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<b>Document title</b>	Status of national management plans for marine mammals
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<b>Category</b>	CMNT
<b>Agenda Item</b>	3 – Seals in the Baltic Sea
<b>Submission date</b>	17.8.2021
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## Background

In the Baltic Sea Action Plan, HELCOM Contracting Parties have committed themselves to, by 2012, finalize national management plans as part of the measures taken to safeguard the long-term viability of the Baltic seal populations according to HELCOM Recommendation 27-28/2.

With reference to the Outcome of SEAL 6-2012 (paragraph 3.4), the Secretariat compiled this document based on the reports by the Contracting Parties on the status of their seal management plans. The document was used as background documentation for the HELCOM 2013 Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting and has since been annually updated by the Seal expert group. After SEAL 9-2015 the name of the document was changed to 'Status of national management plans for marine mammals' to also cover management plans for harbour porpoise.

SEAL 9-2015 agreed to review new and revised national management plans to assess the use of the guidelines and for the Contracting Parties to inform the Secretariat when new plans are adopted and make them available in advance of the annual HELCOM Seal meetings.

This document contains the latest available information on the status of national management plans for marine mammals as updated by EG MAMA 14-2020.

## Action requested

Contracting Parties are invited to

- review the information and update old information (passed years highlighted);
- inform the Secretariat ([laura.kaikkonen@helcom.fi](mailto:laura.kaikkonen@helcom.fi)) on possible new or updated management plans;
- update information on the current status of management plans for marine mammals and information on hunting and regulation quotas by **17 August 2021**;
- check and if needed update the web links (links that don't work have been highlighted)

**Table 1.** Countries with management plans for marine mammals.

Country	Status of the Management Plans and Species included	Adopted in for the years	Planned Updates	Hunting and regulation quotas	Summary: Most important topics of the MPs	Websites	Additional information
Denmark	MPs for grey seal and harbour seal exist	Adopted in 2020 for 2020-2025		Derogation shooting of grey seals and harbour seals. No fixed quota. 48 harbour seals and 2 grey seals in 2020.		<a href="#">GREY SEAL and HARBOUR SEAL</a> (In Danish only)	
Estonia	MPs for grey and ringed seals were adopted in 2015	Adopted in 2015 for 2015-2019	2018 ringed seals and 2019 grey seals				The government is revising the management plans on grey and ringed seals after every five years. Any numbers of seals by-catch are currently rough estimates, and the ministry wishes to improve and modernise the by-catch monitoring. The aim is to make the society and other sectors more aware of the seals and their environment. The grey seal is in the list of wild game in the Estonian Hunting Act, and hunting started on 2015. Grey seal hunt is included in the management plan, hunting is only licenced hunting, quota is set annually according to census data.
Finland	MPs for grey and ringed seal exist  Action plan for harbour porpoise exists	2007 for 2007-2012 and are still valid.	The updates of the seal management plans are still in preparation  Reviewed action plan was released in 2016 (in <a href="#">Finnish</a> and <a href="#">Swedish</a> )	For hunting period 2021-22 the quotas are as follows: Grey seal: The quota for the Gulf of Bothnia - Kvarken stock management area is 350 greys seals, the quota for the stock management area of Southwest Finland is 400 grey seals and the quota for the stock management area of the Gulf of Finland is 300 greys seals Ringed seal: (Licensed hunting) 1) The Quark-Bothnia Bay 300 individuals.  Ringed seal: A maximum of 375 ringed seals in the		GREY SEAL AND RINGED SEAL: <a href="#">ENGLISH</a> <a href="#">FINNISH</a>	The 2007 MPs available at the Webpage of the Ministry of the Agriculture and Forestry (Outcome of HELCOM SEAL 5/2011). The plans are going to be updated during the year 2018 by Finnish Wildlife Agency.  Grey seal hunting requires a special licence granted by the Finnish Wildlife Agency, as referred to in section 41 of the Hunting Act;  Grey seal hunt in Åland: The provincial government has decided on the guidelines for the protection hunt for grey seals for the period 15.4.2021-31.1.2022. As in recent years, a personal permit is no longer required to participate in the hunt, but it may be carried out on your own initiative. There is still a quota of 500 grey seals that may be killed, for this reason all killed seals must be reported. Of the quota of 500 grey seals, 327 grey seals remain. (last updated on 17.8.2021).  Ringed seal: With a hunting licence, granted by the Finnish Wildlife Agency in accordance with the Hunting Act, Sect. 10 Within the regional quota, granted by virtue of the Hunting Act, Sect. 10

