



## Outcome of the 14th Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (FISH 14-2022)

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# Outcome of the 14th Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (FISH 14-2022)

## Introduction

01. The 14th Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (FISH 14-2022), was held online on 23-24 February 2022.
02. The Meeting was attended by delegations from all Contracting Parties except for Latvia and Russia, as well as observers from BSAC, CCB, FEAP and Low Impact Fisheries of Europe (LIFE). The list of participants is contained in **Annex 1**.
03. The Meeting was chaired by Marianne Goffeng Raakil (Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation). Markus Helavuori, Professional Secretary and Susanna Kaasinen, Associate Professional Secretary, acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

## Agenda Item 1 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

- 1.1 The Meeting re-elected Ms. Marianne Goffeng Raakil, Sweden, as Chair of the HELCOM Fish Group for the next two-year period (2022-2023) pending the continuation of the mandate of the group after 2022. The Meeting also re-elected Ms. Katarzyna Kaminska, Poland, as Vice-Chair of the group for the same period.

## Agenda Item 2 Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda of the Meeting as contained in document 2-1.

## Agenda Item 3 Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group

- 3.1 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of recent HELCOM meetings (document 3-1).
- 3.2 The Meeting considered the recommendations by EG STUR to widening the scope of the Fish Group as regards migratory fish species and their migration facilitation (document 3-2 and **Presentation 1**).
- 3.3 In this context, the Meeting recalled that the 2021 Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) contains action B18 to *Restore functional populations of Baltic sturgeon by 2029 implementing the HELCOM Baltic Sea Sturgeon Action Plan*, for which the Fish Group is indicated as one of the overseeing working groups. The Meeting agreed that this action should be reflected in the next update of the Work Plan of the Fish Group.
- 3.4 The Meeting also recognized the relevance of actions B15, and B16 in the biodiversity segment, for restoring Baltic sturgeon populations.
- 3.5 In discussing the proposal set out in document 3-2, the Meeting noted that by-catch of sturgeon continues to be of concern, and that EG STUR collects information on by-catch although there is no obligation for reporting of such by-catch and that there is no HELCOM Recommendation on managing large rivers to ensure river connectivity for fish migration. The Meeting noted that a HELCOM Recommendation would be beneficial to maintain or restore large rivers' connectivity and spawning habitats in order to rehabilitate or maintain populations of migratory fish, including sturgeon. The Meeting agreed with the proposal that EG STUR prepares a draft Recommendation for consideration by FISH 15-2022, in line with the relevant actions in the 2021 BSAP.
- 3.6 The Meeting noted that catchability of target species (e.g. pikeperch, pike and bream) is only marginally reduced when using nets designed to avoid by-catch of sturgeon.

- 3.7 The Meeting recalled that FISH-M also works on the topic of migratory fish.
- 3.8 The Meeting took note of the Baltic Sea Climate Change Fact Sheet climate change key messages related to fish, fisheries, and aquaculture (document 3-3).

#### Agenda Item 4 Implementation and update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

- 4.1 The Meeting recalled that the 2021 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting (20 October 2021) adopted the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) and took note of the actions of particular relevance for the Fish Group as well as the additional information associated with those actions (document 4-1).
- 4.2 The Meeting exchanged views on how to contribute to the implementation of the actions under the group's mandate focusing especially on the actions with target years prior to or in 2025 and other actions for which implementation should commence soon. The outcome of this discussion at FISH 14-2022, as well as initial proposals for next steps and leads is reflected in the table set out in **Annex 2**.
- 4.3 The Meeting noted that the initial proposals for next steps identified in Annex 2 are not intended to be seen as prescriptive commitments for Contracting Parties but should be used as examples and reminders of useful steps to be taken jointly or by Contracting Parties and should be utilized in the updating of the Work Plan of the Fish Group at FISH 15-2022.
- 4.4 Meeting invited Contracting Parties and observers to consider taking the lead or making other relevant proposals related to those actions for which a lead has not been indicated in **Annex 2**, and to inform the Secretariat ([petra.kaaria@helcom.fi](mailto:petra.kaaria@helcom.fi)) by **23 March 2022**.
- 4.5 The Meeting further invited Contracting Parties and observers to submit relevant proposals for next steps in implementing the actions, in particular for actions with no next steps indicated in **Annex 2**, to the Secretariat ([petra.kaaria@helcom.fi](mailto:petra.kaaria@helcom.fi)) by **23 March 2022**.
- 4.6 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to circulate an updated table based on Annex 2 and any proposals received by 23 March 2022, to all contacts of the Fish Group for a round of further comments with a deadline of four weeks after circulation. The Meeting confirmed that agreement of the next steps, leads and comments in the table should be reached by correspondence during spring 2022, and invited the Secretariat to prepare a draft updated Work Plan for the Fish Group based on the agreed table, for consideration by FISH 15-2022.
- 4.7 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to organize a meeting of FISH-M and a meeting of EG FISHDATA, respectively, during 2022 in order to consider implementation of relevant actions as detailed in Annex 2.
- 4.8 The Meeting took note of information provided by the Secretariat regarding the Second Meeting of Chairpersons of HELCOM and HELCOM Main Groups ([CHAIRPERSONS 2-2022](#)), which was held on 25 January 2022 as an online meeting.
- 4.9 The Meeting noted that there are some actions that require close coordination between the Fish Group and other HELCOM Working Groups. The Meeting emphasized the need for cooperation and coordination between groups in implementing these actions. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to ensure that the Outcome of FISH 14-2022, including Annex 2, as well as any additional proposals submitted by the deadline 23 March 2022 are communicated as drafts to upcoming meetings of relevant Working Groups.
- 4.10 The Meeting took note that HOD 61-2021 agreed that to achieve the objectives set in the 2021 BSAP, there is a need to review the working structure and consider necessary adjustments to support the implementation of the actions in an optimal way.
- 4.11 The Meeting noted that depending on the outcome of this restructuring, adjustments may need to be made to the overseeing groups responsible for the BSAP actions.
- 4.12 The Meeting took note of the technical guidance on the renewal of the HELCOM working structure prepared by the Secretariat (document 4-2).
- 4.13 The Meeting discussed how the work of the group is functioning currently.

4.14 The Meeting discussed the need of restructuring the HELCOM working structure regarding the topics under the responsibility of the group.

4.15 In this context, the Meeting supported making the Fish Group a permanent group and invited HOD 62-2022 to take this into account in its consideration of the HELCOM working structure and deciding on the continuation of the mandates of the time-limited HELCOM groups.

