

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) 3rd Surveillance Report

**The PFA, DPPO, KFO, SPSG & Compagnie des Pêches St Malo
Northeast Atlantic Blue Whiting pelagic trawl fishery**

On behalf of

**Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association (PFA)
Danish Pelagic Producers Organisation (DPPO)
Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO)
Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group (SPSG)
Compagnie des Pêches de St Malo (CDPSM)**

Prepared by

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Contents

CONTENTS.....	2
GLOSSARY.....	3
1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
2 REPORT DETAILS.....	6
2.1 Surveillance Information.....	6
2.2 Background	7
2.2.1 UoAs	7
2.2.2 Client Vessels	9
2.2.3 Stock background.....	12
2.2.4 Principle 1.....	12
2.2.5 Principle 2.....	15
2.2.6 Principle 3.....	21
2.2.7 Traceability.....	22
2.2.8 Scope of the fishery in relation to the MSC programme	22
2.3 Version Details	22
3 RESULTS.....	23
3.1 Surveillance results overview.....	23
3.1.1 Summary of conditions	23
Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and catch data	24
3.1.2 Recommendation.....	25
3.2 Conditions	25
3.3 Client Action Plan	31
3.4 Principle level scores.....	32
3.5 Re-scoring Performance Indicators.....	33
4 REFERENCES	34
5 APPENDICES	36
5.1 Evaluation processes and techniques	36
5.1.1 Site Visits	36
5.1.2 Stakeholder participation.....	36
5.2 Harmonised fishery assessments.....	36

Glossary

Acronym	Definition
ACOM	ICES Advisory Committee
BIM	Bord Iascaigh Mhara - Irish Sea Fisheries Board
BMSY	Equilibrium total biomass at MSY
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CDPSM	Compagnie des Pêches de Saint Malo
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CoC	Chain of Custody
CPUE	Catch per Unit of fishing Effort
CR	MSC Certification Requirements
DCF	Data Collection Framework
DPPO	Danish Pelagic Producers Organisation
EAPO	European Association of Fish Producers Organisations
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency
ETP	Endangered Threatened or Protected species
EU	European Union
F	Fishing mortality
FMSY	Fishing mortality resulting in MSY
HCR	Harvest Control Rule
IBPBLW	ICES Inter-Benchmark Protocol for Blue Whiting
IBWAS	International Blue Whiting Acoustic Survey
IBWSS	ICES International Blue Whiting Spawning Stock Survey
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
ITQ	Individual Transferable Quota
IUU	Illegal, unreported and regulated fishing
JDP	Joint Deployment Plan (EFCA MCS)
KFO	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation Ltd
LTMP	Long-term Management Plan
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
MEC	ME Certifications Ltd.
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
NEAFC	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

Acronym	Definition
PELAC	Pelagic Advisory Council
PFA	Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association
PO	Producer Organisation
RA	Regulatory Area (NEAFC)
RSW	Refrigerated Sea Water
SPFA	Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association
SPSG	Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group
SSB	Spawning stock biomass
STECF	Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee For Fisheries
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
UoC	Unit of Certification
UNCLOS	United Nations Law of the Sea
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WG	Working Group
WGWIDE	ICES WG on Widely Distributed Stocks
WKBWMS	ICES Workshop on Blue Whiting Long Term management Strategy Evaluation
WGIPS	ICES WG on International Pelagic Surveys
WHB	Blue Whiting
WW	Western Waters

1 Executive summary

The site visit for the fishery was held on 26th February 2019 at 14:00 GMT via conference call. The team leader and P2 (Hugh Jones), P3 (Sophie des Clers) experts attended the site visit. No requests from stakeholders were received. This was the 3rd annual surveillance of the fishery since certification with the certificate anniversary on 3rd February. The stock remains well above reference points and there have been no major developments in the management of the fishery since the last audit in 2018. The fishery currently has three conditions, which were evaluated against the milestones and client action plans and found to be on target. There was no rescoring of any Performance Indicator at this audit. Following consideration of all stakeholders' inputs and new information provided by the client the fishery assessment team concludes that the fishery should remain certified against the MSC standard.

2 Report details

2.1 Surveillance Information

1	Fishery name	
	PFA, DPPO, KFO, SPSP & Compagnie des Pêches St Malo Northeast Atlantic blue whiting Pelagic Trawl	
2	Surveillance level and type	
	Surveillance level 4, off-site surveillance audit The certificate anniversary is the 3rd February 2019, however, due to client and assessor availability the audit was scheduled for 26th February 2019.	
3	Surveillance number	
	1st Surveillance	
	2nd Surveillance	
	3rd Surveillance	X
	4th Surveillance	
	Other (expedited etc)	
4	Proposed Team Leader	
	Name	Dr Hugh Jones
	Areas of Responsibility	Team Leader, Principle 2 Expert
	Competency Criteria (Annex PC)	Dr Hugh Jones has a PhD in Ecotoxicology and strong background in marine research including publications and reports on ecotoxicology, environmental risk assessments and fisheries research. Prior to joining CU Pesca he was employed as a fisheries scientist in the development of an empirical harvest strategy for commercial abalone fisheries and fisheries assessments of estuarine bivalves. This included work on population metrics (recruitment, growth), harvest dynamics (catch rates, market selectivity), and the use of fine scale geospatial techniques as performance measures to assess stock sustainability. Based on the above experience CU Pesca is confident that Dr Jones meets the 5-year competency requirement for P2 experience under criteria PC3.3. Dr Jones has completed the required Fishery Team Leader MSC training modules for the V2.01 Fisheries Certification Requirements, Fisheries Certification Process V2.1 including ISO:9001 - lead auditor training. CV available on request
	Conflict of Interest	No conflict of interest has been identified for this fishery
	Onsite or offsite	Off-site
5	Proposed Team Member	
	Name	Dr Sophie des Clers
	Areas of Responsibility	Principle 3 Expert
	Competency Criteria (Annex PC)	Sophie is an independent expert in fisheries management and socio-economics. She has been involved in a large number of previous MSC assessments including for cod, haddock, saithe, sardine, lobster, and whelk fisheries. Sophie is an expert in fisheries management and legislation at a regional, national and international level with particular expertise in European, African and Indian Ocean fisheries.

		It is proposed that Sophie would have primary responsibility for Principle 3. The qualifications listed above provide Sophie with the appropriate skills to meet competency criteria PC3.4. She has also completed MSC training modules for V2.01 Fisheries Certification Requirements, Fisheries Certification Process V2.1 and ISO:19011-2018. CV available on request.
	Conflict of Interest	No conflict of interest has been identified for this fishery
	Onsite or offsite	Off-site
6	Audit/review time and location	
	The off-site audit was held on 26 th February 2019 at 14:00 GMT via Skype	
7	Assessment and review activities	
	<p>During the audit, CU Pesca will communicate with the client and any relevant stakeholders and use any available up to date information to assess and review;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any changes to the fishery and its management including those to management systems, regulation and relevant personnel assessments; Any changes to the scientific base of information such as stock; Any developments or changes within the fishery impact may impact on traceability and the ability to segregate MSC from non-MSC products; Progress against existing conditions on PI's 3.1.1, 1.2.1 and 1.2.2. Any other significant changes in the fishery. 	

2.2 Background

2.2.1 UoAs

UoC1 – PFA

Species	Blue Whiting (<i>Micromesistius poutassou</i>)
Geographical range	Northeast Atlantic (ICES Subareas 1-9, 12, and 14)
Method of capture	Pelagic trawl
Stock	ICES Subareas 1-9, 12, and 14
Management System/s	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission Joint agreement between EU, Norway, Iceland and the Faroes National management systems of EEZs fished and client vessel flag states.
Client group	Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association (PFA) – The Netherlands
Other eligible fishers	None

UoC2 – DPPO

Species	Blue Whiting (<i>Micromesistius poutassou</i>)
Geographical range	Northeast Atlantic (ICES Subareas 1-9, 12, and 14)
Method of capture	Pelagic trawl

Stock	ICES Subareas 1-9, 12, and 14
Management System/s	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission Joint agreement between EU, Norway, Iceland and the Faroes National management systems of EEZs fished and client vessel flag states.
Client group	Danish Pelagic Producers Organisation (DPPO)
Other eligible fishers	None

UoC3 – KFO

Species	Blue Whiting (<i>Micromesistius poutassou</i>)
Geographical range	Northeast Atlantic (ICES Subareas 1-9, 12, and 14)
Method of capture	Pelagic trawl
Stock	ICES Subareas 1-9, 12, and 14
Management System/s	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission Joint agreement between EU, Norway, Iceland and the Faroes National management systems of EEZs fished and client vessel flag states.
Client group	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation Ltd (KFO) - Ireland
Other eligible fishers	None

UoC4 – SPSG

Species	Blue Whiting (<i>Micromesistius poutassou</i>)
Geographical range	Northeast Atlantic (ICES Subareas 1-9, 12, and 14)
Method of capture	Pelagic trawl
Stock	ICES Subareas 1-9, 12, and 14
Management System/s	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission Joint agreement between EU, Norway, Iceland and the Faroes National management systems of EEZs fished and client vessel flag states.
Client group	Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group Ltd (SPSG) - UK
Other eligible fishers	None

UoC5 – CDPSM

Species	Blue Whiting (<i>Micromesistius poutassou</i>)
Geographical range	Northeast Atlantic (ICES Subareas 1-9, 12, and 14)

Method of capture	Pelagic trawl
Stock	ICES Subareas 1-9, 12, and 14
Management System/s	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission Joint agreement between EU, Norway, Iceland and the Faroes National management systems of EEZs fished and client vessel flag states.
Client group	Compagnie des Pêches de Saint Malo - France
Other eligible fishers	None

Note that these five UoCs pursue the same target stock with the same fishing gear (mid-water trawl) in the same broad fishing area, but there are some differences in fishing and management operations that justify five separate UoCs.

