

# MarinTrust Improver Programme: NE Atlantic Blue Whiting Milestone Report End Year 2

This document focus on the milestones that make up the Fishery Action Plan (FAP) as part of the Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) aligned to the MarinTrust Assessment criteria.

FIP name	NE Atlantic Blue Whiting
Milestone	Year 2
Management authority (Country/State)	The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). The European Union and the fisheries ministries of Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway and the UK
Date	September 25th, 2023
Developed by	Neil Auchterlonie, NAPA Project/Policy Lead

Outcome of Assessment	
Milestone	Year 2
Sections with milestones	A-3 Harvest strategies
Date	September 25th, 2023
Developed by	Neil Auchterlonie, NAPA Project/Policy Lead

# Background

The North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group (NAPA) launched the market-led approach to improving North Atlantic pelagic fisheries management in June 2021. Currently NAPA has 73 members including seafood retail and processing businesses, as well as trade and industry bodies and environmental NGOs. The reach of NAPA is worldwide as the partners are located across the globe. NAPA's activities are focused on advocacy and influence to secure long-term, science-based management of the North East Atlantic



pelagic stocks: for prospering oceans, fisheries, and business security (https://napafisheries.org/. The MarinTrust FIP operates alongside another FIP which covers the species Atlantic mackerel and Atlanto-Scandian herring, and for which the FAP shows overlap. Byproducts from those species are also used for fish meal and fish oil (FMFO) production. Please note that some of the evidence provided also includes reference to these products.

As a first step for the Blue whiting FIP, the partners evaluated the fishery against the MarinTrust standard in 2021, which provided the basis for the fishery action plan (FAP), and the FIP commenced in October 2021. The first annual report was produced for MarinTrust in October 2022. This report updates MarinTrust on progress made over year 2 of the FIP.

The named Project lead (FIP Coordinator) on the NAPA FIP, Dr Tom Pickerell, moved on from his role in April 2023, and there was a short gap of two months before his successor, Dr Neil Auchterlonie, took on this role in June 2023. There was, therefore, a slight break in activities over this time within the reporting period.

## Details on species designations

The fishery catch composition is mostly blue whiting, with 98% or more of the catch caught with pelagic gears. Therefore, it was considered that blue whiting is the only Type 1 species caught in the fishery and was assessed under Category A.

The catch composition data for purse seines indicated that the catch is effectively 100% blue whiting. EU & UK reports indicated no other species making up 0.1% or more of the catch with any pelagic trawl gears. Faroese and Norwegian reports did indicate the possible presence of Type 2 species in small quantities, which are listed below:

- Herring (Clupea harengus) Norwegian spring-spawning Category C
- Mackerel (Scomber scombrus) North East Atlantic Category C
- Norway pout (Trisopterus esmarkii) North East Atlantic Category C
- Saithe (Pollachius virens) Faroes and North Sea stocks Category C
- Lesser silver smelt (Argentina sphyraena) North East Atlantic Category D

### Gap Analysis and Improvement actions

The assessment and gap analysis identified the need to improve the factor **A-3** – **Harvest Strategy. In particular, A3.2**:

"Total fishery removals of this species do not regularly exceed the level indicated or stated in the stock assessment. Where a specific quantity of removals is recommended, the actual



removals may exceed this by up to 10% ONLY if the stock status is above the limit reference point or proxy".

The FAP included four actions aiming to fulfil this gap:

- 1. Engagement with fisheries management decision makers to Ensure Robust Harvest Strategies are adopted and implemented;
- 2. Dispute settlement legal framework and consultation processes;
- 3. Effective decision-making processes;
- 4. Ensure Key Data Elements (KDE) information is collected on vessels supplying MarinTrust factories.

This report reviews the status of the implementation of those actions.



## **IP** Milestone report

Use the below tables to provide an update on actions in the Fishery Action Plan, with links to relevant evidence documents. Additional lines may be added where necessary.

