

SURVEILLANCE NO. 4

Report for the Faroe Islands North East Arctic cod and saithe Fishery

JFK Trol P/F

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Objective:

The objective of this report is the fourth surveillance audit of the Faroe Islands North East Arctic cod and saithe fishery

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GLOSSARY

Abbreviations & acronyms

ACOM	(ICES) Advisory Committee
AFWG	(ICES) Arctic Fisheries Working Group
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CPUE	Catch per unit effort
CR	Certification Requirements
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ETP	Endangered, Threatened and Protected
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FPZ	Fishery Protection Zone
HCR	Harvest Control Rule
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IMR	Institute of Marine Research, Norway
ISBF	Introduced Species Based Fisheries
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUU	Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported
JNRF	Joint Norwegian Russian Fisheries Commission
LTL	Low Trophic Level
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSE	Management Strategy Evaluation
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation
NAMMCO	North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission
NEAFC	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NGO	Non - Governmental Organization
OSPAR	Oslo – Paris Convention. The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic.
PI	Performance Indicator
PINRO	Polar Research Institute of Marine Fisheries and Oceanography, Russia
PISG	Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts
PSC	Port State Control
REZ	Russian Economic Zone
SG	Scoring guidepost
SSB	Spawning Stock Biomass
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
UK	United Kingdom
UNLOSC	United Nations Law of the Sea Conference
UoC	Unit of Certification
VME	Vulnerable marine ecosystems
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
XSA	Extended Survivor's Analysis

Stock assessment reference points

B_{lim}	Minimum biomass below which recruitment is expected to be impaired or the stock dynamics are unknown.
B_{msy}	Biomass corresponding to the maximum sustainable yield (biological reference point); the peak value on a domed yield-per-recruit curve.
B_{pa}	Precautionary biomass below which spawning stock biomass (SSB) should not be allowed to fall to safeguard it against falling to B_{lim} .
$B_{trigger}$	Value of SSB that triggers a specific management action
F	Instantaneous rate of fishing mortality
F_{lim}	Exploitation rate that is expected to be associated with stock 'collapse' if maintained over a longer time (precautionary reference point)
F_{max}	F where total yield or yield per recruit is highest
F_{msy}	F giving maximum sustainable yield
F_{pa}	Precautionary buffer to avoid that fishing mortality at F_{lim} .
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Table 1 General information

Fishery name	Faroe Islands North East Arctic cod and saithe		
Unit(s) of Assessment (UoA)	UoA 1: Faroe Islands North East Arctic cod		
	Species:	Cod (<i>Gadus morhua</i>)	
	Stock:	North-East Arctic Cod	
	Geographical area:	ICES subareas I & II: within REZ, NEZ and International waters	
	Harvest method:	Demersal rock-hopper trawl	
	Management:	JNRFC, Fisheries management of Faroe Islands and Iceland	
	Client group:	P/F JFK Trol (<i>Gadus</i> , Akraberg, Sjørðarberg); Samherji (Kaldbakur EA1, Snaefell EA310, Björgvin EA-311 and Oddeyrin EA - 210)	
	Other eligible fishers:	Faroe Islands fishers: Enniberg P/F Icelandic fishers: There are currently no other vessels in the Samherji group that are licensed to catch cod in the Barents Sea under the Icelandic quota. If at a later date more vessels are added to the Samherji group they will automatically (subject to full compliance with MSC requirements) be eligible to share the MSC certificate. The list of eligible vessels will be kept updated on www.msc.org and also listed in annual surveillance reports.	
	UoA 2: Faroe Islands North East Arctic saithe		
	Species:	Saithe (<i>Pollachius virens</i>)	
	Stock:	North-East Arctic saithe	
	Geographical area:	ICES subareas I & II: within REZ, NEZ and International waters	
	Harvest method:	Demersal rock-hopper trawl	
	Management:	Fisheries management of Norway, Faroe Islands and Iceland	
	Client group:	P/F JFK Trol (<i>Gadus</i> , Akraberg, Sjørðarberg); Samherji (Kaldbakur EA1, Snaefell EA310, Björgvin EA-311 and Oddeyrin EA - 210)	
Other eligible fishers:	Faroe Islands fishers: Enniberg P/F Icelandic fishers: There are currently no other vessels in the Samherji group that are licensed to catch saithe in the Barents Sea under the Icelandic quota. If at a later date more vessels are added to the Samherji group they will automatically (subject to full compliance with MSC requirements) be eligible to share the MSC certificate. The list of eligible vessels will be kept updated on www.msc.org and also listed in annual surveillance reports.		
Date certified	17 August, 2012	Date of expiry	16 August, 2017
Surveillance level and type	Surveillance level 2 : reduced surveillance 2016: on-site surveillance combined with the reassessment audit		
Date of surveillance audit	10 -14 October 2016		

Surveillance stage	1st Surveillance	
	2nd Surveillance	
	3rd Surveillance	
	4th Surveillance	X
	Other (expedited etc)	
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This report contains the findings of the fourth annual MSC Fisheries surveillance audit conducted for the Faroe Islands North East Arctic cod and saithe fishery during 10-14 October 2016.

The purpose of this annual Surveillance Report is:

1. To establish and report on any material changes to the circumstances and practices affecting the original complying assessment of the fishery;
2. To monitor any actions taken in response to conditions made in the Public Certification Reports for Faroe Islands North East Arctic cod and saithe fisheries;
3. To re-score any Performance Indicators (PI) where practice or circumstances have materially changed during the intervening year, focusing on those PIs that form the basis of Conditions raised.

The primary focus of this surveillance report is to review the changes occurred since the previous year. For a complete picture of the fishery, this report should be read in conjunction with the Public Certification Report and Scope Extension Certification report for Faroe Islands North East Arctic cod fishery and expedited Principle 1 certification report for the Faroe Islands North East Arctic saithe fishery available for download at www.msc.org.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 General background about the Client fishery

2.1.1 PF JFK Trol Group

The Faroe Islands has few licences to fish in the Barents Sea, never more than 5 in the past five years (Faroe Islands Ministry of Fisheries).

Three freezer stern trawlers (from P/F JFK Trol Group *Gadus*, *Akraberg* and *Sjúrðarberg*) engaged in this fishery are covered by this certification, see appendix 3 for details. The vessel *Gadus* was previously owned by JFK P/F but from 2012 has been owned by JFK Trol.

The trawler *Akraberg*, which produces fish fillets at sea, is owned by Framherji and joined the client group at the end of June 2013 and replaced the *Vesturvón*. The *Vesturvón*'s cod quota was transferred to the *Akraberg*, which uses the same fishing gear as the vessel it replaced. The trawler *Sjúrðarberg* is owned by the JFK/Kósin group. Each vessel in the fishery operates the same demersal trawl fitted with rock-hopper ground gear. In compliance with coastal states' fishery regulations, all vessels use a plastic flexi-sorting grid embedded at the top of the sleeve, just before the cod-end, but opt to use 150 mm cod-end mesh rather than the 130 mm minimum permitted to further minimise the capture of small fish. All fish are gutted and frozen, and some filleted, at sea.

The fishing season starts in January and each trip lasts 6–8 weeks. Traditionally, the early fishing begins off Lofoten, in the Norwegian Sea, with successive trips moving progressively north and east into the Barents Sea. In 2011, 2012 and 2013, Norway did not issue licences for Faroese vessels to fish in the Norwegian fishery zone (NFZ), other than in the Svalbard fisheries protection zone¹ where the Faroese fleet has an historic right to fish. Licences were issued for the Faroese vessels to fish, as normal, in the RFZ and in the NFZ in 2014 and 2015².

Cod quotas are allocated on the basis of a historical track record of continuously participating in the fisheries in the Barents Sea over recent decades. Illegal, unregulated and unreported landings of NEA cod (and haddock) are no longer considered to be a significant problem (ACOM_{NEAC}, 2015; AFWG, 2015). Quotas and most recent catch data for the Faroese cod fishery are provided in Section 6 of this report.

2.1.2 Samherji Group

The only vessels in the Samherji group which (per 05.12.2016) have a right to target cod in the Barents Sea are the *Kaldbakur* EA1, the *Snaefell* EA310, Björgvin EA-311 and Oddeyrin EA. Björgvin EA-311 and Oddeyrin EA – 210 were added to the vessel list in august 2015. These vessels have a quota to fish for cod, but haddock and saithe are allowed to be taken as by-catch in the targeted cod fishery. Fishing regulations specify how much by-catch of other species may be taken, and the by-catch of haddock must not exceed 20% of the total cod catch. All non-target species in the cod fishery have to be retained, recorded and landed. The total quantity of all non-target (by-catch) species is not allowed to exceed 30% of the total cod catch at the end of any given trip or at the end of the season.

