



NORTH
ATLANTIC
PELAGIC
ADVOCACY
GROUP

2023 NEAFC Position Statement

North Atlantic Pelagic
Advocacy Group
(NAPA)

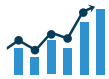


TOP LEVEL ASKS



Agree sustainable catch shares

The Coastal States should prioritise resolving the allocation issues around these stocks.



Follow the scientific advice

The Coastal States should ensure that the overall catch for each stock does not exceed the scientific advice.



Commit to long-term management

Multi-annual management should be the underlying approach by default.



Cap on catching in international waters

Further overfishing could be constrained by a cap on catches in international waters.

AGREE SUSTAINABLE CATCH SHARES



What's the issue?

- Since 1996, there have only been four years (2006-2009) where North East Atlantic Coastal States have been in agreement on the allocation of stock total allowable catch (TAC) for three commercially important North East Atlantic pelagic fisheries (Figure 1).
- A 'good' allocation mechanism will ensure that no participant (or State in this case) is worse off from acting cooperatively. In the case of international fisheries, successful allocation agreements must also be capable of being self-enforcing as there is no third party to ensure enforcement.
- The frequent failures of Coastal States to agree on allocations were highlighted by the [First](#) (2006) and [Second](#) (2014) NEAFC Performance Reviews.
- The second review recommended that NEAFC agrees on and applies objective criteria for determining allocations.
- In 2015, NEAFC agreed to establish a Working Group on Allocation Criteria.
- In 2017, several NEAFC members acknowledged that the task was a very ambitious one, and agreed that there did not seem to be value in continuing with formal meetings of the working group in 2018.
- At the 2019 Annual Meeting, it was agreed to discontinue the Working Group on Allocation Criteria.

- To date, no collective allocation mechanism has been agreed.
- We acknowledge that fisheries negotiations by their very nature are complex. Achieving satisfactory resolutions is a daunting task.
- Frequently, dispute resolution mechanisms are used in fisheries negotiations, and have been incorporated into a number of fisheries agreements.
- Dispute resolution mechanisms can be described as structured processes that address disputes or grievances that arise between two or more parties that aim to reach a consensual agreement that will accommodate their needs. Dispute resolution mechanisms may incorporate conciliation, conflict resolution, mediation, and negotiation.
- Success will be founded on cooperation, with agreed processes and procedures for TAC-setting and quota allocation that can respond to shifts in stock distribution and biomass. This should be coupled with quota trading and exchange mechanisms to balance quota availability with need (with built-in review periods), strong implementation and enforcement of regulations, an effective and responsive dispute resolution procedure, and supported by a strong science-policy interface.

Figure 1: Status of Coastal States Agreements (1996-2023)



There have been just **four years (2006-2009)** in which all Coastal States agreed on total allowable catches for pelagic stocks.

What are we calling for?

- Coastal States to urgently agree and employ an allocation mechanism for North East Atlantic mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring, and blue whiting.
- NEAFC to re-establish the NEAFC Working Group on Allocation Criteria as a first step.
- A dispute resolution mechanism should be utilised to facilitate successful negotiations. The NEAFC Guidelines for Coastal State Consultations in the North East Atlantic provides for a variety of dispute settlement avenues, but the weakness is the non-binding nature and apparent reluctance by the Coastal States to employ them.
- It is recommended that the Coastal States adopt NEAFC Guidelines for Coastal State Consultations in the North East Atlantic in their discussions, and both the Coastal States and NEAFC employ a secondary, compulsory binding dispute settlement system if agreement is not reached.