#### M – Management Framework and Surveillance, Control and Enforcement

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Progress against milestones	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
N /A					

# Category A: Data Collection, Stock Assessment, Harvest Strategy, and Stock Status

#### A-3 Harvest Strategy - Minimum Requirements

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update	Progress against milestones	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
A- 3.2 Total fishery removals of this species do not regularly exceed the level indicated or stated in the stock	1. Engagement to Ensure Robust Harvest Strategies Adopted and Implemented	NAPA has been actively engaged with different fishery stakeholders. Using different and multiple approaches. The main goal has been to align the vision that inaction	M 1.1. Lobby all parties in seeking a joint solution of a long-term management plan, highlighting the market consequences of inaction.	M 1.1., 1.2., and 1.3. combined. NAPA has grown over time with regular inclusion of new Partners and as of 30/9/2023 included 73 Partners across the supply chain, Trade bodies and NGOs.	Website.47 sourcing statementsfrom industrypartners.Slide decks for SteeringCommittee, Partners,and Catching SectorRoundtable meetingsattached.	Ongoing



assessment.on improving harvest strategies (in particular those related to TAC allocation) will have severeCommercial partners produce sourcing statements describing their organisation's A website was commissioned for NAPANAPA Partners Skretting and the Swedished, the catualconsequences on the long-term actualconsequences on the long-term supply chain confidence in the negotiations for TACS and sharingM 1.2 During arrange meetings arrange meetingsNAPA Partners Skretting and the Swedish10% ONLY If the stockFrom post on social arrange meetings with state reference point or proxy.M 1.2 During instructionalNAPA produced a Position Statement activaties, as well as a arrange meetings arrange meetings arrange meetingsNAPA produced a verset as a resource to to NAPA produced a Position Statement NAPA produced a Position Statement NAPA produced a Position Statement activates, as well as a ilibrary of documents.NAPA Partners Position Statement NAPA produced a Position Statement NAPA Partners resource pack (attached).Immit reference point or proxy.Communication with state representatives, as well as participation on public and private forums and events (e.g. during negotiations for TACS, the goal is to promote dialogue and generate momentum toM 1.3. Continue constal States or presentatives toNAPA produced a Position Statement in resource pack to support Partners' representatives.NAPA is well connected and generate momentum toM 1.3. Continue representatives to representatives toM 1.3. Continue con						
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	improve the	promote adherence	the discussions are	launched a	
	management and	to exploitation levels	summarised. NAPA has	communications	
	align the vision	consistent with the	Observer status at	campaign calling on the	
	among all	requirements of	NEAFC. Together with	Coastal States to agree	
	stakeholders. The	Principle 1.	individual connections	on sustainable catch	
	message has been		for NAPA through the CS	shares, follow the	
	appropriately		Delegations,	scientific advice, and	
	shared, and more		government depts.,	commit to long-term	
	industry has been		public bodies and supply	management of	
	actively engaging in		chain, NAPA also works	Northeast Atlantic	
	the efforts.		closely with the Partners	pelagic stocks	
			through the Steering	(#AgreeFollowCommit).	
			Committee. NAPA	The campaign was	
	We focused on Blue		Partners have an	highly successful,	
	Whiting in February		extensive global reach.	garnering significant	
	to March 2023 with		This network is used to	press and media	
	the Golden		effect in sourcing	attention and the	
	Opportunity		information and	support of several	
	Campaign. In line		communicating	external organisations	
	with the spike in		messages.	working in the	
	biomass, we sought			Northeast Atlantic	
	coastal states to			region: the Marine	
	commit to a lower			Stewardship Council	
	share of the catch to			(MSC), Sciaena, and the	
	bring the total			Pew Charitable Trusts	
	allocation in line with			Open letter to Ministers	
	the science advice –			on the need for action -	
	even though this would have seen a reduction			October 2022.	
	in individual coastal			https://napafisheries.or	
	state allocation each			g/this-overfishing-cant-	
	country would have			go-on-napa-and-the-	
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the volume of b		tangible-action-on-
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It would have b		management-of-
win win situatio	n.	pelagic-stocks-at-the-
		2022-coastal-states-
		meeting/
		incetting,
		See also NAPAs Annual
		Report for 2022.
		Blog on impacts of
		inaction on the
		management of Blue
		Whiting.
		https://napafisheries.o
		rg/eminent-uk-salmon-
		retailers-step-forward-
		to-highlight-
		consequences-of-
		inaction-on-north-east-
		atlantic-blue-whiting-
		_
		management/
		Our Calden
		Our Golden
		Opportunity Campaign
		for Blue Whiting ran
		during February/March
		2023
		https://napafisheries.o



