



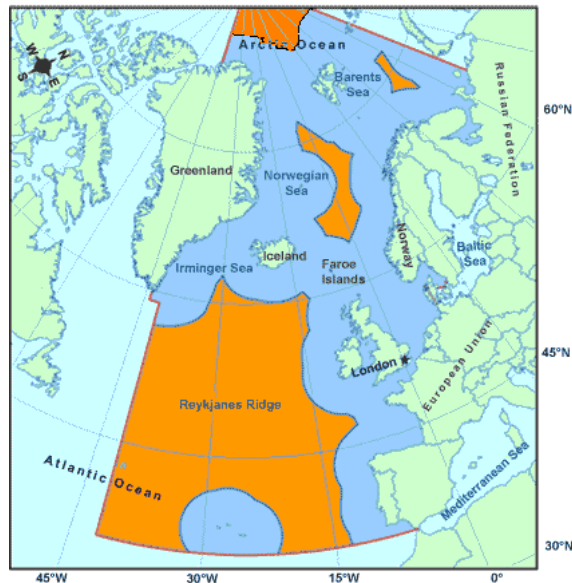
## North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

Contracting Parties: Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the EU, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation

### PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed 17 November 2009, 09:00 am GMT

The high seas of the NEAFC Regulatory Area inside the NEAFC Convention Area in the North-East Atlantic are shown shaded on the map below.



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At its 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held in London on 9-13 November 2009 NEAFC adopted management measures for 6 out of 7 fisheries. Parties will continue consultations on mackerel later this year with a view to agreeing measures later.

Based on Coastal State Agreements, management measures for the **two major pelagic fisheries** - Norwegian Spring Spawning (Atlanto-Scandian) herring and blue whiting - were agreed as were management measures for **Rockall haddock and deep-sea fisheries**. For

**pelagic redfish** in the Norwegian Sea and for **pelagic redfish** in the Irminger Sea, arrangements similar to those for 2009 were agreed. With regard to mackerel, meetings allowing continued consultations with a view to reaching agreement on measures that can be adopted by NEAFC later are ongoing.

A ban on using gillnets in waters greater than 200 metres depth was maintained as were measures to remove and dispose of unmarked or illegal fixed gear and retrieve lost gear to minimise ghost fishing.

Considering the poor status of the shark stock of Spurdog (*Squalus acanthias*) in the Northeast Atlantic, the ban on directed fisheries of spurdog was continued.

NEAFC adopted a ban on discards in NEAFC high seas fisheries.

To protect vulnerable marine ecosystems and in line with scientific advice, NEAFC extended the area closed to fisheries on the Hatton Bank and closed an area south of the Icelandic EEZ known as spawning ground for blue ling. A proposal to extend the closures on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge was sent to the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea for scientific comments. An overview of area management undertaken by NEAFC can be found on page 5.

NEAFC noted the continued results of the NEAFC IUU (Illegal, Unregulated, Unreported) A- and B-lists. The transshipment activities that underpinned these fisheries have been brought under control by flag states, reefer registries and owners of reefer vessels. The NEAFC Port State Control System, which was introduced on 1 May 2007, has continued to work without problems and is deemed to have led to a significant reduction in unreported catches in the NEAFC area.

Based on information on vessels on the IUU B-list that had sunk or been scrapped, NEAFC removed 10 vessels from the B-list.

In September 2008 NEAFC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with its environmental counterpart in the North East Atlantic, the OSPAR Commission (for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic) and the Annual Meeting considered how to make the MoU operational. It was agreed to consider the feasibility of organising a workshop, in collaboration with NAFO and OSPAR, in the first half of 2010 to review respective progress on ecosystem-based area management in international waters in the North Atlantic, with a particular emphasis on defining management objectives.

The cooperative non-Contracting Party status of Belize, Canada, Japan, and New Zealand was renewed for 2010. The Cook Islands have also been a cooperative non-Contracting Party to NEAFC in recent years but had not requested the renewal of that status before the meeting. Cooperative non-Contracting Party status for the Bahamas and Panama is still being considered.

Commenting on these developments at the end of his 3 years as NEAFC President, Mr Stefán Ásmundsson, Iceland, said: *Although we have to admit we were not able to reach agreement in all matters I am confident that Contracting Parties, in the tradition of close cooperation, will reach solutions that can be adopted by NEAFC in time to regulate all fisheries in 2010. We have a solid framework to support sustainable fisheries where legal*

*operators are well protected. With our extensive measures on bottom fishing activities in the high seas I am confident that NEAFC is fully prepared to meet all requirements in international law, technical guidelines adopted in FAO and the objective of its own Convention ‘to ensure the long-term conservation and optimum utilisation of the fishery resources in the Convention Area, providing sustainable economic, environmental and social benefits’. Cooperation with other Regional Fisheries Management organisations, OSPAR and IMO underlines the need to control all human activities with an impact on marine ecosystems.”*

As the incumbent President Mr Stefán Ásmundsson, Iceland ended his three years term, NEAFC elected Dr Sergey Belikov, the Russian Federation, as President for 2010-2012. Jóhán H. Williams, Norway, was elected first Vice-President and Andrew Thomson, EU, was elected second Vice-President for the same period.

