

It's the last day of April; that's the deadline for signing up for those important BSAC meetings: Executive Committee and General Assembly on 14th and 15th May 2019:

<http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-Executive-Committee-and-General-Assembly>

We wrote to members for contributions by Tuesday 30th April 2019.

Please let us have any news by Friday 31st May 2019.

BSAC news and meetings

The BSAC held a working group to deal with ecosystem-based management and Natura 2000 on 13th March 2019: basic principles to observe when dealing with fisheries management in NK2 areas

As we reported in the news from April 2019, this was a really good meeting, well attended, including participation by Baltic Member States, Commission and HELCOM. We were looking forward to sharing the meeting report with you. The final report is now adopted and on the website. We highlight the fact that participants at the meeting put forward and adopted a series of basic principles concerning work to deal with fisheries management measures in protected areas. These will be presented to the BSAC ExCom at its next meeting on 14th May. Please see the report here:

[http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-Working-Group-on-Ecosystem-Based-Management/ReportBSACWGEBM13032019FINAL-\(1\).pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB](http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-Working-Group-on-Ecosystem-Based-Management/ReportBSACWGEBM13032019FINAL-(1).pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB)

The BSAC is having a close look at its rules of procedure: with a Focus Group on 28th March 2019

The Focus Group met on 28th March 2019, chaired by **Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, BSAC Chair**. He clarified the aim: to agree on a set of BSAC statutes and procedures that are simple and cover all necessary points. The Focus Group had a thorough going through of its current statutes and rules, then asked the Secretariat to give the document a re-structuring, so as to make it simpler and easier to read. The Focus Group has been working together to further develop the draft and get it ready for the forthcoming General Assembly on 15th May 2019. A draft is sent to the General Assembly, so there can be discussions on this amongst all BSAC members.

Good Housekeeping: End of the BSAC year 2018 – 2019

The auditor has now been and gone and has approved the BSAC expenditure for the year just gone. These are not considered approved until the ExCom and General Assembly have reviewed them and had the chance to comment at the May meetings. The BSAC has just received the first instalment from the Commission for funding its activities for 2019-2020.

Out with the old and in the with the new: we are blowing our own trumpet: the next BSAC Executive Committee and General Assembly on 14th and 15th May 2019: Copenhagen

We're blowing trumpets because these two meetings are the bridge between the end of one year for the BSAC and the start of the new year. So, the BSAC will be reporting on the work that it was doing during its thirteenth year, since it started in 2006. And then it will be approving the work programme year only just started and preparing for forthcoming work and activities.

So, year thirteen: unlucky for some? The BSAC began in 2006, so this was the thirteenth year. It was a challenging year for the BSAC because at General Assembly meeting on 9th May 2019, members were unable to agree on a new chairman for the Executive Committee, after Reine J. Johansson, chair of thirteen years stepped down. But the BSAC was not left in the lurch: the General Assembly honorary chair Steve Karnicki stepped into the breach and led the BSAC as acting ExCom chair for six months (May to November) until the election of Esben Sverdrup-Jensen. It was full speed ahead as the BSAC continued its work, following the work programme and the agreed focus areas. Here, in summary form, is an overview of what went on. The final BSAC report will be presented for adoption at the Executive Committee and General Assembly meetings in May.

The BSAC hosted a Stakeholder Workshop, Methods for Stakeholder Involvement in Fishing Gear Development, 22nd May 2018, Copenhagen, the aim of which was to provide feedback on the risks and potential problems associated with a more inclusive framework for working on fishing gear development, while gaining insight into how the different stakeholder groups perceive their role and the role of the other stakeholder groups. This workshop confirmed the importance of stakeholder involvement in the development of fishing gears and the development of advice and best practices.

The BSAC held a Focus Group on fisheries control and inspection, 29th May 2018, Copenhagen to draft response to questions put to the Advisory Councils in their consultation on fisheries control and inspection programmes in the Baltic (SCIPs).

The BSAC held a Joint Working Group, 11th – 12th June 2018, Tallinn to hear the ICES advice for the Baltic for 2019, starting with the rules for the advice on fishing opportunities in relation to the specified management objectives and the different stock categories. BSAC members discussed and started drafting its annual advice and recommendations for the Baltic fishery in 2019. The challenges for the Baltic were clear: Western Baltic herring and the two cod stocks were those stocks that gave rise to most discussion and questions.

At the Executive Committee, 28th June 2018, Copenhagen there was the adoption of output from the two previously mentioned meetings: on the SCIPs and on the advice for the fishery for 2019. At the same time, conscious of the need to resolve the issue of who should be chair of the BSAC ExCom, the honorary chair confirmed that the planned Executive Committee meeting on Tuesday 6th November would be replaced by an extraordinary General Assembly meeting.

The BSAC Joint Demersal and Pelagic Working Group, 23rd August 2018, Copenhagen was the first meeting of the BSAC to deal with the Commission's proposal for a revised control regulation. It focused on the main topics and sub-topics presented in the Commission's proposal.

With an ecosystem Based Management Working Group, 4th September 2018, Copenhagen the focus was on eels and seals. On eel, the meeting dealt with the Commission's consultation to evaluate the EU eel management regulation from 2007. On seals, focus was on a proposed joint HELCOM/BALTFISH workshop on seals and proposals for topics and questions which should be brought up at the meeting. A draft statement on illegal seal hunting was also presented for the WG to adopt.

The BSAC Extraordinary General Assembly and Executive Committee meetings, 6th November 2018, Gdynia were important and decisive meetings. At the Extraordinary General Assembly Steve Karnicki, the BSAC honorary chair led the meeting and dealt with the main purpose: to elect the new ExCom chair. The election of Esben Sverdrup-Jensen as BSAC chair was by applause/acclamation. The General Assembly also decided to establish a Focus Group to review the BSAC statutes and propose necessary amendments.