The fishing season for cod for Icelandic vessels starts in Norwegian waters in January and lasts until the end of April. Traditionally, early fishing is off Lofoten, in the Norwegian Sea, and successive trips progressively move north and east into the Barents Sea. In November/December vessels move into Russian waters to fish. No fishing activity currently takes place in NEAFC/International waters.

The Icelandic trawlers use rock-hopper bottom trawl gear equipped with rubber wheels and semi-pelagic doors (e.g. trawl models Hátoppur, Gulltoppur and Baccalao).

In compliance with coastal states' fishery regulations, Icelandic vessels use a sorting grid located at the top of the sleeve, just in front of the cod-end and opt to use 140–155 mm cod-end mesh, rather than the 130 mm minimum permitted, to further minimize small-fish capture. In 2014, the Samherji Group in cooperation with Fjardanet started a new project to further improve their trawling gear and designed a cod-end with 40% larger mesh which allows them to better avoid making by-catches of smaller fish (e.g.

² <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/selected-topics/civil--rights/spesiell-folkerett/folkerettslige-sporsmal-i-tilknytning-ti.html?id=537481>

redfish) and leads to a better quality of fish (Fig. 1). In January 2015, the final version of this trawl was put into active use on both of Samherji's vessels targeting cod and haddock in the Barents Sea.

Samherji's vessels use modern electronic equipment to constantly monitor the quantity of the catch in each haul to ensure the safety and quality of their fishing operations. Catch sensors that allow this high level of monitoring are mounted on all sets of trawl gear.

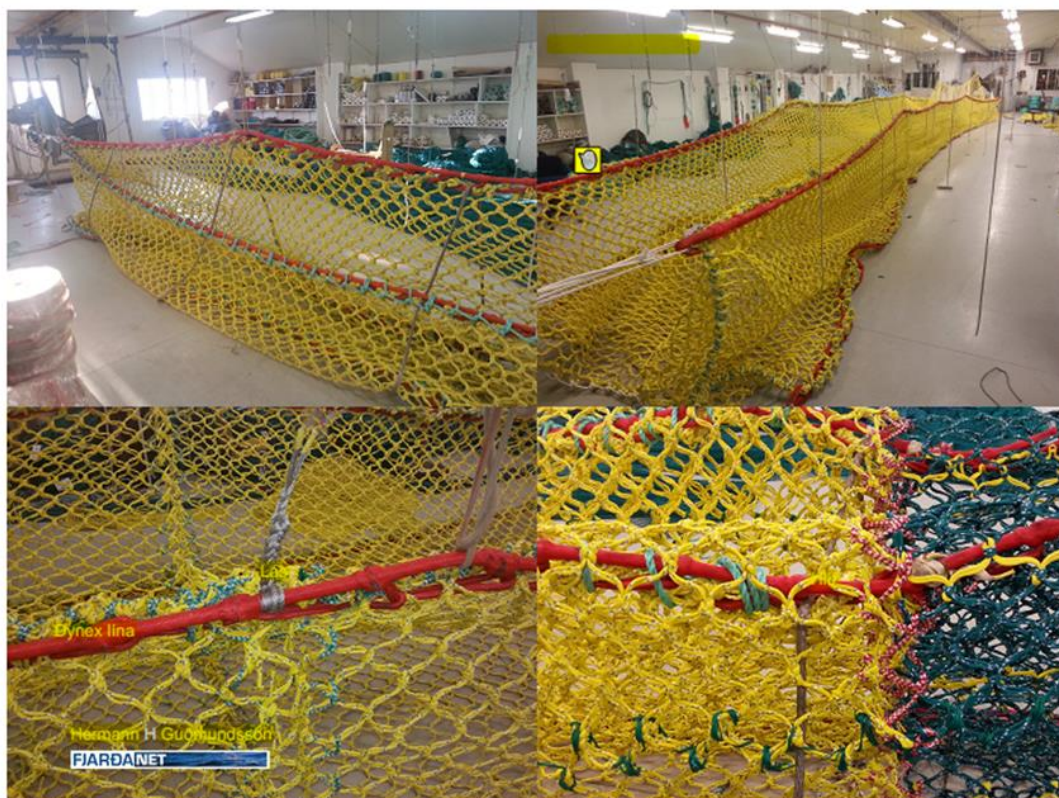


Figure 1: New type of trawl with a large mesh size used by the Samherji fleet as of September 2014

2.2 Northeast Arctic cod stock status

2.2.1 The Fishery

The total recorded landings of Northeast Arctic cod in 2015 were 864,384t. Norway and Russia each took 44% of the total whilst the remaining 12% was shared between the Faroe Islands, France, Germany, Greenland, Iceland, Spain and the UK (ICES, 2016a).

Figure 2 shows the historical pattern of landings of Northeast Arctic cod over the period 1946 to 2015. Landings have steadily increased over recent years after reaching a low of 464,171t in 2007 to reach a peak of 986,449t in 2014. In the past there have been reports of unreported catches through discarding etc. However, the assessment ICES now considers that the landings data, since 2009, are accurate and very close to the actual catches based on an analysis carried out by the Norwegian-Russian group on the estimation of total catch (ICES, 2015a).

ICES advises based on the JNRFC cod management plan which has been evaluated as being precautionary. The advised catch for 2017 is 805,000t which corresponds to fishing at F_{MSY} . The spawning stock (> 1mill tons) is much above $BMSY_{trigger}$ (460 kt). The quota agreed for 2017 by the JNRFC was 894,000t.

2.2.2 Stock Assessment

The assessment model is an age based analytical assessment model (XSA) with cannibalism estimated for the whole time series following the benchmark assessment (ICES, 2015c). The assessment uses four fishery independent survey indices for tuning; two bottom trawl surveys, one acoustic survey and one ecosystem survey. Maturity data comes from the four surveys using an average from Norwegian and Russian surveys. A natural mortality of 0.2 was used in addition to taking cannibalism into account from the analysis of stomach data (Bogstad and Mehl, 1997).

The spawning stock biomass estimate at spawning time in 2016 from the assessment in 2016 was 1,069,881t which was a decrease of 313,500t on the previous year (ICES, 2016a) well above the MSY $B_{trigger}$ (460,000t).

Figure 2 shows the SSB over the period 1946 to 2016. The SSB has been falling from an historical high of over 2 million tonnes in 2013.

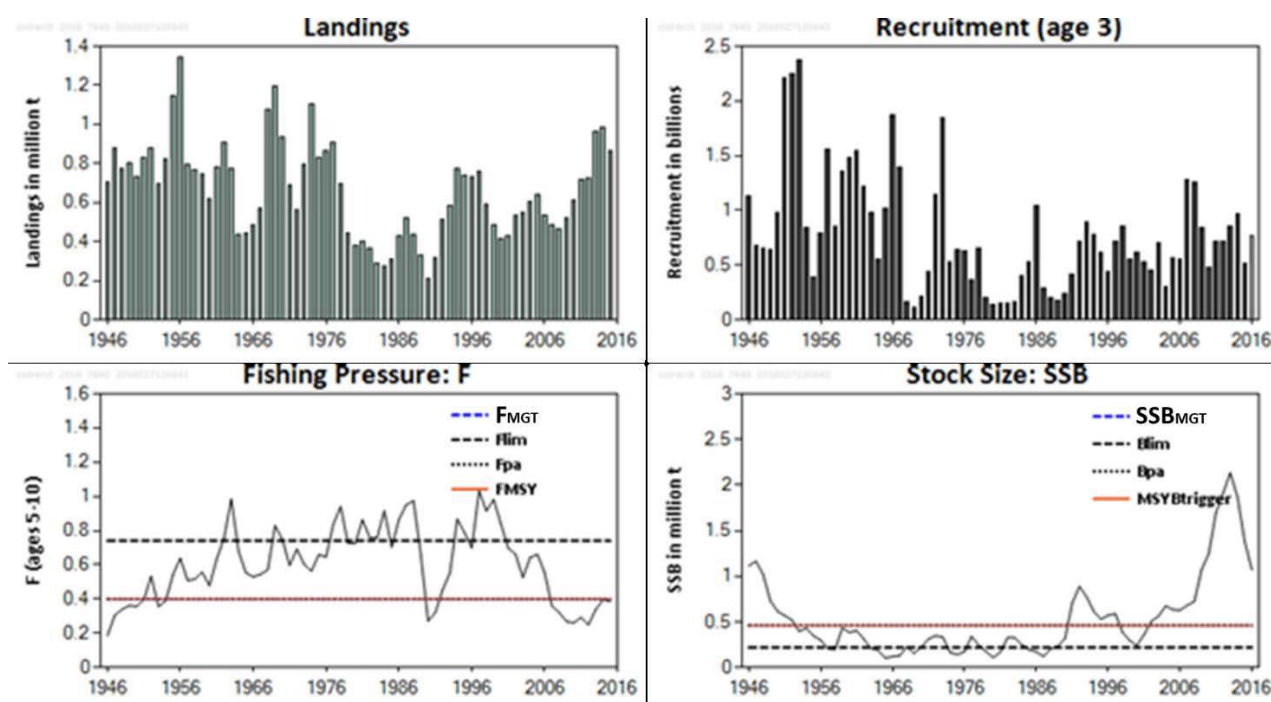


Figure 2 Stock status indicators (Landings, Recruitment, fishing pressure and spawning stock size of Northeast Arctic cod in thousands of tonnes over the period 1946 to 2016 (ICES, 2016a)

2.2.3 Fishing mortality

The annual trends in fishing mortality, based on ages 5-10yrs in the stock, over the period 1946 to 2015 is shown in Figure 2. Fishing mortality generally fell steadily from 1997 through to 2012 but has subsequently begun to increase and was only marginally below F_{MSY} in 2014 and 2015.

