



FISHERY ASSESSMENT REPORT

IFFO GLOBAL STANDARD FOR RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY OF FISHMEAL AND FISH OIL



FISHERY:	Blue whiting (<i>Micromesistius poutassou</i>)
LOCATION:	Northeast Atlantic – Norway (ICES subdivisions I-IX, XII & XIV, combined stock)
DATE OF REPORT:	12th October 2012
ASSESSOR:	Sam Peacock

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Issue No; 2; Issue Date; Nov 09

Report Ref: Blue Whiting

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1. Application Details and Summary of the Assessment Outcome			
Name: Norwegian Seafood Federation			
Address:			
Country: Norway		Zip:	
Tel. No.		Fax. No.	
Email address:		Applicant Code	
Key Contact:		Title:	
Certification Body Details			
Name of Certification Body: Global Trust Certification Ltd			
Assessor Name: Sam Peacock	Peer Reviewer: Mike Platt	Assessment Days: 1	Initial/Surveillance/Re-certification: Surveillance
Assessment Period	12/10/12		
Scope Details			
1. Scope of Assessment:		IFFO Global Standard for Responsible Supply – Issue 1	
2. Fishery		Blue whiting (<i>Micromesistius poutassou</i>)	
3. Fishery Location		Northeast Atlantic	
4. Fishery Method		Mid-water trawl and purse seine	
Outcome of Assessment			
5. Overall Fishery Compliance Rating		LOW	
6. Sub Components of Low Compliance		D1	
7. Information deficiency		NONE	
8. Peer Review Evaluation		Agree to seek further clarification before approval status can be maintained	
9. Recommendation		Remove approval and perform full assessment	

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2. Quality of Information
Good; primarily ICES advice.

3. Compliance Level Achieved
Low
Recommendation
Remove approval and perform full fishery assessment.
4. Guidance for On-site Assessment
Based on High Compliance Findings
Based on Medium Compliance Findings
Key Stakeholders of the Fishery

5. Assessment Determination
<p>There have been no significant changes in the management or enforcement of this fishery. The management plan identified in the original assessment continues to form the basis of international management decisions. The 2012 ICES advice (against which no quota has yet been agreed) recommends a 2013 TAC of no more than 643,000t, which represents adherence to the management plan and a considerable increase on the 2012 TAC of 391,000t.</p> <p>The 2010 ICES advice (and 2011 IFFO RS surveillance report) highlighted the discrepancy between a highly precautionary approach and strict adherence to the management plan. This discrepancy</p>

raises concerns over the likely reaction of fishery managers if SSB falls below B_{pa} ; however, SSB is currently estimated to be above B_{pa} and increased by a million tons from 2011 to 2012.

The 2011 TAC was set at 40,000t. However, the realized catches in 2011 were more than twice as high (103,500t) due to quota transfers from 2010 and Russia setting a unilateral quota of 45,000t. For this reason, and given the existing concerns about the reaction of fishery managers to the low estimated SSB in the 2010 ICES advice, the assessment team recommends approval be removed from the fishery. A full assessment should be carried out to determine the reasons behind the unilateral Russian quota, and the likelihood of this happening again.

HIGH COMPLIANCE

A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, D2, E1, E2

MEDIUM COMPLIANCE

C1, D3

SUMMARY OF LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE					
	The Management Framework and Procedures	Stock assessment procedures and management advice	Precautionary approach	Management measures	Implementation
legal and administrative basis	High Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance
Fisheries management should be concerned with the whole stock unit	High Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance
Management actions should be scientifically based	High Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance
Research in support of fisheries conservation and management should exist	Medium Compliance	High Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance
Best scientific evidence available should be taken into account when designing conservation and management measures	Medium Compliance	High Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance
The precautionary approach is applied in the formulation of management plans	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Low Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance
The level of fishing permitted should be set according to management advice given by research organisations	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Low Compliance	Medium Compliance
Where excess fishing capacity exist, mechanisms should be in established to reduced capacity	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	High Compliance	Medium Compliance
Management measures should ensure that fishing gear and fishing practices do not have a significant impact on non-target species and the physical environment	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Low Compliance	Medium Compliance
A management system for fisheries control and enforcement should be established	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	High Compliance
A framework for sanctions of violation of laws and regulations should be efficiently exists	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	Medium Compliance	High Compliance

