

NAPA Coastal States Campaign Strategy 2023

INTRODUCTION

The brief

The North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group (NAPA) is calling on the Northeast Atlantic Coastal States to commit to long-term, science-based management of Northeast Atlantic pelagic stocks – Northeast Atlantic mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring, and Northeast Atlantic blue whiting – which are currently being overexploited.

Last year, the Coastal States reached an agreement on the total quota for 2023, but could not agree on how it should be distributed between them, leading to a situation of unilateral quota setting by some parties and overall catches that exceeded the scientific advice.

NAPA is advocating that Coastal State actors collectively follow the scientific advice and resolve allocation issues around these stocks – ultimately agreeing and committing to sustainable catch shares. In addition, NAPA is calling on countries to implement long-term management plans for these stocks and to consider capping catches in international waters.

NAPA is now preparing for its autumn campaign to coincide with the 2023 Coastal States negotiations and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) meeting. NAPA will launch a short-term campaign across four weeks (Monday 25 September until Friday 20 October) to be delivered via press and social media engagement, to maintain a drumbeat of advocacy in the run up to the consultations.

Campaign aim

The aim of this campaign is 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, to drive momentum and raise awareness among both industry and consumers.

Audience

The target audience for the campaign can be broken down to:

Primary audience:

- Decision makers – Fisheries Ministers and civil servants in Coastal States who will see press pieces and social media content (this will be facilitated by tagging ministers in social media posts) while the campaign is running. This audience is in a position to take forward the key messages and calls to action of the campaign, and advocate for a

sustainable sharing agreement at the Coastal States level. Press engagement will be the most effective tool for targeting Coastal State actors.

- NAPA Partners – seafood retailers, processors, and supply-chain businesses with a vested interest in the sustainable management of Northeast Atlantic pelagic stocks because their sourcing practices and environmental commitments depend on it. NAPA Partners are key influencers of Coastal State decision-makers representing ‘the voice of the market’. They also possess their own networks within which they can correspond directly with Coastal States, amplify NAPA’s messaging, and generate their own momentum within the campaign.

Secondary audience:

- Subject experts and key stakeholders (i.e. pelagic catching sector organisations, NGOs, supply chain workers) – people who are in a position to put pressure on decision makers if actions taken by Coastal States (or rather inaction) threaten their values or livelihoods. These actors have the capability to amplify NAPA’s campaign and build a chorus of support. Press engagement and social media will be the most effective tools for engaging subject experts and key stakeholders.
- Consumers – people who care about eating sustainable seafood, and want to continue eating it in the future. Consumers may also be inspired to apply pressure and take action through resharing NAPA content and/or communicating their concerns with decision makers. Social media will be the most effective tool for engaging a consumer audience.

MESSAGING

Overarching campaign ‘hero’ message

The ‘hero message’ is the key, strategic campaign message. It is the most important message that will underpin the whole campaign. Other ‘secondary’ messages will be used to support and strengthen the main ‘hero’, whilst keeping content and messaging varied.

The overarching campaign message we propose speaks to the **unstable, politically-charged management situation** facing pelagic stocks – their future **‘hangs in the balance’**. This message underscores that the management and the future of these stocks could go one of two ways, subject to the outcomes of the 2023 Coastal States negotiations. The image of scales and weighting of different factors plays into this:

Agreement reached

A step towards sustainable, collaborative management.



No agreement reached

Continued unsustainable, irresponsible management practices.

This message also strongly connects to the impending '**tipping point**' in seafood sourcing practices. The market is still sourcing from these fisheries despite losing Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification only because they are engaged in NAPA's Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) and the latest [WWF Seafood Guides](#) still list mackerel and herring as green-or-yellow-rated. Following a revision to the WWF Guides (expected this year) and the anticipated conclusion of the NAPA FIP, if a quota sharing resolution is not reached, the Coastal States will have gone beyond the 'tipping point' that the market can bear – consequently, these stocks will not be purchased as they'll represent too great of a reputational risk, despite the real need for them as products in the marketplace and their important contributions to healthy, nutritious diets.

To support this hero message, and generate a recognisable tagline, the campaign hashtag, **#FishStocksInTheBalance**, will be used across social media content.

