

North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) – www.neafc.org

The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) was formed to recommend measures to maintain the rational exploitation of fish stocks in the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. Most of this area is under the fisheries jurisdiction of NEAFC's Contracting Parties (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the EC, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation), but four large areas (including the area around the North Pole) are international waters and constitute the NEAFC Regulatory Area (Figure 3.5). NEAFC's primary objective is to ensure the long-term conservation and optimum utilization of the fishery resources, providing sustainable economic, environmental and social benefits. The present membership is therefore made up as follows:

- The European Union
- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)
- Iceland
- Norway
- The Russian Federation

The main fisheries in the Convention Area are for Norwegian Spring Spawning (Atlanto–Scandian) herring, mackerel, blue whiting and oceanic pelagic redfish. These fisheries are all regulated, at least in part, by NEAFC. Around 1 million tonnes of these stocks are taken annually from the NEAFC area.

The catches of the three pelagic species in 2005 had a landed value of approximately 9,117 million Norwegian kroner (or 681 million US\$) from the Convention Area and 1,566 million Norwegian kroner (or 236 million US\$) from the Regulatory Area.

These fisheries are industrial in nature and are mostly fished by large mid water trawl and purse seine vessels. Landings from these vessels form the basis of large operations processing for human consumption, fish feed for the aquaculture sector, and fish oil and meal in general. NEAFC fisheries have significant economic and social importance to Coastal States and fishing communities.

Article 5 and Article 6 of the NEAFC Convention set up two scenarios for the management of NEAFC fisheries. Article 5 provides for recommendations for straddling stocks in waters beyond the areas under the jurisdiction of Contracting Parties. Article 6 allows for recommendations that apply to waters under the fisheries jurisdiction of Contracting Parties. This is done at the request of the Contracting Party in question and a recommendation must receive its affirmative vote.

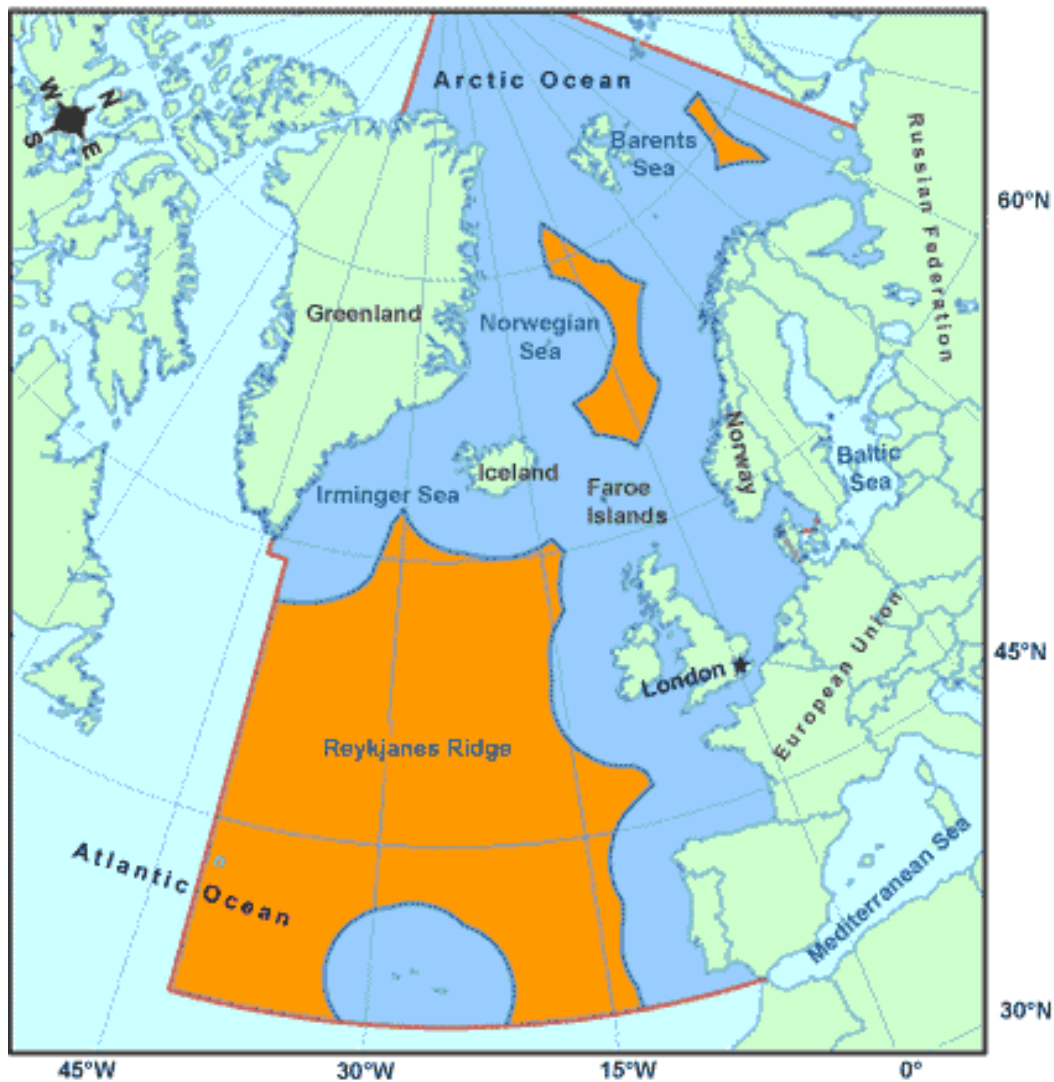


Figure 3.5: Map of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) Regulatory Area (orange blocks)

The Contracting Parties of NEAFC have utilised both of these scenarios as follows:

- a. Coastal State groups adopt management measures and allocations for the whole distribution area of the fish stocks, this includes proposing measures to be adopted by NEAFC for areas beyond the jurisdiction of Contracting Parties (i.e. the Regulatory Area). Examples are the pelagic fisheries for Norwegian spring spawning (Atlanto-Scandian) herring, mackerel and blue whiting and Rockall haddock; and
- b. NEAFC adopts management measures and allocations for the whole distribution area of the stock for areas inside and beyond the jurisdiction of Contracting Parties. Examples are the fishery for pelagic redfish and deep-sea fisheries.

As already mentioned, during 2008 a Memorandum of Understanding between NEAFC and OSPAR was established to facilitate joint working in areas of mutual interest, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The stated goal of the MOU is to conserve living resources of the sea by:

- ensuring there is a free flow of information between NEAFC and OSPAR;
- highlighting other human activities that may effect the marine environment;
- pro-actively undertaking spatial planning; and
- working together to enhance knowledge and understanding of fish and other marine species populations, abundance and distribution in order to better protect them.

→ [*Go to full QSR assessment report on environmental impact of fishing \(publication number 465/2009\)*](#)