



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature  
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION  
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<b>Document title</b>	Coverage of HELCOM Marine Protected Areas and Natura 2000 areas in the Baltic Sea region and the status of MPA management plans
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<b>Agenda Item</b>	3N– Development and implementation of Recommendations
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<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat
<b>Reference</b>	

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### Background

State & Conservation 8-2018 invited the Secretariat to make the presentation of the progress and status of the MPA network (as presented in the HELCOM MPA database) a reoccurring agenda point at the meetings, as well as to include sub-basin, including division by EEZ, results in the calculations.

State and Conservation 9-2018 meeting noted that the current distribution and coverage of the MPA network is still below 10 % for part of the sub-basins (outcome para 3N.32, document 3N-17). In order to provide supporting information for the Recommendation, the meeting invited the Secretariat to provide subbasin-wise calculations for the total protected area, including both HELCOM MPAs and Natura 2000 areas (N2000s) and compile a list of those sub-basins with a less than 10 % total coverage of protected areas, as well as to identify the countries bordering the respective sub-basins. The information was agreed to be shared with State and Conservation Working Group.

State and Conservation 9-2018 agreed that in the future information on the coverage of MPAs and the management plans of MPAs will be presented in one document including relevant maps.

This document presents the distribution and coverage of the HELCOM MPA network based on data extracted from [HELCOM Marine Protected Areas database](#) in October 2019. The dataset was updated April 2019 by HELCOM Secretariat to add a new MPA (MPA ID:522 - Södra Sandbäck) as designated by Finland, and to include new areas to 2 existing MPAs (MPA ID: 143 - Saaristomeri /Archipelago Sea and MPA ID: 157 - Tulliniemen linnustonsuojelualue/ Tulliniemi bird protection area) as designated by Finland. In addition, the whole Finnish MPA network was re-projected to remove the shift in the features that occurred before. Also the spatial delineation of following Finnish MPAs were revised to remove islands and water areas that are not included in the MPA IDs 161, 159 and 144.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

## Coverage of HELCOM Marine Protected Areas and Natura 2000 areas in the Baltic Sea region and the status of MPA management plans

### Introduction

According to HELCOM Recommendation 35/1 'System of coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas (HELCOM MPAs)', the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention are individually and jointly recommended to reach the target set by the HELCOM 2010 Moscow Ministerial Declaration that at least 10% of the marine area in all sub-basins of the Baltic Sea including the EEZ areas beyond territorial waters is covered by MPAs where scientifically justified. In addition, where ecologically meaningful, coastal terrestrial areas can be included.

Human activities within the HELCOM MPAs can be restricted through management plans or measures, which are developed to prevent conflicts of interest and to ensure that specific nature conservation goals are reached. The management plans regulate or compensate harmful human activities through different actions, such as restricting activities during a certain time or in a certain area, prohibiting certain activities completely, restoring degraded areas, maintaining sustainable and traditional use when appropriate and substituting certain materials or substances with less harmful ones. Each HELCOM MPA shall have a unique management plan or management measures drafted for the area in question. In addition, some MPAs have specific targeted management plans for specific parts of the MPA. The management plans of MPAs are, according to HELCOM Recommendation 35/1, updated when necessary and in accordance with other legal requirements with a maximum of 12 years intervals.

State & Conservation 8-2018 invited the Secretariat to make the presentation of the progress and status of the MPA network (as presented in the HELCOM MPA database) a reoccurring agenda point at the meetings, as well as to include sub-basin, including division by EEZ, results in the calculations.

State and Conservation 9-2018 meeting noted that the current distribution and coverage of the MPA network is still below 10 % for part of the sub-basins (outcome para 3N.32, document 3N-17). In order to provide supporting information for the Recommendation, the meeting invited the Secretariat to provide subbasin-wise calculations for the total protected area, including both HELCOM MPAs and Natura 2000 areas (N2000s) and compile a list of those sub-basins with a less than 10 % total coverage of protected areas, as well as to identify the countries bordering the respective sub-basins. The information was agreed to be shared with State and Conservation Working Group.

State and Conservation 9-2018 agreed that in the future information on the coverage of MPAs and the management plans of MPAs will be presented in one document including relevant maps.

This document presents the current distribution and coverage of the HELCOM MPA network based on data extracted from the [HELCOM Marine Protected Areas database](#) 8 October 2019 and the coverage of N2000s in sub-basins of the Baltic Sea.

The dataset was updated in April 2019 by HELCOM Secretariat to add a new MPA (MPA ID:522 - Södra Sandbäck) as designated by Finland, and to include new areas to two existing MPAs (MPA ID: 143 - Saaristomeri /Archipelago Sea and MPA ID: 157 - Tulliniemen linnustonsuojelualue/ Tulliniemi bird protection area) as designated by Finland. In addition, the whole Finnish MPA network was re-projected to remove the shift in the features that occurred before. Also the spatial delineation of following Finnish MPAs were revised to remove islands and water areas that are not included in the MPA IDs: 161, 159 and 144.

The areas per EEZ has not been provided due to identified quality issues in EEZ and territorial waters source datasets, such as gaps and topological errors. MPA coverage per country is not presented due to mentioned reasons and observed quality issues related to MPA GIS data (polygons not correctly aligned with borders).

