

The North East Atlantic mackerel and Atlanto-Scandian herring Fishery Improvement Project

**North Atlantic Pelagic
Advocacy Group**

Last updated: February 2024

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FIP Description

There are two fisheries captured within this Fishery Improvement Project (FIP): the North East Atlantic (NEA) mackerel fishery, and the Atlanto-Scandian herring (ASH) (also known as the Norwegian spring spawning herring) fishery. Both fisheries are prosecuted using pelagic (midwater) trawls and purse seines. Coastal vessels also use mechanised handlines.

These fisheries are managed by the [North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission \(NEAFC\)](#). NEAFC was formed to recommend measures to maintain the rational exploitation of fish stocks in the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. Most of this area is under the fisheries jurisdiction of NEAFC's Contracting Parties (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland (DFG)), the EU, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation), but four large areas (including the area around the North Pole) are international waters and constitute the [NEAFC Regulatory Area](#).

The allocation of national quotas is based on allocation keys negotiated in connection with the establishment of the [EU Common Fisheries Policy \(CFP\)](#) or negotiated in the framework of NEAFC, the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission (JNRFC) or in bilateral agreements between European Union (European Commission at the time) and Norway and the Faroe Islands. Many of these allocations were established when the 200 nm EEZs were established in the late 1970s. These keys are to a large extent based on the Coastal States' fishing records during the period 1971–76 and has subsequently and with only a few amendments been used by the European Union (EU) for the annual allocation of fishing quotas among its Member States. Known as “relative stability” this is one of the cornerstones of the CFP.

However, the changing distribution of these stocks has led to demands for a share of the catch by those countries that have little history of it. The parties have not been able to reach a satisfactory agreement on quotas.

Mackerel

All mackerel Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certificates were suspended in March 2019. The suspension originally took place after the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) advice showed stock (Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)) level below trigger point. After revised ICES advice, showing the stock (SSB) above trigger level, the relevant Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) nevertheless concluded:



"The outcome of harmonisation during the 2nd surveillance audit is that despite the change in mackerel stock status with the SSB currently above the MSY BTrigger, PI 1.2.2 Harvest Control Rules & Tools score remains < 60 and the fishery still fails, for the following reasons:

- **The current level of exploitation does not provide evidence that the tools used to implement the generally understood HCRs are appropriate and effective in controlling exploitation.**
- **There is a continuing dispute over mackerel quota allocation resulting in annual catches well in excess of the advised catches. There is an absence of long-term management strategy for the mackerel agreed by all parties involved in mackerel fisheries. Therefore, it could not be concluded with confidence that the management agency can and will act effectively and in a timely manner to reduce exploitation rate if the point of recruitment impairment is approached.**
- **Despite the change in mackerel stock status with the SSB currently above the MSY BTrigger and the improvement in the management of the advised catch, with current and predicted exploitation level together with low recruitment, the stock is nevertheless predicted to continue to decline. Therefore, there is a reason to conclude that such high level of exploitation will lead to a situation where the stock is likely to fall below sustainable level in the foreseeable future.**

Therefore, the suspension of the fishery certificate is not lifted."

- Conclusions from relevant CABs



The reinstatement of certification is reliant on the effective adoption and implementation of the Harvest Control Rules (HCRs).





Herring

For Atlanto-Scandian herring, independent assessors identified the risk to future stock health and set conditions against their certification in 2015, requiring states to reach a quota-sharing agreement by November 2020. This was not achieved and these fisheries lost their MSC certificates on 30 December 2020. The latest expedited audit (Aug 2020) reveals that the fisheries require:

- **The fishery needs to demonstrate that the harvest strategy is achieving its objectives and that overall quotas are within sustainable limits.**
 - **The ongoing allocation dispute needs to be resolved.**
 - **The fishery should work with the EU, the Pelagic Advisory Council, other certified or suspended Units of Certification (UoCs) in the fishery and/or other parties as appropriate to support the resolution of the dispute between the Coastal States and to re-establish an effective international cooperation and dispute-resolution mechanism for the fishery.**
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FIP Breakdown

FIP Objective	FIP stakeholders are implementing management improvements with a goal to re-certify the FIP fisheries against the MSC Standard by 2024.
FIP Type	Comprehensive
FIP Stage	Stage 3: FIP Implementation
Start and Projected End Dates	April 2021 - April 2024
Next Progress Report Due	December 2022
Species	<p>Common Name - Atlantic Mackerel <i>Scientific Name - Scomber scombrus</i></p> <p>Common Name - Atlanto-Scandian Herring <i>Scientific Name - Clupea harengus</i></p>
Gear Type	<p>Hydraulic Hook & Line Midwater Trawl Purse Seine-Unassociated</p>
Location	FAO Fishing Area 27 (Atlantic, Northeast)
Regional Fisheries Management Organization	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)
Latest Progress Rating	C (some recent progress)

FIP Stocks

Detailed scoring information for each stock included in the FIP is outlined in the tables below:

