



Outcome of the ninth Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (FISH 9-2019)

Contents

Introduction	1
Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda	2
Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group	2
Agenda Item 3 Implementation and update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan	4
Agenda Item 4 Regional cooperation on Fisheries & Environment	5
Agenda Item 5 BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture	7
Agenda Item 6 HELCOM data interests	8
Agenda Item 7 Salmon and sea trout including HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1	9
Agenda Item 8 Interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems	9
Agenda Item 9 Work on indicator development	11
Agenda Item 10 Future work	12
Agenda Item 11 Any other business	13
Agenda Item 12 Outcome of the Meeting	13
Annex 1. List of participants	14
Annex 2. Outcome of FISH 9-2018 with regard to agenda item 3, the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan	15
Annex 3. Draft Terms of Reference for EG Fishdata	19
List of documents	20

Introduction

01. With reference to the decision of FISH 8-2018 (Outcome paragraph 9.4), the ninth Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (FISH 9-2019), was held on 30-31 January 2019 at the premises of the Ministry of the Environment (Narva mnt 7a) in Tallinn, Estonia.
02. The Meeting was attended by delegations from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden, as well as observers from CCB and ICES. Consent for publication of the list of participants and the information contained therein (**Annex 1**) was received by all participants.
03. The Meeting was chaired by Marianne Goffeng Raakil (Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation). Markus Helavuori, Professional Secretary and Henri Jokinen, HELCOM Project manager, acted as secretaries of the Meeting.
04. Mr. Rene Reisner, Head of the Marine department, Estonian Ministry of the Environment welcomed the participants to the Meeting and to Tallinn, and highlighted the important topics of the meeting from the Estonian point of view, including the progress made within CG Aquaculture and the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP).
05. Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, HELCOM Executive Secretary, welcomed the Meeting on behalf of the HELCOM Secretariat and thanked the Estonian Ministry of the Environment for their kind hospitality and excellent arrangements.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

Documents: 1-1, 1-2

1.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda of the Meeting as contained in document 1-1, with two additional points under Agenda Item 11 (Any other business), as proposed by CCB.

Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group

Documents: 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5

2.1 The Meeting took note of the Outcomes of HELCOM HOD 54-2018 and HOD 55-2018 (document 2-1), as introduced by the Secretariat. In particular, the Meeting noted with appreciation that HOD 54-2018 had approved the updated Work Plan for the Fish Group for 2018-2019 and prolonged the mandate of this time-limited group until 2022, to cover the period of updating the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

2.2 The Meeting took note of information on the outcomes of recent HELCOM meetings (document 2-2), as presented by the Secretariat, and agreed to discuss issues of relevance to the Fish Group under relevant Agenda Items.

2.3 The Meeting took note of information on activities and plans of HELCOM FISH PRO II and III (document 2-3).

2.4 The Meeting noted that the BSAP contains a not accomplished action on the harmonization of data on recreational fisheries (c.f. **Annex 2**, Table 1), and that such matters are also on the agenda of FISH PRO III. The Meeting agreed that it would be useful to receive information on whether FISH PRO also considers this to be an issue or whether the action is still considered to be valid and if there are any suggestions on further steps to be taken.

2.5 The Meeting took note of the outcome of the regional expert workshop on essential fish habitats, organized by Pan Baltic Scope project and HELCOM (HELCOM Pan Baltic Scope EFH WS 2018), on 12-13 December 2019, in Riga, Latvia (document 2-4), as presented by the Secretariat.

2.6 A long discussion ensued on the importance of MSP in relation to essential fish habitats. Inter alia the following views were expressed:

- consideration may be given to include the maps on sprat and herring spawning areas into the HELCOM work on underwater noise;
- it is useful to consider the means of utilizing the data on essential fish habitats for other HELCOM processes;
- referring to the Baltic flounder as a separate species from the European flounder may be problematic until EU legislation recognizes this species;
- it is important to know where the essential fish habitats are. Denmark is in the process of developing a Maritime Spatial Plan (MSP) including fisheries and have recognized that there are challenges in producing useful and accurate maps of the spatial demands of fisheries and fish habitats;
- discussion with other Contracting Parties would be beneficial; and
- it is important to have good quality data on fish habitats.

2.7 In addition, the Meeting noted the following information regarding ongoing MSP processes that also consider essential fish habitats:

- In Sweden a consultation on draft maritime spatial plans took place in 2018. A further review of the draft plans will take place in the spring of 2019, with a view to submission to the Government by the end of 2019;
- Finnish MSPs are also under development, including information on essential fish habitats and other biodiversity related information, and a national workshop on the topic took place on 28 January 2019. The aim is to develop a map of ecologically important marine areas, to be used for e.g. MSP purposes; and
- In Denmark, MSP planning has already mapped all the relevant activities. Evaluations of what activities can coexist in the same areas have been done, but a challenge is the legal aspects of which activities can overrule other activities and fisheries is an activity that can be moved elsewhere. This first MSP will simply describe the different activities, but it is clear that e.g. spawning grounds will be difficult to prioritize as there are more economically valuable activities.

2.8 The Meeting noted a comment by CCB that national MSP processes are problematic unless there is coherence between the approaches in the different countries.

2.9 Recognizing the importance of considering conservation targets in MSP, including for commercial fish species that may benefit from this, the Meeting noted Article 8 of the Basic Regulation of the Common Fisheries Policy in this respect. The Meeting also noted that moving fisheries under the way of other more impacting activities may have consequences for the biodiversity, which is a matter that should be considered by HELCOM.

2.10 The Meeting noted information provided by the Secretariat, that maps on essential fish habitats are being developed and will be sent to the State and Conservation Working Group for consideration. The Meeting also noted that the work on this matter will continue, acknowledging the importance of such spatial data for many HELCOM processes.

2.11 The Meeting noted information provided by ICES, that work on essential fish habitats has also been undertaken within ICES WGVHES, which could be relevant for further work in HELCOM.

2.12 Finally, the Meeting noted that the Pan Baltic Scope project is holding a planning forum on 12 February 2019 in Hamburg, which includes a workshop on fisheries in MSP from a national and cross border perspective.

2.13 The Meeting took note of the Outcome of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 17-2018 (document 2-5). In particular, the Meeting considered the discussions on a BSAP action on developing common procedures to facilitate the sharing of aggregated data on fisheries activities in the Baltic Sea in an applicable format for the purpose of assessing pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems e.g. to be applied in MSP, and the view of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 17-2018 that easy access to fisheries data remains a challenge.

2.14 In discussing possible advice to HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 18-2019 to facilitate access to fisheries data for MSP purposes, the Meeting recognized that this is a complex matter and noted that work on fisheries data is being conducted in CG Fishdata, that aggregating data before it is analysed reduces the data quality and reliability, and that the GDPR presents challenges when it comes to fisheries data involving individual fishermen.

