes
Category A Species	Yes
Category B Species	n/a
Category C Species	n/a
Category D Species	Yes
Section E – Ecosystem Impacts	Yes

Detailed Peer Review Justification

Peer reviewers should provide support for their answers in the boxes provided, by referring to specific scoring issues and any relevant documentation as appropriate.
Detailed justifications are only required where answers given are one of the 'No' options. In other (Yes) cases, either confirm 'scoring agreed' or identify any places where weak rationales could be strengthened (without any implications for the scores).
Boxes may be extended if more space is required.

1. Has the fishery assessment been fully completed, using the recognised MarinTrust fishery assessment methodology and associated guidance?	Yes
The assessment has been fully completed and uses the recognised MarinTrust fishery methodology and MarinTrust Wholefish fishery Criteria Guidance. General comment: When more than one Category A species is assessed, they are normally presented in separate sections in accordance with MT guidance. However, given the similarities in the management of the three species identified here, the assessor's approach of assessing them together in the same section is considered valid. This approach was taken in previous assessments of this fishery.	
Certification Body response	
Thanks for your comment.	

2. Does the species categorisation section of the report reflect the best current understanding of the catch composition of the fishery?	Yes
The species categorisation section reflects the best current understanding of catch composition using 2025 data reported by DFFE which was used iin preious composition	

evaluations. Catch data provided by the client covering from 2022 to June 2026 was also provided by the client. The assessor did not make a reference to if client data was consistent with DFFE data or the same data but states that client data was used. Similarly, a note on how the the catch composition from observer data raised to estimated bag weights was used in the review. FAPR presumes as cross reference to that used. Regardless, annual variations are known to occur, but overall, the species breakdown (Type 1 and 2) remains stable across previous evaluations.

Three Type 1 species (target) are identified South Afican anchovy (Engraulis encrasicolus), sardine (Sardinops sagax), and redeye round herring (Etrumeus whiteheadi). The CB peer reviewer noted that two species of anchovy are inter-changed in the report (South African (Engraulis capensis) (used for the Cat A species assessment and European (Engraulis encrasicolus) identified at Table 7 Species categorisation table. It is unclear if the assessor intends to amend the report or make a statement in this regard. Fishbase shows overlapping distributions in the SA fishery locations.
In the 2025 asssessment, the internal peer review wrote ' The assessor justifies that no records of E. capensis catches are available or included within the DFFE's Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources report and concludes that E.capensis and E. encrasulosis may be landed together as 'Anchovy' and therefore species are assessed in combination under Category A. However, since there is no information available about E.capensis, species are not assessed "in combination", only E. encrasulosis is assessed. Recommend changing the narrative and only including E. encrasulosis in the assessment'. In DFFE (2025a). Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025 only encrasulosis is referred too.

Two Type 2 species; horse mackerel (Trachurus capensis) and chub mackerel(Scomber colias). Noting that in the 2025 report, the chub mackerel species was reported as Scomber japonicus, although in the 2023 Wholefish report, colias is identified. Japonicus is referenced in the Status of South Aftican Marine Fishery Resources 2025 (p99).

As with the previous assessment, Lanternfish is occassionaly caught but representing<0.01% of total catch and therefore, correctly excluded from the assessment.

Certification Body response

Type 1 species. Thanks for your comments. As you indicate, both anchovy species occur in the region. However, DFFE reports and stock assessment documents refer only to Engraulis encrasicolus, and no specific records of E. capensis landings have been identified. Available information therefore suggests that E. capensis, if caught by the fishery, represents only a very small proportion of the anchovy catch compared with E. encrasicolus. On this basis, only E. encrasicolus is considered and specifically identified as a Type 1 species in the report.
Type 2 species: In the case of Scomber species, this appears to reflect a historical taxonomic misidentification. Scomber japonicus is currently considered to occur primarily in Pacific and Indo-Pacific waters, while historical Atlantic records attributed to S. japonicus are now generally recognised as Scomber colias. This interpretation is

supported by the most recent IUCN assessment (Collette et al., 2023).
FishBase still refers to S. japonicus as occurring in South African waters in its distribution description; however, the distribution map presented on the same source does not show the species as occurring in the area. Given this inconsistency and the more recent information provided by the IUCN assessment, S. colias is considered the appropriate species identification and is therefore used throughout this report.

