



Potential OECMs Shipping sector

Webinar Other Effective area-based Conservation
Measures (OECMs) in the Baltic Sea – 23 Nov 2021



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs)

- Among the measures that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has adopted to manage the impacts of shipping on the marine environment, the particularly sensitive sea area (PSSA) concept is sometimes viewed as an MPA equivalent and stands out as a potential OECM
- A PSSA is defined as: ***An area that needs special protection through action by IMO because of its significance for recognized ecological, socio-economic, or scientific attributes where such attributes may be vulnerable to damage by international shipping activities.***



Potential biodiversity benefits of PSSAs

It is argued that PSSA designation offers a number of benefits including:

- (1) Providing a comprehensive management tool whereby the vulnerability of an area to damage from international shipping activities can be examined and a measure adopted by the IMO can be tailored to address the identified vulnerability;
- (2) Giving coastal States the opportunity to adopt additional protective measures to address the risks associated with international shipping in the area; and
- (3) Providing global recognition of the special significance of a designated area through identification of PSSA status on international charts, thereby informing mariners of the importance of taking extra care when navigating through a region.

Despite the suggested benefits of PSSA designation, in general, few specific research or ongoing monitoring have been undertaken to evaluate the extent to which biodiversity benefits have been realised.



PSSA in the Baltic Sea



- The Baltic Sea area, except Russian waters, was designated as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) under IMO.
- The principal goal for the PSSA is to protect the sensitive marine environment of the Baltic Sea from impacts caused by shipping by establishing measures for ships navigating in the Baltic e.g. to avoid casualties, collisions and groundings.
- The designation of the Baltic Sea as a PSSA includes **associated protective measures** (APMs) consisting mostly of traffic separation schemes and areas to be avoided.

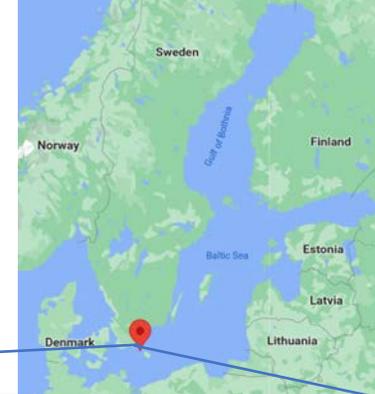


Biodiversity and socio-economic values

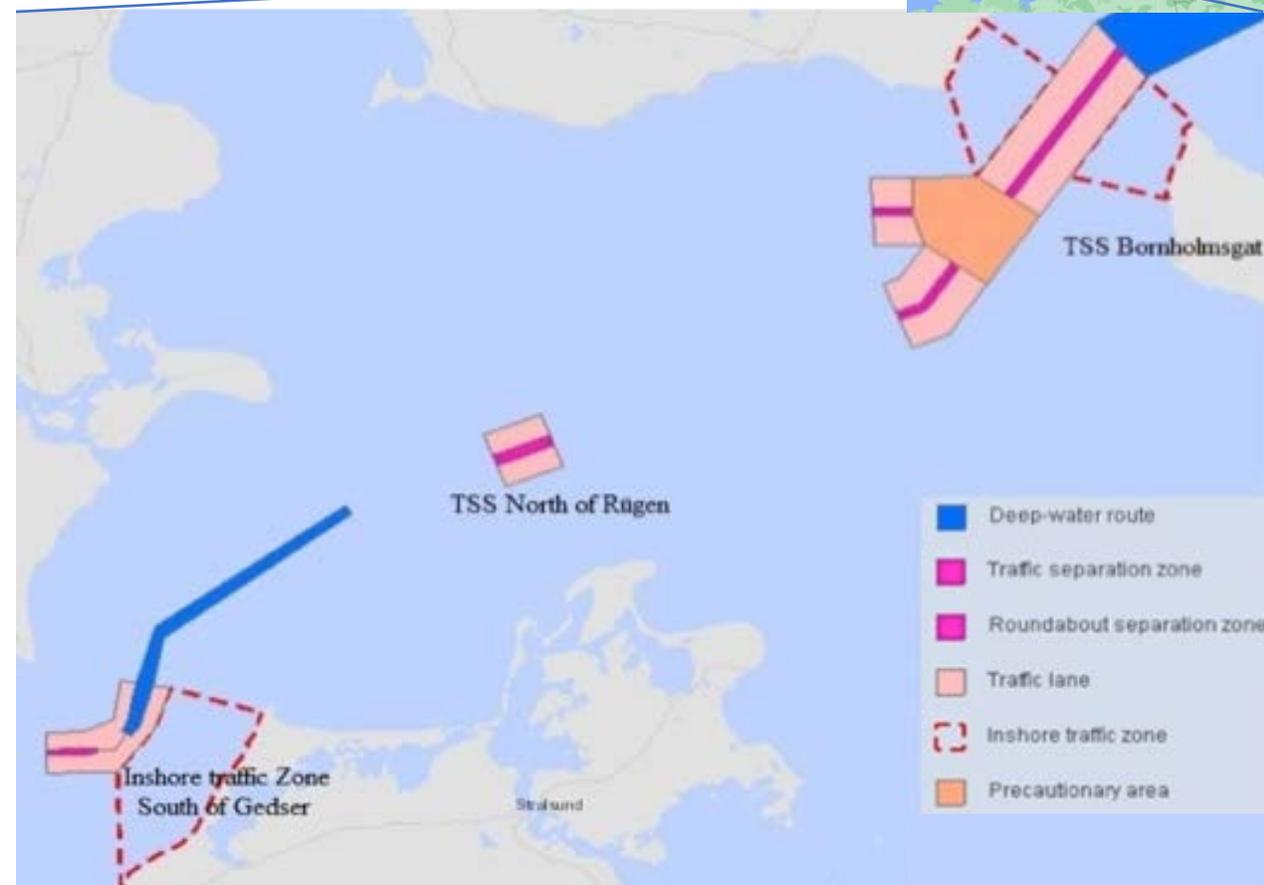
- The proposal for establishing the Baltic Sea as PSSA highlights a number of specific biodiversity values that are threatened by shipping.
- Specifically, the proposal highlights that an oil or other harmful substances spill from ships could have disastrous effects on the vulnerable nature of the Baltic sea, especially **fish spawning areas** and **breeding and resting areas for the birds and marine mammals**.
- From a socio-economic point of view such spills could lead to a less valuable state of the ecosystem with **detrimental effects on fishing, tourism and leisure activities**.