2.2.4 Recruitment

The fluctuating pattern of annual recruitment to the stock, at age 3 yrs, over the period 1946 to 2015 is shown in Figure 2. Recruitment is not estimated from within the assessment model but is derived from an external hybrid model using data from both trawl surveys and the ecosystem survey (ICES, 2015a).

2.2.5 Management advice

The ICES advisory committee (ACOM) advises TAC based on the harvest rules decided by JNRF and evaluated by ICES as precautionary in 2005. The advice for the fishery in 2017 was made on the basis of the existing management plan harvest rule. The resultant predicted catch based on that rule is 805,000t. In 2015 Norway and Russia requested ICES to evaluate alternative harvest control rules for Northeast Arctic cod, haddock and capelin (ICES, 2016b). For cod ICES investigated and evaluated a series of ten harvest control rules including the existing one. ICES concluded that they were all in accordance with the

ICES standard that the annual probability of SSB being below the biomass limit level should be no more than 5%. No changes in the harvest control rules for cod have yet been made

2.2.6 Summary of stock status

ICES considers the stock to be harvested sustainably with fishing mortality below the management plan level and appropriate in terms of maximum sustainable yield (ICES, 2016a). The stock is at full reproductive capacity with SSB above both the management plan and maximum sustainable yield level (ICES, 2016a).

2.3 Northeast Arctic saithe stock status

2.3.1 The fishery

The main fleets targeting saithe include trawl, purse-seine, gillnet, handline and Danish seine. Landings of saithe were highest in 1970-1976 with an average of 239,000 t and a maximum of 265,000 t in 1970. This period was followed by a sharp decline to a level of about 160,000 t in the years 1978-1984, while in 1985-1991 the landings ranged from 67,000-123,000 t. After 1991 landings increased, ranging between 136,000 t (in 2000) and 212,000 t (in 2006), followed by a decline to 132,000 t in 2015. The last three year's landings have been stable at about 132 000 t.

2.3.2 Stock Assessment

The NEA saithe is assessed using an age-based analytical assessment model (SAM; ICES, 2016a) that uses landings in the model and in the forecast. The data that were available include commercial catches (international landings, ages and length frequencies from Norwegian, German, and Russian catch sampling); one survey index. Maturity data are based on otoliths from commercial catches and surveys for 1985-2006, constant (2005-2007 average) for later years. Discarding is considered negligible. Bycatch is included. An inter-benchmark was undertaken in 2014 (ICES IBP NEA SAITHE; ICES, 2014). Arctic Fisheries Working Group (AFWG). The assessment is considered to be 'best practise'. Figure 3 presents the essential indicators on stock status

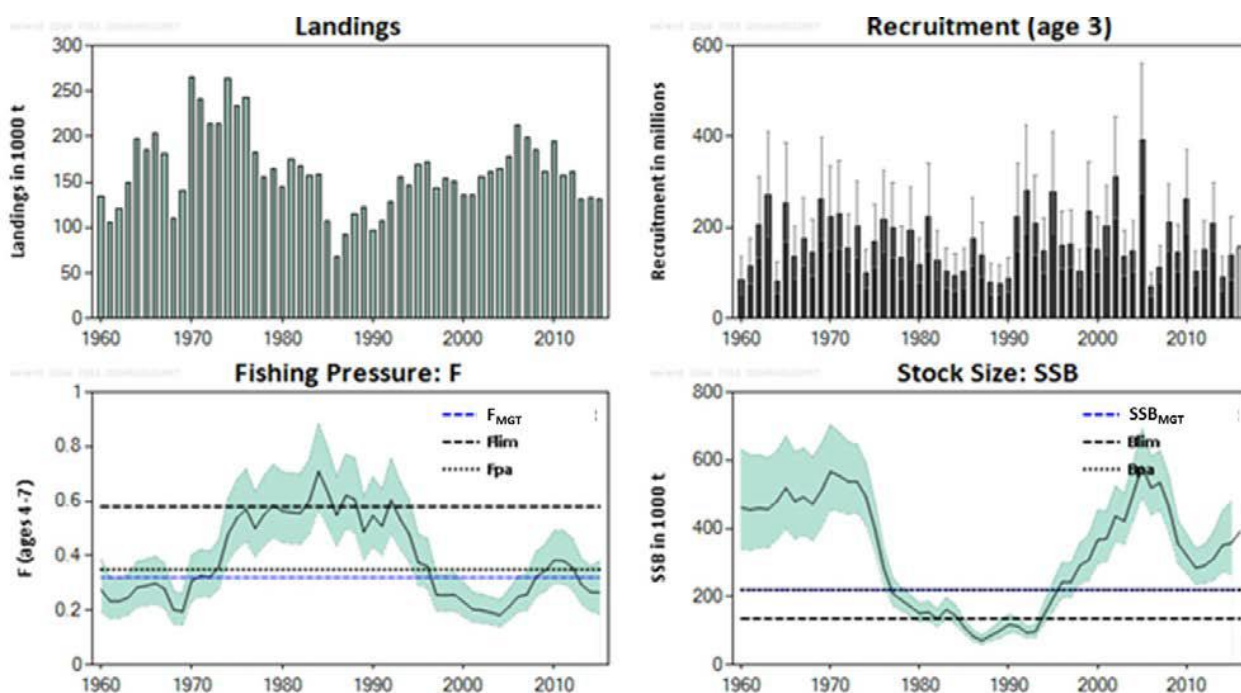


Figure 3 Stock status indicators (Landings, Recruitment, fishing pressure and spawning stock size of Northeast Arctic saithe in thousands of tonnes over the period 1960 to 2016 (ICES, 2016a)



2.3.3 Fishing mortality

The fishing mortality is below reference points (Figure 3).

2.3.4 Recruitment

Recruitment (R) has fluctuated with no clear trend. Current levels are around the long-term mean (Figure 3).

2.3.5 Management advice

The NEA saithe stock is managed by Norway. Management of Saithe in Sub-areas 1 and 2 is by TAC and technical measures. The Norwegian Government has adopted a management plan that has been evaluated by ICES in 2011 as being precautionary. For 2017, the Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries set the TAC according to the advice from ICES, i.e. 150,000 t an increase over the 2016 TAC of 140,000 t.

2.3.6 Summary of stock status

The spawning-stock biomass (SSB) has shown wide fluctuations and has been above Bpa since 1996. The fishing pressure (F) has been below Fpa since 1997, with the exception of 2010 and 2011. Recruitment (R) has fluctuated with no clear trend. The stock is harvested sustainably and producing at full reproductive capacity.

2.4 Impact on the ecosystem

2.4.1 Retained species

Throughout both the Norwegian and Russian Fishing Zones all fish caught have to be retained, recorded and landed. The main retained species (i.e. species constituting $\geq 5\%$ the total annual catch of all catch) are cod, haddock and saithe whereas redfish and Greenland halibut typically account for a few hundred tonnes each annually (2–3 % of the total annual catch combined). Wolffish (*Anarhichas* spp.), a variety of flatfish and other gadoids (e.g. ling, *Molva molva*) are caught in small quantities (any one species $< 0.5\%$ of the total certified catch). Cod, haddock, saithe, Greenland halibut, redfish (both species) and ling are considered in the ICES advisory package other species e.g. plaice and woffish (three species) are not, (AFWG, 2016) and (WGDEEP 2016) owing to their low abundance.

The status of cod and saithe are discussed as PI 1 species above.