## Agenda Item 5 Regional cooperation on Fisheries & Environment

### *Cooperation between HELCOM and BALTFISH*

5.1 The Meeting took note that a BSAC EBM WG meeting with participation from BALTFISH and BSAC was organized on 4 February 2022 in order to inform the BSAC and BALTFISH about the 2021 BSAP, the relevant actions relating to fisheries management and their timelines. The Meeting also took note that the outcome of the meeting will be published on the [BSAC website](#) on 25 February 2022.

5.2 The Meeting took note that no further progress has been made within BALTFISH regarding the HELCOM Roadmap on fisheries data.

5.3 The Meeting took note of other recent activities within BALTFISH, as follows:

- work is ongoing regarding measures for harbour porpoise and eel;
- work ongoing within the regionalized process on a Joint Recommendation related to plaice
- BALTFISH meetings will be organized in March 2022 regarding these matters

5.4 The Meeting took note that the Secretariat continues sharing outcomes of the Fish Group meetings with the BALTFISH Presidency and attending meetings of the BALTFISH Forum. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to also share the 2021 BSAP with the BALTFISH Presidency, noting the relevance of cooperation on a number of actions.

### *Cooperation with the BSAC sub-group on ecosystem-based fisheries management*

5.5 The Meeting took note of recent activities within BSAC relevant for HELCOM, including the ongoing work regarding ecosystem-based fisheries management and its upcoming EBM WG meeting related to eel management on 2 March 2022. The Meeting further noted that the BSAC demersal working group will have a meeting on seal management on 8 March 2022. The Meeting welcomed the offer by BSAC to share the reports of these meetings with contacts of the Fish Group.

### *Cooperation with other organizations*

5.6 The Meeting took note of the report from the HELCOM Workshop on Marine OECMs in the Baltic Sea region organized on 1-3 February 2022 (document 5-1) with involvement by FAO and IUCN, recognizing that the matter of OECMs is highly relevant for the Fish Group. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to provide further information on the related developments to FISH 15-2022.

## Agenda Item 6 BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture

6.1 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of CG AQUACULTURE 4-2021 and the informal meeting of CG Aquaculture (document 6-1). The Meeting noted that significant progress has been made with the development of BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea. The Meeting noted that CG AQUACULTURE 5-2022 will be held on 24-25 March 2022 as an online meeting and that CG AQUACULTURE 6-2022 has been planned for 21-22 June 2022, tentatively in the Åland Islands, Finland.

6.2 The Meeting took note of the comments by Denmark set out in document 6-2 and considered the proposal by Denmark that animal welfare and Aquaculture Management Zones (AMZ) should not be included in the work of CG Aquaculture to develop BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture.

6.3 The Meeting noted that CCB will draft a chapter on non-indigenous species, including species selection, handling and linking also to animal welfare to CG AQUACULTURE 5-2022.

6.4 The Meeting invited Germany to submit a draft chapter on BAT/BEP for animal welfare to CG AQUACULTURE 5-2022, noting that the chapter should be concise, noting the concerns that it should not detail additional requirements related to stocking densities and husbandry issues, and could refer to e.g. EU guidelines on the matter.

6.5 The Meeting noted a comment by Germany, that they have considered the Danish concerns, as shared also by Finland, Poland and Sweden, related to AMZs which will be taken into account in a compromise proposal that adequately considers Recommendation 37/3 without relying on AMZs, to be submitted by Germany to CG AQUACULTURE 5-2022. The Meeting invited Germany and Denmark to liaise bilaterally on the matter, before CG AQUACULTURE 5-2022 in order to reach a solution that is acceptable to all.

6.6 The Meeting noted that comments on the chapter on monitoring, as led by Estonia, have not been provided by other Contracting Parties. The Meeting encouraged comments to be provided to Estonia by email in advance of CG AQUACULTURE 5-2022, or at the latest to that meeting.

6.7 The Meeting encouraged all Contracting Parties and observers to contribute actively to the development of BAT/BEP descriptions within CG Aquaculture.

#### Agenda Item 7 HELCOM data interests

7.1 The Meeting recalled that FISH 13-2021 considered the simplified reporting template for following up on the *Roadmap on fisheries data in order to assess incidental bycatches and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea* and invited the Contracting Parties and observers to submit proposals for revising the draft reporting template to FISH 14-2021, with a view to finalizing the reporting template at a future meeting (document 7-1).

7.2 The Meeting noted that the ongoing review of the EU Control Regulation, the new article 4.1 of the EU MAP under the DCF as implemented from 2022 onwards as well as related studies are expected to provide further information addressing the data needs, e.g. the means to fill the data gaps, and that it might be advisable to finalize the template only after the completion of those processes, but also noted that progress on certain elements of the Roadmap would be useful to consider already before that.

7.3 The Meeting considered a proposed revised template, prepared by Germany as set out in document 7-1-Rev.1.

7.4 The Meeting agreed to continue consideration of the draft template set out in documents 7-1-Rev.1, as well as the follow up on the Roadmap on fisheries data in general, at FISH 15-2022.

7.5 The Meeting invited the EU to inform FISH 15-2022 of the revision of the Control Regulation and in particular matters related to by-catch data collection.

7.6 The Meeting took note of a comment by LIFE, that the safety of fishermen should be prioritized when considering means of collecting data.

7.7 The Meeting took note that a sub-contract with ICES has been established in June 2021 to produce fishing effort maps needed for HOLAS III purposes by 30 June 2022.

#### Agenda Item 8 Salmon and sea trout including HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1

8.1 The Meeting agreed on the reporting procedure for the Recommendation 32-33/1 in 2022 as follows:

- The Secretariat circulates a reporting template as well as the table set out in Annex 2 to the present document after FISH 14-2022;
- Contracting Parties are invited to submit the filled in template to [petra.kaarja@helcom.fi](mailto:petra.kaarja@helcom.fi) by **31 May 2022**;
- the Secretariat will circulate a first draft report of the 2022 implementation of Recommendation 32-33/1 and circulate it to Contracting Parties for comments by **31 August 2022**; and

- the Secretariat will prepare a final draft report of the 2022 implementation of Recommendation 32-33/1, to be submitted to FISH 15-2022 for endorsement.