2.2.2 Client Vessels

2.2.2.1 PFA

Table 1. PFA vessel list 2018-19.

Vessel Name	Vessel Registration (PLN)	Overall length (metres)	Catch holding method	Gear type	Flag
Alida	SCH 6	100	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	NL
W. van der Zwan	SCH 302	142.5	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	NL
Afrika	SCH 24	126	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	NL
Zeeland	SCH 123	113.97	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	NL
Carolien	SCH 81	126.22	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	NL
Frank Bonefaas	SCH 72	119	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	NL
Cornelis Vrolijk	H 171	113.97	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	UK
Wiron 5	PH 1100	55.6	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	UK
Wiron 6	PH 2200	55.6	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	UK
Sandettie	FC 716999	86	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	FR
Prins Bernhard	FC-716900	88.14	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	FR
Label Normandy	FC934228	51	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	FR
Annelies Ilena	KW174	144.6	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	PL
Dirk Dirk	KW172	95	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	NL
Annie Hillina	ROS170	86.33	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	DE
Jan Maria	BX791	125.53	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	DE
Maartje Theadora	ROS171	140.8	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	DE
Helen Mary	ROS785	116.7	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	DE
Margiris	KL855	136.12	Freezer	Pelagic Trawler	LIT

2.2.2.2 DPPO

Table 2. DPPO vessel list 2018-19.

Vessel Name	Vessel Registration (PLN)	Home Port	Overall length (metre)	Catch holding method
Cattleya	E 349	Esbjerg	69.9	RSW
Rockall	S 364	Skagen	69.99	RSW
Beinur	HG 62	Hirtshals	78	RSW
Ruth	HG 264	Hirtshals	87.8	RSW
Asbjorn	HG 265	Hirtshals	75.4	RSW
Isafold	HG 333	Hirtshals	76.25	RSW
Themis	S 144	Skagen	63	RSW
Gitte Henning	S 349	Skagen	90.45	RSW
Ceton	S205	Skagen	62.6	RSW
Astrid	S264	Skagen	69.95	RSW
Lingbank	HM379	Hanstholm	41.81	RSW

2.2.2.3 KFO

Table 3. KFO vessel list 2018-19.

Vessel Name	Vessel Registration (PLN)	Home Port	Overall length (metre)	Catch holding method	Gear type
Aine	SO734	Killybegs	56.5	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Antarctic	D97	Killybegs	50.7	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Atlantic Challenge	D642	Killybegs	59	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Brendelen	SO709	Killybegs	64.6	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Carmarose	SO555	Killybegs	27.35	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Colmcille	G186	Killybegs	27.35	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Father Mckee	SO708	Killybegs	64.6	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Felucca	SO108	Killybegs	58	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Girl Stephanie	G190	Killybegs	51.9	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Neptune	SO715	Killybegs	48.6	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Olgarry	SO591	Killybegs	51.2	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Pacelli	D383	Killybegs	51.2	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Paula	D165	Killybegs	62.6	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Sheanne	SO716	Killybegs	61.6	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Vigilant	SO109	Killybegs	53.06	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Western Endeavour	D653	Killybegs	71	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Westward Isle	G185	Killybegs	27.35	RSW	Pelagic Trawler

2.2.2.4 SPSG

Table 4. SPSP vessel list 2018-19.

Vessel Name	Vessel Registration (PLN)	Home Port	Overall length (metre)	Catch holding method	Gear type
Adenia	LK193	Whalsay & Skerries	61.9	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Altaire	LK429	Northmavine	76.4	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Antares	LK419	Whalsay & Skerries	78.0	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Antartic II	LK145	Whalsay & Skerries	69	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Challenge	FR226	Fraserburgh	65	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Charisma	LK362	Whalsay & Skerries	70.7	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Chris Andra	FR228	Fraserburgh	71.2	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Christina S	FR224	Fraserburgh	72	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Grateful	FR249	Fraserburgh	70	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Havillah	N200	Kilkeel	49	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Kings Cross	PD365	Fraserburgh	78.0	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Lunar Bow	PD265	Peterhead	69.3	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Ocean Quest Delete	BF77	Fraserburgh	61.5	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Ocean Venture Delete	FR77	Fraserburgh	61.5	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Ocean Star	FR77	Fraserburgh	85	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Pathway	PD165	Peterhead	78	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Quantus	PD379	Peterhead	65.5	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Research W	LK62	Whalsay & Skerries	79	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Resolute	BF50	Fraserburgh	64	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Serene	LK297	Whalsay & Skerries	82	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Stefanie-M	N265	Kilkeel	49.2	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Sunbeam	FR487	Fraserburgh	56.2	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Taits	FR227	Fraserburgh	70.6	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Unity	FR165	Fraserburgh	44.9	RSW	Pelagic Trawler
Zephyr	LK394	Whalsay & Skerries	72.8	RSW	Pelagic Trawler

2.2.2.5 CDPSM

Table 5. CDPSM vessel list 2018-19.

Vessel Name	Vessel Registration (PLN)	Home Port	Overall length (metre)	Catch holding method
Joseph Roty II	SM 199 078	Saint Malo	90.55	Surimi paste pelagic freezer trawler

2.2.3 Stock background

Blue whiting (*Micromesistius poutassou*) (WHB) is a small pelagic gadoid species that is widely distributed in the North-eastern Atlantic. It is a streamlined fish that rarely exceeds a length of 40 cm and has a slender silver-coloured body with a slightly bluish dorsal tint. The species is oceanic and benthopelagic, inhabiting the continental slope and shelf down to depths of 600 m. It can make daily nocturnal vertical migrations to the surface. High concentrations are found at spawning time along the edge of the continental shelf to the west of the British Isles, Rockall Bank and Faroe Plateau. Blue whiting is fished at depths between 300 and 600 m. It is a shared and widely distributed stock, straddling the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of several countries and international waters beyond 200 nm. The fishery was developed by the Soviet Union in the 1960s and by Norway in the early 1970s, followed by the Faroe Islands and countries from the EU, and eventually Iceland in the 1990s. Historically, WHB was an important source of fishmeal, but a larger part is now sold for human consumption.

For EU vessels, the fishery mostly takes place early in the year in European waters to the west and northwest of the British Isles and Ireland and in international waters. Later in the year further effort is possible through negotiated access to Faroes and Norwegian waters and on the High Seas in the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) Regulated Area (RA) outside national jurisdictions.

2.2.4 Principle 1

The annual ICES WHB Total Allowable Catch (TAC) advice refers to the entire 'combined' WHB stock in the North-East Atlantic, ICES subareas 1 to 9, 12 and 14 (Table 1).

There are three WHB TAC areas to which the EU member states have access. The principal quota area is referred to as WHB/1x14 and is fished through mainly Subarea 6, with some also caught in Subareas 4, and 7. In addition to this principal area, supplementary WHB quota for some member states is available because of bilateral quota exchange, which can only to be taken in the waters of the Faroe Islands. This WHB is referred to as WHB/2a4axf. Finally, Spain and Portugal, which are not part of this assessment, have rights to fish for southern WHB (ICES Division 8c) under WHB TAC area WHB/8c3411. Out of the WHB quota available to the EU originating from the Coastal States negotiations (30.0 % TAC between 2007 and 2015 after the NEAFC deduction (~8 %), and approximating 45 % since 2016 again after the NEAFC deduction following NEAFC estimations), the EU distributes its overall WHB share among the stocks WHB/1x14 and WHB/8c3411. In 2019 the agreed TAC is 1,143,628 t from which 91,020 t is reserved for NEAFC (about 8 %). After that the EU transfers part of its WHB/1x14 quota to Norway (110,000 tonnes in 2018) and part to the Faroe Islands (10,000 tonnes in 2018). And the EU receives some WHB back from Faroe Islands (2,500 tonnes in 2018), which is referred to as WHB/2a4axF.

2.2.4.1 Stock assessment

The International WHB Acoustic Survey (IBWAS), continues to provide the principle fishery independent survey for the fishery and involves scientists from Norway, Russia, the Faroe Islands and the Netherlands in spring each year. The total combined area coverage extends from the Faroe Islands in the north (60.30°N) to south of Ireland (52°N), with east-west extension from 6°-17° W and is reported via an annual report to ICES (Jacobsen et al. 2018) and used in the stock assessment.

