



## Outcome of the third Meeting of the Task force on migratory fish species (FISH-M 3-2016)

### Introduction

01. In accordance with the Outcome of FISH 4-2016 (paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4), the third Meeting of the HELCOM task force on migratory fish species (FISH-M 3-2016) was held on 15-16 November 2016, back-to-back with the fifth Meeting of the HELCOM group on ecosystem-based sustainable fisheries (FISH 5-2016), at the premises of the Danish AgriFish Agency in Copenhagen, Denmark.

02. The Meeting was attended by delegations from Denmark, European Union, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden as well as an Observer from CCB. The List of Participants is contained as **Annex 1**.

03. The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Anja Gadgård Boye, Denmark. Mr. Hermanni Backer, Professional Secretary of HELCOM acted as Secretary of the meeting assisted by Mr. Marco Milardi, Project Coordinator.

### Agenda Item 1 Election of Chair

1.1 The Meeting elected Ms. Anja Gadgård Boye as Chair for the FISH M -3 2016 meeting.

1.2 The Meeting considered election of Chair and vice-Chair of FISH M and agreed to elect chair of FISH M at the FISH 5 2016 meeting.

### Agenda Item 2 Adoption of the Agenda

Document: 2-1

2.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda of the Meeting as contained in document 2-1.

### Agenda Item 3 Information by the Chair, Secretariat, Contracting Parties and Observer organizations

3.1 The Meeting took note of information by the Secretariat of discussions regarding Fish-M held at the last meeting of the Fish Group and the follow-up thereafter.

3.2 The Meeting took note that the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animal (CMS) and the Sargasso Sea Commission co-organized the first Range State Workshop for the European Eel 13-14 October 2016 in Galway, Ireland.

3.3 The Meeting took note that the event was an informal science workshop to facilitate following up the listing of the European eel on CMS Appendix II, among the species "having a conservation status which would significantly benefit from international co-operation", in 2014.

3.4 The Meeting took note that participants of the workshop included representatives from EU and national administrations, NGOs and scientists from European countries, USA and Canada. The event was made possible through funding made available by the Sargasso Sea Commission and the Principality of Monaco under the [Migratory Species Champion Programme](#).

3.5 The Meeting recalled that the European eel is a particularly difficult species to manage as its spawning ground, the Sargasso Sea, is area beyond national jurisdiction and as it migrates to rivers in a large geographic area covering wider Europe and Northern Africa, from the White Sea to eastern Mediterranean.

3.6 The Meeting recalled that European Union legislation was adopted in 2007 to ensure all EU member states with important eel habitats would develop Eel Management Plans and includes the necessary tools to improve eel management in EU countries.

3.7 The Meeting noted that the Galway workshop discussed the scope for further action on a stock-wide, regional, European and national levels. The workshop identified also the need to involve Northern African countries more closely to the European work, as well as to seek synergies with the protection of American and Japanese eel stocks.

3.8 The Meeting requested the HELCOM Secretariat to circulate the final outcome of the Galway workshop to FISH M, as well as as information on further CMS activities on eel, when made available by the CMS Secretariat.

3.9 The Meeting took note that ICES WG BAST work has identified the need for separate counts of ascending and descending salmon and sea trout.

3.10 The Meeting took note of the work within the EU to update and adjust the Baltic salmon management plan during 2017 and highlighted that proactive work and close cooperation between the Baltic Sea countries which are also members of the EU would be needed to enable this.

3.11 The Meeting also noted that the work within FISH M on the implementation of Recommendation 32/33-1 could facilitate further discussions on the Baltic Sea Salmon Management Plan development.

#### Agenda Item 4 Implementation of actions in the work plan of the HELCOM Fish-M

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

4.1 The Meeting considered the implementation and organization of further work based on the work plan of Fish-M agreed by FISH-M 2-2016 (document 4-1).

4.2 The Meeting took note of the presentation by Stig Pedersen, DTU Aqua on Danish work on river restoration (**Presentation 1**). The work is carried out to ensure fish stocks for harvesting, but also benefits the riverine environment in general and that the EU Water Framework Directive is an important catalyst of river restoration activities in Denmark.

4.3 The Meeting agreed that river restoration is an effective measure to enhance the situation of migratory fish species, extensive national river restoration work is carried out in the Baltic Sea countries, and concluded that this is a good topic for further FISH M work.