Principle	Component	Performance Indicator	NEA Mackerel - UoA 1	ASH - UoA 2
1	Outcome	1.1.1 Stock status	>80	60-79
		1.1.2 Stock rebuilding	N/A	>80
	Management	1.2.1 Harvest Strategy	60-79	60-79
		1.2.2 Harvest control rules and tools	<60	<60
		1.2.3 Information and monitoring	>80	>80
		1.2.4 Assessment of stock status	>80	>80
2	Primary species	2.1.1 Outcome	>80	>80
		2.1.2 Management	>80	>80
		2.1.3 Information	>80	>80
	Secondary Species	2.2.1 Outcome	>80	>80
		2.2.2 Management	>80	>80
		2.2.3 Information	>80	>80
	ETP Species	2.3.1 Outcome	>80	>80
		2.3.2 Management	>80	>80
		2.3.3 Information	>80	>80

FIP Stocks table continued...

Principle	Component	Performance Indicator	NEA Mackerel - UoA 1	ASH - UoA 2
	Habitats	2.4.1 Outcome	>80	>80
		2.4.2 Management	>80	>80
		2.4.3 Information	>80	>80
	Ecosystem	2.5.1 Outcome	60-79	60-79
		2.5.2 Management	<60	<60
		2.5.3 Information	>80	>80
3	Governance and Policy	3.1.1 Legal and customary framework	60-79	60-79
		3.1.2 Consultation, roles and responsibilities	>80	>80
		3.1.3 Long term objectives	>80	>80
	Fishery specific management system	3.2.1 Fishery specific objectives	>80	>80
		3.2.2 Decision making processes	>80	<60
		3.2.3 Compliance and enforcement	>80	>80
		3.2.4 Management performance evaluation	>80	>80

FIP Actions

Action Name	Indicators	Description	Tasks	Expected Completion Date	Status
<p>Engagement to ensure robust harvest strategies adopted and implemented</p>	<p>1.2.2, 1.2.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.1</p>	<p>The stock status (PI 1.1.1) of ASH was scored at 60-79 because fishing mortality (F) in 2019 exceeded the FMSY level, such that SG80 was not met for Scoring Issue (b); SG100 for Scoring Issue (a) was considered met. To ensure that F is no greater than FMSY, helping maintain the stock around its target reference point and achieving SG80 for PI 1.1.1, the existing harvest strategy will be improved to appropriately allocate TAC (total allowable catch) among Coastal States. TACs for both NEA mackerel and ASH are implemented via the existing management strategy framework and a Coastal States Agreement.</p> <p>NAPA and NAPA partners will engage with Coastal States/NEAFC delegations, and other relevant stakeholders, in order to pursue NEAFC adoption, implementation and compliance with robust mackerel and herring harvest strategies that are responsive to the state of the two stocks, adoption of a HCR that is based explicitly on the harvest strategy and formally adopted target and limit reference points, and evidence that the HCR is meeting stock management objectives. Specifically, this will involve negotiations around annual TACs and appropriate sharing arrangements among the coastal states.</p> <p>Expected outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEAFC shall formally adopt appropriately precautionary harvest control rules for the NEA mackerel and ASH stocks that ensure the exploitation rates are reduced as the limit reference points are approached, and that are expected to keep the stocks fluctuating around target levels; • Selection of harvest control rules shall take into account the main uncertainties. <p>Such outcomes will achieve SG80 for Scoring Issues (a) and (b) for PI 1.2.1, and for Scoring Issues (a), (b), and (c) for PI 1.2.2.</p> <p>This action is fundamental to the success of the FIP.</p>	<p>- Communication to continue with Coastal States representatives to promote adherence to exploitation levels consistent with meeting the requirements of Principle 1.</p> <p>- During negotiations for TACs and sharing arrangements, arrange meetings with catching sector (“roundtable”) to encourage a management solution.</p> <p>- Lobby all parties in seeking a joint solution within the framework of a long-term management plan highlighting market consequences of inaction.</p>	<p>4/2024</p>	<p>On Track</p>

FIP Action Progress continued (1)...

Action Name	Indicators	Description	Tasks	Expected Completion Date	Status
<p>Dispute settlement legal framework and consultation processes</p>	<p>3.1.2, 3.1.1</p>	<p>There is a mechanism in place for international cooperation in the fishery (the Coastal States Agreement) but it is not apparently completely effective. We will review the existing mechanisms to determine improvement needs and lobby a coastal state to initiate negotiations for an effective dispute resolution mechanism.</p> <p>Expected outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critique of the Coastal States’ and NEAFC’s dispute settlement protocols; • Adoption of the following text relating to dispute resolution (NEAFC, 2017; Chapter 9 – Mediation, para 25) If agreement on a Framework Arrangement is not reached, the coastal States should consider engaging a mediator. Any decision on engaging a mediator, including the choice of the person and the terms of reference of his/her role, should be made by consensus; • Establishment of a Working Group (or similar) on Allocation Criteria; • NEAFC shall provide 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; • NEAFC shall impose binding arrangements, rather than guidelines, for contracting parties, that results in an agreement that ensures adherence to the harvest strategy by the parties prosecuting the fishery. <p>Such outcomes will achieve SG80 for Scoring Issues (a) and (b) for PI 3.1.1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NAPA reviews and produces a document summarizing the Coastal States’ and NEAFC’s dispute settlement protocols. - Lobby a coastal state (i.e. UK) to initiate negotiations for a mechanism, for cooperation and dispute resolution between the Coastal States which is effective in agreeing an appropriate management mechanism consistent with the management plan. 	<p>11/2023</p>	<p>On Track</p>

FIP Action Progress continued (2)...

