



Document title	Draft HELCOM Recommendation Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM Red List
Code	2-10
Category	DEC
Agenda Item	2 - Matters arising from the subsidiary bodies
Submission date	10.02.2015
Submitted by	Germany and Secretariat
Reference	2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting, Paragraph 4B of the Declaration

Background

This document contains the final draft HELCOM Recommendation on 'Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM Red List'. To develop such a Recommendation was agreed by the 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting (paragraph 4B). It follows-up on the alarming situation of many Baltic Sea species as concluded in the 2013 HELCOM Red List of Baltic Sea in danger of becoming extinct (BSEP 140).

The work to develop the Recommendation has been led by Germany. A first draft of the Recommendation was presented to and discussed at HABITAT 16-2014. Based on the outcome of the meeting it was further developed intersessionally with a 2nd draft produced by 30 June and 3rd draft by 21 September 2014. Comments on the drafts were received from Finland, Sweden and Germany.

Comments to the third draft were discussed at STATE 1-2014 and it was agreed to continue the drafting of the Recommendation on species in a core group consisting of Lead Country Germany, Finland, Sweden and the Secretariat. The core group prepared a new draft that was circulated to State & Conservation contacts with a request for comments in the period 22 January – 3 February 2015. Finland, Germany, Lithuania and Sweden responded to the request. The outcome of the final commenting round has been incorporated in the final draft presented for adoption.

A separate Recommendation on conservation of biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes will be developed at a later stage.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to:

- consider and adopt the HELCOM Recommendation 36/X Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM Red List.

DRAFT
HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 36/X

Adopted [date]
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

**CONSERVATION OF BALTIC SEA SPECIES CATEGORIZED AS THREATENED ACCORDING TO THE HELCOM
RED LIST**

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Article 15 of the 1992 Helsinki Convention requiring Contracting Parties to take all appropriate measures to conserve and protect biodiversity of marine and coastal areas,

BEING DEEPLY CONCERNED about the alarming situation for Baltic Sea species being in danger of becoming extinct, i.e. those categorized as “critically endangered”, “endangered” or “vulnerable” according to the 2013 HELCOM Red List and termed “HELCOM threatened species” hereafter,

RECALLING HELCOM Recommendations aiming at the protection and conservation of specific (groups of) Baltic Sea species, in particular Recommendations 17/2, 27-28/2, 34E-1, 19/2 and 32-33/1,

HAVING REGARD to the complementary HELCOM Recommendation 21/4 on the Protection of heavily endangered or immediately threatened marine and coastal biotopes in the Baltic Sea area,

RECALLING ALSO the commitment of the 2007 HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan to improve the conservation status of threatened and/or declining species of the Baltic Sea area by 2015 (including specific agreements regarding fish and lamprey species), and the goal to achieve a favourable conservation status of all species by 2021,

RECALLING FURTHER the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration stating that species included in the 2013 HELCOM Red List (BSEP No. 140) are priorities for protection and should receive specific protection through an ecologically coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas, and that conservation plans for species at risk of extinction should be established,

RECALLING FURTHERMORE the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Strategic Action Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets, specifically Aichi Target 12 to prevent extinction of threatened species and improve and sustain their conservation status, and Aichi Target 6 to put in place recovery plans and measures for depleted species and that fisheries shall have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species, both to be met by 2020,

BEING AWARE that those Contracting Parties being also EU Member States, have to harmonize their activities regarding threatened species with the implementation of relevant EU Directives and the Common Fisheries Policy as relevant,

HIGHLIGHTING that HELCOM threatened species can be associated *inter alia* with “biological features” according to Annex III Table 1 of the MSFD and thus their protection and conservation contributes to the MSFD objective of achieving Good Environmental Status of EU marine waters by 2020,

RECALLING the ecosystem approach to fisheries management as required by the Common Fisheries Policy and the 2003 HELCOM / OSPAR Statement on the Ecosystem Approach to the Management of Human Activities and the Baltic Sea Action Plan,

