

DNV GL Business Assurance Norway AS
Norway North East Atlantic blue whiting fishery
MSC Inseparable or Practicably Inseparable
(IPI) Announcement

1 Marine Stewardship Council IPI announcement

Table 1 – Inseparable or practicably inseparable (IPI) catches

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Description of the stocks identified as Inseparable or Practicably Inseparable (IPI) and confirmation they are within scope of IPI									
<p>It is not commercially feasible to separate the non-target IPI stock due to the practical operation of this reduction fishery.</p> <p>None of the IPI stocks are endangered, threatened or protected species or MSC certified separately.</p> <p>IPI considerations are relevant where there is a risk of non-certified fish entering into a product sold under the MSC label. As recognised by the MSC Fisheries Certification Process v2.1 Annex PA, there are cases where the by-catch species cannot be separated from the target species. This applies to the blue whiting fishery where the catches - as mentioned above - are pumped into refrigerated tanks, the catches are sampled for species composition and the content of the tank is sold at auctions while the vessels are still at sea through the Norwegian auction system, Kambestad pers. Comm. The fish are used for production of fish meal and fish oil. The MSC certificate can be applied to such products under the IPI approach.</p> <p>The IPI by-catch in the blue whiting fishery 2014-2018:</p>									
Green weight catch (tons)		Purse seine	% purse seine	Pelagic /midwater pair trawl	% pelagic/ midwater pair trawl	botto m trawl	% botto m trawl	Overall client catch (tons)	% overall
2018	Blue whiting	374	100	420.951	99	17.103	87	438.428	98
	IPI species	0	0	3.025	1	1.712	9	4.737	1
	MSC certified species	0	0	1.557	0	869	4	2.426	1
	All species	374	100	425.534	100	19.684	100	445.891	100
2017	Blue whiting	424	100	381.567	99	17.372	87	399.363	98
	IPI species	0	0	3.067	1	1.210	6	4.277	1
	MSC certified species	0	0	1.515	0	1.371	7	2.886	1
	All species	424	100	386.150	100	19.953	100	406.527	100
2016	Blue whiting	245	100	298.788	99	11.379	81	310.412	98
	IPI species	0	0	2.193	1	1.648	12	3.841	1
	MSC certified species	0	0	1.371	0	1.004	7	2.375	1
	All species	245	100	302.352	100	14.031	100	316.628	100
2015	Blue whiting	6.049	100	472.801	99	10.589	85	489.439	99
	IPI species	0	0	1.491	0	896	7	2.387	0
	MSC certified species	0	0	1.187	0	1.029	8	2.216	0
	All species	6.049	100	475.479	100	12.514	100	494.042	100

2014	Blue whiting	13.476	100	362.132	99	23.913	94	399.520	99
	IPI species	0	0	2.000	1	777	3	2.777	1
	MSC certified species	0	0	1.739	0	869	3	2.608	1
	All species	13.476	100	365.870	100	25.559	100	404.905	100

The fishery for blue whiting provides input for two products:

1. Blue whiting (whole and fillets) for direct human consumption
2. Fish meal and fish oil

The amounts processed for direct human consumption are minimal, and in Norway has only been done as an experimental basis. In practise the component is non-significant, in 2018 about 2 tons were landed out of more than 400,000 t, Kambestad pers. Comm. There is sorting by species at the production line, the product is isolated to blue whiting and IPI is not a concern here.

For the production of fish- meal and fish- oil all fish in the tanks are processed. This assessment has assessed the IPI catch under PI 2.1 and PI 2.2 as required (FCP v2.1- PA 1.2.2). The criteria for recognising stocks as IPI are reproduced with comments in the assessment report. The amounts that enter into the product are known, based on the sampling of the catches.

AS required by FCP v2.1 PA 1.4.2:

- The status of the IPI stocks are assessed as part of the PI 2.1 and PI 2.2 scoring
- The amounts do not hinder recovery
- Measures, if required, include closing of areas which are considered likely to work.
- ETP species are considered separately and impact is assessed

Separation of IPI species from the target stock (Blue whiting) is not practical within the existing fishing and production technology.