Action Name	Indicators	Description	Tasks	Expected Completion Date	Status
<p>Effective decision making processes</p>	<p>3.2.2</p>	<p>PI 3.2.2 scored <80 for ASH because Scoring Issues (b) and (c) did not meet SG60. At the international level, since 2013 there has been a lack of agreement on allocation of total stock TAC among the Coastal States, and the combined unilateral TACs that have subsequently been set have significantly exceeded the advised TAC in all years since this time. Whilst the Coastal States have not been able to agree on TAC allocation, there is evidence that the Coastal States have sought to respond to the ICES advice within their own unilaterally-set TACs. Although established decision-making processes exist, it is apparent that they are not functioning in an effective, precautionary manner when it comes to TACs.</p> <p>NAPA and NAPA partners will engage with Coastal States/NEAFC delegations, and other relevant stakeholders, in order to ensure that allocated TACs do not exceed ICES advice. Expected outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making processes are responsive to serious issues, as demonstrated by Coastal States setting TACs that are not unilateral and that do not exceed ICES advice. <p>Although there is overlap between Actions 1 and 3, Action 3 focuses on TAC outcomes to demonstrate that decision-making processes are adequately responsive, whereas Action 1 focuses on improvement of the harvest strategy and HCRs.</p>	<p>- Communication to continue with Coastal States representatives to promote responsive and precautionary decision-making, particularly regarding TACs.</p> <p>- During negotiations for TACs and sharing arrangements, arrange meetings with catching sector (“roundtable”) to encourage a more precautionary management solution.</p>	<p>4/2024</p>	<p>On Track</p>

Progress against FIP actions - 6 month update

Action Name	Indicators	6 month update - October 2021
<p>Engagement to ensure robust harvest strategies adopted and implemented</p>	<p>1.2.2, 1.2.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.1</p>	<p>The task to "lobby all parties in seeking a joint solution within the framework of a long-term management plan highlighting market consequences of inaction" has been completed, see specific activities below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.NAPA sent all Coastal States fisheries ministers letter calling for action on TACs and a long-term management plan on 19th July 2021. Replies received from UK, Iceland and EU as of October 2021. 2.NAPA sent the Norway Prime Minister a letter asking how her co-chairing of the Ocean Panel aligned with the unilateral 55% increase in mackerel TAC on 11th Aug 2021. 3.NAPA sent an open letter to Coastal States fisheries ministers to the trade press, calling for action on TACs, allocations and long-term management plans on 27th Sept. The letter included consequences of failure, as described by three NAPA partners. The letter was covered in <u>Undercurrent News</u>, <u>Seafood Source</u>, <u>Industrias Pesqueras</u>, <u>World Fishing</u>, <u>The Fishing Daily</u>, <u>Le Marin</u> and <u>Fisker Forum</u>; and was referenced (with our support) in a <u>press statement</u> from MSC. 4.NAPA provided a <u>commentary</u> that was published in Intrafish, noting calls to action. 5.Intrafish published an <u>interview</u> with a response from the Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association. 6.NAPA initiated a "Scale of NAPA" survey, which aims to secure useful figures on the significance of NAPA partners' commercial leverage to be used in media statements & in advocacy. The survey has a 75% completion rate so far. 7.NAPA secured observer status at the NEAFC, which has to be done annually. 8.NAPA drafted an op-ed for use by MSC Iceland, which was not published at the time of this progress update. <p>The task to arrange meetings with the catching sector to encourage a management solution is in progress.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.First catching sector roundtable was held on 25th March 2021. 21 pelagic fishing organisations were invited (from all 7 Coastal States), and 7 organisations attended from EU, UK, Russia, Greenland and Iceland. 2.The second catching sector roundtable was held on 7th Sept. 23 pelagic fishing organisations were invited (from all 7 Coastal States) and 13 organisations attended from EU, UK, Russia, Greenland and Iceland. <p>The task to continue communications with Coastal States representatives on exploitation levels is in progress.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Meeting with Scottish Government held on 20th Oct 2021. Agenda included overview of NAPA advocacy and confirmation of our asks. 2.Meeting with Scottish Government held on 1st Oct. Agenda included overview of NAPA advocacy, summary of sourcing statements and an update on the recent mackerel discussions chaired by Faroes. 3.Meeting with UK Government held on 11th Oct. Agenda included UK expectations of Coastal States, plus intel on the work of the Scientific Working Group (zonal attachment report). The FIP provided a 'deadline' for the delegates. 4.NAPA was invited to attend the Coastal State negotiations plenaries for mackerel, herring and blue whiting.