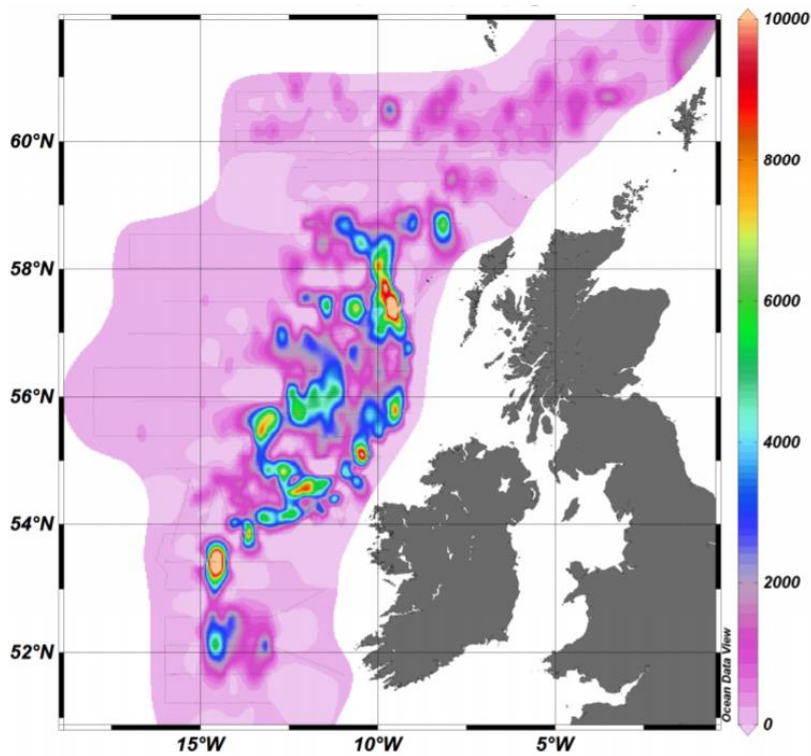


Figure 1. Map of acoustic density ($S_A \text{ m}^2/\text{nmi}^2$) of WHB during the International WHB Spawning Stock Survey (IBWSS) from March-April 2018. Source: (Jacobsen et al. 2018).

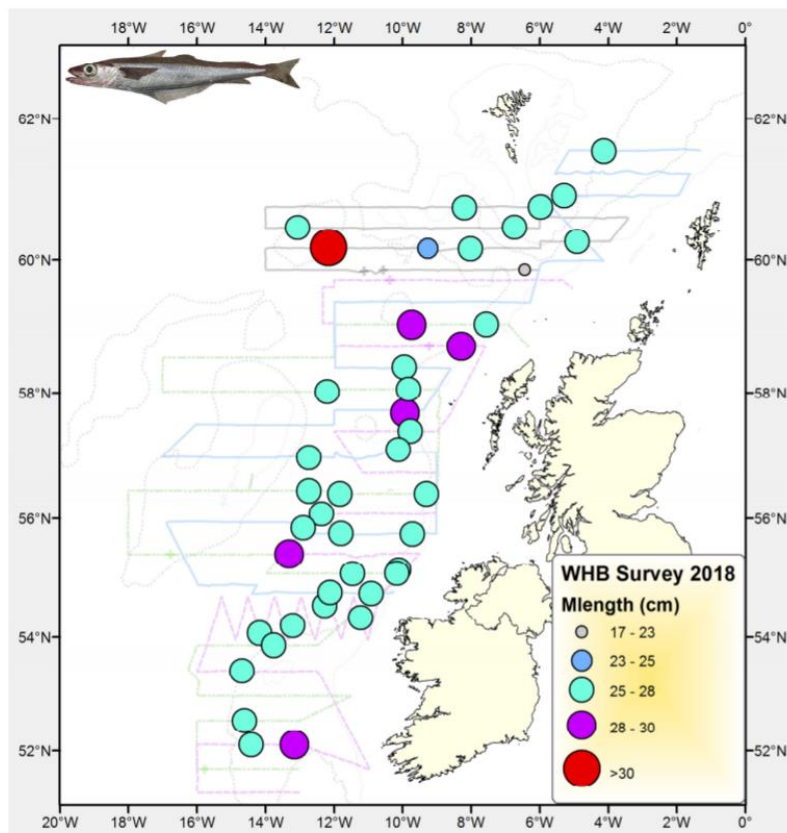


Figure 2. Combined mean length of WHB from trawl catches by vessel March- April 2018. Crosses indicate hauls with zero WHB catches. Source: (Jacobsen et al. 2018).

2.2.4.2 Reference Points

There is no change in the reference points for 2018 from those published previously (Jones et al. 2018). A summary is provided in Table 6. The adoption of the long term management plan (LTMP) by the Coastal States mean the associated reference points are now included in the ICES advice (Anon 2017; ICES 2018; Anon 2018).

Table 6. WHB in subareas 1–9, 12, and 14. Reference points, values, and their technical basis. Source: ICES (2018)

Framework	Reference point	Value	Technical basis	Source
MSY approach	MSY $B_{trigger}$	2250000 t	B_{pa}	ICES (2013a, 2013b, 2016a)
	F_{MSY}	0.32	Stochastic simulations with segmented regression stock–recruitment relationship	ICES (2016a)
Precautionary approach	B_{lim}	1500000 t	Approximately B_{loss}	ICES (2013a, 2013b, 2016a)
	B_{pa}	2250000 t	$B_{lim} \exp(1.645 \times \sigma)$, with $\sigma = 0.246$	ICES (2013a, 2013b, 2016a)
	F_{lim}	0.88	Equilibrium scenarios with stochastic recruitment: F value corresponding to 50% probability of ($SSB < B_{lim}$)	ICES (2016a)
	F_{pa}	0.53	Based on F_{lim} and assessment uncertainties. $F_{lim} \exp(-1.645 \times \sigma)$, with $\sigma = 0.299$	ICES (2016a)
EU–Faroes–Iceland–Norway long-term management strategy	SSB_{MGT_lower}	1500000 t	B_{lim}	Anon (2016)
	SSB_{MGT}	2250000 t	B_{pa}	
	F_{MGT_lower}	0.05	Arbitrary low F	
	F_{MGT}	0.32	F_{MSY}	

2.2.4.3 Stock Status

The spawning stock biomass in 2018 (5,422,226 t) remains greater than two times B_{pa} (2,250,000 t) (Figure 3). However it is projected to decrease below 4.5 million t in 2019, based on the high recruitment year of 2015 becoming less influential to the fishery. F continues to be $> F_{MSY}$ but has seen a decline since 2015 despite unilateral quotas exceeding ICES since 2014 (Table 7, Figure 3).

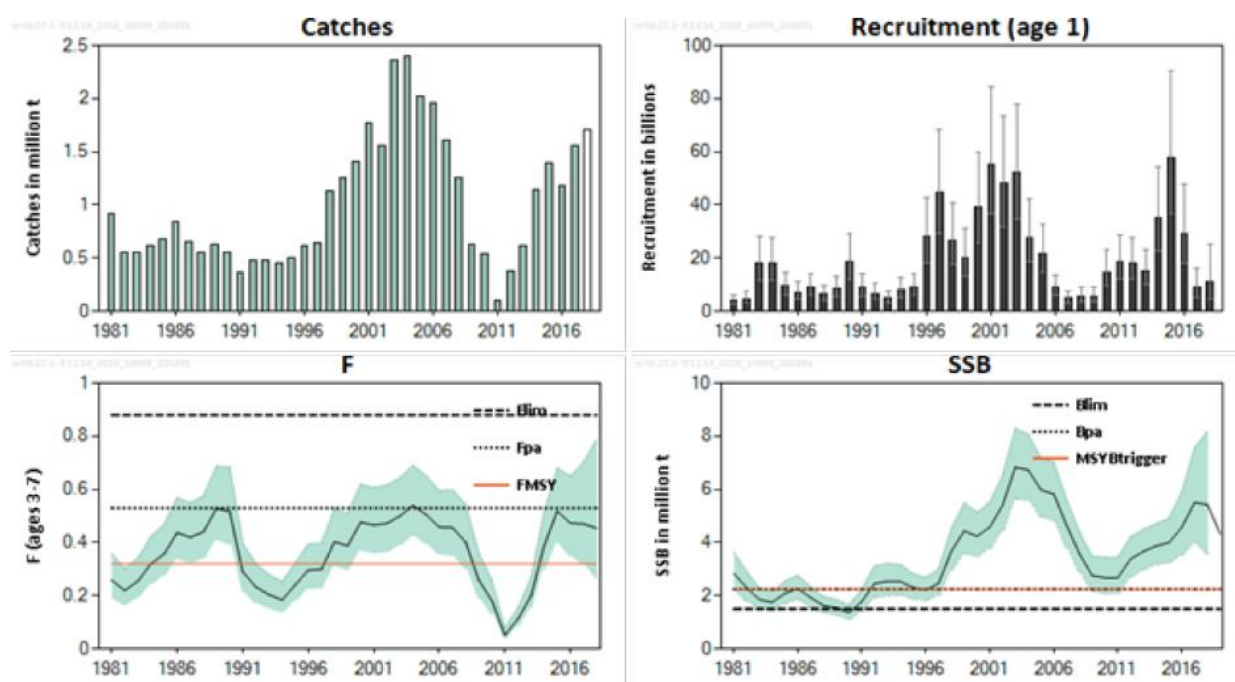


Figure 3. WHB in subareas 1–9, 12, and 14. Summary of the stock assessment. Catches for 2018 (not shaded) are preliminary. For this stock, FMGT = FMSY and SSBMGT= Bpa; therefore, the horizontal lines representing these points in the graph would overlap. Source ICES (2018).

