



Outcome of the 11th Meeting of the Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019)

Introduction

0.1 In accordance with the decision by HOD 55-2018, the eleventh Meeting of the Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019) was convened on 21-25 October 2019 in Riga, Latvia, at the premises of Ministry of Environmental Protection and regional Development of Latvia (Peldu iela 25, Riga).

0.2 The Joint session was attended by delegations from all Contracting Parties and observers from Nordic Hunters' Alliance and Coalition Clean Baltic. The Nature conservation session was attended by delegations from all Contracting Parties as well as observers from Nordic Hunters' Alliance and Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB). The List of Participants is contained as **Annex 1**.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group: Ms. Marie-Louise Krawack (Denmark), Chair of nature conservation issues and Mr. Norbert Häubner (Sweden), Chair of monitoring and assessment related topics. Ms. Jannica Haldin, HELCOM Professional Secretary, Ms. Petra Kääriä, HELCOM Assisting Professional Secretary and Ms. Laura Hoikkala, HELCOM Associate Professional Secretary acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

0.4 The Meeting was welcomed by Ms. Alda Ozola, Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development.

Joint session

Agenda Item 1J Adoption of the Agenda: Joint themes

1J.1 The Meeting adopted items 1J-11J in the Agenda as contained in document 1-2.

Agenda Item 2J Matters of relevance for the Meeting and information from the Secretariat

2J.1 The Meeting took note of the extracts from outcomes of relevant HELCOM meetings for State and Conservation (document 2J-2), as presented by the Secretariat.

2J.2 The Meeting considered the current format for presenting the information, and supported that it would be more useful to provide the document in a more condensed and accessible format, and agreed that in future meeting the Secretariat collate a document containing a list of meetings which have taken place since the previous State and Conservation WG meeting, each listed meeting containing a hyperlink to the respective outcome. The Meeting further agreed that the Secretariat present the most important information as a presentation with one slide for each relevant meeting listed in the document.

2J.3 The Meeting took note of the draft Roadmap on fisheries data in order to assess incidental bycatches and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea (document 2J-1), as presented by Ms. Katarzyna Kaminska, Poland.

2J.4 The Meeting noted the comment by the European Commission to consider further development of the text regarding data on seafloor and to consider including information from the latest ICES workshop WKBEDPRES2 held in October 2019.

2J.5 The Meeting noted the comment by Denmark that once the roadmap is approved, action should be taken on a regional level.

2J.6 The Meeting noted that Germany will submit editorials to the Secretariat (jannica.haldin@helcom.fi) and to Poland (k.kaminska@mgm.gov.pl) in writing.

2J.7 The Meeting provisionally agreed on submitting the Roadmap to HOD 57-2019 for approval, pending that the requested amendments are included.

2J.8 The Meeting took note of the draft HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise (document 2J-3) as presented by the Secretariat.

2J.9 The Meeting took note of the clarification that, in line with the request by STATE&CONSERVATION 10e-2019, rephrasing of existing actions under the BSAP which consider underwater noise are to be crosschecked with the information contained in the Action Plan.

Agenda Item 3J HELCOM indicators and assessments

Continued development of HELCOM core indicators

3J.1 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the first and second indicator workshop, as presented by the Secretariat (**Presentation 1**).

3J.2 The Meeting further took note that the plan for future work on HELCOM indicators will be reviewed and endorsed by GEAR 21-2019 with the intention to submit it to HOD 57-2019 for approval. The Meeting considered and endorsed the proposed direction of further work on HELCOM indicators.

3J.3 The Meeting noted that a meeting document will be produced from the outcomes and submitted to GEAR and that possible comments from Expert Groups (via the respective Chair) and Workshop participants will be submitted to the Secretariat **by 1 November**. The document submitted to GEAR will

concomitantly be provided to State and Conservation contacts and the Meeting agreed that comments to the document from the State and Conservation Working Group contacts can be provided through their national GEAR contacts in advance of GEAR 21-2019.

3J.4 The Meeting took note the comment by Germany on the possible synergies between HELCOM and OSPAR work on indicators and expressed the wish that the Contracting Parties and Secretariats explore all possibilities for close cooperation.

3J.5 The Meeting noted the comment by Finland that having the same experts working in the respective thematic groups under HELCOM and OSPAR, as has occurred for some eutrophication aspects, has proven an effective way of ensuring that information is transferred between indicator development processes under the respective RSC.

3J.6 The Meeting noted the clarification that BSPI and BSII were used as complimentary assessments to the indicator based assessments in HOLAS II to visualize the spatial distribution and intensity of pressures and that current work on the BSPI and BSII tools is focused in further developments of the indices to enhance their usefulness as tools for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) under the Pan Baltic Scope projects.

3J.7 The Meeting acknowledged that while the planning for short-term work (i.e. for HOLAS III) is critical, for practical reasons, including planning at national level, the longer-term developments leading up to HOLAS IV would also be important to consider at this early stage in order to secure resources and ensure good planning that will ensure further improved indicators in the long-term.

3J.8 The Meeting took note of the updated information on indicator lead and co-lead countries, the nominated experts appointed for their development and the development status of the indicators (document 3J-2).

3J.9 The Meeting took note that Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Lithuania and Poland have updates or corrections that need to be reflected in the document. Updates can be provided in writing to the Secretariat (owen.rowe@helcom.fi).

3J.10 The Meeting noted that Denmark is exploring the possibility to continue as co-lead on the indicator on seafloor litter.

3J.11 The Meeting noted the suggestion by Germany that the 'Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds indicator' should be moved from the 'additional indicators' category and placed under mammals and birds sections.

3J.12 The Meeting took note of the comment by Germany on the concept of a 'Bird Population growth rate' indicator, highlighting the discussion ongoing within JWG BIRD for MSFD indicator D1C3. The Meeting invited JWG BIRD (via the HELCOM co-Chair) or Germany to report back to STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2020 on progress of the work and submit a more detailed overview of the proposed indicator once the report becomes available for further discussion to take place on including it as a candidate indicator. This also applies for the potential marine bird habitat quality indicator presented in document 3J-3

3J.13 The Meeting acknowledged that in light of the indicator review and prioritization process it is important to find an appropriate approach for introducing new indicator proposal, to ensure that the new proposals are assimilated into the overall indicator workplan as agreed under the Future work on HELCOM indicators process.

3J.14 The Meeting noted that an indicator manual will be developed during spring 2020 including information on definitions and the process by which HELCOM indicators should be developed and fostered.

3J.15 The Meeting recalled that Sweden will no longer be able to lead the work on the oxygen debt indicator and invited Contracting Parties explore their possibilities to lead the indicator. Progress on the issue can be sent to the Secretariat and the Meeting agreed to come back to this at the next meeting.

3J.16 The Meeting took note that Germany will continue to lead the Diatom-Dinoflagellate Index indicator. The Meeting further took note that Ms. Anke Kremp from IOW will take over the work from Mr. Norbert Wasmund, under the assumption that the indicator development has been mostly finalized and no major development work will be needed, and thanked Mr. Norbert Wasmund for his contribution to earlier work. The Meeting took note the ongoing work related to planning future work on HELCOM indicators and how this may influence the application, adjustment, or development of the indicator.

3J.17 The Meeting took note that the funding for further development of HELCOM eutrophication test assessment has been secured and will be provided by Germany and Sweden. The Meeting further noted that the HODs approved the project proposal intersessionally (document 3J-1).

3J.18 The Meeting noted that a funding request for the eutrophication test assessment will be submitted to Germany shortly.

3J.19 The Meeting noted that Denmark may provide further reflections on the HEAT tool to the Secretariat and that these will be forwarded for consideration by the IN EUTROPHICATION group, as well as specific comments on the plankton indicators.

3J.20 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the EG MAMA health team meeting held in August. The next meeting is planned for spring 2020 and will among other things consider how to develop the core indicators on mammal health.

3J.21 The Meeting recalled that Sweden is no longer able to act as sole lead country for the white-tailed sea eagle indicator. The Meeting took note that Finland is awaiting confirmation on their capacity to act as co-lead on the indicator.

3J.22 The Meeting took note of the development of an indicator on bird offshore habitat disturbance by the JWG BIRD, suitable for addressing MSFD criterion D1C5 - habitat for species, as presented by Germany (document 3J-3). The Meeting invited Germany to provide a more detailed overview of the work at the next meeting of State and Conservation to clarify the possible role of such an indicator within HELCOM.

3J.23 The Meeting noted the comment by Denmark that they welcome the work done by JWG BIRD but remarked that D1C5 is a secondary criteria for birds and therefore it is of lower priority to develop indicators for this criteria.

3J.24 The Meeting took note of the progress report – further development of the HELCOM pre-core indicator “Cumulative impacts on benthic biotopes”, as presented by Germany (document 3J-4, **Presentation 2**). It was lifted that the cut-off method mentioned in the presentation is currently included but its use depends on the results of the work of TG SEABED.

3J.25 The Meeting took note of comments provided by Sweden on that the proposed 25% threshold is likely problematic and not compatible with other closely aligned policies and that spatial resolution may need to be considered for example in highly diverse areas.

OSPAR-HELCOM Workshop on bycatch indicators

3J.26 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the joint OSPAR-HELCOM workshop to examine possibilities for developing indicators for incidental by-catch of birds and marine mammals, held on 3-5 September 2019, as presented by Ms. Katarzyna Kaminska, Poland. The Meeting noted that the outcome of the workshop will be available shortly and an exhaustive report will also be published.