#### Agenda Item 9 Interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems

9.1 The Meeting took note of the follow-up and discussion by BALTFISH on the ICES Special Request Advice on EU request on emergency measures to prevent bycatch of Baltic Proper harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) in the Baltic Sea fisheries (c.f. also Agenda Item 5 above).

#### Agenda Item 10 Work on indicator development

10.1 The Meeting took note of information on HELCOM driver indicator work towards HOLAS 3, specifically addressing drivers and driver indicators with relevance to pressure of fish extraction and fishery activity (document 10-1).

10.2 The Meeting discussed the proposed drivers and driver indicators for the extraction of fish and noted the following comments and questions:

- Russian fisheries should also be considered;
- what is the basis for stating that TACs have been set above the ICES advice?;
- a question related to the consideration of fuel prices;
- pressures and drivers should be considered in a holistic manner (not only fisheries); and
- what is embedded in the term "Political will"?

10.3 The Meeting recognized that the proposed drivers and driver indicators described in document 10-1 are a first draft based on input received from one expert workshop, and that a lot of work remains. The Meeting encouraged experts to attend the HOLAS 3 2nd Workshop on Driver indicators provisionally planned for 3-4 May 2022 to contribute to the process.

10.4 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties and observers to provide any additional comments to the Secretariat ([kemal.pinarbasi@helcom.fi](mailto:kemal.pinarbasi@helcom.fi)) **by 17 March 2022**.

10.5 The Meeting took note of information of HELCOM indicator work towards HOLAS 3, specifically addressing those indicators with relevance to fish-related evaluations (document 10-2).

#### Agenda Item 11 Future work

11.1 The Meeting agreed to organize the next meeting of the Group (FISH 15-2022) tentatively at the HELCOM Secretariat in Helsinki, Finland, on 2-3 November 2022. The Meeting, nevertheless, invited Contracting Parties to consider hosting the meeting and inform the Secretariat, as appropriate. The Meeting welcomed the offer by Germany to host FISH 16-2023 on the Isle of Vilm.

11.2 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to circulate a short list of the most relevant decisions and deadlines to the contacts of the Fish Group within a few days of each meeting of the Fish Group.

#### Agenda Item 12 Any other business

12.1 The Meeting updated the list of contacts and observers of the Fish Group (document 12-1), as included in **Annex 3**.

12.2 The Meeting did not discuss any other business.

Agenda Item 13 Outcome of the Meeting

13.1 The Meeting adopted the Outcome of the Meeting. The Outcome of the Meeting, together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting are available on the FISH 14-2022 meeting site.

## Annex 1. List of participants

Name	Representing	Organization	E-mail address
<b>Marianne Goffeng Raakil</b>	Chair	Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation	marianne.goffeng-raakil@gov.se
<b>Janne Palomino Dalby</b>	Denmark	Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries	jpda@fvm.dk
<b>Jonatan Staff Nørgaard</b>	Denmark	Ministry of Environment	jonsn@mim.dk
<b>Michelle Mortensen</b>	Denmark	Ministry of Environment	mimor@mim.dk
<b>Raimo Selgis</b>	Estonia	Ministry of the Environment	raimo.selgis@envir.ee
<b>Ulvi Päädam</b>	Estonia	Ministry of the Environment	ulvi.paadam@envir.ee
<b>Christoph Priebe</b>	European Union	European Commission, DG MARE	Christoph.PRIEBE@ec.europa.eu
<b>Penina Blankett</b>	Finland	Ministry of the Environment	penina.blankett@gov.fi
<b>Heikki Lehtinen</b>	Finland	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	heikki.lehtinen@gov.fi
<b>Miriam Mueller</b>	Germany	Federal Agency for Nature Conservation	miriam.mueller@bfn.de
<b>Sven Koschinski</b>	Germany	on behalf of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation	sk@meereszoologie.de
<b>Antanas Kontautas</b>	Lithuania	Marine research institute, Klaipeda university	antanas.kontautas@ku.lt
<b>Jolanta Cesiuliene</b>	Lithuania	Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania	Jolanta.Cesiuliene@zum.lt
<b>Katarzyna Kaminska</b>	Poland	The Fisheries Department	katarzyna.kaminska@minrol.gov.pl
<b>Gry Sagebakken</b>	Sweden	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	gry.sagebakken@havochvatten.se
<b>Ewa Milewska</b>	HELCOM Observer	Baltic Sea Advisory Council	em@bsac.dk
<b>Sally Clink</b>	HELCOM Observer	Baltic Sea Advisory Council	sc@bsac.dk
<b>Nils Höglund</b>	HELCOM Observer	Coalition Clean Baltic	nils.hoglund@ccb.se
<b>Lisbeth Jess Plesner</b>	HELCOM Observer	FEAP	lisbeth@danskakvakultur.dk
<b>Christian Tsangarides</b>	HELCOM Observer	Low Impact Fishers of Europe	bans@lifeplatform.eu
<b>Jörn Gessner</b>	Invited guest	EG STUR	Joern.Gessner@igb-berlin.de
<b>Sara Söderström</b>	Invited guest	BSAC Observer	sara.soderstrom@fishsec.org
<b>Markus Helavuori</b>	HELCOM Secretariat	HELCOM Secretariat	markus.helavuori@helcom.fi
<b>Susanna Kaasinen</b>	HELCOM Secretariat	HELCOM Secretariat	susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi
<b>Kemal Binarbasi</b>	HELCOM Secretariat	HELCOM Secretariat	kemal.binarbasi@helcom.fi
<b>Owen Rowe</b>	HELCOM Secretariat	HELCOM Secretariat	owen.rowe@helcom.fi

## Annex 2. Planning the detailed implementation of BSAP actions of relevance for the Fish Group

Actions with the earliest target years and actions that require long term consideration (work to continue by correspondence)