2.15 The Meeting however noted, that fisheries data is being collected and made available through ICES. The Meeting further noted that the ICES data centre together with ICES working groups have long expertise in matters related to data. ICES noted that some data may be restricted and used by ICES working groups under the ICES data policy. Aggregated and analysed data outputs are also increasingly being made available, in accordance with the ICES Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF). The Meeting noted that although obtaining fisheries data used to be quite challenging, the situation is now much better both nationally and on a regional level, especially in light of the standardized call for data by ICES, which also facilitates the analysing of the data. The Meeting noted information provided by ICES, that a data call is currently in place, and encouraged Contracting Parties to submit data in order to facilitate the process.

2.16 The Meeting concluded that in order to provide more specific advice to the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, more detailed information is needed on what type of data is required and what kind of difficulties have been encountered.

2.17 The Meeting took note of the publication of the HELCOM State of the Baltic Sea report – Second holistic assessment 2011-2016 ([BSEP 155](#)) available on the website <http://stateofthebalticsea.helcom.fi/>. The Meeting also took note of the publication of the final version of the Status of coastal fish communities in the Baltic Sea during 2011-2016 – the third thematic assessment (BSEP 161), which is available on the HELCOM [website](#).

Agenda Item 3 Implementation and update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

Documents: 3-1, 3-2, 3-3

3.1 The Meeting took note of the presentation on the Strategic Plan and Work Plan for the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (document 3-1, Annex 1 and Annex 2) and the expected contributions by HELCOM Working Groups as presented by the Secretariat (**Presentation 1**).

3.2 The Meeting noted that the principles for the updated BSAP has been agreed through the 2018 HELCOM Ministerial Declaration and that the BSAP will be addressed at all meetings of HELCOM Working Groups during the update process in accordance to the work plan.

3.3 The Meeting took note of the information on the analyses of sufficiency of measures that will take place as part of the BSAP update process in 2019-2020 and that it will be supported by the recently established HELCOM SOM Platform and the HELCOM-led, EU co-financed, ACTION project (document 3-2). The Meeting noted that the agreed threshold values for HELCOM indicators and pressure targets will be used as the basis for analysing sufficiency of measures.

3.4 The Meeting noted that future Fish Group meetings will in particular follow and guide activities under the HELCOM ACTION project related to by-catch of mammals and birds and impacts on the seabed from fisheries. The Meeting further noted that Contracting Parties can still assign experts to the SOM Platform and that it will benefit the work if a variety of experts on different topics participates in the work.

3.5 The Meeting sought clarification with regard to the role of the Fish Group in the BSAP update process, including the expected resource requirements.

3.6 The Meeting welcomed the offer by the Secretariat to prepare a specific work plan for the Fish Group, further detailing opportunities for the Group to feed into the BSAP update processes, as well as information on the expectations and tasks to be implemented at upcoming meetings of the Group. The work plan will be prepared in March 2019, taking into account the outcomes of the SOM Platform and ACTION Project kick-off meetings that will take place in late February.

3.7 The Meeting discussed the not yet implemented joint HELCOM actions linked to the Fish Group (Attachment 1 to document 3-1, Tab 'Joint actions') and agreed on a process for their implementation and proposals for HOD to consider as further detailed in **Annex 2**.

3.8 The Meeting further considered national and general actions, as further specified in **Annex 2**.

3.9 The Meeting agreed to report on recommendations 19/2, 32-33/1, 37/3 and 25/4, as further specified in **Annex 2**.

3.10 The Meeting took note of the reporting templates for Recommendations under Fish Group (document 3-3), as introduced by the Secretariat, and noted that a template for Recommendation 25/4 will be developed by the Secretariat after the Meeting.

3.11 The Meeting noted that previous reporting by countries on Recommendation 32-33/1 "Conservation of Baltic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) and Sea Trout (*Salmo trutta*) populations by the restoration of their river habitats and management of river fisheries" will be circulated to the relevant contact points together with the templates.

3.12 The Meeting considered the expert and correspondence groups under the Fish Group to be engaged in the BSAP update work. The Meeting proposed that any matters related to aquaculture should involve CG Aquaculture directly. The Meeting further considered that CG FISHDATA and FISH PRO should be engaged on a needs basis, and with regard to matters related to migratory species in the BSAP update process, Fish contacts should be invited to identify suitable participants to attend any relevant meetings or workshops that may be organized.

3.13 The Meeting noted the request by HOD 55-2018 that future Working Group meetings should provide a separate report or annex to summarize discussions and activities related to the update of the BSAP. The Meeting consequently agreed to include such summary as **Annex 2** to the Outcome.

Agenda Item 4 Regional cooperation on Fisheries & Environment

Documents: 4-1

Cooperation between HELCOM and BALTFISH

4.1 The Meeting recalled that FISH 7-2017 had tasked the Secretariat to on a regular basis share information on HELCOM Fish work plans, provisional agendas, outcome documents including main recommendations and decisions, with the BALTFISH Chair.

4.2 The Meeting noted that that the Secretariat has shared such information with BALTFISH as requested, and also that the Secretariat has received meeting documents, work programmes and minutes of the BALTFISH Forum meetings from the BALTFISH Presidency. In this respect, the Meeting noted that the BALTFISH Forum has in its most recent meetings considered inter alia ICES advice on fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for 2019, relevant EU regulations and a BALTFISH joint recommendation on trawl mesh sizes.

4.3 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to share BALTFISH work programmes with the contacts and observers of the Fish Group, whenever they are received by the Secretariat.

4.4 The Meeting recalled that HOD 54-2018 took note of a letter sent in June 2018 by the HELCOM Chair (EU) to the Chair of BALTFISH (Denmark), suggesting a meeting between HELCOM and BALTFISH regarding closer cooperation between management of fisheries and marine environment. The Meeting took note of information provided by the Secretariat, that this first meeting between HELCOM and BALTFISH took place on 29 January 2019 in Tallinn, Estonia, with the objective of strengthening the coordination and cooperation between HELCOM and BALTFISH. The meeting was attended by the Chair of HELCOM, the BALTFISH Presidency, the Chair of HELCOM GEAR as well as the HELCOM Secretariat.

4.5 The Meeting noted that the outcome of the meeting between HELCOM and BALTFISH will be submitted for information to HELCOM 40-2019 and FISH 10-2019.

4.6 The Meeting also noted that the HELCOM Executive Secretary has received an invitation from the BALTFISH Chair for HELCOM to attend a BALTFISH workshop on seal-fisheries interactions to be held 19-20 March in Gothenburg, Sweden.

4.7 The Meeting agreed to consider at FISH 10-2018 the possible contribution of the Fish Group, in supporting the cooperation between BALTFISH and HELCOM.

Cooperation with the BSAC sub group on ecosystem based management

4.8 The Meeting recalled that FISH 6-2017 agreed to establish cooperation with the BSAC sub-group on ecosystem based management, regarding the development and trials of alternative fishing gears or fishing techniques in the Baltic Sea.

4.9 The Meeting took note of ongoing work within BSAC, as presented the Chair of the BSAC Working group for ecosystem based management (Nils Höglund, CCB). This included information on the outcome of a meeting of a BSAC working group meeting to consider the current review of the Control Regulation, and a recent meeting focusing on the status of the eastern cod stock. The outcome of that meeting will be circulated to contacts and observers of the Fish Group through the Secretariat. The Meeting

further noted that the BSAC will organize a workshop on fisheries measures in Natura 2000 areas in March 2019 in Copenhagen, Denmark, which may be of interest to HELCOM Fish contact points and observers.