Agenda Item 4J Monitoring guidelines for biota

4J.1 The Meeting noted that Estonia and Denmark can lift their study reservations on the guidelines for coastal fish monitoring, and, in line with the agreement in STATE&CONSERVATION 10-2019 the guidelines will be published on the HELCOM webpage, once all changes suggested by STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019 have been incorporated.

Leads and co-leads for monitoring guidelines

4J.2 The Meeting took note of the information on lead and co-lead countries for HELCOM Monitoring Program topics (document 4J-2).

4J.3 The Meeting recalled that due to current lack of personnel resources, Sweden invited other Contracting Parties consider to co-lead the work on the development of 'monitoring guidelines on marine bird health'. The Meeting agreed to come back to this issue at STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2020.

4J.4 The Meeting welcomed the information that Latvia and Germany will take co-lead of developing the HELCOM Guidelines for seabirds at sea monitoring. The Meeting noted that the contact persons for the guidelines are Ms. Nele Markones (Germany) and Mr. Ainars Aunins (Latvia).

4J.5 The Meeting recalled that due to resource limitations, Germany invites other Contracting Parties to consider offering co-lead, assistance or take over the lead for some of the 17 monitoring guidelines for hazardous substances currently led by Germany. The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to inform the Secretariat (laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi) about new national nominations for co-lead, assistance or lead for the guidelines **by the end of November 2019**.

4J.6 The Meeting took note of the proposed update of HELCOM guidelines on monitoring of phytoplankton species composition, abundance and biomass. The Meeting invited the Chair of PEG to provide a version of the document which includes track changes and invited the Contracting Parties to provide any possible written comments to the Secretariat (laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi) **by 25 November**. The Meeting in principle endorsed the draft guidelines.

Agenda Item 5J Development and implementation of Recommendations

5J.1 The Meeting took note of the overview of Recommendation reporting deadlines under State and Conservation WG as presented by the Secretariat (document 5J-1). The Meeting noted that at the moment several Recommendations do not have a regular reporting interval or a reporting form.

5J.2 The Meeting welcomed the information that, regarding the abnormal events Recommendation, the EuroSea application to Horizon 2020 was successful and that the kick off meeting will be held late November 2019 and State and Conservation 12-2020 will be invited to provide input to the discussion on project end product and service, with the intention to replace Recommendation 10/1 with a service.

RECOMMENDATION 21/3 SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TOURISM IN THE COASTAL ZONES OF THE BALTIC SEA AREA

5J.3 The Meeting took note of the progress on development of guidelines on sustainable tourism, as presented by Latvia. The Meeting noted that no proposals for revising the Recommendation were received. The Meeting welcomed the information by Latvia that the intention is to present a draft to STATE& CONSERVATION 12-2020 and agreed to come back to the Recommendation at the next meeting of the Working Group.

RECOMMENDATION 24/10 IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED MARINE AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA

5J.4 The Meeting took note of the results of a workshop providing a platform for closer cooperation with planners and producers of Baltic Sea biodiversity data (VELMU) nationally in Finland, as presented by Finland and invited Finland to present the outcome of the EMMA process with regards to MSP at STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2020. More information on other forms of planning cooperation in MSP in Finland can be found here: <https://www.merialuesuunnittelu.fi/en/msp-in-finland/>.

5J.5 The Meeting took note of progress regarding the joint scoping workshop with HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and took note that the proposal will be further considered at the WGs upcoming meeting. The

Meeting supported the proposal to explore the possibility to combine the planned work with the recently started HELCOM MSP Platform project for capacity building.

Agenda Item 6J Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets

6J.1 The Meeting took note of the follow up on agreed actions on BSEFS as presented by the Secretariat, including the actions agreed on phytoplankton related BSEFS (document 6J-2, presentation 3).

6J.2 The Meeting considered the actions proposed by PEG on the phytoplankton related BSEFS.

6J.3 The Meeting noted that Germany supports PEGs view to keep the biomass fact sheet, as it is updated yearly with detailed data, whereas the indicator is updated only every 6 years.

6J.4 The Meeting noted that the Cyanobacterial bloom indicator heavily relies on the biomass fact sheet in addition to satellite data from Finland, and thus keeping the BSEFS is of utmost importance to the indicator.

6J.5 The Meeting supported that IN EUTRO and PEG will work bilaterally during spring 2020 to resolve unclarity regarding biomass and satellite data use.

6J.6 The Meeting considered the update of the BSEFS on Cyanobacteria biomass (document 6J-1), 1990-2018, and agreed on its publication on the HELCOM webpage.

6J.7 The Meeting agreed to keep the biomass factsheet and invited PEG to continue providing regular updates of the information contained therein.

6J.8 The Meeting noted the wish by Germany to include Ms. Nicole Liebeke in the list of contributors to the BSEFS cyanobacteria biomass updating.

6J.9 The Meeting took note of the updates to the existing HELCOM Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets since STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019 meeting (document 6J-3).

6J.10 The Meeting took note that the following new BSEFS have been published on the HELCOM webpage:

- Population Development of Baltic Bird Species: Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*)
- Sea surface temperature in the Baltic Sea in 2018

6J.11 The Meeting took note that the following updated BSEFS are ready to be published on the HELCOM webpage:

- Wave climate in the Baltic Sea
- Bacterial plankton growth in Bothnian Bay and Bothnian Sea

Agenda Item 7J Progress of relevant HELCOM expert groups and projects

Expert group on marine mammals

7J.1 The Meeting took note of the concern expressed by Germany relating to the growing willingness in several Contracting Parties to grant more licenses for the shooting of seals (grey seals, ringed seals and harbor seals) and that the number of illegally hunted and by-caught seals could be higher than previously assumed. The latter clearly contradicting obligations under the HELCOM Recommendation on the Protection of Seals (Rec. 27/28-2) and that as long as a PAL has not been identified it remains unclear if licensed killing contradicts to the seal Recommendation.

7J.2 The Meeting took note that the Finnish licenses have not changed and the number of hunted grey seals is lower than the quota. On average only 20% of the allocated quota is used.

7J.3 The Meeting took note that Sweden currently has a government assignment to analyze the effect of ecosystem-based hunting and possibly increases hunting quotas of seals.

7J.4 The Meeting considered the draft Terms of Reference of the EG MAMA (document 7J-6) and invited the EG to:

- to discuss how a Precautionary Approach Level for the individual seal populations (Management Units) or something similar can be modelled or otherwise determined (e.g. by expert assessment). If a separate project is required for this purpose, a project description should be drawn up;
- discuss how knowledge about the partially unknown occurrence and birthplaces of grey seals can be improved
- re-examine if seal populations are adequately protected by HELCOM and Natura 2000 MPAs
- present figures on seal abundances in tabular form, to be included in the HELCOM biodiversity database, and population trend curves for all management units to be presented on the HELCOM website,
- look into the possibility to define the share of the population in national waters,
- come up with a proposal to further the knowledge on parasites in grey seals, the interaction with fish (including cod) and the possible effects on fisheries,
- collect and collate more precise information on illegal killing and bycatch of marine mammals.

and agreed on the ToR with these clarifications and additions.

7J.5 The Meeting noted the information by the EU that a process is ongoing to review the reporting under Habitats Directive, Birds Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive in order to bring the three processes closer together, with the intention of in the long term having one assessment covering the requirements for all three directives.

7J.6 The Meeting noted the view by Poland and Denmark on the increasing importance to consider seal-fisheries interactions and agreed to discuss seals-fisheries interactions at STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2020.

Expert network on Hazardous substances

7J.7 The Meeting took note of proceedings on exploring a way forward to address the munition and litter related releases of hazardous substances.

7J.8 The Meeting took note of a HELCOM questionnaire on indicators/methods on biological effects of hazardous substances (document 7J-3), as presented by Germany.

7J.9 The Meeting took note that the Contracting parties are invited to answer the questionnaire, in the form of a word document, and sent it to Mr. Owen Rowe (owen.rowe@helcom.fi) and Ms. Berit Brockmeyer (berit.brockmeyer@bsh.de) by **15 November 2019**.

Phytoplankton Expert Group (PEG)

7J.10 The Meeting took note of the report of HELCOM Phytoplankton Expert group (PEG) meeting, which took place on 8-12 April 2019 in Daugavpils, Latvia (document 7J-7, **Presentation 4**), as presented by Ms. Iveta Jurgensone, Chair of the group.

7J.11 The Meeting took note that HOD 56-2019 approved the revised project proposal for Quality assurance of phytoplankton monitoring in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM PEG QA) 2020-2022. The Meeting further took note of how the project plan outlines the work of the group regarding HELCOM indicators (document 7J-9).

7J.12 The Meeting welcomed the work planned on indicators under PEG.

7J.13 The Meeting took note of the final report of the HELCOM PEG for Quality assurance of phytoplankton monitoring in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM PEG QA) project which took place 2017-2019 (document 7J-1).

7J.14 The Meeting noted the comment by Poland that the task is appreciated by Polish experts in the Water Framework Directive Ecostat group – harmonisation PegBioVolume dictionary with CEN standard EN 16695:2015.

Expert Group on Sturgeon Remediation (EG STUR)

7J.15 The Meeting took note that HOD 56-2019 considered the draft Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Expert Group on Sturgeon Remediation (EG STUR) and approved the establishment of the HELCOM Sturgeon EG. A HELCOM website is now available.