Code	Action	Target year	Implemented by	Overseeing WG/EG (Proposal for the responsible body in <b>bold</b> )	Criteria for achievement	Lead(s)	Next steps	Comments
<i>Theme: Spatial conservation measures</i>								
<i>Topic: Spatial conservation management</i>								
B5	Develop, implement and share information on effective management measures, including measures to ensure compliance/control measures, to reduce the impact of fisheries inside marine protected areas (MPAs) in order to contribute to achieve their conservation objectives.	2030	National/Joint	FISH	<p>Management measures for fisheries inside MPAs, contributing to the area's conservation objectives, are more widely in place. (National measure)</p> <p>Fisheries measures are documented in the HELCOM MPA Database. (Joint supporting action)</p>	The Secretariat could lead work related to the MPA Database, with input to be provided by Contracting Parties.	<p>[Contracting Parties to share information on management measures proven to be effective (documentation in HELCOM MPA database)</p> <p>Develop bycatch reduction measures such as set net closures in MPAs</p> <p>Implement nationally in coastal waters</p> <p>Contracting Parties to initiate the Article 11 process/ BALTFISH Joint Recommendation process for EEZs.]</p>	<p>FISH 14-2022 proposed that STATE &amp; CONSERVATION and the MPA TG should be involved in the implementation of this action.</p> <p>The development of management measures and their implementation will require cooperation with BALTFISH, as well as the Scheveningen Group for Kattegat.</p> <p>The Meeting noted that Measures are already in place in many MPAs, information sharing is taking place, as well as the development of regional procedures.</p> <p>There is a link with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the implementation of</p>

Code	Action	Target year	Implemented by	Overseeing WG/EG (Proposal for the responsible body in bold)	Criteria for achievement	Lead(s)	Next steps	Comments
								which also contributes to this action.
	<b>Theme: Conservation of species</b>							
	<i>Topic: Conservation of fish</i>							
B15	<p>Develop and coordinate monitoring and assessment methods, where ecologically relevant, for specified representative coastal fish species, populations and communities, by 2023. Based on these assessment methods, to regularly assess the state of the coastal fish community through selected coastal fish species and groups, including threatened species, by at latest 2023.</p> <p>Based on the results of the assessment, develop and implement management measures with the ambition to maintain or improve the status of coastal fish species, including migratory species by 2027.</p>	2023, 2027	National/ Joint	<b>STATE &amp; CONSERVATION;</b> FISH; FISH Pro	<p>By 2023 assessment, presenting information in a format that contributes to the effective implementation of measures is ready and publicly available. (Joint supporting action)</p> <p>Interval for the next assessment is agreed by 2023. (Joint supporting action)</p> <p>Where ecologically relevant, data and assessment of coastal fish is available by 2023 for the full distribution of the species, at a resolution suitable for management and the implementation of measures. (Joint supporting action)</p> <p>By 2027 appropriate management measures have been implemented with the ambition to maintain or improve the status of coastal fish species. (National measure)</p>			The first part of the action is under the responsibility of S&C WG and the second part of the action, which is a national measure with the target year 2027, is under the responsibility of the Fish Group.
B16	To strengthen native strains and to reinstate migratory fish species:	2023, 2024, 2025	National	<b>FISH;</b> FISH-M	By 2023 rivers, where management measures for migratory fish species, including eel, would have the			EG STUR to be involved in the implementation of the action.

Code	Action	Target year	Implemented by	Overseeing WG/EG (Proposal for the responsible body in <b>bold</b> )	Criteria for achievement	Lead(s)	Next steps	Comments
	<p>-By 2023 identify rivers where management measures for migratory fish species, including eel, would have the greatest positive impact.</p> <p>-Starting from 2023, in line with relevant international commitments, iteratively review and prioritize effective mitigation measures in the identified rivers and/or dams, including removal of dams and migration barriers where relevant and possible, especially in small waterways.</p> <p>-Develop and implement habitat restoration plans of spawning sites for anadromous species in relevant rivers by 2025.</p>				<p>greatest positive impact, have been identified.</p> <p>Mitigation measures are widely in place including removal of dams and migration barriers where relevant. Where this is not possible, mitigation measures at dams (e.g. in connection with hydropower plants), especially in small waterways are being prioritized and applied by 2023.</p> <p>By 2025 national habitat restoration plans in relevant rivers are in place, in order to strengthen native strains and to reinstate migratory fish species.</p> <p>Migration barriers have been removed or mitigated by 2024 in at least three rivers of each Baltic Sea coastal countries, as applicable.</p>			BALTFISH has taken initiative on eel and there may be attempts for a joint recommendation.
B17	With the aim to protect and restore eel population, determine which measures set out in the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), EU Eel Regulation and other relevant instruments would benefit from regional cooperation on a Baltic-	2024, 2025	National/Joint	<b>FISH</b> ; FISH-M	A coordinated programme of protective measures ensuring successful eel migrations, aligned with CMS, the EU Eel Regulation and other relevant instruments is in place by 2024 (Joint supporting action) and being implemented by 2025 (National measure).	FISH-M	[FISH-M to plan the implementation of the action taking into account developments within BALTFISH, EU, EU member states and other relevant bodies]	<p>BALTFISH has taken initiative on eel and there might be attempts for a joint action.</p> <p>Actions needed in all sea basins including the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Important to</p>

Code	Action	Target year	Implemented by	Overseeing WG/EG (Proposal for the responsible body in <b>bold</b> )	Criteria for achievement	Lead(s)	Next steps	Comments
	wide level. Finalize by 2024 and implement by 2025 a Baltic coordinated programme of such measures.							take into account all anthropogenic effects.
B18	Restore functional populations of Baltic sturgeon by 2029 implementing the HELCOM Baltic Sea Sturgeon Action Plan.	2029	National/Joint	<b>STATE CONSERVATION;</b> FISH	<p>Consistent ex-situ conservation programme is implemented, taking advantage of the specimens already secured. (National measure)</p> <p>In situ conservation programme is implemented and enforced, preventing further loss of the remaining specimens. (National measure)</p> <p>A strategic long-term monitoring programme for population development and habitat use, to support adaptive management, is in place in all relevant countries. (National supporting action)</p> <p>A dedicated programme on habitat protection and rehabilitation has been developed, in order to ensure that spawning and nursery sites meet the needs of the species and are accessible for the respective life cycle stages. (Joint supporting action)</p> <p>A dedicated programme on habitat protection and rehabilitation, ensuring that</p>	EG STUR (proposal for S&C)	<p>[HELCOM should activate cooperation with BALTFISH to come up with joint recommendations for modified fishing gear and for monitoring by-catch.</p> <p>EG STUR could plan the more detailed timeline for the implementation of the action at its next meeting.]</p>	<p>Implementation of this action should commence during 2022 in order to meet the target.</p> <p>EG STUR and FISH-M will support the implementation of this action.</p> <p>EG STUR could plan the more detailed timeline for the implementation of the action.</p>

