

BSAC report on HELCOM FISH M informal meeting

14th December 2023 (online)

There were 18 participants, mostly experts on migratory fish, but also representatives of the MS administrations (Finland, Poland). Nils Høglund chaired the meeting as a CCB representative. The meeting met under informal terms. The BSAC was represented by the ExCom Vice – Chair.

The Chair recalled that the HELCOM FISH Working Group supported the suggestion by FISH-M 1-2023 to organise a dedicated session focused on discussing how to improve and ensure the added value of Recommendation 32-33/1¹ and its reporting, reasons for the lack of reporting from some CPs and possible need for the Recommendation's revision, and that an invitation to such a dedicated session should be extended to EG Fish-M experts and experts on river restoration in general. A more official session of FISH M will follow in 2024.

The Chair explained that FISH M is to deal with a number of salmon and sea trout related actions in the BSAP. The group is to decide how to approach the actions.

The Chair referred to ongoing actions and outcomes that could be relevant to discussion on migratory species, in particular salmon and sea trout. He mentioned that on 26th January 2024, ICES is to deliver a set of advice on MSFD Descriptor 3 and C3. Other points of interest: the December AGRIFISH Council decided on measures for eel. BALTFISH has announced a dedicated meeting on eel, in particular to discuss closure periods (**planned for 9 -10 January 2024**).

He referred to **the eel** and actions on eel in the BSAP and underlined the need to hold a meeting dedicated to eel. He informed that eel is on the agenda of the Joint Special Group and on the BALTFISH agenda, therefore work on eel should be coordinated. He had written to DG Mare to consider such approach to combine forces and hold a joint meeting. Cooperation would also be of added value for salmon. Some rivers need to be prioritised. He informed that CCB will hold a seminar on mitigation measures at dams etc.

The Chair proposed to discuss a possible revision of Recommendation 32-33/1.

Discussion on the revision of salmon recommendation: the recommendation was adopted in 2011, based on earlier understanding of salmon situation. Proposals to update the current terminology and reconsider the list of salmon rivers in Annex 1 of the Recommendation were put forward, among others, how to define potential smolt production capacity (PSPC). It is assessed on current conditions and migration problems. What is meant by PSPC in the recommendation and what terminology should be used now?

The Chair stated that the aim of the FISH M is to widen the discussion on salmon management, however, it is up to the Commission to draft the EU management plan. FISH M can provide support.

The meeting agreed that recommendation needs to be revised. There is also a need to look at how to deliver on some actions from BSAP. The meeting decided to deal with salmon first (January 2024). The meeting in January will also look at the reporting - what is the added value, what should be brought in?

¹ [Provisional Agenda \(helcom.fi\)](https://helcom.fi)

Other fish species – dealt with by coastal fish species group. Action B15 directly related. FISH M – mainly on salmon and sea trout, also eel and sturgeon. HELCOM Secretariat will present a **workplan of the HELCOM FISH WG in the meeting end January.**

The meeting agreed:

FISH M session dedicated to salmon will take place on 30th and 31st January 2023 online. The meeting will look into the recommendation 32-33/1 in detail and also at relevant pending actions of the BSAP. Sea trout will be dealt with at a later stage.

HELCOM/BALTFISH meeting dedicated to the **eel** will take place on **13th February 2023.**