			031,
		rg/golden-opportunity- for-northeast-atlantic- blue-whiting-dont- blow-it-say-top- seafood-supply-chain- businesses/	(12),



DJ/G	
2. Dispute settlement legal framework and consultation processesNAPA released a document with a series of recommendations that include the urgency to agree and implement an allocation mackerel, Atlanto- Scandian herring and blue whiting: to adopt NEAFC Guidelines for Consultations processesM 2.1 NAPA reviews and produces a document summarizing the coastal states' and NEAFC's dispute settlement protocols.M2.1. NAPA has produced a draft dispute settlement document referencing an EU Proposal for an amendment to the NEAFC Convention that is yet to be adopted. This will be further developed in 23/24.Draft NEAFC Dispute Settlement document referencing an EU Proposal for an amendment to the NEAFC Convention that is yet to be adopted. This will be further developed in 23/24.Draft NEAFC Dispute Settlement document adopt NEAFC Guidelines for consultations in the NEAtantic in their discussions, and consultations in the matemational waters to constrain further overfishing. The document has been the main tool for conversations with coastal states to motivate support on this endeavour.M2.1 NAPA has produced a tate of the 2022 advised TAC allocations, updating the 2020 and 2021 figures.Draft NEAFC Dispute Settement ad analysis paper attached.	ŗ



3. Effective	NAPA has been	M 3.1 During	Reference to mackerel		Ongoing
decision-making	actively using	negotiations for TACs	campaign 2022 which		
processes	different channels	and sharing	has read-across to		
	to promote the	arrangements,	actions on the NAPA FIP	2023 Campaign strategy	
	importance of	arrange meetings	(the first 3 actions of the	document attached.	
	improving the	with the catching	NAPA FIP are common		
	decision-making	sector ("roundtable")	to the mackerel/herring	Link on Twitter to 2023	
	process. From	to encourage a more	FIP). There were	film.	
	publicly identifying	precautionary	unfortunately divergent	https://x.com/NAPAfish	
	the interest from	management	views on the TAC level,	eries/status/170874775	
	different countries	solution.	with the UK supporting a	<u>8759223318?s=20</u>	
	and companies that		TAC constraint principle.	<b>a</b> 111	
	supply from the		The UK were keen to set	Position paper and	
	fishery. To continue	Communication to	a TAC for blue whiting	Coastal state meetings'	
	lobbying with	continue with Coastal	that was below the ICES	summary paper	
	coastal	States	advice. NAPA heard that	attached.	
	representatives	representatives to	the Heads of Delegation		
	about the market	promote responsive	had been receiving		
	benefits of pursuing	and precautionary	letters from NAPA		
	these new	decision-making,	Partners, and this was		
	mechanisms.	particularly regarding	having an impact.		
		TACs.			
			Prior to the 2023		
			negotiations, NAPA		
			published a social media		
			short film (September		
			2023) and released a		
			statement.		



		NAPA Commenced its	
		2023 Campaign on 25 <sup>th</sup>	
		September.	



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#### B – Category B Stock Status

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update	Progress against milestones	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
N / A						

#### C – Category C Stock Status

MT clause (if	Action in plan	Action update	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
relevant)					
N / A					

# D – Impacts on Species Categorized as Vulnerable by D1-D3

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	 0 0	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
N / A					



# F – Impacts on ETP Species, Impacts on Habitats and Ecosystem Impacts

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan		Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
N / A					

#### SOCIAL CRITERION

	Action in plan		Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
relevant) N / A					

# Milestone reporting template

	MarinTrust Fishery Assessment Section		Initial score	Immediate (6 months)	End of Year 1	End of Year 2	End of Year 3	Status notes
	Date							
	M1.1	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
	1011.1	Actual						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
	M1.2	Projected						No significant changes to respond this indicator
М	IVI I .Z	Actual						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
1	M11 D	Projected						
	M1.3	Actual						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
	M1.4	Projected						No significant changes to respond this indicator
	1011.4	Actual						No significant changes to rescored this indicator