Code	Action	Target year	Implemented by	Overseeing WG/EG (Proposal for the responsible body in <b>bold</b> )	Criteria for achievement	Lead(s)	Next steps	Comments
					<p>spawning and nursery sites meet the needs of the species and are accessible for the respective life cycle stages, has been implemented where relevant. (National measure)</p> <p>Successful, self-sustaining, re-introduced population of Baltic sturgeon is in its potential spawning rivers and in key areas of its former natural range. (National measure)</p>			
	<b>Theme: Fisheries management</b>							
S40	Identify by 2024 fish species for which there is a need for better data for identified purposes, such as setting threshold levels. Utilise dedicated programmes and projects to facilitate recording and reporting of data for these species by 2025 to support the identification and implementation of measures to achieve good environmental status.	2024, 2025	Joint	<b>FISH</b> ; EG Fishdata	<p>By 2024 fish species for which there is a need for better data for identified purposes have been identified.</p> <p>By 2025 programmes or projects are in place to facilitate recording and reporting of data from commercial and recreational fishermen on catch of non-target fish species</p>	EG Fishdata	<p>[For the first part of the action, the Meeting proposed that FishPro and ComFish could identify the need for data.</p> <p>EG Fishdata should be reactivated to consider the implementation of the second part of the action.]</p>	<p>Important that the work is coordinated with ICES and its relevant working groups.</p> <p>The Meeting noted that the action is not related specifically to by-catch, but to improved data on fish species for which there is insufficient data in general.</p> <p>Some issues could be improved by the revision of the control regulation.</p> <p>HELCOM workshop on COMFISH could be consulted.</p>

Code	Action	Target year	Implemented by	Overseeing WG/EG (Proposal for the responsible body in <b>bold</b> )	Criteria for achievement	Lead(s)	Next steps	Comments
								It should be clarified how detailed and for which purpose the data is collected.
S41	Further elaborate cooperation between the Baltic Sea Fisheries Forum (BALTFISH) and relevant HELCOM working groups by 2023 to facilitate a wide range of actions to achieve good environmental status.	2023	Joint	FISH	A more structured or formalized cooperation and coordination between HELCOM and BALTFISH is elaborated. Such cooperation and coordination is carried out through practical means such as sharing meeting agendas, and feeding in to the appropriate processes between organizations.	Secretariat to lead, taking into account decisions/instructions by Fish Group meetings.	[Continue sharing relevant meeting agendas and outcomes with BALTFISH and attending relevant meetings.  FISH 15-2022 to consider further structuring and formalization of the cooperation and coordination.]	The Meeting noted that cooperation with BALTFISH is already ongoing and should continue.  HELCOM and BALTFISH have mainly the same countries although the responsible authorities might differ in some cases. National coordination is therefore also important.
S42	Update and harmonize by 2024 the 2016 BALTFIMPA decision-support tool approach with ongoing initiatives e.g. in the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) on a seafloor assessment framework for the Baltic Sea. This tool should also provide options on how to reduce the possible negative impact of fisheries on conservation values in the most cost-effective way, including in marine protected areas (MPAs).	2024	Joint	FISH	BALTFIMPA decision support tool is updated.		[ICES could be invited to have a look at the BALTFIMPA tool and propose possible updates needed.]	A lead country or project would be useful in order to update the BALTFIMPA tool.

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	<i>Topic: By-catch</i>							
S43	Reduce the negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem and to this end, support the development of fisheries management including technical measures to minimize unwanted by-catch of fish, birds and marine mammals and achieve the close to zero target for by-catch rates of relevant species by 2024, especially the Baltic proper population of harbour porpoise by 2022.	2022, 2024	Joint	FISH	The action is of an ongoing nature and will be followed up by assessment of by-catch within regional assessments.	Proposal to be submitted to FISH 15-2022 with a selection of concrete measures that could contribute to achieving the goal of this action, taking into account also ongoing developments within BALTFISH (drafting led by Germany and Poland)	[Contracting Parties to follow and contribute, as appropriate, to the discussions within BALTFISH regarding fisheries management measures to support this action.  Consider what HELCOM could contribute with through e.g. EG MAMA or other relevant Expert Groups with regard to the implementation of this action.]	<p>Fisheries management measures are developed by CPs and activities are also ongoing on the matter within BALTFISH.</p> <p>An EU Delegated Regulation on full/seasonal closures is also expected to enter into force on 25 February 2022, which contributes to achieving the goal of this action.</p> <p>EG MAMA, JWG Bird EG STUR should be involved in the implementation of this action.</p> <p>The Meeting took note of the following proposed measures, to be considered in the development of a selection of measures for consideration by FISH 15-2022_</p> <p>- Efforts should be made in Contracting Parties to undertake the following concrete actions: / CPs to undertake</p>

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								<p>concrete Actions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time/area closures in high risk areas already identified (e.g., Femern Belt)</li> <li>- Set net closures in MPAs important for porpoises and birds where by-catch has been identified as a problem.</li> <li>- Follow discussions within BALTFISH regarding fisheries management measures</li> <li>- Excluder grids in pontoon traps and fyke nets (not within HELCOM remit).</li> <li>- The European Commission encourages EU Member States to use EMFAF to support the use of alternative fishing gear.</li> </ul>
S44	Invite the competent authorities to immediately, but no later than 2022, implement mitigation measures in the Baltic proper, in order for by-catch of harbour porpoise to be significantly reduced with the aim to reach by-catch rates close to zero.	2022	National	FISH	Mitigation measures are implemented, and Baltic proper by-catch of harbour porpoise has been significantly reduced.		<p>[The EU Delegated Regulation on full/seasonal closures in certain MPAs is expected to enter into force on 25.2.2022.</p> <p>Joint BALTFISH Recommendation on effective measures</p>	The Meeting noted that, in some Contracting Parties, the abundance and data on harbour porpoise is very low, which is why measures have not been put in place and the aim of reaching by-catch rates close to zero