At the Executive Committee, the three working group chairs reported on the outcome of the October Fisheries Council meeting to deal with fishing opportunities for the Baltic for their respective stocks, on the work done to deal with the Commission's proposal for a revised Control Regulation, informed of the state of play with work on a rebuilding plan for western Baltic herring, and on the ecosystem based management topics concerning eel and seals

The BSAC Working Group to deal with control, 28th January 2019, Copenhagen carried on where it left off during the meeting of the Joint Working Group on 23rd August 2018, when it started discussions on the Commission's proposal for a revised control regulation.

The Executive Committee, 29th January 2019, Copenhagen prepared for the new BSAC year from 1st April and adopted its draft expenditure and work programme, so as to get Commission approval in good time. The ExCom adopted the Terms of Reference for a newly created BSAC Management Team and the Terms of Reference of the Focus Group to deal with statutes and written procedures.

There was an ExCom Theme meeting with spotlight on eastern Baltic cod: scientists and experts were invited to give information on the state of the eastern Baltic cod stock, results of recent surveys, and to give supplementary information on predators and on the ecosystem. They made clear that the eastern Baltic cod is stressed by multiple factors. After questions and discussions, the meeting reinforced the accumulated knowledge that the eastern Baltic cod is in an acute critical state. The meeting later adopted a statement

calling on BALTFISH Member States and the Commission to take the matter seriously, to make it the primary priority, to make available the necessary resources for further research and react to the situation.

The BSAC Ecosystem Based Management Working Group, 13th March 2019, Copenhagen updated and discussed an overview of the fisheries management measures in Natura 2000 areas in the Baltic. The meeting concluded by defining some basic principles for work concerning fisheries management measures in protected areas.

Finally, Focus Group on Statutes, 28th March 2019, Copenhagen to work on a revised set of statutes and rules of procedure for the BSAC. Work carries on into the new BSAC year.

During the year, the BSAC has produced **recommendations and advice**, as well as letters to various bodies and authorities : in total 22. The BSAC has been represented at **relevant external meetings**: key fora and meetings have been: Commission hosted and arranged meetings, BALTFISH, EFCA, ICES, HELCOM, as well as relevant conferences, seminars and annual meetings. All meetings are reported on and documented. BSAC members have received **regular newsletters** from the BSAC Secretariat. There has been a total of 11 during the year. These have also been made available to observers and put on the BSAC website. The BSAC Executive Committee has received regular letters with updates and notifications: 14 during the year.

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Which brings us up to date and with focus on the next So for the ExCom and General Assembly meeting on 14th and 15th May 2019: SIGN UP TODAY!!!

Please sign up and book journeys and hotels as soon as possible. It's expensive in Copenhagen.

The Danish minister for fisheries Eva Kjer Danish is unable to take part. Instead, Fisheries Director Ole Toft will come at start of the General Assembly, unless called away.

The BSAC Management Team will meet before the ExCom in the morning of 14th May 2019. Agendas and annexes here:

<http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-Executive-Committee-and-General-Assembly>

Are you ready for the advice? Then come to the BSAC Joint Working Group June 11th -12th 2019

The 2019 ICES advice for the Baltic fishery is released on 29th May 2019. Which gives everyone barely two weeks to read it through before the working group of the BSAC to listen to presentation by ICES ACOM vice chair Colm Lordan. The deadline for signing up is Tuesday 28th May 2019:

[http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-Joint-Working-Group-\(1\)](http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-Joint-Working-Group-(1))

And really looking further ahead: BSAC meeting on 3rd September 2019 Helsinki

Reminder: The BSAC draft Work Programme for 2019-2020 says that a discussion on the future Common Fisheries Policy will be initiated already now, in order to produce a communication from the BSAC to the Commission. The key question is: what should the future CFP contain? The date for this is Tuesday 3rd September and the venue Helsinki (HELCOM have very kindly offered us their meeting room at no cost for the room rental). So please note the date. BALTFISH have informed that a BALTFISH Forum will take place in Helsinki on 4th September 2019 (tbc). The BSAC is looking for a moderator, a dynamic, neutral and dialogue-encouraging moderator who can get elicited and gather ideas and input from the participants We are already investigating.

BSAC output recommendations from the BSAC and replies

A reply from DG Mare on eel in connection with the Commission Consultation on eel

To recall: The Commission held a consultation on eel: on the EU Regulation. It took the form of an electronic consultation which the BSAC could not answer. So BSAC members were encouraged to reply separately, and the BSAC sent a letter to DG Mare. DG Mare replied on 1st April. Please see the reply (last in the list) on the website here:

<http://www.bsac.dk/BSAC-Resources/BSAC-Statements-and-recommendations/BSAC-responding-to-the-Commission-consultation-on>

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News from BSAC members/organisations

The meeting with MEPs in Gdynia 29th March 2019: to learn about the EMFF and technical measures

Krzysztof Stanuch, National Chamber of Fish Producers. He went to a short (2 hour!) meeting organised by MEPs Jaroslaw Walesa in order to meet Gabriel Mato at the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Gdynia on Friday 29th March 2019. The meeting dealt with the European Marine and Fisheries Fund 2021-2027 and the draft technical measures regulation. Jaroslaw Wałęsa informed that the new EMFF is still under debate and requires further work. Gabriel Mato informed on the developments and finalization of the 3-year work on the draft regulation on technical measures. Krzysztof Stanuch spoke at the meeting and took the opportunity to expressed strong regrets that the work on technical measures, so crucial for fishermen, had taken so long. He reminded the MEPs about the BSAC recommendations on technical measures and expressed the fact that the BSAC is open to cooperation with the Parliament. Please see Krzysztof's report and recommendation here:

<http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/BSAC-Resources/Documents-section/BSAC-Newsletter-latest/ExternalMeetingreportKS290319FINAL.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB>

The EU regulation on technical measures is expected to be formally adopted at the Council on 6th July 2019 and to enter into force at the beginning of July