ACKNOWLEDGING the important contributions of other regional fora and cooperation frameworks to the conservation of HELCOM threatened species, *inter alia*, under the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS), the implementation of which this Recommendation will support,

RECOGNISING however that, in spite of some overlaps of threatened Baltic Sea species with species listed in the Annexes of EU Birds Directive (BD, 2009/147/EC) and Habitats Directive (HD, 92/43/EEC), most of the HELCOM threatened species do not fall under the strict protection regimes of the BD and HD, and therefore specific protection measures for those threatened Baltic Sea species are required beyond the scope of these directives,

AIMING at specific protection and conservation measures for HELCOM threatened species, and when scientifically meaningful, reintroduction programmes for “regionally extinct” species,

RECOMMENDS that the Governments of Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention take all necessary measures to improve the status of HELCOM threatened species according to the 2013 HELCOM Red List and reduce the number of red listed species, herewith also working towards the achievement of their favourable conservation status by 2021, and to carry out the following steps:

1. Make an inventory of existing and planned national and regional conservation-, recovery- and/or action plans as well as other relevant programmes and measures for the protection of species which are threatened according to the HELCOM Red List and evaluate the sufficiency and effectiveness of their protection by 2016 , and based on this:
 - 1.1. Determine by 2017 which additional actions are needed to mitigate the identified threats (pressures and/or impacts) for HELCOM threatened species as specified in BSEP No. 140 and listed in Annex 1.
 - 1.2. Specify respective conservation needs for HELCOM threatened species, develop and implement by 2018 additional or updated plans and measures for HELCOM threatened species or groups of species for which they are lacking or considered insufficient, where appropriate in cooperation with neighboring countries or relevant organizations.
2. Consider the possibility to introduce and/or update national legislation, or if more appropriate choose different kinds of instruments (such as incentives, administrative actions or negotiated agreements), to provide for effective protection of relevant HELCOM threatened species in all their life stages in the Baltic Sea subregions where they are threatened.
3. Whenever applicable, conduct an EIA or similar procedures for plans and projects which are likely to cause adverse effects on populations of HELCOM threatened species, including:
 - 3.1. a baseline study with specific consideration of the occurrence of such species,
 - 3.2. a documentation of the human induced pressures and/or impacts,
 - 3.3. provisions for appropriate measures to avoid or limit and mitigate the relevant pressures and/or impacts,
 - 3.4. the possibility to prohibit activities which may significantly affect, destroy or damage HELCOM threatened species, populations or their habitats.
4. Consider whether any sites justify selection as new or expanded MPAs for the conservation of HELCOM threatened species such as sites of particular ecological significance for their different life stages (e.g.

habitats of sessile species, feeding grounds, moulting/haul-out sites, nursery and resting areas), with the aim to improve connectivity between populations and key areas along migration routes.

5. Identify and map areas of ecological significance, such as migration corridors for individual or groups of HELCOM threatened species, also in order to support maritime spatial planning based on the ecosystem approach.
6. Support, and if necessary take measures to reduce transboundary pressures and/or impacts on HELCOM threatened migrating species which are moving across national borders including such pressures and/or impacts on species not occurring within the waters where the pressures and/or impacts originate from.
7. Encourage other international organizations or bodies to promote and strive for taking all appropriate measures in areas of their specific competence, such as in fisheries management or shipping, in order to reduce pressures and/or impacts on HELCOM threatened species including an evaluation of whether all necessary measures have been undertaken to ensure that pressures and/or impacts on HELCOM threatened species are reduced to a minimum.
8. Increase coordinated efforts to improve spatial data, monitoring and assessment and quality assured data management in order to enhance knowledge on HELCOM threatened species, and more specifically:
 - 8.1. improve the exchange of data on HELCOM threatened species between HELCOM and other international and national bodies that produce or use similar data in order to create synergies,
 - 8.2. systematically investigate and as far as possible regularly monitor the distribution, abundance, diversity and ecology of HELCOM threatened species as well as the pressures and/or impacts that are causing threats to these species,
 - 8.3. together with recreational and commercial fishermen, seamen, and other relevant stakeholders, set up information campaigns on HELCOM threatened species, also targeted to the general public, with the aim to encourage reporting of observations and incidental catches to improve knowledge on the distribution of HELCOM threatened species.
9. Raise awareness about the alarming situation of several Baltic Sea species amongst all stakeholders and the general public.

