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Reference	

Background

This document contains the outline of a strategy, taking into account considerations by State and Conservation 7-2017, for the review and update process of the Red List of Baltic Sea species. In particular, specific information on the role and estimated time required by national experts taking part in the review and update of the Red List is included. The strategy has been elaborated to feed into the other relevant work under State & Conservation, nationally and under other international commitments. It also contains a suggestion for, as well as a description of, how the next iteration of the work could progress.

From Outcome of the seventh Meeting of the Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (STATE & CONSERVATION 7-2017):

- The Meeting considered the suggested outline for reviewing the HELCOM Red List of Species, noting the HELCOM commitments to work on endangered species, as well as the ongoing national work and the example of how the output of HELCOM work could be further enhanced.
- The Meeting reviewed the suggested strategy for a project taking note of the comments from Contracting Parties and updated the proposal
- The Meeting supported in principle the proposed two step; to first carry out an update of the checklist and secondly to carry out an updated Red List assessment, and the idea of having the same Project Coordinator to lead both work strands. Germany referred to the outcome of State and Conservation 5, where Poland, Denmark, and Germany were of the opinion that 2025 should be kept for the finalization of updated HELCOM Red Lists. Germany noted that their national red lists are updated with 15 to 20 years interval, and that from national experiences this is an adequate time period. Germany was of the opinion that after a red list assessment a proper time period is needed to discuss and decide on programmes and measures for the conservation of those species which are under particular threat or decline, and seek, as a next step, for progress on respective commitments, before new red lists are worked out.
- The Meeting supported the idea of developing a database on biota data, noted the benefits such a database could have for other HELCOM initiatives and national red listing efforts, and reflected that such a database would benefit from containing information on both regional and national Red List category (in addition to spatial, temporal and confidence information).

- The Meeting noted the concerns of Germany, Latvia, Poland and Denmark about the proposed schedule, relating to the lack of availability of updated data (i.e. via national Red Lists) and expert resources. However, both Germany and Denmark are willing to provide national data.
- The Meeting took note of the information that the project has been planned to place as little strain as possible on national experts and welcomed the Secretariats offer to update the document to reflect specific information on the role and estimated time required by national experts taking part in the project.
- The Meeting welcomed the information that Sweden is willing to co-fund the activity if also other Contracting Parties do so and noted that Finland is in the process of exploring their possibility to obtain national funding for co-financing as well. Germany will also explore the possibility of funding, however it is unlikely that clarification will be reached within the proposed timeframe. In the near future Germany is planning to establish a national red list center at BfN which means that in the future there might be more personnel and financial resources also for German contribution to HELCOM's work on red lists.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- consider and agree on the suggested strategy to reviewing the HELCOM Red List of species.
- consider the suggested timetable and agree on the start date of the checklist review to be 2018/2019

Suggested strategy for reviewing the HELCOM Red List of Species

The previous HELCOM RED LIST was a four year effort which produced a comprehensive Red List of threatened species in the Baltic Sea according to the IUCN Red List criteria, and an update the Red Lists of Baltic Sea biotopes and biotope complexes, in order to fulfill the commitments in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, namely:

Therefore **WE AGREE** to increase knowledge on and protection of Baltic Sea marine habitats, communities and species

- by 2011 by updating a complete classification system for Baltic marine habitats/biotopes;

- by 2013 by updating HELCOM Red lists of Baltic habitats/biotopes and biotope complexes, and producing a comprehensive HELCOM Red list of Baltic Sea species;

;...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 favorable conservation status of all species by 2021.

The previous RED LIST project ran between 2009-2013. The projects outcomes, including the first ever checklist of Baltic Sea Macro species and the ambitious process to create a biologically meaningful, Baltic Sea wide classification of habitats and biotopes that is compatible with the European Nature Information System (EUNIS) were published in 2012 ([HELCOM Baltic Sea Checklist of Macro Species](#)) and 2013 ([HELCOM Red List of Species](#), [Species Information Sheets](#), [Red List of biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes](#), [Biotope information Sheets](#) and the [HELCOM Underwater Biotope and Habitat classification system](#)).

