



Annual Report 2022

North Atlantic Pelagic
Advocacy Group

View from Aoife Martin, Independent Chair of The North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group (NAPA)

I am delighted to present NAPA's second full Annual Review. It has been another incredibly busy twelve months for NAPA, as we continue to advocate for long-term, science-based management of Northeast Atlantic mackerel, herring and blue whiting.

Our Annual Review sets out the achievements that NAPA has made, on behalf of processors and retailers from around the globe. While I am pleased with all the progress we have achieved, particular highlights include that (1) we extended NAPA's reach across five continents, and welcomed our first US partner, (2) we produced a comprehensive position paper that set out, step by step, the actions that the Coastal States need to take to address the current challenges, and we launched our #AgreeFollowCommit campaign in the lead up to the Coastal State negotiations. However, despite our efforts to both highlight the management failures and to propose management solutions, we are still to achieve our aims.

We are now entering the third year of our mackerel and herring FIPs – this is a critical period for NAPA as the terms of these plans mean that unless there is meaningful progress against NAPA's objectives the FIPs will end. This will have dramatic consequences for businesses across the seafood supply chain and for consumers. It would also represent the abject failure of Coastal State collaboration and effective fisheries management. We hope this is not the case but there is much work still to done.

About the North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group

The North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group (NAPA) is a collective of global retailers and supply-chain businesses with a commitment to sourcing sustainable seafood. This collective is using its voice to advocate for long-term, science-based management of Northeast Atlantic pelagic stocks: for prospering oceans and fisheries, and business security.

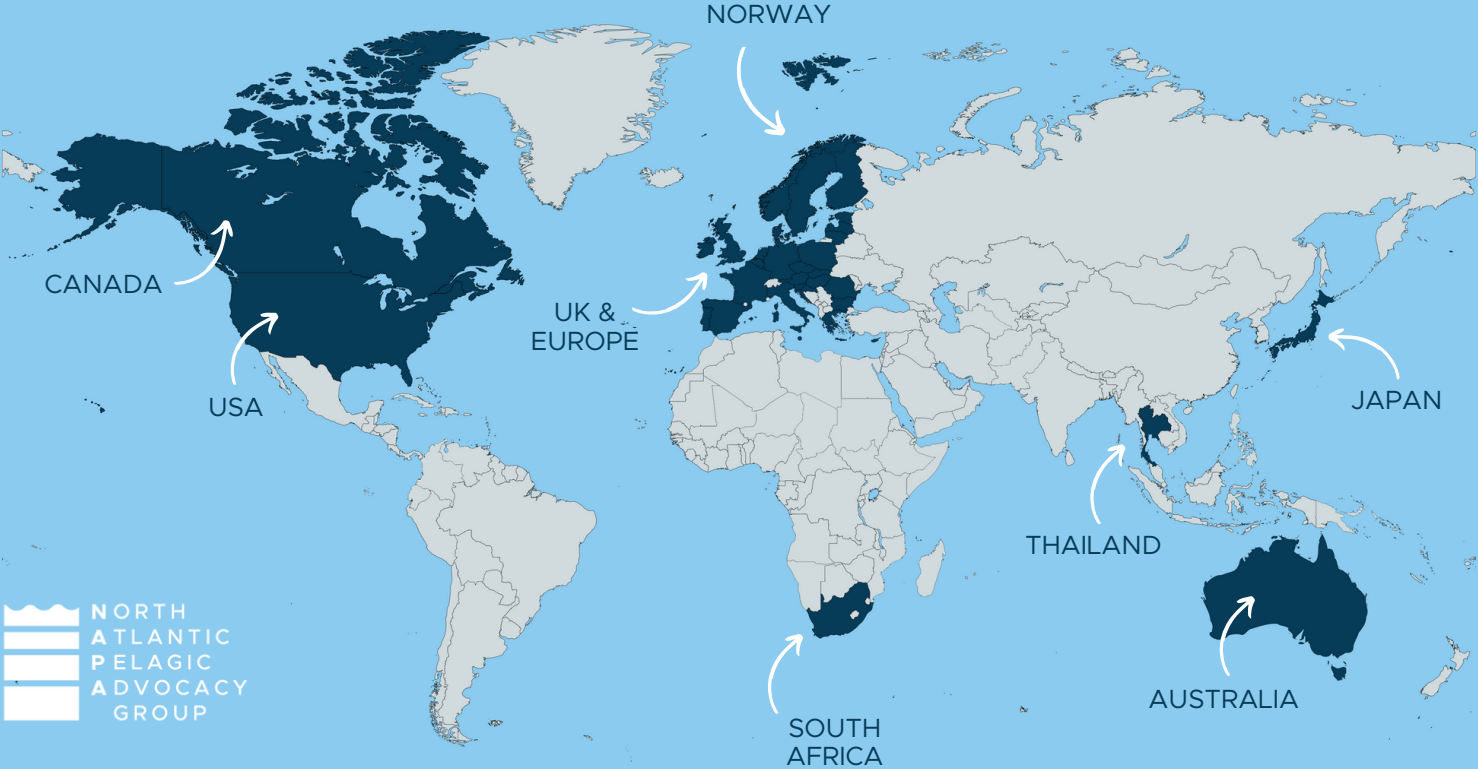
Established in June 2020, NAPA is a market-led approach working to improve North Atlantic pelagic fisheries management. It was formed in response to the continuing dispute over mackerel quota allocation in the Northeast Atlantic. Over time, this dispute has resulted in annual catches well in excess of the advised level for three commercially important species: Northeast Atlantic mackerel (hereafter mackerel), Atlanto-Scandian (Norwegian Spring Spawning) herring (hereafter herring), and Northeast Atlantic blue whiting (hereafter blue whiting).

