



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION
15-2021

Online, 4-8 October 2021

Document title	Provisional Annotated Agenda
Code	1-1-Rev.2
Category	DEC
Agenda Item	1 – Adoption of the Agenda
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Background

In accordance with the decision by HOD 59-2020, the 15th Meeting of the Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021) will be convened on 4-8 October 2021. The Meeting will be convened online.

The Meeting will start on **Monday 4 October 2021 at 10.00 EEST** and is expected to end on **Friday 8 October 2021 at 16.00 EEST**. The Meeting will focus on Joint and Nature conservation and biodiversity sessions. Monday to Thursday 13:00 EEST will be dedicated to joint themes (Agenda Items 1J-9J), and Thursday 14:00 to Friday 16:00 EEST is planned for issues related to Nature conservation and biodiversity (Agenda Items 1N-7N).

Focal items of the meeting are to:

- **Joint session:**
 - endorsement of indicators for use in the HOLAS III assessment
 - follow up on the work of Expert Groups under the auspice of the Working Group and planning future work through e.g., updated proposal for the next Red List assessment.

- **Nature conservation and biodiversity:**
 - development and implementation of Recommendations regarding nature conservation and biodiversity
 - consider how to better incorporate conservation and other topics of biodiversity relevance into HOLAS process and the State of the Baltic Sea report.

The Meeting will be Chaired by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group Marie-Louise Krawack (Denmark), Chair of nature conservation and biodiversity topics and Norbert Häubner (Sweden), Chair of monitoring and assessment related topics.

Meeting documents will be submitted by the Secretariat to the [STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 Meeting Site](#) via the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#). The Secretariat has prepared a [document template](#) and recommends using the template when submitting documents to the Secretariat.

The Secretariat kindly requests the Contracting Parties and Observers to observe the deadlines for submission of documents to a HELCOM meeting. Basic documents and documents requiring action or a decision to the Meeting should be submitted in electronic format to Professional Secretary, Jannica Haldin (jannica.haldin@helcom.fi) by **7 September 2021**, at the latest. Documents containing comments to the basic documents as well as information documents should be provided to the Secretariat by **27 September 2021**.

Participants are kindly requested to register for the Meeting by answering the [Participation Survey](#) at their earliest convenience, and **not later than 27 September 2021**. Instructions for the use of the Meeting Portal are available on the [HELCOM Website](#).

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Joint session

Agenda Item 1J Adoption of the Agenda: Joint themes

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Annotated Agenda for the Joint themes (1J-9J), as contained in document 1-1.

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

HELCOM

The Meeting is invited to take note of the outcomes of relevant recent HELCOM meetings (**document 2J-1**).

The Meeting is invited to take note of the status of the BSAP update process and associated documents (**document 2J-2**).

IUCN/WCPA/FAO

The Meeting is invited to take note of further plans for organizing a Baltic Sea workshop on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in 2022 jointly with FAO/IUCN as well as preliminary results from the scoping survey prepared to support the workshop (**document 2J-3**).

The Meeting is further invited to take note of the selected case studies on OECMs to be considered at the workshop (**document 2J-4**).

~~The Meeting is invited to take note of the further edited Agenda for the Workshop (**document 2J-5**).~~

EU

~~The Meeting is invited to take note of the guidance on aligning the MSFD art 8 reporting and the HBD, stemming from the Commission workshop on improving the coordination of assessments under the Birds and Habitats Directives (BHD) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), held on 21 May 2021 (**document 2J-6**).~~

The Meeting is invited to take note of the EU workshop on the assessment of management effectiveness of marine Natura 2000 sites and other EU MPAs, to be held on 13-14 October 2021.

CBD

The Meeting is invited to take note of progress on the adoption of the post 2020 targets under CBD.

The Meeting is invited to note that CBD COP 15 will take place in two parts: the first part in virtual format on 11-15 October 2021 and the second part as a face-to-face meeting in Kunming, China from 25 April to 8 May 2022. The finalization and adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be addressed during the second part.

Agenda Item 3J Progress of relevant HELCOM expert groups and projects

HELCOM Expert Groups under the guidance of the State and Conservation WG

The Meeting is invited to consider specific issues lifted in relation to EGs as follows:

HELCOM-Baltic Earth Expert Network on Climate Change (EN CLIME)

The Meeting is invited to note that the Climate Change Fact Sheet was published and launched on 3 September 2021 and is available on the HELCOM website.

The Meeting is invited to approve the updated ToRs and Work Plan of EN CLIME (document 3J-85).

HELCOM Expert Group on Marine Mammals (EG MAMA)

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 considered the progress in drafting a project plan to establish precautionary approach level (PAL) for seals in the Baltic Sea and invited EG MAMA to prepare an updated and detailed project proposal for submission to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 and agreed to come back to the issue for in depth discussion and review of the viability of the project plan at that meeting. The meeting noted concerns regarding funding for the suggested project and agreed to come back to this at STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 when a more detailed plan is available. The meeting noted that should the project plan not be considered viable other options for progressing on the issue of PAL may need to be considered, including opening the Recommendation for revision.

The Meeting is invited to consider the proposals by EG MAMA for addressing the issues raised in relation to establishing PAL for seals in the Baltic Sea ([document 3J-1](#)) and agree on a way forward.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed change to the management unit structure for harbour seals (document 3J-89) and implement the changes for the relevant HELCOM indicators.

The Meeting is invited to consider and agree on the Terms of References for EG MAMA 16-2022 (document 3J-38).

The Meeting is invited to take note of the distribution of the pupping activity of seals in the HELCOM area (document 3J-101).

Joint OSPAR/ICES/HELCOM Working Group on Seabirds (JWG BIRD)

The Meeting is invited to take note that a kick-off workshop on bird migration was organised under the auspice of the German Chairmanship of HELCOM.

The Meeting is invited to discuss and decide on the geographical scope the new subgroup on bird migration will cover.

The Meeting is invited to consider and approve the final ToRs and the draft work plan for the JWG Bird subgroup on bird migration (document 3J-2) noting that changes may be introduced by one of the two other host organizations as part of their approval processes.