Table 7. WHB ICES advice and catch statistics for subareas 1-9,12 and 14 from 2012-2018 in tonnes (ICES 2018). * No agreed TAC by the Coastal States, sum of unilateral quotas. ** provisional catch result. # provisional catch result (Anon 2018).

Year	ICES Advice	Predicted Catch corresponding to ICES Advice	TAC	ICES Catch	Official Catches
2012	Follow the agreed management plan	391,000	391,000	376,000	385,300
2013	Follow the agreed management plan	643,000	643,000	614,000	628.200
2014	Follow the agreed management plan	948,950	1,200,000	1,148,000	1,155,300
2015	Follow the agreed management plan	839,890	1,260,000*	1,391,000	1,396,200
2016	MSY approach	≤776,400	1,147,000*	1,147,000	978,053
2017	MSY approach	≤1,342,330	1,675,400*	1,558,349	1,553,918
2018	Long-term management strategy	≤1,387,872	1,727,964*	1,712,870	1,560,382#
2019	Long-term management strategy	≤1,143,629	1,143,628 t		

2.2.4.4 Landing Obligation

No change from last year's report (Jones et al. 2018) as the landing obligation has been in force for the fishery since 2015. Note UoA 5 (CDPSM) continues to operate under a *de minimis* exemption from the EU landing obligation for small WHB discards in North Western waters (ICES zones 5-except 5a and only Union waters of 5b, 6 and 7) on the basis of its food safety policy. The processing of small individuals of WHB onboard the vessel can lead to small amount of gut being included in the final surimi paste product, which may create bacterial issues. For 2018 this is 6 % of the catch tonnage. For 2019 and 2020 the exemption will reduce to 5 % (LegiFrance 2018).

2.2.4.5 Conclusion

There is no change in the scoring of Principle 1 based on the available evidence. Progress on conditions associated with Performance Indicators 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 are described in Section 3.2.

2.2.5 Principle 2

2.2.5.1 PFA

The PFA self-sampling programme has been implemented incrementally on many vessels that belong to the members of the PFA. Because the self-sampling programme has been under development over the years, different numbers of vessels have been participating in the programme over different years (2018 = 16), and a proportional increase in sample number (hauls) is evident between years (Table 8). Results should be treated as an indicator of relative distributions and samples of catch and catch compositions (Pastoors 2019). For WHB the PFA self-sampling data was filtered using the following criteria:

- hauls north of 50 degrees latitude.

- catch of WHB by trip and week at least 80% of the total catch that trip and week.

Based on the information available in Table 8, there is no 'main' species evident in the fishery supporting the conclusions of the scoring at the time of certification (desClers et al. 2015).

Table 8. Catch composition for 2015 - 2018 in tonnes from the PFA self-sampling programme, for WHB. n is number of hauls within the given year. Source: Pastoors (2019)

Name	Species	2015 n=199	2016 n=545	2017 n=617	2018 n=1,361	all	%
WHB	<i>Micromesistius poutassou</i>	18,097	54,038	73,715	157,794	303,644	96.9
argentines	<i>Argentina spp.</i>	685	979	1,097	1,590	4,351	1.4
mackerel	<i>Scomber scombrus</i>	84	187	1,444	1,164	2,879	0.9
horse mackerel	<i>Trachurus trachurus</i>	221	311	168	907	1,607	0.5
hake	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	87	263	88	235	673	0.2
whiting	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>	.	12	.	52	64	0.0
saithe	<i>Pollachius virens</i>	.	4	3	43	50	0.0
squid	<i>Loligo vulgaris</i>	5	.	.	20	25	0.0
squid	<i>Loliginidae, Ommastrephidae</i>	.	.	3		3	0.0
boarfish	<i>Capros aper</i>	.	.	.	5	5	0.0
NA	NA	.	.	.	8	8	0.0
Total	Total	19,179	55,795	76,518	161,819	313,311	100

The latest available observer report for PFA vessels was reviewed at year two surveillance (Jones et al. 2018; Overzee et al. 2017) and the next will not be due until later in 2019 (S. Verver. Pers comm.), which will incorporate 2017 and 2018 observer reports. In 2017 there were three observer trips on PFA vessels while targeting WHB and in 2018 five trips covering ICES Areas 4, 6, and 7.

In association with the PFA self-sampling program, PFA have initiated a bycatch (ETP) recording scheme in 2018. The bycatch scheme is aimed at documenting overall trip characteristics (area, dates, number of hauls, crew) and the bycatch incidents on a haul-by-haul basis. In order to assess any patterns in bycatch events, several additional variables are being recorded (position, date, time of day, depth, water temperature, vessels around) and properties of the bycatches (species, size, number of specimens, discarded alive or dead) are recorded. The initial year data (2018) was unavailable at this audit but should be available at the year four surveillance audit.

As documented at the year two surveillance, PFA continue to trial new net configurations to avoid hake bycatch (Jones et al. 2018).

2.2.5.2 DPPO

As per previous years information provided by DPPO, all data is recorded via e-log and the pelagic fleet appears to be low risk fishing method, with 100 % target species caught in 2018 (Table 9). No observer data has been collected in the past year as the fishery is considered to be low risk by the authorities in Denmark.

Table 9. Catch composition for DPPO vessels targeting WHB from 2014-2018 in tonnes.

Species	Total landings while targeting WHB (tonnes)		
	2017	2018	%
WHB	67,769.0	87,226.8	100
Herring	555.5	0	
Bluefin tuna	0.3	0	
Total	68,324.8	87,226.8	100

ETP species interacting with the DPPO fleet are recorded in the Danish e-log. Within the system there is the provision to register ETP catches under miscellaneous or in some specific cases under the specific name, as is the case for seals and some sharks/rays. No reports were received in 2018.

2.2.5.3 KFO

All catches are landed, and the data in Table 10 reflects those reported by KFO; potential LO issues are dealt with by the “Quota Balancing for Pelagic Stocks” scheme (Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine) introduced on a pilot basis for 2018.

The electronic system for logbook reporting through Bord Iascaigh Mhara’s (– BIM: Ireland’s Seafood Development Agency) Responsibly Sourced Seafood (RSS) Standard logbook, was delayed due to vessels having difficulty uploading data (internet issues while at sea). This has been resolved in recent month’s leading up to this audit. Vessels will continue to keep paper records until early April 2019 when their data will be transferred to the Verifish electronic system which is externally audited on behalf of BIM RSS Standard. KFO will have a sample of data recorded by the electronic system as soon as it becomes available in April 2019.

Table 10. Catch composition for KFO vessels targeting WHB from 2014-2018 in tonnes.

Species	Total landings (tonnes)				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Herring	0	0	0	0	0
Mackerel	0	19	1	0	0
Horse mackerel	0	0	45	0	0
WHB	16,053	17,051	20,054	30,662	30,722
Total	16,053	17,070	20,099	30,662	30,722

There were no observer trips on KFO vessels in 2018. An Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) species log is maintained by the vessels during fishing operations, as part of the BIM Seafood environmental management system and RSS¹. A new specialised application is also being developed to report interactions with ETP species (KFO, pers. comm.).

¹ <http://irishpelagic.com/en/conservation-measures/environmental-management-system-2.html>

2.2.5.4 SPSG

As per previous years, Marine Scotland Science considers the pelagic fleet to be low risk fishing method and as such no observer data has been collected in the past year.

Catch composition data for the fleet is obtained from Marine Scotland Science landing data (Table 11), which maintains the track record of the UoC showing that there are no 'main' (greater than 5 % of the total catch) bycatch (all retained, no discard under the landing obligation) species for this fishery.

Table 11. Catch composition for SPSG vessels targeting WHB from 2014-2018 (tonnes). Data provided by D. Turnbull at Marine Scotland.

Species	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% catch total
Boarfish	16.3	0	0	0	0	0.0
Haddock	0.9	0	0	0	0	0.0
Herring	1,302.2	0	0	0	0	0.6
Horse mackerel	215.4	0	0	0	0	0.1
Mackerel	0	0	0	228.0	0	0.1
WHB	27,175.5	32,396	39,907.9	62,942	66,494	99.2
Total	28,710.3	32,396	39,907.9	63,170	66,494	230,678.20

SPFA commenced a pelagic self-sampling programme in summer 2018. To date data has been collected on herring and mackerel fisheries. The WHB fishery will be included for 2019 as no such data is available at present.

SPSG updated their Standard Operating Practices (SOP) in 2018 (version 3.0) (SPSG 2018). This SOP includes:

- Jig sampling of shoals to avoid wherever possible the capture of juvenile/undersized fish.
- Communication procedure with other vessels in the event of « poor » fishing (mixed species, unsuitable sizes).
- Standard recording of Endangered, Threatened or Protected (ETP) species interactions.
 - Including I.D. sheets, with distribution and migration patterns of key ETP species
 - Logging requirements.