7J.16 The Meeting took note of the Activity Report and the workplan resulting from the first meeting of the Expert Group on Sturgeon Remediation under HELCOM State & Conservation (EG STUR) 2019 as presented by Germany (document 7J-8). The Meeting noted that Mr. Jörn Gessner has been elected as Chair of the Group and CPs have been invited to nominate national contacts take part in the group. The next meeting will be convened on 23-25 January 2020 in Berlin, Germany.

7J.17 The Meeting noted that draft text regarding sturgeon to be proposed to be included in the update BSAP has been circulated to the State and Conservation contacts and suggested that the text be converted into a synopsis and submitted as proposals for new actions for the updated BSAP.

7J.18 The Meeting noted that the Action Plan for the protection and recovery of Sturgeon will be translated into Polish in order to improve the dialogue with national fishermen on the Action Plan with the aim to be able to obtain feedback concerning observations and bycatch of released sturgeon individuals. Poland further requested also other countries to consider translation of the action plan into national languages to enhance knowledge on the Baltic Sturgeon Remediation Programme in the Baltic Sea.

HELCOM-Baltic Earth Expert Network on Climate Change

7J.19 The Meeting took note of the outcome of the first physical meeting of EN CLIME (EN CLIME 3-2019), which took place on 19 August in Stockholm, Sweden, and the draft key messages for primary parameters, as presented by the Secretariat (document 7J-11).

7J.20 The Meeting recalled that the terms ‘primary’ and ‘secondary parameter’ will not be used in the final product of the group.

7J.21 The Meeting took note of an overview of expertise within EN CLIME (document 7J-2) and the list of secondary parameters for the Climate Change Fact Sheet.

7J.22 The Meeting noted the comment by Germany to include EN EUTRO under the expertise for acidification.

7J.23 The Meeting urged the Contracting Parties to nominate experts to the work under secondary parameters to fill the identified gaps in the expertise of EN CLIME by **28 October 2019** to the Secretariat (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi).

Expert Network on Benthic Habitats

7J.24 The Meeting took note of progress regarding the workshop on habitat and biotope mapping, which will take place on 12-13 November 2019, back to back with the EN BENTHIC meeting, in Helsinki, Finland. The Meeting took note that the Contracting Parties are invited to nominate experts to take part in the event.

Network for Marine Protected Areas Management (EN MPA MANET)

7J.25 The Meeting took note that HOD 56-2019 approved the amended Terms of Reference of the Network for Marine Protected Areas Management (EN MPA MANET) and that the network held its first workshop since establishing the Terms of Reference in the form of a Management Workshop hosted by Finland in September 2019.

7J.26 The Meeting took note of the report from the Second HELCOM MPA Management Workshop, as produced by the workshop facilitator (document 7J-10).

7J.27 The Meeting took note of topics proposed by the MPA managers taking part in the Second HELCOM MPA Management workshop on topics for future work of the HELCOM MPA Management Network (EN MANET) (document 7J-12).

7J.28 The Meeting noted that Estonia is exploring the possibility to host the next meeting of MPA MANET possibly to be organized in September 2020.

Projects

ZEN

7J.29 The Meeting took note of initial plans to develop a project proposal for a new zooplankton project related to indicators and the needs identified for HOLAS III and welcomed the information that the intention is to have a proposal ready for consideration at STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2020.

HOLAS III

7J.30 The Meeting took note of the preliminary overall timeline and the proposed tentative steps (document 7J-4, **Presentation 5**), as presented by the Secretariat.

7J.31 The Meeting took note of the clarification by the Secretariat that while effort has been made to try to improve on challenges identified under HOLASII the plan for HOLAS III needs to be elaborated within the framework delineated by the BSAP and the other international commitments (such as the MSFD) and in accordance with the needs outlined by the Contracting Parties. This places some limitations on how dynamic the HOLAS III process can be and necessitates that some trade-offs be considered early in the process. It also sets hard deadlines which need to be met in order to optimize the added value and to make full use of the HOLAS III work.

7J.32 Overall the Meeting welcomed the early planning and that effort has been made to incorporate the input received during and following HOLAS II.

7J.33 The Meeting considered the proposal to include 2016 in the assessment period for HOLAS III. The Meeting invited GEAR to clarify possible issue with reporting 2016 data to the EU Commission twice, both as regards MSFD requirements and as regards possible technical challenges. The Meeting also asked that the effect on the assessment of including the same year twice be explored during the assessment process.

7J.34 The Meeting stressed that for several topics included in the assessment it is highly challenging that data can be delivered with only one years time lag and that this could result in 2021 being a data weak year, a possible trade off which needs to be considered when agreeing on the structure of the assessment. A detailed analysis, based on national data streams and ICES and HELCOM procedure, is needed to identify for which parameters it will be difficult to report data in time for the assessment in 2022. The result of the analysis will be presented at STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2020 and possible solution discussed. A detailed plan for the assessment should be produced for every thematic assessment.

7J.35 The Meeting supported that the minimum requirement for supporting information needed for data reporting to e.g. ICES needs to be clearly identified and communicated prior to data reporting taking place in order to speed up the reporting.

7J.36 The Meeting highlighted the importance of ensuring that the HOLASIII results are available for the Contracting Parties also being EU member states to support their national MSFD reporting process, and to the extent possible ensure that the processes doesn't necessitate national experts repeating the assessments at regional and national scale.

7J.37 The Meeting took note of the information by the EU that the reporting needs for the MSFD article 8 reporting are to be defined earlier on in the process and took note of the offer to present the current proposal for reporting at GEAR 21-2019. The Meeting took note of the proposal by the EU to bring the issue of the time period for assessments to WG GES in an effort to come up with a common approach.

7J.38 The Meeting endorsed the proposal of the preparatory phase for HOLAS III outlined in the preliminary plan. The Meeting agreed that for the assessment phase 6 years of data is needed, and agreed not to include data earlier than 2016, meaning that data until minimum 2021 will be needed for the assessment.

7J.39 The Meeting was of the opinion that the results from the indicator evaluations and the integrated assessments should be approved in separate, consecutive processes.

7J.40 The Meeting agreed to forward the proposed project structure and timeline to GEAR 21- 2019 for further discussion with the intention to submit a preliminary plan and project structure to HOD 57-2019 for approval. The Meeting invited the Secretariat and co-chairs of State & Conservation to communicate the discussion in State and Conservation to GEAR 21-2019.

7J.41 The Meeting welcomed the project proposal for the HELCOM Data Flow project (Document 7J-5, **presentation 6**) and invited the Secretariat to include in the gap analysis alignment with MSFD descriptors, to clearly distinguish between cumulative impact indicator (CumI) and BSPI/BSII, and to include a mapping of BSPI datasets to MSFD criteria/descriptor. The Meeting also recommended to include in the outputs of the project concrete recommendations to State & Conservation on modifications of reporting requirements. The Meeting took note of the comment by Estonia that the project would carry resource implication nationally.

7J.42 The Meeting took note of the need to secure co-funding from the Contracting Parties for the project.

7J.43 The Meeting in principle endorsed the proposal for HELCOM Data Flow project. The Meeting agreed to send the proposal to GEAR 21-2019 for endorsement, with the intention to submit to HOD 57-2019 for approval.

7J.44 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to consider the possibility to provide national funding for the work.

Strategic discussion on EGs

7J.45 The Meeting discussed a more strategic approach to the expert level work and associated expert groups.

7J.46 The Meeting took note of the preliminary overview of the topics to be covered under the work of State and Conservation WG and the currently available expertise, as well as a proposed outline of how existing Expert Groups could be modified to better fulfill the assessments needs under HELCOM (presentation 7). discussed a more strategic approach to the expert level work and associated expert groups.

7J.47 The Meeting acknowledged that the aim is not to by default establish more groups but to ensure that the correct experts are available for the needed tasks.

7J.48 The Meeting welcomed the information that Sweden can prepare an information document to be used as a basis for further discussion at STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2020, outlining a plan for how the

EGs could be restructured to be better involved in HOLAS III process, to be made available to the Contracting Parties by the end of January.

Agenda Item 8J [Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan \(BSAP\) and associated activities](#)

8J.1 The Meeting [took note](#) of the progress on the BSAP update activities and the analysis of sufficiency of measures, including the planned workshops and sessions to support the SOM analysis related to biodiversity as presented by the Secretariat (document 8J-4, **Presentation 8**).

8J.2 The Meeting [took note](#) of the upcoming workshops to support the SOM analysis for fish (4-6 November 2019, Warsaw Poland) and benthic habitats (14 November 2019, Helsinki Finland).

8J.3 The Meeting [took note](#) of the planned technical review of synopses on potential new HELCOM actions to take place at the next meeting of the Working Group, and that guidance for the review will be prepared in advance of the meeting. The Meeting [took note](#) of the proposed dates for thematic BSAP UP workshops, and that a biodiversity related workshop is to take place during the week 25-29 May 2020 (dates tbd).

Guidance and validation of work under the SOM Platform (work plan activity 2.5)

8J.4 The Meeting [took note](#) of the plan for validation of data and information what will be used in the SOM model (document 8J-4, Annex 2). The Meeting [noted](#) that while the expert networks provide the data for the analysis, the responses are provided by individual experts or consolidated national responses and that expert networks are also involved in reviewing the combined outcome before submission to HELCOM Working Groups.

8J.5 The Meeting [proposed](#) that EN Benthic should be involved in the expert-based contributions and validation with regard to physical loss and disturbance to benthic habitats and also [noted](#) that State and Conservation Working Group will be involved in the validation of data on this topic.