Haddock is subject to annual analytical age-based assessments with appropriate biological reference points being set, and are subject to an internationally agreed management plan and harvest control rule. Reference points have been defined and tested by ICES; ICES considers both the plans and the control rules to be consistent with both the precautionary and MSY-framework approaches. Currently the spawning stock biomass of haddock is above biological reference levels and ICES considers the haddock stock to retain full reproductive capacity (ICES, 2016³). Redfish are subject to quasi-analytical trends-based assessments and are judged to be in a depressed state (ACOM_{smen}, 2015⁴; ACOM_{snor}, 2015⁵), but the quantities taken by this MSC-certified fleet are small (~270 t, all species, in 2014; i.e. $< 1\%$ of the total annual catch of this fleet and less than that of all fleets) so likely have little adverse effect on management measures to safeguard and rebuild them. However, in the ICES advice for 2017 as for previous years (ICES, 2016), it is stressed that catches of the golden redfish (*Sebastes norvegicus*) should be kept “as low as possible”. The same conclusion on the likely impact of demersal trawl catches on overall stock health applies to the small quantities taken of Greenland halibut (ACOM_{gh}, 2015⁶), other gadoids, though coastal cod catches are specifically mentioned for avoidance, and flatfish.

For this surveillance audit the client has updated the Unit of Certification catch data for all retained species caught in the 2015 fishery and the 2016 fishery from January to October. These data are listed in Table 2 and Table 3. The data show no significant changes from the data in the original assessment.

³ ACOM_{neahr}, 2015. Ecoregion Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea: northeast Arctic cod (subareas I and II). ICES Advice Book 3.3.2.

⁴ ACOM_{smen}, 2015. Ecoregion Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea: beaked redfish (*Sebastes mentella*) in subareas I and II. ICES Advice Book 3.3.6.

⁵ ACOM_{snor}, 2015. Ecoregion Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea: golden redfish (*Sebastes marinus*) in subareas I and II. ICES Advice Book 3.3.7.

⁶ ACOM_{gh}, 2015. Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea: Greenland halibut in Subareas I and II. ICES Advice Book 3.3.5.

Table 2 Catch (tons) by Faroese trawlers under the UoC for 2015-2016 in the Barents Sea

	Vessel	Cod	Saithe	Haddock	Long rough dab	Whiting	Redfish	Ling	Dab	North ern woffish	Spotted Wolffish	Atlantic Wolffish	Gr. Halibut	Other spp	Total
01/01 - 31/10 2016		Gadus morhua	Pollachius virens	Melanogrammus aeglefinus	<i>Hippoglossoides platessoides</i>	<i>Merlangius merlangius</i>	Sebastes spp	Molva molva	<i>Limanda limanda</i>	Anarhichas denticulatus	<i>Anarhichas minor</i>	Anarhichas lupus	Reinhardtius hippoglossoides		
Barents Sea (ICES I+II)	AKRABERG, XPLH	2240.6	177.2	289.1			15.1	6.2	0.1		3.6		0.3		2732.2
Norwegian Fishing Zone	GADUS, XPXO	1803.8	17.4	266.7			17.9	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.9		3		2110
	SJÚRÐARBERG, OW2408	1988.7	294.9	277.3			31.6	2			4.7	1.1	2.9		2603.2
	Total	6033.1	489.5	833.1			64.6	8.3	0.2	0.1	9.2	1.1	6.2	0	7445.4
	%	81.03	6.57	11.19	0.00	0.00	0.87	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.01	0.08	0.00	100.00
Barents Sea (ICES I+II) Russian Fishing Zone	AKRABERG, XPLH	2321.4	48.3	179.3			17.7		1.5	3.9	21.5		6.4		2600
	GADUS, XPXO	4895.7	181.3	346.2			22.1		6.2	0.6	26		20.8	0.3	5499.2
	SJÚRÐARBERG, OW2408	1043	14.1	77.5			6.8		1		7.1	2.6	6.8		1158.9
	Total	8260.1	243.7	603	0		46.6		8.7	4.5	54.6	2.6	34	0	9258.1
	%	89.22	2.63	6.51	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.09	0.05	0.59	0.03	0.37	0.00	100.00
01/01 - 31/12 2015															
Barents Sea (ICES I+II)	AKRABERG, XPLH	4267.6	231.4	508.8		0.3	31.3	4.6	0.1	1.5	16.6		6.9	0.9	5070

	Vessel	Cod	Saithe	Haddock	Long rough dab	Whiting	Redfish	Ling	Dab	North ern woffish	Spotted Wolffish	Atlantic Wolffish	Gr. Halibut	Other spp	Total
Norwegian Fishing Zone	GADUS, XPXO	3447.1	82.9	331.1			12.8	5	0.7	0.3	9.9		8.3		3898
	SJÚRÐARBERG, OW2408	2561.8	267.8	282			26.8	1.7	0	1.6	17.8	0.7	6		3166.1
	Total	10276.5	582.1	1121.9	0	0.3	70.9	11.3	0.8	3.4	44.3	0.7	21.2	0.9	12134.1
	%	84.69	4.80	9.25	0.00	0.00	0.58	0.09	0.01	0.03	0.37	0.01	0.17	0.01	100.00
Barents Sea (ICES I+II) Russian Fishing Zone	AKRABERG, XPLH	3082.6	2	2.5		209.4	48.1		5.7	12.1			10.1	0.1	3372.6
	GADUS, XPXO	4382.1	22.2	9.8		474	31		2.9	0.3			29.8	1.1	4953.3
	SJÚRÐARBERG, OW2408	548.7	1.2	0.2		145.6	3.3					5.9	4.3	0.5	709.7
	Total	8013.4	25.4	12.5	0	829	82.4		8.6	12.4		5.9	44.2	1.7	9035.6
	%	88.69	0.28	0.14	0.00	9.17	0.91		0.10	0.14		0.07	0.49	0.02	100.00

Table 3 Catch (tons) by Samherji (Iceland) trawlers under the UoC for 2015-2016 in the Barents Sea

Retained species (Common names)	Retained species (Latin names)	All vessels	
		t	%
		2016 / 2015	
Cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>	2.783,986 / 3.794,052	85,81 / 87,98
Haddock	<i>Melangrammus aeglefinus</i>	353,646 /444,892	10,9 / 10,3
Saithe	<i>Pollachius virens</i>	35,502 /51,153	1,1 / 1,2
Greenland Halibut	<i>Reinhardtius hippoglossoides</i>	6,08 / 9,398	0,019 /0,22
Redfish	<i>Sebastes spp</i>	6,202 / 4,955	0,19 /0,11
Spotted catfish	<i>Anarhichas minor</i>	3,865 / 3,911	0,12 /0,09
Northern Wolffish	<i>Anarhichas denticulatus</i>	0,457 / 0	0,014 /0
Atlantic catfish	<i>Anarhichas lupus</i>	2,283 / 0,3	0,07/ 0,007
Common dab	<i>Limanda limanda</i>	0 / 0	0 / 0
Ling	<i>Molva molva</i>	3,477/ 1,4	0,11 / 0,03
European place	<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>	5,525 / 0,328	0,17 / 0,008
Sole	Hippoglossoides platessoides	0 / 0	0 / 0
Starry ray	Raja Amblyraja radiata	2,359 / 1,066	0,073 /0,02
Cusk	Bromse bromse	0,111 /0	0,003 /0
Lumpfish	Cyclopterus lumpus	0,172 / 0	0,005 /0

2.4.2 By-catch species

No discarding is permitted in either the NFZ or the RFZ; all fish are retained, recorded and landed (as also required by Faroese and Icelandic regulations).

Norway and Russia both enforce and operate a real-time closure system aimed at protecting juvenile fish (Gullestad, 2013)^{7, 8}. Fishing is prohibited in areas where the catch by number of undersized cod, haddock and saithe combined exceeds 15 (the size limits vary by species). Vessels must report immediately whenever the number of undersized haddock, cod and saithe combined exceeds this threshold and move a minimum of 5 miles before shooting their gear again. These data are used to assess the need to close an area for specified periods. An area so closed is then not opened until there is documented evidence of low catch rates of juvenile fish by sentinel fishing vessels. A national evaluation of the effectiveness of the system up to 1998 found a clear decrease in the discarding of small cod and haddock. In 2006, an independent evaluation of the Norwegian monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) regime in Norwegian waters gave it an overall score of 9/10 (Skaret and Pitcher, 2006)⁹

Of the c. 250 fish species recorded from the Norwegian Sea¹⁰ and the Barents Sea¹¹, the overwhelming majority are either pelagic species not vulnerable to capture in (large-mesh) demersal (bottom) trawls or are small (relative to commercial gadoids) non-commercial species that are able to escape through the large (150 mm) cod-end mesh or the sorting grid. For practical purposes, therefore, there are no bycatch species (as defined by MSC) taken by the fleet covered by the certification in the fishery.

