



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Ad hoc Seal Expert Group
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Background

This document contains a proposal for actions (4.7.1 and 4.7.2) that have been identified as needed within HELCOM as regards the topic 'selective extraction and incidental by-catch of species'. These proposals have been developed within a regional coordination process of measures initiated by the HELCOM Group on the Implementation of the Ecosystem approach (Gear) and are part of the Joint documentation on regional coordination of programmes of measures in the Baltic Sea area, prepared by the Group.

The joint documentation including the actions under 'selective extractions and incidental by-catch of species' has been prepared based on the outcome of the Gear IG PoM (Intersessional Group on Programmes of Measures) workshop held on 28 October 2015, in Warsaw ([Memo of IG PoM](#)) and subsequently GEAR 12-2015 ([Outcome of GEAR 12-2015](#)) and will be considered by HOD 49-2015 in December 2015.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

Proposals for actions still needed on selective extraction and incidental by-catch of species

Section 4.7 – Selective extraction and incidental by-catch of species

**See page 5 for explanation of the template used for proposing these actions*

4.7.1 Adjustment or utilization of EU data collection framework to retrieve data for assessments and the development of management measures related to by-catch of species	
HELCOM type of action	<p>a. Measures v .Joint actions with the aim of influencing international regulations</p> <p>b. d. Data and information; i. Data</p>
Type of coordination	<p>a v.=4 - Joint regional action in relation to third parties</p> <p>For d_i: Not applicable (Regional coordination of data retrieval).</p>
Short description of the action / measure ¹	<p>HELCOM Input to: the new EC proposal for Data Collection Framework, new multiannual programs for data collection and regional DCF groups.</p> <p>New DCF Regulation has been proposed in July 2015, in order to make DCF compliant with the reformed Common Fisheries Policy. It is proposed that the new DCF Regulation will define the frameworks for EU multiannual programme for data collection, which will be prepared after adoption of a Regulation. Multiannual programme for data collection will define only stable and basic variables, but other parameters will be more flexible and can be changed with time. The role of regional DCF groups in deciding in detail how the data should be collected is strengthened. This approach is in line with regionalisation under the reformed Common Fisheries Policy. Such an EU approach may provide room for more active role for regional stakeholders such as HELCOM, in deciding on data collection in each marine region.</p> <p>This action should contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HELCOM contribution to DCF processes; • Gaining needed data on by-catch for such actions as: management of endangered species, gathering information on threats, carrying out assessments of by-catch. Data could comprise fish species present on coastal waters, particularly those not covered by EU legislation, as well as information on marine mammals and bird by-catch. • Gaining needed data on by-catch from chosen fishing fleet segments, recreational fishing; • Indicator development (by-catch indicator- lacking of data, to establish thresholds or environmental limits for by-catch.
Spatial coverage	The Baltic Sea
Recommended start and duration, if appropriate, of action / measure (temporal coverage)	2016 depending on an EU progress on this issue

¹ Cooperation with Russia on the issue of by-catches is needed.

Contribution of the action / measure to achieve the target	Obtaining data on by-catch of threatened and endangered marine species from DCF will be cost efficient, as these data can be collected together with “traditional” fishing data. Data from by-catch can be used for analysis of pressures assessments of marine environment, and for development of indicators. Consultation with BALTFISH, and cooperation with ICES and ASCOBANS, BSAC needed
Proposed activities for implementation (<u>very</u> briefly)	1) Make an inventory of what kind of data from DCF will be useful for Baltic Sea region, and what kind of data will be needed for HELCOM Baltic Sea indicators and environment assessments. Any successful implementation of measures prerequisites an effective monitoring. DCF could be a part of this implementation process. 2) Determine how the access to the data coming from data collection could be organised for HELCOM in order to ensure highest standards of primary data protection. New data from recreational fisheries is specifically relevant
Obstacles to implementation (at regional and CP level)	Currently DCF is designed for collecting fisheries data and does not take into account environmental elements. The relevant focus on environmental aspects of new DCF should be ensured. Problems with obtaining by-catch data from commercial and recreational fisheries could appear.