The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) meeting of a seminar on fisheries control: the way forward, and its Administrative Board meeting 9th and 10th April 2019, Vigo

These meetings were attended by Staffan Larsson, Swedish Fishermen PO and Andrzej Białas BSAC vice chair

Staffan Larsson's report from the seminar:

<http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/BSAC-Resources/Documents-section/BSAC-Newsletter-latest/BSACReportSLEFCASeminar090419.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB>

Andrzej Białas report from the Administrative Board:

<http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/BSAC-Resources/Documents-section/BSAC-Newsletter-latest/ExternalMeetingreportABEFCAAdminBoard100419.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB>

Goodbye Malin: Swedish Fishermen PO ExCom substitute to the BSAC Malin Skog is leaving that organisation to follow new work as consultant and dealing with, for example with MSC. So she will be leaving the BSAC and we won't see her at the meetings in May. We wait for formal notice from the Swedish Fishermen PO. Goodbye Malin and good luck.

BALTFISH/Member States news and meetings

What about output from the seal workshop 19th to 20th March 2019?

We've asked if there's an official report from the BALTFISH workshop and if the presentations can be made available.

More eel: the BALTFISH workshop eel 8th May 2019 – invite and speaker from BSAC

BALTFISH has invited the BSAC to its BALTFISH Workshop on the management of eel organised by the Swedish BALTFISH Presidency. The BALTFISH workshop on management of eel is organised back to back with the BALTFISH CEG (ControlExpertGroup) Workshop on Control of eel that will be organised on 7th May. The Draft Agenda is here:

<http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/External-events/BALTFISH-Workshop-on-fisheries-management-of-eels>

The BSAC has also been invited to register 1 speaker representing the BSAC at the workshop. Nils Höglund (Chair of the EBM WG) has confirmed that he's ready to deliver the BSAC's views on the eel management with clear hints towards needs to update current eel recovery plan. He reminds that the BSAC has had several meetings on this and has a good basis for the different views, including joint views supported by a majority, if not all the BSAC. Michael Andersen (Demersal WG chair) and Jan Kappel (European Anglers Alliance) are also taking part from the BSAC.

The next BALTFISH Forum meeting 3rd June 2019, Stockholm

Don't forget, please note the date.

Council news and meetings

All quiet on the Council front.

Commission news and meetings

Fisheries: Commission welcomes adoption of new technical conservation measures, 16th April 2019

The European Parliament has adopted the political agreement reached in February between the co-legislators on the Commission's proposal for decentralised and simplified technical rules. The new rules will give fishermen a stronger say in deciding on the best measures for sustainable fishing, adapted to their specific needs. The new rules, in line with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and the Commission's Better Regulation agenda, streamline the technical measures guiding how, where and when fishermen may fish, as well as determining the type of gear, catch composition and ways to deal with accidental catches.

The Regulation simplifies the existing technical conservation measures that over the years have become highly complex. It includes provisions for the protection of the marine ecosystem and marine habitats. The new rules confirm the EU's strong commitment to sustainable fisheries by introducing additional measures to avoid by-catches of non-commercial and sensitive species.

This new Regulation will enter into force 20 days after its publication, which will take place after the necessary steps in the Council and the signature by the Council and the European Parliament.

https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/press/fisheries-commission-welcomes-adoption-new-technical-conservation-measures_en

EUMOFA Monthly Highlights:

The latest issue of the **EUMOFA Monthly Highlights No. 3/2019** has now been published.

Increases in value and volume: First sales grew in Denmark, Estonia, Norway and Portugal. The increases were particularly high in Norway and Denmark due mainly to higher harvests of small pelagics. In Portugal, the rise was linked to a higher supply of cephalopods (octopus, squid, and cuttlefish). Decreases in value and volume: First sales dropped in Belgium, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK. The decrease was particularly sharp in Sweden due to lower harvests of herring and sprat – the species that account for 90% of total first-sales volume in the country. Nothing specifically Baltic this time.

<https://www.eumofa.eu/documents/20178/145405/MH+3+2019+EN+16.04..pdf/>

The Seafood Global Expo, 7th -9th May 2019, Brussels

The exposition features more than 1,900 exhibiting companies from 78 countries. Exhibitors supply nearly every type of fish, seafood, and seafood-related product or service.

<https://www.seafoodexpo.com/global/>

Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries TECF

Report: Monitoring of the performance of the CFP, April 2019

STECF is requested to report on progress in achieving MSY objectives in line with the Common Fisheries Policy. It includes an overview of the trends observed in the NE Atlantic (2003 to 2017) and the Mediterranean & Black Seas (2003 to 2016), and applies to the stocks included in the reference list of stocks for these areas. The stocks are those with a full analytical assessment as well as data limited in the NE Atlantic stocks.

It can be downloaded at:

https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/cfp-monitoring/-/asset_publisher/oz5O/document/id/2484866?inheritRedirect=false&redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fstecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu%3A443%2Freports%2Fcfp-monitoring%3Fp_p_id%3D101_INSTANCE_oz5O%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-2%26p_p_col_pos%3D1%26p_p_col_count%3D2

It's commented on below

European Parliament news and meetings

The Committee on Fisheries has concluded its work for the 8th parliamentary term 2014 - 2019.

After the European elections on 23 - 26 May 2019 and the constitutive meeting of the new European Parliament, the Committee on Fisheries will convene again in week 28 (tbc).