As a result of the work the 2013 Copenhagen HELCOM Ministerial Declaration made the following commitments:

“ to make the Red List assessments of Baltic Sea species and habitats/biotopes a regular activity which will enable the tracking of long-term trends in the status of the Baltic Sea biodiversity;

WE DECIDE to implement on a regional level the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for the 2011- 2020 period of the UN Convention of Biological Diversity, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, taking into account the special characteristics of the Baltic Sea, bearing in mind that the implementation of the Plan in the EU and its Member States is carried out through the EU Biodiversity Strategy, and more specifically DECIDE to take measures so that by 2020, regionally, the loss of all red listed marine habitats and biotopes in the Baltic Sea will be halted and they have largely recovered, and that degradation and fragmentation have been significantly reduced, the progress of which will be measured with a core indicator to be produced; develop by 2015 a new HELCOM Recommendation on conservation plans for species, habitats and biotopes which are at risk of extinction.”

The updating frequency and regularity of Red List of Species assessments was discussed during the RED LIST project, and has been considered repeatedly since the end of the project, with a timeframe of 5-6 years between full updates of the Red List of Species being the most common suggestion. Repeated iterations of the work brings many benefits, such as:

- a difference in results can be visible for short-lived species
- knowledge gaps are filled when assessments are carried out regularly
- continuity of the work is ensured with more frequent assessments
- enables following of changes in the status
- the possibility to stay up to date in comparison to the work done globally, to IUCN recommendations and to work done nationally.
- the results of the Red List of species work being available to the large number of other work strands utilizing it.

However, an interval of six years between full deliverables means there are only two years between projects, which in turn results in tying up resources and expertise for extended periods of time, and this has so far proved unfeasible.

An alternative strategy, which would still allow for feeding into other relevant work strands, is an interval of eight years between products, and an alternation between full update and review. Below is a suggested outline of what this strategy could look like. Annex 1 to this document is intended to show how this work could potentially link into the work on other international commitments.

Benefit of a Red List review

The work outlined in this document would enable HELCOM to use the lessons learned from the last RED LIST project. Since the end of the previous RED LIST project IUCN has progressed significantly in the process of taking into account the regional approach. Work planned under the review would entail pre-assembling guidelines, prepared prior to the Red list assessment work, based on the updated and refined guidelines from IUCN (see Annex 2). This exercise would provide substantial assistance both for those Contracting Parties currently using IUCN guidelines, e.g. by facilitating streamlining in the region, and for those not currently using the IUCN criteria but considering their use for further updates.

In general work on the regional level would help facilitate and minimize the work effort for national experts in any consequent assessment work, both regional and national, as well as both temporal and spatial inter assessment differences. Transnational collaboration will also ensure better assessments in relation to biogeographic boundaries.

A reviewed Checklist, linked to work on a species distribution database, would bring added value for national Red Listing activities, both current and future. It would assist in the work on gap-analysis, which could be used for strategic knowledge gathering e.g. monitoring and/or inventory work, and significantly facilitate future assessment work on a regional level and could also be used for work outside of the red list, e.g. for biogeographic analysis. The possibility to add information on functional groups to the checklist (and subsequently to the database), could be explored.

A database would be build and the initial aim of the database is to function as a support for the Checklist, provide improved infrastructure and continuity and to facilitate the red listing process, both for the next and following iterations (e.g. data availability, possibility to query the data, and the potential to use digital tools for part of the assessment process etc.). It is a clear step towards providing increased spatial quality of Baltic Sea wide biota data and centralizing workload and provides the possibility to, for species found in the database, link frequency and possibly more specific distributional information to the information already available in the Checklist. Eventually merging the information in the checklist with the database would allow for the possibility to automate a significant part of the assessment work, which in turn helps minimize mistakes and the need for resources

A review assessment of the Red List of Species would provide a reference point for those CP's not currently planning species related Red List work, as a regional assessment show the trend of the assessed species throughout its range, not only in the areas in which new data has been collected, and incorporates increased understanding of the assessment procedure overall, as well as of other linked parameters, in addition to the any available new data. Based on the current knowledge gaps and needs, assessments for macrophytes and benthic invertebrates on a HELCOM level is much needed, and cost-efficient compared to national assessments. Due to the high levels of new data combined with a relatively small workload, the work on mammals is also urgent.

The results from a review of the Red List of Species would also, together with the database, substantially diminish the work needed to address other related topics, such as MPA related assessments, possible effects of climate change, and ecosystem services etc.