3. Is the scoring of the fishery consistent with the MarinTrust requirements, and clearly based on the evidence presented in the assessment report?	Yes

Yes, the scoring of the fishery is consistent with the MarinTrust requirements and provides sufficient evidence presented in concise summarises with appropriate references that justifies the pass outcome.

Certification Body response

Ok, thanks.

3a. Are the "Category A Species" scores clearly justified?	Yes

Anchovy, sardine and round herring are identified as Category A species and are subject to regular stock assessment and are managed relative to reference points and an annual quota. The assessor uses the most recent 2025 published stock assessment. The assessor provides justifies scores for A1.1 Annual landing data collected by DFFE via logbooks and verified through landing inspections for all Cat A species for the fishery.

The assessor identifies no significant changes since the previous surveillance and information continues to be collected to enable stock status to be determined, including a range of fishery independent and dependent data (A1.2).
For A2.1 the assessor score is justified stating that stock assessments for the three principal target species—South African anchovy (Engraulis capensis), sardine (Sardinops sagax) and round herring (Etrumeus whiteheadi)—are undertaken on a regular basis by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), with scientific support from the Marine Resource Assessment and Management Group (MARAM). The most recent assessments were completed during 2025 using data up to 2024.
The assessor notes that explicit biological reference points such as BMSY and Blim have not been formally adopted for these stocks, but since the assessment models estimate stock biomass, recruitment and fishing mortality, and these outputs are evaluated against predefined management thresholds and harvest control rules embedded within the Operational Management Plans, the evidence fulfils the requirements for clause A2.2.
The rationale for A2.3 is justified as the assessment draws on the latest SWG-PEL / DFFE 2025b advice for interim TACs, TABs and PUCLs that respond directly to the current stock status of anchovy, sardine and round herring. It recognises the lower anchovy and sardine

biomass signals the need for precautionary catch controls advised by the Scientific Working Group.
The assessor idenitifies that the assessment processes are subject to peer review by MARAM and SWG and that all assessments are made publicly available on the MARAM website justifiying the pass score for A2.4. Also of note, the reference could include the specific reports available from the 2025 workshop (https://science.uct.ac.za/maram/2025-workshop) / https://zivahub.uct.ac.za/articles/report/International_Review_Panel_Report_for_the_2025_International_Fisheries_Stock_Assessment_workshop_/30833363?file=60225893

At A2.5, the ratioale provides justification since the stock assessments are available at the MARAM website although the two links provided appear different (one with publications to 2016 - http://mam-server1.uct.ac.za/maram and one with more recent publications (https://science.uct.ac.za/maram/overview). As indicated in the rationale, lots of reported information concerning sardine and anchovy stock assessment and fisheries management approacha but FAPR did not locate a document with that title? Minor note that the Outcome row is not chosen at A2,5.
The rationale at A3.1 demonstrates that the fishery has mechanisms to restrict total fishing mortality because anchovy, sardine and redeye round herring are managed through TACs, TABs and a PUCL, with interim limits set when the 2025 biomass survey was delayed. The assessor provides a justifiable rationale for total removals of each species not exceeding levels indicated in stock assessments - catches consistently remained below or inline wih their respective management allocations, including the Total Allowable Catch (TAC), Total Allowable Bycatch (TAB), and Precautionary Upper Catch Limit (PUCL). The FAPR could not locate DFFE (2025b). Interim Recommendations of the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group for the Sustainable Management of Small Pelagic Resources for the Season 2026. FISHERIES/2025/DEC/SWG-PEL/80./
The A3.3 rationale appropriately demonstrates compliance with the clause identifying that harvest control rules reduce or prohibit fishing when biomass falls below the relevant proxy threshold, including the anchovy example where the OMP calculated a 0 t TAC and targeted fishing was not permitted pending updated survey results. A4.1 rationale is justified describing that the OMP decision variables act as proxy reference points and the available assessments indicate that anchovy, sardine and round herring remain above levels that would trigger closure or prohibition of removals.
A scores are justified, some minor comments regarding references made.