The next Fisheries Committee meetings (to be confirmed):

Monday, 8th July (constitutive meeting)

Monday, 22nd July

Tuesday, 23rd July

The latest PECH Newsletter: Trawler from April 2019 prepared by the Secretariat of the Committee on Fisheries. It has farewell words from the chair of the Committee Alain Cadec with a few words on what the Committee has achieved or started on. It includes a list of the ongoing files Available on PECH website:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/162665/Trawler%20April%202019.pdf>

EFCA Control Agency news and meetings

Technical guidelines and specifications for the implementation of Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) in EU fisheries EFCA

12th April 2019

This EFCA document describes minimum technical requirements and standards for REM systems which could be used as a tool to monitor and document compliance with the CFP landing obligation in EU fisheries. It's meant as a guidance document for MS authorities to be used for the potential implementation of REM on their vessels with the purpose of monitoring and control of the landing obligation and related provisions. 43 pages.

<https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/technical-guidelines-and-specifications-implementation-remote-electronic-monitoring-rem-eu>

Happy 10th Anniversary EFCA!

2018 was a year of intense activity, marking EFCA's tenth anniversary. The agency's main achievements relate to the core tasks of operational coordination and fisheries control and its contribution to the EU Coast Guard cooperation.

EFCA performed 26,922 coordinated inspections, a 28% increase compared to 2017. 714 suspected infringements, 15% less than in 2017, were detected, mostly concerning non-compliance with recording obligations and technical measures.

At international level, EFCA has assisted the European Union in cooperating with developing countries and international fisheries organisations to help combat illegal fishing. In 2018, the five-year EU funded development project PESCAO kicked off, aiming to improve the fight against Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing in Western Africa, contributing to sustainable fisheries management and the reduction of food insecurity in the region. As part of this project, EFCA provides technical assistance to thirteen countries in the area. The full annual report 2018 of EFCA:

<https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/efca-administrative-board-adopts-its-annual-report-2018>

This is the press release:

https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/press/2018-year-many-achievements-european-fisheries-control-agency-efca_en

Dates for next EFCA meetings:

Advisory Board 21st October 2019, and Administrative Board 22nd October 2019, both tbc.

News from other ACs

The Pelagic AC reporting from the January meeting between ICES and the Advisory Councils

Please find attached the minutes of the MIAC meeting from 17 January 2019. Final report from the MIAC meeting – the one done by the PELAC on behalf of all the ACs. Find it here:

<http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/BSAC-Resources/Documents-section/BSAC-Newsletter-latest/FINAL-Minutes-MIAC-meeting17-01-2019.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB>

The NSAC is going to work on the circular design of fishing gear

At their last Ecosystem Working Group (19th April 2019) Dr Anne-Cécile Dragon from WWF reported on the EC meeting held on the 26th February on the Circular design of fishing gear in relation to the single use plastics directive. (The BSAC was at this and made a report). During the discussion, a need for a focus group working on the circular design of the fishing gear has been identified by the NSAC. The Commission is also quite eager to receive advice on this. So this is the NSAC: **Circular Design of Fishing Gear Focus Group:**

Kenny Coull - Scottish Fishermen	Kenny@swfpa.com
Pim Visser - VisNed	wvisser@visned.nl
Geert Meun - VisNed	gmeun@visned.nl
Henrik S. Lund - Danish Fishermen	hl@dkfisk.dk
Marijke Boonstra - De Stichting Noordzee	m.boonstra@noordzee.nl
Andrea Stolte - WWF	andrea.stolte@wwf.de
Anne-Cécile Dragon - WWF	acdragon@wwf.eu

Added to the mailing list as interested parties are:

Sally Clink, BSAC Secretariat - sc@bsac.dk

Maris Stulgis, DG MARE - Maris.STULGIS@ec.europa.eu

Jasmine Vlietinck, Rederscentrale - info@rederscentrale.be

Anne-Marie Kats, PELAC Secretariat - a.kats@pelagic-ac.org

Supporting documents are available from the NSAC. **Still open:**

To Sally from Baltic Sea AC, would you like to join efforts with BSAC members? The BSAC is hereby informed

The Market Advisory Council says goodbye and hello

Sandra Sanmartin, who was performing the role of Executive Secretary of the MAC, is leaving us at the end of the month. **Konstantinos Kalamantis** will slowly take over the tasks and challenges the MAC entails and be present in the forthcoming meetings. He has extensive experience in policy issues, particularly with regards to fisheries.

ICES and science

The ICES Benchmark report on the Baltic cod east and west WKBALTCOD2

<http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2019/WKBALTCOD2/WKBALTCOD2%202019.pdf>

The ICES workshop WKBALTIC Workshop on the Ecosystem Based Management 20th-23rd May 2019, Copenhagen

Here are the terms of reference for this workshop:
<http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/External-events/WKBALTIC>

The BSAC is invited to a pre-meeting on 20th May 2019. The invitation to the BSAC said:

“The meeting with BSAC [afternoon of 20th May 2019, ahead of the actual workshop] will be to solicit your views and ideas about what are the main ecological and fisheries issues in the Baltic that are of concern for you. We would aim to discuss this in an open forum, and with a full exchange of views. The issues raised would then be investigated by the workshop over the following days to identify where advice and guidance could be provided, or where it was possible and appropriate, to carry out further research. The intention is to have the priorities for work set by the stakeholders rather than the scientists, so your participation would be greatly appreciated and crucial to the success of the workshop.”

The BSAC is taking part as invited guests to the special afternoon meeting on 20th May 2019 (and the rest of the workshop): BSAC chair Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, Nils Höglund, Michael Andersen and Secretariat. No one else from ExCom replied.

ICES Workshop on science with industry initiatives WKSCINDI 24th-26th June 2019

The ICES Workshop on Science with Industry Initiatives (WKSCINDI) will be take place at ICES from 24 June (13:00) to 26 June (17:00) 2019.

This workshop will provide ICES with an up to date overview on the roles that industry can play in delivering scientific information relevant to ICES advice and marine research, and result in a roadmap for measurable steps toward the inclusion and application of scientific data from industry. The terms of reference are given below. ICES expects that this workshop will be well attended as scientists, fishing industry, managers, technologists and NGOs have all expressed interest in participation.

http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/3444dff7-4d70-4bd7-a0d8-45507a7c2025/Expression-of-interest-letter_WKSCINDI.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB

The BSAC ExCom has been asked to indicate interest by 30th April 2019, upon which the names have to go to ICES.