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### More Details

<b>Main Fisheries/ stocks</b>	<b>Management measure 2009</b>
Norwegian spring spawning (Atlanto-Scandian) herring	Overall TAC of 1,483 thousands tonnes
Blue whiting	Overall TAC of 497 thousands tonnes
Mackerel	Consultations continue
Rockall haddock	Box closed to trawl fisheries to protect juvenile haddock.
Pelagic redfish in the Irminger Sea	Total allowable catch not higher than in 2009
Pelagic redfish Norwegian Sea	Overall TAC of 8,600 tonnes to be fished from 15 August to 30 November
Deep Sea Fisheries	Effort less than 65 % of effort in earlier years
Orange roughy	TAC of 150 tonnes for each Contracting Party

The four main fisheries in the Convention Area are Norwegian spring spawning (Atlanto-Scandian) herring, mackerel, blue whiting and pelagic redfish. About 3 million tonnes have been taken in these fisheries. Catches of the three pelagic species in 2005 had a landed value of approximately US \$681 million from the Convention Area and US \$236 million from the Regulatory Area.

<b>Additional measures related to fishing</b>	<b>Period</b>
Ban on finning of sharks	2007 ---→
Haddock box	2003--→
Closures of large areas for bottom fisheries	2004--→
Bottom fishing regulations	2008--→
Ban of gill net fishing in depths over 200 m in the Regulatory Area	2006 --→
Ban on directed fisheries for spurdog, <i>Squalus achanthias</i>	2009 ---→

### Overview of the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

1. The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the **North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission** (NEAFC) took place in London on 9-13 November 2009 under the chairmanship of Mr. Stefán Ásmundsson, Iceland.
2. All Contracting Parties were represented: Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Community, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation. Representatives from Belize, Canada, the Cook Islands, New Zealand, the International Government Organisation OSPAR and two non-governmental organisations, Seas at Risk and the Pew Foundation, attended as observers.
3. The Commission reviewed scientific information from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) concerning the status of fish stocks in the North-East Atlantic. Specific attention was given to reports on stocks under NEAFC's regulatory competence (pelagic redfish, blue whiting, Norwegian spring spawning (Atlanto-Scandian) herring, mackerel, pelagic redfish in the Irminger and the Norwegian Seas, Rockall haddock and deep-sea species). The Commission also reviewed scientific information on Marine Ecosystems.
4. In 2003 NEAFC agreed on temporary measures to freeze effort in fisheries for fish species inhabiting deep waters in the Regulatory Area from 1 January 2004. This year NEAFC agreed to maintain a reduction in fishing effort in these fisheries by 35 % in 2010.

NEAFC agreed on management measures to control the exploitation of major fish stocks in the high seas (the NEAFC Regulatory Area). These measures include total allowable catches for Norwegian spring spawning (Atlanto-scandian) herring, blue whiting, pelagic redfish in ICES Sub-areas I and II and in the Irminger Sea, blue whiting, Rockall haddock, orange roughy and deep-sea species. A ban on directed fishery for spurdog sharks was also agreed

Consultations on mackerel will continue after the Annual Meeting

5. NEAFC reviewed recent trends in the international management of marine resources, including the ecosystem approach and cooperation with other regional and global organisations. NEAFC evaluated the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, VMEs,

Meeting schedules for subsidiary bodies (the Permanent Committees on Control and Enforcement, PECCOE, and the Permanent Committee on Science and Management, PECMAS) and working groups were adopted.

The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting is scheduled to take place in London on 8-12 November 2010.