8J.6 The Meeting [noted](#) that the Maritime Group has been requested to nominate experts on measures to control introductions of non-indigenous species to participate in the evaluation of effectiveness of measures related to the NIS (para 3.29, Maritime 19-2019).

8J.7 The Meeting [noted](#) that with regard to eutrophication a data-based approach will be used as far as possible in the SOM analysis while for estimating effectiveness of measures for agriculture a survey-based approach, similar as for other topics, will likely be used. The matter will be further discussed at Pressure 11-2019.

8J.8 The Meeting [recalled](#) the approach for the analysis of sufficiency of measures (**Presentation 9**) and took note of the expert-based surveys that have been developed to contribute with information on effectiveness of measures and the link between reduction in pressures and improvement in the state of the environment. The Meeting [took note](#) that for all biodiversity related topics the surveys are introduced at workshops or sessions of planned HELCOM meetings.

8J.9 The Meeting [noted](#) the information from the Secretariat that workshops on mammals and birds, held 26-27 September and 3 October 2019 respectively, have received substantial and valuable feedback from participants. The feedback will result in a revision of the surveys and experts will have the possibility to respond to the revised surveys online before end of the year. The organization of the workshops has also been revised to allow participants to review the surveys and underlying background information during the workshops and provide their final responses to the surveys at a later stage.

8J.10 The Meeting [took note](#) that national experts from Germany and Denmark that attended the workshop on mammals and birds were critical on how they were arranged. The Meeting also [noted](#) that no outcome of the workshop has been prepared yet but will be so in the near future.

8J.11 The Meeting considered the proposal to use same data and approach as in the HOLAS II project to estimating loss and disturbance to the seabed from human activities (document 8J-10). The Meeting took note that due to the late submission of the document Denmark, Germany and Poland was not in a position to agree on the approach. The Meeting took note that Sweden supported the use of data as it has already been agreed for use in HELCOM HOLAS II. The Meeting noted the comment by the EU that given the project timeline and the inherent uncertainties of the analysis, the proposal in document 8J-10 should not be rejected in the pursuit of ideal data. The Meeting also took note of the clarification by the secretariat that the baseline for the SOM analysis is 2016, coinciding with the latest indicator evaluations carried out to support HOLAS II.

8J.12 The Meeting agreed that countries will provide comments to document 8J-10 by **6 November 2019** (luke.dodd@helcom.fi) and, as necessary, to arrange an online meeting (proposed for the **8 November 2019**) to discuss potential deviating comments before the workshop of EN Benthic which will be held **14 November 2019**. Proposed date for the online meeting will be circulated by the Secretariat.

8J.13 The Meeting agreed that validation of additional input to the SOM analyses by State and Conservation, as outlined in document 8-4, Annex 2, will take place through correspondence. The Meeting noted that the intersessional validation step is likely to be set up in December 2019 since it needs to take place before the implementation of the SOM analyses which will be carried out in early 2010.

Review and guidance of activities under the HELCOM ACTION project

8J.14 The Meeting took note of the update from ACTION Project WP2: Impacts on the seabed as presented by the Secretariat (document 8J-2), noted the following comments or questions raised, and agreed that the information should be communicated to the relevant project partners:

- Does the compilation of restoration measures take into account climate change? Can it be addressed in this compilation?
- Are restoration measures in the watershed also considered or only measures targeted towards the marine area?
- Are the restoration measures only active or also passive?
- The WP2 report could also consider the output of ICES Workshop WKTRADE2.
- Poland and Finland asked about the underlying data behind the DISPLACE work, as presence of certain fishing activities in their waters was unexpected (e.g. bottom trawling).
- A question was also raised as to the scale of assessment units, and any fishing activity in a square, as this may be an important discussion point if the approach is to be applied to management.

8J.15 The Meeting noted that WP2 will next be discussed at the EN BENTHIC Meeting and that further comments can be submitted to the Secretariat (owen.rowe@helcom.fi) by **14 November 2019**.

8J.16 The Meeting took note of the update from ACTION Project WP3 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as presented by the Secretariat (document 8J-3), including the approach to develop an initial approach with the selection criteria applied (e.g. species criteria), agreed on an extended deadline of **4 November** for filling in the questionnaire for those CPs which have not yet done so and noted the following comments or questions raised:

- Germany informed that there is an error for one of the selected German MPAs (Westliche Roennebank) and information was taken from the EEA database (i.e. the selected MPA does not have a management plan). Germany has checked that the information in the HELCOM MPA database is correct.

- Germany asked for clarification on whether the approach covers the effectiveness of MPA management or the effective implementation of plans. It was clarified that at this initial step it considers effective implementation of management plans as a proxy for management effectiveness. The current approach has been developed based on the information currently available on MPA management and should be seen as a proof of concept which can be further developed or expanded on.

8J.17 The Meeting took note of the update from ACTION Project WP5 Conditions that influence the achievement of GES as presented by the Work Package (WP) lead, Mr. Urmars Lips (document 8J-5), and noted the following comments or questions raised:

- Denmark informed that they may provide comments to the project in relation to mercury.
- The WP lead clarified that the WP only explores issues related to natural conditions and the exceptions applied by HELCOM Contracting Parties that are also EU Member States on that basis.
- The WP lead informed that the major basis of the analysis will be from published information (e.g. research) and that the aspects related to climate change will also be evaluated using a modelling approach.
- The WP lead clarified that a final report will be developed by the end of the year, discussed at the next project partner meeting, and subsequently supplied to the spring 2020 meeting of State and Conservation

8J.18 The Meeting took note of the invitation to provide further comments, particularly related to the summary of exceptions used for natural conditions, to the Secretariat (owen.rowe@helcom.fi) by **14 November** at the latest.

Finalization of proposal on ecological and management objectives for the updated BSAP (work plan activity 2.2)

8J.19 The Meeting took note of the review and revision of HELCOM objectives for the updated BSAP (document 8J-7, **Presentation 10**), considered the proposal to revise the goal for the biodiversity segment and agreed on the following goal 'Baltic Sea ecosystems are healthy and resilient'.

8J.20 The Meeting recalled the task to review existing HELCOM objectives and develop new ones for a set of additional topics as outline in the work plan for the BSAP update (activity 2-2). Proposal on revised and new objectives are to be presented for endorsement at HOD 57-2019.

8J.21 The Meeting took note of the adjustment of segments and goals of the Baltic Sea Action Plan to be used as a basis for Working Groups as provisionally agreed by HOD 56-2019 (document 8J-7).

8J.22 The Meeting took note that the co-chairs of State and Conservation, Denmark, and the Secretariat has amended and proposed new biodiversity objectives and objectives for loss and disturbance since the previous meeting of the Group.

8J.23 The Meeting discussed the proposal to revise the goal of the biodiversity segment and agreed to propose as a new goal "Baltic Sea ecosystems are healthy and resilient".

8J.24 The Meeting discussed the proposal ecological and management objectives for biodiversity and agreed to revise them as follows:

Ecological objectives:

- a. Viable populations of all native species
- b. Natural distribution, occurrence and quality of habitats and associated communities

- c. Functional, healthy and resilient food webs

Management objectives:

- a. An effectively managed and ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas
- b. Ecosystem-based planning throughout the Baltic Sea
- c. Minimized disturbance of species, their habitats, and migration routes by human activities,
- d. Effective and coordinated conservation plans and-or measures for threatened species, habitats, biotopes, and biotope complexes
- e.
- f. Human induced mortality including hunting, fishing, and incidental bycatch does not threaten the viability of Baltic sea life.

8J.25 The Meeting discussed an additional management objective on foodwebs (Pressures affecting foodwebs are reduced or prevented) however this was not finalized.

The Meeting agreed to come back to this issue at the intersessional meeting of State and Conservation to be held on the **8 November 2019**, and invited Denmark to distribute the alternative wording for the management objective for foodwebs to State and Conservation contacts prior to the intersessional meeting.

8J.26 The Meeting discussed whether the ecological objective on Viable population of all species should include a list of species group as proposed in document 8J-1. The Meeting agreed to delete the list, for the purpose of making the objective shorter and more straightforward. The Meeting however proposed to clarify to HELCOM HOD that all species are to be addressed under the objective.

8J.27 The Meeting noted that the proposed management objective “Ecosystem based planning through the Baltic Sea” will be brought forward to HELCOM VASAB-MSP 19-2019. The Meeting also noted that the objective in its current form will possibly be placed under the segment of sea-based activities since Maritime Spatial Planning will be linked to this segment according to the provisional agreement on the BSAP structure by HOD 56-2019.

8J.28 The Meeting furthermore agreed that the proposed objective “The food web is assessed holistically as an interconnected system” should not be pursued as an objective but could be considered for development as an HELCOM action.

8J.29 The Meeting discussed different option to the term “wild-life” which at GEAR 20-2019 was proposed to be substituted with a word that better reflects the whole ecosystem, including microbial life. Different options were discussed including marine life, brackish life, Baltic Sea life, biodiversity, or species. The Meeting agreed to propose either “Baltic Sea biodiversity” or “Baltic Sea life” but needs more time to decide on which term to use and noting that the term will be used in objectives related to hazardous substances, marine litter and underwater noise.