2.4.3 Endangered, Threatened and Protected Species (ETP)

There are no records either in the mandatory logbooks or from the Russian observers on board that the client's MSC-certified trawlers working in the Barents Sea have had any direct interactions (i.e. catches of) with seabird or marine mammal populations. However, as reported by the client, there might be rare interactions with Greenland sharks, which when caught accidentally, are released alive.

Although NAMMCO regularly expresses concern about the numbers of porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) taken in the inshore cod gillnet fishery in Norwegian Barents Sea coastal waters (NAMMCO, 2015¹²), it has not expressed similar concern with respect to the trawl fisheries. Similarly, neither the ICES working group on seabird ecology (WGSE, 2015¹³) nor on marine mammal ecology (WGMME, 2015¹⁴) has identified Barents Sea trawl fisheries as cause for concern.

2.4.4 Habitat and ecosystem

There are no significant changes to report in relation to habitat or ecosystem features or to fishery impacts on them since the 2015 surveillance.

⁷ Gullestad, P., 2013. The "Discard Ban Package" – Norwegian experiences in efforts to improve fisheries exploitation patterns. http://www.fisheries.no/PageFiles/21748/HSM/pdf_vedlegg/Norwegian%20discard%20policy.pdf

⁸ <http://www.fiskeridir.no/english/fisheries/marine-protected-areas>

⁹ Skaret, G. and Pitcher, T.J. 2006 An Estimation of Compliance of the Fisheries of Norway with Article 7 (Fisheries Management) of the FAO (UN) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing. 19 pages. In Pitcher, T.J., Kalikoski, D. and Pramod, G. (eds) Evaluations of Compliance with the FAO (UN) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Fisheries Centre Research Reports 14(2).

¹⁰ http://www.fishbase.org/trophiceco/FishEcoList.php?ve_code=138

¹¹ http://www.fishbase.org/trophiceco/FishEcoList.php?ve_code=133

¹² NAMMCO, 2015. Report of the Twenty First Meeting of the Scientific Committee of NAMMCO. Tromsø. <http://www.nammco.no/webcronize/images/Nammco/1001.pdfpdf>

¹³ WGSE, 2015. Report of the Working Group on Seabird Ecology. ICES CM 2013/SSGEF:19.

¹⁴ WGMME, 2015. Report of the Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology. ICES CM 2014/ACOM:27. http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2013/WGMME/wgmme_2013.pdf

The Faroe Islands (either in its own right or under the aegis of Denmark) and Iceland continue to be signatories to a wide range of international conventions that embrace the conservation and protection of marine biota, their habitats and the environment.

Monitoring of the marine environment and all aspects of its living resources throughout the Barents Sea are ongoing research programmes, both individually by IMR and PINRO and jointly through the JRNFC (Prokhorova, 2013¹⁵) in support of the integrated Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea management plans¹⁶. These programmes include monitoring the effects of trawling on sensitive marine habitats and developing protection measures where appropriate. Current practice is for fishing vessels to report the presence of cold-water corals or sponges in the catch and to move a minimum of 3 miles before shooting once more. According to the client, the Russian and Svalbard fishing areas are almost completely sponge-free. Tromsøflaket in the Norwegian zone is one of the most vulnerable areas in the Barents Sea in terms of sponge presence, having a lot of sponge present, but the area is avoided by fishing vessels. The client fleet does not fish in new areas and does not plan to do so.

In addition to the designated marine protected areas in both the NFZ and RFZ in which all fishing is prohibited, it is an offence in the NFZ to fish on or in close proximity to known areas of coral reef. Whether or not vessels honour these obligations is monitored in quasi real time through VMS. VMS maps for the client fleet were scrutinised by the assessment team and may be made available on request and with permission of the client.

As with other aspects of national fishery regulations, there was no evidence of non-compliance by client vessels in 2015 and 2016 (Faroese Ministry of Fisheries, skippers and client, pers. comm.)

2.5 Changes to the management system

There have been no changes to the management system since certification of the fishery.

All vessels have to comply fully with fishery management regulations agreed by the Joint Russian–Norwegian Fishery Commission (JRNFC)¹⁷ that apply throughout the Barents Sea. These regulations include a total ban on the discarding of commercial fish species (MFCA)¹⁸. There are also real-time closure regulations in place for the protection of juvenile fish and depleted stocks (e.g. redfish) – see above - that require skippers to report the catch immediately and to move a minimum of three miles if catches of juvenile fish (the size limits vary by species) or redfish exceed 15 of the total catch in the haul (Gullestad, 2013)^{19,20}.

Enforcement is carried out in their respective fishery zones by both the Norwegian and Russian fishery agencies through a variety of on-board surveillance, inspections at sea, aircraft surveillance flights, satellite vessel monitoring system (VMS) perusal and daily reporting of fishing position and catch statistics recorded in electronic logbooks in the NFZ and paper logbooks in the RFZ (plus the electronic logbook as required by the Faroese and Icelandic authorities). The electronic logbooks capture a wide range of information related to catch and fishing operations and store all data in a database on board the vessel for viewing and inspection. They are connected to a variety of sensors and devices, including GPS, weather sensors and echo-sounder, resulting in fewer errors and mistakes in data entry. E-logbooks also allow the company to generate extensive fishing reports and statistics. When fishing in Russian waters,

¹⁵ Prokhorova, T. (Ed.). 2013. Survey report from the joint Norwegian/Russian ecosystem survey in the Barents Sea and adjacent waters, August-October 2013. IMR/PINRO Joint Report Series, No. 4/2013

¹⁶ http://www.imr.no/forskning/programmer/okosystem_norskehavet/en

¹⁷ <http://www.jointfish.com/eng/REGULATIONS>

¹⁸ MFCA. Norwegian fisheries management, our approach on discard of fish. Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries & Coastal Affairs. www.regjeringen.no/upload/FKD/Brosjyre%20og%20veiledninger/fact_sheet_discard.pdf

¹⁹ Gullestad, P., 2013. The "Discard Ban Package" – Norwegian experiences in efforts to improve fisheries exploitation patterns. http://www.fisheries.no/PageFiles/21748/HSM/pdf_vedlegg/Norwegian%20discard%20policy.pdf

²⁰ <http://www.fiskeridir.no/english/fisheries/marine-protected-areas>

vessels use both paper logbooks for reporting to the Russian authorities and e-logbooks for reporting to Icelandic and Faroe Islands authorities. Electronic logbooks comply with the EU Common Fisheries regulations effective as of January 2010. They require skippers to record all fish species (commercial and non-commercial) caught and any significant interactions with seabirds, marine mammals and other ETP species. Each day's entries cannot be closed until the seabird and mammal sections are complete (with zeroes where appropriate).

All fishing vessels entering and leaving the RFZ must do so via a fixed-location enforcement vessel where they collect and return an observer who on entering the zone remains on board for the duration of the trip. Vessels also have to report their intention to enter and leave the NFZ and may be required to rendezvous with an inspection vessel before leaving the NFZ. In addition to the possibility of rigorous inspection before leaving coastal states' waters, vessels are subject to unscheduled inspections (every 2–3 weeks in the RFZ), particularly if in the opinion of the authorities a vessel is giving particular cause for concern. All client vessels were fully compliant with coastal states' regulations throughout 2014 and 2015, and no enforcement action or sanction had to be taken.

2.6 CoC considerations

No changes to the CoC were observed during the surveillance activities. The MSC Fisheries certificate (F-DNV-121163) applies only to the fishing vessels specified in Appendix 2 of this surveillance report up to the landing point. All further activities from the first points of landing are subject to Chain of Custody certification in accordance with MSC Certification Requirements.

First points of landing for the certified fishery fleet are presented in Table 4. The main market for the products originating from the Faroese vessels is the UK. Main markets for the products originating from the Icelandic vessels are the UK, France, Germany and the USA.