Certification Body response
Thanks for your comments. The references have been completed.

3b. Are the “Category B Species” scores clearly justified?	Yes
There were no Cat B species identified. Peer Reviewer agrees with the analysis.	

Certification Body response

3c. Are the “Category C Species” scores clearly justified?	Yes
No Cat C species identified.	
Certification Body response	

3d. Are the “Category D Species” scores clearly justified?	Yes
Two species were identified in the catch: Chub mackerel (Scomber colias) and Cape horse mackerel (Trachurus capensis) and Fishbase life-history parameters referenced as well as two additional life-histroy publications for Cape horse mackerel. FAPR notes that in the 2025 assessment, Scomber japonicus is assessed. Japonicus is referenced in the Status of South Aftican Marine Fishery Resources 2025 (p99). Also noting that Fishbase states that japonicus distribution includes Indo-Pacific: anti-tropical, absent from the Indian Ocean except for South Africa, KZN to Western Cape (58304).https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Scomber_japonicus.html So whilst scores are justified for the Cat D species, clarification could be added regarding the species identified here and in previous assessments (2023- Scomber colias; 2024 and 2025- Scomber japonicus). As with the previous assessment, Lanternfish is occassionaly caught but representing<0.01% of total catch and therefore, correctly excluded from the assessment.	
Certification Body response	
Species identification has been clarified. Scomber japonicus is now considered not to occur in the area (see comment above)..	

Are the scores in “Section M – Management Requirements” clearly justified?	Yes
The evidence provided is consistent with the M1.1 requirements, and score is justified. The assessor identifies DFFE as the competent management authority and explains its documented responsibilities across regulation, administration, science, data collection and enforcement in a well presented easy and concise layout. The rationale also demonstrates that fishers have access to appropriate information and training through nationally recognised organisations. The rationale provides justification for meeting M1.2, as it identifies the MLRA, NEMA and PAJA as legal instruments empowering DFFE to regulate access, authorise vessels, resolve disputes and recognise stakeholder rights. The references broadly support these	

statements, (minor note - the PAJA reference appears to contain a minor date typo ("3 February 20").
FAPR suggests that the MLRA reference could be added as a reference here as well as at other clauses. (https://www.gov.za/documents/marine-living-resources-act-27-may-1998-0000).
The evidence is consistent with M1.3 pass, clearly identifying DFFE and MARAM as the organisations responsible for data collection, scientific assessment and provision of advice to the management system, including stock, non-target species and ecosystem considerations.
Minor note - DFFE status reports and scientific outputs could also be added to M1.3 references (e.g. Status of the South African Marine Fishery Resources 2025 https://www.dffe.gov.za/fim_research).

The rationale supports a pass for M1.4 by linking the fishery's long-term management objectives to the MLRA and Marine Living Resources Amendment Act, both of which establish sustainability, precautionary and ecosystem-based principles.