The Meeting is invited to note the current situation on leads for the JWG Bird subgroup on bird migration and, if needed, consider nominating a lead/co-lead for the group.

The Meeting is invited to approve the Revised draft HELCOM Guidelines for monitoring seabirds at sea, developed by the Lead countries Germany and Latvia, with the support of JWG BIRD (document 3J-86).

The Meeting is invited to take note of the outcome of the BfN-JWGBIRD workshop on migratory birds (document 3J-99).

Expert Network on Hazardous Substances (EN-HZ)

The Meeting is invited to note that there is currently a need for a new Chair due to the retirement of one co-Chair and the current parental leave of the other.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the considerations in Pressure regarding the possibility to amend the tasks of EN HAZ, support the proposal for the expansion of responsibilities and the transformation to being an Expert Group jointly guided by State and Conservation and Pressure.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the plan and review progress for the periodic review the ToRs of EN HAZ.

The Meeting is invited to agree to change the name of the group to Expert Group on Hazardous substances (EG HAZ) to adequately reflect the work of the group and agree on the ToRs for the group (document 3J-96 and 3J-96-Add.1).

The Meeting is invited to consider providing additional nominations to the group to support newly proposed tasks should this expansion of responsibilities be implemented.

The Meeting is invited to take note of discussions and possible plans in OSPAR regarding cooperation on biological effects of contaminants.

The Meeting is invited to endorse the proposal to submit a message to EU WG Chemicals outlining a regional opinion for inclusion of certain substances and sampling matrix types (sediment) within existing EQS threshold value review and prioritisation processes (document 3J-92).

Expert Network on Benthic Habitats (EN BENTHIC)

The Meeting is invited to take note of the plan and progress for the periodic review the ToRs of EN BENTHIC.

Quality Assurance of Phytoplankton Monitoring in the Baltic Sea (PEG)

The Meeting is invited to take note that the PEG-BVOL list for 2021 is now published at ICES and can be accessed here: <https://www.ices.dk/data/data-portals/Pages/DOME.aspx>.

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 welcomed that PEG will submit a proposal on prolongation of the phytoplankton work to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021.

PEG is invited to submit a proposal on prolongation of the phytoplankton work to the Meeting.

The Meeting is invited to approve the proposal on prolongation of PEG for adoption at HOD 61-2021 (document 3J-4).

Zooplankton Expert Network (ZEN)

The Meeting is invited to approve the final ToRs for the Zooplankton Expert Network for adoption at HOD 61-2021 (document 3J-5).

The Meeting is invited to review and update the list of expert participation in the group and provide new nominations as needed (document 3J-6).

HELCOM Correspondence Group on Food Webs (CG FOODWEB)

The Meeting is invited to take note of recent and upcoming activities of CG Foodweb (**document 3J-7**).

Joint HELCOM-OSPAR Expert Group on Non-Indigenous Species (JEG NIS)

The Meeting is invited to approve the final ToRs of JEG NIS (**document 3J-8**) for approval at HOD 61-2021, pending the study reservation placed by Estonia at HOD 60-2021.

Expert Group on eutrophication (EG EUTRO)

The Meeting is invited to review and approve the ToR and the associated workplan for the years 2022-2024 of the expert group (document 3J-90) and agree to change the name of the group from “Intersessional network on eutrophication (IN-Eutrophication)” to “Expert Group on Eutrophication “(EG EUTRO)”.

Projects

Ongoing projects

HOLAS III associated projects

The Meeting is invited to take note of the overview of progress and events associated with the HOLAS III assessment which have occurred in the interim between STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 and STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 (**document 3J-9**).

A number of proposed changes to the HELCOM assessment units at level 4 have been proposed as part of the preparatory phase of HOLAS III.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the overview information of the proposed spatial changes and, if no update has been provided, confirm that current set of HELCOM Assessment units on Level 4 reflect the correct WFD water types / water bodies that should be used in HOLAS III for indicators that are assessed on level 4 (document 3J-94-Rev.1).

The Meeting is invited to consider the proposal on Bornholm Basin border (document 3J-35) and agree on the proposed change and its implementation in the HELCOM Map and Data Service, as well as in the maps of the HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy for use in HOLAS III and beyond and submit it for approval by HOD 61-2021.

Data flows related work

HELCOM Data Flow Project (DataFlow)

The Meeting is invited to take note of the HOLAS III relevant work planned under the project and progress of work under the HELCOM DataFlow project, including more detailed information on Task E as per invitation by STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 (**document 3J-10**).

Baltic Data Flows (BDF)

The Meeting is invited to take note of the HOLAS III relevant work planned under the project and progress of work under the Baltic Data Flows project (**document 3J-11**).

HELCOM BLUES

The Meeting is invited to take note of the HOLAS III relevant data work planned under the project and progress of work under the HELCOM BLUES project (**document 3J-12**).

HOLAS III Data Call

The Meeting is invited to take note of information and clarifications regarding the HOLAS III data call (**document 3J-13**).

The Meeting is invited to consider the summary of the data availability for 2021 eutrophication data for HOLAS III, as submitted by IN EUTRO, and to agree on a way forward (document 3J-57).

Indicators related work

The Meeting is invited to take 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 and provide input as needed (**document 3J-14**).

The Meeting is invited to consider the draft list of criterial elements for species related descriptors (**document 3J-15**).

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 invited JWG Bird and the Secretariat to prepare criteria element lists of breeding birds and crosscheck said lists with the species currently included under this indicator and submit the list to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 for further consideration.

The Meeting is invited to consider the criteria element lists of breeding birds (document 3J-16).

The Meeting is invited to review the proposed updated structure of the indicator reports (**document 3J-17**).

The Meeting is invited to take note of the updated overview of overall progress on the further development of HELCOM indicators, outlining current status of development (**document 3J-18**).

Topic: Phytoplankton

Indicator: Diatom/dinoflagellate index

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 noted that Germany would like to keep the Diatom-Dinoflagellate Index indicator and invited the CPs to clarify their positions on the indicator, following the submission of the document on the diatom/dinoflagellate indicator to be prepared by PEG, at STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021.

