

FISHERY BY-PRODUCT REPORT

IFFO GLOBAL STANDARD FOR RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY OF FISHMEAL AND FISH OIL



Illustration: Jón Baldur Hlíöberg

R1

FISHERY By-Product:	Plaice (<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>)
LOCATION:	UK & Ireland – Ices Areas IVa-c, VI a, VIIa,b,d-h,j2
DATE OF REPORT:	February 2017
ASSESSOR:	Deirdre Hoare

Global Trust Certification Ltd, 3rd Floor, Block 3, Quayside Business Park, Mill Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth, Ireland Tel: 042 932 0912 Fax 042 938 6864

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1. APPLICATION DETAILS AND SUMMARY OF THE ASSESSMENT OUTCOME		
Name: UFI		
Address:		
Country: UK & Ireland	Zip:	
Tel. No.	Fax. No.	
Email address:	Applicant Code	
Key Contact: Frank Treaty	Title:	
Certification Body Details		
Name of Certification Body:	SAI Global (Ireland)	
Assessor Name	Peer Reviewer	Initial/Surveillance/ Re-certification
Deirdre Hoare	Sam Dignan	Re-certification
1. Scope of Assessment		
	IFFO RS By-Product surveillance year 2016	
2. Fishery By-Product		
	Plaice (<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>)	
3. Fishery By-Product Location		
	UK & Ireland – Ices Areas IVa-c, VI a, VIIa,b,d-h,j2	
4. Fishery Method		
	Beam trawl	
5. Outcome of Assessment		
	Approve byproduct	

2. GUIDANCE FOR ONSITE ASSESSMENT

3. ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION

There is a robust fishery management framework at the EU and UK & Ireland levels, which is applied specifically to the plaice stocks in the assessment area. Management is supported by species-specific data collection and stock assessment. The assessment team recommends the approval of this byproduct material against the IFFO RS standard.

4. RATIONALE OF THE ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

A. THE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND PROCEDURE

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE	
<i>The management of the fishery used to produce the By- Product must include a legal and administrative basis for the implementation of measures and controls to support the management of the fishery.</i>	
LOW	An administrative framework that ensures an efficient management of the fishery is not established.
MEDIUM	An administrative framework that ensures an efficient management of the fishery is somehow established, but there is evidence of not being efficient to ensure the management of the stock.
HIGH	A legal and administrative framework that ensures an efficient management of the fishery is established and works efficiently.

Determination: There are effective fishery management frameworks in place at the EU and national levels, and these frameworks are applied specifically to the byproduct stock under assessment. The only plaice stock subject to a management plan is North Sea plaice; however as this is where the majority of plaice is caught, a high compliance rating remains appropriate.

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Fishery management framework:

The UK & Ireland are members of the European Union and therefore in Community waters implement the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). In force since 1983, the CFP aims to reconcile resource conservation with the preservation of income and jobs in coastal zones that offer few alternatives in terms of production or employment. It therefore covers not just resources but also markets and structures. The CFP has undergone a series of updates, including the most recent reform which was implemented from 1st January 2014. The principal aim of the new CFP is to achieve maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for all stocks by 2015 where possible, and at the latest by 2020. The 2014 reform also details the gradual roll-out of a landing obligation (prohibiting discards), which began in selected fisheries in 2015. Plaice fisheries came under the regulation in 2016 and will eventually encompass all commercial fisheries from 2019. Finally, the 2014 reform increased the role and importance of management at the regional level, and encourages more intensive stakeholder engagement.

The primary authorities with responsibility for implementing the CFP are the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in Ireland; the Marine Management Organisation (in cooperation with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) in England and Wales; and Marine Scotland, a Directorate of the Scottish Government, in Scotland.

Species-specific management:

Plaice is subject to a number of regional annual quotas in the area covered by this assessment. These areas, along with the associated TAC for 2016 and 2017 are as follows:

Area	2016	2017
IV, EU waters of IIa, IIIa excluding Skagerrak-Kattegat	122,494	122,494
VI, Vb, international waters of XII and XIV	658	658
VIIa	1,098	1,098
VIIb+c	74	74
VII d+e	12,446	10,022
VII f+g	420	405
VII h,j,k	135	108

These areas broadly, though not precisely, match the geographical areas for which ICES advice is given. The majority of these management units have no specific management objectives, although plaice in the North Sea (Subarea IV) is subject to a 2-stage, precautionary sole and plaice management plan.