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				Gulf of Bothnia stock management area. In other areas, the quota is 0 rings.			Within the regional quota, granted by virtue of the Hunting Act, Sect. 10. Requires a special licence granted by the Finnish Wildlife Agency, as referred to in section 41 of the Hunting Act.
<b>Sweden</b>	<p>MPs for grey seal and harbour seal in Skagerrak and Kattegat (except for the "Kalmarsund population") are in place.</p> <p>MP for the Kalmarsund population of harbour seal will be updated and reviewed</p> <p>MP for ringed seal: A new draft will be reviewed in spring <b>2017</b></p> <p>For harbour porpoise there is a new action plan, published June 2021.</p>	<p>2012 for 2012-</p> <p>2021-2025</p>		<p>Grey seal (protective hunting): 760 individuals divided between 12 counties from Norrbotten to Skåne.</p> <p>Ringed seal (protective hunting): 190 individuals divided between the two counties Norrbotten and Västerbotten (The Quark - Bothnia Bay).</p> <p>Harbour Seal (protective hunting): 390 individuals including the counties of Västra Götaland, Halland and Skåne.</p>	<p>Development of seal safe fishing gear continues.</p> <p>Information and cooperation as a tool to make better understanding between fishery and conservation is a challenging goal.</p> <p>The long-term (prior to 2040) target for the harbour porpoise action plan is to ensure that the conditions in Swedish waters enable all three populations to</p>	<p><a href="#">GREY SEAL</a></p> <p><a href="#">HARBOR SEAL</a></p> <p><a href="#">PORPOISES</a></p>	<p>Management plans for grey seals and harbour seals were adopted in 2012. Conflict with fisheries is an issue.</p> <p>Only protective hunting is allowed on seals in Sweden.</p> <p>Regarding protective hunting on harbour seal Skåne only includes the municipalities Båstad, Ängelholm, Höganäs and Helsingborg. Västra Götaland also includes Skagerrak.</p>

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Latvia	One MP for all Baltic Sea species	2021 for 2021-2031			reach 80% of their carrying capacity over the next 100 years. For the Baltic Proper population human induced mortality should be zero until favourable conservation status is reached.  The plan suggests necessary actions in relation to stranded seals and seal by-catch in fishery, as well as technical management options for upgrades and improvements of fishing gear in order to avoid seal depredation.	<a href="https://www.daba.gov.lv/lv/sugu-un-biotopu-aizsardzibas-plani">https://www.daba.gov.lv/lv/sugu-un-biotopu-aizsardzibas-plani</a>	Seals are protected species and hunting are not allowed. The law allows the acquisition of seals as nongame species with special permits.

Table 2. Countries with national management plans under development or without national management plans for marine mammals.

Country	Status of the Management Plans and Species included	Website	Hunting and regulation quotas	Additional information
Poland	<p>Under development for grey seal</p> <p>For harbour porpoise a management plan was adopted in 2015 (two versions available)</p>	<p><a href="#">GREY SEAL</a> (draft)</p> <p><a href="#">HARBOUR PORPOISE</a> (draft)</p>		<p>Preparation of management plans (in Poland - conservation programmes) for endangered species is one of the main tasks of the General Directorate for Environmental Protection. In Poland draft national management plans for grey seal and harbour porpoise have been developed within the project "Supporting the restitution and protection of Baltic mammals in Poland" co-financed from the EU funds, conducted by WWF Poland in cooperation with Hel Marine Station of the University of Gdansk and the Foundation for the Development of the University of Gdansk. WWF Poland has hired a professional mediatory company to ensure all stakeholder participation and consultation in the development of draft management plans, including fishermen, national and local authorities, scientists, environmentalists, legal advisers etc. In 2012 there were 2 plenary meetings organized as well as 6 working groups meetings (on the topics of: interactions with fisheries /2 meetings/, disturbance, noise and pollution /2 meetings/, research and monitoring /1 meeting/, information, education and social communication /1 meeting/). There were 98 participants from 42 institutions and organisations involved in this process.</p> <p>Draft plans were reviewed by foreign scientists and final versions were prepared by the end of the year 2012. At the beginning of 2013 draft management plans were sent to the General Directorate for Environmental Protection which is responsible for further internal and social consultations, preparation of final versions of documents and their adoption as a part of national legislation. During the meeting with the Ministry of Environment and the General Directorate for Environmental Protection WWF Poland received the information that the process of interdepartmental consultations of both documents will begin not earlier than in the first quarter of 2014.</p> <p>Consultations for the grey seal management plan are planned for 2015.</p> <p>State Monitoring Programme: grey seal - yearly monitoring during pupping and moulting seasons (since 2016) acc. to HELCOM Guidelines; harbour porpoise: last monitoring (C-PODs) 2016-2018, current monitoring started March 2021 and will last till April 2022.</p>
Russia	No Management Plans			<p>There is no official management plan for the marine mammals in the Russian part of the Baltic Sea. In 2017 ringed seal numbers were still very low (100 individuals for whole Gulf of Finland.) Ringed and grey seals of the Baltic Sea are protected as a species which are included in the "Red data book of Russian Federation". The seals investigations are bathed on the personal activities of scientists and sponsors' support. Ringed seals aircraft survey and start of telemetry investigation have been done in 2017. Seals rehabilitation, survey of grey and ringed seals on haul outs and register of seals mortality was also done in 2017. The seals on the haul outs are in the focus, and there are good haul outs in the southern GOF, in Kurgalsky peninsula, problems are due to by-catch in fishing nets in where half of the population is located. The risks for seals in the Russian part of the Gulf of Finland are strengthening of anthropogenic impact: increase of disturbance, by-catch, increase of traffic of large-capacity vessels and an oil disaster possibility. Another risk is warm winters with lack of ice and snow with increase of predator risk and disturbance.</p> <p>Plans for the 2018 are: to make aircraft survey of ringed seals in the Gulf of Finland in collaboration with Estonia and Finland. A boat survey of grey seals in the time fixed by HELCOM for the Baltic Sea. Make investigation of seal distribution using GSM tagging to pick up data about foraging region and moving of seals in time when they are not on haul outs. Telemetry study of seals will be done in international collaboration with Estonian specialists. The work with seals rehabilitation, survey of grey and ringed seals on haul outs and register of seals mortality will be continue in the 2018.</p>