SPSG vessels keep an ETP 'unusual events' logsheet onboard to complete in the event of interactions with ETP species. Skippers must submit logs to SPSG annually. None have been received in 2018.

2.2.5.5 CDPSM

The de minimis exception for undersize WHB for CDPSM remains in place and in 2018 was set at a maximum of 6 % of total catch (LegiFrance 2018). Catch records show that this was adhered to in 2018 with undersize WHB accounting for < 3 % of the total catch (Table 12). No other species comprised more than 1 % of the total catch maintaining the record of no 'main' species for the fishery as per the observations at the time of certification.

The French CDPSM vessel continued its programme of self-sampling of the WHB length distributions and keeps detailed records of any accidental catch of rays, sharks (1 porbeagle sharks, *Lamna nasus* in 2018), cetaceans, birds and presence of VMEs via coral and sponge catches.

Table 12. Catch composition and discards (de minimis) by CDPSM between 2014 and 2018 in kilograms.

	Tableau rejets (Merlan Bleu : de minimis) et prises accessoires par espèce									
	Discards (for Blue Whiting : de minimis) and by-catches by species									
Species	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	Volume (kg)	%catchs comp.	Volume (kg)	%catchs comp.	Volume (kg)	%catchs comp.	Volume (kg)	%catchs comp.	Volume (kg)	%catchs comp.
Blue Whiting (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>)	455 500	4,19%	597 696	6,13%	485 152	4,18%	170 355	1,83%	253 332	2,32%
Atlantic Mackerel (<i>Scomber scombrus</i>)			2 500	0,03%			170			
Swordfish (<i>Xiphias gladius</i>)	1 610	0,01%					100	0,00%		
Shortfin squids (<i>Illex spp.</i>)	760	0,01%	300	0,00%			400	0,00%	165	0,00%
King of herrings (<i>Regaleus glesne</i>)	1 370	0,01%								
Saithe (<i>Pollachius virens</i>)	100	0,00%								
Porbeagle (<i>Lamna nasus</i>)	50	0,00%							45	0,00%
Calmar Totam (<i>Doryteuthis pealeii</i>)					150	0,00%		0,00%		
Hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>)					70	0,00%	50	0,00%		
Bluefin Tuna (<i>Thunnus Thynnus</i>)									50	0,00%
Total discards and by-catches	459 390	4,22%	600 496	6,16%	485 372	4,18%	170 855	1,83%	253 382	2,32%
Total landings (Blue Whiting : whole fish weight)	10 424 280		9 744 880		10 406 960		9 325 010		10 901 410	

2.2.5.6 Habitats and Ecosystem

There is no significant new information on these components at this audit.

2.2.5.7 Conclusion

For Principle 2 there is no need to re-score any component based on this audit.

2.2.6 Principle 3

There has been no change in 2018 to the fisheries' management objectives, decision-making processes or regarding consultation, roles and responsibilities.

The UoCs client group for the WHB fishery has been very active as per the defined Action Plans aimed at improving management and meeting SG80 for PI 3.1.1a and b. The client group representatives participated, as members or observers, in meetings of the Pelagic Advisory Council (PELAC), NEAFC, Coastal States meetings and Bilateral EU-Norway meetings. Activities are summarised against the Client Action Plans in Table 20 for Condition 1.

In particular, the PELAC meeting 2-3 October 2018 recommended to follow the ICES advice based on an agreed Long Term Management Strategy, and to set a TAC of 1 143 629 tons for 2019. These recommendations were also adopted by NEAFC by a consensus of its Contracting Parties.

The PELAC also encouraged the Coastal States to further explore the two-tier approach to fishing mortality as originally suggested in the multiannual management strategy developed by PELAC in 2012. The PELAC believes that working with different fishing mortality values at different SSB levels could be a key tool in securing long-term stability without sacrificing yield, provided that this approach is found to be precautionary by ICES and is in line with Common Fisheries Policy, Article 2.2. The PELAC encourages further work on identifying methods to improve data and knowledge on stock recruitment – one of the key elements in the ICES stock advice.

Finally, the PELAC encouraged the EU Commission and Member States to seek rapid agreement with all Coastal States on a sustainable long-term sharing arrangement for the WHB stock. The current situation with no agreed sharing principles is not sustainable in the long-term. This matter was also discussed at the NEAFC Annual meeting: 12-16 November 2018 London (PFA attended as observer). The NEAFC Coastal States adopted the proposal for conservation and management measures for Blue Whiting in the NEAFC Regulatory Area for 2018 (NEAFC 2018), the long-term Management Plan, and ICES advice for blue whiting for 2019 by consensus. However, they did not include allocation among the Contracting Parties, and no sharing arrangement has been agreed. Norway noted at the NEAFC meeting that the situation on the major pelagic fish stock remains unchanged, with lack of overall agreements; that discussions are still ongoing, and they must remain hopeful that solutions can be found². The Chair of the Working Group on Allocation Criteria explained that his group had been put on hold for the present following the 2017 Annual Meeting. Following consultations with other members of the Working Group he had no new developments to report. The Chair was requested to continue to have informal consultations before the next Annual Meeting in order to see if there were any potential avenues for progress in the future, reporting back to the 2019 Annual Meeting (NEAFC 2018). There is a general feeling that the UK 'Brexit' process, which may change memberships in the various fora, needs to be resolved before further progress can be made. Therefore, although the condition timetable was somewhat optimistic, the condition is still on target. There is no need for re-scoring.

² https://www.neafc.org/system/files/AM-2018-73_Norway-OPENING-STATEMENT-2018.pdf

Compliance remains high in this fishery. Surveillance and controls at sea and on land (landings and transport) are coordinated by the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) with active involvement of the national competent authorities of the vessels in the certified fishery. The risk-based Joint Deployment Plan for pelagic fisheries in Western Waters reports very few instances of non-compliance and medium-level risks linked to the landing obligation and mis-reporting³, which are not deemed to be a problem in this fishery. The companies' copies of control reports provided to the team show that there was no instance that applied to vessels in this fishery or in the Norwegian waters, where foreign vessels are systematically inspected.

2.2.6.1 Conclusion

For Principle 3 there is no need to re-score any component based on this audit.

2.2.7 Traceability

No change the traceability of the fishery remains as per the PCR (Gascoigne et al. 2015).

2.2.8 Scope of the fishery in relation to the MSC programme

CU Pesca confirms that the fishery under assessment is within the scope of the MSC Fisheries Standard (7.4 of the MSC Certification Process v2.1):

- The target species is not an amphibian, reptile, bird or mammal (FCP 7.4.2.1);
- The fishery does not use poisons or explosives (FCP 7.4.2.2);
- The fishery is not conducted under a controversial unilateral exemption to an international agreement (FCP 7.4.3);
- The client or client group does not include an entity that has been successfully prosecuted for a forced labour or child labour violation in the last 2 years (FCP 7.4.4);
- The fishery has in place a mechanism for resolving disputes, and disputes do not overwhelm the fishery (FCP 7.4.5);
- The fishery is not an enhanced fishery as per the MSC FCP 7.4.6; and
- The fishery is not an introduced species-based fishery (ISBF) as per the MSC FCP 7.4.7.

2.3 Version Details

Table 13. Fisheries program documents versions

Document	Version number
MSC Fisheries Standard	Version 2.0
MSC General Certification Requirements	Version 2.3
MSC Surveillance Audit Reporting Template	Version 2.0

³ See <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/annual-report-2017>

3 Results

3.1 Surveillance results overview

3.1.1 Summary of conditions

Table 14. Summary of Assessment Conditions

Condition number	Condition	Performance indicator (PI)	Status	PI original score	PI revised score
1	The SG80 requirements for SI a) and b) above must be met. There should be evidence of organised and effective cooperation between all affected parties, which delivers outcomes consistent with meeting Principle 1. There should also be evidence of an effective and transparent mechanism for dispute resolution between the parties (UNFSA Article 10 paragraphs a), h) and j) are particularly relevant to the meeting of this condition).	3.1.1	On -target	65	Not revised
2	The SG80 requirements for scoring issue b) must be met. SG 80 SI b): 'Available evidence' may be any relevant evidence, provided through ICES or other verifiable means, that shows the implications of all available management actions (e.g. by Coastal States and/or agreements with other relevant states in controlling fishing mortality) in achieving exploitation levels consistent with the long term management strategy and that F is reduced below FMSY.	1.2.1	On -target	70	Not revised
3	The SG80 requirements for SI c. SG 80 SI c): 'Available evidence' may be any relevant evidence, provided through ICES or other verifiable means, that shows the implications of all available management actions (e.g. by Coastal States and/or agreements with other relevant states in controlling fishing mortality) in achieving exploitation levels consistent with the long term management strategy to which the HCRs are set.	1.2.2	On -target	75	Not revised

Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and catch data

Overall TAC and catches for the WHB stock are provided in Table 7. For the WHB stock by UoA , TAC, quotas and UoA catches (2014-2018) are given in Table 15 to Table 19 along with percentage of landings to available quota.

3.1.1.1 PFA

Table 15. PFA Quota and Landings data in tonnes.