A number of international commitments are to be delivered by 2020/2021 and therefore, a review of the Red List of species assessment by 2020-21 is proposed as it would provide relevant information for assessing the fulfillment of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration 2013, UN Convention of Biological Diversity, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and UN Sustainable Development Goals (see table 1 and Annex 1). Several of the HELCOM Contracting Parties are currently in the process of updating their national red lists. Based on a questionnaire circulated for the Red List Workshop 1-2017 most species groups will be completely or partially assessed by several countries by 2020, and it is expected new information will be available for the majority of the species groups. This makes for a unique opportunity to align the national and regional work, and be able to present regional lists by 2021. The work on the Checklist and the database would both capitalize and contribute to the ongoing efforts on national Red Lists (see table 2), and has been planned so to the extent possible it is aligned with that work in those CP's who have planned updates before 2021.

Table 1. Overview of other commitments, with reporting year, related to HELCOM Red List work

Commitment	Target year/Year of reporting
Baltic Sea Action plan (BSAP)	2021
Convention on Biological Diversity and the Strategic Action Plan for Biodiversity	2020
EU Biodiversity Strategy	2020
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	2019
Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)	2019
Annex III Table 1 of the MSFD	
UN Sustainable Development Goal 14	2020

Table 2. Overview, extent and timeline of national Red List work.

Country	Planned update to national species Red Lists	Planned period of work/availability of data	Macrophytes	Bentic invertebrates	Mammals	Fish	Birds
Denmark	Yes	extended period until 2019 (one publication + website)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Estonia	Yes	2017 – 2019/most of the groups	After 2020	After 2020	yes	yes	yes
Finland	Yes	Jan 2018 – Jun 2019/all groups	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Germany	Yes	habitats will be assessed/new information on several species groups will be available through monitoring					
Sweden	Yes	Sep 2018 – Apr 2020/most of the groups	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Russia	Yes for the Leningrad region	A revised Red List of plants is going to be published in 2017 and the revision of Red List of animals is scheduled to be done by 2018.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Latvia	No						
Poland	No	-/more information for EU reporting requirements					
Lithuania	No information						

HELCOM Red List Review resource requirements

Effort has been made to elaborate a strategy that would require a minimum of resources for the work on the side of Contracting Parties and nominated experts, based on the experience of the previous Red List project.

Resource requirements by Contracting Parties:

Contracting Parties are requested to provide data for populating the database, and as a basis for assessment, as well as expert participation in the suggested workshops (see below).

The main bulk of the assessment workload will be on the Assessment Coordinator and Project Manager, with the national expert participation limited to data submission, a maximum of two workshops (max 10 days total over 2 years), and, should any inconsistencies be identified in the initial assessment, to approve the amended result remotely (the amendments will be done by the Project Manager based on instructions from the workshop).

The plan presented in this document also includes the involvement of preexisting networks within HELCOM in conjunction with national experts nominated specifically for the RED LIST II work.

Checklist of Species review:

Responsible: REDLIST project manager

Update of the HELCOM Checklist, the development and populating of a HELCOM database on biota.

Two workshops are planned for this part of the work:

1. Workshop to scope the structure and requirements of a species information database (possible to hold in conjunction/back to back with a workshop on the needs for updating the MPA database).
2. Expert workshop to review database functionality, data and updated checklist and approve it for use as a base for the Red List of species assessments. While evaluating the data this WS would also preliminarily identify DD species for which a review assessment will not be needed.

Red List of Species Review:

Responsible: REDLIST project manager

Other: Assessment Coordinator

Five back to back workshops are planned for this stage of the work:

1. Expert workshop on reviewing the initial Red List results for macrophytes
2. Expert workshop on reviewing the initial Red List results for benthic invertebrates
3. Expert workshop on reviewing the initial Red List results for fish (could be carried out in coordination with HELCOM FISH-PRO and HELCOM FISH)
4. Expert workshop on reviewing the initial Red List results for seabirds (could be carried out in coordination with HELCOM/OSPAR/ICES joint working group on birds)
5. Expert workshop on reviewing the initial Red List results for marine mammals (could be carried out in coordination with HELCOM SEAL EG)

Resource requirements by project:

Project manager:

The position of Project Manager (located at the Secretariat), a 3 years position, divided over the Checklist of Species review and database development and the Red List review.