Traffic separation schemes



- A **traffic separation scheme** or **TSS** is an area where all ships sail in the same direction or they cross the lane in an angle as close to 90 degrees as possible.
- Three TSSs have been adopted as APMs as part of the Baltic PSSA. These concern the TSS in Bornholmsgat, the TSS to the north of Rügen and the inshore traffic zone in the TSS located south of Gedser.
- Since the adoption of these APMs, no accidents have been recorded in these areas. The only exception was a collision due to human factors near the TSS to the north of Rügen in 2008.

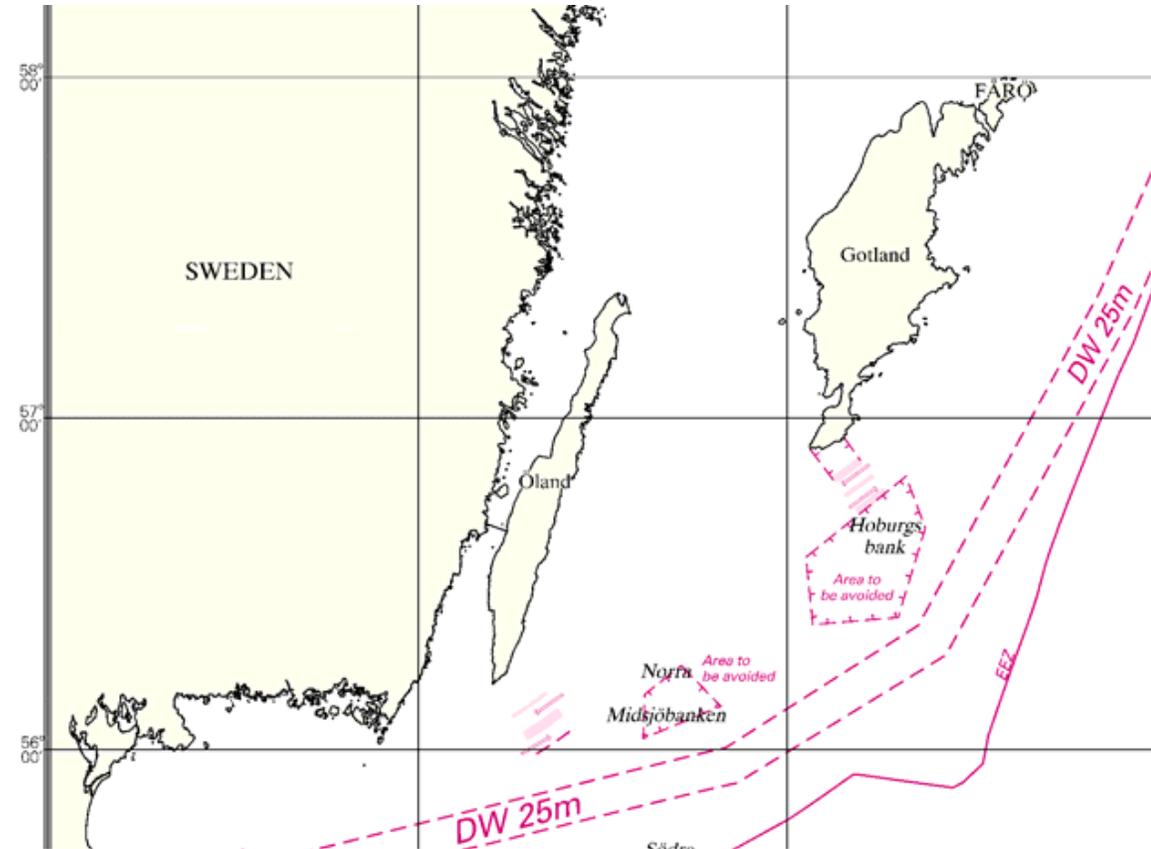


Areas to be avoided



APMs

- The Baltic Sea APMs provide that ships should avoid navigating in Northern Midsjöbanken and Hoburgs Bank, the aim being to limit the intensity of traffic in those areas.
- No accidents have been registered on the banks since the creation of the PSSA. However, several minor illegal oil discharges have been recorded.
- The areas have been designated as HELCOM MPAs in 2016.



Assessing effectiveness of the PSSA



- There is no specific monitoring of the biodiversity in the APM areas.
- Given that their purpose is mainly the avoidance of accidents (and resulting spills), no direct data/comparisons on impact of measures exist, but HELCOM has annual reports on shipping accidents and annual reports on detected spills in the Baltic Sea area since the year 2000.
- Under the PSSA Guidelines, new associated protective measures (APMs) may be adopted to cater for future international shipping activities that are expected to cause damage to the proposed area (paragraph 7.5.1(3)). New APMs may technically be added to an existing layer operating in a given PSSA.





Thank you!