For UoA 1 & 2, the total combined proportion of catches from possible IPI stock(s) is <2% (FCP v 2.1- clause 7.5.8.1.c) and will therefore, be eligible to be certified without being considered as IPI stocks for this certification.

For UoA 3, the total combined proportion of catches from the IPI stock(s) does not exceed 15% by weight of the total combined catches of target and IPI stock(s) (FCP v 2.1- clause 7.5.8.1.c) and will therefore, be eligible to be certified as IPI for this certification period (PA 1.4.1.1).

Since the implementation of the landing obligation in Norway in 1987, all species in the catch are landed and registered at landing ports (with an exception for elasmobranchs, which can go back to the sea as long as they are alive).

For the purse seine UoA, there are no main nor minor primary nor secondary species to consider under PI 2.1.1 and 2.2.1. Besides, since there are no other species in the catch composition there are no IPI catches to consider. Data facilitated by the Directorate of Fisheries shows a clean catch composition were all catch is the targeted blue whiting.

For the pelagic/midwater trawls UoA, landing records by the Directorate of Fisheries show that catch composition is very clean, with blue whiting accounting for the 99% of the catch. Therefore, there are no main primary nor secondary species to consider. There are, however, minor primary and secondary species which, all together, account for a 1% of the catch. Since this is a reduction fishery, these species are not segregated and are therefore considered as inseparable to the blue whiting catch.

As regards other species present in the catch (but not reaching the 2% threshold catch level) some of these stocks are already MSC certified in the NEA. Stocks already MSC certified in the UoA fishing grounds are Norway pout, cod, saithe, hake, sand eel, herring, ling and haddock. There are more than 20 different species which are present in the catch, but which are not MSC certified. These non-certified stocks meet the requirements for IPI catches described in FCP v2.1, 7.5.8.1. (this is, the catches of non-target species are distinguishable, but it is not commercially feasible to separate them, the total combined proportion of catches from IPI stocks does not exceed 15% by weight of the total combined catches of target and IPI stocks for the

UoA, the IPI stocks are not ETP species, and are not certified separately. Therefore, Annex PA shall be applied for these stocks.

Since all IPI species in the pelagic/midwater trawl UoA are considered as minor species there is no need of modifications in the default assessment tree. Minor primary and secondary species in the catch were already evaluated during the initial assessment of the fishery, resulting in scores above SG80 for PI 2.1.1. and PI 2.2.1. Minor primary species obtained a score of 100 since the stock status of them all was in a safe biological condition. Minor secondary species also obtained a score of 100 based on the minimal catch taken by the UoA.

Landing records facilitated by the Directorate of Fisheries show that, on average, for the years 2014-2018, blue whiting accounts for over an 88% of the catch of the bottom trawl UoA. The rest 12% is formed by more than 20 different species, of which Norway pout and lesser silver smelt are considered as main species as in years 2015 and 2016 they accounted for more than a 5% of the catch, regardless the average proportion taking into consideration years 2014-2015 being less than 5%. Norway pout is evaluated under the primary species PI while lesser silver smelt is evaluated as a secondary species. The lack of information on lesser silver smelt justifies the use of the RBF to score this element. There are more than 20 minor species in the catch composition of bottom trawlers.

As mentioned above, approximately 12% of the catch is formed by other species which are not the targeted blue whiting, and which, in their vast majority, are not MSC certified in the fishing grounds. Since this is a reduction fishery, these species, while distinguishable, are not inseparable from the blue whiting catch.

Non-MSC certified species present in the catch of the bottom trawl UoA account for less than a 15% of the global catch but more than a 2% of it. The definition of IPI species as described in FCP 7.5.8.1 applies to these non-certified species present in the catch.

Catch composition for the past 5 years for the reduction fishery of blue whiting with the bottom trawl fishing gear shows that there are catches above the 2% threshold of species such as lesser silver smelt, Norway pout, horse mackerel and saithe. Since the Norway pout and saithe stocks are MSC certified in the fishing grounds they do not meet the requirements for IPI catches and are not taken into consideration here. As regards lesser silver smelt and horse mackerel stocks, these species are considered as IPI stocks for the blue whiting bottom trawl UoA.