4.4 The Meeting recommended as a first step organising a FISH M meeting/workshop on river restoration in the Baltic Sea in summer 2017 (**c.f. Annex 2**) and invited all Baltic Sea countries to present the available information on river restoration at the event.

4.5 The Meeting took note of the comments to the FISH-M work plan submitted by CCB (document 4-4).

4.6 The Meeting took note of the comment by the EU that the European commission has the firm goal to restore the eel stock and regional cooperation can support this, but we need to avoid duplication of work and use resources efficiently taking into account the exclusive competence of EU in fisheries.

4.7 The Meeting agreed that enhanced regional level co-operation among the Baltic Sea countries and EU would be helpful in improving national action on eel and for EU countries implementation of the existing legal framework. Such cooperation should aim for a Baltic wide stock status assessment and facilitating subsequent action, to be further developed at the appropriate fora.

- 4.8 The Meeting recommended as a first step organising a FISH M meeting/workshop on European eel in the Baltic Sea to exchange information on national eel management during summer 2017 (**c.f. Annex 2**).
- 4.9 The Meeting highlighted the need of regional projects on European eel in the Baltic Sea in order to get an in depth overview of the situation, carry out the necessary science, and assess management measures and called for the Contracting Parties, other actors and the Secretariat to enable initiation of such projects in the near future.
- 4.10 The Meeting recalled the [HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1](#) on salmon and sea trout and that reporting of implementation should, according to the Recommendation, be carried out every three years.
- 4.11 The Meeting recalled that the last round of reporting of the HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1 was completed in 2012 and that national reports were received from Sweden, Poland, Latvia, Finland and Estonia (document 4-3). In addition Sweden provided a report to FISH 2-2015.
- 4.12 The Meeting agreed that reporting of Recommendation 32-33/1 is a key topic for FISH M, that the next reporting by the coastal countries should be carried out by May 2017 and recommended that the Secretariat circulates a reporting request after the Meeting.
- 4.13 The Meeting agreed that, based on the material received by May 2017, FISH M supported by the Secretariat should compile a report including an assessment of the implementation status of the Recommendation 32-33/1 in the Baltic Sea countries as well consider steps to revise the Recommendation if needed.
- 4.14 The Meeting agreed that Sturgeon and the wider environment –fisheries matters are important topics but in order to focus the limited resources and time of FISH M they should be covered within the overall discussions within the HELCOM FISH Group.
- 4.15 The Meeting agreed on the revised work plan of FISH M 2017-18 incorporating these actions as included in **Annex 2**.
- 4.16 The Meeting agreed to the suggested follow-up indicators of HELCOM Recommendations 32-33/1 and 19/2 as included in document 4-2.
- 4.17 The Meeting recalled that FISH-M 2-2016 suggested that a request to ICES should be formulated to define secondary targets for ascending salmon for individual rivers and agreed to continue discussions at future meetings.
- 4.18 The Meeting took note of the status of work regarding the RETROUT project initiative based on a presentation by the coordinator, Håkan Häggström, County Administrative Board of Stockholm (**Presentation 2**). The project took note that the project application will have to be completed in December 2016 to enable submission to Interreg by the final deadline 17 January 2017.
- 4.19 The Meeting welcomed the the aim to ensure close cooperation with FISH M and the offer that all organisations in FISH M could participate in the project as associate partners.
- 4.20 The Meeting took note that such associate partner status requires that the lead partner receives a confirmation by December 16 and a support letter signed by an authorised representative by January 9. The RETROUT lead partner ([Hakan.Haggstrom@lansstyrelsen.se](mailto:Hakan.Haggstrom@lansstyrelsen.se)) is available for further information and will circulate a support letter template and further information on the project with support from the HELCOM Secretariat.
- 4.21 The Meeting appreciated the RETROUT project initiative and especially the decision to incorporate river restoration in a dedicated work package led by HELCOM. The Secretariat requested Contracting Parties and observers interested in river restoration to contact the Secretariat ([Hermanni.backer@helcom.fi](mailto:Hermanni.backer@helcom.fi)) as soon as possible to enable a mature work package on river restoration.

## Agenda Item 5      Any other business

Documents: 5-1, 5-1.Rev.1

5.1            The Meeting took note of information by Sweden on an outbreak of salmon disease along the Swedish coast and that further information will be provided at the next meeting. Sweden requested that also other countries provide on projects and activities on fish disease to the next meeting.

