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<b>Category</b>	DEC
<b>Agenda Item</b>	4 - Matters arising from the subsidiary bodies
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<b>Submitted by</b>	Executive Secretary
<b>Reference</b>	HELCOM Copenhagen Declaration 2013, Paragraph 2 (R) and HELCOM RESPONSE 18/2014, Paragraphs 6.6-6.8

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## Background

HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration 2013 re. Preparedness and response on the shore and oiled wildlife response includes:

2 (R). NOTING the current status of Oiled Wildlife Response (OWR) in the Baltic Sea countries, WE AGREE to develop and adopt national wildlife response plans by 2016; AGREE to strengthen the work on OWR under HELCOM RESPONSE through a targeted expert working group and by enhancing co-operation with NGOs and the private sector, inter alia in order to accommodate the involvement of volunteers;

HELCOM RESPONSE 18/2014 considered the proposal by WWF Finland and Sea Alarm regarding the work on oiled wildlife response and welcomed the initiative for an expert working group on oiled wildlife response.

HELCOM RESPONSE 18/2014 established a drafting group to consider the formation of and Terms of Reference for an oiled wildlife response expert working group and requested the Secretariat to submit the Terms of Reference of OWR EWG as included in document 6/1/Rev.1 to HELCOM 35/2014 for adoption after editorial work (cf **Attachment 1**).

HELCOM RESPONSE 18/2014 kept the streamlining activity in mind when considering the work in sub-groups and task groups, including the proposed oiled wildlife response expert working group by i.a. minimizing the number of live meetings and maximizing the use of online correspondence and back-to back/side event meetings.

## Action required

The Meeting is invited to:

- consider and adopt the Terms of Reference of the expert working group on oiled wildlife response (HELCOM EWG OWR) for 2014-2017, as included in **Attachment 1**;
- take note that HELCOM RESPONSE has updated and extended the work plan for oiled wildlife response for 2014-2017 to reflect the Ministerial commitments, which would be developed by the proposed EWG OWR at its first meeting, as included in **Attachment 2**.

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**Attachment 1****DRAFT****Terms of Reference for HELCOM expert working group on oiled wildlife response (HELCOM EWG OWR)****1. Background**

In 2010 the Contracting Parties adopted HELCOM Recommendation 31E/6 INTEGRATED WILDLIFE RESPONSE PLANNING IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA. The Recommendation RECOMMENDS the Contracting States to apply Guidelines for their wildlife response planning attached to this Recommendation, and REQUESTS the Contracting States to develop a wildlife response plan integrated into oil pollution contingency plans either on a national or sub-national/local level and exchange the details about its contents with other Contracting Parties.

The timeline for developing the wildlife response plan and the formation of an oiled wildlife expert group were discussed at HELCOM RESPONSE 17/2013. The Minutes of this meeting read under Paragraph 7.14 that: *The Meeting approved further that the 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Declaration should include decisions to develop and adopt national wildlife response plans by 2016; to establish a HELCOM expert working group on Oiled Wildlife Response; and to enhance cooperation with NGOs and the private sector, i.a., to accommodate the involvement of volunteers.*

The decision made during the 2013 Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting has now given strong political backing to this proposal.

This paper looks at how the new decisions can be implemented.

**2. Tasks and working mode of the expert working group**

The oiled wildlife response expert working group will aim to strengthen the cooperation between HELCOM Contracting Parties in the field of oiled wildlife response. It will act as a forum for the exchange of information on progress and best practices, and facilitate the creation of joint standards and cross-border cooperation in oiled wildlife response. It will also, where possible, facilitate the training of national experts and exchange of training materials.

**Tasks:**

1. To facilitate the timely development of national oiled wildlife response plans in cooperation with other authorities and NGOs;
2. To arrange regular (at least once a year) meetings involving all members of the working group, allowing for training and information sessions that would provide added value to the national processes;
3. To facilitate the implementation of the HELCOM RESPONSE Work Programme on Oiled Wildlife Response and Preparedness for 2014-2017;
4. To produce, by 2016, a report on the finalized integrated oiled wildlife response plans (A HELCOM assessment of oiled wildlife response preparedness in the Baltic region).