Table 3. Countries with no expected management plans.

Country	Status of the Management Plans and Species included	Hunting and regulation quotas	Additional information
Germany	<p>No national MPs foreseen to be produced</p> <p>A seal-fisheries conflict management plan for Mecklenburg-Pomerania is under development.</p>		<p>In recent years first permanent grey seal haul-outs established in the German Baltic Sea, with steadily increasing numbers of grey seals in the Greifswald Bay and Wismar Bay. In 2018 there was the first evidence of breeding on the German coastline as well as moulting evidences. Resting harbour seals are frequently observed in Wismar Bay (Outcome of HELCOM SEAL 4/2010). All hunting of seals is forbidden in Germany.</p> <p>Some management measures are conducted: All stranding are reported and the cause of death is determined. Reported sightings are also recorded (Outcome of HELCOM SEAL 5/2011). Plans for habitat restoration measures to re-install one important haul-out site that was destroyed by gravel extraction in the early 20th century are not implemented so far due to several reasons. Numbers of seals in this site are monitored twice a month by federal, state authorities as well as scientist and NGOs. (Outcome of HELCOM SEAL 4/2010). Since 2020 several measures are in force in Mecklenburg-Pomerania 1) aerial surveys are conducted during the breeding and moulting season 2) entrances of fish traps in the Greifswald Bay must not be larger than 75 cm in order to avoid grey seal by-catch 3) fishermen may claim compensation for reported seal induced damages (catch or fishing gear).</p>
Lithuania	<p>No management plans and no plans in near future for it to be implemented.</p>		<p>Grey seals are protected under Lithuanian law (no categories) and listed as DD (data deficiency) under IUCN red list categorization in Lithuania. No stable seal population. However, resting grey seals can be observed on breakwater rocks near main Klaipeda harbour, other seal species can be observed only very rarely, some of them reported stranded or were taken to rehabilitation at Lithuanian Sea Museum (LSM).</p> <p>In 2019 16 grey seal pups were taken to rehabilitation (LSM), of them were 11 survived. Seals were released in 2019. 3 of released animals were tagged with GPS transmitters in collaboration with Mart Jussi. There is no other monitoring of marine mammals performed.</p> <p>Stranded individuals: 2018 – 56 grey seals (43 were above 50 kg, 11 weight was not identified, and &gt;50 % were found in June), 2019 – 78 grey seals. No further examination was performed. The majority of dead carcasses were found as usual in May-June.</p> <p>Baltic sea mammal and bird rehabilitation centre is still under construction and should start working in 2022. In collaboration with interested institutions rehabilitation center should carry out several functions, the main is rehabilitation and monitoring of health status of Baltic seals and marine birds.</p> <p>Fishermen still receive compensations for their losses due to grey seal activity and in return they have to fill separate sheets about seal sightings in their fishing logbooks.</p> <p>Pontoon traps were tested on Lithuanian coast this year during the project lead by Lithuanian Fund for Nature. So far results exceeded expectations as pontoon traps being seal safe, more selective and almost as equally effective as traditional traps.</p>