### Coverage of HELCOM MPAs and Natura 2000s

Areas for the analyzes of marine fraction of HELCOM MPAs were delineated as follows: All land areas were removed from the HELCOM MPA dataset. Removed areas included all areas on islands and mainland, regardless whether the islands were included in the original MPA delineation or cut out of it. Some MPAs have areas falling landward of the coastline and these were also removed. The same method as in the MPA analysis was applied to remove mainland and islands from N2000 areas. All overlapping MPA and N2000 areas were dissolved, and the resulting total MPA + N2000 areas were compared to the normal HELCOM version of sub-basins.

The coverage of marine MPAs and N2000s is presented in Figure 1. Number and total area of HELCOM MPAs, marine fraction of HELCOM MPAs and N2000s per sub-basin are provided in Table 1.

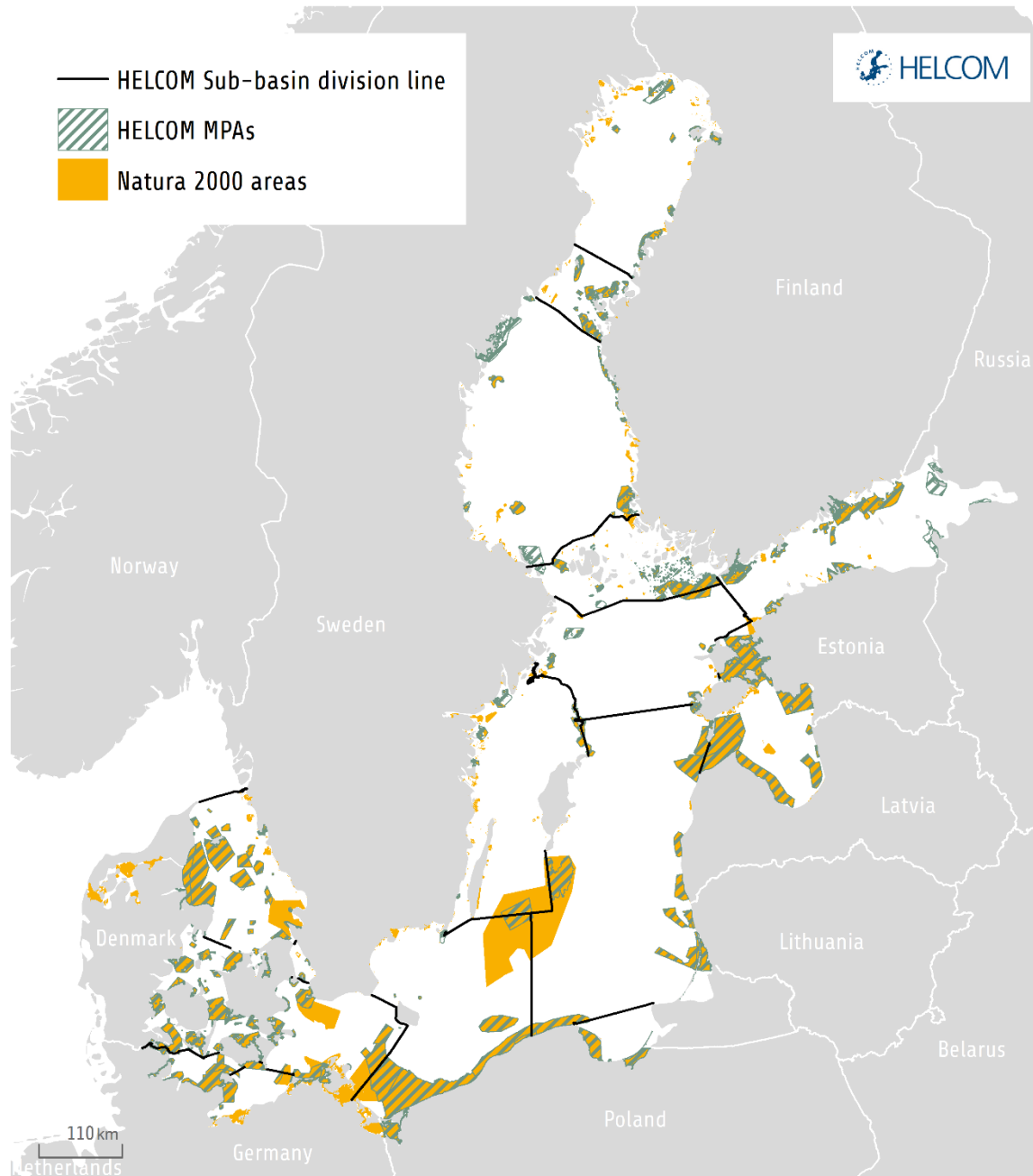
The share of marine area covered by HELCOM MPAs exceeded 10% of the total area in 11 of the 17 sub-basins. The coverage was below 10 % in the Sound, Eastern Gotland Basin, Western Gotland Basin, Northern Baltic Proper, Bothnian Sea and Bothnian Bay.

