

NORTH ATLANTIC PELAGIC ADVOCACY GROUP (NAPA)

# BLUE WHITING CAMPAIGN

Strategic approach, platform and comms considerations





# OUR STARTING POINT: THE CHALLENGE

## A PRIZED PELAGIC

Blue whiting is hugely valuable. Some is used for human consumption while most is used in feed, particularly for farmed salmon.

With global demand for seafood soaring, relying increasingly on aquaculture, feed sustainability has become pivotal to the fish farming industry.

## FULFILS A BIG BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Current blue whiting stocks are high and are feeding a global salmon farming industry that's worth over \$1.8 billion annually – a massive economic contributor for the coastal states.

## FOR SHORT-TERM GAIN

Coastal states are allocating themselves their own slice of the blue whiting pie based on current stock levels.

But these allocations are ignoring scientific advice on overfishing – they are taking more slices than the pie has to offer.

**SHORT-TERM GAINS ARE PRIORITISED OVER LONG-TERM ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS, WHICH ARE NOT IN DOUBT FOR KEY PLAYERS IN THE INDUSTRY.**

**THE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE OF THIS FISH IS AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE.**



# OUR MISSION: TO DRIVE...

CONTINUED  
AWARENESS OF THE  
URGENCY TO STOP  
OVERFISHING OF  
BLUE WHITING



ADVOCACY FOR  
LONG-TERM  
RESPONSIBLY  
MANAGED FISH  
STOCKS RESULTING  
IN COUNTRY  
SHARING  
AGREEMENTS



DEEPER  
UNDERSTANDING  
THAT SUSTAINABLE  
FISHING IS  
BENEFICIAL FOR  
PEOPLE, PLANET  
AND PROFITS



**FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS THE ASK HAS BEEN  
SIMPLE...**

**POLITICIANS FROM THE COASTAL STATES  
MUST WORK TOGETHER TOWARDS A  
SUSTAINABLE SHARING AGREEMENT**



# BUT SUSTAINABLE STOCKS STILL HANG IN THE BALANCE BECAUSE ...

**... THERE ARE DISCUSSIONS  
BUT NO SHARING AGREEMENT**

There are regulations and long-term management strategies agreed by all major catching countries (except Russia).

But the sharing agreements needed to implement these are still not in place.

**... CURRENT HIGH BIOMASS  
BUT A FLUCTUATING STOCK**

Whilst biomass is currently healthy, recruitment (young fish entering the stock) dropped substantially in 2023.

If recruitment stays low, ICES indicates that the biomass may rapidly decline

**... LESSONS FROM THE PAST  
BUT WE NEED TO LISTEN**

Average catches have exceeded advice by 29% since 2018.

ICES notes the sharp stock decline in 2018 -2020 was caused by excessive fishing.

**So is this once again going to be THE SAME OLD STORY?**



# WE NEED TO PUSH BACK...

Blue whiting is **EASILY CAUGHT**  
and current short-term healthy stock makes it  
**ALL TOO EASY** to ignore the longer-term issues.

But it **WON'T BE SO EASY** when Coastal States are  
**CAUGHT OUT** by their own ongoing lack of tangible  
political action and self-interest.

So how can we communicate this risk of being caught out  
in a way that gets across the real  
**dangers of overfishing?**



## OUR CAMPAIGN AND SUPPORTING PLATFORM

# BLUE WHITING RED ALERT

Because although stocks are booming, a bust is coming – thanks to overfishing.

**But there's still time to **rewrite that same old story.****

And why is this so urgent? Because business security is already at risk...

For farmed salmon, fishmeal and fish oil are complex to produce. Blue whiting is crucial to the carefully designed products they eat.

Salmon production is responsive to and relies on what is available on the market – if stocks dwindle, what's the alternative? Is there a sustainable one?

Alternatives are likely to be imported, increasing the carbon footprint of feed & therefore salmon - undermining efforts to source & produce responsibly



# ADDRESSING THE RISK OF GREENWASHING

If blue whiting stops being a responsible option for feed sourcing, it is important to understand the sustainability of the alternatives.

This includes the health and management of alternative feed fish stocks, as well as the carbon footprint involved in transport and processing.

If businesses switch away from blue whiting to a less sustainable alternative, there is a big risk of undermining the messaging that NAPA has built its campaigns on - the importance of healthy stocks and responsible fisheries management for business security.