Progress against FIP actions - 6 month update continued (1)...

Action Name	Indicators	6 month update - October 2021
<p>Dispute settlement legal framework and consultation processes</p>	<p>3.1.2, 3.1.1</p>	<p>The task to review and produce a document summarizing the Coastal States' and NEAFC's dispute settlement protocols is well underway.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.NAPA developed an 'Options Paper' which includes recommendations for a dispute resolution mechanism for the Coastal States, as well as implementation of the mechanism at NEAFC. Also contains recommendations on agreeing an allocation mechanism and consideration of a cap on international catches to constrain expansion of fishing effort. 2. The Options Paper is to be circulated to all Coastal States. <p>The task to lobby a coastal state to initiate negotiations for a dispute resolution mechanism has been initiated via the following meetings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.NAPA met with the Scottish Government on 1st Oct 2021 and raised the issue of the UK championing the use of the NEAFC dispute mechanism, and for the adoption of a dispute resolution mechanism at the Coastal States meetings. The government provided a non-committal response but did not rule it out. 2. During a meeting with the UK Government on 11th Oct, NAPA raised the issue of UK championing the use of the NEAFC dispute mechanism, and for the adoption of a dispute resolution mechanism at the Coastal States meetings. The government provided a more positive response, no definite agreement though.
<p>Effective decision-making processes</p>	<p>3.2.2</p>	<p>The TAC negotiations task is on track with implementation of the following activities, some of which are also relevant to Action 2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.First catching sector roundtable was held on 25th March 2021. 21 pelagic fishing organisations were invited (from all 7 Coastal States) and 7 organisations attended from EU, UK, Russia, Greenland and Iceland. 2.Second catching sector roundtable was held on 7th Sept 2021. 23 pelagic fishing organisations were invited (from all 7 Coastal States) and 13 organisations attended from EU, UK, Russia, Greenland and Iceland. 3.The Pelagic Advisory Council (PELAC) (EU advisory body for pelagics; 75% of members are catching organisations) issued 2022 catching opportunity advice for mackerel and Atlanto-Scandian herring, which recommends following the ICES advice based on an agreed Long-Term Management Strategy and encourages the EU Commission and Member States to seek rapid agreement with all Coastal States on a sustainable long-term sharing arrangement for the stocks. 4. Fiskebåt (Norwegian Fishermen's Organisation) made a public statement (translation) on mackerel ahead of the Coastal States meeting calling for agreement of TACs. <p>The European Association of Fish Producers Organisation (EAPO) Northern Pelagic Working Group published their EU pelagic industry position paper on Coastal States negotiations for pelagic stocks in 2022. The paper is aligned with the asks of NAPA.</p>

Progress against FIP actions - 6 month update continued (2)...

Action Name	Indicators	6 month update - October 2021
<p>Effective decision-making processes</p>	<p>3.2.2</p>	<p>For the task relating to communications with Coastal States representatives to promote responsive and precautionary decision-making, particularly regarding TACs, the following has taken place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NAPA launched a social media campaign for a 6 week lead-in to Coastal States meeting with #CountdowntoCoastalStates hashtag. 2. NAPA provided an 'engagement resource pack' for NAPA members to use to individually engage with Coastal State delegations and fishery ministers. 3. 10 of 40 NAPA members have provided 'sourcing statements' (as of October 2021) noting the consequences of failure of the FIP. 4. Sourcing statements were published on social media and the NAPA webpage. 5. NAPA did a Podcast with The Fishing Daily in July 2021. 6. NAPA presented to the 2021 Arctic Circle Assembly on 15th Oct. 120 people attended, in person and virtual. 7. NAPA membership expanded beyond NE Atlantic with the joining of JCCU (Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union) from Japan. 8. The Guardian covered this issue and NAPA's asks, and tweeted the story to their 9.9 million followers.