Table 4: First points of landing for the client fleet

Vessel	Point of landing
Gadus, Sjúrdarberg, Akraberg	Faroe Islands: mainly in Klaksvík, Fuglafjørður and Toftir
Kaldbakur EA1, Snaefell EA310, Björgvin EA-311 and Oddeyrin EA - 210	<p>Norway: designated ports in Norway for further transport to factories in Iceland or directly to the customer. Main ports of landing are Senja, Hopen, Myre and Sortland.</p> <p>Iceland: designated ports in Iceland, but most catches are landed at the Dalvík whitefish processing plant and/or the Útgerðarfélag Akureyringa (ÚA) processing plant.</p>

2.7 Catch data

Table 5 TAC and Catch Data for North East Arctic cod – Faroe Islands

TAC	Year	2016	Amount	894000
UoA share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	25.443
UoC share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	19.320
Total green weight catch by UoC	Year (second most recent)	2015	Amount	18 289,9
	Year (most recent)	2016 (01.01-31.10)	Amount	14 293,2

Table 6 TAC and Catch Data for North East Arctic saithe – Faroe Islands

TAC	Year	2016	Amount	140000
UoA share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	1.400
UoC share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	1.000
Total green weight catch by UoC	Year (second most recent)	2015	Amount	733,2
	Year (most recent)	2016 (01.01-31.10)	Amount	607,5

Table 7 TAC and Catch Data for North East Arctic cod – Iceland

TAC	Year	2016	Amount	894000
UoA share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	2 783,986
UoC share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	2 783,986
Total green weight catch by UoC	Year (second most recent)	2015	Amount	3 794,052
	Year (most recent)	2016 (01.01-07.10)	Amount	2 783,986

Table 8 TAC and Catch Data for North East Arctic saithe – Iceland

TAC	Year	2016	Amount	244000
UoA share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	NA*
UoC share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	NA *
Total green weight catch by UoC	Year (second most recent)	2015	Amount	51,153
	Year (most recent)	2016 (01.01-07.10)	Amount	35,502

*No TAC for saithe is set in Iceland. Catches are taken as by-catch in the targeted cod fishery.

2.8 Summary of Assessment Conditions

There are no conditions attached to the certification of these fisheries.

3 THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

3.1 Scope of the assessment

The MSC Fisheries CR and guidance v2 define the Unit of Certification (UoC) (i.e., the unit entitled to receive an MSC certificate) as follows:

"The target stock or stocks (= biologically distinct unit/s) combined with the fishing method/gear and practice (including vessel type/s) pursuing that stock and any fleets, groups of vessels, or individual vessels of other fishing operators."

The fisheries covered by this certification are defined as described in **Table 9** and **Table 10** below. There are no other eligible fisheries and the Unit of Assessment is therefore the same as unit of the certification.

Table 9 UoC – North East Arctic cod fishery

Fishery name:		Faroe Islands North East Arctic cod fishery
Unit of certification	Species:	Cod (<i>Gadus morhua</i>)
	Stock:	North-East Arctic Cod
	Geographical area:	ICES subareas I & II: within REZ, NEZ and International waters
	Harvest method:	Demersal rock-hopper trawl
	Management:	JNRFC, Fisheries management of Faroe Islands and Iceland
	Client group:	P/F JFK Trol (<i>Gadus</i> , Akraberg, Sjóðarberg); Samherji (Kaldbakur EA1, Snaefell EA310, Björgvin EA-311 and Oddeyrin EA - 210)
	Other eligible fishers:	Faroe Islands fishers: Enniberg P/F Icelandic fishers: There are currently no other vessels in the Samherji group that are licenced to catch cod in the Barents Sea under the Icelandic quota. If at a later date more vessels are added to the Samherji group they will automatically (subject to full compliance with MSC requirements) be eligible to share the MSC certificate. The list of eligible vessels will be kept updated on www.msc.org and also listed in annual surveillance reports.

Table 10 UoC – Faroe Islands North East Arctic saithe fishery

Fishery name:		Faroe Islands North East Arctic saithe fishery
Unit of certification	Species:	Saithe (<i>Pollachius virens</i>)
	Stock:	North-East Arctic saithe
	Geographical area:	ICES subareas I & II: within REZ, NEZ and International waters
	Harvest method:	Demersal rock-hopper trawl
	Management:	Fisheries management of Norway, Faroe Islands and Iceland
	Client group:	P/F JFK Trol (<i>Gadus</i> , Akraberg, Sjóðarberg); Samherji (Kaldbakur EA1, Snaefell EA310, Björgvin EA-311 and Oddeyrin EA - 210)
	Other eligible fishers:	Faroe Islands fishers: Enniberg P/F Icelandic fishers: There are currently no other vessels in the Samherji group that are licenced to catch cod in the Barents Sea under the Icelandic quota. If at a later date more vessels are added to the Samherji group they will automatically (subject to full compliance with MSC requirements) be eligible to share the MSC certificate. The list of eligible vessels will be kept updated on www.msc.org and also listed in annual surveillance reports.

3.2 History of the assessments

3.2.1 Summary of the original assessment

The intent of the Faroe Islands North East Arctic cod fishery to become MSC certified was announced on 28 June 2011, and the fishery received its certification on 17 August 2012. The scope of the certification is up to the point of landing and the chain of custody commences from the point of landing and sale.

The default assessment tree, set out in the MSC Fishery Assessment Methodology version 2.1 (FAM v.2.1), was used for the initial assessment. The fishery attained a score of 80 or more against each of the MSC Principles and did not score less than 60 against any of the individual MSC Criteria. The scores of the three Principles in the initial certification are listed in Table 3.

Table 11 Principle scores

Principle	Score – Trawl
Principle 1 – Target Species	96.3
Principle 2 – Ecosystem	90
Principle 3 – Management System	94.3

No conditions, but one recommendation for continuing certification was set by the assessment team during the initial assessment. The recommendation is presented in full in section 5.1 of this annual surveillance report.

3.2.2 First annual surveillance – 2013

The first surveillance audit was performed as an off-site audit (desktop review of new information) and conducted according to MSC Certification Requirements, version 1.2 dated 10 January 2012.

The surveillance was announced on the MSC website on 13.06.2013 followed with a supporting notice to stakeholders issued by the MSC on the same date. Direct email notification was also sent to the stakeholders that had previously been identified for this fishery, inviting interested parties to contact the audit team.

As no conditions were set, the key purpose of the first surveillance audit was a review of any new information related to management systems, regulations, scientific basis of information, personnel changes in scientific staff or key management or industry. The information gathering was conducted between 13 June 2013 and 17 August 2013. One member of the original assessment team, Dr Stephen Lockwood, plus DNV Lead Auditor Mrs Anna Kiseleva gathered input from the various stakeholders, incl. the Ministry of Fisheries and Natural resources, the Faroe Marine Research Institute (Havstovan), and the client.

Stephen Lockwood also met with the respective stakeholders in Faroe Islands during an on-site surveillance for a different fishery (Silver smelt) in August 2013 and used the opportunity to clarify several aspects for the desktop review of this cod fishery.

3.2.3 Second annual surveillance – 2014

The second surveillance audit was performed as an on-site audit and conducted according to MSC Certification Requirements, version 1.3 dated 14 January 2013.

The surveillance was announced on the MSC website on 15.05.2014 followed with a supporting notice to stakeholders issued by the MSC on the same date. Direct email notification was also sent to the stakeholders that had previously been identified for this fishery, inviting interested parties to contact the audit team.

The second surveillance audit was scheduled for 18–19 June and coordinated with surveillances of other fisheries taking place then at the Faroe Islands.

These fisheries were:
- Faroe Islands Silver Smelt (Certificate issued 29 August 2012)

- Faroe Islands North East Arctic Haddock (Certificate issued 18 August 2012)
- Faroe Islands Saithe (Certificate issued 15 June 2013)

The coordination of surveillance activities was sought in order to achieve:

- Coordinated stakeholder consultancy
- Reduction in travel costs
- Reduction in administration and coordination activities
- Reduction of time the stakeholders have to invest in order to participate in multiple assessment activities.
- Harmonised outcomes of assessments and achievement of consistent conclusions
- Sharing of fishery information

The surveillance visit for the fishery was therefore conducted between 18 and 20 June 2014 at the Faroe Islands. One member of the original assessment team, independent expert Dr Stephen Lockwood, plus DNV GL team-leader Anna Kiseleva gathered input from the various stakeholders, including The Faroese Ministry of Fisheries, Fisheries Inspection, Research Institute Havstovan and the client fishery. An independent expert in fisheries management, Åsgeir Danielsson, responsible for the potential extension of the client's certificate with Icelandic vessels, also participated in surveillance activities for this fishery and in all stakeholder meetings.

3.2.4 Scope extension, 2014

In 2014, the client fishery informed DNV GL that it had a partner, Samherji group, which had two vessels fishing for cod and haddock in the Barents Sea and which wished to join the certification. The partner fishery participated in the annual surveillance activities for Faroe Islands fishery during the period 18–20 June 2014. The assessment team scrutinised the fishing operations of these vessels and concluded that the nature of the operations of the Samherji vessels was of a similar character to that of the client group. The assessment team sought and was granted a variation to change the existing UoC and to add the Samherji vessels operating under an Icelandic quota to the client's certificate.