8J.30 The Meeting considered that the ecological objectives for physical loss and disturbance to the seabed should be associated to activities and agreed on the following proposals:

- Seabased activities affecting benthic habitats do not threaten the viability of species and communities

8J.31 The Meeting proposed that the management objectives for physical loss and disturbance should not be linked to specific activities and also to avoid the use of the term “sustainable”. The Meeting agreed to propose the following management objective:

- Reduce, prevent and mitigate pressure and impacts from activities that are causing loss and disturbance to the seabed

8J.32 The Meeting noted that the Secretariat will communicate the proposals related to loss and disturbance to the seabed to Pressure 11-2019.

8J.33 The Meeting discussed the use of the word “natural” in the objectives with some participants being of the view that it could be interpreted synonymous to a pristine condition which is not achievable. Others felt that it is a word that reflects the aspiration of HELCOM work in simple terms. It was furthermore noted that it is the HELCOM indicators and associated threshold values that define when the objectives have been achieved. The Meeting agreed to maintain the word ‘natural’ in HELCOM objectives but proposed that the use and meaning of the term should be reflected in documentation associated to the development of the objectives.

HELCOM Science Agenda

8J.34 The Meeting took note of the input received by 13 October from subsidiary bodies to the HELCOM Science Agenda (8J-6 rev 1, 8J-6 Att1 rev.1, **Presentation 11**). The Meeting took note that a Task Group has been established that will work further on the science agenda based on the input from the subsidiary bodies.

8J.35 The Meeting took note that some topics are poorly covered in the current proposals, e.g. migratory fish, coastal fish, phyto- and zooplankton, and requested the Secretariat to remind the relevant HELCOM expert network and projects that they are still welcome to contribute to the survey. The Meeting also noted that proposals related to hydrographic changes are missing.

8J.36 The Meeting noted that TG MPA has submitted proposals to the science agenda and that the secretariat will update the survey and circulate the updated version to the State and Conservation.

8J.37 The Meeting agreed to submit proposals on additional knowledge and research needs by the Secretariat by **15 November 2019** (ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi) and that a consolidated compilation will be made available to the State and Conservation Group by 30 November and thereafter submitted to the first meeting of the Task Group for the Science agenda.

Existing HELCOM actions; follow-up of progress, continued work on tentative rephrasing (work plan activity 1.1) and Continued work to concretize agreements from HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2018 (work plan activity 2.4)

8J.38 The Meeting recalled the task for Working Groups to 1) consider tentative needs for rephrasing of existing HELCOM actions that are not likely implemented by 2021 2) to develop concrete actions to follow-up the HELCOM 2018 Ministerial Declaration and 3) to consider development of concrete actions based on previous commitments that have not been possible to follow-up due to lack of targets (activities 1.1 and 2.4 of the workplan for the BSAP update).

8J.39 The Meeting noted that documents 8J-1 rev.1 summarizes the discussions held so far on all the three tasks to facilitate an overview of the topics addressed. The Meeting noted that proposals on how to follow-up on the 2018 Ministerial Declaration is expected to be presented at HOD 57-2019 while the possible rephrasing of existing actions from the BSAP and Ministerial Declarations 2010 and 2013 is to be completed by State and Conservation 12-2020. All proposals from the Working Groups will however be presented for information and tentative guidance by HOD 57-2019.

8J.40 The Meeting agreed to organize an evening session on the topic.

8J.41 The Meeting discussed the current proposals as included in document 8J-1 and after reviewing the proposals the Meeting agreed that due to the large number of actions, and limited time to provide input, all the actions are to be considered “work in progress”.

8J.42 The Meeting agreed on a lead country approach, to further develop the proposals, for all the actions listed in the document, as indicated in Annex 3.

8J.43 The Meeting agreed on the following timeline to finalize the proposals:

- a. Contracting parties are to provide final confirmation to the Secretariat (jannica.haldin@helcom.fi) on their role as lead by **8 November 2019**,
- b. after which Contracting Parties are invited to submit input to the proposals by **13 December 2019** to the Secretariat (jannica.haldin@helcom.fi).
- c. The Secretariat will collate the proposals and submit them to the leads by the **19 December 2019**.
- d. The leads will provide proposals for concrete actions and measures, including target years etc., to the Secretariat (jannica.haldin@helcom.fi) by **28 February 2020**.
- e. The Secretariat will collate the proposals and submit them for review and approval to the online meeting of State and Conservation planned to take place on the **17 March 2020**.

8J.44 The Meeting noted that text proposals should at this time only focus on the concrete action. How the drafting of the text BSAP will take place will be discussed at HOD 57.

8J.45 The Meeting took note of the proposal by Germany that links of proposed actions and MSFD descriptors should be included in future documents.

Reporting on HELCOM Recommendations (work plan activity 2.3).

8J.46 The Meeting took note of the level of implementation for the Recommendations under State and Conservation (document 8J-8) and noted the following comment by Sweden regarding Rec 37/2: the fact that there are currently many different possible aggregation rules, makes reporting on the Recommendation complicated.

Synopses on potential new HELCOM actions

8J.47 The Meeting took note of the proposal on an action for the updated BSAP as proposed by CCB with the title “Establish an effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected system of highly protected marine protected areas (MPAs), covering a minimum of 30 % of the Baltic Sea area by 2030. All MPAs shall include fully closed zones (complying with IUCN 1a category) or be fully closed in their entirety, depending on the conservation objectives and needs of the specific site” (document 8J-9).

8J.48 The Meeting noted the proposal, however due to its late submission is not prepared to discuss the proposal in any detailed. The Meeting agreed to come back to the proposal at the next meeting of the Working Group.

Agenda Item 9J Future work

9J.1. The Meeting took note of the upcoming tasks as outlined in the working group work plan. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to include a column in the tables outline progress (or lack thereof) and to come back to planning future work at STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2019.

9J.2. The Meeting considered and discussed the proposed approach to update HELCOM frame on hazardous substances including functioning as background for the relevant segment of BSAP (document 9J-1). The Meeting agreed to provide comments to the plan to the Secretariat (jannica.haldin@helcom.fi) by **19 November 2019**, to be forwarded to the Pressure WG.

Agenda Item 10J Any other business

UN

10J.1 The Meeting took note of the upcoming Our Oceans Conference taking place in Oslo 24-25 October 2019.

ICES

10J.2 The Meeting took note that HOD 56-2019 approved the arranging of one-day joint HELCOM-ICES online workshop focused on improving reporting and usability of data for the HELCOM COMBINE database on the 26 November 2019. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to encourage the relevant experts to register to the meeting through the registration survey available on the meeting site.

CBD

10J.3 The Meeting took note of information on the upcoming thematic consultations on marine and coastal biodiversity for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, taking place 13-15 November 2019 in Montreal, Canada (link to document 2N-3).

UNEP

10J.4 The Meeting took note of information on the 21st Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans which was co-hosted by HELCOM in Berlin on the 3-5 October.

STATE & CONSERVATION

10J.5 The Meeting took note of the information by Estonia that from the 1st October 2019, the procedure for marine research permits issued to foreign researchers for marine scientific research in Estonian territorial sea or exclusive economic zone was amended by a new Water Act. Since the 1st of October 2019, the Ministry of the Environment is issuing marine research permits to foreign research bodies instead of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Foreign marine science researchers can apply for a research permit directly from the Ministry of the Environment (keskkonnaministerium@envir.ee). More detailed information available: <https://www.envir.ee/en/news/amendment-procedure-marine-research-permits-1-october-2019>.

10J.6 The Meeting took note of information on progress regarding the arranging of one-day extra session of State and Conservation Monitoring 27 November 2019 focusing on the reporting on and update of the monitoring programmes.

10J.7 The Meeting took note that the session will take place back to back with a BONUS workshop for the FUMARI, SEAM and INTEGRAL projects, and welcomed the information that State and Conservation representatives are welcome to join the workshop.

10J.8 The Meeting took note of the information by the EU that an advanced draft of reporting guidance for Article 11 reporting is available and will be made available to the STATE&CONSERVATION 11ME-2020 meeting.

10J.9 The Meeting took note of the list of contacts and observers of the Working Group (document 10J-1 rev.1). The Meeting took note that updates and changes to the list should be provided to the Secretariat in writing (laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi), and that Germany, Denmark, Lithuania and CCB will provide amendments.

10J.10 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to confirm the process for including further contacts to the list of contacts for State and Conservation, specifically whether nomination of new contacts need to be done by the respective HOD or by the official State and Conservation representative.

10J.11 The Meeting took note of the comment by Germany that there is a need to clarify how HELCOM refers to experts in the Expert Group outcomes, specifically whether experts should be referred to by name or by the respective Contracting Party and invited the Secretariat to clarify this.

10J.12 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to, for future meetings of the State and Conservation WG, provide numbering of the known documents already in the first version of the annotated agenda, and noted that this might result in gaps in the numbering of the submitted documents.

10J.13 The Meeting took note of the information by Estonia that they will confirm hosting STATE & CONSERVATION 12-2020, which will take place on 11-15 May 2020, in early 2020.

10J.14 The Meeting agreed that STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020 will be held 5-9 October 2020 and welcomed the information that Sweden will explore the possibility to host the meeting.

Agenda Item 11J Outcome of the Joint themes

11J.1 The Meeting adopted the outcome of the Joint theme and noted that the outcome will be available (together with outcome of the nature conservation theme) at the STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019 Meeting Site, together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting.

Nature conservation

Agenda Item 1N Adoption of the Agenda: Nature conservation

1N.1 The Meeting adopted Agenda items 1N-7N as contained in document 1-2.

