MarinTrust Standard V2

By-product Fishery Assessment

ESP37 – Blue whiting in ICES Subareas 1-9, 12 and 14

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Table 1 Application details and summary of the assessment outcome

Fishery Under Assessment	Species:	Blue whiting, *Micromesistius poutassou*
	Geographical area:	Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters
	Country of origin of the product:	Spain
	Stock:	ICES Subareas 1-9, 12 & 14
Date	December 2023	
Report Code	ESP37	
Assessor	Sam Peacock	
Country of origin of the product - PASS	Spain	
Country of origin of the product - FAIL	n/a	

Application details and summary of the assessment outcome			
Company Name(s): Conserveros Reunidos SL (CONRESA)			
Country:			
Email address:		Applicant Code:	
Certification Body Details			
Name of Certification Body:		LRQA	
Assessor	Peer Reviewer	Assessment Days	Initial/Surveillance/ Re-approval
Sam Peacock	Jose Peiro Crespo	0.2	Initial
Assessment Period	December 2023 – December 2024		

Scope Details	
Main Species	Blue whiting, *Micromesistius poutassou*
Stock	ICES Subareas 1-9, 12 & 14
Fishery Location	Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters
Management Authority (Country/ State)	EU, Norway, Faroe Islands, Iceland, UK
Gear Type(s)	Purse seine
Outcome of Assessment	
Peer Review Evaluation	Approve byproduct
Recommendation	Approve byproduct

Table 2. Assessment Determination

Assessment Determination
Blue whiting has been categorised by the IUCN Red List as Least Concern, and does not appear in the CITES appendices. Blue whiting in the Northeast Atlantic is managed relative to target and limit reference points, and was therefore assessed under Category C. The most recent stock assessment was conducted by the ICES Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks in 2023, utilising commercial catch and discard data and one survey index. The assessment concluded that SSB is substantially larger than the target reference point level. For these reasons, the byproduct should be approved for use as a raw material.
Fishery Assessment Peer Review Comments
The by-product fishery under assessment is the Blue whiting (*Micromesistius poutassou*) caught with purse seine in ICES Subareas 1-9, 12 & 14, FAO area 27. The species is classified as LC by the IUCN. The species is managed relative to biomass-based reference points and therefore it is assessed under category C. The most recent stock assessment conducted by the ICES Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks in 2023 indicated that that SSB is substantially larger than the target reference point level. Therefore, it passes category C. The peer review supports the auditor's recommendation to pass the Blue whiting caught with purse seine in trawls in ICES Subareas 1-9, 12 & 14, under the Marin Trust IFFO RS v2.0 by-fishery standard for the production of fishmeal and fish oil.
Notes for On-site Auditor

Species Categorisation

NB: If any species is categorised as Endangered or Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, or if it appears in CITES Appendix 1, it **cannot** be approved for use as an MarinTrust raw material.

IUCN Red list Category

By-product material from a species listed by IUCN (the International Union for Conservation of Nature) under the Red List for the following categories shall immediately fail the assessment;

- EXTINCT (E) AND EXTINCT IN THE WILD (EW)
- CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (CR) facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.
- ENDANGERED (EN) facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.

By-product material may be used from the following categories provided that all clauses in the MarinTrust standard are passed.

- VULNERABLE (VU) facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.
- NEAR THREATENED (NT) does not qualify for above now, but is close or is likely to qualify for, a threatened category in the near future.
- LEAST CONCERN (LC) Widespread and abundant.
- DATA DEFICIENT (DD) and NOT EVALUATED (NE)

Table 3 Species Categorisation Table

Common name	Latin name	Stock	Management	Category	IUCN Red List Category[1]	CITES Appendix 1[2]
Blue whiting	*Micromesistius poutassou*	Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters	Yes	C	Least Concern[3]	No

[1] https://www.iucnredlist.org/
[2] https://cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php
[3] https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/198586/18983495

CATEGORY C SPECIES

In a by-product assessment, Category C species are those which are subject to a species-specific management regime and are usually targeted species in fisheries for human consumption.