AGREES that:

- a) State & Conservation Working Group develops by 2017 guiding documents on conservation, recovery or action plans and/or related management measures for HELCOM threatened species or species groups and their habitats, and regularly reviews the progress of recovery of HELCOM threatened species,
- b) Contracting Parties will report on their first activities taken to implement this Recommendation in 2016, and thereafter according to the schedule to be agreed by the State & Conservation Working Group with the aim to harmonize reporting intervals and content with EU and other reporting obligations supported by this Recommendation, using an appropriate template to be developed,
- c) State & Conservation Working Group regularly follows up on the progress in implementing the Recommendation and assesses the implementation of this Recommendation in 2020,
- d) based on the progress in implementing this Recommendation and following the next Red List assessment of the Baltic Sea species and habitats/biotopes in 2019, the Governments of Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention utilize new knowledge on threatened species to maintain or further improve the status of HELCOM threatened species also beyond 2021.

Annex 1: Threats to red listed species as listed in the 2013 HELCOM Red List (BSEP No. 140)

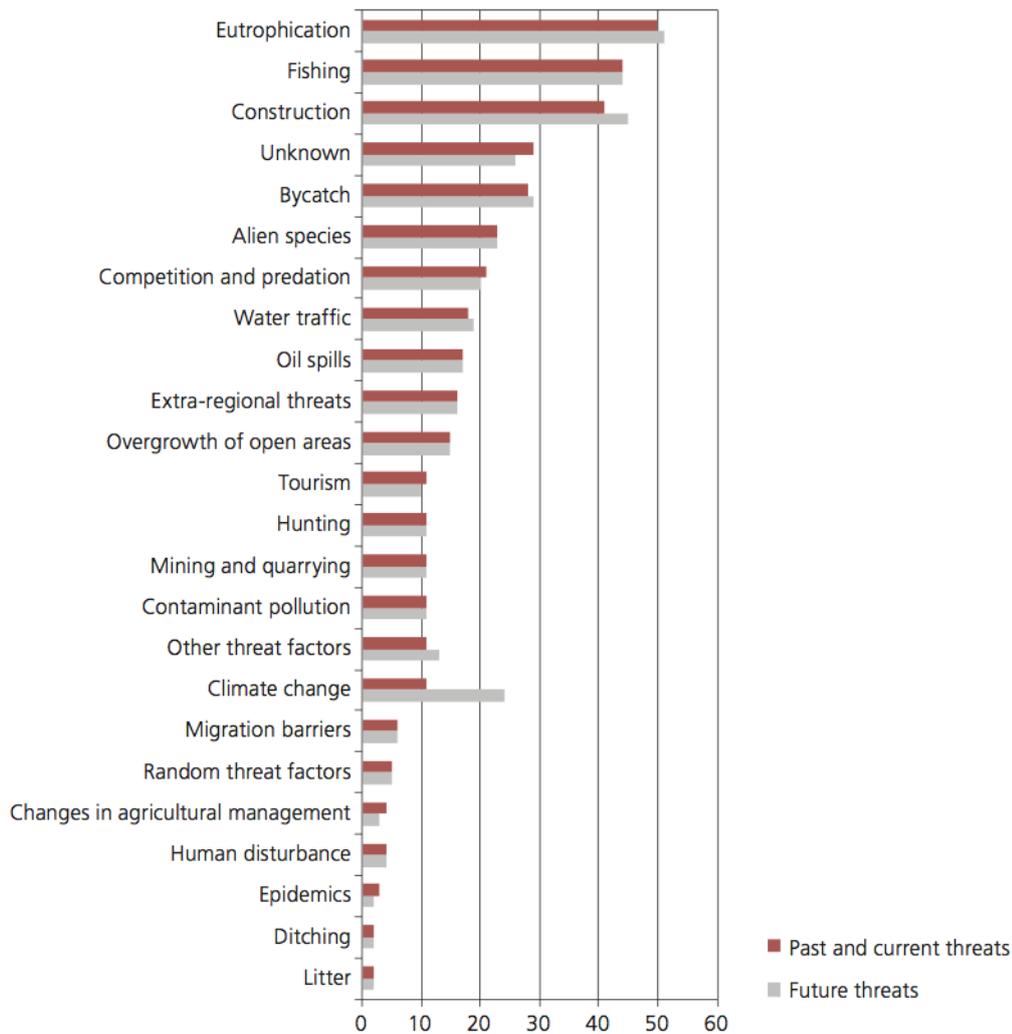


Figure: Past and current threats (reasons for becoming threatened) for the red-listed species and future threats, counted over all species groups. The x-axis shows the number of red-listed species for which the threat was regarded important by the HELCOM Red List experts and reported in the Species Information Sheets. Source: BSEP No. 140, Fig. 3.2.

Table: Threat codes and descriptions for past, current and future threats that affect the populations of red-listed species. Source: BSEP No. 140, Table 2.2.

Threat code	Description
A	Alien species: competition, predation, hybridization, diseases, ecosystem changes by introduced species
Bc	Bycatch: bycatch by fishing, concerns both non-target species of fish and also other animals, such as waterbirds or marine mammals
AM	Changes in agricultural management: intensification of management, conversion of grassland to cropland etc.
Cc	Climate change: all detrimental effects of climate change
CPr	Competition and predation: competition and predation by native species, especially if promoted by human activities, such as rabies vaccination for foxes, improved food availability for gulls due to fishery and refuse disposal