Agenda Item 2N Matters of relevance for the Meeting and information from the Secretariat

2N.1 The Meeting took note of the [HELCOM biodiversity database](#) which is now publicly available, as presented by the Secretariat. The Meeting took note that new data can be submitted to the database at any time.

2N.2 The Meeting took note of the workplan for the State & Conservation Working Group 2019-2020 (document 2N-1, presentation N1). The Meeting took note that Germany has comments to the tasks agreed on in the workplan, including the section for the Joint session. The Meeting agreed that the document will be submitted also to the next State & Conservation Meeting, at which point the German comments can be included.

2N.3 The Meeting took note of information that regarding Workplan action number 6.6. on ecosystem restoration, a post-2020 workshop on habitat restoration is planned, and that the topic has also been discussed at the Nature Directors meeting under the EU Commission, which could potentially be used to inform future discussion in State and Conservation WG. The Meeting further noted that this is also highlighted in the global forum through the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration.

2N.4 The Meeting took note of information on the upcoming thematic consultations on marine and coastal biodiversity for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which will take place 13-15 November 2019 in Montreal, Canada (document 2N-3).

2N.5 The Meeting took note of the contribution by HELCOM to the consolidated input by the regional seas to the thematic consultations as coordinated by UNEP (document 2N-2).

Agenda Item 3 Development and implementation of Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 15/1 PROTECTION OF THE COASTAL STRIP

3N.1 The Meeting took note that the latest national reporting has been undertaken in 2019 as part of the BSAP update process, and that the next scheduled reporting will take place in 2025.

RECOMMENDATION 16/3 PRESERVATION OF NATURAL COASTAL DYNAMICS

3N.2 The Meeting took note of the results of the reporting for the Recommendation 16/3 as presented by Denmark (document 3N-9). The Meeting took note that the reporting was also considered in document 8J-8 under the joint session.

3N.3 The Meeting took note that Germany has provided amendments to the reporting on the Recommendation to the Secretariat and Latvia will also provide further comments, to be incorporated by Lead Country Denmark.

RECOMMENDATION 17/2 PROTECTION OF HARBOUR PORPOISE IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA

3N.4 The Meeting took note of the input from EG MAMA 13-2019 on the revision of the Recommendation 17/2 (document 3N-3), as presented by Katarzyna Kaminska, Poland. The Meeting further revised and commented the Recommendation as provided in document 3N-3 rev.1 and agreed to submit the revised Recommendation to HOD 57-2019 for approval with intention of submitting it to HELCOM 41-2020 for adoption.

3N.5 The Meeting discussed the following reference to the Baltic Sea Plan: “By 2015 by-catch of harbour porpoise, seals, waterbirds and non-target species has been significantly reduced with the aim to reach by-catch rates close to zero”. The Meeting agreed that when rephrasing the action for inclusion in the updated BSAP an updated target year should be included and agreed on the target year of 2026 at the latest.

a. Follow-up of action ‘avoiding by-catches of harbour porpoises, particularly following the recommendations of ASCOBANS and the ASCOBANS Jastarnia Plan’

3N.6 The Meeting took note of the follow up on ACTION project WP1 on bycatch as presented by the Secretariat (document 3N-4).

3N.7 The Meeting took note that Poland will strive to provide data also from small coastal fishing vessels in Polish waters to the project.

3N.8 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the Joint OSPAR-HELCOM Workshop on Bycatch indicator development as presented under the Joint Session (paragraph 3J.25).

3N.9 The Meeting took note of a comment from Poland, that the OSPAR/HELCOM Bycatch workshop will, in addition to the workshop outcome, produce a technical report building on the background document prepared for the workshop. The Meeting took note of comment from Poland that it would be good if also the ACTION project WP 1 products could be included in the technical report.

3N.10 The Meeting took note of the concerns by CCB, Birdlife International and NABU with regards to NATO mine clearance exercise and its impact on harbor porpoise in the Marine Protected Area Fehmarn Belt, as presented by Sven Koschinski (document 3N-17, presentation N2).

3N.11 The Meeting took note that the mine clearance took place in the German EEZ nature reserve Fehmarn Belt (at the same time a N2000 site and a HELCOM MPA). The Meeting took note of and discussed a presentation and video footage on effects of the NATO mine clearing exercises on the seafloor and associated species, as presented by Germany.

3N.12 The Meeting took note of a comment from Poland, that harbor porpoise carcasses have been observed stranded on the Polish coast, and the enquiry from Poland, whether CCB has heard of any increased strandings after the mine clearings. The Meeting took note that due to weather conditions during the mine clearance events, it is unlikely that carcasses resulting from the mine clearance exercise would have washed up on the German coast. The Meeting took note that Poland will check the possibility to provide CCB with further information on the Polish strandings with national experts

3N.13 The Meeting further took note of a question by Germany, if other countries have had similar NATO experiences in their national waters, as the NATO mine sweeping of the remaining mines from second world war concerns the entire Baltic Sea area and invited the Contracting parties to provide information on this at STATE&CONSERVATION 13-2020.

b. Follow-up of action ‘take action in close co-operation with ASCOBANS and ICES’

3N.14 The Meeting took note of the increased cooperation between HELCOM, ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS and ICES in relation to work on the bycatch indicator.

RECOMMENDATION 27-28/2 CONSERVATION OF SEALS IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA

3N.15 The Meeting took note of the following national work relevant for the Recommendation 27-28/2:

- Finland has returned to yearly surveys of grey seals after one-year gap in 2018. monitoring of the southern ringed seal populations is dependent on the ice conditions.

- Swedish government has issued a government assignment to explore changing the hunting ordinance from protected hunting to licensed hunting for grey seals as a political initiative to reduce conflicts in relation to seals. Sweden will report back on the issue in autumn 2020 State & Conservation Meeting.

3N.16 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of HELCOM workshop on seal – fisheries interactions, which took place 27 June, back to back with HELCOM FISH 10-2019 meeting.

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

3N.17 The Meeting recalled that in State & Conservation 10-2019, the question was raised whether reporting on the recommendation could be split with HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

3N.18 After consideration, the Meeting agreed to for the time being keep the Recommendation 34E/1 under State & Conservation.

a) *Follow-up on action 'Compile and exchange information on existing, on-going as well as planned developments for wind energy facilities and wave energy installations well as on migration routes and staging areas of birds'*

3N.19 The Meeting considered the proposals of the State & Conservation online meeting (23 September) for further work on identifying migration routes and staging areas of migrating seabirds (document 3N-5) and agreed that a Migratory birds correspondence group should be established, preferably as a subgroup to JWG Bird.

3N.20 The Meeting took note that the Secretariat will contact the OSPAR and ICES Secretariats to ensure there are no barriers for establishing the subgroup under JWG BIRD. The Meeting further took note that if barriers are encountered, the CG can be established directly under HELCOM.

3N.21 The Meeting took note that as a next step, Terms of Reference will be drafted and presented for review at STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2020 (Joint session).

3N.22 The Meeting welcomed the information that Germany, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Lithuania will explore the possibility to nominate experts for the work.

3N.23 The Meeting took note that the Secretariat has been approached by the UNEP Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) on the possibility for initiating cooperation with HELCOM regarding work on migratory birds.

3N.24 The Meeting took note of the information presented by Germany about the national surveys on seabirds and harbour porpoise and benthic habitats and communities (document 3N-15, presentation N3).

3N.25 The Meeting took note of an enquiry from Poland on the reliability of aerial monitoring of harbour porpoises. The Meeting took note that the survey method is suitable for higher densities of harbor porpoises, and for lower densities acoustic monitoring is used, mainly in eastern parts of German waters. The Meeting further took note that weather conditions affecting the likelihood of sightings are taken into account in aerial surveys, and counts done in bad weather conditions are excluded from the data.

3N.26 The Meeting took note of information by Denmark on comparative studies on survey methodology simultaneously using different survey methods, and invited Denmark to share the results when they are available.

3N.27 The Meeting took note that Finland is monitoring harbour porpoises with C-pods in the southern part of the archipelago sea and has annual detections.

RECOMMENDATION 35/1 SYSTEM OF COASTAL AND MARINE BALTIC SEA PROTECTED AREAS (HELCOM MPAs)