Database developer

Funds for a database developer would be reserved during first 1,5 years, exact amount of hours to be decided

Assessment Coordinator

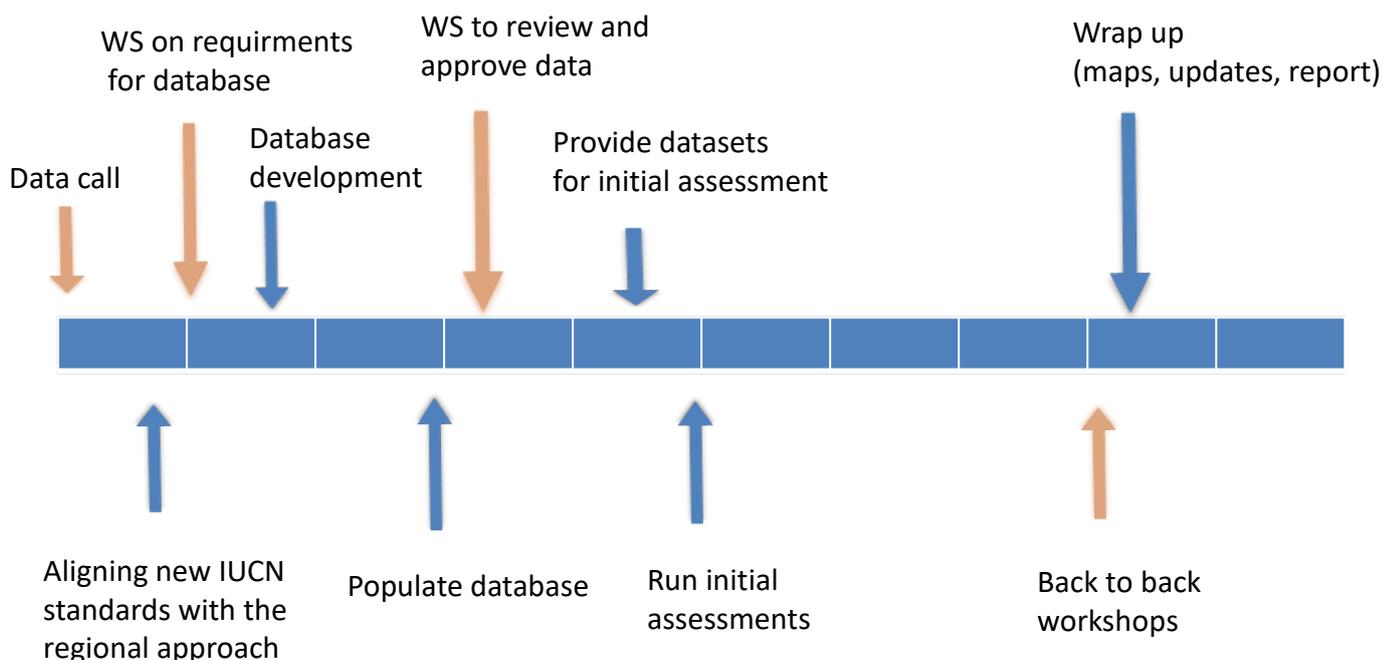
An Assessment Coordinator (6 months) with familiarity with the assessment tool would be hired to assist the Project Manager with running the initial assessments and taking part in the workshops for reviewing the initial results.

Preliminary budget examples (all sums are in euro):

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total/activity
Project Manager	50000	50000	50000	0	150000
Assessment Coordinator	0	10000	10000	0	20000
Database developer	10000	0	0	0	10000
Workshops	HELCOM	HELCOM	HELCOM	0	0
Product finalization (report editing etc.)	0	HELCOM	0	HELCOM	0
Total/year	60000	60000	60000	0	

General overview of suggested work process :

→ : Work stages involving contributions by CPs



Annex 1. Suggested frequency and timeline of Red List work

Table 3. Outline of proposed long term strategy, with links to other State & Conservation planned and potential activities as well as international commitments, based on example timetable.