Progress against FIP actions - 12 month update

Action Name	Indicators	12 month update - April 2022
<p>Engagement to ensure robust harvest strategies adopted and implemented</p>	<p>1.2.2, 1.2.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.1</p>	<p>The task to "lobby all parties in seeking a joint solution within the framework of a long-term management plan highlighting market consequences of inaction" was completed in October 2021. NAPA has continued to lobby all parties in seeking a joint solution, see specific activities below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NAPA produced an op-ed for the MSC to publish in Iceland & Norway, which was published in several outlets, including the Fishing Daily and Intrafish, in November 2021. 2. NAPA presented on our work, and our asks, at ArcticCircle 2021 (1400 participants) on a panel coordinated by the MSC. Received coverage in the Icelandic press. 3. Engagement Resource Pack provided to all Partners in advance of the Coastal States Sharing Discussions 4. 23 Sourcing Statement received from Partners. 5. Individual letters sent to each Coastal State fishing minister. <p>The task to arrange meetings with the catching sector to encourage a management solution is in progress.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heidrun Lind Marteinsdottir, CEO of Fisheries Iceland, publishes statement calling for agreement on mackerel and criticising Norway's Fishermen's Organisation for calling for zonal attachment 2. Third catching sector roundtable was held on 30th March 22. 23 pelagic fishing organisations were invited (from all 7 coastal states) and 8 organisations attended from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Netherlands and Iceland. 3. Aldi Sud presented at the Roundtable - noting the importance for them to see the management of the fisheries improved. <p>The task to continue communications with Coastal States representatives on exploitation levels is in progress.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coastal States meeting (October 21) concluded with agreement to follow ICES scientific advice when setting TACs for the three species. Lack of sharing arrangements was recognised as a concerning factor, as was current levels of overfishing. Three Coastal State working groups have been established to create or update reports on the spatial distribution for each stock - could be used as an evidence base for zonal attachment. The sharing agreements meetings was scheduled for early 2022. 2. The NEAFC meeting took place in November 2022. Measures were adopted for mackerel, blue whiting and ASH in the NEAFC Regulatory Area (international waters) in 2022. The traditional NEAFC catch level for blue whiting for the Russian Federation and Greenland (7.69%) was ratified. Concerns were raised by several delegations. The UK made a general comment on the 3 main pelagic stocks, underlining its concern at their state, as well as on the level of uptake in international waters. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) concurred on the need to exert all efforts on finding a solution on allocations to avoid reflecting badly on the regional processes. Several Parties also underlined their concern about the fisheries. 3. NAPA made an opening statement at NEAFC calling for delegates to follow the advice, employ Management Plans and address allocations. Following NEAFC we released a statement entitled "De-coding the coastal States." 4. In advance of the sharing discussions several Coastal states published allocations. This was extremely unhelpful and NAPA published a statement criticizing these unhelpful actions, which was picked up in trade press. 5. The initial sharing discussion meeting took place in March 22. NAPA was invited to participate in the plenary. 6. In advance of this meeting we held meetings with the UK, Iceland, Greenland and Russia delegations. At these meetings we expressed our concerns and iterated our asks.

Progress against FIP actions - 12 month update continued (1)...

Action Name	Indicators	12 month update - April 2022
<p>Dispute settlement legal framework and consultation processes</p>	<p>3.1.2, 3.1.1</p>	<p>The task to review and produce a document summarizing the Coastal States’ and NEAFC’s dispute settlement protocols is complete and the report has been published.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.NAPA produced the options paper and converted it into a position paper which was used in advocacy and is available online. 2.The paper was circulated to all Coastal States. Responses were received from UK (Minister & Civil Service) and Iceland. 3.NAPA published a Press Statement. 4.The position paper was covered in trade press, including FishFocus, The Fishing Daily, and Undercurrent News. <p>The task to lobby a coastal state to initiate negotiations for a dispute resolution mechanism is in progress.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.During meetings with UK Government on 21st January & 17th March 2022, NAPA raised the issue of UK championing the use of the NEAFC dispute mechanism, and for the adoption of a dispute resolution mechanism at the Coastal States meetings. The UK government remains interested, but has not made any definite agreement. 2.During meeting with Iceland on 7th Jan 2022, NAPA raised the issue of Iceland championing the use of the NEAFC dispute mechanism, and for the adoption of a dispute resolution mechanism at the Coastal States meetings. Iceland's government provided a lukewarm response--they felt it would be incredibly difficult to get agreement.
<p>Effective decision-making processes</p>	<p>3.2.2</p>	<p>During negotiations for TACs and sharing arrangements, NAPA has continued to arrange meetings with the catching sector (“roundtables”) to encourage more precautionary management solutions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.In advance of the Coastal States sharing discussions NAPA published (Dec 21) a social media short film. As of 20th April, this film has received 834 views on Twitter. 2.In January 2022 NAPA published a press statement noting global importance of the fisheries highlighting our first African member (Woolworths SA). This was picked up by the trade press, including Undercurrent News, FishFocus, The Fishing Daily, and Fiskerforum. 3.This was followed in March 2022 with another press statement noting NAPA had been joined by members from Canada, Italy and Australia. This was picked up by the trade press including SeafoodSource, EFA News, The Fishing Daily, FishFocus, and Fiskerforum. 4.Following outcry over the spillage of 100,000 tonnes of blue whiting, NAPA used the press interest to note that this was approx. 18t whereas over 300,000t were deliberately overfished each year. This observation was picked up by the national press including Express and FishFocus. 5.The Coastal States sharing discussions took place in February 2022, and for the first time a summary of the meeting was published. Following the meeting, NAPA met with the mackerel & herring working group (WG) chairs who informed us that the meeting mood was different – no blockers, positive, constructive attitudes; there was a real appetite to reach a 2022 agreement – but it may not be until 2023. They reflected that the post-meeting statement was stimulated in part by NAPA advocacy; there is hope to reach agreement in late May/June – may be September; one difficulty is the different fishing season start dates for each Coastal State throughout the year (hence 2023 may be more likely). UK & Faroes to attend NAPA Partner meeting on 26th April in their roles as WG Chairs. 6.The mackerel sharing discussion took place in March 2022, and the spatial distribution report was presented. The conclusion was that the report was a useful evidence base. There are still gaps, but it can be used to inform sharing arrangement discussions. Another mackerel meeting has been scheduled for May 2022. Continued overleaf.