- 3N.28 The Meeting took note of information from Denmark that the process on designating additional MPAs in the waters around Bornholm and the North Sea and Skagerrak is progressing. The Meeting took note that Denmark has now identified a list of relevant species and habitats to include in the process (including HELCOM red-listed species/habitats), and that Denmark is now analysing the two waters including a connectivity to national and international MPAs and using MAXAN to identify relevant hotspots. The plan is to identify hotspots by the end of 2019. The Meeting further took note that in spring 2020 a socio economic analysis will be carried out.
- 3N.29 The Meeting considered the question of reporting frequency for the Recommendation 35/1 and agreed on 6 years frequency, with the next reporting taking place in 2021.
- 3N.30 The Meeting agreed that lead country Finland will develop a reporting template for reporting on the Recommendation, including a request to report on both for which MPAs management plans are available (which could be done through the MPA database), and on other measures. The Meeting invited Finland to submit a draft format to STATE&CONSERVATION 13-2020.
- 3N.31 The Meeting took note that Poland is working to have management plans implemented for most MPAs within the next few years.
- 3N.32 The Meeting took note of a suggestion for a MPA related proposal for LIFE 2020 call, as presented by the Secretariat (presentation N4).
- 3N.33 The Meeting recalled that STATE&CONSERVATION 10-2019 supported the idea of a MPA related project proposal for LIFE 2020 call and agreed that initial scoping for such a proposal should begin as early as possible, building on already existing or identified gaps in MPA work in the region.
- 3N.34 The Meeting convened a planning session on topics that could be included in the proposed MPA related project proposal for LIFE 2020 call and considered the possible scope and structure of the proposed project and acknowledged the importance of having a thought through objective.
- 3N.35 The Meeting discussed the duration of LIFE projects and took note that also long term projects (over 5 years) can be funded. The Meeting took note that the total costs of such project would be at least 1 million euros and that LIFE projects have a set upper limit for how much of the co-financing can be covered by time of existing experts. The Meeting acknowledged that the aim is to get good regional coverage and that HELCOM would be the coordinator of the planned project.
- 3N.36 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to further develop the structure and topics to be included and to share the plan for further input with TG MPA and State and Conservation early spring of 2020. The Meeting further invited the Secretariat to cross-check the identified topics against each country PAFs as well as against the the Nature Action Plan and the [N2000 Biogeographical Process Road map](#) for knowledge exchange and cooperation in the marine regions.
- 3N.37 The Meeting further considered that a prioritized list of topics will be useful to guide HELCOMs work irrespective of the project application.
- 3N.38 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the second MPA management workshop, including suggestions on how the MPA Management Network (MPA MANET) would provide most added value to the work of the managers in the Baltic Sea region (document 7J-12).

a) Follow-up of action 'reach goal of 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'

3N.39 The Meeting took note of the information on current status of management plans for MPAs as contained in the HELCOM MPA database, as well as current coverage of HELCOM Marine Protected Areas and Natura 2000 areas in the Baltic Sea region as presented by the Secretariat (document 3N-10).

3N.40 The Meeting took note that the lack of a coherent and topologically complete data set to be used in the analysis has presented a challenge. The Meeting considered that a data call for Contracting Parties to submit data layers with national borders and coastlines should be a first step. The Meeting also invited the Secretariat to a document outlining the on all encountered issues in more detail, including example maps to STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2020 (joint session) for further discussion.

3N.41 The Meeting took note of a comment by CCB, that the countries should aim to get MPA management plans implemented for all MPAs as soon as possible.

c) Follow-up of action 'ensure that HELCOM MPAs inter alia provide specific protection to those species, habitats, biotopes and biotope complexes included in the HELCOM Red Lists'

3N.42 The Meeting took note of the background information on the delineation of various classification schemes done under the SPICE project and the definitions for the MSFD broad habitat classes as proposed by Evans et al. in 2016 (document 3N-16). The Meeting took note that it is not fully clear why the offshore circalittoral and littoral classes have been excluded by the SPICE project, as they occur in the Baltic Sea, and further investigation is needed to clarify this.

3N.43 The Meeting agreed that as a next step the Secretariat will contact the authors of the relevant SPICE WP 4 report to try to clarify why the habitats in question were excluded and come back to this issue in the joint session in STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2020.

d) Follow-up of action 'ensure, when selecting new areas, that the network of HELCOM MPAs is ecologically coherent and takes into account connectivity between sites'

3N.44 The Meeting took note of the upcoming HELCOM workshop on habitat mapping, which will take place **12-13 November 2019** in Helsinki, Finland. The Meeting took note of information from Finland that the agenda for the workshop will soon be submitted. The Meeting encouraged Contracting Parties to nominate experts to attend the workshop and the meeting and took note of the information by Finland to book the hotel well in advance.

3N.45 The Meeting further took note that a questionnaire has been provide which will provide background material for the workshop, and further took note that the Secretariat will send a reminder to respond to the questionnaire to the Contracting Parties and workshop participants by **10 November 2019**. The Meeting recalled that the first workshop will look into the methods of mapping and monitoring and a second workshop, to take place in Uppsala, is planned to focus on the modelling and use of the data. The Meeting supported communication between those who produce and utilize the data is beneficial, and hence it is recommended that both producers and end-users take part to both workshops.

3N.46 The Meeting took note that the deadline for registering to the workshop is **6 November 2019**.

i) Follow-up of action 'update the management plans when necessary and in accordance with other legal requirements with a maximum of 12 years intervals'

3N.47 The Meeting took note of the updated summary of responses to the questionnaire on national frequency of review and update of HELCOM MPA management plans, including responses from Denmark (document 3N-11).

k) Follow-up of action 'assess the effectiveness of the management plans or measures of HELCOM MPAs by conducting monitoring, and where feasible scientific research programmes, which are directly connected to the conservation interests of HELCOM MPAs'

3N.48 The Meeting took note of the progress on analyzing sufficiency of MPAs as a measure under the ACTION project, and the questionnaire sent to the Contracting Parties related to this work. The Meeting took note that this is the first time this type of study is being tested, and that the work should be considered as proof of concept. The Meeting took note that the extended deadline for answering the questionnaire is **4 November 2019**.

l) Follow-up of action 'include HELCOM MPAs as areas of particular ecological significance in coastal and maritime spatial planning processes and incorporate their management provisions'

3N.49 The Meeting considered the maps on essential fish habitats in the Baltic Sea, produced by Pan Baltic Scope project (document 3N-6). The Meeting took note that the comments from Germany had not been taken into account in the update, and Denmark will provide comments

3N.50 The Meeting took note that Germany and the lead for the work package producing the maps will strive to find a solution for how to include German data bilaterally. The Meeting took note that Denmark and Germany placed a study reservation on the publication of the maps.

3N.51 The Meeting agreed on a four week review period of the maps and that any comments should be communicated directly to Lena Bergström (lena.bergstrom@helcom.fi).

m) Follow-up of action 'update, when necessary, HELCOM MPA related guidelines and guiding documents in order to keep them in line with new knowledge and compatible with other international criteria'

3N.52 The Meeting took note of the national EBSA process in Finland, referred to as EMMA, which is currently out for the final commenting round and should be available for use for planners in few weeks. The Meeting invited Finland to present how the work was received in STATE&CONSERVATION 13-2020.

3N.53 The Meeting took note of the proposed, amended list of pressures for the draft Guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation (document 3N-1), presented by Finland. The Meeting considered and further revised the list of pressures, as contained in document 3N-1 rev.1.

3N.54 The Meeting agreed on the list of pressures, and further invited Finland to continue updating the guidelines based on the revised list. The Meeting invited Finland to submit the draft of the guidelines and the list of pressures for review to State and Conservation Contacts prior to STATE&CONSERVATION 13-2020.

3N.55 The Meeting took note of proposals by MPA MANET on information to be included in the updated MPA management manual, as presented by the Secretariat (document 3N-7).

3N.56 The Meeting took note that Finland has received further specific comments from Germany on the MPA management manual.

3N.57 The Meeting agreed that, in the effort to ensure the manual remains up to date, information that by default has a limited timespan should preferably not be included in the manual. The Meeting considered that some of the topics proposed by MPA MANET could be better suited for guidelines associated with the manual than inclusion in the manual itself. The Meeting took note of comment from Poland that some of the issues, especially related to legislation could be solved by using existing tools, such as the [EU N2000 communication platform](#), which has a [dedicated marine section](#).

3N.58 The Meeting took note that Denmark finds the topics under measures and monitoring, as identified by the MPA managers, suitable for inclusion in the manual. The Meeting took note of comment from Sweden that social media could be replaced by public communication together with stakeholder communication, and also include in the manual a section on definitions of adaptive management and why it is important.

3N.59 The Meeting took note of a comment by CCB that it is important to include any existing assessments of management effectiveness in the manual, and that it would be useful to provide information for MPA managers on the case studies available for stakeholder interactions and any case studies evaluating management effectiveness.

3N.60 The Meeting took note that EU finds the conclusions of the MPA Management workshop, co-financed by the EU Biogeographical Process, useful to share also for a wider audience, as there are several crosscutting topics that concern MPA managers also outside the HELCOM area.

3N.61 The Meeting supported that the update of the manual, and possible associated guidelines, will be considered for inclusion in any future MPA projects.

3N.62 The Meeting took note of the updated version of MPA designation guidelines (document 3N-2). The Meeting further edited and commented the document as presented in document 3N-2 rev.1.

3N.63 The Meeting in principle agreed on the updated version of the guidelines, taking note that the comments from the meeting will be incorporated.

q) Follow-up of action 'continuously report the most recent numerical and descriptive data on HELCOM MPAs to HELCOMs data systems (HELCOM MPA database, GIS based map and data service)'

3N.64 The Meeting took note of the information whether the MPA database has been reviewed by Contracting Parties within the past year.

- The Meeting took note that Finland has not had any major updates to the database recently.
- The Meeting took note that Poland has no major changes to the database and it is hence up to date, though not recently reviewed.
- The Meeting took note that Estonia has also not updated the database for a while, but has no information to add. The Meeting took note that for Estonia, reviewing the database once per year is acceptable.
- The Meeting took note that Denmark has not updated the database for while, and there are currently no resources for the task.

3N.65 The Meeting discussed that the current database is in need of revision and refinement.

3N.66 The Meeting took note of and discussed the information about the process towards the implementation of fisheries measures for the German EEZ as presented by Gesine Lange, Germany (document 3N-14, presentation N5).