Underlying supporting messages

Underlying messages will be used to support and strengthen the main 'hero' message. These messages will play an important role in building a clear, memorable, and impactful narrative that speaks to the key audiences. Underlying messaging will draw upon NAPA's existing tone, impactful language, and sound scientific reasoning. These are outlined below:

- **A simple decision to follow the science**

- This supporting message underscores the importance of collaboration between the Coastal States to ensure that overall quotas do not exceed scientific recommendations – it boils down to a simple decision to follow the science.
- In many respects, pelagic fish species' management should represent an easy case for cooperation – the Northeast Atlantic is one of the most observed, assessed, understood and "rich" (in every sense of the word) areas for fishing in the world.
- Messaging also relates back to NAPA's fundamental asks of the Coastal States to: 1) Follow the science, 2) Agree on sustainable catch shares (resolve allocation

issues), 3) Commit to/implement long-term management plans, 4) Consider capping catches in international waters.

- **Race against time**

- The 3-year deadline of the NAPA FIP lends itself to the concept of time. Highlighting to ministers and delegates that time is running out will emphasise their own ambitions to reach an agreement in the near future. It also connects with the idea of supply chain businesses losing patience and not being prepared to stand by any longer while this neglect continues.
- Messaging will draw on the notion of 'zero hour for fish stocks', 'eleventh hour for fish stocks', and 'calling time on unsustainable fishing'.
- The concept of time running out supported by a countdown timer has been used in previous NAPA campaigns and could be reframed to support this message visually e.g. countdown clock/timer hosted on the NAPA website counting down the number of days until the end of the FIP: [2020 Doomsday Clock Statement - Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists \(thebulletin.org\)](#).

- **Consumer impact**

- Messaging under this theme will explore the interplay between overfishing and consumer health and livelihoods. There is a need for sustainably managed fisheries to provide sustainable and affordable fish for consumers.
- Human health:
 - Mackerel and herring (rich in omega 3) are healthy sources of oily fish that are readily available.
 - Blue whiting is used in the manufacture of fishmeal and fish oil, which are in turn used in aquaculture. A significant volume of these marine ingredients are produced from this fishery every year.
 - Overfishing therefore has the potential to impact the availability of highly nutritious and low-cost fish products. Moreover, these stocks are on our doorstep, but this advantage is being squandered by inappropriate governance.

- **Fish for tomorrow**

- This message relates to the importance of securing the longevity of pelagic stocks, which will be contingent on sustainable and responsible management.
- It prompts the Coastal States to think about the bigger picture of fisheries management and the impact of their decisions on future generations of both fishers and fish.
- In addition, it raises the question of long-term access to markets and the economic model followed by the fishery, i.e. stability of supply into current markets versus disruption and possible supply into less lucrative, less discriminatory (more global) markets.

- **A unanimous call for action**

- Everyone (scientists, NGOs, consumers, and retailers) is calling for the same thing – for Coastal States to follow scientific advice.
- Competitors have come together as NAPA partners in an unprecedented pre-competitive collaboration, to strengthen the voice of the market and draw on the combined purchasing power of retailers and supply-chain businesses in calling for change.
- The management of these stocks is the responsibility of all Coastal States, making cooperation essential; everyone has to come together. The non-compliance of a single Coastal State has the potential to derail efforts for all.

- **Meet your commitments to people and planet**

- The protection of pelagic stocks has knock-on benefits for:
 - i) the environment
 - ii) fisheries resources
 - iii) business confidence
- Commitments to sustainable fishing have been made by all Coastal States through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), who are instead disregarding their commitments. SDG 14 ‘Life Below Water’ is particularly pertinent and provides a strong angle through which to influence national governments. Other instruments may also be relevant.
- Messaging under this theme may be used to shame Coastal States and highlight their hypocrisy – e.g. ‘says one thing, does the opposite’, ‘put your money where your mouth is’.

- **Choose healthy stocks**

- This supporting message outlines that Coastal States have the power to choose healthy stocks – the barriers are purely political.
- It emphasises the need for: healthy stocks; healthy fisheries; healthy politics.
- Messaging will urge delegates to establish a binding mechanism so that Coastal States cannot simply ‘walk away’ from stock management negotiations and set their own unilateral quotas.
- Messaging will also position mackerel, herring, and blue whiting as part of a complex, interconnected, healthy ecosystem – if the stocks were to collapse because of overfishing, what would this mean for the Northeast Atlantic?