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							<p>outside MPAs (e.g., pingers, time/area closures, alternative gears) or other effective measures (relevant for EU Member States).</p> <p>Contracting Parties to consider additional closures in further MPAs where required from a biological perspective]</p>	<p>has been reached. The Meeting also noted that by-catch reducing measures for other species (e.g. birds) would also benefit the harbour porpoise.</p> <p>The Meeting noted that funding for the SAMBAH II has been applied for, in order to get up to date data on the distribution of harbour porpoise in the Baltic Sea.</p>
S45	Invite the competent authorities to implement operational conservation measures for the Belt Sea population of harbour porpoise by 2024 such as permanent and/or spatial-temporal closures for relevant fishing métiers in risk areas where technical mitigation measures are insufficient to reach conservation goals.	2024	National	FISH	Mitigation measures are implemented where conservation goals have not been met.		<p>[Contracting Parties to follow and contribute, as appropriate, to the discussions within BALTFISH and the Scheveningen Group, respectively, regarding fisheries management measures to support this action.</p> <p>Consider what HELCOM could contribute with through e.g. EG MAMA or other relevant Expert Groups with regard to the implementation of this action.]</p>	
S46	Promote effective mitigation measures to	2025	Joint	FISH	Effective mitigation measures to reduce by-catch of harbour		[Study porpoise occurrence in	A lead country (or countries) would be

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	minimize by-catch of harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea area inter alia via cooperation with the Baltic Sea Fisheries Forum (BALTFISH), and evaluate and promote adjusted measures as needed by 2025.				porpoise in the Baltic Sea have been promoted inter alia in cooperation with BALTFISH.		German/Polish/Danish MPA cluster using C-PODs, sharing data, developing additional appropriate measures and promoting them.  Voluntary measures in the German/Polish/Danish MPA cluster to be adapted to porpoise occurrence and also in relation to other protected goods (e.g., long-tailed ducks) as required by actions S44 and B5  Develop interim measures using pingers in coordination with Navies.]	beneficial to facilitate implementation of this action.  Cooperation with EG MAMA and the ASCOBANS/JASTARNIA group would be beneficial, in particular with regard to studying the occurrence of harbour porpoise.
S47	Continually test, promote and introduce new technical and operational by-catch mitigation measures such as alternative and seal safe gears in cooperation with competent authorities with the aim to, as appropriate, replace fishing gear proven to be problematic with respect to by-catch, with evaluation of measures every five years starting in 2023, and regularly update the HELCOM questionnaire on trials of alternative	Starting 2023	National/Joint	FISH	Ongoing tests of new technical and operational by-catch mitigation measures are evaluated every five years, starting in 2023. (Joint)  New efficient alternative fishing gear have been developed and are used as appropriate. (National)  HELCOM questionnaire on trials of alternative fishing gears and techniques updated regularly, at least every two years, starting in 2022 making also use, as applicable, of information collected through	Poland to lead work related to the questionnaire. Denmark to lead filling in questionnaire with results from DTU Aqua.	[DK to fill in <a href="#">HELCOM questionnaire</a> with results of their tests at DTU Aqua  CPs to initiate co-operation between science and fishers  Initiating projects, field tests etc.  Alternatives for flatfish set nets sought  Investigate the possibility to add information to questionnaire from EU Regulation 2019/1241 (if	The Meeting noted that developing and testing alternative fishing gears requires both funding and cooperation with the fishing industry.  It is currently difficult to carry out research for alternative cod fishing and other species for which no targeted fishery is allowed.  A lead is needed to investigate the

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	fishing gears and fishing techniques.				the reporting requirements of Regulation EU 2019/1241. (Joint)		any) to the HELCOM questionnaire.]	possibility to add information to questionnaire from EU Regulation 2019/1241 (if any) to HELCOM questionnaire
S48	Develop and implement an effective data collection for more reliable data on incidental by-caught birds and mammals and fishing effort consistent and fully in line with the data needs identified by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). Relevant sources of data are e.g. EU basic control Regulation and additional national or regional coordinated data collection programmes or projects for filling data-gaps outlined in the HELCOM Roadmap on fisheries data.		Joint	FISH	An effective system is in place for data collection of by-catch of birds, mammals, and fishing effort, taking into account data needs identified by ICES and data gaps outlined in the HELCOM Roadmap on fisheries data, as well as the requirements on data collection in the EU Control Regulation.		<p>[In the short term: HELCOM to introduce HOLAS data needs to BALTFISH to ask RCG to evaluate HOLAS needs and possibility to deliver the data in time for the HOLAS process.</p> <p>In the longer term (taking into account the revised EU Control Regulation):</p> <p>a) Contracting Parties to exchange information on how to collect effort data for small vessels and bycatch data.</p> <p>b) On the basis of the exchanged information Contracting Parties should identify ways how to collect the needed data in a cost-effective way making use of identified synergies to the extent possible</p>	<p>The overall responsibility of implementing this action is with the Fish Group, possibly also EG Fishdata. Cooperation with regional coordination groups needed.</p> <p>The Meeting noted that there is a legal obligation for EU member states with regard to data collection.</p> <p>The Meeting noted that the EU Control Regulation is currently being reviewed, the outcome of which will need to be taken into account in implementing the action.</p>

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							<p>c) Contracting Parties to initiate (national/joint) projects to collect bycatch data on the basis of the EU MAP</p> <p>d) Contracting Parties to incentivise fishermen's participation in a REM study]</p>	
S49	Maintain, develop and extend regulatory or voluntary schemes to protect key seabird areas and seasons by establishing appropriate fisheries measures in line with conservation objectives and to monitor incidental catches of seabirds by 2025. Extend and develop outreach programmes for the fisheries sector concerning their possible impacts on seabird populations.	2025	National/Joint	FISH	Regulatory or voluntary schemes are in place and being implemented, as appropriate, to protect key seabird areas and seasons by establishing appropriate fisheries measures in line with conservation objectives. (Joint and national)		<p>1. Outreach</p> <p>Contracting Parties to initiate outreach projects.</p> <p>2. Monitoring/data collection: HELCOM to introduce HOLAS data needs to BALTFISH to ask RCG to evaluate HOLAS needs and possibility to deliver the data in time for the HOLAS process. (taking into account the revised EU Control Regulation):</p> <p>a) Contracting Parties to exchange information on how to collect effort data</p>	<p>JWG BIRD should be involved in the implementation of this action.</p> <p>The HELCOM BLUES project is developing risk maps, which are expected to be useful for this action.</p>

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							<p>for small vessels and bycatch data.</p> <p>b) On the basis of the exchanged information Contracting Parties should identify ways how to collect the needed data in a cost-effective way making use of identified synergies to the extent possible.</p> <p>c) Contracting Parties to initiate (national/joint) projects to collect bycatch data on the basis of the EU MAP</p> <p>d) Contracting Parties to incentivise fishermen's participation in a REM study</p> <p>3. management measures:</p> <p>Contracting Parties to start a Joint Recommendation process for management measures within MPAs immediately to meet the target year 2025.]</p>	