As the scope extension process was not yet defined in the CR (v1.3), the assessment team re-evaluated both Principles 2 and 3 for the fishery in full in order to ensure that all impacts from the additional vessels were taken into account. Results of this re-evaluation were harmonised with the assessment results for the Faroese vessels and final harmonised scores with the supportive rationales were presented in Appendix 3 of the scope extension certification report: https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/north-east-atlantic/faroe_island_north_east_arctic_cod/assessment-downloads-1/20141106_SCOPE_EXT_COD307.pdf

Scores and supportive rationales previously applied to Faroese vessels are in the Public Certification Report which is available for download at the MSC website: https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/north-east-atlantic/faroe_island_north_east_arctic_cod/assessment-downloads-1/20120816_PCR_COD307.pdf

It should be noted that the scoring (re-evaluation) of this additional component was conducted according to CR v1.3, whereas the Faroe Islands cod fishery was originally scored according to FAM v2.1. The assessment team avoided the discrepancy in assessment outcomes between the Initial assessment and the scope extension by undertaking rescoring of the initial assessment for those performance indicators that had been changed or modified in transition from FAM v2.1 to CR v1.3. Results of the transfer can be found in the second surveillance report published on the MSC website for the fishery.

The Icelandic component of the fishery attained a score of 80 or more against each of the MSC Principles and did not score less than 80 against any MSC Criteria (Table 6). Neither conditions nor client action plan were therefore required prior to certification being granted.

The recommendation for the Faroe Islands North East Arctic cod fishery did not apply to the Icelandic vessels, because electronic log-books were already implemented and enforced for the Icelandic fleet in the UoC.

Table 12: Final Principle Scores for the Faroe Islands NE Arctic cod fishery after scope extension

Final Principle Scores	
Principle	Score
Principle 1 – Target Species	98.8
Principle 2 – Ecosystem	86.3
Principle 3 – Management System	95.9

3.2.5 Third annual surveillance, 2015

The third surveillance audit was conducted according to MSC Certification Requirements, version 1.3 dated 14 January 2013. According to the MSC Certification Requirements Version 1.3 the overall surveillance score for this fishery is 0. The surveillance level for this fishery qualifies for a reduced surveillance with the following annual activities:

Year 1 and 3 – review of new information/ off-site audit

Year 2 – on-site audit

Year 4 – on-site audit + recertification site visit.

The third surveillance audit was however carried out as an on-site audit because it was coordinated with the expedited Principle 1 assessment of the Faroe Islands North East Arctic saithe fishery and surveillances of other fisheries taking place then at the Faroe Islands.

These fisheries were:

- Faroe Islands Silver Smelt (Certificate issued 29 August 2012)
- Faroe Islands North East Arctic haddock (Certificate issued 18 August 2012)
- Faroe Islands Saithe (Certificate issued 15 June 2013)
- Faroe Islands North East Arctic saithe (Expedited Principle 1 assessment, assessment in process)

The coordination of assessment activities was sought in order to achieve:

- Coordinated stakeholder consultancy
- Reduction in travel costs
- Reduction in administration and coordination activities
- Reduction of time the stakeholders have to invest in participating in multiple assessment activities.
- Harmonised outcomes of assessments and achievement of consistent conclusions
- Sharing of fishery information

The surveillance was announced on the MSC website on 26.03.2015 followed with a supporting notice to stakeholders issued by the MSC on the same date. Direct email notification was also sent to the stakeholders that had previously been identified for the fishery, inviting interested parties to contact the audit team.

The surveillance visit for the fishery was therefore conducted on 12 and 13 May 2015 at the Faroe Islands. Independent expert Dr Andrew Payne and DNV GL team-leader Anna Kiseleva gathered input from the various stakeholders, including the Faroese Ministry of Fisheries, Fisheries Inspection, the Research Institute Havstovan and the client fishery.

3.2.6 Scope extension, 2015

The client fishery sought to extend their existing certification (DNV certificate F-DNV-121163 for Faroe Islands NEA cod) to cover North East Arctic saithe fishery taken as by-catch in the mixed cod and haddock fishery in the Northeast Arctic. Scope extension was undertaken through Expedited P1 assessment which took place as a part of the annual surveillance audit for cod and haddock fisheries. It was originally planned that results of the Expedited audit would form a part of a regular surveillance report. However, due to time constraints (surveillance report to be submitted to MSC within 60 days of completing the on-site component of the audit)) and amount of work required in order to complete an Expedited assessment (e.g. GAP analysis, scoring and harmonisation activities, Client and Peer Review) it was concluded that results of expedited Principle 1 assessment would be presented in a separate report which was made available for stakeholder consultation in Autumn 2015. The scope of the DNV certificate F-DNV-121163 was extended to include Faroe Islands North East Arctic saithe fishery on 2nd of February 2016.

3.3 Fourth annual surveillance, 2016

The fourth surveillance audit was performed as an on-site audit with a review of new information.

The surveillance audit methodology, as defined in the MSC Certification Requirements (CR) (version 2.1) and in the subsequent MSC Guidance for the Fisheries Certification Requirements (version 2.0) were followed in this audit. The default assessment tree as set out in the MSC CR v1.3 was used for this surveillance. The surveillance was announced on the MSC website 6 September 2016 followed by a supporting notice to stakeholders issued by the MSC on the same date. Direct email notification was also sent to the stakeholders previously identified for this fishery, inviting interested parties to contact the audit team.

The document review activities for the fishery were carried out by DNV GL team leader and CoC expert Anna Kiseleva and Independent MSC Fisheries expert Hans Lassen during 10 -14 October 2016.

The assessment team gathered input from the various stakeholders, including the Faroese Ministry of Fisheries, Fisheries Inspection, the Research Institute Havstovan, Natural History Museum and the client fishery.

3.4 Harmonisation

Harmonisation meeting for Barents Sea bottom trawl fisheries took place on 10.03.2016 and was coordinated by the MSC. Following Barents Sea cod, haddock and saithe fisheries were included into the harmonisation:

- Scapêche and Compagnie de Pêche de St. Malo saithe
- Barents Sea cod, haddock and saithe (Ocean Trawlers)
- Greenland cod, haddock and saithe trawl
- Norway North East Arctic saithe
- UK Fisheries/DFFU/Dogger Bank group saithe
- UK Fisheries/DFFU/Dogger Bank Northeast Arctic cod, haddock and saithe
- Russian Federation Barents Sea cod and haddock
- AGARBA Spain Barents Sea cod
- Comapêche and Euronor cod and haddock
- FIUN Barents & Norwegian Seas cod and haddock
- Norway North East Arctic cod and haddock
- Faroe Islands North East Arctic cod and saithe
- Faroe Islands North East Arctic haddock.

Participants:

David Agnew (MSC)	Billy Hynes (Acoura)
Megan Atcheson (MSC)	Lucia Revenga (P2 Assessor - Acoura)
Shaun McLennan (MSC)	Chrissie Sieben (MEC)
Dan Hoggarth (MSC)	Jo Gascoigne (P2 Assessor – MEC)
Stephanie Good (MSC)	Bert Keus Agonus (P2 Assessor - DNVGL)
Sigrun Bekkevold (DNVGL)	Guro Meldre Pedersen (DNVGL)
Andy Hough (P2 Assessor - DNVGL)	Anna Kiseleva (DNVGL)
Virginia Polonio (BV)	Jason Coombes (Acoura)
Macarena Garcia (BV)	Terry Holt (P2 Assessor - DNVGL)

General Conclusions

- MSC introduced the call with some background on harmonisation in the context of V1.3 of the standard. Particular emphasis was placed on the key difference between approaches required for harmonisation against difference Principles. There was also some background provided by MSC on the 14 certified fisheries operating within the Barents Sea, including some of the scoring trends reflected by respective assessments.
- The participants then discussed scoring in their respective fisheries and some of the factors underpinning passes and conditional passes. Some inconsistencies were highlighted, in particular

with respect to: i) the interpretation of Scoring Guideposts; ii) the evidence used to supporting scoring; iii) the outcomes of scoring and iv) client action plans (content and challenge).

- In general there seemed to be a range of factors impacting each score scenario which are covered in notes below²¹. Whilst changes to scores as a result of the meeting are not certain, the value of the discussion was arguably more about providing consistent rationales to explain differences in scores after harmonisation. Indeed this set of notes in itself may act to provide a source of information for CABs and Assessors to help explain differences in assessments undertaken for Version 1.3 of the standard.
- The MSC team reiterated the implications for fisheries entering new “areas” or in scenarios where there were “material changes” to scores evidenced by new information, including the need to consider at surveillance audits and via expedited audits where necessary.
- The team also touched on changes in Version 2 of the standard and likely harmonisation implications but it was felt that more time was needed/perhaps another session to help prepare CABs and Assessors for transition.

