

## NORTH ATLANTIC PELAGIC ADVOCACY GROUP (NAPA)

### STATEMENT TO THE PRESS: MARINTRUST FORMALLY ACCEPTS THE NE ATLANTIC BLUE WHITING FIP ONTO THE MARINTRUST IMPROVER PROGRAMME (IP)

**DATE:** 7 October 2021

**The North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group (NAPA) – a collective of nearly 50 retailers and supply chain businesses working together to secure sustainable management of key pelagic stocks – today starts the clock on three-year countdown to certification-ready blue whiting fisheries.**

NAPA has announced the launch of an innovative ‘policy FIP’ - designed to drive political will for cooperative decision-making and secure sustainable management for blue whiting. The FIP covers blue whiting in the NE Atlantic (FAO area 27), subareas 1–9, 12, and 14 (Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters). Blue whiting fisheries from this region lost their MSC certifications in December 2020 due to ongoing disagreements between Coastal States actors, leading to unilateral quota-setting. This, says NAPA, is an unacceptable threat to the sustainability of this products, and one which has major implications for the purchasing decisions of the market.

The continuing dispute over quota allocation of blue whiting has resulted in annual catches well in excess of the advice. The agreed quotas for 2021 reveal that ICES advice is being exceeded by 30% for blue whiting. The new ICES advice published last week revealed that the advised 2022 catch for blue whiting be no more than 752,736 tonnes; a 19% reduction from the 2021 catch advice, and a whopping 39% reduction from the 2021 catch estimate.

This is having major implications for businesses. Loss of MSC certification implies that fisheries are no longer publicly recognised against well-known independent certification programmes for fisheries sustainability. Furthermore, blue whiting lost MarinTrust certification - which is conditional on MSC certification. The knock-on effect on the biggest customer of the fishery, salmon aquaculture, is a significant step back in responsible business practice and impacts retailer and foodservice companies, as well as consumers, who demand sustainable marine ingredients in feed.

**Helen Ziv-Douki, President of aquaculture feed-producer Cargill’s aqua nutrition business**, commented: *“Cargill welcomes the launch of this important FIP for blue whiting in conjunction with those on herring and mackerel in the North East Atlantic. It’s imperative for aquaculture to be part of a supply chain which carefully and diligently maintains the sustainability of the fisheries through good governance, management and fishing activities. We have made commitments to our customers and consumers to provide ethical, sustainable products - and NAPA’s comprehensive FIPs will drive sustainable supplies of marine ingredients. We appreciate the joint efforts of our suppliers and partners on this industry-wide challenge.”*

The policy FIP is a concept designed, scoped and executed by NAPA to drive sustainability in blue whiting fisheries. Using the framework of a traditional, science-based FIP as a guide for driving policy and political action towards the desired, sustainable outcome. Should no improvements be made then individual NAPA members will review their individual purchasing decisions; NAPA members are currently publishing 'sourcing statements' setting out clearly the consequences of failure.

*'We are calling on the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) Coastal States to agree quotas in line with scientific advice and implement a long-term science-based management plan for blue whiting. ... Should progress falter, or the FIP fail, **we will continue our stand to not source fishmeal containing uncertified blue whiting.**'* – Skretting Norway, NAPA Member

*'In the event of a failure of the Blue Whiting FIP, Aquascot will review our sourcing policy for feed used by our Scottish salmon farming suppliers and will aim to **source this product only from Coastal States that are reviewing their fishery management plans in line with NAPA's recommendations.**'* – Aquascot, NAPA Member

**The issue is entirely political; Coastal States merely need to agree on blue whiting catch shares that follow the ICES advice.**

We are calling on the Coastal States involved in North East Atlantic blue whiting fisheries to:

- **Follow the ICES advice** - Ensure that the overall catch does not exceed scientific advice.
- **Implement Management Plans** - Multi-annual management should be the underlying approach by default. That includes stable sharing arrangements and harvest strategies that include precautionary harvest control rules for setting catch limits, a periodic review process, and any necessary mechanisms to transition from previous arrangements to a new system.
- **Resolving the allocation issues around this stock** - Prioritise and re-establish the NEAFC WG on Allocation as a first step. In addition, a dispute resolution mechanism should be employed at both the coastal States meeting and NEAFC.

**\*\*ENDS\*\***

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*Notes to Editors:*



## **More on NAPA**

NAPA is growing constantly, and currently represents nearly 50 retailers, food service companies and suppliers from EU and non-EU countries with the shared aim of sourcing sustainable and certified seafood in order to supply a growing demand for ecolabelled fish products. To achieve this, NAPA is seeking an agreement on total allowable catches for North East Atlantic Pelagic fisheries in line with scientific advice, and for a long-term science-based management agreement.

Further detail can be found at: <https://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/fisheries-management/north-atlantic-pelagic-advocacy-group/>