Clause C1 should be completed for each Category C species. If there are no Category C species in the fishery under assessment, this section can be deleted. Where a species fails this Clause, it should be assessed as a Category D species instead.

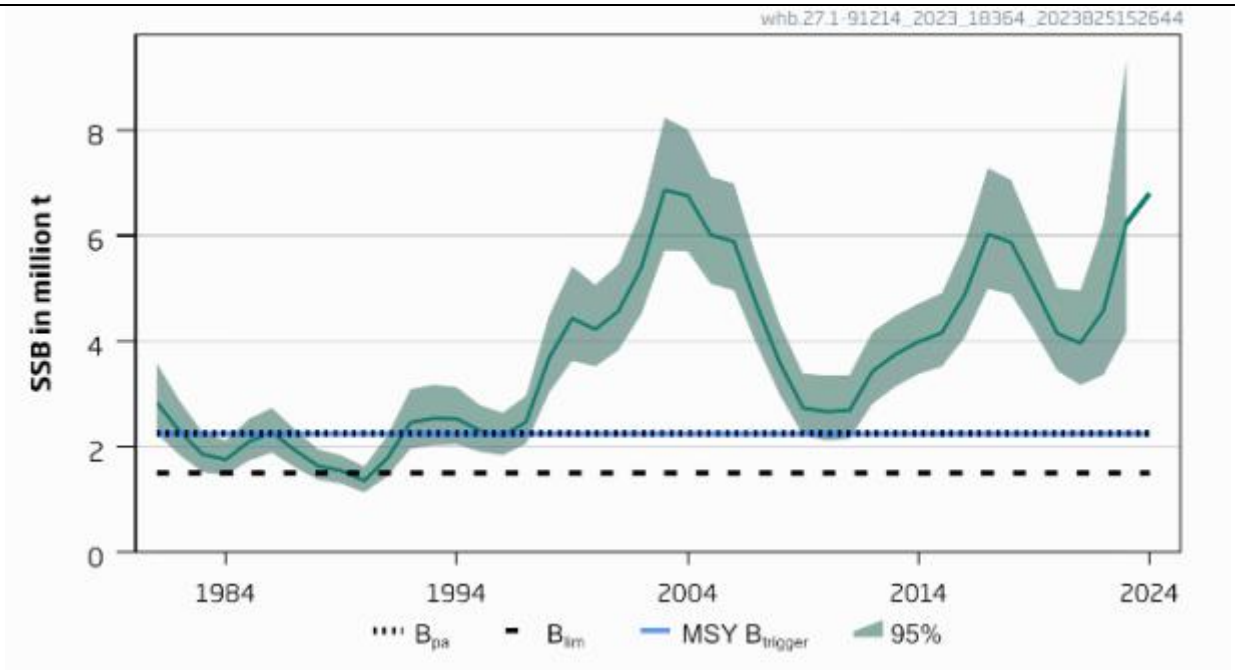
Species Name		**Blue whiting**	
C1	**Category C Stock Status - Minimum Requirements**		
	C1.1	Fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process, OR are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.	PASS
	C1.2	The species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy), OR removals by the fishery under assessment are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.	PASS
		Clause outcome:	PASS

C1.1 Fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process, OR are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.

Blue whiting in the Northeast Atlantic is subject to annual stock assessment by the IUCN Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE). The most recent stock assessment was conducted in 2023, with the results summarised in the ICES catch advice published in September 2023. The stock assessment was an age-based analytical assessment which utilised commercial catches and catch-at-age data, along with one survey index. Discards were also included (ICES 2023). C1.1 is met.

C1.2 The species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy), OR removals by the fishery under assessment are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.

The 2023 ICES catch advice provides an indication of the current stock status relative to established reference points. The target reference points MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{pa}, and SSB_{mgt} are set at 2,250,000t. The limit reference points B_{lim} and SSB_{mgt_lower} are set at 1,500,000t. The 2023 stock assessment projected that SSB in 2024 would be 6,799,985t, substantially larger than the target reference points. The catch advice states that "spawning-stock size is above MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{pa}, and B_{lim}" (ICES 2023). C1.2 is met.