4.10 The Meeting took note of information on the status of the draft list of trialled alternative fishing gears or fishing techniques (document 4-1 submitted by Poland), which FISH 8-2018 agreed will be considered as a living document at future meetings of the Fish Working Group. The Meeting also noted that BSAC welcomed the opportunity to react to the compilation (see document 4-1).

4.11 The Meeting noted that the list is not exhaustive or final, but rather provides examples of such gears, and discussed the purpose and target audience of the list.

4.12 As invited by FISH 8-2018, the Meeting agreed on including the questionnaire to the HELCOM website, considering the options presented by the Secretariat for maintaining the content of the questionnaire up-to-date in a longer term. The Meeting agreed that the best option would be to publish it on the HELCOM Meeting Portal in a dedicated work space, where it can be continuously kept up to date by Contracting Parties and observers. The Meeting also agreed that before publication on the work space, introductory text should be included to explain the background, status and purpose of the document, including a disclaimer that the gears and techniques are not necessarily approved for use. The Meeting noted with appreciation the offer by Poland to take the lead in the further development of the questionnaire, as well as the offer by Germany to help Poland in this regard and to restructure the document, including to draft the introductory text. The Meeting further agreed that the revised document will be circulated for comments before publication on the work space.

4.13 The Meeting invited Poland to submit a document with the latest version of the list to future meetings of the Fish Group.

4.14 The Meeting noted that Germany and CCB have intentions to update the list with new information on acoustic reflectors and pingers, respectively. On this note, all Contracting Parties and observers were invited to provide updated information, comments and amendments to Poland (K.Kaminska@mgm.gov.pl). After publication on in the HELCOM work space, updates can be done directly by Contracting Parties and observers.

4.15 The Meeting noted information on a [synthesis report](#) on selective fishing gear published by SLU Aqua, Sweden.

Cooperation with other organizations

4.16 The Meeting took note of the outcome of the [ICES WKMSIGD 2018 workshop](#) on methods for stakeholder involvement in fishing gear development hosted by the BSAC in May 2018, the aim of which was to get feedback from different stakeholder groups (fishing industry, scientists and managers) about the risks and potential problems when developing fishing gears in a wider framework. The Meeting concluded that the involvement of fishermen in fishing gear selectivity projects provides valuable experience and knowledge, and that there is a need for greater coordination of all ongoing national science-industry gear development initiatives. There is also a need for more effort towards getting effective gear solutions implemented into legislation and encouraging their uptake.

4.17 Meeting participants were invited to share information on regional, EU and international (FAO, CBD, other regions) developments for closer regional cooperation between organisations in the fields of fisheries and the marine environment. In this context, the Meeting noted that ICES has recently adopted a new [Strategic Plan](#) and a [Science Plan](#) "Marine ecosystem and sustainability science for the 2020s and beyond" including both the Baltic Ecosystem Overview and the Baltic Fisheries Overview.

4.18 The Meeting took note of information provided by Sweden on a joint marine-fisheries workshop that was hosted by Sweden in Gothenburg on 23-24 January 2019, and that HELCOM matters such as the draft Roadmap on collection of fisheries data in order to assess incidental bycatches and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea had been referred to at the event.

4.19 The Meeting took note of a comment by Finland, that one of the lessons learned at the workshop was that there is a lot of synergy to be achieved between the EU Data Collection Framework and the Marine

Strategy Framework Directive through practical cooperation, but that coordination is required on the national level in order to achieve this.

4.20 The Meeting took note that the planning for a joint OSPAR-HELCOM bycatch indicator workshop is progressing and that this matter is to be further presented under Agenda Item 9.

Agenda Item 5 BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture

Documents: 5-1

5.1 The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the second meeting of HELCOM FISH Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018; document 5-1), as presented by the Secretariat.

5.2 The Meeting further noted that HOD 55-2018 considered matter regarding CG Aquaculture (Outcome para. 4-85-4.90), and specifically:

- expressed appreciation for the progress made by CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018,
- adopted the Terms of Reference and approved the draft revised Work Plan for CG Aquaculture,
- appreciated the identified thematic leads and in particular Germany and Finland for offering their leadership,
- recognized the importance of all Contracting Parties contributing with missing information, including national contact points for the work, noting that the work on BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture should originally have been finalized already by the end of 2017,
- encouraged all Contracting Parties to nominate experts to participate in the work of CG Aquaculture.

5.3 The Meeting noted that CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018 invited the Secretariat to provide further information to FISH 9-2019 of the validity of HELCOM Recommendation 25/4 on *Measures aimed at the reduction of discharges from fresh water and marine fish farming*, and to what extent the reporting requirements still apply, and that the matter was also raised at HOD 55-2018.

5.4 On this matter, the Meeting was informed by the Secretariat that while Recommendation 37/3 on *Sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region* was developed to substitute Recommendation 25/4, it also recognizes the need to maintain Recommendation 25/4 until sufficient progress on BAT and BEP has been made. Work on this matter is still ongoing in CG Aquaculture.

5.5 Following the provided clarification on the matter, the Meeting agreed that Recommendation 25/4, as well as its reporting requirements, are still valid and applicable and encouraged Contracting Parties to provide reports in accordance with Recommendation 25/4.

5.6 The Meeting took note of information on recent activities relevant to the development of sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea as well as the BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture, and specifically that ICES has a new strategic initiative on aquaculture, with nine different working groups touching upon aquaculture, focusing on specific topics such as genetics, ecological carrying capacity, environmental impact etc.

5.7 The Meeting welcomed the progress made and thank the lead countries, and also thanked Germany for allowing CG Aquaculture contacts and observers to comment on a German project proposal with the aim of appointing staff to work further on BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture.

5.8 The Meeting agreed that, in addition to the themes presented at CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018, parasites and pathogens could be a useful additional theme to be considered in the future work on BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture.

5.9 The Meeting noted the view of Denmark, that the Nordic Council of Ministers report on sustainable aquaculture may be valuable for the work of CG Aquaculture.

Agenda Item 6 HELCOM data interests

Documents: 6-1, 6-2, 6-3

Roadmap on collection of fisheries data in order to assess incidental bycatches and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea

6.1 The Meeting recalled that, as established by FISH 7-2017, the ‘Correspondence Group on fisheries data for operationalizing indicators used for the purposes of MSFD implementation, for the Contracting Parties which are also EU members (CG Fishdata)’ has worked, according to the Groups ToR (Annex 3, FISH 7-2017 Outcome), for developing a draft Roadmap on fisheries data for operationalizing the two indicators (‘Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gears’ and ‘Cumulative impact on benthic biotopes’) used for the purposes of MSFD implementation for the Contracting Parties which are also EU members.

6.2 The Meeting further recalled the progress made with regard to the development of the Roadmap lead by Denmark and Poland, and being considered by the CG FISHDATA 2-2018, FISH 8-2018, STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 and CG FISHDATA 3-2018 meetings.