KEY: Low Compliance Medium Compliance High Compliance:

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6. Rationale of the Assessment Outcome

a. The Management Framework and Procedure

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE	a.i. The management of the fishery must include a legal and administrative basis for the implementation of measures and controls to support the conservation of the fishery.	References	Rating
LOW	<p>Determination: Fisheries management in Norway continues to be subject to an iterative, stakeholder-driven management process, led by the Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs. There is an effective legal and administrative basis for the implementation of management measures.</p> <p>The Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs is responsible for, amongst other activities, ensuring long-term, optimal exploitation of living marine resources; ensuring sound management of the marine environment; and progressing towards a profitable, self-sustained fisheries industry.</p> <p>The regulatory system for fisheries management in Norway is an interactive and iterative process based on incremental changes, and is sometimes referred to as the regulatory chain. The chain has no set start or finish, but can rather be seen as a continuous process. The chain connects ICES and Institute of Marine Research (IMR, the primary marine research agency in Norway) science, international negotiations, national fisheries management decisions, and engagement with fishery stakeholders.</p> <p>For more detail on the regulatory chain, and broader information on the fishery management process in Norway, please refer to the initial assessment.</p>	R1	HIGH
MEDIUM			
HIGH			

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	a.ii. Fisheries management should be concerned with the whole stock unit over its entire area of distribution and take into account fishery removals and the biology of the species	References	Rating
LOW	<p>Determination: <i>As at the time of the previous surveillance report, research suggests that there may be more than one Blue Whiting stock in the Northeast Atlantic; however this has still yet to be confirmed and so the current stock unit represents best scientific advice.</i></p> <p>Research by ICES in 2009 suggested, based on genetic and growth rate analyses of the fishery, that there may be more than a single stock in the Northeast Atlantic. While more work is required to confirm the stock composition, the blue whiting populations in areas VIIk and VIIj and further south are likely to be one stock, separate from the stock found in the Northeast Waters.</p> <p>However, ICES advice is that until this is clarified further, any TAC that is agreed upon should take into account the entire blue whiting population. In other fisheries (e.g. sandeel) the EU has rapidly implemented ICES recommendations on stock definition changes when scientific understanding of the stock changes.</p>	R1, R3, R4	HIGH
MEDIUM			
HIGH			
	a.iii .Management actions should be based on long-term conservation objectives	References	Rating
LOW	<p>Determination: <i>The stock is still managed using the internationally-agreed plan identified by the original assessment. This plan includes long-term objectives, and is considered by ICES to follow the precautionary approach.</i></p> <p>The long-term objectives of the international management plan for the fishery were agreed by Norway, the EU, the Faroe Islands, and Iceland, and endorsed by NEAFC in November 2008. The agreement includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Parties agree to implement a long term management plan for the fisheries on the Blue Whiting stock, which is consistent with the precautionary approach, aiming at ensuring harvest within safe biological limits and designed to provide for fisheries consistent with 	R1, R4	HIGH
MEDIUM			
HIGH			

	<p>maximum sustainable yield, in accordance with advice from ICES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a priority, the long term plan shall ensure with high probability that the size of the stock is maintained above 1.5 million tonnes (B_{lim}). • The Parties shall aim to exploit the stock with a fishing mortality of 0.18 on relevant age groups as defined by ICES. <p>ICES evaluated this management plan in 2008 and found it to be adherent to the precautionary approach.</p>	
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b. Stock Assessment Procedures and Management Advice