A summary of the biological status of IPI stocks such as lesser silver smelt, Norway pout and horse mackerel is given below, as their catch proportion is above the 2% threshold.

- As regards lesser silver smelt (*Argentina shpyraena*), this species is data deficient and there is no ICES assessment available. The catch of 3~5% is not considerable (i.e. > 10%). Scientific research undertaken in the Porcupine bank (Fernández Zapico et al., 2017) show that biomass and abundance of lesser silver smelt shows its highest value in the Porcupine Bank research time series (2001-2016). The average catch by UoC 3 in years 2014-2018 is 500 tons. Following FCR v2.1 PF4.1.3 and PF4.1.4.1 PSA on "main" species has been presented for evaluating PI 2.2.1 (see section on RBF). The species obtained a PSA MSC associated score above 80 (but below 100).
- According to ICES 2019 advice on horse mackerel (*Trachurus trachurus*) in Subarea 8 and divisions 2.a, 4.a, 5.b, 6.a, 7.a–c, and 7.e–k (the Northeast Atlantic), SSB has been declining since 2007 and has been around MSY Btrigger since 2014. ICES assess that fishing pressure on the stock is above FMSY and between Fpa and Flim; and spawning stock size is below MSY Btrigger and between Bpa and Blim. Catch advice for 2020 is 42% lower than that for 2019. This is due to both an update of the reference points and a downward revision in the perception of the stock biomass from the assessment. ICES estimated catch in the whole area in 2017 was 82 961 tons. Landings by the blue whiting bottom trawl fishery in 2017 accounted for 600 tons. The average catch of horse mackerel by UoC 3 in years 2014-2018 is 400 tons. Given the low catches taken by the blue whiting bottom trawl fishery the team concludes that the UoC is not hindering the recovery and rebuilding of this stock. The species meets the requirements for SG80 set at PI 2.2.1.

As for lesser silver smelt, the increase of abundance of the species in the Porcupine bank in years 2001-2016, together with the low quantities taken by UoC 3 and the high score obtained by the species when scored using the RBF suggest that the stock is above Blim. As regards horse mackerel, according to ICES 2019 advice, SSB is above Blim. IPI stocks above the 2% threshold meet the requirements set in this epigraph.

	<p>For UoC 1 there are no IPI species to consider.</p> <p>For UoC 2 the combined proportion of IPI species is below the 2% threshold limit (0.7%).</p> <p>For UoC 3, IPI species above the 2% threshold limit are identified as lesser silver smelt, Norway pout, horse mackerel and saithe, of which Norway pout and saithe are MSC certified in the fishing grounds where the bottom trawl blue whiting fishery takes place, which is the Norwegian trench in the northern North Sea. Besides, there are more than other 20 species which are present and inseparable in the catch of the bottom trawl blue whiting fishery, all of them in a proportion below 2%.</p> <p>The combined proportion of all inseparable non-targeted species in UoC 3 does not exceed 15% by weight of the total combined catches of target and IPI Stocks.</p>
2 a	<p>Rationale to indicate fish and fish products from IPI stocks may enter further chains of custody</p> <p>IPI stocks above the 2% threshold are not poorly known and there is sufficient scientific information to evaluate the impact of the UoA on these stocks. As for IPI species below the 2% threshold, there is room for improved knowledge for some of them, however the small quantities taken by the UoA are expected not to hinder the recovery of those species should they be in a poor biological situation.</p> <p>The main measure working in preventing hindering recovery is the limited catches taken by UoC3.</p> <p>Given the information shown in ICES advice for the different stocks, the team considers that all the requirements for IPI species at PA1.4.2 are met.</p> <p>According to PA 7.5.11.a, the CAB confirms that fish or fish products to be considered as coming from IPI stocks (i.e. lesser silver smelt, Norway pout and horse mackerel) may enter chain of custody subject to annex PA and the requirements set at PA 4.1.2.</p>
2 b	<p>Rationale to indicate fish and fish products from IPI stocks may enter further chains of custody with an exemption to additional assessment requirements</p>
	NA

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