6.3 The Meeting took note of the Outcome of CG FISHDATA 3-2018 (document 6-1), held in Copenhagen on 21 November 2018.

6.4 Having made some editorial changes to the draft Terms of Reference, the Meeting approved the draft Terms of Reference and new status of the group as “Expert Group on fisheries data for operationalizing indicators used for the purposes of assessment of the marine environment” (EG Fishdata) as set out in **Annex 3**, subject to endorsement by HELCOM 40-2019. In this context, the Meeting agreed that the priority and purpose of EG Fishdata is to operationalize the indicators, but that once this task is complete proposals may be made to Fish and HOD for amending the Terms of Reference and extending the mandate of the Group.

6.5 The Meeting noted information provided by ICES about working groups within ICES and the EU on various data issues, and agreed that the focus of EG Fishdata should be on developing the Roadmap. ICES further commented that the purpose of the indicators was for management purposes, and that clearly stating the objectives with regard to bycatch and benthic biotopes is essential to guide both data collation and technical work to develop indicators.

6.6 The Meeting considered the possibilities of including all Contracting Parties into the work of EG Fishdata, and welcomed this as a possibility to broaden the utility of the Group beyond the sole purposes of EU MSFD implementation through common interests and interlinkages.

6.7 The Meeting encouraged those Contracting Parties that have not participated in the work of the group, to do so, and agreed that the national Heads of Delegation for the Fish Group should be the Fishdata contact points for those Contracting Parties that have not nominated official contact points for the Group. The Meeting specifically encouraged Estonia and Lithuania, who were present at FISH 9-2019, to join the work of EG Fishdata as well.

6.8 The Meeting recalled that CG Fishdata has been developing a Roadmap on collection of fisheries data in order to assess incidental bycatches and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea. CG FISHDATA 3-2018 agreed in November 2018 that while the draft Roadmap (set out in document 5 + attachments of CG FISHDATA 3-2018) contains much of the information needed, its current structure was not fit for purpose, and consequently a new structure for the Roadmap was developed (Annex 2 of the CG FISHDATA 3-2018 Outcome; document 6-1).

6.9 The Meeting noted that, as agreed by the CG FISHDATA 3-2018, the Chair developed a first draft Roadmap using the new structure, utilizing as much as possible text from the current draft, as well as the CG FISHDATA 3-2018 Outcome. The Meeting confirmed its support to the new structure of the draft Roadmap.

6.10 The Meeting took note of the Draft Roadmap on collection of fisheries data set out in document 6-2, as presented by Denmark, and of comments on the Draft Roadmap, as presented by Germany and Poland in document 6-3.

6.11 The Meeting noted that there may be elements in the draft Roadmap that could potentially be of interest to note also by BALTFISH.

6.12 The Meeting agreed that the draft Roadmap set out in document 6-2 should be used as a starting point for its continued development, but that the comments in document 6-3 contains many useful elements to be taken on board.

6.13 The Meeting discussed extensively the various elements of the draft Roadmap, including some of the specific challenges with regard to the use of VMS and AIS data, as well as on the revision of the Control Regulation. The Meeting agreed that the Roadmap should not be drafted in a prescriptive way, as this may be problematic in relation to officially agreed national positions on e.g. EU legislation.

6.14 The Meeting also noted a comment by ICES on certain provisions in the proposal in document 6-3, related to the work of ICES, needing revision in order to ensure correctness. The Meeting welcomed the offer by ICES to engage in the further development of the Roadmap.

6.15 Finally, the Meeting discussed the way forward with a view to finalizing the Roadmap, and agreed that Denmark will develop a revised draft Roadmap for consideration by the next meeting of EG Fishdata, with the aim of finalizing and agreeing on the Roadmap at FISH 10-2019 and subsequent submission for approval to the next possible meeting of the HELCOM Heads of Delegation.

Agenda Item 7 Salmon and sea trout including HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1

Documents: 7-1, 7-2

HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1

7.1 The Meeting took note of the [2017 Report](#) on implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1 'Conservation of Baltic salmon (*Salmo salar*) and sea trout (*Salmo trutta*) populations by the restoration of their river habitats and management of river fisheries' which is to be reported to the Commission every three years, starting in January 2012.

FISH-M and RETROUT project

7.2 The Meeting took note of the outcome of FISH-M 6-2018 (document 7-1) held as a joint HELCOM-RETROUT workshop on sea trout population status and habitat assessment methods, in Klaipeda, Lithuania, 26-28 June 2018.

7.3 The Meeting took note of the recent activities of RETROUT (Development, promotion and sustainable management of the Baltic Sea Region as a coastal fishing tourism destination) project (2017-2020) co-funded by Interreg, with HELCOM involvement as a project partner, leading work package 4 ('Assessment of status and management of sea trout rivers and stocks') with considerable focus on river restoration activities and assessment of sea trout river and stock status (document to be submitted), as presented by HELCOM RETROUT Project manager Mr. Henri Jokinen.

Agenda Item 8 Interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems

Documents: 8-1

Seals-fishery interactions

8.1 The Meeting recalled that FISH 8-2018 welcomed the organization of a workshop on seal-fisheries interactions and emphasized that the workshop could provide an opportunity to discuss solutions,

recognizing the different point of views on the topic and welcomed the willingness by several Contracting Parties and observers to contribute to the preparation and take active part in the workshop. The Meeting also noted that HOD 54-2018 approved the organization of this workshop.

8.2 The Meeting noted that Denmark has offered to host the workshop and co-lead the preparatory work, and that Poland has offered to be the second co-lead. In addition, the Meeting noted that Germany and BSAC are also willing to take part in the preparations.

8.3 The Meeting was informed about the further preparations of the workshop, as provided by the Secretariat, including the potential timing of the workshop on 27 June 2019, to be confirmed as soon as possible.

8.4 The Meeting noted the BALTFISH workshop discussed in paragraph 4.6 above, and agreed that the outcome of this workshop should be considered in the preparations of the HELCOM workshop to create synergy and to avoid duplication of efforts. The Meeting also agreed that BALTFISH representatives should be invited to the workshop.

8.5 The Meeting noted information provided by the CCB on behalf of LIFE, related to seal-fisheries interactions, that seals are a problem for passive gear fishermen, but to a varying degree in different areas of the Baltic Sea. According to LIFE the starting point should be non-lethal methods for addressing the problem, but a multitude of actions is needed. The Meeting noted that LIFE also wants to support the organization of the HELCOM seal-fisheries workshop, including ensuring the attendance by fishermen.

8.6 The Meeting also noted information conveyed by CCB on work being undertaken in BSAC on seal matters, and recalled that a letter from BSAC to HELCOM and BALTFISH, as well as a statement on the illegal killing of seals had been circulated on 19 October 2018 by the Secretariat on behalf of BSAC to contacts and observers of the Fish Group.

8.7 The Meeting took note of information presented by Denmark on concerns related to seals, including the condition of cod populations and cod parasites, seals that have learned to travel upstream in rivers, threatening e.g. sea trout populations. A meeting was convened recently by the Danish Parliament where the local fishery organization of Bornholm and Christiansø, scientists from DTU Aqua, as well as the Minister for Fisheries were invited to consider these matters and possible solutions thereto.