The combined coverage of HELCOM MPAs and N2000s was below 10 % in the Bothnian Bay, Bothnian Sea and the Northern Baltic Proper. The identified sub-basins are bordered by Estonia, Finland and Sweden.

Subbasin	HELCOM ID	Subbasin Area km2	Number of H.MPA	Total area of H.MPA km2	Marine fraction of H.MPA		H.MPA marine area %	H.MPA + N2000 marine area km2	H.MPA + N2000 marine area %	
					km2	%			%	%
Arkona Basin	SEA-006	17600	17	2858	2589	91	15	5547	32	
Bay of Mecklenburg	SEA-005	4620	7	860	802	93	17	1328	29	
Bornholm Basin	SEA-007	42014	12	7850	7332	93	17	12181	29	
Bothnian Bay	SEA-017	32225	12	1320	1222	93	4	1786	6	
Bothnian Sea	SEA-015	59349	13	3413	2617	77	4	3211	5	
Eastern Gotland Basin	SEA-009	75133	19	6413	5831	91	8	8690	12	
Gdansk Basin	SEA-008	5876	5	1115	958	86	16	958	16	
Great Belt	SEA-002	10662	34	4574	4058	89	38	4099	38	
Gulf of Finland	SEA-013	29877	17	4921	3970	81	13	4243	14	
Gulf of Riga	SEA-011	18787	8	8292	7698	93	41	8170	43	
Kattegat	SEA-001	23973	29	5850	5644	96	24	8144	34	
Kiel Bay	SEA-004	3485	11	1511	1418	94	41	1425	41	
Northern Baltic Proper	SEA-012	32831	7	1160	1058	91	3	1304	4	
The Quark	SEA-016	8159	3	1520	1374	90	17	1527	19	
The Sound	SEA-003	921	2	90	71	79	8	100	11	
Western Gotland Basin	SEA-010	34528	8	1427	1333	93	4	3930	11	
Åland Sea	SEA-014	16829	11	1909	1840	96	11	2133	13	
<b>TOT</b>				<b>55082</b>	<b>49814</b>					

Table 1. The areas of HELCOM sub-basins, number and total area of HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (H.MPAs), the area and share of marine fraction of MPAs and combined areas of HELCOM MPAs and N2000s per sub-basin and their shares of the total sub-basin areas. Data has been extracted from HELCOM Marine Protected Areas database in October 2019. Note that the Assessment unit data (all levels 1-4) is not equally precise for all countries regarding the coastline, introducing some uncertainty for the sub-basin calculations. Also, the number of islands and their details were intentionally decreased while making the HELCOM assessment unit datasets, and the national MPA spatial data is not harmonized on coastline and spatial resolution. This creates uncertainty when comparing marine fractions of MPAs between sub-basins. To calculate the total area of MPAs in a sub-basin, the delineations of sub-basin were continued to also include land areas, which is beyond the assessment unit areas as defined in HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy, thus the methodology to assign land areas to each subbasin was not based on approved data.

Figure 1. Marine fractions of HELCOM MPAs (HELCOM MPAs excluding areas on islands and mainland) and marine Natura 2000 areas in the Baltic Sea.



### Status of HELCOM MPA management plans

Since State & Conservation 9-2018, the dataset has been updated, in April 2019, to add a new MPA (MPA ID:522 - Södra Sandbäck) as designated by Finland, and to include new areas to two existing MPAs (MPA ID: 143 - Saaristomeri /Archipelago Sea and MPA ID: 157 - Tulliniemen linnustonsuojelualue/ Tulliniemi bird protection area) as designated by Finland. In addition, the whole Finnish MPA network was re-projected to remove the shift in the features that occurred before. Also the spatial delineation of following Finnish MPAs were revised to remove islands and water areas that are not included in the MPA IDs: 161, 159 and 144.

The HELCOM MPAs in different management plan status classes are shown in Figure 2. Of the 177 established HELCOM MPAs 119 (67 %) currently have an implemented management plan, in 7 MPAs the management plan has been implemented for parts of the MPA, and 51 HELCOM MPAs (29 %) have a management plan under development or no management plan (Table 2). More than half of the area covered by MPAs and marine fraction of the MPAs have implemented management plans, whereas only 29% of the MPA in Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) have fully implemented management plans.

Table 2) The number, area and shares of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in different management plan status classes in October 2019. Status class 'designated' signifies that no management plan has been developed or the management plan is under development, 'designated and partly implemented' signifies that the management plan has been implemented for parts of the MPA and 'Designated and Managed' that the management plan has been implemented for the whole MPA. Areas and the shares of areas in different management plan status classes are given separately for marine fraction of the MPAs and Exclusive Economic Zones.

Status	Number of MPAs	%	MPA (km <sup>2</sup> )	%	MPA marine (km <sup>2</sup> )	%	EEZ (km <sup>2</sup> )	%
Designated and managed	119	67	30070	54	25949	52	2530	29
Designated and partly managed	7	4	2094	4	1490	3	0	0
Designated	51	29	23215	42	22666	45	6149	71

Figure 2. HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in different management plan status classes, as extracted from [HELCOM Marine Protected Areas database](#) in October 2019.