Post-Coastal States reflective messaging

A real and compelling consequence of the 2023 Coastal State negotiations is the possibility of dramatic changes to the sourcing practices of NAPA partners. At the NAPA Steering Committee meeting on 13 July 2023, an agreement was reached whereby NAPA partners will review their decision on whether to collectively execute their sourcing statements, once the outcomes of the 2023 negotiations have been announced. This decision should not be taken lightly, thus an in-person Steering Committee meeting will be held in early November to discuss this further. At

that point, contingent on the partners being ready to commit to their sourcing statements, campaign messaging may pivot in order to speak to the potential of the marketplace to ‘walk away’ from sourcing from these stocks. Campaign messaging has already been developed to support this potential outcome, and is detailed in MWC’s presentation to the Steering Committee on 13 July.

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Social media

Social media content will be crafted in order to contribute to the ‘drumbeat’ of regular advocacy messaging that will drive the campaign forwards. The campaign will take place primarily on NAPA’s [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) channels over the course of four weeks, from Monday 25 September until Friday 20 October (refer to timeline below). During this period, up to three posts per week will be scheduled that will draw on the key messages outlined above, including a short campaign film that will speak directly to the hero message and promote the launch of the campaign.

Press

At least three press pieces will be drafted and issued during the campaign:

- One forward-looking press release/statement reaffirming NAPA’s position and calls to action in the run up to the negotiations,
- One Op-Ed article authored by the NAPA Project Lead (to be drafted by MWC in the first instance),
- One reflective press statement to be issued after the negotiations have closed, commenting on the outcomes.

Press pieces will include impactful quotes from NAPA Partners, thus leveraging the power and voice of the marketplace in our advocacy.

All press pieces will be distributed to NAPA’s extensive database of national and sector press contacts, including journalists and publications working throughout all Coastal States. In addition, key press contacts with an interest in NAPA’s work and pelagic fisheries will be contacted directly.

Chorus of support

Coastal State ministers will be tagged in a selection of salient social media posts to facilitate the communication of key messages to those who have the power to make change happen.

Organisations that publicly supported NAPA’s 2022 Coastal States campaign – namely the Marine Stewardship Council, Sciaena, and The Pew Charitable Trusts – will also be tagged to facilitate the wider sharing and amplification of messaging. These organisations will be contacted individually by MWC in advance of the campaign, to inform them of the upcoming

campaign, to seek permission to tag them in relevant social media content, and to give them the opportunity to ask questions. NAPA will also seek to build new collaborative relationships with other organisations, such as IFFO (The Marine Ingredients Organisation).

NAPA partners will receive at least one social media post (including copy and a graphic) that they can share via their corporate company accounts or personal Twitter and LinkedIn channels. This will form part of the autumn partner engagement resource pack.

Media advertising

If time and funds permit, media advertising within national press outlets may also be explored. This approach could support NAPA's post-Coastal States reflective messaging, which is contingent on the partners being ready to execute their sourcing statements.

TIMELINE

The main campaign will run over the course of four weeks, from **Monday 25 September until Friday 20 October**. Upon the conclusion of the annual consultations and following the autumn Steering Committee meeting in early November, further reflective comms content may be curated for November and December to address the outcomes of the negotiations.

In order to facilitate an agreed sharing arrangement ahead of the annual consultations, there will also be several Coastal States WG meetings throughout September and October (detailed below).

MONITORING

The impact of the campaign will be monitored by gathering data analytics on a weekly basis. This will inform a post-campaign review. The following data will be collected:

Social media (Twitter)

- Impressions - The number of times content has been displayed on users' homepages.
- Conversations - The number of retweets (retweets increase the visibility of a post, making it appear on the timelines of accounts other than the ones that follow NAPA).
- Engagement - The collective number of likes, comments, and retweets obtained on a post.
- Follower growth - The change in the number of @NAPAFisheries followers throughout the course of the campaign.

Press

- Journalist engagement:
 - The number of journalists opening press releases.

- The number of journalists clicking on links in press releases.
- Press coverage:
 - Genre/type of publication.
 - Approximate number of resultant press articles.

Website traffic

- The number of website visits during the campaign.

MWC CONTACT

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