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 invited PEG to provide an elaboration of the diatom/dinoflagellate indicator, explaining how the indicator functions, rationale behind the methodology and threshold values, data requirements and outlining the explanatory power of the indicator and to provide this to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 for further consideration.

PEG is invited to provide an elaboration of the diatom/dinoflagellate indicator, explaining how the indicator functions, rationale behind the methodology and threshold values, data requirements and outlining the explanatory power of the indicator (document 3J-19).

The Meeting is invited to consider this information and act accordingly, and the Contracting Parties are invited to clarify their positions on the indicator.

Indicator: Seasonal succession of dominating phytoplankton groups

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-20).

Topic: Zooplankton

Indicator: Zooplankton mean size and total stock (MSTS)

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-21).

Assessment of pelagic habitats

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed approach for assessing the state of pelagic habitats in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-22).

Topic: Benthic habitats

Indicator: Cumulative impact on benthic biotopes

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-23).

Indicator: State of the soft-bottom macrofauna community

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-24).

Indicator: Condition of benthic habitats

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-25).

Assessment of benthic habitats

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed approach for assessing the state of benthic habitats in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-26).

Topic: Fish

The Meeting is invited to consider the information provided by the indicator leads on what the barriers are preventing reporting of 2021 data on coastal fish and what the implications of excluding this data would be for the indicator (**document 3J-27**).

Indicator: Abundance of key coastal fish species

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 raised concern about not including data for 2021 due to this not being in line with other relevant indicators, invited the indicator leads to provide detailed information on what the barriers are preventing reporting of 2021 data and what the implications of excluding this data would be for the indicator and submit this information to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021, and agreed to come back to the discussion on exclusion of 2021 data at STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 when the rationale has been provided.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document, including list of species to be included in evaluation (document 3J-28).

Indicator: L90 Coastal fish

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 raised concern about not including data for 2021 due to this not being in line with other relevant indicators, invited the indicator leads to provide detailed information on what the barriers are preventing reporting of 2021 data and what the implications of excluding this data would be for the indicator and submit this information to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021, and agreed to come back to the discussion on exclusion of 2021 data at STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 when the rationale has been provided.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document, including list of species to be included in evaluation (document 3J-29).

Indicator: Abundance of coastal fish key functional groups

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 raised concern about not including data for 2021 due to this not being in line with other relevant indicators, invited the indicator leads to provide detailed information on what the barriers are preventing reporting of 2021 data and what the implications of excluding this data would be for the indicator and submit this information to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021, and agreed to come back to the discussion on exclusion of 2021 data at STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 when the rationale has been provided.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document, including list of species to be included in evaluation (document 3J-30).

Indicator: Abundance of non-commercial offshore species (three-spined stickleback, flounder, brill and dab).

The Meeting is invited to endorse the indicator as a candidate indicator and consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment (document 3J-88).

Assessment of non-commercial fish

The Meeting is invited to take note that the integrated assessment of non-commercial fish will be done utilizing the BEAT assessment tool (document 3J-31).

Assessment of commercial fish

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the recommended approach for assessing the status of commercial fish species stemming from the HELCOM Workshop on Commercial Fish Assessment (COM FISH WS 1-2021), held on 28-29 September 2021 (document 3J-32).

The Meeting is invited to note that, in accordance with the plan agreed at GEAR 24-2021, in relation to the establishment of a list of commercial species, ComFish WS 1-2021 will consider and recommend an approach to

be used, guidance on how to delineate species between D1 and D3, including that no threatened or prohibited species can be included on the list of commercial stocks. Should an approach be available through EU processes this will be used. The workshop will conclude on a way forward to prepare the actual lists intersessionally after which the lists will be submitted for review at a short workshop, possibly in early November 2021, after which they will be finalized and submitted together with all the other material on proposals for commercial fish assessment to HOD 61-2021.

*The Meeting is invited to take note of the background information for the list of species for commercial fish assessment (documents 3J-95) and provide national positions on the preferred option to derive species lists by **24 September 2021**, in advance of the ComFish Workshop, to be sent to the HELCOM Secretariat (florent.nicolas@helcom.fi).*

The Meeting is invited to endorse an approach for establishing a list of species to be included in the assessment, based on the recommendation by ComFish WS 1-2021 (document 3J-33).

Topic: Waterbirds

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 invited JWG Bird to prepare a document outlining how baselines and threshold values are identified and established for the indicators under the umbrella of the groups work and submit this to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 to support the indicator endorsement and approval processes.

JWG Bird is invited to submit and present a document outlining how baselines and threshold values are identified and established for the indicators under the umbrella of the groups work to the Meeting.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the respective indicator template.

Indicator: Abundance of waterbirds in the wintering season

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 in principle supported the application of the indicator at the species group level and at the appropriate spatial scale to ensure ecological relevance, however, to ensure the consequences of such a decision, the meeting invited the Secretariat to approach JWG Bird. The meeting invited JWG Bird and the Secretariat to prepare criteria element lists of wintering birds and crosscheck said lists with the species currently included under this indicator and submit the list to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 for further consideration.

The Meeting is invited to take note of progress of work on criteria element lists of wintering birds.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-36).

Indicator: Waterbird breeding success

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-37).

Indicator: Waterbird habitat quality

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 noted the request by Sweden to clarify what data layers would be included in the indicator and invited the indicator leads to provide this information to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information on data layers to be included in the indicator (**included in document 3J-39**).

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-39).

Topic: Mammals

Indicator: Nutritional status of seals

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-40).

Indicator: Reproductive status of seals

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-41).

Indicator: Harbour porpoise abundance

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-42).

Indicator: Harbour porpoise distribution

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 noted that a workshop to further develop harbour porpoise distribution and habitat quality indicators is suggested in Annex 1 of the document 4J-28 and invited the CPs to consider the possibility to host such a workshop and return to the proposal at STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021.

The Contracting Parties are invited to consider the possibility to host a workshop to further develop the harbour porpoise distribution and habitat quality indicators.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-43).

Assessment of marine mammals

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed approach for assessing marine mammals in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-44).

Topic: Bycatch

Indicator: Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-45).Bycatch assessment

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-46).