	M1.5	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
	1011.5	Actual					
	M1.6	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
	1011.0	Actual					
	M2.1	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
	111211	Actual					
	M2.2	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
Μ	1112.2	Actual					
2	M2.3	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
		Actual					
	M2.4	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
		Actual					
	A1.1	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
A1		Actual					
	A1.2	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
		Actual				5 5	
	A2.1	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
		Actual				5 5	
	A2.2	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
		Actual					
A2	A2.3	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
		Actual					
	A2.4	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
		Actual				5 5	
	A2.5	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
		Actual					
A3	A3.1	Projected				No significant changes to rescored this indicator	



		Actual				
		Projected			Despite the efforts, commitments and discussions made NAPA Partners, there is still work to be done to reach ag TAC allocations for this stock and the milestone is behind Work on the Action #4 (Key Data Elements) was planned in Year 3., and work on this Action is just starting. Summ other work:	reement on d schedule. to commence
					<ul> <li>For the Coastal State Negotiations:</li> <li>There were divergent views on the TAC level, with the U a TAC constraint principle.</li> <li>Parties agreed to reconvene to continue discussions or blue whiting before the NEAFC meeting</li> <li>For the NEAFC discussions:</li> </ul>	the TAC for
	A3.2				<ul> <li>Discussions on a total allowable catch for blue whiting of Measures were adopted for blue whiting in the NEAFC Area (international waters) in 2023.</li> <li>These measures reflect the outcomes of Coastal State of and prevent countries who are not Coastal States or fish accessing these stocks.</li> </ul>	Regulatory consultations ing parties
		Actual			NAPA has continued to engage with the CSs and NEAFC is on KDEs action is just commencing (October 2023). As not this FIP is at an important juncture and the future of the discussed at a meeting of the Steering Committee (and s in London in November 2023. In the meantime work will the 4 Actions in the FAP, but there may be some required for an extension to this FIP from 2024 onwards, given th FIP and the lack of synchronicity with the CS Negotiation NEAFC Discussions.	oted above FIP will be takeholders) I continue on ment to apply e timing of the
	A3.3	Projected			No significant changes to rescored this indi	cator



		Actual			
A4	A4.1	Projected	No cigr	nificant changes to rescored this indicator	
A4	+ A4.1	Actual		incant changes to rescored this indicator	
	F1.1	Projected	No cigr	nificant changes to rescored this indicator	
	Г І. І	Actual		incant changes to rescored this indicator	
F1	F1.2	Projected	No cigr	nificant changes to rescored this indicator	
ГІ	F1.2	Actual		incant changes to rescored this indicator	
	F1.3	Projected	No sigr	No significant changes to rescored this indicator	
	F1.5	Actual		incant changes to rescored this indicator	
	F2.1	Projected	No cigr	nificant changes to rescored this indicator	
	ΓΖ.Ι	Actual		incant changes to rescored this indicator	
F2	F2.2	Projected	No cigr	ificant changes to rescored this indicator	
12	FZ,Z	Actual		nificant changes to rescored this indicator	
	F2.3	Projected	No cigr	nificant changes to rescored this indicator	
	F2.5	Actual		incant changes to rescored this indicator	
	F3.1	Projected	No sigr	nificant changes to rescored this indicator	
	15.1	Actual		incant changes to rescored this indicator	
F3	F3.2	Projected	No sign	nificant changes to rescored this indicator	
гэ	1,5,2	Actual			
	F3.3	Projected	No cigr	nificant changes to rescored this indicator	
	F3.3	Actual	INO SIGI		

#### Additional Information

The following section highlights any information provided by the fishery in support of this Milestone Report which does not relate directly to any of the Milestones above, but which is relevant to the ongoing monitoring of fishery management status.



Given the disappointing lack of progress seen with this FIP, the NAPA Secretariat is organising a meeting of the Steering Committee, and other stakeholders to discuss the implications and mechanics of applying for an extension to the original 3-year FAP. MarinTrust has also been invited to this meeting. This meeting will be held in London on the 7<sup>th</sup> November as an in-person event. NAPA understands that the current timeline for the FIP is challenging.

#### Amended timeline

The following section allows the applicant to explain if there are any amendments to the improvement timelines and provide the reasons and evidence for this.

The timeline is under review, per the text above. Significant progress is possible, but unfortunately unlikely in early 2024, so NAPA will reassess the relevance of the FIP in Q423/Q124.