

NAPA Blue Whiting sub-group meeting minutes

5 February 2025, 11:00-12:30 (UK time)

Chair: Dave Robb, Cargill

Review of actions from last meeting – Fi Birch-Green

- **NAPA partners** to send any evidence of activities that may contribute towards FIP actions to Fi Birch-Green by midday on Friday 18th October, for inclusion in FIP progress report. – **Complete**
- **Aoife Martin** to contact North Atlantic Seafood Forum (NASF - Bergen, 4-6 March) organisers regarding an agenda slot for the NAPA blue whiting sub-group. – **Complete: further update to be provided during the meeting**
- **NAPA partners** to reach out to supply-chain contacts in Iceland, Norway and EU who may be able to further NAPA engagement with Fisheries Ministers, negotiators, catching sector, retailers and salmon producers. – **Ongoing: long-term action for NAPA partners**
- **NAPA team** to contact members in relation to sourcing statements and payment of membership fees for 2024-25. – **Complete**
- Next BW sub-group meeting to take place in Jan/Feb 2025. – **Complete**

Blue whiting TAC update – Fi Birch-Green

- Fi provided an update on blue whiting TAC and quota setting. Please refer to the accompanying presentation to view the slides presented.
- In summary, TAC setting has been business as usual for Coastal States. Having agreed to follow the ICES advice in October 2024, Coastal State declarations of 2025 quotas for blue whiting have not yet been published. Details of most bilateral agreements for 2025 also do not appear to be available, apart from the EU's confirmed transfer of 81,750 tonnes of blue whiting to Norway (in exchange for Barents Sea cod). Time will tell if the Coastal States agree to adhere to the recommended catch limits or set unilateral quotas leading to catches that exceed the ICES advice.
- The next Coastal States discussions are set to take place on 5-6 February 2025. If a Plenary is held, NAPA will attend and report back.

Update on recent advocacy and engagement – Aoife Martin

- Aoife provided an update on recent NAPA advocacy and engagement. Please refer to the accompanying presentation to view the slides presented.
- She summarised a meeting between NAPA and the EU negotiators held on 16 January, who put forward an entrenched narrative, painting the EU as playing fair but blaming others of quota grabbing.

- In response to the entrenched views of EU negotiators, Aoife shared that the Steering Group is exploring strengthening NAPA's core asks.
- The NAPA Team also meet with Kate Sanderson (Head of Representation, Faroe Islands) to explore Faroese perspectives shared during NAPA workshop in December 2024.
- Further meetings are planned around the fringes of the Coastal States negotiations in London on 13 February, including meetings with the Icelandic lead negotiator, Gudmundur Thordarson, and members of the EU catching sector, namely Tim Heddema (Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association) and Dominic Rihan (Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation). NAPA is also seeking separate meetings with the Faroese negotiators and Faroese catching sector, though these are to be confirmed.
- In a positive step, SalMar has agreed to join NAPA, kindly facilitated by Leif Kjetil Skjæveland. NAPA now has the membership backing of nearly 80% of all Norwegian salmon production.
- NAPA partners emphasised the social and economic impacts of no certification and how this argument might help focus minds. Stock declines leading to lower volumes could increase demand and drive up costs. NAPA intends to run an economic analysis with the MSC to demonstrate the financial impacts of certification loss.
- The lack of voice coming from the catching sector was also highlighted as a challenge.

North Atlantic Seafood Forum – Aoife Martin

- Aoife provided an update on NAPA's session at the North Atlantic Seafood Forum (NASF). Please refer to the accompanying presentation to view the slides presented.
- The NAPA session is part of the formal agenda this year and will focus on blue whiting management failures and consequences for the Norwegian salmon industry, which aligns with the motivations of the conference on salmon and aquaculture.
- A strong group of NAPA Partners have agreed to speak, with the session to be facilitated by Dave Robb.
- NAPA Partners were encouraged to attend and share the event with their networks.
- **Action taken for Fi to find out if Tesco plans to attend the NASF – Quiterie (Kit) Ng from Tesco subsequently confirmed she will attend the NASF and hopes to join NAPA's session.**

Communications Update – MWC

- Charlotte Browne from Mindfully Wired Communications presented the comms update. Please refer to the accompanying comms presentation to view the slides presented.
- She shared details of the comms plan for blue whiting including the blue whiting postcard handouts to be shared at the NASF and best supporting fish campaign, in addition to an overview of recent engagement on blue whiting from the sector press and on social media.

- There was wide support for the comms approach from the NAPA partners.

Member survey of blue whiting use – Dave Robb

- Dave Robb presented a member survey for blue whiting use that had been communicated to members of the sub-group by email on 4 February. Please refer to the accompanying presentation to view the slides presented.
- The aim of the survey is to estimate total NEA blue whiting production purchased by NAPA partners and collect information on the end use of blue whiting products. This will help demonstrate to regulators the importance of NAPA partners as customers of the blue whiting catching fleet and thus of paying attention to our needs.
- It was clarified that the survey is most appropriate for aquafeed companies, who will possess data on quantities of blue whiting sourced.
- **Action taken for Dave Robb to contact Rob Blyth-Skyrme and include an additional survey question about the certification standards that apply to businesses.**

Sourcing statements – Aoife Martin

- Aoife reminded the partners to submit their sourcing statements by Friday 14 February, if they had not done so already. Please refer to the accompanying presentation to view the slides presented.
- Importantly, any member wishing to continue with their existing statement needs to let the NAPA Team know.
- **Action taken for NAPA Partners to submit sourcing statements to Aoife and Fi, by Friday 14 February.**

NGO engagement – Aoife Martin

- Aoife presented a proposal for NAPA to connect with NGOs through convening two NGO roundtables per year. Please refer to the accompanying presentation to view the slides presented.
- NGOs offer an untapped opportunity to build a chorus of support around NAPA's asks and messaging, and NAPA has built good relationships with several NGOs through attending NEAFC meetings to date (e.g. Pew, MSC, Accountability.Fish, Blue).
- There was a mixed response to the suggestion. Some partners were particularly wary of engaging with anti-fishing NGOs and recommended extreme caution. Some partners welcomed the idea and highlighted the public attention that NGOs could draw towards the issue.

- It was agreed that a shortlist of NGOs that are supportive of fisheries and aquaculture would be drawn up as a next step. This could then be reviewed by NAPA partners and a decision on how to proceed would be made.
- **Action taken for NAPA partners to send a list of NGOs that they would feel comfortable engaging with to Aoife and Fi, by Friday 14 February.**

Actions

- **NAPA partners** to reach out to supply-chain contacts in Iceland, Norway and EU who may be able to further NAPA engagement with Fisheries Ministers, negotiators, catching sector, retailers and salmon producers. – **Carried forward: Long-term action for NAPA partners**
- **Fi** to find out if Tesco plans to attend the NASF. – **Complete: Quiterie (Kit) Ng from Tesco subsequently confirmed she will attend the NASF and hopes to join NAPA's session**
- **Dave Robb** to contact Rob Blyth-Skyrme and include an additional survey question about the certification standards that apply to businesses.
- **NAPA Partners** to submit sourcing statements and NGO lists to Aoife and Fi, by Friday 14 February.