Year	Available Quota	Landings	Landing %
2014	74,177.6	68,788.5	92.7
2015	85,042.5	83,651.2	98.4
2016	84,038.1	83,908.9	99.8
2017	150,828.6	139,592.2	93.6
2018	205,144.1	185,530.0	90.0

3.1.1.2 DPPO

Table 16. DPPO Quota and Landings data in tonnes.

Year	Available Quota	Landings	% Landings
2014	39,478	35,011	88.7
2015	45,277	45,037	99.5
2016	39,331	39,164	99.5
2017	60,928	67,769	89.9
2018	91,101	87,302	95.8

3.1.1.3 KFO

Table 17. KFO Quota and Landings data in tonnes.

Year	Available Quota	Landings	Landing %
2014	19,657	16,053	81.7
2015	25,002	17,051	68.2
2016	25,917	20,054	77.4
2017	43,110	30,662	71.1
2018	50,651	30,722	60.6

3.1.1.4 SPSG

Table 18. SPSP Quota and Landings data in tonnes.

Year	Available Quota	Landings	Landing %
2014	25,975	25,593	98.5

2015	32,929	30,504	92.6
2016	36,638	36,896	100.7
2017	64,660	62,943	97.0
2018	68,518	66,494	97.0

3.1.1.5 CDPSM

Table 19. CDPSM Quota and Landings data in tonnes.

Year	Available Quota	Landings	Landing %
2014	16,256	10,429	64.2
2015	11,296	9,753	86.3
2016	12,375	10,407	84.1
2017	12,486	9,345	74.8
2018	12,893	10,901	84.5

3.1.2 Recommendation

None

3.2 Conditions

Table 20. Condition 1

Performance Indicator	PI 3.1.1 The management system exists within an appropriate legal and/or customary framework which ensures that it:
Score	65
Rationale	<p>SI 3.1.1a SG80: There is an effective national legal system and organised and effective cooperation with other parties, where necessary, to deliver management outcomes consistent with MSC Principles 1 and 2.</p> <p>Currently, international co-operation does not extend to an 'agreement and delivery of management actions consistent with sustainable management advice' and therefore SG80 is not met.</p> <p>3.1.1b SG 80: The management system incorporates or is subject by law to a transparent mechanism for the resolution of legal disputes which is considered to be effective in dealing with most issues and that is appropriate to the context of the fishery.</p> <p>The on-going disputes in relation to the Norwegian share of the WHB TAC clearly indicate that the management system does not have a mechanism to address disputes that is 'effective in dealing with most issues' and so SG80 not met.</p>
Condition	<p>The SG80 requirements for SI a) and b) above must be met.</p> <p>There should be evidence of organised and effective cooperation between all affected parties, which delivers outcomes consistent with meeting Principle 1.</p> <p>There should also be evidence of an effective and transparent mechanism for dispute resolution between the parties (UNFSA Article 10 paragraphs a), h) and j) are particularly relevant to the meeting of this condition).</p>
Milestones	<p>Year 1. Communication should have begun or continued with relevant parties to promote cooperation on delivery of outcomes consistent with meeting the requirements of Principle 1 and achieving a suitable means of dispute resolution. The Client Group shall provide documented evidence of correspondence, meetings, representations etc.</p>

	<p>Year 2 and Year 3. It is understood that the condition could be closed at any time. Year 2 and 3 should therefore provide information on all relevant correspondence, meetings, representations undertaken and the prevailing situation regarding cooperation between parties and dispute resolution.</p> <p>Year 4. The SG80 requirements should be met. At the time this is achieved, this PI will be rescored at 80 or more.</p>
Client action plan See Appendix 4	<p>Milestone year 2: If the dispute is not resolved, continue to lobby. Demonstrate that discussions have taken place and progress has been made towards agreeing an appropriate dispute resolution system within the Coastal States Agreement. If it appears that the Coastal States cannot agree, evaluate options for development of an agreement at the level of the various fleets involved in the fishery to ensure that the TAC is not overshoot to an unsustainable level in the future, directly or via the Pelagic AC or other bodies as appropriate</p> <p>Action year 2: During negotiations for 2017 TACs and sharing arrangements, arrange meetings with other fleets in the fishery, the European Commission and other Coastal States administrations, when possible, to encourage a management solution for 2017. If no agreement has been reached, the client group will arrange meetings with other fleets in the fishery in order to seek options for a solution at industry level. The Pelagic AC will be included in this work if found appropriate.</p> <p>Outcome year 2: By March 2017, all Coastal States should have formally agreed on management and sharing arrangements for 2017 and beyond. Alternatively, options for an 'industry' level management arrangement have been analysed.</p>
Progress on Condition Year 1	<p>Numerous actions have taken place, led by the Client Group of EU fishing industry representatives.</p> <p>During 2015 and 2016 the EU industry had numerous contacts with their member state administrations, with the EC, and liaised directly with the Norwegian, Faroese and Iceland fishing industry representatives on the margin of Coastal State and NEAFC meetings on the sharing and management of WHB.</p> <p>The scientific basis of the WHB stock management, which included ICES scientific advice, new benchmark and management strategy evaluation, was discussed in detail at meetings of the Pelagic Advisory Council - PELAC (where the relevant NGO's on pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic are also active). The Client Group has also contributed in kind (vessel time and dedicated fisheries scientist time) and financially to improve the WHB research cruises.</p> <p>A new agreement between Coastal States pledging explicitly to abide by ICES scientific advice was signed in December 2016.</p> <p>There is still no overall agreement on TAC shares to reduce fishing mortality to FMSY. Sustainable management for the stock has not yet been achieved. The condition remains open.</p> <p>There is still no formally agreed sharing arrangements for the WHB fishery with quotas still set unilaterally by Norway and Iceland in 2016 and 2017. There is a sign that an agreement could be reached for the 2018 TAC shares. Therefore the expected outcome is not yet entirely reached. The condition was deemed on target.</p>
Progress on Condition Year 2	<p>The client group for the WHB fishery has been quite influential in the Pelagic Advisory Council in developing a management plan and in formulating recommendations to this end. The PELAC recommendation of October 2017 regarding WHB has been as follows: The PELAC recommends following the ICES MSY advice and setting the TAC at 1,387,872 tonnes in 2018. The PELAC further encourages Coastal States to explore the two-tier approach to fishing mortality as originally suggested in the multiannual management strategy developed by the PELAC in 2012. The PELAC believes that working with different fishing mortality values at different SSB levels could be a key tool in securing long-term stability without sacrificing yield. Furthermore, the PELAC has established a focus group working on developing methods to manage the stock in a dynamic and sustainable manner. The PELAC encourages the EU Commission and Member States to contribute to</p>

	<p>the work of this focus group, whose key aspect is to identify methods to improve data and knowledge on stock recruitment – one of the key elements in the ICES stock advice. The Client Group has initiated outreach towards the industry groupings in the other Coastal States (CS). This has resulted in the following:</p> <p>A meeting held among the CS industries including other certified fisheries for North East Atlantic small pelagic stocks (MAC, ASH and WHB) in London in October 2017 on the 3 pelagic stocks discussed in the CS (AS herring, mackerel and WHB) (SPSG 2017).</p> <p>A letter to the chairs of the various CS for pelagic stocks of November 2017 (see Appendix 3).</p> <p>A meeting with leading persons within MSC HQ on technical questions related to the certifications and the state of affairs in the CS discussions (November 2017). I. Gatt (SPSG) and G. van Balsfoort (PFA) represented the client group.</p> <p>A Pelagic Fish Forum industry meeting each November, organised by the Norwegian industry, across all small pelagic fisheries, and a mid-term meeting of the Pelagic Fish Forum at the Brussels Seafood Show in April 2018.</p> <p>There has also been some progress with the working groups at NEAFC, adopting guidelines for Coastal States negotiations at its annual meeting at the end of 2017 (NEAFC 2017a; NEAFC 2017b; NEAFC 2017c). It also adopted a recommendation introducing catch limits on the High Seas (NEAFC Regulatory Area) for 2018 (NEAFC 2018).</p> <p>At this stage, the Coastal States have not yet formally agreed sharing arrangements.</p> <p>The Client Action Plan was somewhat optimistic, hoping for a resolved outcome by this Year 2 surveillance audit. The necessary length of negotiations was taken into account in the milestones set to lift the condition, progress is therefore on target.</p>
Progress on Condition Year 3	<p>The client group for the WHB fishery has been quite influential in the Pelagic Advisory Council (PELAC) in developing a management plan and in formulating recommendations to this end. As part of Pelagic Advisory Council meeting: 2-3 October 2018 The Hague (member). The following recommendations on WHB were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PELAC recommends following the ICES advice based on an agreed Long Term Management Strategy and setting the TAC at 1,143,629 tons in 2019. • The PELAC encourages the EU Commission and Member States to seek rapid agreement with all Coastal States on a sustainable long-term sharing arrangement for the stock. The current situation with no agreed sharing principles is not sustainable in the long-term. <p>At the NEAFC Annual meeting: 12-16 November 2018 London (PFA attended as observer), it was noted that Coastal States consultations had resulted in an agreement on a total catch according to the Long Term Management Plan and ICES advice, and the proposal for conservation and management measures for WHB for 2019 was adopted by consensus.</p> <p>It was also noted that these measures were not fully comprehensive, as they did not include allocation among the Contracting Parties.</p> <p>Below is the list of meeting attendance (and role) of the PFA as lead of PFA-led Client Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal States MAC (4rd round): 21-22 November 2018 London (observer) • EU-Norway incl. bilateral agreement WHB and ASH: 26-30 October 2018 Bergen (observer). See annexed the bilateral EU-Norway fisheries arrangements on WHB and ASH for 2019, signed on 11 December 2018. • ICES Advice Drafting Group WIDE: 12-14 September 2018 (observer) • Northern Pelagic Working Group: 1 October 2018 The Hague (chair) • Coastal States pelagic (1st round): 8-12 October 2018 London (observer) • Coastal States pelagic (2nd round): 24-26 October 2018 London (observer)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal States WHB and ASH (3r round): (5-6 November 2018 London. See annexed the Coastal States agreement on the TAC and Long Term M Plan for WHB. Coastal States MAC (3rd round): 7-9 October 2018 Clonakilty (observer) Meeting MSC certified pelagic fleets in the NEA: 9 October 2018 London (see report meeting in annex) Meeting with MSC staff on pelagic complex and MSC certification: 10 October 2018 London List of actions by PFA as lead of PFA-led Client Group: Meeting MSC certified pelagic fleets in the NEA: 9 October 2018 London (see meeting report in annex) Meeting with MSC staff on pelagic complex and MSC certification: 10 October 2018 London develop harmonised Plan of Action for the certified WHB fisheries in the NEA to be adopted by all clients (on-going)
Status of condition	<p>There continues to be no resolution to sharing agreements of the TAC between the Coastal States, and the mechanism for dispute resolution is still undefined. In 2018, the intent of the UK to exit the European Union (Brexit) has brought further issues to the Coastal States forum. As of 2020 the UK will likely become a separate Coastal State at the negotiating table and this has led to unease within the forum for trying to find an agreement prior to this time. The condition remains on target by virtue of the milestone for reaching an agreement being set for year 4.</p>

