

# "SHARING IS CARING"

## CHALLENGES IN THE NORTHEAST ATLANTIC PELAGIC FISHERIES AND THE SOLUTIONS

15.10.21 | 08:45-10:40PM | HARPA OPERA CENTER

**08:45-08:50 OPENING CHAIR**

JÓHANN SIGURJÓNSSON, ICELAND'S SPECIAL ADVISOR ON OCEAN AFFAIRS, ICELAND MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND A FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ICELAND'S MARINE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**08:50-09:05 INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES; CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS**

ÁRNI M. MATHIESEN: SENIOR ADVISOR ICELAND OCEAN CLUSTER AND FORMER HEAD (ADG) OF THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE DEPARTMENT AT FAO

**09:05-09:20 INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES LAW AND TRANSBOUNDARY FISH STOCKS**

ERIK J. MOLENAAR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR AT THE NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA (NILOS) AT UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

**09:20-09:40 THE ROLE OF THE MARKET – RECOGNIZING AND REWARDING SUSTAINABLE FISHING PRACTICES AND INCENTIVIZING CHANGE**

RUPERT HOWES, CEO OF MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

**09:40-09:45 BREAK**

**09:45-10:00 THE NEW VOICE OF ENVIRONMENTALISM IN PELAGICS: THE SUPPLY CHAIN**

TOM PICKERELL, PROJECT LEADER, NAPA (NORTH ATLANTIC PELAGIC ADVOCACY GROUP)

**10:00-10:15 IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY FOR TESCOS PROCUREMENT**

HELENA DELAGADO NORDMANN, RESPONSIBLE SOURCING MANAGER (MARINE) TESCO

**10:15-10:40 Q AND A FROM CHAIR AND AUDIENCE**





# INTRODUCING THE SPEAKERS



**JÓHANN SIGURJÓNSSON**, ICELAND'S SPECIAL ENVOY ON OCEAN AFFAIRS AND A FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ICELAND'S MARINE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**MR. JÓHANN SIGURJÓNSSON IS ICELAND'S SPECIAL ENVOY ON OCEAN AFFAIRS AND A FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ICELAND'S MARINE RESEARCH INSTITUTE. AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF MRI, HE WAS THE CHIEF ADVISER TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND ON FISH AND WHALE STOCKS AROUND ICELAND AND ON MARINE SCIENCE POLICY AND LONGTERM UTILIZATION STRATEGIES OF FISH STOCKS.**



**ÁRNI M. MATHIESEN**: SENIOR ADVISOR AND FORMER ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE DEPARTMENT AT FAO

**ÁRNI M. MATHIESEN IS AN ICELANDIC POLITICIAN, THAT PREVIOUSLY HAS SERVED AS BOTH MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF FISHERIES. UP UNTIL RECENTLY HE HAS SERVED MANY YEARS AS THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND HEAD OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE AT THE UNITED NATIONS FOOD & AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO). HE NOW HOLDS A SENIOR ADVISOR ROLE AT THE ICELAND OCEAN CLUSTER IN REYKJAVIK.**



**ERIK J. MOLENAAR**: PROFESSOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR AT THE NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA (NILOS) AT UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

**PROFESSOR ERIK J. MOLENAAR HAS BEEN WITH THE NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA (NILOS) AT UTRECHT UNIVERSITY SINCE 1994 AND CURRENTLY HOLDS THE POSITION OF DEPUTY DIRECTOR. HE HAS DONE A LARGE NUMBER OF RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES LAW AND THE INTERNATIONAL LAW RELATING TO THE ARCTIC AND THE ANTARCTIC.**



**RUPERT HOWES**: CEO OF MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL (MSC) SINCE OCTOBER 2004. A LIFELONG COMMITTED ENVIRONMENTALIST AND A PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED ACCOUNTANT; CAME TO THE MSC FROM UNITED KINGDOM ORGANIZATION FORUM FOR THE FUTURE AS DIRECTOR OF THE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY PROGRAMME.**



**TOM PICKERELL**, PROJECT LEADER NAPA (NORTH ATLANTIC PELAGIC ADVOCACY GROUP)

**MARINE BIOLOGIST WITH OVER 15 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN SEAFOOD SUSTAINABILITY; INCLUDING WILD FISHERIES AND SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE, FISHERIES POLICY (DEVELOPING AND ADVOCACY), CERTIFICATION SCHEMES AND CONSUMER GUIDES AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN SEAFOOD. CURRENTLY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT THE GLOBAL TUNA ALLIANCE AND PROJECT LEADER OF THE INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE NAPA.**