R1 – R8

B. STOCK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND MANAGEMENT ADVICE	
LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE	
<i>B. Research in support of fisheries management should exist.</i>	
LOW	Research to support the management of the stock does not exist
MEDIUM	Research to support the management of the stock exists, however research programmes could be significantly improved to decrease scientific advice uncertainty.
HIGH	Research to support the management of the stock exists, and research programmes for provision of scientific advice are considered adequate.
<p><i>Determination: The level of scientific understanding varies between stocks, but the most important fishery occurs on the well-understood North Sea stock. A high compliance rating remains appropriate.</i></p> <p>Fisheries management in EU waters is supported by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). ICES utilises the best available scientific information collected by 20 member countries and others, and develops advice for the majority of commercially fished stocks in European waters.</p> <p>ICES provides advice for seven plaice stocks relevant to the area covered by this assessment, as follows:</p> <p>Plaice in Subarea IV (North Sea) and Division IIIa (Skagerrak) Following a review of the stock structure of plaice in the North Sea and the Skagerrak, the two areas are now combined in one assessment. A large proportion of the catch in the western Skagerrak is considered to originate from the North Sea component of the stock, mainly in the summer on mixed feeding aggregations. Therefore, Skagerrak is now assessed together with the North Sea. The new stock definition is considered to have improved the quality of the assessment. An age-based assessment is conducted annually using commercial catch data and three survey indices. Reference points have been defined based on the MSY and PA approaches, and in relation to the management plan. Estimates of fishing mortality and SSB are available. ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2017 should be no more than 158 201 tonnes.</p> <p>Plaice in Division VIIa (Irish Sea) The assessment model is indicative of the long-term trend in stock development because the assessment method is not considered to provide estimates of absolute stock size. There is high uncertainty in the annual SSB estimates, making it more difficult to detect interannual variations of SSB. The discard data are variable and have been uncertain in the past, which contributes to the overall uncertainty in the assessment. However, discard estimates in recent years have improved. The proportions of fish at older ages that are discarded show an increasing trend; this has not been accounted for in the assessment. ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, catches in 2017 should be no more than 1,493 tonnes.</p> <p>Plaice in Divisions VIIb,c (West of Ireland) No assessment is conducted due to a lack of data. No reference points are defined and the stock is severely data-limited. ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, wanted catches should be no more than 30 tonnes in each of the years 2016 and 2017</p> <p>Plaice in Division VIId (Eastern Channel) An age-based analytical assessment that uses catches in the model and in the forecast. The most recent benchmark (ICES, 2015a) has estimated new natural mortality values which resulted in a substantial rescaling of SSB, F, and recruitment values. Other changes made to the assessment include the incorporation of discard estimates (2006–2015), which is highly relevant for this stock; discards for earlier years are reconstructed internally in the assessment model. ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches of the Division 7.d plaice stock in 2017 should be no more than 12,805 tonnes.</p>	

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Plaice in Division VIIe (Western Channel)

The most recent inter-benchmark process (ICES, 2015) concluded that this assessment should be treated as a category 3 trends-based assessment, owing to strong retrospective patterns. Reference points based on the MSY approach are in place, and ICES notes that there are several significant sources of uncertainty in the assessment. ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, catches of the Division 7.e plaice stock in 2017 should be no more than 2,714 tonnes.

Plaice in Divisions VIIf, g (Celtic Sea)

A trends-based assessment is conducted using two survey time-series. No quantitative reference points have been defined and the stock is categorised as data-limited. ICES advises that when precautionary approach is applied, catches in 2017 should be no more than 1,500 tonnes

Plaice in Divisions VIIh–k (Southwest of Ireland)

An age-based analytical assessment is conducted using commercial catches and a commercial tuning index. No quantitative reference points have been defined and the stock is categorised as data-limited. ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, landings in 2017 should be no more than 86 tonnes.

R7, R8

C. STOCK STATUS

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE

C. The fish used to produce the fish By- Product is not considered to be critically at risk of over exploitation in accordance with the IUCN guidance.

LOW	The fish By-Product must not come from a species that is listed as extinct, or critically endangered.
MEDIUM	The fish By- Product is from a species that is classified as vulnerable, but has a management regime in place that will control the level of fishing permitted. Or if a species is deemed to be endangered but the sub-group from where the fish By- Product is harvested is deemed scientifically to be at no risk of over exploitation.
HIGH	The fish By- Product comes from a fishery that is not deemed to be at risk of over exploitation from fishing activities.

Determination: Plaice has been categorised by the IUCN as a species of least concern, and therefore a high compliance rating is appropriate.

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A widespread species which is vulnerable to over-fishing in the sea. However, the species has recovered from historical over-fishing in the 1970-1980s, and spawning biomass is increasing. The species is widely distributed and proved to be resilient to over-exploitation, and is considered Least Concern.

R9, R10

5. REFERENCES

- R1. About the Common Fisheries Policy: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/index_en.htm
- R2. CFP – Managing fish stocks: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/index_en.htm
- R3. CFP – Discarding and the Landing Obligation:
http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/discards/index_en.htm
- R4. Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Fisheries Department:
<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/fisheries/>
- R5. Marine Management Organisation (About):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/marine-management-organisation>
- R6. Marine Scotland (About): <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/About>

- R7. ICES advice, plaice in the Northeast Atlantic, 2016:
 - Plaice in Divisions VIIb,c (West of Ireland):
<http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2015/2015/ple-7b-c.pdf>
 - Plaice in Divisions VIIh–k (Southwest of Ireland):
<http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2015/2015/ple-7h-k.pdf>
 - Plaice in Divisions VIIf,g (Celtic Sea):
<http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2015/2015/ple-celt.pdf>
 - Plaice in Division VIId (Eastern Channel):
<http://ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2015/2015/ple-eche-update.pdf>
 - Plaice in Division VIIe (Western Channel):
<http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2015/2015/ple-echw.pdf>
 - Plaice in Division VIIa (Irish Sea):
<http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2015/2015/ple-iris.pdf>
 - Plaice in Subarea IV (North Sea):
<http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2015/2015/ple-nsea-reopen.pdf>

- R8. EU fishing quotas 2016, 2017: https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs_en
- R9. IUCN redlist: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>
- R10. CITES appendices: <http://www.cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php>

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