Progress against FIP actions - 12 month update continued (2)...

Action Name	Indicators	12 month update - April 2022
<p>Effective decision-making processes</p>	<p>3.2.2</p>	<p>7. On 26 April 2022, NAPA met with three coastal state WG Chairs, who expressed that NAPA has been having an impact. The Mackerel WG Chair (UK) shared that Ministers are interested in what stakeholders are saying and are certainly listening to organisations like NAPA. The AS-Herring WG Chair (UK) noted that any stakeholder input is valuable; the more consolidated the better, and to please continue efforts. The Blue Whiting WG Chair (Faroes) agreed that it is important to be in contact with NAPA, and that it is having very good impact. Their consensus was that any coalition that can come together in coherent way can be influential--the more brains the better.</p> <p>As described under Action 1, NAPA has continued communicating with Coastal States representatives to promote responsive and precautionary decision-making, particularly regarding TACs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NAPA presented on their work and asks at ArcticCircle 2021 (1400 participants) on a panel coordinated by the MSC. They published a press statement ("De-coding the coastal states") on challenges regarding setting of TACs in November 2021. 2. They provided an Engagement Resource Pack to all partners in advance of the coastal states sharing discussions and sent individual letters to each coastal state fishing minister. 3. A third catching sector roundtable was held on 30th March 2022. 23 pelagic fishing organisations were invited (from all 7 coastal states), and 8 organisations attended from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Netherlands and Iceland. 4. Heidrun Lind Marteinsdottir, CEO of Fisheries Iceland, published a statement calling for agreement on mackerel and criticising Norway's Fishermen's Organisation for calling for zonal attachment.

Progress against FIP actions - 18 month update

Action Name	Indicators	18 month update - October 2022
<p>Engagement to ensure robust harvest strategies adopted and implemented</p>	<p>1.2.2, 1.2.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.1</p>	<p>NAPA has continued to lobby all parties in seeking a joint solution (completed in October 2021). In June, we 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”). This received wide coverage in the trade press. We received a reply from the UK and EU.</p> <p>The task to arrange meetings with the catching sector to encourage a management solution is in progress. A further roundtable meeting took place in September 22. 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, with the catchers insisting that the market distinguish between the "good" and "bad" actors – indicating that the market pressure is working. Organisations were eager to distinguish themselves from each other. We noted that many of our Partners' sourcing statements specifically commit to "sourcing from responsible fisheries/fleets" only if the FIPs fail.</p> <p>Following the meeting NAPA met with the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO) to discuss possible collaboration on advocacy. We noted we aligned on our calls for a dispute resolution mechanism, and cap on international catches (though we call for a 20% cap and they call for a 10% cap). It was agreed to consider a joint press statement on this alignment. We shared a draft with KFO and the European Producers' Organisation Northern Pelagic Working Group. However, they were adamant that the statement highlighted the fact that UK/EU were abiding by the 2014-20 agreement on mackerel. This does not align with our position, and negates our call for collective responsibility.</p> <p>However, we have at least now began to discuss joint NAPA/Catchers statements.</p> <p>The task to continue communications with Coastal States representatives on exploitation levels is in progress. In preparation for the 2022 Coastal States and NEAFC meetings, our comms team led by Mindfully Wired Communications, devised and launched an advocacy campaign (see evidence). 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.</p> <p>The aim of the campaign was two-fold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Saliency: Communicate this message loud and clear, for both industry and consumers to hear and understand.

Progress against FIP actions - 18 month update continued (1)...

Action Name	Indicators	18 month update - October 2022
<p>Engagement to ensure robust harvest strategies adopted and implemented</p>	<p>1.2.2, 1.2.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.1</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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 and we secured a 5% increase in followers.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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 (both included as evidence).</p> <p>The ICES advice statement was covered in Seafoodsource, Intrafish and FishFocus.</p> <p>The open letter featured a quote from Erin Priddle, the MSC’s Northern Europe Regional Director. This statement received significant media interest in the UK and the EU sector press, with at least 10 resultant articles published.</p> <p>Additionally, our Project Lead was invited to write an op-ed in Intrafish on the pelagic situation and took the opportunity to promote NAPA's asks.</p> <p>Finally, we developed a 'mailout', similar to a newsletter which we sent to all Coastal States' Ministers and delegations on 17th Oct. This reiterated our asks. The mailout was sent to 25 recipients and had a 44% opening rate and 18% click rate. The industry average is 23% and 3% respectively - so we performed better. We received a reply from Scottish Government.</p>
<p>Dispute settlement legal framework and consultation processes</p>	<p>3.1.2, 3.1.1</p>	<p>The task to review and produce a document summarizing the Coastal States’ and NEAFC’s dispute settlement protocols was completed in April 2022 and NAPA has continued to build on this.</p> <p>Building on the Position Paper we did a deeper dive on the location of mackerel catches by Coastal States in June - the aim being to provide a further evidence base to our position on a cap on international catches.</p> <p>The analysis suggests that such a cap could do more than simply restrict overfishing – but could act to reduce catches. We provided a range of scenarios; including one that suggest a 20% cap on mackerel catches in international waters could address the current fishing beyond scientific advice. The NAPA Steering Committee agreed to formally adopt an ask for a 20% cap on international catches of mackerel based on the report conclusions. The report was published online and circulated to all Coastal State ministers and delegations. The new ask was included in our core asks.</p>