ICES: Do you Sharepoint? An evaluation of ICES Sharepoint

From ICES the following message:

Dear Advisory Councils,

The Stakeholders' SharePoint site Advice Activities has been up and running for 5–6 months now. The Advisory Programme is doing its best to update the site with relevant news and to inform you of upcoming meetings of interest. What information would the ACs like to see on this site? Is the information you receive useful? More and more members of the community are setting up Alerts, in order to be advised when items are uploaded. It is the best way of automatically getting relevant information in your inboxes. So if you haven't generated an Alert, please do so.

If Ex Com members have comments, you can write to me or to Helle G. Jørgensen at ICES Secretariat hellej@ices.dk

Baltic Sea 2020 The inauguration of Baltic Sea Science Center has finally taken place!

11th April 2019

Baltic Sea 2020 had a thank you to the guest of honour, HRH Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden, as well as partners, contributors and employees for a great opening: the Baltic Sea comes to Skansen at the Baltic Sea Science Center. The building is home to aquariums, exhibition areas, classrooms and a laboratory. The challenges of the Baltic Sea. In one part of the building, there is an exhibition highlights the three main environmental challenges faced by the Baltic Sea: eutrophication, environmental toxins and overfishing. Skansen, an island in Stockholm is the world's oldest open-air museum, showcasing the whole of Sweden with houses and farmsteads from every part of the country.

<http://www.skansen.se/en/baltic-sea-science-center>

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HELCOM

From HELCOM's newsletter April 2019:

Excerpts and links:

HELCOM addresses future orientations and adopts key recommendations during its annual meeting:
<http://www.helcom.fi/news/Pages/HELCOM-40-2019.aspx>

There's a further debate on marine litter:

<http://www.helcom.fi/news/Pages/HELCOM-at-UNEA-4.aspx>

A HELCOM questionnaire on alternative fishing gears

9th April 2019

HELCOM sent an e-mail and referred to a draft list of trialled alternative fishing gears or fishing techniques, which FISH 8-2018 had previously agreed will be considered as a living document. The Meeting noted that the list is not exhaustive or final, but rather provides examples of such gears, and discussed the purpose and target audience of the list. The FISH 9-2019 meeting agreed to publish it on the HELCOM Meeting Portal in a dedicated work space, where it can be continuously kept up to date by Contracting Parties and observers. The Meeting also agreed that before publication on the work space, introductory text should be included to explain the background, status and purpose of the document, including a disclaimer that the gears and techniques are not necessarily approved for use. Poland took the lead in the further development of the questionnaire, and Germany offered to help Poland in this regard and to restructure the document, including to draft the introductory text. Poland and Germany have updated the Excel questionnaire and drafted the attached introductory text and as agreed by FISH 9-2019, the text is hereby circulated for comments before publication on the work space. The dedicated Workspace on alternative fishing gears can be found on the HELCOM site (log in needed). The Secretariat has saved a copy of the latest Excel table. Poland and Germany have asked questions:

1. Contracting Parties should check if all information concerning trials carried out in their countries **is reflected properly in the Questionnaire** and also **CPs are requested to complement missing information** (mostly marked in yellow) and also add information about the results of the trials and references;
2. CPs are requested to consider the purposes of this Questionnaire. If it should contain information about the trials aiming at bycatch reduction, reduction of the impact on benthic communities, and reduction of seals' fisheries interactions only **or should also contain information about the trials in order to increase selectivity of fishing gears;**
3. **CPs are requested to check introductory text and disclaimer** if it is ok as it stands now, or further changes are needed.

HELCOM asked for answers by 19th April 2019. We'll update you.

HELCOM FISH 10: will be on 25th and 26th June in Copenhagen

Invitation and agenda here:

[http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/External-events/HELCOM-FISH-\(10\)](http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/External-events/HELCOM-FISH-(10))

HELCOM workshop on seal-fisheries interactions will be on 27th June in Copenhagen

Invitation here:

<http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/External-events/HELCOM-workshop-on-seals>

Other information/reading

German fisheries sector reporting for last year 2018: Fischerblatt tells all

The German monthly news booklet Fischerblatt from April 2019 contains reporting for the cutter and coastal fishery from 2018. Looking at the Baltic, landings from the Schleswig-Holstein vessels totalled 12.430 tonnes at a value of 7.4 million EUR. The corresponding figures for 2017 were 13.223 tonnes and 7.4 million EUR. Almost half of the catches were landed in local ports, and almost the other half landed abroad, whilst the remainder landed in ports in other parts of Germany. The poor quality of the eastern Baltic cod is mentioned; not all of the quota was fished up. The report then goes on to give figures and prices for the landings of cod, the flatfish flounder, plaice and dab, as well as sprat and herring. (Pages 11-13 of the newsletter).

Wall to wall cod reporting: the eastern Baltic variety

This past month, there's been lots of news, information and activities concerning the Eastern cod. It's still going on as we write.

The Secretariat is pleased to note that reference has been made to the BSAC Theme meeting on 29th January 2019 when the BSAC invited experts to come and share the latest knowledge on the eastern cod. It concluded with a statement and short recommendations from the BSAC. The BSAC will revert to this at its ExCom meeting on 14th May 2019.