**HELENA DELAGADO NORDMANN**, RESPONSIBLE SOURCING MANAGER (MARINE) TESCO

**EXPERIENCED BIOLOGIST SPECIALISED IN THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT. CAREER EXPERIENCE COVERS BOTH RESEARCH AND INDUSTRY. CURRENTLY THE RESPONSIBLE SOURCING MANAGER (MARINE) AT TESCO DELIVERING THE COMPANY'S MARINE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY TO MEET THEIR GOAL OF REACHING 100% SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD.**





# Quota sharing agreement urgently needed for North East Atlantic pelagic fish stocks

- Important pelagic fish stocks in the North East Atlantic - mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring and blue whiting - are being overexploited because international governments are repeatedly failing to reach quota sharing agreements.
- Over the past six years, total catches have exceeded sustainable levels by almost five million tonnes<sup>1</sup>.
- The states fishing these stocks are some of the wealthiest in the world and have access to rich stock data, giving them a responsibility to follow scientific advice and ensure long-term sustainability.
- Governments must reach a quota sharing agreement at the Coastal States meetings between 19 and 27 October 2021 to protect stocks from overfishing.

## Europe's largest fish stocks under threat

**Mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring and blue whiting in the North East Atlantic make up one of the largest fish populations in Europe. But due to a lack of effective long-term international management, these stocks are being overexploited and at risk of future collapse.**

In recent years, the populations of these stocks have shown an overall downwards trend<sup>2</sup>. The declining population of Atlanto-Scandian herring is particularly concerning, having fallen 36% over the past decade<sup>3</sup>.

This stock collapsed in the late 1960s due to overfishing, and only recovered following 20 years of restricted catches<sup>4</sup>. The loss of these stocks would cause huge harm to marine ecosystems in the region, where they are an important source of food for other species.

Consumers would see popular products vanishing from supermarket shelves and menus across Europe and Japan, and fish farms may face disruption to feed supply, as blue whiting is commonly used to produce fishmeal.



JON BILBROUGH

<sup>1</sup> Between 2015 and 2020, actual catch totals exceeded scientifically recommended catch levels recommended by ICES by 4,781,470 tonnes - made up of 988,875 tonnes for herring, 1,584,574 for mackerel, and 2,208,021 for blue whiting (MSC calculation based on six years (2015 – 2020) of advised catch and actual catch data from ICES)

<sup>2</sup> ICES Advice on fishing opportunities, catch, and effort Ecoregions in the

Northeast Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean (2021): Atlanto-Scandian herring, Mackerel, Blue whiting

<sup>3</sup> ICES Advice on fishing opportunities, catch, and effort Ecoregions in the Northeast Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean – Atlanto-Scandian herring (2021)

<sup>4</sup> Sigurdsson, Thorir. (2006). The Collapse of the Atlanto-Scandian Herring Fishery: Effects on the Icelandic Economy

## Combined catch exceeding scientific advice

**States are consistently setting quotas which, in sum, exceed scientific advice for mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring and blue whiting.**

While states agree that a Total Allowable Catch aligning with scientific advice from ICES is needed, they are repeatedly failing to agree how to share this catch between them. As a consequence, each state is setting its individual quota instead - and the sum of these individual quotas is consistently higher than the sustainable catch amount advised by ICES.

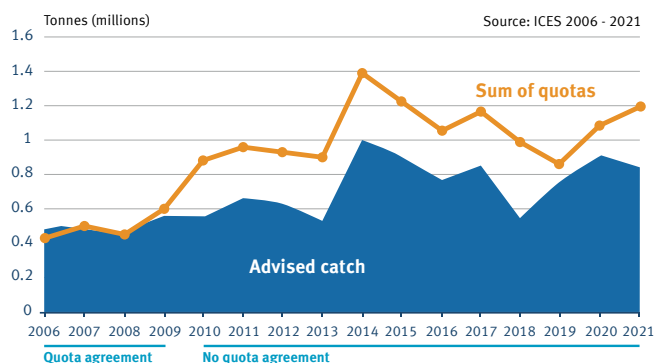
Over the past six years alone, the total catch of mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring and blue whiting has exceeded the advised limit by **almost five million tonnes**.