8.8 The Meeting noted that seal related issues are specifically related to grey seals, and noted the view of Germany, that the populations in different areas of the Baltic Sea are in a different conservation status, e.g. grey seals in German waters are in an unfavourable conservation status and therefore strictly protected, and that the ecosystem approach is important to consider when addressing the issue.

Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG)

8.9 The Meeting recalled that FISH 8-2018 took note of a draft regional survey to compile information on on-going national activities with regard to abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) (FISH 8-2018 document 7-1), supported the initiative and noted that based on the reporting and resulting evaluations, the intention is to evaluate the pros and cons of a harmonized regional approach and alternative approaches to tackle the problem to fill in existing gaps identified.

8.10 The Meeting took note of the outcome of the regional questionnaire to compile information on national activities with regard to ALDFG (document 8-1), as presented by the Secretariat. Responses to the questionnaire were received by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden.

8.11 The Meeting considered the outcome of the questionnaire, as well as the scope and scale of the problem revealed by the questionnaire.

8.12 The Meeting noted a remark by Finland, that some of their national information is incomplete or erroneous, and agreed that Finland should provide the necessary corrections directly to the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) as soon as possible.

8.13 Denmark informed the Meeting that they can lift their study reservation from PRESSURE 9-2018, if the sentence “This also may be considered for implementation at regional level” is deleted from page 3 of the questionnaire and related text in the annex.

8.14 The Meeting also took note of information of a Danish project on ghost nets which will be financed by IMP under the EMFF. The tender will be issued very soon.

8.15 The Meeting discussed and attempted to prioritize the potential regional actions to mitigate the impact of ALDFG on the marine environment, based on the summary (document 8-1 Annex). The Meeting agreed that more consideration should be given to existing measures and requirements based on e.g. EU legislation, and that the proposed actions should be structured more clearly to distinguish between concrete measures and more general statements. The Meeting further agreed that in order to provide a more informed prioritization, the Fish Group would also need more information on the purpose and future development of this list of proposed actions, emphasizing that the final list should be written in a way that makes it possible to implement in practice. The Meeting also emphasized that the matter of ALDFG is of great importance, and consideration should be given to having a dedicated session to consider this matter in more detail.

8.16 In this context, the Meeting also noted a question by Finland, on whether additional actions and measures are even needed, in addition to those already in place through the EU. The Meeting also noted that the appropriate measures to address ALDFG may differ significantly in different parts of the Baltic Sea e.g. due to different benthic conditions.

8.17 The Meeting agreed that it would be useful also in the context of the update of the BSAP, to consider the need for Fish and Pressure to cooperate on marine litter and other possible areas of common interest.

Agenda Item 9 Work on indicator development

Documents: 9-1

9.1 The Meeting recalled that FISH 8-2018 noted information on the ongoing process under OSPAR Meeting of the Biodiversity Committee (BDC), which in February 2018 had agreed that proposals should be developed for a workshop to examine needs and possibilities for developing indicators for incidental by-catch of birds, seals, cetaceans, turtles and non-commercial fish, linked to related work by HELCOM and ICES as relevant. HOD 54-2018 noted the initiative for a possible joint HELCOM/OSPAR workshop on by-catch indicators.

9.2 As requested by FISH 8-2018 the Secretariat informed the Meeting on the initiative with the aim of having Fish and State and Conservation Groups contributing to the process.

9.3 The Meeting took note of the draft Terms of Reference for a joint OSPAR-HELCOM workshop for indicators for incidental bycatch (document 9-1), as introduced by the Secretariat.

9.4 The Meeting noted that the draft ToRs for the workshop have been drafted by the Secretariats of OSPAR and HELCOM, and have been submitted also to CG FISHDATA 3-2018, STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 and GEAR 192018, as well as OSPAR ICG-COBAM for comments, and are also to be considered by OSPAR BDC 2019 on 25-29 March 2019 before finalization by the HELCOM and OSPAR Secretariats based on the comments received from all relevant meetings.

9.5 The Meeting further noted that after submission of document 9-1, the HELCOM and OSPAR Secretariats have made further progress on the matter, including setting tentative dates for the workshop (9-11 September in Denmark).

9.6 The Meeting noted that a small group of interested countries have held online meetings with the HELCOM and OSPAR secretariats, in order to make progress on the preparations.

9.7 The Meeting did not provide any further comments to the draft ToR, but noted with appreciation that experts from ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS and ICES working groups have already been contacted to ensure their valuable expertise is included already in the early preparation of this Workshop.

9.8 The Meeting took note of the ongoing work within HELCOM on indicators (document 9-2), as briefly introduced by the Secretariat.

9.9 The Meeting took note that there is ongoing work within HELCOM to review the catalogue of HELCOM indicators, particularly those used in the 2018 State of the Baltic Sea report or those pressures and gaps identified within the report – including matching of the existing indicators to policy requirements (e.g. the Baltic Sea Action Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive).

9.10 The Meeting was informed about a HELCOM indicator workshop, tentatively planned for 13-15 May 2019, that will combine both technical and policy experts required for discussion on the identified priority issues – the outcome of which will be a document submitted to the following HELCOM HOD meeting (June 2019) that will detail the planned work on indicators and the relevant milestones. The Meeting requested that the outcome of the workshop should be reported to the next meeting of the Fish Group, to provide an informed discussion on possible contribution from the Group in the HELCOM work on indicators.

9.11 The Meeting further noted that the overall purpose of the ‘future work on HELCOM indicators’ is to further develop a suitable set of indicators that are operational and functional in time for the Baltic Sea Action Plan update (2021) and the third holistic assessment (2023). Development work will thus be completed in advance of these events to allow sufficient time for the indicators to be run or updated, i.e. by autumn 2020 and autumn 2021, respectively.

9.12 The Meeting noted that of specific relevance to the HELCOM Fish Group, particularly with relevance to the ongoing process on HELCOM indicators, may be indicators such as by-catch (though this is being developed through a somewhat separate process jointly with OSPAR), the coastal fish indicators (these are operational and were updated in 2018), the migratory fish indicators (salmon and sea trout - these are operational and were updated in 2018), and indicators that currently not operational but may be considered as important knowledge gaps, such as: Proportion of large fish in the community or Maximum length fish in the pelagic community.

Agenda Item 10 Future work

Documents: no documents

10.1 The Meeting considered how the Fish Working Group should prioritize its work and develop its future work plans, in particular in light of the update of the BSAP, including possible monitoring and evaluation of progress. The Meeting agreed that the Secretariat would in cooperation with the Chair develop a draft revised Work Plan for Fish to cover the period 2020-2021 well in advance of FISH 10-2019, to allow comments and to facilitate preparations of Contracting Parties and observers.

10.2 In this regard a comment was made, that the Fish Group should proactively contribute to developing priorities of the Group, not only relying on tasks or requests stemming from other HELCOM bodies. The Meeting also noted that the Work Plan will have to take into consideration objectives and actions from e.g. Ministerial Declarations and the BSAP.