A group of NGOs wrote a letter to the Baltic ministers about the eastern Baltic cod

On the OurFish site (but you can find it other places aswell) is reference to a joint NGO letter 11th April 2019 to the effect that in their view, for eastern Baltic cod: Emergency measures are needed and justified. They refer to the BSAC meeting from January. Their letter is here:

<https://our.fish/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Letter-to-Ministers-about-Eastern-Baltic-Cod.pdf>

And on the website Under Current news, the heading is: Eastern Baltic cod stock on brink of collapse, report finds 12th April 2019

They also refer to the NGO letter, as well as directly to the ICES benchmark meeting on eastern and western Baltic cod, and which was held on 24th-28th February 2019:

<https://www.undercurrentnews.com/2019/04/12/eastern-baltic-cod-stock-on-brink-of-collapse-report-finds/>

The Fisheries Secretariat also refers to the letter from the NGOs

11th April 2019

<https://www.fishsec.org/2019/04/11/eastern-baltic-cod-fisheries-ministers-urged-to-implement-emergency-measures/>

The Fisheries Secretariat also provides a running update, with a list of different statements, letters and other outputs on eastern Baltic cod, including from the BSAC:

https://www.fishsec.org/2019/04/02/update-on-eastern-baltic-cod/?fbclid=IwAR09Db_pges0zXr48hwNoPJZNdamgcKsr8Xzl_sGhI5pl_B4sVX9O5KF5n8

Coalition Clean Baltic uses the heading: Eastern Baltic cod stock has collapsed – NGOs call to immediately close fishing of Eastern Baltic cod, 11th April 2019

And refers to the call by some NGOs to EU ministers to close the eastern Baltic cod fishery immediately and includes quotes from the recent ICES benchmark report from 5th March 2019

<https://ccb.se/2019/04/eastern-baltic-cod-stock-has-collapsed-ngos-call-to-immediately-close-fishing-of-eastern-baltic-cod/>

The Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet – has an article on why the cod is disappearing

12th April 2019

Written by two Swedish candidates for the forthcoming European Parliament elections, they devote their debate article to what they state as cod in the Baltic being on the brink of collapse.

They state that one cause in their opinion is bottom trawling which by genetic selection leads to catches of larger cod, leaving only smaller ones behind. Another factor they point to is the political infighting amongst ministers over TACS and quotas and not enough consideration given to following the recommendations from the scientists and precautionary principle. They call for the designation of a special EU Commissioner for environment and fisheries in the Baltic, for a ban on bottom trawling and for fishing quotas to follow the precautionary principle. Read here:

<https://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/a/rArB53/torsken-i-ostersjon-ar-pa-gransen-till-kollaps>

From a Swedish documentary on cod in the Baltic - the hope of the sea?

14th April 2019

This follows on from an earlier documentary 18 years ago called “The last cod”. In the preface it says that the cod stock had really diminished then, but it has returned, albeit smaller, thin and full of seal worm. If cod disappears from the Baltic, the entire ecosystem of the Baltic runs the risk of collapse. In his documentary, he goes on a Baltic journey, talk to fishermen and scientists and hopes to find some answers: is there any hope of rescuing the cod and the Baltic?

The Swedish Fishermen PO also have a comment on cod – the eastern variety

From the leader from Peter Olsson, the chairman of the organisation who says stop making the fishermen the guilty party – referring to the recent documentary film from 16th April 2019 on Swedish television about eastern Baltic cod. He starts by welcoming the reference in the documentary to the impact that the seals are having – in terms of the seal worm which has infected the cod. He thinks the documentary gives a good insight into the problems facing the Swedish fishermen who are trying to carry out a local, coastal small scale fishery. But the Baltic isn't a Swedish sea; and it requires all Baltic member states, as well as Russia to work together. The Swedish Fishermen PO has been calling on ministers to follow the ICES advice and reduce the TAC. But he's concerned that this documentary can paint a negative picture of the Swedish fishermen. For example, the bigger vessels from the west coast are not fishing for cod, but for sprat and herring. As for the cod near the island of Åland: it's not a species that's resistant to the seal worm, it's just that the seal worm can't survive in the less salty waters around Åland. His article is here:

<https://www.sfpo.se/>

The Fisheries Secretariat also refers to the TV Documentary: The cod – hope of the Baltic Sea

16th April, 2019

And their comment is that: A new Swedish TV-documentary airing on Tuesday 16 April paints a depressing picture of the Eastern Baltic Cod stock. However, they state, ‘The cod – hope of the Sea’, Torsken – havets hopp, also provides a glimmer of hope for the iconic species and the Baltic Sea ecosystem. This is just a summary of the documentary which is in Swedish. Here's the documentary in Swedish. From 14th April 2019 and available until 13th October 2019:

<https://www.svtplay.se/video/21832166/torsken-havets-hopp>

STECF: Is the glass half full or half empty?

Europêche on the STECF report on status in terms of achieving sustainable fishery for fish stocks 36% more fish in the sea in only ten years, 17th April 2019

Europêche reports that this was one of the main results from the European Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) annual report¹ on the performance of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), particularly concerning the progress towards achieving sustainable fisheries. The scientific report shows that the stock status has significantly improved in the North-East Atlantic with an overall downward trend in the fishing pressure over the period 2003-2017. As a consequence, fish populations have been generally increasing since 2007, reaching in 2017 levels 36% higher than in 2003. However, further efforts are still needed, particularly in the Mediterranean.

<http://europeche.chil.me/post/253859/3625-more-fish-in-the-sea-in-only-ten-years>

Fisheries Secretariat on the STECF report: Europe risks missing legal deadline to end overfishing Published on 12th April, 2019

“Many stocks remain overfished and/or outside safe biological limits, and ... progress achieved until 2017 seems too slow to ensure that all stocks will be rebuilt and managed according to FMSY by 2020.”, which is the legal deadline set by the EU Common Fisheries Policy, CFP. This is the conclusion of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) report “Monitoring the performance of the Common Fisheries Policy”.

<https://www.fishsec.org/2019/04/12/eu-report-the-eu-risks-missing-legal-deadline-to-end-overfishing/>

OurFish have a debate article on the Danish news site Altinget: OurFish to EvaKjer: stop overfishing before the deadline is passed

12th April 2019

It states that Eva Kjer Hansen, the minister of fisheries in Denmark committed to stop overfishing before 2020. The deadline risks being passed. This means that future fish stocks and the marine environment will be put at risk, writes Catherine Pedersen Schirmer. She refers to the STECF report (link above) and quotes that 41% of north Atlantic stocks are still overfished.