Progress against FIP actions - 18 month update continued (2)...

Action Name	Indicators	18 month update - October 2022
		<p>Due to the progress being made on mackerel sharing arrangements, we have paused the push for a dispute resolution settlement at this time - lest we disrupt the proceedings, or provide an excuse to "walk away" by one or more parties.</p>
<p>Effective decision-making processes</p>	<p>3.2.2</p>	<p>During negotiations for TACs and sharing arrangements, NAPA has continued to arrange meetings with the catching sector ("roundtables") to encourage more precautionary management solutions. Following the September Catching Sector Roundtable meeting NAPA met with the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO) to discuss possible collaboration on advocacy. We noted we aligned on our calls for a dispute resolution mechanism, and it was agreed to consider a joint press statement on this alignment. We shared a draft with KFO and the European Producers' Organisation Northern Pelagic Working Group. However, they were adamant that the statement highlighted the fact that UK/EU were abiding by the 2014-20 agreement on mackerel. This does not align with our position, and negates our call for collective responsibility.</p> <p>NAPA has continued communicating with Coastal States representatives to promote responsive and precautionary decision-making, particularly regarding TACs. In May, we 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. It was widely covered in the trade press.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Progress against FIP actions - 18 month update continued (3)...

Action Name	Indicators	18 month update - October 2022
<p>Effective decision-making processes</p>	<p>3.2.2</p>	<p>As noted above, we produced a press statement on the ICES - noting there was a golden opportunity for blue whiting allocations to be lowered, while maintaining (or increasing) catch.</p> <p>In late-October, the seven Coastal States convened in London for the Coastal States meeting. What was noticeable this year 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. This year there was far more debate and discussion.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The NEAFC meeting took place in late November and despite intersessional meetings on mackerel and blue whiting, no agreements had been reached. This was positive as it demonstrated that serious negotiations were happening.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Progress against FIP actions - 32 month update

Action Name	Indicators	32 month update - December 2023
<p>Engagement to ensure robust harvest strategies adopted and implemented</p>	<p>1.2.2, 1.2.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.1</p>	<p>NAPA has continued to lobby all parties in seeking a joint solution (ongoing).</p> <p>The task to arrange meetings with the catching sector to encourage a management solution is ongoing. Catching Sector Roundtable meetings are held regularly.</p> <p>The task to continue communications with Coastal States representatives on the continuing importance of reaching allocation agreements remains in progress.</p> <p>Evidence for these activities is as follows:</p> <p>NAPA has developed its own website for the specific communication of its activities. The website has a page dedicated to the publication of sourcing statements from the NAPA membership that describe the actions that Partners will take in the event that NAPA is not successful in meeting its goals. There are currently more than 70 NAPA members, with applications continually received, and this webpage is updated continuously. The News page and Resources page provide an up-to-date record of NAPA’s public-facing advocacy work, including press releases, news coverage, NAPA papers, and moments of policy influence. This is an important means to chronicle the efforts and successes of NAPA in raising awareness of the key issues that the FIP seeks to address.</p> <p>Regular meetings are held with the NAPA Steering Committee. Over the reporting period these were held: 12/10/2022; 9/12/2022; 23/02/2023; 13/4/2023; 13/07/2023; 31/08/2023; 07/11/2023; 12/12/2023, slides available here. Full NAPA Partner meetings were held: 13/12/2022; 20/04/2023; 14/09/2023; 14/12/2023, Slides available here. These meetings communicate NAPA’s activities to the NAPA membership as well as providing a forum to discuss NAPA’s strategic direction (Steering Committee).</p> <p>The most recent Catching Sector Round Table meeting was held 29th September 2023, slides available here. Catching Sector Roundtable meetings are held twice yearly although due to a change in the NAPA policy lead only one meeting was held in 2023. Alongside this there is periodic direct engagement with individual catching sector organisations. Catching sector reps were also invited to attend the NAPA Workshop in November 2023 to encourage greater alignment with NAPA’s position.</p> <p>NAPA Partners, Skretting and the Swedish Seafood Association, presented at the MSC’s NEA Pelagics Event.</p> <p>NAPA produced a Position Statement in which it communicated to NEAFC at the 41st NEAFC Meeting in November 2022 and the 42nd Annual Meeting in November 2023, and presented an opening statement in person at the event here. The Position Statement communicates NAPA’s goals including a request that catches in international waters be capped at 20% of each Coastal State’s share.</p>

Progress against FIP actions - 32 month update continued (1)...