HELCOM long term work example

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	Project interval		
				HOLAS III						HOLAS IV							HOLAS V						HOLAS VI				6 year interval	
	Checklist Review							Checklist update									Checklist Review									Checklist update	8 year interval	
		RedList Species Review							RedList Species III										RedList Species Review								8 year interval (16 year between full updates)	
	Guidelines Review Initial Management Guidelines							Guidelines Review									Guidelines Review								Guidelines Review	8 year interval (option of 16 year interval)		
	EBSA				COHERENCE and MANAGMENT									COHERENCE and MANAGMENT										COHERENCE and MANAGMENT				8 year interval

Other international commitments

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	Project interval	
	MSFD Assessment II	MSFD Assessment III						MSFD Assessment IV						MSFD Assessment V						MSFD Assessment VI							
	MSFD monitoring I	MSFD Monitoring II						MSFD Monitoring III						MSFD Monitoring IV						MSFD Monitoring V							
		MSFD Programs of Measures II						MSFD Programs of Measures III						MSFD Programs of Measures IV						MSFD Programs of Measures V							
	MSFD Marine Strategy Implementation I	MSFD Marine Strategy Implementation II						MSFD Marine Strategy Implementation III						MSFD Marine Strategy Implementation IV						MSFD Marine Strategy Implementation V							
	WFD Management cycle II	WFD Management cycle III						WFD Management cycle IV						WFD Management cycle V						WFD Management cycle VI							
	HD assessment of conservation status III	HD assessment of conservation status IV						HD assessment of conservation status V						HD assessment of conservation status VI						HD assessment of conservation status VII							
	Birds directive reporting XI	Birds directive reporting XII						Birds directive reporting XIII						Birds directive reporting XIV						Birds directive reporting XV							
	CBD and the Strategic Action Plan for Biodiversity																										
	EU Biodiversity strategy																										
	UN Sustainability Goals 2020	UN Sustainability Goals 2025						UN Sustainability goals 2030																			



Proposed cycle of project iteration (assuming start in 2018)

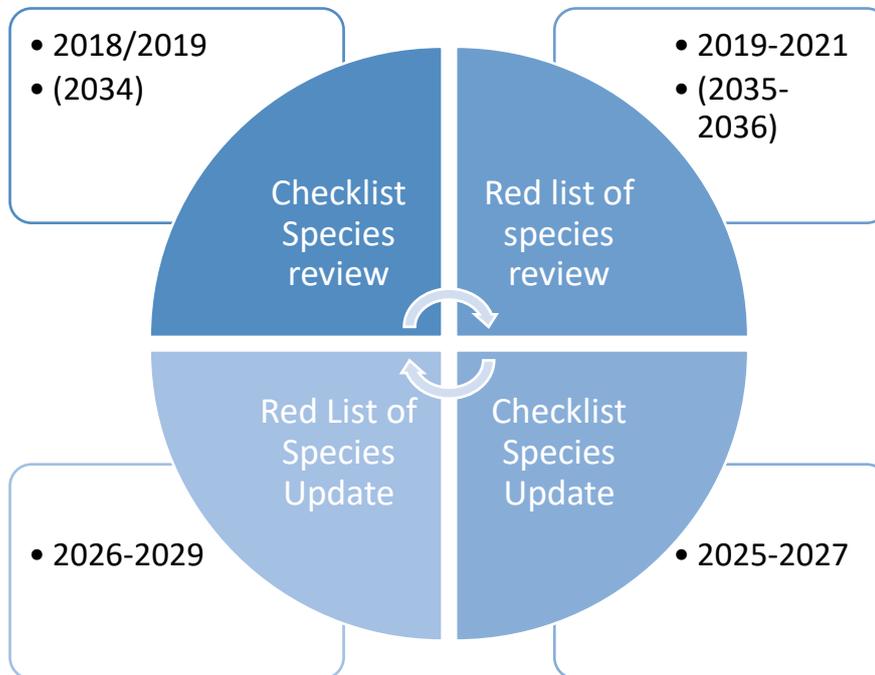


Figure 1. Proposed cycle of project iteration for Red List projects. Years of next suggested iteration shown in boxes, following iteration in brackets.



