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MRAG Americas, Inc.

Pacific Whiting (Hake) Mid-Water Trawl RFM Surveillance Announcement

June 2, 2023

MRAG Americas, Inc. is pleased to announce the 1st annual surveillance audit of the **Pacific whiting (hake) mid-water trawl fishery**. The assessment will evaluate whether the fishery continues to comply with the Responsible Fisheries Management Fishery Standard.

Table 1.	Relevant RFM Program and scheme documents, including applicable versions and their usage		
Relevant RFM Program	Certified Seafood Collaborative (CSC Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program		
Relevant RFM Program Documents	Document Title	Version	Usage
	RFM Procedure 2: Application to Certification Procedures for the RFM Fishery Standard	V6	Process requirements
	Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program Fisheries Standard	V2.1	Standard
	Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program Guidance to Performance Evaluation for the Certification of Wild Capture and Enhanced Fisheries in North America	V2.1	Guidance to Standard

Table 2 – Fishery Announcement		
1	Fishery name	
	Pacific whiting (hake) mid-water trawl	
2	Certificate number	
	RFM-FISH-0003	
3	Certification cycle, assessment type and number	
	1 st surveillance assessment, off-site	
4	Statement that the fishery is within scope	
	MRAG Americas confirms that the fishery under assessment (as defined by the Units of Assessment described below) is within scope of the relevant RFM Fisheries Standard.	
5	Unit(s) of Assessment – UoA(s)	
	Geographical Area(s)	US federal EEZ waters off Washington, Oregon and California
	Management System	Management of the coastal Pacific hake fishery is shared among the joint management Committee (or JMC as established by the agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the USA on Pacific hake/whiting), who recommends the annual TAC, and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the US and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) in Canada. NMFS is responsible for domestic management of US fisheries.
	Fishing gear(s)/method(s)	Mid-water trawl
	Client Group	Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative
	Species (common name/scientific name)	North Pacific hake (<i>Merluccius productus</i>)
	Stock(s)	Offshore stock of Pacific whiting/hake
6	Proposed team leader	
	<p>Ms. Amanda Stern-Pirlot will serve as team leader for the assessment. Amanda is an M.Sc. graduate in Marine Ecology and Fisheries Biology from the University of Bremen, Center for Marine Tropical Ecology (ZMT). She joined MRAG Americas Inc. in 2014 and now serves as Vice President—Science, providing technical oversight of all projects, ensuring MRAG Americas maintains a strong science- and evidence-based ethos. She also oversees our growing portfolio of fisheries certification projects under the MSC, RFM, and FISH Standard for Crew standards. Throughout her career, she has worked with many scientists, conservationists, fisheries managers, and producer groups on international fisheries sustainability issues. With the Institute for Marine Research (IFM-GEOMAR) in Kiel, Germany, she led a work package on simple indicators for sustainability within the EU-funded international cooperation project INCOFISH. This was followed by 5 years in the Standards Department at MSC in London developing standards, and policies and assessment methods informed by best practices in global fisheries management. She was Resources Analyst of the Alaska pollock industry in the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council focusing on bycatch and ecosystem-based management issues and managing the operations of the offshore pollock</p>	

	cooperative. She has co-authored publications on fisheries sustainability in the developing world and the functioning of sustainability standards as an instrument for transforming fisheries to a sustainable basis.
7	Proposed team members
	<p>Dr. Giuseppe Scarcella is an experienced fishery scientist and population analyst and modeller, with wide knowledge and experience in the assessment of demersal stocks. He holds a first degree in Marine Biology and Oceanography (110/110) from the Università Politecnica delle Marche, and a Ph.D. in marine Ecology and Biology from the same university, based on a thesis "Age and growth of two rockfish in the Adriatic Sea". After his degree he was offered a job as project scientist in several research programs about the structure and composition of fish assemblage in artificial reefs, off-shore platform and other artificial habitats in the Italian Research Council – Institute of Marine Science of Ancona (CNR-ISMAR, now CNR-IRBIM). During the years of employment at CNR-ISMAR he has gained experience in benthic ecology, statistical analyses of fish assemblage evolution in artificial habitats, fisheries ecology and impacts of fishing activities, stock assessment, otolith analysis, population dynamic and fisheries management. During the same years he attended courses of uni- multivariate statistics and stock assessment. He is also actively participating in the scientific advice process of FAO GFCM in the Mediterranean Sea. At the moment he is member of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries for the European Commission (STECF).</p> <p>He is author and co-author of more than 50 scientific paper peer reviewed journals and more than 150 national and international technical reports, most of them focused on the evolution of fish assemblages in artificial habitats and stock assessment of demersal species. For some years now, Dr Scarcella has been working in fisheries certification applying the Marine Stewardship Council standard for sustainable fisheries, currently concentrating on Principle 1 of the Standard. Furthermore, Dr Scarcella holds the credential as Fishery team leader (MSC v2.0) and he completed the MSC procedure training 2.1. He also holds the credential as certifier of Responsible <i>Fisheries</i> Management (RFM).</p> <p>Dr. Susan Hanna is professor emeritus of marine economics at Oregon State University. Her research and publications are in the area of marine economics and policy, with an emphasis on fishery management, ecosystem-based fishery management, property rights and institutional design. Dr. Hanna has served as a scientific advisor to the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Minerals Management Service, Northwest Power and Conservation Council and the Pacific Fishery Management Council. She served on the Ocean Studies Board of the National Research Council (NRC), National Academy of Sciences, and several NRC Committees, including the Committee to Review Individual Quotas in Fisheries and the Committee on Protection and Management of Pacific Northwest Anadromous Salmonids.</p> <p>A discussion between team members regarding conflict of interest and biases was held and none were identified.</p>
8	Site Visit
	<p>A site visit for the fishery will occur remotely the week of July 5, 2023.</p> <p>Stakeholders who would like to submit information or request a meeting with the assessment team are asked to do so by 17:00 UTC on July 2, 2023.</p> <p>To schedule a meeting please provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your name and contact details • your association with the fishery • the issues you would like to discuss • where and when you would like to meet <p>Please send any documentation, requests for meetings, or inquiries to: MRAG Americas, Inc. certification@mragamericas.com Amanda Stern-Pirlot MRAG Americas, Inc. 8950 Martin Luther King Jr. St. N., Suite 202 St. Petersburg FL 33702 Ph: 1-206-669-0439</p>

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Information on the RFM stakeholder process can be found here: <https://rfmcertification.org/stakeholder-involvement/>

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Submitted by: Haley Tomberlin

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