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	<i>Topic: Fish stock management</i>							
S50	Competent authorities to jointly further develop protective measures for Baltic Sea salmon to support the development of a new regional salmon management plan, and nationally establish salmon management plans by 2023, where appropriate. These management plans should be implemented by 2025 to achieve the set targets, including but not limited to smolt production, genetic diversity and distribution throughout the river habitat. In addition, nationally ensure that granting permits for activities in and near rivers does not compromise the ability to reach set river specific fish population targets.	2023, 2025	National/Joint	<b>FISH</b> ; FISH-M	Protective measures for Baltic Sea salmon to support the development of a new regional salmon management plan have been further developed by 2023. (Joint) Long-term national management plans for salmon stocks are in place by 2023 and being implemented by 2025 and at least 10 threatened salmon rivers have active conservation. (National)  National procedures are in place to ensure that granting permits for activities in and near rivers does not compromise the ability to reach set river specific fish population targets. (National)	FISH-M	[A meeting of FISH-M should be organized during 2022 in order to initiate the development of protective measures for Baltic Sea salmon.]	A lead is needed for the joint part of this action to develop protective measures.  The ICES WG on Baltic salmon and sea trout should be invited to provide input to the work on implementing this action.  The European Commission intends to request ICES to evaluate the existing Baltic Sea main basin salmon river list.
S51	Competent authorities to improve data related to sea trout stocks and to improve populations of sea trout stocks by implementing national measures at the latest by 2025 with the view to achieve good ecological condition in sea trout streams.	2025	National	<b>FISH</b> ; FISH-M	Active management, including effective conservation measures of sea trout stocks, including habitat restoration, are in place in each Baltic Sea coastal country and being implemented.			The Meeting noted that the new data collection EU MAP requires EU Member States to collect more data on sea trout stocks.

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S52	Define necessary complementary measures by 2024 in relevant policy (fisheries, environment etc.) areas to improve the size/age structure for fish stocks, including cod.	2024	National/Joint	FISH; STATE & CONSERVATION	Complementary measures are defined and can be implemented, in order to improve size/age structure, to reach healthy fish stocks, including cod.			A lead is needed to further the fisheries part of this action.  It is proposed that both FISH and STATE&CONSERVATION oversee this action, as the complementary measures to be defined are expected to stem from the areas of responsibility of both groups.
S54	Share information among Contracting Parties, the Baltic Sea Fisheries Forum (BALTFISH) and Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC) on non-lethal mitigation measures or other ways to manage seals-fisheries interactions and implement those measures by 2025, as appropriate.	2025	National/Joint	FISH	HELCOM-BALTFISH toolbox, or other means of sharing information on non-lethal mitigation measures or ways to manage seals-fisheries interactions are in place (Joint supporting action) and such measures are being implemented, as appropriate. (National measure) Overview of actions that are suitable within the existing legal framework.			A lead is needed to create toolbox or other means of sharing information.  Involvement by BALTFISH, BSAC and EG MAMA useful in implementing the action.
	<b>Theme: Underwater noise</b>							
S61	Develop and implement guidelines for the design and use of acoustic deterrent devices to avoid detrimental impacts on the environment from underwater noise by 2024.	2024	Joint	FISH	Guidelines for the design and use of acoustic deterrent devices are in place and implemented in all Contracting Parties.	EG Noise (proposal by FISH 14-2022)	[Contracting Parties to submit information to FISH 15-2022 on the purpose (e.g., offshore construction, aquaculture, fishing), and frequency of occurrence as well as evaluation of	FISH 14-2022 noted that unless permits to used ADDs are needed, information on their use may be scarce. However, if projects, studies etc. on the

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							ADD use, types of devices used in different sectors as well as on finished, planned or foreseeable projects using ADDs. Information should also be provided on whether the use of ADDs requires permits in the respective Contracting Parties.  EG Noise]	matter have been conducted, the outcomes of such should be shared as this information could be useful in developing guidelines.  EU Member States have committed to provide information on impulsive underwater noise to an ICES registry.  EG Noise should lead the development of Guidelines, especially related to ADDs used for other purposes than fisheries.
	<b>Theme: Seabed loss and disturbance</b>							
S64	Enforce and implement by 2025, in line with the update of the marine protected area (MPA) management guidelines, effective management plans and/or conservation measures to not allow destructive and exploitative activities related to the seabed that may compromise the conservation objectives of MPAs.	2025	National	<b>STATE &amp; CONSERVATION;</b> FISH; HELCOM-VASAB MSP; EN DREDS	Effective management plans, conservation rules or other equivalent systems to not allow for destructive and exploitative activities related to the seabed compromising the conservation objectives of MPAs are implemented and enforced.			The action should be led by STATE & CONSERVATION, with contribution by FISH, as appropriate, related to fisheries.  Strong link with EU Biodiversity Strategy and the new EU restoration law.

## Actions with later target years

Code	Action	Target year	Implemented by	Overseeing WG/EG (Proposal for the responsible body in <b>bold</b> )	Criteria for achievement	Possible comments
	<b>Theme:</b> <i>Hazardous substances</i>					
	<i>Topic: Legacy pollutants</i>					
HL14	Encourage the use of alternative less toxic metals and other materials to replace lead in fishing gear and shooting bullets with the aim to minimize harmful use of metallic lead.	2030	National/Joint	PRESSURE; FISH	Regional guidelines and recommendations on substitution of lead in fishing gear and ammunition are adopted. (Joint)  National guidelines and recommendations on substitution of lead in fishing gear and ammunition are issued. (National)  Related regional and national outreach campaigns are arranged. (Joint and national)	
	<b>Theme:</b> <i>Fisheries management</i>					
S39	Develop guidance by 2026 in cooperation with the Regional Coordination Groups within the EU Data Collection Framework and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) on how to improve data collected on recreational fisheries in a cost-effective way, with a view to evaluate the impacts of recreational fisheries on the marine environment, where there is a need.	2026	Joint	<b>FISH</b> ; EG Fishdata	Guidance on how to improve data collected on recreational fisheries, taking into account the requirements on data collection in the EU Control Regulation, is adopted.	
	<i>Topic: Fish stock management</i>					

Code	Action	Target year	Implemented by	Overseeing WG/EG <i>(Proposal for the responsible body in bold)</i>	Criteria for achievement	Possible comments
S53	Implement measures to restore coastal fish communities, including establishment of no-take areas, seasonal closures and catch regulations, as appropriate by 2026 for the specific coastal area.	2026	National	FISH	Measures are in place in specific coastal areas, as appropriate, including establishment of no-take areas, seasonal closures and catch regulations.	