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE	bi. Research in support of fisheries conservation and management should exist.	References	Rating
LOW	<p>Determination: <i>National and international research continues to be carried out on this stock. There have been no major changes since the time of the initial assessment.</i></p> <p>The main task of Norway’s Institute of Marine Research (IMR) is to provide advice to Norwegian authorities on aquaculture and the ecosystems of the Barents Sea, the Norwegian Sea, the North Sea and the Norwegian coastal zone. The IMR has nearly 700 staff divided between 19 interdisciplinary research groups, a Department of Research Support and the Centre of Development Co-operation in Fisheries.</p> <p>The Blue whiting stock is assessed using a Stochastic Multi-Species model (SMS) applied to data including commercial catch-at-age statistics and data from a broad international survey. ICES advice for this fishery continues to be based on three main survey indices: Norwegian spawning ground survey 1993–2003; International ecosystem survey in the Nordic seas 2000–2011 (IESNS); International blue whiting spawning</p>	R1-R5	HIGH
MEDIUM			
HIGH			

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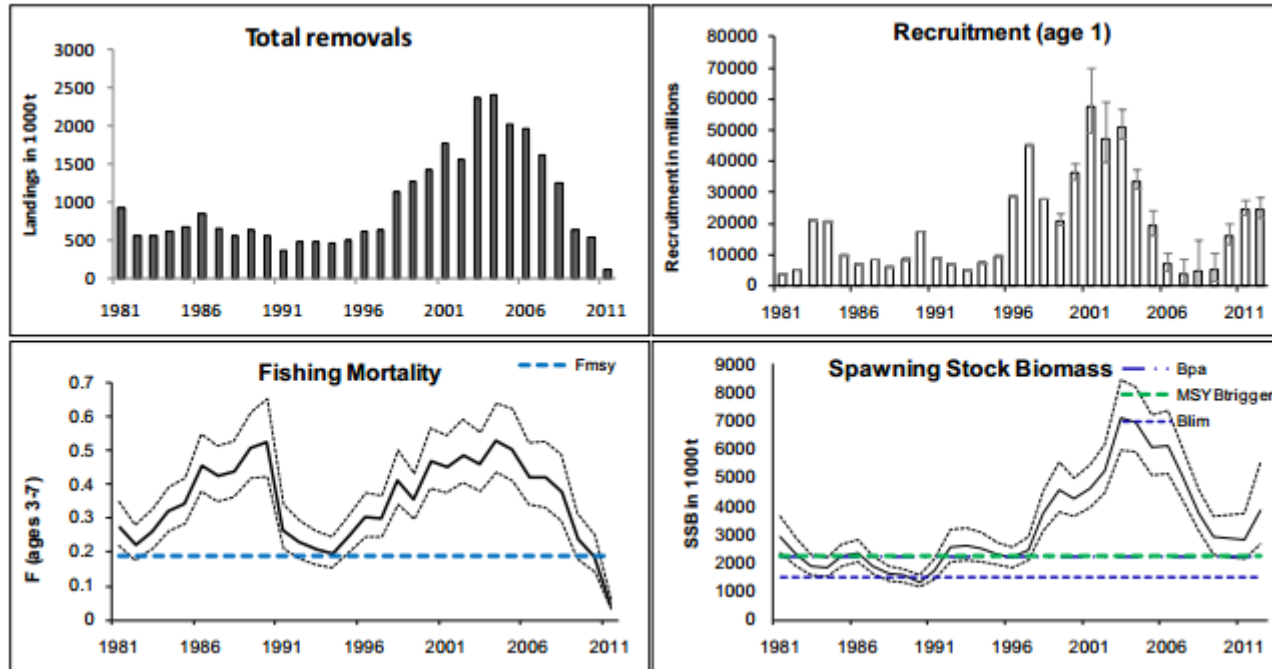
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stock survey (IBWSS) 2004–2011.

For more details of the research carried out on the Blue Whiting stock, please refer to the original assessment.



Blue whiting in Subareas I–IX, XII, and XIV. Summary of stock assessment (weights in thousand tonnes; the estimated shaded recruitment is assumed equal to the 2011 recruitment). Top right: SSB and F over the years. From the 2012 ICES advice.

