



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION
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Document title	Identified barriers to the reporting of 2021 Coastal Fish data
Code	3J-27
Category	CMNT
Agenda Item	3J – Progress of relevant HELCOM expert groups and projects
Submission date	13.9.2021
Submitted by	Coastal Fish indicator leads

Background

This document summarizes the expected barriers, and implications, related to the reporting of 2021 coastal fish data for application in HOLAS III, as requested by State and Conservation 14-2021 ([Outcomes paragraph 4J-96](#)). The same information is also provided within the indicator template documents provided to this meeting.

[S&C 2021-14](#) asked 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.

The barriers for including 2021 data for coastal fish in HOLAS III are two-fold.

- 1) the timing of the data-submission deadline for HOLAS III in late May 2022 is not possible to meet for all Contracting Parties. In FISH PRO III, the data-reporting deadline has since long been the 30th of June the following year, and very few Contracting Parties are able to meet this deadline as data is usually reported in early fall.
- 2) the deadline for indicator evaluations is set to 31st of August 2022 and the time-period between the final data submission of 2021 data (even if it was available by end of May 2022) and this deadline coincides with the field season of the majority of the experts involved in the work. There is hence no possibility for evaluation and review of the indicator results to also include 2021 data by the experts during the period of June-August 2022.

The implications on the assessment results from not including also 2021 data are difficult to perceive given that coastal fish indicator data exhibit pronounced interannual variation, a feature that has substantial impact on the occurrence of trends in short time-series. For the longer time-series (> 15 years of data), for which the “base-line approach” will be applied, however, excluding 2021 will likely not have any major impact on the assessment results as the indicator assessment value is based on the median indicator value during the assessment period of six (and in this case five) years. The potential inclusion of 2021 data in some areas but not all, is expected to lower the comparability of the assessments in the different areas.

Action requested

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.