The rationale demonstrates consistency with M1.5 by describing stakeholder engagement through SWG-PEL, RMWGs, DFFE consultation processes and SAPFIA involvement, alongside publicly available management decisions and scientific review through MARAM and MSE processes.
FAPR minor note - further references might be considered for M1.5 from the SAPFIA homepage, which states its functions include representing members in negotiations with government and making representations on matters affecting the industry and reference to examples of DFFE public announcements on finalisation of small pelagc appeals and permit validty (https://www.dffe.gov.za/index.php/mediarelease/george_frap2021.22smallpelagicappeals).
M2.1 outcome is justified with the evidence provided, as the rationale identifies DFFE's MCS function as the responsible compliance authority and describes appropriate monitoring tools, inspections, VMS/AIS tracking, landing controls and IUU-prevention mechanisms supporting a Pass. The Pass outcome is justified for M2.2 with the evidence, as the rationale explains that the MLRA provides a sanctions framework with deterrent penalties and that no evidence of systematic non-compliance was identified.
M2.3 score is justified as the assessor describes documented compliance monitoring, fisher cooperation, vessel-level catch traceability and multi-agency IUU controls, supporting the conclusion that there is widespread compliance and no substantial evidence of IUU fishing.

Certification Body response
Thanks for your comments. The references have been completed and corrected where necessary.

Are the scores in "Section E – Ecosystem Impacts" clearly justified?	Yes

THe ratioanle justifies E1.1 pass, identiying that information between fishery and ETP's are collected via observer programme, vessel licence requirements for reporting ETP catches. Data is up-to date and identifies species. The information indicates that interations with ETP's are uncommon and result in negligible mortality, Fur seals noted as the most frequent interacting species. The assessor notes that no fishery specific management strategy is in place, there are measures placed on licence holders to report interactions, there is an observer programme in place and there are national conservation measures for protected species, including National Plans of Action (NPOAs) for specific seabird bycatcgh and sharks. Incidence of interaction is low and the measures are described as appropriate. Given the reporting and independent observation, monitoring would identify if changes to the level of interaction were to occur, E1.2 and 3 scores are justified.

The E2.1-3 rationale is justified given that the fishery continues to use pelagic purse seine and midwater pelagic trawl gears, so direct seabed contact and habitat impacts are expected to be negligible.

The E3.1 rationale is justified describing the key ecosystem concern for this forage-fish fishery—prey availability for dependent predators such as African penguins—and explains that this is managed through ecosystem-based measures including MPAs, precautionary harvest controls and permanent fishing exclusion zones around breeding colonies.

Whilst there is evidence of a deline in the critically endangered African penguin population, the assessor identifies that evidence indicates multiple causal factors; enviromental, prey distrubution, habtiat and prey availability. Precautionary spatial fishing closures have been established, whilst through court approved settlement, along with revised African Penguin Biodiversity Management Plan and the existing network of Marine Protected Areas have strenghtened the ecosystem based framework for the fishery

The evidence provided, justifies the pass score that there is no substantial evidence of negative impact and where impacts may be occuring, the fishery management framework has been adapted to respond.

The E3.3 rationale is justified describing the evidence that the fishery has identified and is responding to wider ecosystem dependencies, particularly the role of small pelagic fish as prey for African penguins, through precautionary harvest controls, MPAs, and permanent fishing exclusion zones around key colonies.

References are provided- the assessor may wish to add to E3.2, 3 references - the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). 2024/2025. Biodiversity Management Plan for the African Penguin (Spheniscus demersus) in South Africa. Government Gazette / DFFE, Republic of South Africa.https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/36966gon824.pdf

And the Birdlife South Africa and Another v Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and Others (2024-029857) [2025] ZAGPPHC 264 (18 March 2025). https://lawlibrary.org.za/akn/za-gp/judgment/zagpphc/2025/264/eng@2025-03-18

Certification Body response
Thanks for your comments. The suggested references have now been added to the report.

Optional: General peer reviewer comments on the draft report
Overall, the report is comprehensive and uses the most recent published information and outcome scores are justified for continued approval of the South African small pelagic fishery. Comments made refer to clarification on species of anchovy conflict and on species of chub mackerel assessed here, scomber colias v somber japonicus in the previous 2025 report. Minor note on possible additional references.
Certification Body response
MarinTrust also requested clarification regarding the species targeted by the fishery. This has now been addressed, and an explanatory note has also been included in the summary.