Topic: Foodwebs

Assessment of food webs

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed approach for assessing food webs in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-47).

Topic: BEAT Integrated biodiversity assessment tool (BEAT)

The Meeting is invited to take note of the Workshop on the BEAT tool which took place on 30 August 2021.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the plan for how to utilize the BEAT tool for the HOLAS III assessment (document 3J-48).

Topic: Eutrophication

STATE & CONSERVATION 14 (document 4J-82-Rev.1, Presentation 8) agreed on splitting the Bornholm Basin (SEA-007) to include a new assessment unit Pomeranian Bay in the eutrophication assessment to represent the influence of the Odra plume. The Meeting also requested IN EUTROPHICATION to evaluate the existing

threshold values for the HEAT related indicators in Bornholm Basin regarding their validity after splitting Bornholm Basin into two separate units and to come up with new proposals for threshold values if the need arises.

The Meeting is invited to further discuss the proposed threshold values for Pomeranian Bay and Bornholm Basin, endorse threshold values for use in HOLAS III and agree on a way forward (document 3J-87).

State & Conservation 14-2021 agreed on the following changes to the open Gulf of Finland assessment unit SEA-013 (assessment scale 4 applied in the eutrophication assessment): 1) The eastern-most tip of the assessment unit was re-defined as coastal and transitional waters, pending agreement by Russia, and 2) the remaining open-sea assessment unit was divided into two smaller units (as proposed in document 4J-90 in S&C 14-2021, shown also in Fig. 1). This change is to be applied in HOLAS III, with the caveat that if no threshold values can be established for the new areas prior to HOLAS III it will revert to using the threshold values used in HOLAS II for the purposes of the assessment.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed thresholds for SEA-013A and SEA-013B for the eutrophication indicators:

- Dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN)
- Dissolved inorganic phosphorus (DIP)
- Total nitrogen (TN)
- Total phosphorus (TP)
- Chlorophyll-a
- Water clarity
- Cyanobacterial bloom index

and endorse the oxygen debt threshold value of SEA-013 for SEA-013A (document 3J-91).

Indicator: Total nitrogen

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 invited IN EUTRO to suggest threshold values for all relevant assessment units for the Total nitrogen indicator, utilizing the upcoming IN EUTRO 20-2021 meeting, and to submit this information in STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021. The meeting encouraged all relevant CPs to strive to find an acceptable solution to ensure inclusion in HOLAS III and invited relevant national contacts to participate in IN EUTRO 20-2021.

IN EUTRO is invited to submit threshold values for all relevant assessment units for the Total nitrogen indicator.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-49).

Indicator: Total phosphorus

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 invited IN EUTRO to suggest threshold values for all relevant assessment units for the Total phosphorous indicator, utilizing the upcoming IN EUTRO 20-2021 meeting, and to submit this information in STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021. The meeting encouraged all relevant CPs to strive to find an acceptable solution to ensure inclusion in HOLAS III and invited relevant national contacts to participate in IN EUTRO 20-2021.

IN EUTRO is invited to submit threshold values for all relevant assessment units for the Total phosphorous indicator.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-50).

Indicator: Chlorophyll-a

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-51).

Indicator: Phytoplankton spring bloom intensity based on chl-a

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-52).

Indicator: Cyanobacterial Bloom Index (CyaBI)

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 invited the indicator lead Finland, with assistance from the PEG, to further consider how to address the concerns by Germany and Denmark and submit proposed solutions to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 in the effort to resolve any remaining issues prior to HOLAS III.

Finland is invited to present proposed solutions to the raised concerns on the indicator (document 3J-89).

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-53).

Indicator: Shallow-water bottom oxygen

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-54).

Indicator: Oxygen debt

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-55).

Integrated eutrophication assessment tool (HEAT)

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 concluded that several CPs were of the opinion that the proposed integration rules for use in HOLAS III may need further consideration. To support further discussion, and with the aim of coming to a shared understanding prior to HOLAS III, the meeting invited IN EUTRO to test both alternatives to demonstrate the effect of the integration rules on the assessment results and to present these results at STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 for further deliberation and agreement.

IN EUTRO is invited to present documentation on the effect of the integration rules on the assessment results, (document 3J-56) to support the discussion.

The Meeting is invited to consider the effect of the integration rules on the assessment results, to be submitted by IN EUTRO and endorse on the integration rules to be used for HOLAS III.

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 noted that as HELCOM uses a nested assessment scale approach, which allows for comparison of results across indicators and assessment, it may be relevant to consider expanding the use of the new assessment areas to encompass all level 3 and 4 assessments in HOLAS III, to ensure comparability. The meeting considered that more time is needed to adequately estimate the implications of this and agreed to come back to this discussion at STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse an approach for how to handle the division of subbasins for level 3 and 4 for HOLAS III for other topics than eutrophication.

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the plan for how to utilize the HEAT tool for the HOLAS III assessment (document 3J-58).

Topic: Contaminants

The Meeting is invited to endorse the ongoing development of improved confidence evaluation for hazardous substances towards HOLAS III, striving to align the confidence aspect of hazardous substances indicators more closely with the approach applied for biodiversity and eutrophication (document 3J-97).

HELCOM Pre-EMPT

The Meeting is invited to take note of information on progress of the Pre-EMPT project.

Indicator: Radioactive substances: Cesium-137 in fish and surface seawater

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-59).

Indicator: Diclofenac

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-60).

Indicator: Heavy metals (lead, cadmium, and mercury)

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-61).

Indicator: Copper

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-62).

Indicator: Tributyltin (TBT) and imposex

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-63).

Indicator: Polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and their metabolites

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-64).

Indicator: Reproductive disorders Malformed amphipod embryos

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-65).

Indicator: Hexabromocyclododecane (HBCDD)

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-66).

Indicator: Polybrominated biphenyl ethers (PBDE)

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-67).

Indicator: Perfluorooctane sulphonate (PFOS)

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-68).

Indicator: Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) and dioxins and furans

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-69).

Indicator complex: Biological effects

The Meeting is invited to consider the progress made related to the assessment of biological effects and the proposal to include sediment cores as supporting contextual information in the HOLAS III thematic assessment ([document 3J-98](#)).