Table 21. Condition 2.

Performance Indicator	PI 1.2.1: There is a robust and precautionary harvest strategy in place.
Score	70
Rationale	<p><u>SG 80 SI b) requirement:</u> The harvest strategy may not have been fully tested but evidence exists that it is achieving its objectives</p> <p>Finding: The current situation, where the long-term management plan implemented in 2008 has been set aside and the ICES MSY approach advice on the fishery is not being followed could lead to a situation where the status of the stock is adversely affected. Currently, the problem is only manifested in increased fishing mortality to above F_{MSY}. As evidenced by the annual catches exceeding the ICES advice and current level of fishing mortality being above F_{MSY}, the harvest strategy, based on the MSY approach and lacking an effective long-term management plan, is not achieving all its objectives and the requirements at SG 80 are not met.</p>
Condition	<p>The SG80 requirements for scoring issue b) must be met.</p> <p><u>SG 80 SI b):</u> 'Available evidence' may be any relevant evidence, provided through ICES or other verifiable means, that shows the implications of all available management actions (e.g. by Coastal States and/or agreements with other relevant states in controlling fishing mortality) in achieving exploitation levels consistent with the long term management strategy and that F is reduced below F_{MSY}.</p>
Milestones	<p><u>Year 1:</u> Communication should be progressed with the Coastal States and NEAFC to promote cooperation by all participants in the fishery to deliver outcomes consistent with meeting the requirements of Principle 1 and achieving satisfactory progress towards a reduction in fishing mortality consistent with the MSY approach and, once implemented, consistent with the agreed Long Term Management Strategy (2016).</p> <p><u>Year 2 and Year 3:</u> It is understood that the condition could be closed if ICES advice is that fishing mortality has fallen to at or below F_{MSY}, thus providing sufficient additional evidence that the harvest strategy is achieving its objectives. Years 2 and 3 should therefore provide information on all relevant actions by the Coastal States and</p>

	<p>NEAFC towards achieving the requirement for evidence that the harvest strategy is achieving its objectives in relation to both SSB and F.</p> <p><u>Year 4:</u> The SG80 (b) requirements should be met. At the time this is achieved, this PI will be rescored at 80 or more.</p>
Client action plan	<p>Milestone year 1</p> <p>Make contact with representatives from other Coastal States, EU-Commission, NEAFC and ICES in order to secure information on management, fishing activities and scientific analysis in the respective states and transnational governing bodies. Encourage all parties to seek a joint solution to the sharing arrangements within the framework of a LTMP.</p> <p>Action year 1</p> <p>During negotiations for 2018 TACs and sharing arrangements, arrange meetings with other certified MSC UoCs in the fishery and European Commission to gather information and evidence.</p> <p>Participate in ICES advice drafting group on widely distributed stocks. Lobby all parties in seeking a joint solution within the framework of a long term management plan.</p> <p>Outcome year 1</p> <p>By March 2018, all Coastal States have formally agreed on management and sharing arrangements for 2018 and beyond within reference to the LTMP.</p>
Consultation on condition	<p>None. The actions required for meeting this condition lie with the fisheries “lobbying power” with the EU authorities and their Coastal States counterparts.</p>
Progress on Condition Year 2	<p>F is being reduced towards F_{MSY} but there is still overshoot on the TAC resultant of unilateral quotas.</p> <p>The client group have been active in lobbying activities in 2017 and 2018 (See those listed in Condition 1 above).</p> <p>There has been some progress with the working groups at NEAFC but the Coastal States have not yet formally agreed sharing arrangements.</p>
Progress on Condition Year 3	<p>F continues to be reduced towards F_{MSY} but there is still overshoot on the TAC resultant of unilateral quotas (see Principle 1 background section in this report).</p> <p>The client group have been active in lobbying activities in 2017 and 2018. In particular, the PELAC further encourages Coastal States to further explore the two-tier approach to fishing mortality as originally suggested in the multiannual management strategy developed by PELAC in 2012. The PELAC believes that working with different fishing mortality values at different SSB levels could be a key tool in securing long-term stability without sacrificing yield, provided that this approach is found to be precautionary by ICES and is in line with Common Fisheries Policy, Article 2.2. The PELAC encourages further work on identifying methods to improve data and knowledge on stock recruitment – one of the key elements in the ICES stock advice.</p>
Status of Condition	<p>On target although CAP outcome not yet met</p>

Table 22. Condition 3

Performance Indicator	PI 1.2.2: There are well defined and effective harvest control rules (HCRs) in place.
Score	75
Rationale	<p><u>SG 80 SI c) requirement:</u></p> <p>At the generic level, setting an annual TAC, based on a reliable annual estimate of stock status, backed by either a precautionary long-term Management plan or an MSY strategy, does have a reliable track record for many stocks in the NE Atlantic. The management of the WHB stock is now based on the MSY approach and will adopt a new management plan in 2017. The management is supported by rigorous surveillance, monitoring and enforcement of the national declared quotas together with technical measures. Levels of discarding in the various national fisheries are considered by ICES to be very low and total landings are considered to be a reasonable estimate of the actual catch.</p> <p>The recent history of increasing SSB and F usually below FMSY provides some evidence that the tools used to implement the HCR are effective and are appropriate methods to control exploitation: SG60 is met.</p> <p>SG80 requires evidence that the tools in use are appropriate and effective in achieving the exploitation levels required under the HCRs. Despite there being periods since 2006 when the catch exceeded the ICES advice and the agreed TAC, exploitation levels (F) were below FMSY from 2008 through 2013 when the long term management plan was in operation. Since 2014, however, Coastal States have effectively set their own catch levels, above ICES advice, and exploitation levels have been above FMSY. The evidence indicates that the tools in use are not effective in achieving the exploitation levels required under the HCRs, and SG80 is not met.</p>
Condition	<p>The SG80 requirements for SI c.</p> <p><u>SG 80 SI c):</u> Available evidence' may be any relevant evidence, provided through ICES or other verifiable means, that shows the implications of all available management actions (e.g. by Coastal States and/or agreements with other relevant states in controlling fishing mortality) in achieving exploitation levels consistent with the long term management strategy to which the HCRs are set.</p>
Milestones	<p><u>Year 1:</u> A revised Long Term Management Strategy (LTMS) has been endorsed by ICES as consistent with the Precautionary approach and agreed by the Coastal States (with a minor amendment) This revised strategy should be used by ICES from 2017 for their advice on the fishery in 2018 and subsequent years.</p> <p><u>Year 2 and Year 3:</u> It is understood that the condition could be closed at any time. The evidence required to close the condition will be that:</p> <p>The Long-Term Management Strategy is being used by ICES as the basis for their advice:</p> <p>The Coastal States allocation of shares does not exceed the ICES advice;</p> <p>The total annual catch does not exceed the ICES advised catch (subject to clause 5 in the LTMS)</p> <p><u>Year 4:</u> The SG80 requirements should be met. At the time this is achieved, this PI will be rescored at 80 or more.</p>
Client action plan	<p>Milestone year 1: Make contact with other interested parties and lobby the European Commission to initiate negotiations for a mechanism for cooperation between the Coastal States which is effective in agreeing an appropriate management mechanism consistent with the management plan.</p> <p>Action year 1: During negotiations for 2016 TACs and sharing arrangements, arrange meetings with other fleets in the fishery, European Commission and Member States' national administrations to encourage a management solution for 2016.</p> <p>Outcome year 1: By March 2016, all Coastal States should have formally agreed on management and sharing arrangements for 2016 and beyond.</p>