She also refers to the recent ICES benchmark of cod stocks report and states that the (eastern) cod stock in the Baltic is now at such a critical level that it is no longer able to reproduce. And she refers to the above-mentioned letter to all ministers around the Baltic to stop the commercial cod fishery immediately. And back to the CFP reform from 2013 and the promise by all EU ministers to live up to the legal requirement to stop overfishing by 2020 at the latest.

<https://www.altinget.dk/miljoe/artikel/our-fish-til-eva-kjer-hansen-stop-overfiskeri-inden-deadline-overskrides>

This has prompted head biologist Michael Andersen of the Danish Fishermen PO to put pen to paper and write a commentary in the newspaper of the Fishing News on 20th April 2019

The quota for cod in the eastern Baltic must be reduced.

See here (unofficial translation and shortened):

<http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/BSAC-Resources/Documents-section/BSAC-Newsletter-latest/MichAndersentoFT200419.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB>

And whilst with the Danish Fishermen PO, a zoom into one of the organisations under its umbrella: the Fishermen's Association of Bornholm and Christiansø recent General Assembly meeting April 2019

Reporting on 6th April 2019 in the Fishing News that “grey seals are taking their share of the food” “Both cod, fishermen and chairman (of Bornholm) under pressure because 2018 became the year of the seal” Reporting as chair of the organisation, Thomas Thomsen said that in his 33 years as fisherman, he has never experienced such a bad cod fishery. In his annual report he referred to the fact that the cod in the eastern Baltic are in a catastrophic situation, whereas the grey seal has never had it better. In 2018 a total of 2.580 tonnes of cod were caught, which represents a 35% use of the quota. The cod fishery from 2017 to 2018 has decreased by 38.6% and that meant a loss of earning of 14.3 million DKK (just under 2 million EUR). He pointed out that the fishermen from Bornholm have been calling repeatedly for something to be done; no more reports or studies. Action needed includes temporary compensation for the fishermen, development of technical solutions and regulation of the seal stock. Thomas Thomsen was unable to predict any rapid improvement of the eastern cod stock; he cannot see that happening before the grey seal population is thinned out.

Bornholm in figures:

Value of total landings in 2018 was 96.2 million DKK (almost 13 million EUR), compared to 99 million DKK in 2017 (13 million EUR). Cod is still the main source of revenue, but is being increasingly replaced by other species such as plaice and Norway lobster

And speaking at the annual meeting was Marie Storr Poulsen from DTU Aqua, who admitted to having been shocked by the latest fishing trips on the Baltic to study the cod – very small catches. They now have evidence to show that the cod are not growing - they get to 25 cm, but then grow only a bit and it all stops at 30cms. So there is a real reduction on growth after 30 cm. There are a lot of small cod, but they never get big. Moreover, 90-100% of the cod are infected with worms. So the poor and lack of growth is no surprise. She added that other fish are also getting infected: 16% also contain a couple of worms. There is an indication that the worms are damaging the cod. And as the number of seals has increased, so has the number of cod containing worms. So there is an interaction, and they are working on two theories: that the liver worm survive well in water that does not contain much salt and that the species of seal has significance – that it's the grey seal that's the problem, and it can be both things. DTU Aqua are currently working on finding out whether salt content of the water has a significance.

Did someone say seals? Check out the site of the Association for Low Impact Coastal Fishery and meet Sara Königson from Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences: seals affect fish stocks near the coast

11th April 2019

In this article, Sara Königson says she's been working on the seals since 2000 and talks about the conflicts that there are between seals and fish and fishermen. In the eastern Baltic, cod mortality is high, due not only to the seals. But they do have an impact: damaging the fishing gear, affecting the stock, transferring parasites to the cod. She refers to the Habitats Directive, according to which when managing nature, one should take account of the surrounding ecosystem as well as human activities. It's in Danish:

<http://skaansomtkystfiskeri.dk/forsker-saeler-paavirker-kystnaere-fiskebestande/>

Baltic Sea 2020, Its Fisheries Brief No. 12, 2nd April 2019

The catastrophic development of the Baltic cod continues with no sign of intervention on the part of authorities or politicians. Stocks have been in decline for 20 years, but the situation has clearly reached crisis point in recent years, which was confirmed when the a Swedish science radio programme interviewed Joakim Hjelm, Swedish researcher with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). Joakim Hjelm, refers to overfishing by means of bottom trawling which has taken out all the large individuals, leaving behind the small and slow growing cod. Read all here:

<http://levandekust.se/english/press-room/467-fisheries-brief-no-12-continued-cod-fishing-is-harmful>

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SWAM/HaV) is worried about the situation in the Baltic 17th April 2019

This is a press release from the site "mynewsdeskHaV"

<http://www.mynewsdesk.com/se/havochvatten/pressreleases/havs-och-vattenmyndigheten-aer-bekymrad-oever-situationen-i-oestersjoen-2861705>

SWAM is also concerned about the eastern Baltic cod. There are many factors at play, and it's complex work to sort out the reasons and know what measures to take. SWAM provides links to a series of reports giving information on the state of the Baltic, cod and the work being done by the Agency.

And what about this cod near Åland? Is it doing better because of the lower salt content?