NAPA aims to drive sustainability in these fisheries by securing an agreement on total allowable catches (TACs) in line with scientific advice, as well as long-term science-based fisheries management strategies. The group intends to tackle these issues through the establishment of a Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) for mackerel and herring, and a MarinTrust FIP for blue whiting. The FIPs both serve to drive political will while holding key actors and decision-makers to account.

NAPA facts and figures:

- 61 Company Partners
- 5 Trade body Partners
- Representation from 5 continents

Global reach of NAPA membership





2022 Highlights


Advocacy and Outreach

We began the year in anticipation of progress following the Coastal States' agreement to begin sharing discussions in early 2022. However, several Coastal States published their allocations before these meetings commenced and NAPA published a statement criticizing these actions.

In February, following the media noise generated by the spillage of 100,000 tonnes of blue whiting, NAPA made a statement that brought attention to the fact that given the lack of effective management processes, this spillage represented a small proportion when compared with overfishing.

Official sharing discussions took place in March 2022 and NAPA was invited to participate in the plenary. In preparation for this, meetings with the UK, Iceland, Greenland, and Russia delegations were organised, and concerns were discussed.

In March, we published a position paper setting out meaningful steps that Coastal States can take to achieve agreement on total allowable catches for mackerel, herring, and blue whiting. Our report argued that it is time for Coastal States to agree on an appropriate system for quota allocation, employ a dispute resolution mechanism, and consider a cap on international catches.



We followed this position paper with a deeper-dive into catches of mackerel. The analysis determined that the westerly migration of the mackerel stock led to the establishment of new mackerel fisheries in Iceland and Greenland's EEZ. These Icelandic and Greenland mackerel fisheries contributed 162,841mt (or 15%) to the total 2021 catch (1,077,349mt). However, with the more recent eastward migration, these fisheries are now predominantly targeted in international waters (83.51% of Icelandic catch and 100% of Greenland catch in 2021). The analysis concluded that there is an argument that the mackerel allocations of these Coastal States (and the Russian Federation) should better reflect the distribution of the mackerel stock (i.e. through zonal allocation).

In March, NAPA partners received presentations from the Chairs of the Coastal States' Working Groups on mackerel, blue whiting, and Atlanto-Scandian herring: Colin Faulkner, Herluf Sigvaldsson and Will Francis. All said that securing a quota sharing arrangement in 2022 was the priority.

In May, NAPA released a statement when we learned that despite the ongoing sharing discussions, the Faroese Ministry of Fisheries independently confirmed their quotas for blue whiting, and joined the EU, UK, and Norway in setting Atlanto-Scandian herring quotas, and the UK and Norway in setting blue whiting quotas, despite the continuing discussions.