Action Name	Indicators	32 month update - December 2023
<p>Engagement to ensure robust harvest strategies adopted and implemented</p>	<p>1.2.2, 1.2.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.1</p>	<p>NAPA produced a Partners resource pack (here) that provided information for Partners to undertake their own lobbying activities including letters to Fisheries Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Coastal States. In this way NAPA extends and multiplies its influence throughout the Group.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A subsequent campaign building on the messages shared in 2022 also ran over September and October 2023: this included setting poor performance on agreements against Coastal State obligations under the UNSDGs (here), launch of a campaign film on social media (link), and with the underlying messages supporting NAPA’s aims under the social media hashtag: #FishStocksInTheBalance. The 2023 campaign was a unanimous call for action that saw strong engagement over 4 weeks (25 Sep-20 Oct):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,000 impressions on social media (X & LinkedIn) – the number of times content was displayed on users' homepages; • 360 engagements on social media (X & LinkedIn) – the collective number of likes, comments, replies and reshares obtained on posts; • MSC, Pew, Sciaena, SEAwisely publicly amplified the campaign, building a chorus of support. • A significant increase in website traffic and engagement, with a 175% increase in views and a 445% increase in users. • Two press releases resulted in 20 articles in both national and sector press. • NAPA subsequently featured in The Guardian newspaper on 17 November 2023 as part of the publication’s ocean series entitled ‘Seascape: the state of our oceans’. The article unpacked the repercussions of mackerel overfishing in the Northeast Atlantic for seafood companies and retailers who make up NAPA’s membership. <p>See also NAPAs Annual Report for 2022 and 2023 (NAPA website).</p>
<p>Dispute settlement legal framework and consultation processes</p>	<p>3.1.2, 3.1.1</p>	<p>The task to review and produce a document summarising the Coastal States’ and NEAFC’s dispute settlement protocols was completed in April 2022 and NAPA has continued to build on this. In addition, the task to Lobby a coastal state (i.e.UK) to initiate negotiations for a mechanism, for cooperation and dispute resolution between the Coastal States which is effective in agreeing an appropriate management mechanism consistent with the management plan is essentially part of NAPA’s current business.</p> <p>NAPA continues to engage with NEAFC, holding Observer status, communicating by email, and in attendance for the 2023 Annual Meeting in London. For this meeting NAPA produced an updated Position Paper (here) which stressed again the importance of dispute resolution mechanisms in achieving success for TAC-setting and quota allocation. NAPA also liaised closely with the other Observers, several of whom are supportive and aligned with NAPA’s work, adding further influence within NAPA’s network.</p>

Progress against FIP actions - 32 month update continued (2)...

Action Name	Indicators	32 month update - December 2023
		<p>NAPA engages regularly with the Coastal States’ Government representatives, particularly those of the UK. After the handover to Neil Auchterlonie from Tom Pickerel in June 2023, early orientation meetings were set up with both UK and Scottish Government representatives summarising informally the current position for the pelagic species negotiations. These contacts have continued to be useful for NAPA on a regular basis and NAPA receives regular update communications, including invitations to Coastal State negotiation meeting plenary sessions (which are attended when availability permits). Contact with the other Coastal States representatives is developing and planned for 2024.</p> <p>The UK representative (Colin Faulkner) was invited to join the Future of NAPA workshop, held in London on the 7th November 2023, during which an overview of the CS negotiation meetings, timeline and priorities was outlined in order to support the NAPA Steering Committee in outlining a way forward. NAPA was told that the activities are having an effect on the CS discussions, and all parties are aware of NAPA’s activities, and the communications/messages delivered by the Group.</p>
<p>Effective decision-making processes</p>	<p>3.2.2</p>	<p>Communication to continue with Coastal States representatives to promote responsive and precautionary decision making, particularly regarding TACs. During negotiations for TACs and sharing arrangements, NAPA has continued to arrange meetings with the catching sector (“roundtables”) to encourage more precautionary management solutions.</p> <p>2023 Campaign strategy document, Position Paper and Coastal state meetings’ summary paper (here).</p> <p>Campaign film: Link on Twitter to 2023 film.</p>



Appendix 1

NAPA Mackerel and Herring FIP Progress Reporting

To ensure that FIPs are making progress, the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) has developed the "FIP Tracker". This tracks the progress of FIPs against their indicators and collates evidence of progress. FIP evaluators can then use this evidence to measure the rate of progress that a FIP is demonstrating, and reward the FIP with a progress rating (A-E).

Information from the FIP Tracker is presented in this document. It is supported by the evidence of progress for the NAPA Mackerel and Herring FIP in 6 month intervals. The evidence can be accessed via the external Google document link, below:

> [NAPA Mackerel and Herring FIP Progress Reporting Evidence](#)





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