15th April 2019

It was mentioned in the Swedish documentary film. Project coordinator Ulf Bergstöm at the Swedish University of Agricultural Science is leading a project to find out what's so special about the cod around Åland. The fact that cod can adapt to the lower salt content in the water and manage to spawn gives hope. But the scientists are cautious about saying that this Åland cod is a separate stock. It's in Swedish:

<https://www.havet.nu/?d=190&id=48364>

And even more about Åland cod, 13th April 2019

And Swedish TV has picked up on this - also reporting on what's been seen in the waters near Åland, but also referring to that documentary on cod (see above), as well as interviewing the scientist mentioned above. Also in Swedish:

<https://www.svt.se/nyheter/vetenskap/forskare-ska-utreda-torskar-i-alandshav?cmpid=del:tw:20190413:forskare-ska-utreda-torskar-i-alandshav:nyh:lp>

The European Anglers Alliance enters the debate on the eastern cod 19th April 2019

They report on the fact that an increasing number of stakeholders, including the European Anglers Alliance, are urging the EU to intervene to save the Eastern Baltic cod stock from collapse. They refer to the ICES benchmark report and copy paste a few sentences from the report. These are on the EAA website here:

<https://www.eaa-europe.org/news/13309/eastern-baltic-cod-stock-on-the-brink-of-collapse.html>

Eva Kjer Hansen: The fisheries minister wants to stop the cod fishery in the Baltic 25th April 2019:

Fødevarerwatch (Food watch)

Danish fisheries minister Eva Kjer Hansen wants to stop the eastern Baltic fishery this year in order to save the stock. She will be proposing this to her Baltic minister colleagues, says Food Watch. She says that the

Baltic Sea Advisory Council This news doesn't reflect the views of the BSAC or its members

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stock is in such a bad way and in recent years the quotas have been reduced drastically, but according to the scientists, more drastic steps need to be taken. So she will be proposing a 70% in the current year's TAC which in turn will put an end to a targeted fishery for the cod, but will make it possible to allow bycatches of cod in fishery for other stocks. She expects her Baltic colleagues to back up this initiative. The article also refers to the seal population the Baltic and the fact that increasing numbers of seals are having an impact on the cod stock. The article reports that ministers are working together on a joint recommendation to the EU Commission so as to make it possible once more to regulate the seal stock. In Danish:

https://fodevarewatch.dk/Landbrug_Fiskeri/article11338535.ece

Some organisations are commenting that this is too little, too late.

But does the sprat fishery impact on cod?

In the Polish bimonthly magazine Fishing News, is an article by Michael Andersen on with your article (page 11). He was asked to provide information on **The Danish fishery for sprat in the Baltic and whether it impacts the cod stocks. The full magazine in Polish is here:**

<http://rybackie.com.pl/inc/newd.htm>

The article by Michael Andersen is here in English:

<http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/BSAC-Resources/Documents-section/BSAC-Newsletter-latest/MAtoPLMagDanish-pelagic-Baltic.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB>

Now, from us, the very last word on cod from Polish Gazeta Wyborcza Magazine 27th April 2019

Against this fish, everything is plagued: climate, fishery and parasites

An article in Polish on the challenges facing cod, such as eutrophication. A headline to the article is: If you want fresh cod, go to LIDL:

<http://wyborcza.pl/magazyn/7,124059,24699842,swiezy-dorsz-prosto-z-lodzi-rybackiej-do-lidla-pan-idz.html?disableRedirects=true>

An OECD article on subsidies to the fishing sector

Here, OECD presents a solution to the many government subsidies that lead to overfishing. OECD has researched into the different kinds of subsidies given. Its report doesn't talk about completely removing subsidies, but about shifting support from fuel towards giving aid to business and human capital.

It's actually from 29th February 2019.

<http://www.oecd.org/agriculture/government-subsidies-overfishing/>

Turning Aspiration to Action: Challenges of Making the Ecosystem Approach Operational in Fisheries in: The Future of Ocean Governance and Capacity Development, 25th April 2019

By Mark Dickey-Collas, ICES

.../Many natural scientists see ecosystem based management as a rationale to demand more resources for their science. The idea that more knowledge automatically means better management is prevalent, 'we just need to know more to manage better'. In the fisheries realm this seems to be about knowing more about energy flow and trophic interactions. The problem is that an understanding of the entire fisheries system is an afterthought. Policy development, institutional change, and reconciling economic and social objectives in an equitable manner all require something different than just more knowledge of whom eats whom. This is clear from the principles of the ecosystem approach described by the Convention on Biological Diversity and the advice on operational implementation in fisheries by the Fisheries and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

But are we developing a fisheries system that can deliver these principles by adjusting existing management and governance structures to achieve the ecosystem approach? An analysis of the European Union (EU) fisheries management system found an institutional gap between fisheries and environmental policy frameworks. This gap results in limited integration of broader environmental concerns leading to a standoff between decision-makers, creating frustration for the involved agencies. When executing ecosystem based fisheries management, some of the anthropogenic pressures from fishing may not be managed by the

fisheries agencies, and conversely the consequences for the environment of fishing may fall under the remit of non-fisheries agencies. The need for co-ordination in management and governance structures is clear./.../

<https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004380271/BP000062.xml?lang=en>

Marine litter and health and safety

No more throwing fishing nets overboard: Plastix and the EU Directive: a visit to the Danish plastic recycling company Plastix in Lemvig, Western Jutland

From 29th March 2019 (Danish)

https://fodevarewatch.dk/Landbrug_Fiskeri/article11286929.ece

We all know about the coming ban on the use of single use plastics such as cotton buds, straws, plates etc. The EU directive enters into force in 2021. But old or faulty fishing nets are also included. This means extra work for the company Plastix in Lemvig, which converts plastic waste from the fishing industry into raw plastic. The director Hans Axel Kristensen talked to the Danish radio station P4 and said that the company will be hiring extra staff to deal with the extra work and operating round the clock. Plastix is one of the few companies in the world recycling used fishing nets. Fishermen are already good at gathering in their used nets when they're out fishing - maybe not in former days, but in the last 10-15 years fishermen have got better at doing this, explained skipper Tamme Bolt to Danish radio. Hans Axel Kristensen sees great potential with the new EU Directive, not just for his company but also for the local area. He says that western Jutland is Denmark's green "Silicon Valley" 2021.