In June, NAPA issued an [open letter](#) to politicians highlighting that major retailers and manufacturers in Europe were increasingly sourcing Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified sustainable jack mackerel from Chile as an alternative to Northeast Atlantic mackerel. Unlike Northeast Atlantic mackerel, Chilean jack mackerel is sustainably managed and fished: the 15 nations catching Chilean jack mackerel in the South Pacific Ocean have been able to agree on a sustainable catch quota allocation in line with scientific advice. We highlighted that jack mackerel products can already be found on shelves at leading European retailers like Migros (own brand M-Classic “MSC Makrelenfilets”), Delhaize (First State “Jack Mackerel”), or Albert Heijn (FishTales “Hors Makreel in Olie”).

In advance of the 2022 Coastal States and NEAFC meetings in October and November respectively, we launched a communications campaign calling on the Coastal States to agree on sustainable catch shares, follow the scientific advice, and commit to long-term management of Northeast Atlantic pelagic stocks ([#AgreeFollowCommit](#)). The campaign was highly successful, garnering significant press and media attention and the support of several external organisations working in the Northeast Atlantic region: the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Sciaena, and the Pew Charitable Trusts. You can read more about our campaign in the [Communications section](#).

Messaging from NAPA's 2022 Coastal States campaign

Healthy stocks > Healthy fisheries > Healthy politics

NORTH ATLANTIC PELAGIC ADVOCACY GROUP

#AgreeFollowCommit

THE NEWS

For cod's sake, don't let it happen again

Overfishing and stock collapse – We've been there before with Northeast Atlantic cod, off Canada and the USA.

Now, Northeast Atlantic pelagic stocks are in danger of becoming drastically depleted, as coastal states struggle to follow the science and agree long-term management plans.

Let's not allow it to happen again for Northeast Atlantic mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring and blue whiting.

Overfishing is an unacceptable threat to pelagic fisheries. Let's learn from past mistakes.

NORTH ATLANTIC PELAGIC ADVOCACY GROUP

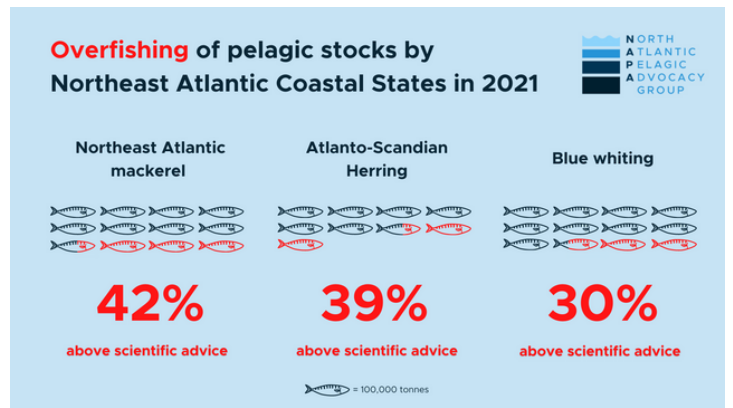
#AgreeFollowCommit

7 WEEKS TO GO

Coastal States meetings
17 - 21 October 2022

NORTH ATLANTIC PELAGIC ADVOCACY GROUP

#AgreeFollowCommit



If you don't share, nobody gets to play.

NORTH ATLANTIC PELAGIC ADVOCACY GROUP

#AgreeFollowCommit

Agree. Follow. Commit.

NORTH ATLANTIC PELAGIC ADVOCACY GROUP

#AgreeFollowCommit

Timeline of Coastal States (dis)agreements



There have been just **four years (2006-2009)** in which all Coastal States agreed on total allowable catches for pelagic stocks.

Agree. Follow. Commit.

NORTH ATLANTIC PELAGIC ADVOCACY GROUP

#AgreeFollowCommit



New Members


11 companies joined NAPA in 2022, including representation from Australia, Canada, and the USA.

Fishery Improvement Projects

Our mackerel and herring FIP received a further ‘C’ (adequate) progress rating for our first 12-month review. This recognised the limited progress made by the Coastal States (described above) but also the considerable advocacy efforts made by NAPA.

Until August this FIP was lodged on FisheryProgress.org. Launched in 2016, FisheryProgress.org is a one-stop shop for information on the progress of global FIPs. It makes tracking progress more efficient, consistent, and reliable for businesses that support fishery improvement projects.