NAPA will be carrying out research into carbon footprints, which will be crucial in informing our comms approach and message, and minimising the risk of greenwashing.





# WE NEED TO COME TOGETHER TO TURN THE TIDE BECAUSE....

For companies sourcing from blue whiting fisheries, the lack of political co-operation poses an unacceptable threat to wider responsible business practices.

The entire supply chain risks losing public trust in their role as responsible 'managers of the ocean'.

Demand for transparency and traceability is rising – retailers guide consumer purchase decisions, so buyers need to source responsibly end to end.

**IT'S TIME TO REWRITE THE BLUE WHITING STORY.**





**AND IT CAN BE DONE.**

**THERE'S STILL TIME TO REACH  
SHARING AGREEMENTS...**



# WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR OUR COMMS APPROACH?

## CONSIDERATIONS

To date we have been consistent and determined with our messaging – sounding the alarm or urgency.

There are several key coastal state players.

The impact has been made clear, but action is still lacking.

We need to maintain the pressure to drive advocacy: we are not giving up.

Campaigning is focused on decision makers who are driven by the business opportunity. At one end they have the power to drive change that will, ultimately, positively impact consumers at the other end.



## EXECUTION

We need to pivot, refresh and make our campaign stand out in a sea of the same messages about the dangers of overfishing.

We must ensure we reach everyone in the right way, showing up where they are.

The issues need to feel 'real' to those involved' – we must drive relevancy, be bold and deliver impact.

Broaden the appeal of NAPA's mission to generate more opportunities to see, hear and understand.

In order target decision makers we need to reinforce how their current actions will **negatively impact consumers who drive demand and fuel the business opportunity**. We must show how sharing agreements make good business and environmental sense.



A large fishing net with yellow floats is being pulled through the ocean, with many birds flying overhead. The net is dark and appears to be made of a fine mesh. The water is dark blue and has some white foam from the net's movement. The sky is a pale, overcast grey. The text "SUGGESTED TACTICS" is overlaid in the center of the image in a bold, dark blue font.

# SUGGESTED TACTICS



# WHAT COULD A COMMS CAMPAIGN FOR BLUE WHITING LOOK LIKE?

**OVERARCHING NAPA REFRESH AND SOFT RELAUNCH**

**IT'S TIME TO PUSH BACK NOT WALK AWAY**

**BLUE WHITING RED ALERT:**

**IT'S TIME TO REWRITE THE BLUE WHITING STORY**

## **VISUALS AND IMPACT**

### **GETTING NOTICED ON SOCIAL**

Specific mini social campaigns dedicated to blue whiting.

Campaigns will have their own visual identity to stand out from other ongoing NAPA comms work and broaden appeal.

## **EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH**

### **DRIVING EDUCATION IN THE MEDIA**

At key moments in time, stories dedicated to blue whiting will be crafted for focussed outreach.

Using facts, figures and spokespeople we will ensure the issues feel 'real'

## **IN PERSON ADVOCACY**

### **SHOWING UP AT KEY MOMENTS**

Reach decision makers where they are and ensure the blue whiting campaign messages are heard by making sure we are seen and heard at key events in coastal states calendars

## **SURROUND SOUND**

**ONGOING DRUMBEAT OF OVERARCHING NAPA COMMS & ADVOCACY  
(OF WHICH BLUE WHITING IS A PART)**



# FOUNDATIONS





**Pan-NAPA events & speaking opps calendar**

**List of socials accounts & key individuals**

**Packaged content & ad-hoc support**

**Blue whiting campaign section on the website**

**Species-specific briefing materials & talking points**

**Correspondence & meetings**



# CUSTOMISING MESSAGING

It is important to remember when communicating in any format that we don't want to be seen to be singling out certain States for 'targeted blame'.

In order to better land our messages, however, our comms must be customised to the States to which we're speaking, so that the messaging is **relevant**, **clear** and as **impactful** as it can be.

This tailored approach will be informed by data on the relevance and importance of blue whiting to each Coastal State specifically (also understanding there is a broad economic and ethical relevance to preventing the collapse of a stock).

In some instances, one messaging theme - eg. the importance of blue whiting to salmon farming - may create a compelling story for more than one Coastal State. We will consider this in any form of communications - whether it's campaign materials or direct correspondence - to drive relevance.

Please note all external communications are supporting a foundation of, and fostering, direct NAPA engagement with CS actors.