10.3 The Meeting recalled the agreement under Agenda Item 3 above to also produce a more specific Fish work plan for the BSAP update process.

10.4 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to consider hosting the next meeting of the Group.

10.5 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Denmark to host the next HELCOM Fish Group meeting (FISH 10-2019), and agreed tentatively that it will be held in Copenhagen in 25-26 June 2019, back-to-back with the seal-fisheries workshop scheduled for 27 June 2019.

Agenda Item 11 Any other business

Documents: 11-1, 11-2

11.1 The Meeting took note of the updated Data and Information Strategy (document 11-1) to be submitted for adoption by HELCOM 40-2019, as introduced by the Secretariat.

11.2 The Meeting reviewed and updated the list of nominated contacts for the HELCOM Fish Working Group (document 11-2). Taking into account the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, (EU) 2016/679), the Meeting agreed that the contact address list will be made available on the HELCOM Meeting Portal upon receipt of consent for publication by all contact persons.

11.3 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties and Observer organizations to inform of any new, or changed, nominations to the Secretariat (henri.jokinen@helcom.fi).

11.4 The Meeting took note of information by CCB on the testing trials of pingers that are smaller and lighter than conventional ones, intended mainly for deterring porpoises. The aim of the trial is to establish whether seals are attracted to these pingers, which should not be the case as frequencies above 50 Hz is being used.

11.5 The Meeting noted that the BSAC will organize a workshop on fisheries measures in Natura 2000 areas in Copenhagen, Denmark, during the week of 11-15 March 2019. An overview of such measures has been compiled by the BSAC Secretariat and may be sent to interested parties upon request.

Agenda Item 12 Outcome of the Meeting

12.1 The Meeting adopted the Outcome of the Meeting. The Outcome of the Meeting, together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting are available on the [FISH 9-2019 meeting site](#).

Annex 1. List of participants

Representing	Name	Organization	E-mail
Chair			
Sweden	Marianne Goffeng Raakil	Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation	marianne.goffeng-raakil@gov.se
Contracting Parties			
Denmark	Anja Gadgård Boye	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	anjboy@um.dk
Denmark	Janne Palomino Dalby	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	jadalb@um.dk
Estonia	Rene Reisner	Ministry of the Environment	rene.reisner@envir.ee
Estonia	Sander Sandberg	Ministry of the Environment	sander.sandberg@envir.ee
Estonia	Martin Ott	Ministry of the Environment	martin.ott@envir.ee
Finland	Penina Blankett	Ministry of the Environment	penina.blankett.ym.fi
Finland	Heikki Lehtinen	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	heikki.lehtinen@mmm.fi
Germany	Christian Pusch	Federal Agency for Nature Conservation	christian.pusch@bfn.de
Germany	Sven Koschinski	on behalf of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation	sk@meereszoologie.de
Germany	Gesine Lange	consultant for Federal Agency for Nature Conservation	gesine.lange@nabu.de
Lithuania	Adrija Gasiliauskienė	Ministry of Agriculture	adrijag@zum.lt
Poland	Paweł Łazarski	Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation	pawel.lazarski@mgm.gov.pl
Sweden	Ulrika Gunnartz	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	ulrika.gunnartz@havochvatten.se
Observer organizations			
Observer	Nils Höglund	Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB)*	nils.hoglund@ccb.se
Observer	Sebastian Valanko	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea	sebastian.valanko@ices.dk
HELCOM Secretariat			
Secretariat	Monika Stankiewicz	Secretariat	monika.stankiewicz@helcom.fi
Secretariat	Markus Helavuori	Secretariat	markus.helavuori@helcom.fi
Secretariat	Ulla Li Zweifel	Secretariat	ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi
Secretariat	Henri Jokinen	Secretariat	henri.jokinen@helcom.fi

*also representing BSAC and LIFE on relevant matters

Annex 2. Outcome of FISH 9-2018 with regard to agenda item 3, the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

The Meeting took note of the presentation on the Strategic Plan and Work Plan for the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (document 3-1, Annex 1 and Annex 2) and the expected contributions by HELCOM Working Groups as presented by the Secretariat (**Presentation 1**).

The Meeting noted that the principles for the updated BSAP has been agreed through the 2018 HELCOM Ministerial Declaration and that the BSAP will be addressed at all meetings of HELCOM Working Groups during the update process in accordance to the work plan.

The Meeting took note of the information on the analyses of sufficiency of measures that will take place as part of the BSAP update process in 2019-2020 and that it will be supported by the recently established HELCOM SOM Platform and the HELCOM-led, EU co-financed, ACTION project (document 3-2). The Meeting noted that the agreed threshold values for HELCOM indicators and pressure targets will be used as the basis for analyzing sufficiency of measures.

The Meeting noted that future Fish Group meetings will in particular follow and guide activities under the HELCOM ACTION project related to by-catch of mammals and birds and impacts on the seabed from fisheries. The Meeting further noted that Contracting Parties can still assign experts to the SOM Platform and that it will benefit the work if a variety of experts on different topics participates in the work.

The Meeting sought clarification with regard to the role of the Fish Group in the BSAP update process, including the expected resource requirements.

The Meeting welcomed the offer by the Secretariat to prepare a specific work plan for the Fish Group, further detailing opportunities for the Group to feed into the BSAP update processes, as well as information on the expectations and tasks to be implemented at upcoming meetings of the Group. The work plan will be prepared in March 2019, taking into account the outcomes of the SOM Platform and ACTION Project kick-off meetings that will take place in late February.

The Meeting discussed the not yet implemented joint HELCOM actions linked to the Fish Group (Attachment 1 to document 3-1, Tab 'Joint actions') and agreed on a process for their implementation and proposals for HOD to consider as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Plans for implementation of not yet implemented joint actions under the Fish Group.

Action (origin)	Reflections and proposed process
Further development and implementation of common practices for breeding, rearing and releasing salmon and sea trout as reintroductions in potential salmonid rivers (MD 2013) Current status: not accomplished	Still a relevant HELCOM action; important for consideration of genetic affects and spreading of parasites and deceases. Sweden informed that a national strategy will be updated shortly that can contribute to the work. There are also guidelines developed within NASCO (North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization) that could inform the process. ICES WGPDMO (Working Group on Pathology and Diseases of Marine Organisms) could also give advice. The Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to take the action forward through the FISH-M, e.g. through organizing a dedicated workshop. - <u>proposed</u> to aim for development of common guidelines rather than common practices since the latter term can cover a broad range of issues that are necessarily essential for the activities.
Further development and implementation of comparable methodology for data collection (salmon and sea trout) through	The Meeting <u>noted</u> that there are several activities established under DCF that address this topic and furthermore that HELCOM FISH-M and the RETROUT project have discussed methodological issues regarding