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-70).

Integrated hazardous substances assessment tool (CHASE)

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the plan for how to utilize the CHASE tool for the HOLAS III assessment, including the proposal to use sediment cores in the thematic assessment to represent supporting contextual information (document 3J-71).

*Topic: Marine litter**Indicator: Litter on the seafloor*

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 took note of the proposal for a HELCOM method for estimating amount of litter on the seafloor in HOLAS III, discussed and agreed on the inclusion of “single use plastic” and “fishing gear” items categories (Table 2 in document 4J-75) as a separate output of the seafloor litter assessment. When discussing the approach to establish threshold values the meeting agreed to come back to the final decision on this matter at a later stage (Outcome of STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021, para. 4J.276-4J.282).

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed approach to establish threshold values for use of the indicator in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-72).

*Topic: Underwater noise**Indicator: Distribution in time and space of loud low- and mid-frequency impulsive sounds*

Following STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 agreement on the proposal on the assessment methodology for impulsive noise in HOLAS III (Outcome of STATE & CONSERVATION, para. 4J.285 -4J.290), **the Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed approach to establish threshold values for use of the indicator in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-73).**

Indicator: Continuous low frequency anthropogenic sound

Germany holds a study reservation on the proposal on the assessment methodology for low frequency underwater noise in HOLAS III presented to STATE&CONSERVATION 14-2021. For resolving the study reservation by Germany regarding the proposal on the assessment methodology for low frequency underwater noise in HOLAS III presented to STATE&CONSERVATION 14-2021, amendments to the document [4J-78](#) were proposed by German experts. An amended document was distributed to the network of EN-Noise for review and feedback, with the aim to resolve the study reservation by Germany on the previous version of the assessment proposal submitted to STATE&CONSERVATION 14-2021. The majority of these amendments found consensus within the network, while the approach proposed regarding the incorporation of important habitats for noise sensitive species into the continuous noise assessment was not yet resolved.

The Meeting is invited to agree on the amendment of the continuous noise assessment as proposed Germany (document 3J-93).

When considering a proposal on the assessment methodology for low frequency underwater noise in HOLAS III as well as the German reservation on the matter, STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 agreed that, while acknowledging the reservation by Germany, the work under EN Noise and the BLUES project can continue, so as to not jeopardize the possibility to include an assessment of continuous noise in HOLAS III, should a methodology and threshold values not become available from EU TG Noise in time to be included in the HOLAS

III assessment (Outcome of STATE & CONSERVATION, para. 4J.291 - 4J.301). Subsequently, GEAR 24-2021 discussed that this indicator is one of those for which the EU process is not fully aligned with existing HOLAS III/HELCOM deadlines, and agreed on the contingency as present in [presentation 5 \(Outcome of GEAR 24-2021, para. 5.25-5.26\)](#). In view of these decisions EN-Noise agreed to further advance on the assessment methodology, to include masking and potentially disturbance (thresholds expressed as fixed sound pressure levels).

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment as indicated in the corresponding document (document 3J-74).

Topic: Acidification

Indicator: Baltic Sea acidification

Topic: Driver indicators

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the approach for how to identify and utilize driver indicators for the HOLAS III assessment (document 3J-75).

[Assessments and method development related work](#)

Topic: Spatial Pressure and Impact Assessment

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the further developed Spatial Pressure and Impact Assessment tool and the resulting information for the HOLAS III assessment (document 3J-76).

Topic: Economic and Social Analyses

Assessment of ecosystem services and ecosystem accounting

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the approach for assessing ecosystem services (document 3J 77).

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the approach for ecosystem accounting for the HOLAS III assessment (document 3J-3).

Cost of degradation analysis

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the approach for and inclusion of assessing the cost of degradation for the HOLAS III assessment, where relevant (document 3J-78).

Use of Marine Waters analysis

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the approach for and inclusion of assessing the use of marine waters for the HOLAS III assessment, where relevant (document 3J-79).

Sufficiency and effectiveness of measures

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the approach for and inclusion of assessing sufficiency and effectiveness of measures for the HOLAS III assessment, where relevant (document 3J-80).

Cost-benefit analyses of measures

The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the approach for and inclusion of cost benefit analyses of measures for the HOLAS III assessment, where relevant (document 3J-81).

[Proposed/planned projects](#)

[Third HELCOM holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea environment \(HOLAS III\)](#)

The Meeting is invited to take note of an initial proposal on ways to provide additional support to CPs to facilitate the approval processes under the HOLAS III assessment, including the possibility to present information on status on contributions, overview lists of national representatives included in the review process through the

various expert groups and the use of the CG (**document 3J-82**), as requested by STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021.

[LIFE MPA project](#)

The Meeting is invited to take note of the progress on a HELCOM led MPA project proposal submitted to the EU LIFE funding instrument (**document 3J-83**).

[SAMBAH II](#)

Germany is invited to inform the Meeting on status of the SAMBAH II project proposal.

[HELCOM Red List project](#)

The Meeting is invited to note that HOD 60-2021 provisionally approved the draft project for reviewing and updating the HELCOM Red List of species and habitats/biotopes (HELCOM RED LIST II, 2022-2024), pending securing funding of the work, and invited the Secretariat and the State and Conservation Working Group to further elaborate the project description with the aim of submitting a finalized draft to HOD 61-2021 for final approval.

The Meeting is further invited to note that according to HOD 60-2021 the Contracting Parties are at this time not in a position to provide additional financing to secure the work, invited the Secretariat to continue exploring possible financing of the work, and provisionally approved the use of HELCOM funds to finance the planned work, should these be available. HOD 60-2021 agreed to come back to the question of financing the work at HOD 61-2021.

Sweden is invited to give a presentation on the national red list assessment tool Edit, possibly to be utilised in the suggested project.

The Contracting Parties are invited to consider providing funding for the project to ensure that the planned work can take place.

The Meeting is invited to consider the further elaborated project description (document 3J-84) and endorse it to be submitted to HOD 61-2021 for final approval.

