



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature  
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION  
5-2016

Tallinn, Estonia, 7-11 November, 2016

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<b>Document title</b>	Proposal on the Limit Reference Level (LRL) for harbour seals
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*Note that the document was submitted after the established deadline. It will be decided by the Meeting if the document can be discussed or postponed to the next meeting.*

### Background

This document contains a proposal on the Limit Reference Level (LRL) for harbour seals, prepared by a drafting group including participants from Denmark, Germany and Sweden during SEAL 10-2016.

SEAL 10-2016 considered the proposal, agreed on it as included in this document, noting the study reservations by Denmark and Sweden, and agreed to submit it for the consideration of STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the proposal on the LRL for harbour seals.

## Proposal for the Limit Reference Levels for harbour seals

\*Suggestion – define the limit reference level at 10 000 harbour seals for the combined management unit "Kattegatt (including the Danish Straits)" and "Southwestern Baltic" with respect to the following points.

1. Note that the harbour seals are highly stationary at a smaller geographic scale within the large distribution area. The sub-populations are weakly linked by migration and form a so called "metapopulation". This implies that sub-populations must be monitored and managed separately (this should be regulated in national management plans).

2. If for example the metapopulation is above the limit reference level, the Southwestern Baltic harbour seal subpopulation might still be vulnerable and therefore require a different management and protection strategy:

Each subpopulation should have positive population growth rates until the metapopulation reaches the target reference level (as agreed upon in the HELCOM seal recommendation).

HELCOM MPAs should encompass the main harbour seal haul out sites.

If the growth rate of harbour seals is negatively influenced by e.g. grey seal dominance, different management options should be taken.