**Working mode:**

To ensure resource efficiency, the group will arrange meetings by skype/telephone and work via the HELCOM extranet. These meetings shall take place at least once a year but can be arranged more often if necessary. When necessary, face-to-face meetings shall be organized back-to-back with other HELCOM response related events and, if possible, simultaneously with the meetings of the expert working group on shore response. The group (chair) will report to HELCOM RESPONSE on progress made.

Tasks can and will be added by the working group and its chair once the group has been established and a chair has been elected among the group during its first meeting.

Tasks of the chair are to be determined during the first meeting of the expert working group, but will include reporting on working group progress at the meetings of HELCOM RESPONSE.

**3. Members of the expert working group**

Each Contracting Party shall nominate at least one (1) representative of the appropriate state body (government or agency) to the working group, at their earliest convenience but before 15 March 2014. The Contracting Parties may choose to nominate further members as they see fit.

**Attachment 2****Proposal for an updated and extended oiled wildlife response work plan 2014-2017**

The *Work Programme on Oiled Wildlife Response and Preparedness* that was adopted by HELCOM RESPONSE in 2010 and revised by HELCOM RESPONSE in 2011 included a number of activities that could be accomplished by Contracting Parties as part of an already existing routine. Additionally, a number of activities were included, basically training events, workshops or seminars.

To accommodate for the oiled wildlife response references made in the 2013 Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration, and seeing as the current work plan extends only to 2014, there is a need for further updating and extending the oiled wildlife response work plan. A proposal for an updated programme can be found in **Table 1**. This table includes the activities previously agreed for 2014, and has been extended to the year 2017 to reflect oiled wildlife response references of the Ministerial Declaration.

The events listed allow the more thematic events (courses on response management, facilities, etc.) to be combined with events that aim to develop Baltic networks of experts and the development of a targeted expert working group (hands-on responder workshops, wildlife authority workshops and meetings).

The extended work programme includes events that offer unique opportunities for responders, authorities and scientists to develop and exchange expertise, and will also function as a guiding document for the oiled wildlife response expert working group.

**Table 1.** Proposed updated and extended Work Programme on Oiled Wildlife Response and Preparedness for 2014-2017

Categories	2014	2015*	2016*	2017*
Regular exchange at HELCOM RESPONSE meetings	Progress and lessons learnt on authority-NGO cooperation	Progress and lessons learnt on authority-NGO cooperation	Progress and lessons learnt on authority-NGO cooperation	Progress and lessons learnt on authority-NGO cooperation
	Progress and lessons learnt on development of national plans	Progress and lessons learnt on development of national plans	Progress and lessons learnt on development of national plans	Report on possible updates of national plans
	Report on national training, exercises, events and planning progress	Report on national training, exercises, events, and planning progress	Report on national training, exercises, events and planning progress	Report on national training, exercises and events
	Each CP proposes a wildlife authority rep for the HELCOM Oiled Wildlife Expert Group by 15 <sup>th</sup> of March 2014; Feedback on work of oiled wildlife expert working group by chair to HELCOM RESPONSE	Feedback on work of oiled wildlife expert working group by chair to HELCOM RESPONSE	Report on finalised integrated oiled wildlife response plans; HELCOM assessment of oiled wildlife response preparedness in the Baltic region.	
Training & Exercises	Item has been moved to the year 2015	Oiled wildlife response management course, including table top exercise		
	BALEX Delta operational response exercise to include oiled wildlife response aspects	BALEX Delta operational response exercise to include oiled wildlife response aspects	BALEX Delta operational response exercise to include oiled wildlife response aspects	BALEX Delta operational response exercise to include oiled wildlife response based on finalised oiled wildlife response plan
Workshops, meetings and events	Baltic OWR Responders/Authority event. Kick-off of Baltic oiled wildlife response network	HELCOM/BONN International workshop on aspects of Post Release Survival and Euthanasia of oiled wildlife (Month?? Host??)	Baltic oiled wildlife response network meeting	
	First meeting of oiled wildlife response expert working group, 17 <sup>th</sup> of June 2014	Meeting of oiled wildlife response expert working group	Meeting of oiled wildlife response expert working group	Meeting of oiled wildlife response expert working group
Cooperation with other regional conventions and EU	Advocating an EU funding scheme for OW response and preparedness			

\*will be decided by the first meeting of the oiled wildlife expert working group, June 2014.