



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

HELCOM Platform for sufficiency of measures

SOM Platform 2-2019

Helsinki, Finland, 16-17 September 2019

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Background

HOD 55-2018 agreed to establish an *ad hoc* platform for analysing sufficiency of measures (SOM Platform) to support the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan ([Outcome HOD 55-2018](#)). To implement the framework and contribute with the required data and information for the analyses, topic teams were established for each of the topics addressed by the SOM Platform. No SOM Topic Team has however been established for marine mammals, water birds, or migratory fish. The Secretariat assumed work on these topics and submitted an [initial work plan](#) to STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019 proposing analyses for these topics.

This document is an update of that proposal, outlining the progress, proposals, and ongoing work on these biodiversity related topics. Importantly, the necessary input from experts will be collated through the implementation of a set of workshops or sessions at expert group meeting in autumn 2019.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the document and guide ongoing work on these topics.

Organization of work

Without a Topic Team in place, the analyses rely on the HELCOM core indicators. The clear HELCOM responsibility for each of the relevant topics (EG MAMA, JWG Birds, Fish Group) is also beneficial in these circumstances, and upcoming HELCOM meetings and workshops in autumn 2019 will be used to support the SOM analysis. The contribution on benthic habitats for the SOM analysis, which is covered by the HELCOM ACTION project, will be supported by HELCOM IN BENTHIC at their planned meeting 14 November 2019.

Timetable

The timetable of work follows the preliminary timetable for tasks by the topic teams according to the below. Activities for 2020 are still to be outlined.

Task	Outcome/contribution	Timeline 2019
Identify relevant measures frameworks (step 1 SOM approach)	Very short information document	Complete
Identify presence of time-lags between measures and pressures (step 2 SOM approach)	Very short information document	Complete
Propose geographic scale of analysis	Proposal	Complete
Expert evaluation: identifying main pathways for pressures (step 3 SOM approach)	Use the outcome of survey of pressures when evaluating effectiveness of measures and pressure-state linkage	October
Pressure-state time-lags	Data (models, project outcomes, literature)	September-November
Measure-pressure time-lag verification	Verify time-lag effected measures from list provided by Secretariat	September-October
Measure list verification	Verify no missing relevant measures from list provided by Secretariat	September-October
Effect of measures data	Data (models, project outcomes, literature, national reports)	September-November
Expert evaluation: effectiveness of measures (step 4 SOM approach)	Participate in survey/workshop	October-November, tentative dates and meetings as in point 4 below
Expert evaluation: pressure-state linkage (step 6 SOM approach)	Participate in survey/workshop	October-November, tentative dates and meetings as in point 4 below
Projected development of human activities/pressures (step 5 SOM approach)	Data (models, project outcomes, literature, national reports)	Not relevant for this topic
Synopses on potential new measures	Information document	End of year

Updated plan for marine mammals, birds and fish

1) Analysis structure

Mammals

The topic is broken up into analysis of four separate species (Grey seal, Ringed seal, Harbour seal, Harbour porpoise). All three seal species have established core indicators for trend and abundance that will be used as the analyzed metric. Grey seal will be analyzed at the whole Baltic scale, ringed seal for two sub-basin groups ([Bothnian Bay, The Quark, Gulf of Bothnia], [Åland Sea, North Baltic Proper, Gulf of Finland, Gulf of Riga]), and harbour seal for three sub-basin groups ([Kattegat including the Limfjord sub-population], [Great Belt, The Sound, Kiel Bay, Bay of Mecklenburg, Arkona Basin, Bornholm Basin], [Western Gotland]) all in line with their core indicator structure. Harbour porpoise trend and abundance will also be analysed for two sub-basin groups ([Kattegat, Great Belt, The Sound, Kiel Bay, Bay of Mecklenburg, Arkona Basin], [Bornholm Basin

and west]) based on sub-populations presented in HOLAS II. There is no operational core indicator on harbour porpoise and the pressure-state surveys therefore need to be modified accordingly.

Waterbirds

The topic is broken up into analysis of five separate species groups (surface feeders, pelagic feeders, benthic feeders, wading feeders, grazing feeders) in two seasons (breeding season, wintering season) based on the core indicator structure. HELCOM assessment scale 1 (Baltic wide) will be used in the analysis.

Fish

The topic is broken up into analysis of three species (salmon, sea trout, eel). Salmon and sea trout have established core indicators that will be used as a basis for the analysis. Eel is more difficult in this regard since no indicator or thresholds value has been agreed, requiring a similar approach as harbour porpoises. HELCOM assessment scale 1 (Baltic wide) will be used for all analyses.

2) Measures

An inventory of measures has been gathered by the Secretariat and distributed to national contact points of the SOM Platform on 12 July. Responses for mammals and birds were requested by 15 September and for fish by 15 October. The initial lists include national MSFD reporting, HELCOM measures reporting, and online searches of global and regional measures frameworks.

3) Relative contributions of activities to pressure

Note that the pressures listed below are only those with a direct impact on the state of biodiversity. Assessment of sources and pathways of other pressures, e.g. eutrophication, hazardous substances, NIS, are carried out by other Topic Teams or the HELCOM ACTION project.

Mammals

Related to mammals are the pressures of by-catch and hunting. However, these pressures only involve 1 (hunting) or 2 (by-catch) activities. The distinction between the two fishing categories will be established at the SOM Marine Mammal Workshop and hunting needs no additional work on this issue. If human disturbance is indicated to be a primary pressure, activity contributions to that pressure for marine mammals will also be assessed at the workshop.

Waterbirds

Related to waterbirds are the pressures of by-catch and hunting. However, as for mammals, these pressures only involve 1 (hunting) or 2 (by-catch) activities. The distinction between the two fishing categories will be established at the same time as the effectiveness of measures surveys and hunting needs no additional work on this issue. If human disturbance is indicated to be a primary pressure, activity contributions to that pressure for waterbirds will also be assessed at the workshop.

Fish

Related to fish are the pressures of by-catch and targeted extraction, impacts and obstructions (obstacles like dams), and species-specific habitat issues. The fishing pressure is planned to be separated into the two fishing categories using a data approach and the other pressures consist of a single activity (impacts and obstructions) or are treated as a direct pressure and therefore need not be linked to activities.

4) Effectiveness of Measures and Pressure-State

A workshop for SOM Marine Mammals is set for 26-27 September immediately following EG MAMA 13-2019.

Efforts are being made to organize a meeting time for SOM Birds associated with the JWG meeting in early October to gather the required data on effectiveness of measures and pressure-state links. An online survey will be used for this purpose if a workshop is not possible. A decision on this situation is expected in late August/early September.

A SOM Fish workshop is to be held in Warsaw, Poland in November pending approval by HOD. Exact dates are still to be determined. Effectiveness of measures will likely need to be determined for three pressures: by-catch and targeted extraction, impacts and obstructions, and species-specific habitat issues. Discussion needs to take place with HELCOM ACTION project WP6 concerning how to account for riverine habitat aspects that may present outside of the scope of loss/disturbance of the seabed.

5) Time-lags

For the biodiversity topics, population recovery is an important aspect in pressure-state time-lags. Consideration of these medium-term time-lags is being discussed with HELCOM ACTION project, WPs 5 and 6.

6) Overview

This topic is moving forward and will be one of the first completed topics. Issues remain in regard to generation scale time-lags and the evaluation of the harbour porpoise state component.