3N.67 The Meeting took note of a comment from CCB, that having read the original German proposition for the N2000 MPAs in the German EEZ in the North Sea, the subsequent Joint Recommendation based on negotiations and compromises in the Scheveningen Group and then the letter from the EU commission in response to the submitted recommendation, CCB supports the critique presented by the EU Commission in their letter, and thinks that as it stands, the fisheries regulations in the Joint Recommendation are deemed inadequate to help the species and habitats the N2000 sites are designated to protect to reach favourable status, or Germany to reach GES in their North Sea waters. The Meeting further took note that CCB considers the trawl corridors to be counterproductive and the proposed control measures inadequate to ensure the proposed restrictions in fisheries.

3N.68 The Meeting further took note that while CCB welcomes that the national process for regulation mobile contacting fisheries in the N2000 MPAs in the German EEZ in the Baltic Sea has been started, CCB urges Germany to start the process of developing fisheries measures for gillnets as soon as possible and to consider control mechanisms also for vessels under 12 meter.

3N.69 The Meeting took note of the overall disappointment of CCB in the slow progress of joint recommendation processes, and that CCB urges Germany to get Joint Recommendations in place as fast as possible.

3N.70 The Meeting discussed the process and challenges of implementing measures regulating commercial fishing. The Meeting discussed that there is a need for a discussion on fisheries measures from the nature conservation perspective. The Meeting would also welcome a closer link between State & Conservation Nature conservation session and the HELCOM FISH WG.

RECOMMENDATION 37/2 CONSERVATION OF BALTIC SEA SPECIES CATEGORIZED AS THREATENED ACCORDING TO THE 2013 HELCOM RED LIST

3N.71 The Meeting discussed the frequency and start year for reporting and agreed to set the reporting frequency to 6 years, with the next reporting taking place in late 2020.

3N.72 The Meeting took note of the presentation by Anna Karlsson, Sweden, on the need for more species specific reporting under HELCOM Recommendation 37/2 (presentation N6).

3N.73 The Meeting took note of the responses received to the questionnaire for reporting on the level of implementation of the actions under the Recommendation 37/2, as presented by Gesine Lange, Germany (presentation N7). The Meeting thanked lead country Germany for compiling the responses to the reporting template. The Meeting provided comments to the reporting template, as provided in presentation N7.

3N.74 The Meeting discussed the possibility for more detailed reporting on the recommendation and agreed that a higher level of detail would add value to the results of the reporting exercise. The Meeting took note that the workload for reporting for individual species would be much higher compared to the template tested prior to STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019, however considered that the matrix approach could provide added value to the reporting exercise.

3N.75 The Meeting considered possible grouping of species for the reporting and agreed that if grouping would be used, it should be harmonized on HELCOM level to enable compiling the information.

3N.76 The Meeting welcomed the offer from Germany to develop a matrix based reporting template further and to send it out for review and testing prior to STATE&CONSERVATION 13-2020, with the intention to finalize and approve the template at the meeting.

3N.77 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to compile lists of the redlisted species occurring in the waters of each country and provide these to Germany prior to the review and testing of the updated reporting template.

a) Follow-up of action 'Inventory of existing and planned national and regional conservation-, recovery- and/or action plans, and by 2018 review their effectiveness and, if necessary, define future protection needs'

3N.78 The Meeting took note of the updates of information on national conservation plans for species and biotopes categorized as threatened according to HELCOM 2013 Red List, as presented by the Secretariat (3N-13 rev.1). The Meeting took note that the secretariat has cross checked the list against the possible missing species identified by Germany and can confirm that all species are included in the list but for technical reasons not all species were visible.

3N.79 The Meeting took note of the concern by CCB that no management plans for the Swedish MPAs for harbour porpoises are in place almost three years after designation of the MPAs. The Meeting took note of the response from Sweden that the process for making the management plans is ongoing.

b) Follow-up of action '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'

3N.80 The Meeting took note of comments and proposals from JWG BIRD on prioritization of bird species in HELCOM work and on conservation measures as presented by the Secretariat (document 3N-8).

3N.81 The Meeting took note of the comment from Germany, that the measures outlined in the document could be considered for synopsis for new measures for the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

3N.82 The Meeting supported that information on real population sizes of the species are needed.

3N.83 The Meeting agreed that as a next step, Contracting Parties will check nationally whether and how the suggested measures are implemented for the species listed in the document, and report back to STATE&CONSERVATION 13-2020.

RECOMMENDATION 40/1 CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF MARINE AND COASTAL BIOTOPES, HABITATS AND BIOTOPE COMPLEXES CATEGORIZED AS THREATENED ACCORDING TO THE HELCOM RED LISTS

3N.84 The Meeting discussed on how to initiate reporting on the Recommendation 40/1 and the appropriate future reporting schedule, and agreed to report with 6 year frequency, with the first reporting taking place in late 2020 and consecutive reporting taking place in the year following Article 17 reporting under the Habitats Directive for those CPs who are also EU member states.

3N.85 The Meeting agreed that reporting on recommendations 37/2 and 40/1 will be harmonized, and linked with Habitats Directive reporting.

3N.86 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Lead country Germany to develop a reporting format and to send it out for review and testing prior to STATE&CONSERVATION 13-2020, to be finalized and approved at the meeting.

9) Follow up of action: to encourage other international organizations or bodies to promote and strive for taking all appropriate measures in areas of their specific competence, such as in fisheries management or shipping, in order to reduce pressures and impacts on HELCOM threatened marine biotopes, habitats or biotope complexes,

3N.87 The Meeting took note of the guidance provided by the Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC) on Natura 2000 and fisheries management measures in the Baltic Sea (document 3N-12).

3N.88 The Meeting took note of comment from CCB, that there is a general will within CCB and BSAC to incorporate the ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

Agenda Item 4N Links to Ongoing Work under the habitats and Birds Directives

4N.1. The Meeting took note of presentation by Sophie Ouzet, EU Commission, on Natura 2000 biogeographical process (presentation N8) and that the [LIFE publications](#), [LIFE Fact sheet](#), [Action Plan for nature, people and the economy 2017-2019](#) and [Preliminary results of the reporting under Art. 17 of the Habitats Directive](#) are available on the European Commission webpages.

4N.2. The Meeting took note that Finland welcomed the work on improving the coherence on the different approaches for evaluating habitats.

4N.3. The Meeting took note of the comment by Poland that sufficient input on the marine components into PAFs is crucial to ensure financial support for the marine conservation actions in the next financial perspective. The Meeting also encouraged State and Conservation WG members to cooperate closely on this matter with their colleagues working on PAFs.

4N.4. The Meeting took note that ETC has been collecting and making available information on the Natura 2000 process to the [Natura 2000 communication platform](#).

- 4N.5. The Meeting took note that the next marine seminar will take place in 2021, drafting terms of reference for the support contract for arranging meeting under the Biogeographical process ongoing, and information will be available via the [Natura 2000 biogeographical process webpage](#).
- 4N.6. The Meeting took note of information on the following national article 12 and 17 reporting:
- Denmark has recently submitted reporting on species and habitats. For the Danish Baltic region Grey seals are unfavourable conservation status. That equally conservation status of harbour porpoise was found unfavourable, due to Baltic Proper population. Marine habitats under Annex 1 are also found to be in unfavourable conservation status.
 - Germany has reported on article 17 in 2019, the material is published on the website. The, marine mammals(harbour porpoise, harbor seal and grey seal) were all reported as being not in a favourable conservation status. The same is true for Annex 1 habitats sandbanks and reefs. Germany is working on the management plan for the harbour porpoise.
 - Estonia: Marine habitats under annex 1 are in favorable status and the trend is stable. For ringed seal the status bad and the trend is declining, for grey seal the status is favourable and the trend stable
- 4N.7. The Meeting took note that Denmark find the reporting for the region rather than the population does not lead to a detailed refecton on the conservations tatu for some species, such as the harbor porpoise where the status differs for the Baltic Proper and Western population.
- 4N.8. Plans for implementation of the work plan and emerging issues
- 5N.1 The Meeting discussed further plans related to future work of the group.
- 5N.2 The Meeting agreed that a dedicated discussion on fisheries and joint recommendations should be included in the agenda of STATE&CONSERVATION 13-2020.
- 5N.3 The Meeting agreed that those CP who are interested will prepare a presentation on one of their MPAs including concrete examples of measures and management (or development of management), conservation objectives etc. and that a round table for this is to be included in the agenda of STATE&CONSERVATION 13-2020.
- 5N.4 The Meeting agreed that should the plan to submit a MPA project proposal progress, an intersessional meeting of the Conservation Session could be arranged in spring 2020, with intention to further develop the proposal. The Meeting agreed to consider the project structure, specific tasks and deliverables as well as identify possible partners and co-funding intersessionally.
- 5N.5 The Meeting discussed the way the Recommendations are considered in the State & Conservation Meetings and took note that the long term intention behind setting up reporting schemes and formats for each recommendation is to create a rolling system where all recommendations are included but only 2-3 Recommendations (those currently being reported on) would be discussed in each meeting.

Agenda Item 6N Any other business

6N.1 The Meeting took note that CCB is working on management briefings for MPAs specific habitats, including e.g. lagoons and deep mud for Baltic Sea. The briefings will include the latest scientific information and proposals on concrete measures and include references on where measures have been used. The Meeting took note that CCB hopes that the Contracting Parties will look into the briefings and distributed them to their MPA managers. The Meeting invited CCB to submit the briefings to the STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020.

Agenda Item 12J Outcome of the Nature conservation session

7N.1. The Meeting adopted the outcome of Nature Conservation theme and noted that the outcome will be available (together with outcomes of the joint and monitoring and assessment themes) at

the STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019 Meeting Site, together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting.

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