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE	b.ii Best scientific evidence available should be taken into account when designing conservation and management measures	References	Rating
LOW	<p>Determination: <i>Fishery management continues to follow the long-term management plan identified in the original assessment. The plan has been independently verified by ICES as adherent to the precautionary approach and following best scientific evidence.</i></p> <p>The management plan agreed by Norway, the EU, the Faroe Islands and Iceland, and subsequently endorsed by NEAFC in 2008, uses i) a target fishing mortality ($F = 0.18$) if SSB is above B_{pa}, ii) a linear reduction to $F = 0.05$ if SSB is between B_{pa} and B_{lim}, and iii) $F = 0.05$ if SSB is below B_{lim}. ICES evaluated the plan in 2008 and concluded that it is in accordance with the precautionary approach.</p> <p>There have been no significant changes in the ICES advice for management of this fishery since the time of the original assessment.</p>	R1-R5	HIGH
MEDIUM			
HIGH			

c. The Precautionary Approach

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE	c.i The precautionary approach is applied in the formulation of management plans.	References	Rating
LOW	<p>Determination: <i>The 2011 surveillance assessment awarded the fishery a medium compliance in this section due to the discrepancy between the management plan and a highly precautionary approach, which would have led to a closed fishery in 2011. For the 2012 season this discrepancy is less pronounced but still present, and so the fishery retains a score of medium compliance.</i></p> <p>The management plan used to determine quotas for this fishery has been reviewed by ICES as adhering to the precautionary approach; however the 2010 ICES advice highlighted the potential discrepancy between management-plan-based quotas and a highly precautionary approach (see table 1). A fully precautionary approach would have led to a closed fishery, whereas the management plan</p>	R1, R3-R5	MEDIUM
MEDIUM			
HIGH			

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implied a quota of 40,100t (which was eventually adopted). In the 2011 advice, ICES again noted that the management-plan-based quota (391,000t) was greater than the precautionary-approach-based quota (315,000t). The 2012 quota was eventually set at 391,000t, again in line with the management plan.

Table 1 – ICES management advice options for 2011. From the 2010 ICES advice.

Advice for 2011

Management Objective (s)	Landings in 2011
Transition to an MSY approach with caution at low stock size	50 700 to 223 000 for transition to the MSY framework by 2011 and 2015, respectively
Cautiously avoid impaired recruitment (Precautionary Approach)	Zero landings
Cautiously avoid impaired recruitment and achieve other objective(s) of a management plan (e.g., catch stability)	40 100 tonnes

SSB saw a substantial increase in the 2012 ICES advice, to the extent that stock biomass is now considerably above Bpa; however, future assessors should be aware of the discrepancy described above and the issues which may reduce the compliance of the fishery if SSB should fall below Bpa.

The assessment team considers a score of medium compliance to be appropriate at this time.

d. Management Measures

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE		d.i The level of fishing permitted should be set according to management advice given by research organisations.	References	Rating
LOW		<p>Determination: <i>The total international TAC for 2012 was set according to the advice provided by ICES for adherence to the agreed management plan. However, landings in 2011 were more than double the agreed TAC, which raises further concerns about the reaction of fishery managers to low biomass estimates.</i></p> <p>Historically, the total TACs and landings agreed by the members of the management plan have been considerably higher than the ICES recommendations. When it was agreed in 2008, the management plan was intended to take full effect from 2011, with a 35% reduction in TAC each year until then. Quotas have seen significant annual reductions since 2008 (TAC was 1.8 million tonnes in 2007, 1.25 million tonnes in 2008; 606,000t in 2009), and have recently begun to accurately reflect the management plan. In 2010 the agreed TAC (548,000t) was only slightly higher than the recommended TAC (540,000t). The 2011 and 2012 TACs have been set in accordance with ICES advice. The most recent ICES advice was published in September 2012 and saw a substantial increase in the maximum recommended landings; the 2013 quota associated with this advice has not yet been agreed.</p> <p>Figure 1 lists ICES recommendations, TACs and landings in the international fishery since 1987. The 2011 quota was set at 40,000t. The 2012 ICES advice revealed that total landings in 2011 were 105,000t, with the ICES working group report stating “The advice for 2011 to follow the management plan (TAC 40,100 t) was partly followed, however the realized catches in 2011 (103,500t) was more than twice as high due to quota transfers from 2010 and that Russia set an unilateral quota of 45,000 tonnes.” Taking into account the existing concerns over the extent to which a TAC of 40,000t was</p>	R1-R5	LOW
MEDIUM				
HIGH				