## Annex 3. List of Contacts and Observers of HELCOM Fish Group

Name	Organization	E-mail address
<b>Chair</b>		
Marianne Goffeng Raakil	Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Sweden	marianne.goffeng-raakil@gov.se
<b>Denmark</b>		
Janne Palomino Dalby	Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries	jpda@fvm.dk
Kim Raegaard	Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries	kimrae@fvm.dk
Mikkel Stage	Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries	miksta@fvm.dk
<b>EU</b>		
Antoine Kopp	European Commission	antoine.kopp@ec.europa.eu
Laurent Markovic	European Commission	Laurent.markovic@ec.europa.eu
<b>Estonia</b>		
Raimo Selgis	Ministry of Environment of Estonia	Raimo.Selgis@envir.ee
Katrina Lang	Ministry of the Environment	Katrina.Lang@Envir.ee
Lauri Saks	Estonian Marine Institute, University of Tartu	lauri.saks@ut.ee
Roland Svirgsden	Estonian Marine Institute, University of Tartu	roland.svirgsden@ut.ee
<b>Finland</b>		
Penina Blankett	Ministry of the Environment	penina.blankett@gov.fi
Heikki Lehtinen	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	heikki.lehtinen@gov.fi
Mirva Wideskog	The Center of Economic Development, Transport and the Environment	mirva.wideskog@ely-keskus.fi
<b>Germany</b>		
Dieter Boedeker	German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)	dieter.boedeker@bfn.de
Marina Carstens	Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection Mecklenburg- Vorpommern	m.carstens@lm.mv-regierung.de
Hans-Peter Damian	Federal Environment Agency	hans-peter.damian@uba.de
Ulfert Focken	Thünen-Institute of Fisheries Ecology	ulfert.focken@thuenen.de
Sven Koschinski	on behalf of German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)	sk@meereszoologie.de
Eva Papaioannou	Geomar Helmholtz Center for Ocean research	epapaioannou@geomar.de
Christian Pusch	German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)	christian.pusch@bfn.de
Miriam Müller	German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)	Miriam.mueller@bfn.de
<b>Latvia</b>		
Laura Briekmane	Institute of Food, Safety, Animal Health and Environment "BIOR"	laura.briekmane@bior.gov.lv
<b>Lithuania</b>		
Justas Poviliūnas	Ministry of Agriculture	Justas.poviliunas@zum.lt

Antanas Kontautas	University of Klaipeda	antanas.kontautas@ku.lt
Loreta Bražinskaitė	Ministry of Agriculture	loreta.brazinskaite@zum.lt
Jolanta Cesiulienė	Ministry of Agriculture	Jolanta.cesiuliene@zum.lt
<b>Poland</b>		
Katarzyna Kaminska Vice-Chair of Fish	Ministry of Maritime and Inland Navigation	Katarzyna.Kaminska@minrol.gov.pl
Andrzej Kapusta	Inland Fisheries Institute in Olsztyn	kasta@infish.com.pl
Paweł Łazarski	Ministry of Maritime and Inland Navigation	pawel.lazarski@mgm.gov.pl
Wojciech Pelczarski	National Marine Fisheries Research Institute	wpelczar@mir.gdynia.pl
Iwona Psuty	National Marine Fisheries Research Institute	iwona.psuty@mir.gdynia.pl
Igor Wawrzyniak	Ministry of Maritime and Inland Navigation	igor.wawrzyniak@mgm.gov.pl
<b>Russia</b>		
Natalia Bobyleva	State Company "Mineral"	bobyleva@helcom.ru
Sergey Shibaev	Kaliningrad State Technical Univeristy	shibaev@klgtu.ru
Svetlana Tochanskaya	Saint-Petersburg State Company "Mineral"	svetlana@helcom.ru
<b>Sweden</b>		
Martin H Larsson	Ministry of the Environment	martin.h.larsson@regeringskansliet.se
Gry Sagebakken	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	gry.sagebakken@havochvatten.se

<b>Observers</b>		
Sally Clink	Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC)	sc@bsac.dk
Ewa Milewska	Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC)	em@bsac.dk
Małgorzata Maria Klawiter-Piwowarska	Baltic Sea States Subregional Co- operation (BSSSC)	m.klawiter@pomorskie.eu
Bruna Campos	BirdLife International	bruna.campos@birdlife.org
Gesine Lange	BirdLife International	gesine.lange@nabu.de
BONUS EEIG	BONUS EEIG	bonus@bonuseeig.fi
Ida Carlén	Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB)	ida.carlen@ccb.se
Mikhail Durkin	Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB)	mikhail.durkin@ccb.se
Nils Höglund	Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB)	Nils.Hoglund@ccb.se
Glenn Douglas	European Anglers Alliance (EAA)	glenn.douglas@sportfiskarna.se
Catherine Pons	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	secretariat@feap.info
Irja Skytén-Suominen	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	irja.skyten- suominen@kalankasvatus.fi
Anna Pyc	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)/Polish Trout Breeders Association	anna@pstraqustelnia.pl
Lisbeth Jess Plesner	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	lisbeth@danskakvakultur.dk
Konstantin Ivanov	Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe	konstantin.ivanov@gwpcee.org

Eugene Nixon	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)	ernixon1@gmail.com
Lotte Worsøe Clausen	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)	lotte.worsoe.clausen@ices.dk
Mark Dickey-Collas	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)	mark.dickey-collas@ices.dk
Wojciech Wawrzynski (substitute for Lotte)	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)	Wojciech@ices.dk
Sebastian Valanko	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)	Sebastian.valanko@ices.dk
Terrance Long	International Dialogues on underwater munitions	chair@idum.org
Marjukka Porvari	John Nurminen Foundation	marjukka.porvari@jnfoundation.fi
Miina Mäki	John Nurminen Foundation	miina.maki@jnfoundation.fi
Christian Tsangarides	Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE)	bans@lifeplatform.eu
Dennis Hamro-Drotz	Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO)	dennis.hamro-drotz@nefco.fi
Javier Santiago	Oceana	jlopez@oceana.org
Inger Näslund	WWF	inger@wwf.se
Matti Ovaska	WWF Finland	matti.ovaska@wwf.fi