<p>surveys, especially on recreational fisheries (MD 2013)</p> <p>Current status: not accomplished</p>	<p>seatrout. Harmonization of methodology also takes place in ICES WGBAST (Assessment Working Group on Baltic Salmon and Trout). If was furthermore underlined that development of such methodology would be resources demanding. National data collection is however still not harmonized so it is relevant that comparable methodology for data collection is developed. The Meeting <u>agreed</u> that it would be useful to receive information on whether FISH PRO also considers this to be an issue or whether the action is still considered to be valid and if there are any suggestions on further steps to be taken (Outcome paragraph 2.4).</p> <p>The Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to change the status of accomplishment to partly accomplished - <u>proposed</u> to change the formulation of the HELCOM action; HELCOM is proposed to signal the need for data harmonization development, e.g. by establishing guiding principles, but not to develop the methodology as such.
<p>Further development and implementation of recommendations for riverine and estuarine management and conservation measures, such as fish ways for up and down migration, restoration and protection of spawning grounds, concerning fisheries within rivers and estuaries (MD 2013)</p> <p>Current status: Not accomplished</p>	<p>The RETROUT project will collate information on the effect of restoration measures for seatrout in the Baltic Sea region including, e.g. for spawning sites, fish ways. The Meeting further <u>noted</u> that FISH-M 4-2017 addressed a number of cases and best practices for river restoration.</p> <p>The Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to change the status of accomplishment to partly accomplished - <u>proposed</u> to update HELCOM Recommendation 32/33-1 by adding guidelines on restoration measures, taking into account conclusions from FISH-M 4-2017 and the RETROUT project. The Secretariat will draft a first proposal. When such guidelines are in place the action can be considered as accomplished. - <u>noted</u> that the action is originally related to salmon
<p>The further development and testing of the HELCOM generic decision-support tool to map possible negative impacts of specific gear types on threatened or declining species and habitats, and which helps to develop and/or recommend measures to address these (MD 2013)</p> <p>Current status: partly accomplished</p>	<p>The HELCOM BalticBOOST project developed a tool to evaluate impacts of fishing gear on benthic communities but the specific tool that is referred to in the action (the 'HELCOM generic tool') has not been further developed. The Meeting <u>did not find it relevant</u> to continue working on the existing tool but found it relevant to share experience and compile information from different existing sources regarding the impacts of different gear types on species and habitats.</p> <p>The Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>proposed</u> to delete the action in its current formulation but to keep the topic on the work plan of the Fish Group. - <u>agreed</u> to convene a dedicated session on how far countries have come in implementing fisheries management measures in MPAs, how such measures are linked to other processes such as MSP, HOLAS, MSFD implementation and how information on impacts of fishing gear is used for management.
<p>Development and implementation of effective monitoring for by-caught birds and mammals (BSAP)</p> <p>Current status: not accomplished</p>	<p>The HELCOM roadmap on collection of fisheries data is under way. It was however noted that implementation of such monitoring may not be in place by 2021.</p> <p>The Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to change the status of accomplishment to partly accomplished. - <u>proposed</u> as a first step to finalize the roadmap on collection of fisheries data.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to change the wording to the supporting information in column F of the excel-file to: "...is not considered as sufficient data for assessments of by-catch"
<p>Development and implementation of effective reporting systems for by-caught birds and mammals (BSAP)</p> <p>Current status: partly accomplished</p>	<p>Reporting on by-catch takes place by EU MS to the EC and is further submitted to ICES. The reporting is however done in different ways by the countries and there is a need to further develop existing reporting systems. If a fit for purpose reporting system to support HELCOM work (e.g. indicator assessment) is in place it is however not necessary for HELCOM to set up a separate reporting system.</p> <p>The Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to specify what the reported data should be used for within HELCOM. - <u>proposed</u> to change the wording of the action to "Further development of existing reporting systems".
<p>Development and implementation of fisheries management measures for fisheries inside marine protected areas (BSAP)</p> <p>Current status: partly accomplished</p>	<p>A relevant HELCOM action where several countries mentioned their implementation of such measures. The Meeting <u>was however of the view</u> that it is not suitable to assess the action in terms of being accomplished or not. It was furthermore proposed to label the action as 'national'. The Meeting <u>noted</u> that BALTFISH will also consider management measures in MPAs in the Baltic Sea.</p> <p>The Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to consider the action as "national" and to request countries to report on the implementation of fisheries management measures in MPAs. The Secretariat will explore if it is suitable to use the HELCOM MPA database for this reporting purpose. Since the action is not suitable for assessing the level of accomplishment this should be indicated in the follow-up system with a link to relevant source of information.

The Meeting discussed the progress on national actions that have not yet been implemented by all Contracting Parties (Attachment 1 to document 3-1, Tab 'National actions'). The Meeting was of the view that all the listed actions are still valid.

With regard to the action '*Continue the efforts underway and enhance co-ordination of measures within the Baltic Sea as well as with other European countries, for the conservation of eel stocks, in line with national eel management plans*' the Meeting acknowledged that further coordination of measures in the Baltic Sea region is essential and proposed that this should be considered as a joint action to be followed-up regularly by the Fish Group. The Meeting also noted that BALTFISH will organize a workshop on eel in spring 2019.

The Meeting noted that several national actions are related to the improvement of size/age ranges of commercial fish species while at present there are no indicators for evaluating these characteristics. The Meeting recognized that the matter may need further consideration at a later stage.

The meeting noted the following information on the implementation of national actions from Contracting Parties:

- Sweden: A national management plan on salmon as well as sea trout was developed in 2016 and is under implementation. Targets for salmon rivers exist and concerning trout conservation limits exist for rivers on the west coast of Sweden and are under development for the east coast. Progress has been made in implementing the national programme for eel recovery and work to classify eel rivers is being initiated.
- Poland: Development of management plans for salmon and sea trout is ongoing. Classification and inventory of rivers with European eel has started.
- Denmark: With regard to management plans for sea trout, there are national measures to limit recreational fisheries on sea trout, but to have long-term management plans for commercial sea trout

fisheries is not relevant for Denmark since there is very limited commercial fishing on sea trout. Denmark therefore proposed that the action should be considered as not applicable for Denmark. With regard to eel, Denmark has e.g. reduced gear, more than required by the eel regulation.

- Finland: Finland has adopted national strategies for salmon and sea trout and a strategy for the migratory fish species. Regional strategies for sea trout are close to being finalized during 2019. A priority for the present Government has been the recovery and re-establishment of migratory fish population in inland rivers and in rivers with inflow to the sea. New resources have been allocated to these activities. Finland has been implementing the national eel management plan and has implemented fishing ban during certain months beyond the EU requirements.

The Meeting considered actions set out in the tab 'For information' in attachment 1 to document 3-1, noting that they are foremost considered by the State & Conservation Working Group and the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG while the topics are also linked to the Fish Group. The Meeting proposed a closer collaboration between Fish and the relevant lead groups and invited State & Conservation and HELCOM-VASAB MSP-WG to inform Fish on relevant developments.

The Meeting considered action listed in the tab 'Too general' in attachment 1 to document 3-1, referring to actions that have not been considered in the follow-up system due to their formulations being considered as either too unspecific for follow-up, overlapping with other actions, or being formulated as aspirations rather than commitments. The Meeting considered that they are still relevant however concurred that they are not suitable to follow-up in terms of accomplishment in their current formulation. The Meeting supported that also the updated BSAP should include visions and wider aims for HELCOM, however, that such visions should be accompanied with concrete actions and that indicators to follow-up their implementation should preferably be defined already when formulating the actions.