In 2022, FisheryProgress.org launched a new Human Rights and Social Responsibility Policy to “help FIPs reduce the risk of human and labour rights abuses and to provide a common framework for reporting on social performance in fisheries”. All FIPs reporting on FisheryProgress.org are required to comply with the policy. Of particular relevance to NAPA, the new policy requires information about all the vessels or fishers included in the FIP, and for this to be updated annually. Furthermore, NAPA would be required to “undertake best efforts to make fishers aware of their rights under this policy, including the FIP’s commitment to improvement under the FisheryProgress Human Rights Code of Conduct and the availability of grievance mechanisms and how to use them.”



Our FIP is a “policy FIP” that aims to improve fisheries management, rather than on-vessel activities. Accordingly, our FIP has no direct links with vessels, and by design covers all vessels fishing for mackerel and Atlanto-Scandian herring in FAO27. This requirement is not of relevance to the FIP and outside of our mandate. Accordingly, NAPA regretfully withdrew from FisheryProgress.org and has instead lodged the FIP on the NAPA website.

Nevertheless, the FIP remains a credible, comprehensive FIP with 6-month reporting vetted by the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership. The only difference is the platform it is hosted on.

Our [MarinTrust Blue Whiting FIP](#) was launched in October 2021 and the NAPA Steering Group is already considering introducing a supplementary 6-month review to accompany the mandatory annual review to maximise transparency.

Catching Sector Collaboration

It has always been the intention of NAPA to work collaboratively with the pelagic catching sector: after all, we have the same goal – sustainable fisheries. We regularly hold “Catching Sector Roundtables” where we can update the catchers on our work, and explore opportunities for collaboration.

Eight organisations from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Netherlands and Iceland attended our March 22 roundtable. The Aldi South Group presented, noting the importance of improving the the management of the fisheries..

A further roundtable meeting took place in September. Catching sector reps from Ireland and the European Association of Pelagic Organisations attended, along with several NAPA Partners. The discussion focussed on NAPA’s view on collective responsibility – indicating that the market pressure is working. Organisations were eager to distinguish themselves from each other.



Communications


In preparation for the 2022 Coastal States and NEAFC meetings, our comms team led by [Mindfully Wired Communications](#), devised and launched an advocacy campaign. At the heart of the campaign was the call for Coastal States to commit to long-term, science-based management of Northeast Atlantic pelagic stocks – mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring, and blue whiting.

The aim of the campaign was two-fold:

- Targeted influence: Specifically, to influence Coastal States decision makers – the ministers and delegates who attend the Coastal States negotiations and have power to make change happen.
- Salience: Communicate this message loud and clear, for both industry and consumers to hear and understand.

The overarching campaign message related directly to NAPA's fundamental asks that Coastal States agree on sustainable catch shares, follow the scientific advice, and commit to long-term management, thereby coining the campaign slogan: Agree Follow Commit, or #AgreeFollowCommit on social media.

The campaign ran from 5th September to 28th October 2022, leveraging the power of social media through [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). The social media campaign accrued >11,000 impressions, with an engagement rate increase of 1.3% over the course of the campaign. The campaign was also publicly supported and amplified by several external organisations working on pelagics in the Northeast Atlantic region – the [Marine Stewardship Council \(MSC\)](#), the [Pew Charitable Trusts](#) and [Sciaena](#) (an environmental NGO based in Portugal).



The second key activity of the campaign was engagement with press and media. Two press statements were issued in the run up to the negotiations – one reported on the latest ICES advice and the second was a joint open letter to ministers with the MSC. The open letter featured a quote from Erin Priddle, the MSC’s Northern Europe Regional Director. Both statements received significant media interest in the UK and the EU sector press, with at least 13 resultant articles published.

Over the past year, NAPA has become an important go-to information source for fisheries journalists from several top publications, including The Guardian, IntraFish and The Grocer, who now actively come to NAPA for updates on the status of political negotiations. We intend to continue strengthening these relationships while also forging new connections in 2023.

Successes from the 2022 Coastal States campaign will be carried forward and built upon in 2023, and the approach will be adapted and strengthened in response to reflections following this campaign.

Recognition

In 2022, to reflect its budding involvement in wild-capture fisheries, the Global Seafood Alliance (GSA) introduced the Global Fisheries Innovation Award to recognize individuals and organizations finding new solutions to the key challenges facing fisheries.

NAPA was selected as one of three finalists this award, as determined by GSA’s Standard Oversight Committee. While we did not win, we hugely appreciated the recognition.