Blue whiting in the Northeast Atlantic, SSB relative to current reference points (ICES 2023).

References

ICES (2023). Blue whiting (*Micromesistius poutassou*) in subareas 1–9, 12, and 14 (Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters). ICES Advice: Recurrent Advice. Report. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21856554.v1

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

CATEGORY D SPECIES

Category D species are those which are not subject to a species-specific management regime. In the case of mixed trawl fisheries, Category D species may make up the majority of landings. The comparative lack of scientific information on the status of the population of the species means that a risk-assessment style approach must be taken.

D1	Species Name	n/a	
	Productivity Attribute	**Value**	**Score**
	Average age at maturity (years)		
	Average maximum age (years)		
	Fecundity (eggs/spawning)		
	Average maximum size (cm)		
	Average size at maturity (cm)		
	Reproductive strategy		
	Mean trophic level		
		Average Productivity Score	
	Susceptibility Attribute	**Value**	**Score**
	Availability (area overlap)		
	Encounterability (the position of the stock/species within the water column relative to the fishing gear)		
	Selectivity of gear type		
	Post-capture mortality		
		Average Susceptibility Score	
		PSA Risk Rating (From Table D3)	
		Compliance rating	
	Further justification for susceptibility scoring (where relevant) *For susceptibility attributes, please provide a brief rationale for scoring of parameters where there may be uncertainty affecting your decision*		
References			
Standard clauses 1.3.2.2			

Table D2 - Productivity / Susceptibility attributes and scores.

Productivity attributes	High productivity (Low risk, score = 1)	Medium productivity (medium risk, score = 2)	Low productivity (high risk, score = 3)
Average age at maturity	<5 years	5-15 years	>15 years
Average maximum age	<10 years	10-25 years	>25 years
Fecundity	>20,000 eggs per year	100-20,000 eggs per year	<100 eggs per year
Average maximum size	<100 cm	100-300 cm	>300 cm
Average size at maturity	<40 cm	40-200 cm	>200 cm
Reproductive strategy	Broadcast spawner	Demersal egg layer	Live bearer
Mean Trophic Level	<2.75	2.75-3.25	>3.25

Susceptibility attributes	Low susceptibility (Low risk, score = 1)	Medium susceptibility (medium risk, score = 2)	High susceptibility (high risk, score = 3)
Areal overlap (availability) Overlap of the fishing effort with the species range	<10% overlap	10-30% overlap	>30% overlap
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	Low overlap with fishing gear (low encounterability).	Medium overlap with fishing gear.	High overlap with fishing gear (high encounterability). Default score for target species
Selectivity of gear type Potential of the gear to retain species	a Individuals < size at maturity are rarely caught	a Individuals < size at maturity are regularly caught.	a Individuals < size at maturity are frequently caught
	b Individuals < size at maturity can escape or avoid gear.	b Individuals < half the size at maturity can escape or avoid gear.	b Individuals < half the size at maturity are retained by gear.
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	Evidence of majority released post-capture and survival.	Evidence of some released post-capture and survival.	Retained species or majority dead when released.

D3		Average Susceptibility Score		
		1 - 1.75	1.76 - 2.24	2.25 - 3
Average Productivity Score	1 - 1.75	PASS	PASS	PASS
	1.76 - 2.24	PASS	PASS	TABLE D4
	2.25 - 3	PASS	TABLE D4	TABLE D4

D4	Species Name	n/a	
	Impacts On Species Categorised as Vulnerable by D1-D3 - Minimum Requirements		
	D4.1	The potential impacts of the fishery on this species are considered during the management process, and reasonable measures are taken to minimise these impacts.	
	D4.2	There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on the species.	
		Outcome:	

Evidence

D4.1: The potential impacts of the fishery on this species are considered during the management process, and reasonable measures are taken to minimise these impacts.

D4.2 There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on the species.

References

Links	
MarinTrust Standard clause	1.3.2.2, 4.1.4
FAO CCRF	7.5.1
GSSI	D.5.01