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		<p>precautionary (see section C1), the assessment team cannot award anything other than low compliance under this clause. The fishery should be subjected to a full assessment to better understand the international management of the stock, and hence the probability of a similar response to low biomass estimates in future.</p>		
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Year	ICES Advice	Predicted Catch corresp. to advice	Agreed TAC	ICES catch
1987	TAC for northern areas; no advice for southern areas	950	-	665
1988	TAC for northern areas; no advice for southern areas	832	-	558
1989	TAC for northern areas; no advice for southern areas	630	-	627
1990	TAC for northern areas; no advice for southern areas	600	-	562
1991	TAC for northern areas; no advice for southern areas	670	-	370
1992	No advice	-	-	475
1993	Catch at <i>status quo</i> F (northern areas); no assessment for southern areas	490	-	481
1994	Precautionary TAC (northern areas); no assessment for southern areas	485	650 ¹	459
1995	Precautionary TAC for combined stock	518	650 ¹	579
1996	Precautionary TAC for combined stock	500	650 ¹	646
1997	Precautionary TAC for combined stock	540		672
1998	Precautionary TAC for combined stock	650		1125
1999	Catches above 650 000 t may not be sustainable in the long run	650		1256
2000	F should not exceed the proposed F_{pa}	800		1412
2001	F should not exceed the proposed F_{pa}	628		1780
2002	Rebuilding plan	0		1556
2003	F should be less than the proposed F_{pa}	600		2321
2004	Achieve 50% probability that F will be less than F_{pa}	925		2378
2005	Achieve 50% probability that F will be less than F_{pa}	1075		2027
2006	F old management plan	1500	2100 ²	1966
2007	F should be less than the proposed F_{pa}	980	1847 ³	1612
2008	F should be less than F_{pa}	835	1250 ⁴	1246
2009	Maintain stock above B_{pa}	384	606 ⁵	636
2010	Follow the agreed management plan	540	548	540
2011	See scenarios	40–223	40	105
2012	Follow the agreed management plan	391	391	
2013	Follow the agreed management plan	643		

Weights in thousand tonnes.
¹NEAFC proposal for NEAFC regions 1 and 2.
²Agreed TAC from four Coastal States of 2 million tonnes, and an additional allocation to Russia in the international zone of 100 000 t.
³Agreed TAC from four Coastal States of 1.7 million tonnes, and an additional allocation to Russia and Greenland of 147 000 t.
⁴Agreed TAC from four Coastal States of 1.1 million tonnes, and an additional allocation to Russia and Greenland.
⁵Agreed TAC from four Coastal States of 0.59 million tonnes, and an additional allocation to Russia (0.016 million tonnes).

Fig 1 - Blue whiting in Subareas I–IX, XII, and XIV (Combined stock). ICES advice, management, and landings. Weights in '000t. From the September 2012 ICES advice.