Co	Construction: all marine construction activities, e.g. wind power farms, gas pipelines, bridges, dredging, ports, coastal defence barriers, also coastal terrestrial construction, if relevant (vacation homes or roads), also noise from construction or operation
Cp	Contaminant pollution: all pollution to waters by hazardous substances, except for oil spills which have their own code (coastal industry, riverine load of heavy metals, discharges of radioactive substances, atmospheric deposition of metals and dioxins, polluting ship accidents excluding oil spills)
Di	Ditching: ditching and draining of mires and coastal meadows
Ep	Epidemics: large-scale epidemics or diseases
E	Eutrophication: detrimental effects of nutrient enrichment that can be defined in more detail, e.g. anoxia and hypoxia, excessive growth of algae, reduction in water transparency, or siltation
ERT	Extra-regional threats: e.g. fishing, hunting or habitat changes affecting migratory species outside the HELCOM marine area
F	Fishing: both commercial and recreational fishing, surface and mid-water fishery, bottom-trawling, coastal stationary fishery, gillnets
H	Hunting: selective extraction of species, including incidental non-target catches
L	Litter: plastic waste, ghost nets etc.
MB	Migration barriers: dams by hydroelectric power plants or other river constructions preventing spawning migrations of fish
Mi	Mining and quarrying: extraction of bottom substrates
O	Oil spills: oil spills from ship accidents, also from oil terminals, refineries, oil rigs
OT	Other threat factors: specific, known threat factors that are not covered by the other threat codes (to be specified)
Ogr	Overgrowth of open areas: e.g. coastal meadows or shallow water areas that become overgrown due to lack of management (related to eutrophication and interfloral competition, incl. expansion of reed)
D	Human disturbance: e.g. disturbance due to people visiting bird islands or passing by too close to bird colonies, hauling-out areas of seals, etc., also disturbance of species due to hunting activities (especially species other than those targeted by hunting)
RTF	Random threat factors: used only for species that are so rare that even random catastrophic events can destroy their populations
To	Tourism: detrimental effects of tourism, e.g. trampling of beaches or cleaning of algal belts from sandy beaches
U	Unknown: threats are not known
T	Water traffic: physical impact due to traffic, e.g. erosion caused by anchoring, boat wakes and other vessel effects, also noise