[eMSP: Emerging ecosystem-based Maritime Spatial Planning topics in North and Baltic Seas Region](#)

The Meeting is invited to take note of the work planned under the eMSP project.

[HELCOM PreEMPT](#)

The Meeting is invited to take note of the work planned under the HELCOM PreEMPT project.

[Agenda Item 4J Development and implementation of Recommendations](#)

The Meeting is invited to take note of the overview of Recommendation reporting deadlines under State and Conservation WG to be presented by the Secretariat (**document 4J-1**) and recall the decision by STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020 to consider reporting of 1-2 Recommendations per State and Conservation meeting until the rolling system is in place.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the Recommendations for which reporting is planned in 2022 and plan accordingly.

[RECOMMENDATION 10/1 ABNORMAL SITUATIONS IN THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT](#)

This recommendation is possibly to be taken over by a service.

Lead country for this Recommendation is Estonia.

Reporting interval for the Recommendation has not been specified.

The Meeting is invited to restart the discussion on the possible replacement of the Recommendation.

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

This recommendation is proposed to be replaced with guidelines.

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2020 noted the revised draft HELCOM guidelines for sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism in the coastal zones of the Baltic Sea Area the Baltic Sea Area, as presented by Latvia and agreed on the following intersessional commenting round and adoption process:

- invited the Contracting Parties to provide possible further comments to the revised guidelines by 18 June 2021 to Latvia (Inga.Belasova@varam.gov.lv) and cc to the Secretariat (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi)
- invited Latvia to consolidate possible comments received and submit a possible revised version for adoption to the CPs and to suggest a way forward with development of the guidelines by 16 August.

Latvia is invited to present the current status of the guidelines to the Meeting (document 4J-2).

The Meeting is invited to review the guidelines, endorse removing the recommendation and replacing the recommendation with the guidelines and agree to forward proposal and the guidelines to HOD 61-2021 for consideration with the intention to submit the proposal for adoption at HELCOM 43-2022.

Agenda Item 5J Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets

STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019 supported that IN EUTRO and PEG will work bilaterally during spring 2020 to resolve unclarity regarding biomass and satellite data use. STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020 agreed to come back to the issue at the next meeting and invited the Chairs of IN EUTRO and PEG to present the matter at STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021.

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 agreed to postpone the discussions on the outcome of the issue regarding biomass and satellite data use, as presented by IN EUTRO/PEG Chairs to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021.

The Chair(s) of IN EUTRO/PEG are invited to present to the Meeting the outcome of the issue regarding biomass and satellite data use.

*The Contracting Parties are invited to provide information on any changes or updates to the Environment Fact Sheets to the Secretariat (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi) by **7 September 2021**.*

The Meeting is invited to take note of the updates to the existing HELCOM Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets since STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 (document 5J-1). **The Meeting is also invited to consider and approve the publication of any new fact sheets.**

Agenda Item 6J Future work

Next meeting

The Meeting is invited to note that STATE & CONSERVATION 16-2022 will be held on 9-13 May 2022 preliminarily in Germany and STATE & CONSERVATION 17-2022 on 10-14 October 2022 in Sweden.

The Meeting is invited to agree on the dates for the STATE & CONSERVATION 18-2023 meeting.

The Contracting Parties are invited to consider their possibility to host future meetings of the Working Group.

Agenda Item 7J Any other business

The Meeting is invited to discuss any other business related to the mandate of the Working Group.

Housekeeping

The Meeting is invited to consider and update the list of contacts and observers of the Working Group (document 7J-1-Rev.1).

Agenda Item 8J Outcome of the Joint themes

A draft Outcome with main decisions will be prepared by the Secretariat for consideration and approval by attendants of the joint themes.

Nature conservation and biodiversity

Agenda Item 1N Adoption of the Agenda: Nature conservation and biodiversity

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Annotated Agenda for Nature conservation and biodiversity (1N-7N), as contained in document 1-1-Rev.2.

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

HELCOM

The Meeting is invited to recall that HELCOM has been accepted to take part in arranging a special symposium on MPA networks as part of the International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC) and is invited to take note of the arrangements surrounding the next IMCC.

EU

The Meeting is invited to take note of that the HELCOM approach for assessing MPA management effectiveness developed under the ACTION project will be presented at the EU workshop on the assessment of management effectiveness of marine Natura 2000 sites and other EU MPAs, 13-14 October 2021.

CBD

The Meeting is invited to note that the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, will be held in Kunming, China, on 11-24 October 2021 and the meeting will discuss the new strategic plan of CBD including the new biodiversity targets.

IUCN

The Meeting is invited to take note of that the HELCOM approach for assessing MPA management effectiveness developed under the ACTION project was presented at a dedicated Campus Session on the 7 September at the World Conservation Congress.

The Meeting is invited to take note of any relevant outcome of the World Conservation Congress to be held on 3-7 September 2021.

Agenda Item 3N Development and implementation of Recommendations

The Meeting is invited to recall that STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020 agreed to consider the reporting of 1-2 Recommendations per State and Conservation meeting until the rolling system is in place.

[RECOMMENDATION 17/2 PROTECTION OF HARBOUR PORPOISE IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA](#)

The Contracting Parties are invited to inform the Meeting on any ongoing or planned national work relevant to the actions listed below.

Reporting on the Recommendation

Lead country for this Recommendation is Poland.

STATE & CONSERVATION 12-2020 welcomed the information that Poland will commence work on developing a reporting template for Recommendation 17/2, a draft of which will be submitted to STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020. STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020 suggested that EG MAMA will consider the reporting form produced by Poland in further detail after which it will be submitted to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 for approval.

Poland is invited to submit and present the amended reporting template, reviewed by EG MAMA 15-2021, to the Meeting.

The Meeting is invited to approve the revised reporting template (document 3N-1).

- a. give highest priority to avoiding by-catches of harbour porpoises, particularly following the recommendations of ASCOBANS and the Jastarnia Plan, in order to achieve the ecological objective of the

Baltic Sea Action Plan. By-catch of harbour porpoise, shall be significantly reduced with the aim to reach by-catch rates close to zero, recognizing that the Baltic Proper population of harbour porpoise is more threatened than the WBBK population

The Meeting is invited to take note of the follow-up and discussions by Baltfish on the ICES Special Request Advice on EU request on emergency measures to prevent bycatch of Baltic Proper harbour porpoise.