Discussion


PI 2.4.1 Outcome

- Assessors reported they find ambiguity inherent in the language and definitions (e.g. risk probabilities) for the habitat requirements. They rely on expert judgement to assess this PI.
- Scoring tended to focus on VMEs specifically where known. Best practice seems to be to consider each VME individually (as identified in MAREANO or other information source).
- With respect to the information on sensitivity of individual VMEs to trawling - consensus was that this information is available but has not tended to be specifically used (it may be that the assumption is that all VMEs are 'vulnerable' by definition).
- A number of VME and Habitat definitions used including OSPAR papers (e.g. OSPAR, 2010. Background Document for Deep-sea sponge Aggregations. Biodiversity Series, OSPAR, London). For Barents Sea main VMEs identified have been corals, sponges and (more recently) Sea pens / 'coral gardens'.
- Factors that may result in different outcome scores for PI 2.4.1:
 - Differences in target species (Saithe fished further south, cod and haddock intermediate latitudes and prawn furthest north)
 - Differences in intelligence available about fishing zone (best information in NEZ, less information in SFPZ although improving, Russian zone a bit unclear (information may exist but be hard to access)).
 - Differences in the number of vessels in fleet and type of vessels (size but also what technology they have on board for identifying bottom types and how they use it)
 - Vessel/Operation nationalities. E.g. EU vs non-EU fishing activity - this is relevant in the Barents Sea because due to the rules on haddock bycatch for the EU fleet their footprint is more constrained than that of the Norwegian and Russian fleets.
 - Spatial extent of the vessel footprint – do they continuously fish over the same areas or is it widely dispersed.
 - Type of benthos
 - Some CABs use a scoring element approach for different types of habitats (sand, rocky, coral etc.), while others do not, even though required by CR v1.3 27.10.7.

PI 2.4.2 Management

- Factors that may result in different scores for PI 2.4.2:
 - Scale is an important consideration – there is generally more certainty that strategies are workable with less vessels (less variables); on the flip side large fleets are also more

²¹ The harmonisation summary note was prepared by the MSC and distributed to all CABs who participated in the harmonisation meeting 10.03.2016.

- 
- likely to be impacted by a national management framework (e.g. entire Norwegian fleet having to comply with “Move On” rules).
 - Differences in habitat impact management framework (Norway vs Russia vs both). Norway tended to manage fishery impacts in Marine Protected Areas (MPA); Russia does not have clear habitat protections.
 - Differences in approach of the individual client companies (e.g. awareness of VMEs, approach to recording and avoiding, monitoring and updating of their information e.g. via MAREANO).
 - The availability of individual skippers was important – it was key to gauge their attitude as well as their experience of seeing VMEs come up in the trawl - but note that this is variable from fishery to fishery (usually only where a small number of vessels but not always even then).

PI 2.4.3 Information

- Factors that may result in different scores for PI 2.4.3:
 - Differences in the sources of information - coastal state information which is readily available - MAREANO notably; coastal state information which is not readily available e.g. scientific reports in Russian
 - individual vessel / fleet data e.g. on-board recording of VMEs
 - VMS data - easier to get in some cases than others, more often seen on the site visit than provided in reports; difficulties in obtaining highlighted
- Other important considerations (whilst not necessarily impacts on scoring, useful context for developing the standard).

Fisheries found it hard to “prove a negative” – there seemed to be scenarios where if interactions with sensitive habitats were not recorded, NGO’s tended to speculate that those fisheries were not complying with monitoring requirements.

4 RESULTS

Table 13 – Recommendation 1

Performance Indicator(s) & Score(s)	Insert relevant PI number(s)	Insert relevant scoring issue/ scoring guidepost text	Score
	PI 2.3.3: Relevant information is collected to support the management of fishery impacts on ETP species, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - information for the development of the management strategy; - information to assess the effectiveness of the management strategy; and - information to determine the outcome status of ETP species. 	SG80 Sia: NA/general recommendation	80
Recommendation	When the e-logbooks are introduced there will be a statutory requirement for the presence or absence of any ETP species (birds and marine mammals) in the catch to be recorded. The client should anticipate this change by making it a requirement on the current paper logbooks with immediate effect.		
Progress on recommendation Year 1, 2, 3	Progress: on target. There were no bird or mammal catches recorded in 2014 and 2015. All vessels operating within the Russian fishery zone carry an observer and are required to use hard-copy paper logbooks. The client requires all skippers on its vessels to record all birds and marine mammals caught (or other significant interactions). Electronic logbooks have been introduced by the client for its own vessels and it is a condition that the presence or absence of any ETP species (birds and marine mammals) in the catch is recorded before the day's entries can be closed. Nevertheless, the accuracy of these records is still a 'trust' requirement (other than in the RFZ where the observer can check that logbooks are completed correctly) and the client needs to do all that it can to ensure that vessel skippers comply.		
Progress on recommendation Year 4	Progress: CLOSED The client supports the aim of the recommendation and is encouraging vessel skippers to complete the seabird and marine mammal records accurately. No bird or mammal catches recorded in 2014, 2015 and to date in 2016		
Status of recommendation	CLOSED		

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 North East Arctic cod

The Principle scores for this fishery have not changed since the last surveillance and the certification.

The fishery continues to be within the scope of the MSC fisheries standard (MSC FCR v2.0 § 7.4) according to the following determinations (MSC FCR v2.0 § 7.4):

- The target species is a fish and the fishery does not use poisons or explosives;
- The fishery is not conducted under a controversial unilateral exemption to an international agreement;
- The client or client group does not include an entity that has been successfully prosecuted for a forced labour violation in the last 2 years;
- The fishery has mechanisms for resolving disputes and disputes do not overwhelm the fishery;
- The fishery is not enhanced or based on an introduced species.

The stock status is good, the by-catch are remains consistent with the data that that were the basis for the assessment and the management is unchanged compared to the basis for the assessment.

Table 14 Conclusion

Fishery	Status of certification	Comment
North East Arctic Cod	Certified	The assessment team concludes that the MSC Certificate for this fishery shall remain active, subject to the agreed annual surveillance schedule and progress on the remaining recommendations.

5.2 North East Arctic saithe

The Principle scores for this fishery have not changed since the Expedited Principle 1 certification.

The fishery continues to be within the scope of the MSC fisheries standard (MSC FCR v2.0 § 7.4) according to the following determinations (MSC FCR v2.0 § 7.4):

- The target species is a fish and the fishery does not use poisons or explosives;
- The fishery is not conducted under a controversial unilateral exemption to an international agreement;
- The client or client group does not include an entity that has been successfully prosecuted for a forced labour violation in the last 2 years;
- The fishery has mechanisms for resolving disputes and disputes do not overwhelm the fishery;
- The fishery is not enhanced or based on an introduced species.

The stock status is good, the by-catch are remains consistent with the data that that were the basis for the assessment and the management is unchanged compared to the basis for the assessment.

Table 15 Conclusion

Fishery	Status of certification	Comment
North East Arctic saithe	Certified	The assessment team concludes that the MSC Certificate for this fishery shall remain active, subject to the agreed annual surveillance schedule and progress on the remaining recommendations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Stakeholder submissions

Relevant stakeholders have been identified and consulted during this annual surveillance. No material changes have been identified since the initial certification of the fishery and the last surveillance audit. No written submissions were made by stakeholders during the annual surveillance audit process in 2016.

Appendix 2. Revised Surveillance Program

This year the fishery followed the assessment process defined in MSC FCR v2.0 and new requirements to surveillance applied.

Since the fishery has no conditions attached to the certification, the assessment team adopted the reduced surveillance option (Surveillance level 2). However, since the fourth surveillance audit was integrated with the re/assessment, the audit was carried out on-site.

The timing of the fourth surveillance audit was postponed with 2 months (2 months later than the certificate anniversary date) in order to coordinate surveillance of this fishery with the re-assessment activities.

Appendix 3. List of member vessels

Table 16: Vessels operating under quota issued by Faroe Islands

Owner	P/F Gadus	P/F Framherji	JFK/Kósin group
Member Vessel	FO 220 <i>Gadus</i>	FD 10 <i>Akraberg</i> ²²	KG 180 <i>Sjúrdarberg</i>
Length (m)	60.0	78.57	60
Main engine (kW)	3042.5	3700	1978
Freezing capacity (t 24–1 hours)	70	75	50
Hold capacity (t)	750	1350	750

Table 17: Vessels operating under quota issued by Iceland

Owner	Samherji	Samherji	Samherji	Samherji
Member Vessel	<i>Kaldbakur</i> EA1	<i>Snaefell</i> EA310	Björgvin EA311	Oddeyrin EA210
Length (m)	68.66	69.74	50.53	54.40
Main engine (kW)	2089	2205	1868	2973
Freezing capacity (t 24–1 hours)	-t/24h	30t/24h		
Hold capacity (t)	234	350		

²² Registered 20.06.2013



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