Global Fisheries Innovation Awards



NAPA Project Lead, Dr Tom Pickerell (centre), at the inaugural Global Fisheries Innovation Awards in Seattle.



Summary of 2022 Political Negotiations

ICES Scientific Advice

In mid-October, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) published advice on Northeast Atlantic pelagic stocks. The advised 2023 catch for Northeast Atlantic mackerel is no more than 782,066 tonnes; a 1.6% reduction from the 2022 catch advice. However, the agreed 2022 total allowable catch (TAC) was set at 1,131,416 tonnes. To follow the ICES advice in 2023, a cut of 31% is required.

The advised 2023 catch for Atlanto-Scandian herring is no more than 511,171 tonnes; a 14.6% reduction from the 2022 catch advice. However, in 2022 there was no agreement on the TAC; the sum of the declared unilateral quotas from the individual parties was 827,963 tonnes. In order to follow the ICES advice in 2023, a cut of 38% is required.

There was better news for blue whiting. The advised 2023 catch for blue whiting is no more than 1,359,629 tonnes; an 81% increase from the 2022 catch advice. The preliminary 2022 catch was calculated to be 1,107,529 tonnes. As such, compared to 2022, there is an opportunity for a 23% increase in the TAC.

However, the uptick in the advice for blue whiting is not linked to improved stock management. On the contrary, unprecedented levels of recruitment have flooded the fishery, effectively masking the underlying problems of inadequate management and governance, which mackerel, herring and blue whiting collectively suffer from.

Coastal States

In late-October, the seven Coastal States [1] convened in London for the Coastal States meeting [2]. The elevated advice for blue whiting offered a golden opportunity to the Coastal States. The revised estimates of abundance would allow all parties to scale-back their allocations and ensure the TAC does not exceed the scientific advice without taking real-term cuts. Would they seize this chance?

Mackerel

- There was broad recognition of the advice from ICES, with most Parties indicating their support for setting the TAC at this level.
- Parties discussed a sharing arrangement.
- There were constructive talks, with good progress being made in exploring solutions.
- Parties agreed to continue sharing discussions at the start of November before signing an agreed record on a total catch limit.

Atlanto-Scandian Herring

- Parties agreed to set the TAC for ASH in line with the headline advice from ICES, equating to a TAC of 511,171 tonnes, a -14.60% decrease compared to 2022.

Blue Whiting

- There were divergent views on the TAC level, with the UK supporting a TAC constraint principle.
- Parties agreed to reconvene to continue discussions on the TAC for blue whiting before the NEAFC meeting.

[1] UK, EU, Norway, Iceland, Greenland, Faroes and Russian Federation

[2] Northeast Atlantic mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring and blue whiting fisheries exist across both Coastal State exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and in international waters. To manage these fisheries, the Coastal States adopt management measures and allocations for the whole distribution area of the fish stocks, this includes proposing measures to be adopted by the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) in international waters (i.e. the NEAFC Regulatory Area). NEAFC takes management measures for the part of the stock that occurs within the Regulatory Area, but only after the relevant Coastal States have agreed on TACs and allocations at a separate meeting called the Coastal States meeting.



What was noticeable in 2022 was that previously there has been quick agreement to follow the ICES advice and set a TAC accordingly. While this sounds great on paper, in reality this only 'works' if there is a multilateral agreement between all parties. There was far more debate and discussion.

The limited discussions (relative to mackerel and blue whiting) on Atlanto-Scandian herring were likely to be due to the fact that the Russian Federation is a Coastal State for this species and several of the other Coastal States did not wish to negotiate with them due to the invasion of Ukraine.

North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)

The NEAFC meeting took place in late November and despite intersessional meetings on mackerel and blue whiting, no agreements had been reached.

Mackerel

- Discussions on a total allowable catch for Northeast Atlantic mackerel were ongoing.
- A measure for mackerel will be tabled via correspondence once an Agreed Record has been agreed and signed by the Coastal States.
- The agreed records will be uploaded once they are signed.





Atlanto-Scandian Herring

- Coastal States agreed that total allowable catches for 2023 will be in line with scientific advice for Atlanto-Scandian herring.
- The UK did not co-sign the same Agreed Record as the Russian Federation, instead signing a separate, identical version.
- All Parties expressed a genuine willingness to continue addressing a new quota sharing arrangement and underlined the need to reach a new arrangement for sustainable management
- The delegations agreed that the Parties will meet in January 2023 to address the issue of a quota sharing arrangement for the imminent future.