The Meeting noted that in accordance with the Strategic Plan for the BSAP update, Contracting Parties are requested to report on the implementation of HELCOM recommendations in spring 2019 to support the update of the BSAP.

The Meeting agreed to report on recommendations 19/2 (Protection and improvement of the wild salmon (*Salmo salar* L.) populations in the Baltic Sea area), 32-33/1 (Conservation of Baltic salmon (*Salmo salar*) and sea trout (*Salmo trutta*) populations by the restoration of their river habitats and management of river fisheries) and 37/3 (Sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region) as proposed in document 3-1. The Meeting, however, also agreed that Recommendation 25/4 (Measures aimed at the reduction of discharges from fresh water and marine fish farming) should be reported as it is considered to be valid.

The Meeting took note of the reporting templates for Recommendations under Fish Group (document 3-3), as introduced by the Secretariat, and noted that a template for Recommendation 25/4 will be developed by the Secretariat after the Meeting.

The Meeting noted that previous reporting by countries on Recommendation 32-33/1 "Conservation of Baltic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) and Sea Trout (*Salmo trutta*) populations by the restoration of their river habitats and management of river fisheries" will be circulated to the relevant contact points together with the templates.

The Meeting considered the expert and correspondence groups under the Fish Group to be engaged in the BSAP update work. The Meeting proposed that any matters related to aquaculture should involve CG Aquaculture directly. The Meeting further considered that CG Fishdata and FISH PRO should be engaged on a needs basis, and with regard to matters related to migratory species in the BSAP update process, Fish contacts should be invited to identify suitable participants to attend any relevant meetings or workshops that may be organized.

Annex 3. Draft Terms of Reference for the Expert Group on fisheries data for operationalizing indicators used for the purposes of assessment of the marine environment (EG Fishdata)

The Expert Group on fisheries data should work on fisheries data for operationalizing HELCOM indicators inter alia used for the purposes of Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) implementation. The work supports the implementation of HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan with regard to *'the development and implementation of effective monitoring and reporting systems for by-caught birds and mammals'*, and specifically links to HELCOM indicators *'Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear'* and *'Cumulative impact on benthic biotopes'*. The Expert Group work is needed to create a robust process to further define the fisheries data needs of the indicator data needs, to identify available data sources, and to identify possible measures to improve the availability of the needed data.

The task of the group open to representatives of competent technical authorities of Denmark, Estonia, European Union, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden is to:

1. Draft a roadmap on fisheries data for operationalizing the two HELCOM indicators, used inter alia for the purposes of MSFD implementation (for the Contracting Parties which are also EU members), covering – e.g. procedures, steps to be taken, roles of different institutions/bodies, data needs specifying related legal obligations, identifying existing data sources and recommending potential methods and steps to fill the identified data gaps taking into account the legislative framework.
2. Submit a draft roadmap on fisheries data for operationalizing indicators to the HELCOM Fish Group in 2019.
3. Follow up on the Roadmap addressing the identified data gaps. Feed into other relevant processes (e.g. update of the State of the Baltic Sea Report) and identify future needs for updating the Roadmap.

The Expert Group reports to the HELCOM Group on ecosystem-based sustainable fisheries (Fish).

The Group will meet as necessary (preferably twice per year), taking into account any window of opportunities for contributing to or interacting with developments and instructions from the Fish Group. The ToR of the Group will be time limited (2019-2020) and could be extended upon agreement of the HoDs.

List of documents

Name	Agenda Item	Category	Submitted by
1-1 Provisional Agenda.pdf	AI 1 <i>Adoption of the Agenda</i>	DEC	Secretariat
1-2 Provisional Annotated Agenda.pdf	AI 1 <i>Adoption of the Agenda</i>	DEC	Secretariat
2-1 Outcomes of HOD 54-2018 and HOD 55-2018.pdf	AI 2 <i>Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group</i>	INF	Secretariat
2-2 Information on the outcomes of recent HELCOM meetings.pdf	AI 2 <i>Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group</i>	INF	Secretariat
2-3 Activities and plans of HELCOM FISH PRO II and III.pdf	AI 2 <i>Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group</i>	INF	Secretariat
2-4 Outcome HELCOM Pan Baltic Scope EFH WS 2018.pdf	AI 2 <i>Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group</i>	INF	Secretariat
2-5 Information on the Outcome of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 17-2018.pdf	AI 2 <i>Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group</i>	CMNT	Secretariat
3-1 Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan.pdf	AI 3 <i>Implementation and update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan</i>	CMNT	Secretariat
3-1 Attachment - Implementation of HELCOM actions under Fish.xlsx	AI 3 <i>Implementation and update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan</i>	CMNT	Secretariat
3-2 Analysis of sufficiency of measures to support the update of the BSAP.pdf	AI 3 <i>Implementation and update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan</i>	INF	Secretariat
3-3 Reporting templates for Recommendations under Fish Group.pdf	AI 3 <i>Implementation and update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan</i>	INF	Secretariat
3-3 Att. Recommendations reporting Fish.xlsx	AI 3 <i>Implementation and update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan</i>	INF	Secretariat
4-1 Questionnaire on alternative fishing gears.pdf	AI 4 <i>Regional Cooperation on Fisheries & Environment</i>	CMNT	Poland
4-1 Attachment - HELCOM Questionnaire on alternative fishing gears and fishing techniques.xlsx	AI 4 <i>Regional Cooperation on Fisheries & Environment</i>	CMNT	Poland
5-1 Corr. Outcome of CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018.pdf	AI 5 <i>BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture</i>	INF	Secretariat
6-1 Outcome of the third workshop of the correspondence group for fisheries data (CG FISHDATA 3-2018).pdf	AI 6 <i>HELCOM data interests</i>	DEC	Secretariat
6-2 Draft Roadmap on collection of fisheries data.pdf	AI 6 <i>HELCOM data interests</i>	DEC	Denmark
6-3 Comments to the draft Roadmap on collection of fisheries data.pdf	AI 6 <i>HELCOM data interests</i>	CMNT	Germany and Poland
7-1 Outcome of FISH-M 2018.pdf	AI 7 <i>Salmon and sea trout including HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1</i>	INF	Secretariat
7-2 Recent and upcoming activities of the RETROUT project.pdf	AI 7 <i>Salmon and sea trout including HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1</i>	INF	Secretariat
8-1 Outcome of the regional questionnaire to compile information on national activities with regard to ALDFG.pdf	AI 8 <i>Interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems</i>	CMNT	Secretariat
9-1 OSPAR-HELCOM workshop on incidental bycatch.pdf	AI 9 <i>Work on indicator development</i>	CMNT	Secretariat
9-2 Ongoing work within HELCOM on indicators.pdf	AI 9 <i>Work on indicator development</i>	INF	Secretariat
11-1 Draft update of HELCOM Data and Information Strategy.pdf	AI 11 <i>Any other business</i>	INF	Secretariat

11-2 List of Contacts and Observers of Fish.pdf	AI 11 <i>Any other business</i>	CMNT	Secretariat
---	---------------------------------	------	-------------