## Combined quotas in 2021

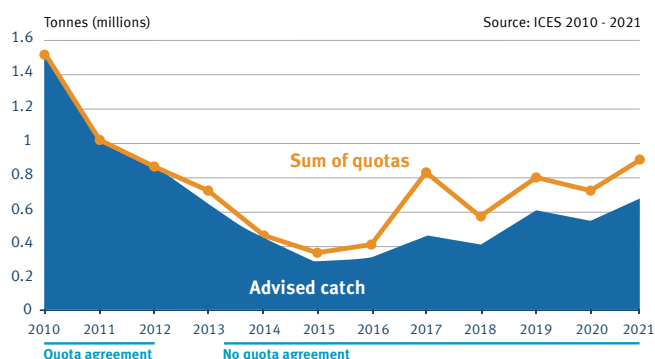
**In 2021, the combined individual quotas for mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring and blue whiting exceeded ICES advice by 41%, 35% and 25% respectively.**

Since 1996 there have only been four years where quota sharing agreements have been in place for all three stocks.

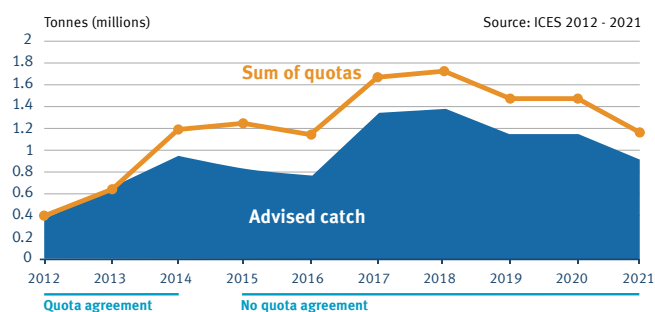
### Mackerel



### Atlanto-Scandian herring



### Blue whiting





The three key pelagic fish stocks are shared by the European Union (EU), Norway, Iceland, Russia, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and the United Kingdom (UK). These states form the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) contracting parties.

Those states are responsible for setting a Total Allowable Catch in line with scientific advice from the International Council on Exploration of the Seas (ICES). Crucially, the states must agree on quotas to share the Total Allowable Catch between them.

## International agreement urgently needed

**The health and availability of these important natural resources are under threat. Only by following scientific advice and agreeing quotas that do not exceed sustainable limits can we protect the stocks for current and future generations.**

Representatives from each state will attend the annual Coastal States meetings, held between 19 and 27 October 2021. This is their opportunity to agree how quotas will be shared in 2022, and to prevent mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring and blue whiting stocks being overexploited yet again.

Action is urgently needed. The distribution of these stocks is shifting throughout the region, likely accelerated by the impacts of climate change, making the need for adaptive, resilient fisheries management even more crucial.

The states catching these stocks are some of the wealthiest worldwide and have access to rich stock data and scientific expertise. They are also highly sophisticated in terms of fishing capacity, control and enforcement<sup>5</sup>. It is their responsibility to manage these natural resources sustainably for the good of society and our planet.

The states must find solutions to the stock sharing dilemma and work together and reach a shared agreement that will ensure the long-term sustainability of these economically and ecologically important stocks.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Performance Review Panel (2014), North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)

<sup>6</sup> Atlanto-Scandian herring and blue whiting fisheries to be suspended (Dec 2020)

## Unsustainable fishery management

Robust stock management, science-based catch quotas and cooperation between all states are important components of an effective and sustainable fisheries management framework. They are also key requirements of the MSC Fisheries Standard, which is based on the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

**The lack of quota sharing agreements has resulted in all MSC certified mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring, and blue whiting fisheries in the North East Atlantic losing MSC certification<sup>6</sup>.**

Fishers and their practices cannot be certified sustainable without effective regional fisheries management in place. Until governments put quota sharing agreements in place that ensure the long-term sustainability of these species, independent assessors cannot reinstate MSC certificates for the Atlanto-Scandian herring, mackerel or blue whiting fisheries.

**To avoid long-term damage to important fish stocks, governments must reach a quota sharing agreement at the Coastal States meetings held between 19 and 27 October 2021 to ensure future catches are within scientifically advised limits.**

The MSC uses the ecolabel and fishery certification program to contribute to the health of the world's oceans by recognising and rewarding sustainable fishing. It is the only wild-capture fisheries certification and ecolabelling program that meets best practice requirements set by both the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) and ISEAL, the global membership association for sustainability standards.



**“**  
**MSC and our partners in the supply chain call on policy makers from the fishing nations of the North East Atlantic to reach a shared agreement for managing these important stocks**  
**”**

**Rupert Howes, Chief Executive  
Marine Stewardship Council**

Find out more: [msc.org](http://msc.org)