4.7.2 Testing alternative fishing gears/fishing techniques to minimize by-catch through joint project/projects	
HELCOM type of action	a Measures. iv HELCOM Recommendations that require implementation through measures and b. Management coordination ii Plans, guidelines and manuals
Type of coordination	a_iv:= 2 - Regional measure For b_ii: Not applicable (Regional coordination of national technical developments to reduce by-catch)
Short description of the action / measure	The project HELCOM BALTFIMPA aimed at development of a selective and more environmental friendly fishing gears comparing to currently used, has not been continued after failing to obtain LIFE + financing. At the same time, measures in order to minimize negative impact of fisheries on protected species are urgently needed. Therefore, this is a proposal for continuation of activities proposed under HELCOM BALTFIMPA project with special emphasis on minimization of by-catch problem. Several of the topic are already agreed as a work plan of the HELCOM FISH group. MAMBO ² project proposal should be taken into account. Outcome from the project could be provided to BALTFISH.
Spatial coverage	Baltic Sea
Recommended start and duration, if appropriate, of action / measure (temporal coverage)	2016-2017
Contribution of the action / measure to achieve the target	Information provided by the project should be useful for decision makers to implement measures to reduce by-catch of threatened and endangered species, especially in MPAs

² MAMBO project – Management Actions and Conservation Measures for the Baltic Sea Odontocete.

Proposed activities for implementation (<u>very</u> briefly)	<p>HELCOM to serve as a coordination body, in cooperation with other relevant bodies, for mainly nationally funded activities regarding alternative gear development and testing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyse traditional fishing gears• Define potential by-catch “hot spots”• Analyse and test usefulness of available alternative fishing gears,• Analyse and test new fishing gears/fishing techniques;• Prepare a HELCOM Recommendation concerning utilisation of alternative fishing gears/fishing techniques for by-catch “hot spots” in the Baltic Sea;• Prepare guidelines for fishing in MPAs, including also by-catch “Hot spots”, as well as education for fishermen
Obstacles to implementation (at regional and CP level)	Relevant financial support for the project coordination should be ensured.

**Explanation of the template*

HELCOM Contracting Parties and Working Groups used the following template to identify and propose actions that are still needed to reach the target(s). The “actions still needed” relate to the analysis of planned national measures and to gaps identified in HELCOM work.

Name of action / measure	<i>Including a short title and numbering for quick referencing</i>
HELCOM type of action	<i>As proposed to GEAR 8 for the purpose of implementation control of actions agreed in HELCOM*</i>
Type of coordination	<i>As defined in the Joint Document: (1) regional coordination of national measure, (2) regional measure, (3) sub-regional measure, (4) joint regional action in relation to third parties.</i>
Short description of the action / measure	<i>Including its purpose and a description of the mechanism of how the action / measure improves the state of the environment.</i>
Spatial coverage	<i>E.g. European, whole Baltic Sea, sub-basin(s).</i>
Recommended start and duration, if appropriate, of action / measure (temporal coverage)	
Contribution of the action / measure to achieve the target	<i>Possibly including reference to available studies on effectiveness.</i>
Proposed activities for implementation (<u>very</u> briefly)	<i>E.g. technical requirements, milestones including reference to ongoing activities.</i>
Obstacles to implementation (at regional and CP level)	<i>E.g. relating to resources, lead country, policies</i>

* Type of actions proposed to GEAR 8:

- a. Measures [directly aimed at reducing pressures or improving the state of the environment]
 - i. Reduction of pressures
 - ii. Spatial protection
 - iii. Restoration/Reintroductions of habitats and species
 - iv. HELCOM Recommendations that require implementation through measures
 - v. Joint actions with the aim of influencing international regulations
- b. Management coordination [aimed at establishing joint HELCOM principles for management of the marine environment]
 - i. HELCOM Recommendations not included under Measures
 - ii. Plans, guidelines and manuals
 - iii. Assessment tools
 - iv. Classification systems, reporting systems
 - v. Follow-up/assessments of agreed actions and plans
- c. Monitoring and assessment [i.e. the implementation of]
 - i. Monitoring and surveillance
 - ii. Assessments
- d. Data and information
 - i. Data
 - ii. Databases
- e. Knowledge
 - i. Promotion of research
 - ii. Reviews and evaluations
 - iii. Development of supporting information [e.g. modelling]