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE		d.ii Where excess fishing capacity exist, mechanisms should be in established to reduced capacity to allow for the recovery of the stock to sustainable levels.	References	Rating
LOW		<p>Determination: <i>The capacity-reducing mechanisms identified in the original assessment continue to be functional and effective.</i></p> <p>The initial assessment described the licensing, quota and registration requirements used by Norwegian fisheries managers to control fishing capacity and reduce it when necessary. There have been no significant changes in these management tools since the time of the initial assessment; please refer to it for more detail.</p>	R1	HIGH
MEDIUM				
HIGH				
LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE		d.iii Management measures should ensure that fishing gear and fishing practices do not have a significant impact on non-target species and the physical environment.	References	Rating
LOW		<p>Determination: <i>The previous surveillance assessment of this fishery awarded a score of medium compliance under this clause due to limited available bycatch information. The assessment team considers this scoring to remain appropriate, as there have been no significant changes in this issue over the last year.</i></p> <p>In order to limit the catch of fish under the minimum size which may result in increased risk of juvenile fishing mortality, legislation was introduced at the end of the 1990s requiring the use of a sorting grid when fishing with large-mesh trawl. Data on effects of the fishery on PET species is sparse but a European Commission study group considered blue whiting pelagic trawling a fishery where monitoring for cetacean bycatch is a priority. The information on the overall impact of this fishery on PET species is still insufficient, but no critically endangered species appear to be impacted. The Norwegian fishery reports little by-catch during the spawning season, although catches of juveniles, as well as saithe and redfish, increase when this fishery has continued later in the season. Direct effects on habitat and seafloor are typically minimal for pelagic gears, although occasional contact is known to occur and, in these cases, can potentially cause damage to fragile ecosystems</p>	R1, R4	MEDIUM
MEDIUM				
HIGH				

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	<p>(e.g. corals).</p> <p>For more detail on the impacts of the fishery on non-target species and the environment, and an explanation of the original compliance rating, please refer to the initial assessment.</p>	
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e. Implementation

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE	e.i There should be a framework for sanctions of violation of Laws and regulations.	References	Rating
LOW	<p>Determination: <i>The initial fishery assessment identified a robust system of sanctions in place for those violating laws, regulations, quotas and international agreements. There have been no major changes in the Norwegian sanctions system since that time.</i></p> <p>Norway constantly seeks to regulate its own fisheries sustainably and ensure efficient control of resources both on landing and at sea through the Coast Guard. Moreover, a number of measures have been implemented to deter Norwegian vessels from participating in IUU fishing and to prevent illegally caught fish from entering the Norwegian market. The Norwegian Government’s Plan of Action on Economic Crime has been used in order to enforce measures against Norwegian actors in IUU activities.</p> <p>There is a full list of Norwegian fisheries regulations available at: http://www.fiskeridir.no/english/fisheries/regulations</p> <p>For more information on sanctions applied by Norwegian fishery managers, please refer to the initial fishery assessment.</p>	R1	HIGH
MEDIUM			
HIGH			

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE		e.ii A management system for fisheries control and enforcement should be established.	References	Rating
LOW		<p>Determination: <i>Norway continues to maintain a robust management system for fisheries control and enforcement.</i></p> <p>Norwegian fisheries regulations are enforced at sea, when the fish is landed and when it is exported. At sea, the Coast Guard is responsible for inspecting fishing vessels and checking their catch against their log books, whereas landings and exports are monitored by the Directorate of Fisheries. In addition, so aid the management of shared fish stocks, Norway has cooperative agreements in place with Russia, Iceland, England, Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark, Faroe Islands, Netherlands, Germany, Portugal, Canada and Poland.</p> <p>For more information on Norwegian fisheries control and enforcement, please refer to the initial assessment.</p>	R1	HIGH
MEDIUM				
HIGH				

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References

R1 – IFFO RS scheme initial assessment: Norway Blue Whiting, August 2011:

<http://www.iffo.net/downloads/IFFO%20RS/Whole%20Fish/Blue%20whiting%20Norway%20Fishery%20Report.pdf>

R2 – ICES blue whiting advice October 2010:

<http://www.ices.dk/committe/acom/comwork/report/2010/2010/whb-comb.pdf>

R3 – ICES blue whiting advice September 2011:

<http://www.ices.dk/committe/acom/comwork/report/2011/2011/whb-comb.pdf>

R4 – ICES Blue Whiting advice September 2012:

<http://www.ices.dk/committe/acom/comwork/report/2012/2012/whb-comb.pdf>

R5 – ICES WG WIDE working group report, Blue Whiting, 2012:

<http://www.ices.dk/reports/ACOM/2012/WGWIDE/Sec%2008%20Blue%20Whiting.pdf>

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