



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature
conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION
15-2020

Online, 4-8 October 2021

Document title	Development of a Common understanding on how to protect species and restore and protect habitats in coastal areas - special focus on macrovegetation, reefs and nesting seabird species
Code	6N-1
Category	CMNT
Agenda Item	6N– Plans for implementation of the work plan and emerging issues
Submission date	21.9.2021
Submitted by	Germany
Reference	S&C 14-2021 document 8J-3

Note that this document was submitted to the Secretariat on time and the late submission is the responsibility of the Secretariat. It will be decided by the Meeting whether the document can be discussed or is postponed to the next meeting.

Background

At HELCOM State&Conservation 14 Germany introduced a proposal for the development of a common understanding on how to better protect species and restore and protect habitats in coastal areas with special focus on macrovegetation, reefs and nesting seabird species ([S&C 14-2021 document 8J-3](#), [Presentation 16](#)). S&C 14 welcomed the German proposal and noted several ongoing restoration activities in Finland, Denmark, and Sweden as well as welcomed the exchange of experiences/activities in relation to the proposal also in the future. SWE informed S&C14 that a handbook on restoration of bladder wrack produced by Sweden is available also in English.

S&C14 suggested to link this work to the development of the planned restoration action plan under the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan and noted that 2025 is the target year for developing the restoration action plan. S&C14 further suggested that the EU multispecies action plan could be utilized in this work and invited the Contracting Parties to provide possible written comments to Germany (christine.wenzel@melund.landsh.de) by end of June 2021. Germany was invited to present an updated version of the document under the conservation session of STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 (document 5N-1).

Denmark submitted the following comment by the deadline mentioned above while thanking for the proposal regarding a common understanding on how to protect species and re-store and protect habitats in coastal areas: „We support knowledge sharing and the collection of concrete management measures so countries can learn from each other and optimise their management measures for endangered species and habitats (as needed). However, at this stage we do not support producing common rules. We would like to point out that there are already several good examples of transnational cooperation on ‘best practice’ and coordinated efforts for endangered birds such as the Baltic meadow birds and other coastal birds - e.g. in Natura 2000 sites and with funding from LIFE Nature. **Therefore, we find it important that as a first step the existence of groups/collaborations that operate in the Baltic Sea are mapped, to ensure that HELCOM does not take on work that is already underway in a well-established group/collaboration. If this work is not carried out by a current group/collaboration, then relevant groups under HELCOM can be responsible for knowledge sharing and collection in a report on, which measures work and which do not work.**“

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the updated version of the document in particular the tentative and not exhaustive list of ongoing activities as regards the German proposal and discuss the way forward taking into consideration the comment submitted by Denmark.

Tentative and not exhaustive list of ongoing activities as regards 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

Text in grey refers to projects, which focus on the North Sea.

Title	Instrument type (program, project, measure, subsidy, study, etc.)	Aims / Methods
Breeding Birds in Coastal Areas		
EU International Multi-Species Action Plan for the Conservation of Breeding Waders in Wet Grassland Habitats in Europe (2018-2028)	program	<p>Multi-Species Action Plans (MSAPs) are designed to coordinate conservation action that seeks to protect groups of threatened species that occur across similar habitats.</p> <p>The MSAP focuses on the following biogeographic populations: Baltic Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina schinzii</i>), "European" Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa limosa</i>), Common Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>), Common Snipe (<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>), Eurasian Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>), Eurasian Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>), Northern Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) and Ruff (<i>Calidris [Philomachus] pugnax</i>).</p>
Better Bird LIFE (Baltic Sea), September 2018 until October 2025	project	<p>Better BirdLIFE is focused on coastal birds in the West Baltic Sea.</p> <p>The main objectives of the project, Better BirdLIFE, are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve natural habitats for 10 bird species listed in Annex 1 of Directive 2009/147/EC and 4 species of regularly occurring migratory bird species. - improve conservation status for the 14 bird species targeted. - contribute to obtain favourable conservation status for 10 natural habitat types listed in Annex 1 of Directive 92/43/EEC. - counteract 8 identified threats toward the 14 bird species and 10 natural habitat types.
LIFE Limosa (Northsea)	project	<p>Aim is to stop the decline of black-tailed gotwit, ruff and other species.</p> <p>Measures are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - optimizing wet grassland in ten SPA at the Northsea Coast in SH - increase breeding success by improving habitat conditions