Blue Whiting

- Discussions on a total allowable catch for blue whiting were ongoing.
- Measures were adopted for blue whiting in the NEAFC Regulatory Area (international waters) in 2023.
- These measures reflect the outcomes of Coastal State consultations and prevent countries who are not Coastal States or fishing parties to these stocks fishing.

Post-NEAFC Discussions

In early December, the mackerel working group meet once again. This time the Parties agreed to set the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) in line with the headline scientific advice, equating to 782,066 tonnes: a -1.62% decrease on the 2022 TAC. This means that States will commit to fishing within limits that scientists feel are not damaging to the long-term welfare of the stock. But, as noted above, for this to mean anything, a sharing agreement is needed.

However, the Agreed Record also reflects agreement by the delegations to initially set quotas for 2023 at levels which would set a positive tone and pave the way for reaching a firm agreement on fishing limits in 2023. For the majority of Parties, this will be through setting provisional quotas at the start of the year.



This is a significant step, as last year the UK and the EU set their mackerel allocation before the sharing discussions had even begun. Not conducive for constructive dialogue.

The Parties also agreed a work plan for continued discussions on sharing in 2023. Parties will meet several times in February and March for a period of intensive discussions, with aim of reaching final agreement before 31st March.

Again, this is significant – setting a deadline should enable an agreement to be reached for 2023. In recent years, the sharing discussions have taken so long that the Parties were unable to reach an agreement before the mackerel fishing season started.

Following NEAFC, the TAC for blue whiting was also set at the level advised by ICES, equating to 1,359,629 tonnes: an 80.62% increase on the 2022 TAC.

This was disappointing and must be viewed as a missed opportunity (as described above). However, the UK strongly advocated for the TAC for blue whiting to be set at a more precautionary level, in line with TAC constraint principles. The outcome reflects the strong positions of the other Coastal States to the stock. A unilateral statement is included in the Agreed Record, which highlights the UK position that the preference would have been for a more precautionary level, and that Parties should seek mechanisms to ensure greater stability in the stock going forward.



NAPA's take on the negotiations

NAPA called on the Coastal States involved in Northeast Atlantic pelagic fisheries to:

- Agree on sustainable catch shares
- Follow the science
- Commit to long-term management

In 2022, we saw progress; the previous 'rubber-stamping' of pledges to adhere to ICES advice, followed by a lack of political will to agree on allocations resulting in TACs collectively exceeding said advice, was only seen with Atlanto-Scandian herring. That in itself was likely a consequence of the geopolitical situation in Ukraine.

There were more involved discussions on mackerel and blue whiting. The UK position of restraint to 'bank' the unexpected boom in blue whiting must be recognised; it is unfortunate that other Coastal States were not as ambitious. Finally, the setting of a deadline for a mackerel sharing agreement is very positive; NAPA will hold the Coastal States to their timeline.



Forward Look

In 2023 NAPA's priorities will be to:

- Continue to make progress with our FIPs;
- Continue our advocacy campaign to encourage the Coastal States and Fishing Nations to ensure NAPA's objectives are understood and realised;
- Continue to encourage supply chain engagement;
- Build on our collaborative partnership with the catching sector.

2022 Financial Summary

The following financial summary highlights the expenditure against budget for the period January 2022-December 2022.

Income 2022/23	
Revenue collected	£54,000
Carry over from 2021/22	£5,197
Packard Foundation grant	£66,278
Total	£125,475
<hr/>	
Expenditure 2022/23	
Tomolamola Consulting	£37,440
Mindfully Wired Comms Support	£31,680
Ocean Outcomes - Blue Whiting FIP Review	£1,868
Marine Ingredients Certifications Ltd Fee increase	£60
2 year domain name purchase: napafisheries.org	£37
Cost for continued use of the Cision media platform	£1,200
Website Design and Build	£9,120
MWC comms variation order	£2,880
Total	£84,285
<hr/>	
Total Remaining	£41,190



NORTH
ATLANTIC
PELAGIC
ADVOCACY
GROUP

CONTACT

Dr Tom Pickerell
NAPA Project Lead
tom@tomolamolaconsulting.com

Aoife Martin
NAPA Chair
aoife.martin@seafish.co.uk

Brought to you by
[Mindfully Wired Communications](#)