Annex 2: HELCOM commitments to work on threatened species

HELCOM has committed to work on threatened species both on a broad and specific scale. Below are excerpts of current HELCOM commitments that directly affects or supports the topic of threatened species:

Copenhagen Ministerial declaration 2013

1 (K). WE AGREE to develop regional assessments jointly and in such a way that they can be used by the Contracting Parties in assessments of their marine and coastal waters, as well as for their reporting purposes under EU MSFD and other international frameworks, and WE AGREE to start implementing the revised HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy immediately, including:

e. to make the Red List assessments of Baltic Sea species and habitats/biotopes a regular activity which will enable the tracking of long-term trends in the status of the Baltic Sea biodiversity;

4 (B). WE DECIDE to implement on a regional level the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for the 2011- 2020 period of the UN Convention of Biological Diversity, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, taking into account the special characteristics of the Baltic Sea, bearing in mind that the implementation of the Plan in the EU and its Member States is carried out through the EU Biodiversity Strategy, and more specifically DECIDE to... take measures so that by 2020, regionally, the loss of all red listed marine habitats and biotopes in the Baltic Sea will be halted and they have largely recovered, and that degradation and fragmentation have been significantly reduced, the progress of which will be measured with a core indicator to be produced; develop by 2015 a new HELCOM Recommendation on conservation plans for species, habitats and biotopes which are at risk of extinction

Helsinki Convention

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

HELCOM Recommendations

Recommendation 17/2 Protection of Harbour Porpoise in the Baltic Sea Area

Recommendation 27-28/2 Conservation of seals in the Baltic Sea Area

Recommendation 19/2 Protection and Improvement of the Wild Salmon (*Salmo salar* L.) populations in the Baltic Sea Area

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

Recommendation 34E-1 Safeguarding important bird habitats and migration routes in the Baltic Sea from negative effects of wind and wave energy production at sea

Recommendation 37/2 Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the 2013 HELCOM red list

THE COMMISSION:

BEING DEEPLY CONCERNED about the alarming situation of 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,

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 favorable conservation status of all species by 2021,

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,

Contracting Parties being also EU Member States, have to coordinate their activities regarding threatened species with the implementation of relevant EU Directives, such as the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), and the Common Fisheries Policy as relevant,

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,

RECOMMENDS that the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention take 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 goal to achieve a favorable conservation status of all species by 2021, and to carry out the following steps:

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 sub-regions where they are threatened.

3. Consider including HELCOM list of threatened species in EIA procedures in order to mitigate or limit pressures or impacts inflicted on threatened species with the aim to:

3.1. Receive and share knowledge about the occurrence of such species,

3.2. Get a documentation of the human induced pressures and/or impacts,

3.3. Be in a position to decide on appropriate measures to avoid or limit and mitigate the relevant pressures and/or impacts,

8. 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, and therefore:

8.1 Consider improving data by regular systematic investigations and/or monitoring of the abundance, distribution, diversity and ecology of HELCOM threatened species or the pressures and/or impacts that are causing threats to these species,

8.2 Raise awareness about the HELCOM list of threatened species amongst stakeholders and the general public, and consider to establish a permanent dialogue and exchange of knowledge between HELCOM and relevant stakeholders such as recreational and commercial fishermen, seamen.

RECOMMENDS ALSO that

9. The Contracting Parties will report on their first activities taken to implement this Recommendation in 2018, 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,

10. Based on the progress in implementing this Recommendation and following the next Red List assessment of the Baltic Sea species and habitats/biomes in 2019, the Governments of the 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.

The Contracting Parties will report on their first activities taken to implement this Recommendation in 2018, 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

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 the 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 3: Updated and refined IUCN information available

As a number of new or updated information has been made available from the IUCN since the work on the previous HELCOM Red List of species took place, there is a need to revisit the results of the earlier process. This, however, presents some challenges with regards to assessing only certain species on the current list as the species presented after the review would then be consist of both outdated, non-reviewed species following the previous guidelines, and species assessed according to the latest, most up-to-date guidelines. Part of the work planned under the RED LIST review would be set aside to study the revised IUCN guidelines, “translate” them into a HELCOM context and get acceptance for this. This would be done in an effort to avoid the issues experienced tin the previous iteration of the HELCOM Red listing process, where the understanding between the IUCN guidelines and regional need was not clear-cut. A selection of information updated by the IUCN since the latest HELCOM Red List of species assessment process can be found below

Guidelines for Using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. *The Red List Guidelines document is regularly updated: the current version is version 13 (March 2017).* Available in [English](#)

Documentation Standards and Consistency Checks for IUCN Red List Assessments and Species Accounts. Available in [English](#). *This document is regularly updated: the current version is version 2 (September 2013).*

Rules of Procedure: IUCN Red List assessment process 2017-2020. Available in [English](#).

Guidelines for Application of IUCN Red List Criteria at Regional and National Levels. Version 4.0. Available in [English](#)