	<p>Milestone year 2: If the dispute is not resolved, continue to lobby. Demonstrate that discussions have taken place and progress has been made towards agreeing an appropriate dispute resolution system within the Coastal States Agreement. ^[SEP] If it appears that the Coastal States cannot agree, evaluate options for development of an agreement at the level of the various fleets involved in the fishery to ensure that the TAC is not overshoot to an unsustainable level in the future, directly or via the Pelagic AC or other bodies as appropriate</p> <p>Action year 2: During negotiations for 2017 TACs and sharing arrangements, arrange meetings with other fleets in the fishery, the European Commission and other Coastal States administrations, when possible, to encourage a management solution for 2017. If no agreement has been reached, the client group will arrange meetings with other fleets in the fishery in order to seek options for a solution at industry level. The Pelagic AC will be included in this work if found appropriate.</p> <p>Outcome year 2: By March 2017, all Coastal States should have formally agreed on management and sharing arrangements for 2017 and beyond. Alternatively, options for an 'industry' level management arrangement have been analysed.</p> <p>Milestone year 3: Demonstrate that an appropriate system for Coastal States cooperation and dispute resolution is agreed. Alternatively, develop a fleet-level management plan to ensure sustainable management in the absence of international agreement, in agreement with other fleets in the fishery.</p> <p>Action year 3: If no agreement has been reached, the client group will continue to further develop an industry level management arrangement. The work will be done in agreement with other fleets in the fishery.</p> <p>Outcome year 3: By March 2018, all Coastal States should have formally agreed on management and sharing arrangements for 2018 and beyond. Alternatively the framework for an 'industry' level management arrangement has been developed.</p> <p>Milestone year 4: Demonstrate that the effective Coastal States cooperation/dispute resolution system is in place and operational. Alternatively, validate and implement the fleet-level plan, in agreement with other fleets in the fishery.</p> <p>Action year 4: If no agreement has been reached, the client group together with other fleets in the fishery will implement the industry level management arrangement.</p> <p>Outcome year 4: By March 2019, all Coastal States should have formally agreed on management and sharing arrangements for 2019 and beyond. Alternatively an 'industry' level management arrangement has agreed among the fleets on the fishery and implemented.</p>
Consultation on condition	None. The actions required for meeting this condition lie with the fisheries "lobbying power" with the EU authorities and their Coastal States counterparts.
Progress on Condition Year 2	The LTMP has been reviewed by ICES and found to be precautionary (ICES 2017b) subsequently it is taken into account in ICES Advice 2017 for 2018 –(ICES 2017a)
Progress on Condition Year 3	The LTMP is included in the Coastal States Agreed Record for 2019 (Anon 2018), however TACs are still being set independently by the Coastal States and therefore the condition cannot be closed. As per Table 20. Condition 1. The client Group continues to engage and lobby at forums associated with the fishery to secure sharing agreements between CS but this as not so been successful.
Status of Condition	On target but no resolution to date.

3.3 Client Action Plan

No updates beyond the activities referenced in Table 20. Condition 1.

3.4 Principle level scores

Table 23. Summary of Performance Indicator level scores by Principle.

Principle of the Fisheries Standard	UoA 1	UoA 2	UoA 3	UoA 4	UoA 5
Principle 1 – Stock status	86.3	86.3	86.3	86.3	86.3
Principle 2 – Minimising environmental impacts	86.0	89.3	89.3	89.3	87.7
Principle 3 – Effective management	88.4	88.4	88.4	88.4	88.4

Table 24. Individual Performance Indicator Scores.

Principle	Component	Weighting	PI	Performance Indicator	UoC1	UoC2	UoC3	UoC4	UoC5
1	Outcome	0.5	1.1.1	Stock status	90	90	90	90	90
			1.1.2	Reference points	90	90	90	90	90
			1.1.3	Stock rebuilding	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Management	0.5	1.2.1	Harvest Strategy	70	70	70	70	70
			1.2.2	Harvest control rules and tools	75	75	75	75	75
			1.2.3	Information and monitoring	90	90	90	90	90
			1.2.4	Assessment of stock status	95	95	95	95	95
2	Retained species	0.2	2.1.1	Outcome	95	95	95	95	100
			2.1.2	Management	85	85	85	85	100
			2.1.3	Information	95	95	95	95	100
	Bycatch species	0.2	2.2.1	Outcome	80	100	100	100	80
			2.2.2	Management	90	100	100	100	90
			2.2.3	Information	80	100	100	100	80
	ETP species	0.2	2.3.1	Outcome	80	80	80	80	80
			2.3.2	Management	80	80	80	80	80
			2.3.3	Information	80	80	80	80	80
	Habitats	0.2	2.4.1	Outcome	90	90	90	90	90
			2.4.2	Management	90	90	90	90	90
			2.4.3	Information	95	95	95	95	95
	Ecosystem	0.2	2.5.1	Outcome	80	80	80	80	80
			2.5.2	Management	80	80	80	80	80

Principle	Component	Weighting	PI	Performance Indicator	UoC1	UoC2	UoC3	UoC4	UoC5
			2.5.3	Information	90	90	90	90	90
3	Governance and Policy	0.5	3.1.1	Legal and customary framework	65	65	65	65	65
			3.1.2	Consultation, roles and responsibilities	90	90	90	90	90
			3.1.3	Long term objectives	100	100	100	100	100
			3.1.4	Incentives for sustainability	100	100	100	100	100
	Fishery-specific management system	0.5	3.2.1	Fishery specific objectives	90	90	90	90	90
			3.2.2	Decision making processes	80	80	80	80	80
			3.2.3	Compliance and enforcement	100	100	100	100	100
			3.2.4	Research plan	90	90	90	90	90
			3.2.5	Management performance evaluation	80	80	80	80	80

3.5 Re-scoring Performance Indicators

None

4 References

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5 Appendices

5.1 Evaluation processes and techniques

5.1.1 Site Visits

CU Pesca announced the Year 3 Surveillance audit on the 24th January 2019. The off-site surveillance was completed on 26th February 2019 via video conference by the CU Pesca Team leader Hugh Jones (P2) and Sophie des Clers (P3) with Gerard van Balsfoort lead representative of PFA. The list of contacted persons during the audit process are provided in Table 25.

Table 25. Persons contacted during the audit.

Name	Organisation	Reason for Contact
Ian Gatt	SPSG	Updates on SFSG activities during 2018.
Lise Laustsen	DPPO	Updates on DPPO activities during 2018
Norah Parke	KFO	Updates on KFO activities during 2018
Romain Soisson	CDPSM	Updates on CDPSM activities during 2018
Gerard van Balsfoort	PFA	Updates on PFA activities during 2018
Martin Pastoors	PFA	Updates on PFA self sampling activities during 2018
Sieto Verver	WUR	Observer data for PFA in 2018
David Turnball	Marine Scotland	Catch composition data for SFSG

5.1.2 Stakeholder participation

Stakeholders were informed of the visit on 25th January 2019 via email. No stakeholder responses were received during the 30 day period prior to the site visit.

5.2 Harmonised fishery assessments

Table 26. Overlapping fisheries

Fishery name	Certification status and date	Performance Indicators to harmonise
Faroese Pelagic Organisation North East Atlantic blue whiting	Certified, 15 th June 2016	Principle 1 and 3
ISF Iceland North East Atlantic blue whiting	Certified, January 2018	Principle 1 and 3
Norway spring spawning herring	Certified, 30 th April 2009	Principle 1 and 3 (WHB) Principle 3 (3.1.1) (ASH)
Faroese Pelagic Organization (FPO) Atlanto-Scandian herring	Certified, 26 th February 2010	Principle 3 (3.1.1)
ISF Norwegian & Icelandic herring trawl and seine	Certified, 29 th May 2014	Principle 3 (3.1.1)
Faroese Pelagic Organisation North East Atlantic mackerel	Suspended, 15 th June 2016	Principle 3 (3.1.1)

Fishery name	Certification status and date	Performance Indicators to harmonise
Northern Ireland Pelagic Sustainability Group (NIPSG) Irish Sea-Atlantic mackerel, WOS herring & NS herring	MAC only: Suspended, 5 th December 2016	Principle 3 (3.1.1)
MINSA North East Atlantic mackerel	Suspended, 10 th May 2016	Principle 3 (3.1.1)

Table 27. Overlapping fisheries

Supporting Information	
<p>The CABs responsible for fisheries listed in Table 26 were contacted on 05/05/19 by CU Pesca via email. No reported changes in scoring were given by the CABs, since the Year 2 audit of this fishery.</p> <p>CU Pesca contacted the CABs again on 27/02/2019 following the audit to report that scoring of Principle 1 and 3 remained as current and no rescoring was required.</p>	
Was either FCP v2.1 Annex PB 1.3.3.4 or PB1.3.4.5 applied when harmonising	No
Date of harmonisation meeting	05/05/19 and 27/02/19
If applicable, describe the meeting outcome	
No scoring changes required at this time	