- b. take action for collection and analysis of data on pressures such as by-catch, disturbance, including underwater noise, pollutants, changes in food base and prey quality, habitat deterioration, climate change, and human activities associated with the listed pressures;
- c. Continue to carry out regular large-scale regional surveys, such as SAMBAH, SCANS and MiniSCANS, of abundance, density and distribution, as well as coordinated national monitoring programmes of harbour porpoise distribution, abundance and density where appropriate

Germany is invited to inform the Meeting on the status of LIFE application for the SAMBAH II project.

- d. take necessary action for collection and analysis of data on behavior, life history and health from by caught and stranded animals and sightings;
- e. seek close co-operation inter alia with OSPAR, ASCOBANS and ICES;
- f. consider the establishment of marine protected areas for harbour porpoises within the framework of the Baltic Sea Protected Areas (HELCOM MPAs) when documented information is available that an area is important to harbour porpoises
- g. implementing effective and adequate protection measures for the species both inside and outside HELCOM MPAs;

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

STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2021 invited EG MAMA to annually report count data to the HELCOM Biodiversity Database (once the functionality is enabled) and to annually provide a document to the autumn meeting of State and Conservation Working Group containing a table presenting the number of seals by species and management unit, confidence information as well as population trend curves.

The meeting invited the Secretariat to prepare a document template for submission to EG MAMA 15-2021 to support the work. The meeting noted that data on harbour seals will only be obtained during autumn and thus will be reported for the previous year. The meeting noted that alternative methods for surveying ringed seals are being considered in EG MAMA to account for the increasing frequency of milder winters and consequent poor ice conditions.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the template for summarising information stemming from annual seal monitoring, as well as an update on the progress of enabling reporting of count information to HELCOM BioBase (**document 3N-2**).

Reporting on the Recommendation

Lead country for this Recommendation is Sweden.

The Recommendation states that the effectiveness of the Recommendation is to be assessed in 5 years' time with regard to the conservation of seals in the Baltic Sea Area, and whether amendments are necessary. The latest full reporting took place in 2017 and reporting is mainly prepared by the EG MAMA group.

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

The Contracting Parties are invited to inform the Meeting on any ongoing or planned national work, outside of what is specified, relevant to the actions listed below.

Reporting on the Recommendation

Co-lead countries for this recommendation are Sweden and Germany.

The Recommendation states that action taken by the Contracting Parties in accordance with this Recommendation should be reported to the Commission on request.

- 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'
- b) Follow-up on action 'jointly assess cumulative impacts of wind energy facilities and wave energy installations in the Baltic Sea Area on birds, including risks of collisions and adverse effects to migration routes'
- c) Follow-up on action 'Enable appropriate planning of the use of marine space that incorporates conservation need of seabirds in the Baltic-wide context thus contributing to reaching their favourable conservation status'
- d) Follow-up on action 'Support development and use of nature friendly wind energy technology to minimize collision risk and other negative impacts on birds and intensify the research;
- e) Follow-up on action 'Avoid that wind energy facilities and wave energy installations are sited in areas important for birds, and that the loss of off-shore staging habitats will be halted'
- f) Follow-up on action 'Avoid that wind energy facilities are situated within major migrating routes of birds'
- g) Follow-up on action 'Ensure that plans for offshore wind energy development and individual wind energy facilities will be established only following strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment, respectively, where cumulative regional Baltic Sea scale and sub-basin scale impacts and benefits of the different development options to birds have been thoroughly assessed'
- h) Follow-up on action 'Include into construction and operating permissions the obligation for the operator to carry out adequate monitoring of impacts on birds during the operation phase'

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

The Contracting Parties are invited to inform the Meeting on any ongoing or planned national work relevant to the actions listed below.

Reporting on the Recommendation

Lead country for this Recommendation is Finland.

Reporting for this Recommendation is due in 2021.

Finland is invited to present a draft reporting template for the Recommendation at the Meeting.

The Meeting is invited to approve the reporting template (document 3N-3) and agree on the timeline for reporting in 2021.

Revision of the Recommendation

STATE & CONSERVATION 12-2020 took note of the observed possible update needs for Recommendation 35/1, as presented by Finland, and noted the comment by Denmark that the updated Recommendation should strive to have as long a shelf life as possible without losing the level of ambition and that relevant outcomes from the BSAP update are important to be included in the update and by CCB whether synopses related to MPAs will be scrutinized when updating the Recommendation and whether the Aichi targets mentioned on the first page will be updated based on the new CBD biodiversity targets stemming from the post-2020 process.

Presentations on specific national MPAs

STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020 welcomed the information that Denmark will give a presentation on Danish MPAs and Finland on an adjacent transnational MPA between Sweden and Finland in the Bothnian Bay at STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021.

Denmark and Finland are invited to give presentations on these MPAs at the Meeting.

Sweden is invited to present information on a new Swedish framework for a network of MPAs. The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 noted that information on new national MPA processes and designations will be submitted by Denmark to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021.

- 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'

The Meeting is invited to note that the Secretariat has updated the GIS layer containing MPA borders based on submitted shapefiles.

The Contracting Parties are invited to highlight and report any missing information and to inform the Meeting on any new or planned MPAs in territorial waters or EEZ areas beyond said waters.

- b) Follow-up of action 'review whether new coastal and marine areas justify being selected as HELCOM MPAs, and to designate new sites as HELCOM MPAs where ecologically meaningful, especially in offshore area beyond territorial waters'

The Contracting Parties are invited to share information on any newly designated national MPAs which could be included in the HELCOM MPA network with the Meeting.

- 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'
- 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'
- e) 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'
- f) 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'

Finland is invited to submit and present the amended instructions for MPA pressure evaluation (**document 3N-4**) to the Meeting.

The Meeting is invited to approve the final instructions and note that the document should be considered as a living document after its approval.