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LIFE Waddensea Birds (Northsea)	project	<p>Aim: counteract six identified threats to birds and their habitats in the Danish and German Wadden Sea area. Actions will focus on two Natura 2000 sites in the Wadden Sea Marsh in the Atlantic biogeographical region with a focus on waders and meadow birds.</p> <p>The main objectives: increase the number and conservation status by improving and restoring feeding and breeding habitats; increase the number and conservation status of migrating/wintering species, Reduce predation (including from invasive alien species) of the bird species; Introduce a multifunctional approach, including adaptation to climate change through storm-water storage.</p>
Species specific measures of Natura 2000 Management plans	measures	Different measures at different sites: visitor navigation, visitor information, water management, fencing against predation and against stepping on clutches
„Feuerwehrtopf“ (Northsea)	subsidy	Success based contractual nature conservation / flexible form of agri-environmental scheme, implemented for the protection of meadow birds: farmers get a single compensatory payment for an adapted management, if broods of Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>), Black-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>), Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) or Eurasian curlew (<i>Numenius arquatus</i>) were located on their grasslands. Since 1999 the Ministry of the Environment of Schleswig-Holstein finances the pays.
Protection concepts for single species of the Michael Otto Institute of the NABU Germany (for Oystercatcher, great ringed plover a.o.)	Study / measure	Species specific Examinations and measures: Analysis of habitat conditions, Birds get ringed, Investigation about Food, Measures like Fences
Predation management concept of Schleswig-Holstein	program	<p>Aim: Protection of meadow breeding birds and coastal birds against predation</p> <p>Instruments: map with the most important sites for target species; check sheet to find suitable measures for a site, description of ways for funding measures</p>
Working Group on Coastal Birds and Coastal Bird Conservation in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	Program/ measure	<p>aim: protection of the coastal birds and their breeding sites</p> <p>instruments: monitor the breeding success, protect the breeding sites against the impacts of people, optimization of land use (e.g. grazing), predator management concept focusing on islands and peninsulas</p>

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LIFE Limicodra	project	main objectives are i.a. protection of existing breeding grounds and creation of suitable breeding habitats for waders; improvement of conditions for resettlement of Dunlin and Ruff; optimization of common agricultural funding in EU and in our federal state with focus on meadow birds protection; establishment of an expert network on meadow birds in the Baltic Sea Region; Reduction of predator menace measures: optimization of land use, optimization of hydrological management, protection of clutches and predator management
Compensations measures	measure	renaturation of polder (e.g. polder Eisenhammer or Sundische Wiese)
support program for the implementation of the National Strategy on Biological Diversity	project	Hot Spot 29 (finalised): renaturation of polder Drammendorf and Bresewitz Hot Spot 28 (planned): renaturation, optimization of land use, predation management, control invasive species
Macrophytes and reefs		
Mapping of Habitat Types according to EU-requirements (e.g. coastal waters of Schleswig-Holstein and the German EEZ)	program	This mapping is ongoing in Schleswig-Holstein for 12 years and is aiming at a region-wide coverage of all habitat types relevant for european assessments, in particular HD but also contributing to the implementation of the WFD, MSFD and HELCOM. This ongoing program includes macrophytes and reefs
Baltic Intercalibration Exercise according to WFD	program	This intercalibration exercise was or is being carried out by the Baltic geographical intercalibration group (Baltic GIG) with the aim to agree on common assessment procedures for biological quality components between neighbouring countries or baltic-sea-wide according to WFD requirements (e. g. depth distribution of Macrophytes) – see e.g. final report 2018-1-11 „Intercalibration of WFD assessment systems in the German Baltic Sea - Macroalgae and angiosperms & benthic invertebrate fauna“; English summary available under https://www.gewaesser-bewertung.de/index.php?article_id=425&clang=1 ; in German language: https://www.gewaesser-bewertung.de/
Particular measures in the updated MSFD Program of Measures (2021)	measures	The German PoM according to the MSFD has been updated in 2021 and is currently subject of public consultation until 31st December 2021; in relation to the conservation and restoration of reefs one particular measure is included in this program: „Reconstruction of reefs, reintroduction of hardbottom substrates“. The objective is to restore abiotic or biotic reefs in areas,

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		where this habitat type was or is occurring naturally and where favourable conditions for its development exist. This measure is also aiming at contributing to the fulfilment of other regulations such as the HD and HELCOM (in relation to the Baltic Sea).
Scientific Project in German coastal waters „SeaStore – Diversity enhancement through seagrass restoration“	project	The Seastore Project is a scientific joint project run independently by different institutions; for more details see https://www.ifw-kiel.de/institute/research-centers/global-commons-and-climate-policy/projects/seastore-diversity-enhancement-through-seagrass-restoration/

Additional requirements exist for e.g.

- protection against impacts stemming from intensive tourism or other relevant human activities affecting macrophytes, reefs and coastal birds

Proposal for further procedure:

- After finalisation of the new BSAP add a list of Actions to which this initiative is aiming to contribute
- Continue to update the proposal for developing a Common Understanding by adding information about ongoing activities from Contracting Parties
- Add a proposal to establish a Best Practice Data Base
- Add a proposal to initiate regular exchanges of experiences and identify relevant Groups under HELCOM that can be responsible for knowledge sharing and collection as well as reporting on the progress of the initiative