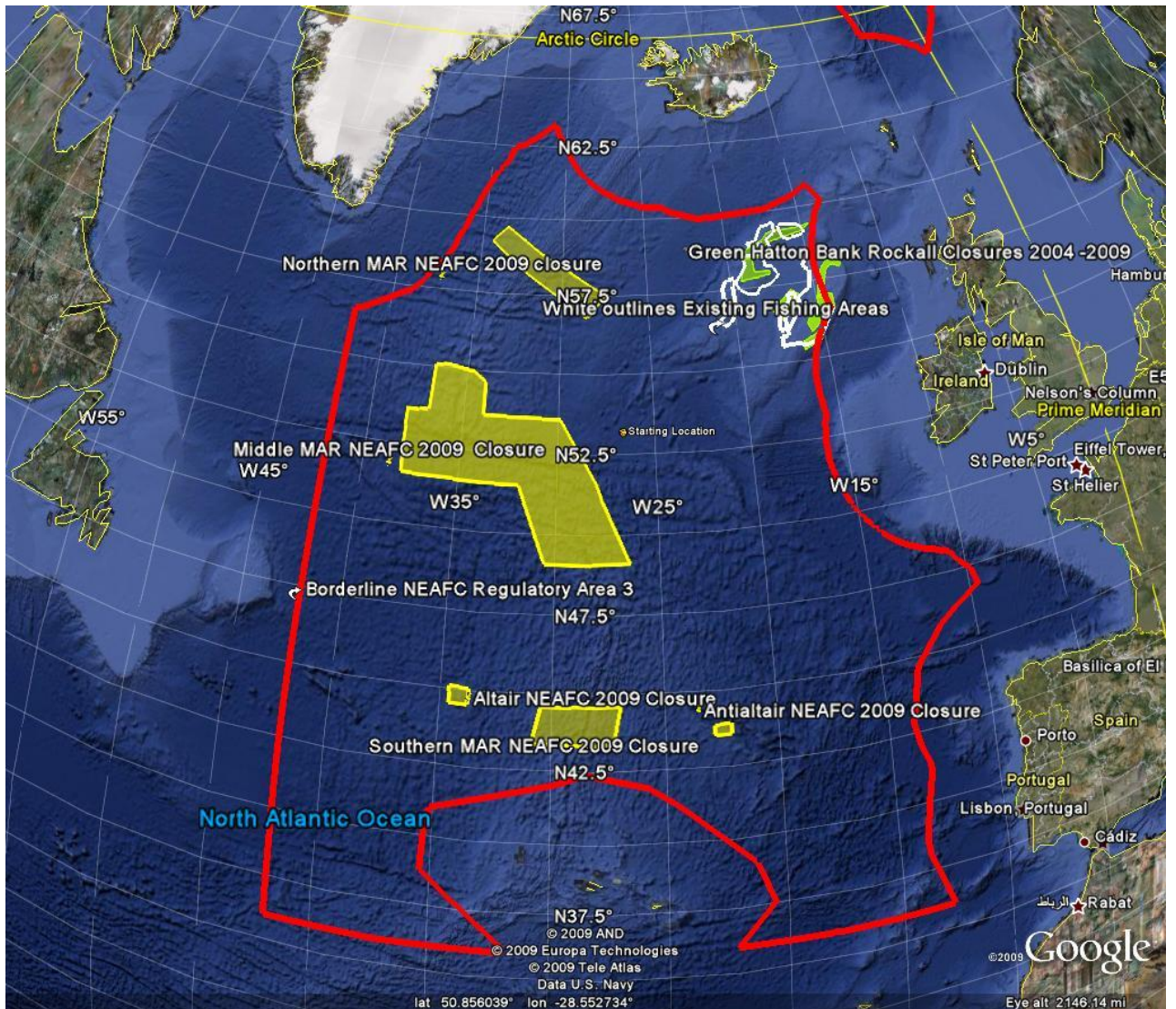
### **NEAFC evaluates the protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in the High Seas of the North East Atlantic and agrees measures and plans for most major fisheries in the NEAFC Regulatory Area.**

At its 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, held in London on 9-13 November 2009, NEAFC made an evaluation of measures in place to protect Vulnerable Marine ~~Ecosystems~~ (Ecosystems (VMEs)). A summary of actions taken by NEAFC to conserve ~~VMEs and~~ VMEs and deep sea ~~species in~~ species in the high seas of the North East Atlantic is attached.

NEAFC continues to review these measures and, at the meeting, it was decided to seek cooperation with the OSPAR Commission. At the meeting it was agreed to extend the closures on the Hatton Bank to bring them in line with scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, ICES, NEAFC's scientific provider. In the same line a spawning area for blue ling was closed south of the Icelandic EEZ.

In a postal vote earlier this year NEAFC adopted measures that close more than 330,000 square kilometres to bottom fisheries on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.

This comes on top of a number of other measures adopted by NEAFC to protect deep-sea diversity. The closures are shown on the map below.



The five green areas on the Mid-Atlantic ridge are the closures adopted earlier this year. The red line is the boundary of the high sea areas in the North East Atlantic. The “existing” bottom fishing areas are the relatively small areas within the white lines in the north east corner (the Hatton – Rockall Banks area, of the high seas area). All areas outside the white lines are considered as "new" bottom fishing areas.

The draft FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas in paragraph 43bis reads as follows: “*Risk assessments referred to in paragraph 43 (vi) above should take into account, as appropriate, differing conditions prevailing in areas where DSF<sup>1</sup> are well established and in areas where DSF have not taken place or only occur occasionally*”.

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<sup>1</sup> DSF. Deep-sea Fisheries

Based on this, in its bottom fishing regulation NEAFC has outlined “existing fishing areas” where fishing has taken place and “new fishing areas” where fishing has not taken place. The “new” fishing areas are 99.1% of the area seen in the map above. To reduce risks of significant adverse impacts on VMEs, bottom fisheries in these areas are severely restricted. Normal commercial bottom fisheries authorisations are not sufficient in the areas, as bottom fishing can only be authorised under the strict conditions in the NEAFC Exploratory Bottom Fisheries Protocol. Vessels authorised under this protocol must have an observer on board. Observers shall collect data in accordance with a Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem Data Collection Protocol.