- g) Follow-up of action 'modernize the HELCOM MPAs database'
- h) 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)'

The Meeting is invited to take note of the responses received under the national reporting on this action for the BSAP update and consider making this data reporting an annual occurrence with a given deadline.

- m) 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, such as MSFD requirements, in particular those concerning spatial protection measures

The Meeting is invited to note that due to a technical error during the HELCOM website renewal in 2019, the updated version of the MPA designation guidelines, which was approved for publication by STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019, was lost from the HELCOM website.

The Meeting is invited to confirm that the updated MPA designation guidelines (**document 3N-5**) can be republished on the HELCOM website.

[RECOMMENDATION 37/2 CONSERVATION OF BALTIC SEA SPECIES CATEGORIZED AS THREATENED ACCORDING TO THE 2013 HELCOM RED LIST](#)

The Contracting Parties are invited to inform the Meeting on any ongoing or planned national work, outside of what is specified, relevant to the actions listed below.

[Reporting on the Recommendation](#)

The lead country for this Recommendation is Germany.

The reporting frequency for the Recommendation is 6 years and the reporting for 2020 was due by end of June 2021.

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 invited those Contracting Parties that have not yet reported on Recommendations 37/2 and 40/1 to do so as soon as convenient but not later than by end of June 2021 by sending the completed reporting templates to Germany (gesine.lange@nabu.de).

*Germany is invited to present the reporting results to the Meeting (**document 3N-6**).*

The Meeting is invited to take note of the reporting results.

- 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'](#)

STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016 agreed to follow-up on the agreed action 'Activities to support conservation of Baltic Sea species and biotopes/habitats categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM Red List' by testing the categorization of conservation measures proposed by the Meeting ([Outcome STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016, Annex 3](#)), and by updating the inventory of national conservation plans for species and biotopes threatened according to the HELCOM Red Lists.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the updates in information on national conservation plans for species and biotopes categorized as threatened according to HELCOM 2013 Red List, as presented by the Secretariat (**document 3N-7**).

The Contracting Parties are invited to update the living document on the inventory of national conservation plans.

The Contracting Parties are invited to report missing and additional information on national conservation plans to the Secretariat (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi) as it becomes available (template available upon request).

STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020 acknowledged that there are no clear agreed definitions for conservation plan, action plan etc. which has resulted in unclarity regarding the internal relationship between these different measures. The Meeting agreed to consider the preferred interpretation of the terms at STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 and invited Sweden to submit a document to the meeting outlining the various terms and possible definitions, to function as background for further discussion.

*Sweden is invited to submit and present a document outlining the various terms (conservation plan, action plan etc.) and possible definitions to the Meeting (**document 3N-8**).*

The Meeting is invited to jointly discuss the preferred interpretation of the terms conservation plan, action plan etc.

- 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'
- c) Follow-up of action 'Take measures to reduce transboundary pressures and/or impacts on HELCOM threatened migrating species'

STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020 took note of the information provided by Finland and Germany regarding which of the measures recommended by JWG Bird have been implemented in the respective CP. The meeting took note of the information that Denmark will provide information intersessionally and invited all Contracting Parties to provide their responses to the Secretariat (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi) so that they can be collated and presented in an overview to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the overview of measures recommended by JWG Bird have been implemented in the Contracting Parties (document 3N-10).

The Contracting Parties are invited to share information with the Meeting on, or express their interest in, any transboundary efforts to reduce the pressures and/or impacts on threatened migrating species.

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

Reporting on the Recommendation

The lead country for this Recommendation is Germany.

The reporting frequency for the Recommendation is 6 years and the reporting for 2020 was due by end of June 2021.

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 invited those Contracting Parties that have not yet reported on Recommendations 37/2 and 40/1 to do so as soon as convenient but not later than by end of June 2021 by sending the completed reporting templates to Germany (gesine.lange@nabu.de).

Germany is invited to present the reporting results to the Meeting (document 3N-9).

The Meeting is invited to take note of the reporting results.

Agenda Item 4N Links to ongoing work under the Habitats and Birds Directives

STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 supported the proposal to have a regional discussion on the common understanding and future regional coordination of the assessment of relevant marine species and habitats under EU directives and agreed that this should be a reoccurring agenda point of State and Conservation meetings, especially in preparation for the next reporting on the directives.

The Contracting parties are invited to present progress, questions and challenges related to the work on the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.

Agenda Item 5N Dedicated session

The Meeting is invited to recall that STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020 agreed for upcoming meetings to identify a relevant theme or topic and include a dedicated session during the meeting to tackling the issue in question, with the aim that this would result in concrete ways forward and the identification of clear future tasks.

In such a dedicated session the Meeting is invited to consider and recommend how to better incorporate conservation and other topics of biodiversity relevance into HOLAS process and the State of the Baltic Sea report.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the list of proposed topics for a dedicated session ([document 5N-1](#)) and consider adding topics as relevant as well as agree on a topic for STATE & CONSERVATION 17-2022.

Agenda Item 6N Plans for implementation of the work plan and emerging issues

The Meeting is invited to discuss any further plans relating to implementing the work plan and/or identifying emerging issues.

The Meeting is invited to recall that STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 welcomed the German [proposal for development of a common understanding on how to protect species and restore and protect habitats in coastal areas with special focus on macro vegetation, reefs and nesting seabird species](#) and invited the Contracting Parties to provide possible written comments to Germany by end of June 2021 and invited Germany to present an updated version of the document under the conservation session of STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021.

*Germany is invited to submit and present an updated version of the proposal for common understanding on coastal biodiversity (**document 6N-1**) for the meeting.*

The Meeting is invited to consider the updated version.

Agenda Item 7N Any other business

HELCOM Expert Group on Sturgeon Remediation (EG STUR)

EG STUR is invited to give a presentation on the progress of work, as requested by STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021.

The Meeting is invited to take note of progress on implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Sturgeon Remediation.

The Meeting is invited to discuss any other business related to the themes of nature conservation and biodiversity.

Agenda Item 8N Outcome of the Nature conservation and biodiversity session

A draft Outcome with main decisions will be prepared by the Secretariat for consideration and approval by the attendants of the nature conservation and biodiversity session of the Meeting.