5.2            The Meeting reviewed and updated the list of contacts of Fish-M including nominated participants to the Fish-M intersessional activities (document 5-1 and 5-1-Rev.1) as included in **Annex 3**.

## Agenda Item 6      Outcome of the Meeting

Documents: draft outcome

6.1            The Meeting adopted the draft outcome of the Meeting. The Outcome of the Meeting, together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting are available on the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#).

## Annex 1: List of participants

Delegation	Name	Organization	Email address
<b>CONTRACTING PARTIES</b>			
Denmark	Anja Gadgård Boye	Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark	anbo@naturerhverv.dk
Denmark	Janne Palomino Dalby	Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark	jpda@naturerhverv.dk
Denmark	Stig Pedersen	DTU Aqua	sp@aqua.dtu.dk
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Sweden	Ulrika Gunnartz	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	ulrika.gunnartz@havochovatten.se
Sweden	Willem Dekker	SLU-Aqua	Willem.Dekker@SLU.SE
Sweden	Jens Persson	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	jens.persson@havochovatten.se
<b>OBSERVERS</b>			
	Nils Höglund	Coalition Clean Baltic	nils.hoglund@ccb.se
<b>INVITED GUESTS</b>			
	Klaus Wysujack	Thuenen-Institute of Fisheries Ecology (Hamburg/Ahrensburg)	klaus.wysujack@thuenen.de
<b>HELCOM SECRETARIAT</b>			
	Hermann Backer	Helsinki Commission	hermanni.backer@helcom.fi
	Marco Milardi	Helsinki Commission	marco.milardi@helcom.fi

## Annex 2: Draft Work plan for HELCOM Task Force on migratory fish species (Fish-M) 2017-2018

No.	ACTION	LEAD/RESPONSIBLE	FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME
<b>Action 1 River and habitat restoration</b>				
1	Best practices on River restoration	Fish-M	Seminar/targeted meeting on river restoration best practices in 2017 Workshop Report/publication on river restoration in the Baltic Sea 2017 If funded, RETROUT project WP on river restoration 2018	summer 2017
<b>Action 2 European eel:</b>				
2	Exchange of information on national eel management in the coastal countries including i.a. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– enforcement/tackling assumed illegal catches (with the aim to assess the scale of the problem and look for solutions for proper enforcement),</li> <li>– traceability/tracking of eel</li> <li>– data gaps and collection methods</li> <li>– links to international eel management (e.g. CMS)</li> <li>– other relevant issues as appropriate</li> </ul> The above is carried out with the aim of a Baltic wide stock status assessment and facilitating subsequent action, to be further developed at the appropriate fora.	FISH-M	Seminar/targeted meeting under Fish-M to present national management plans and consider regional collaboration related to the implementation of national management plans on eel, for EU countries in relation to the EC regulation on eel <sup>1</sup> 2017. Participants should preferably include representatives from management bodies, scientific experts and relevant stakeholders. Workshop Report/publication on eel in the Baltic Sea by 2017	summer 2017
<b>Action 3 Implementation of recommendation 32/33-1 on Salmon and sea trout</b>				
3	Reporting on the implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 32/33-1 and following up on the below activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the active conservation of at least ten endangered/threatened wild salmon river populations in the Baltic Sea region as well as the reintroduction of native Baltic Sea salmon in at least four potential salmon rivers, by 2009,</li> <li>– common practices for breeding, rearing and releasing salmon as reintroduction in potential salmon rivers,</li> <li>– investigating needed improvements for stocking practices (e.g. biological and genetic guidelines), as well as</li> <li>– model recommendations for protection and conservation measures such as fish ways for up and down migration, restoration and protection of spawning grounds, fishery regulation for the river and estuaries;</li> </ul>	Fish-M	Updating of 2012 report by May 2017  Evaluation on the status and revision needs of HELCOM Recommendation 32/33-1 based on updated information and EU Salmon management plan developments by 2018	

## Annex 3: FISH M contacts [pending confirmations]

Delegation	Name	Organization	Email address
<b>CONTRACTING PARTIES</b>			
Denmark	Anja Gadgård Boye*	Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark	anbo@naturerhverv.dk
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\*) [assumed official contact point]