

Nineteenth Annual Report of the Baltic Sea Advisory Council 2024-2025

Introduction

The Baltic Sea Advisory Council has been in operation since 2006. Its main function is to advise the European Commission and Member States on matters relating to management of the fisheries in the Baltic Sea. Its work and activities are funded by the EU Commission, the Baltic Sea Member States and its members.

The BSAC comprises a General Assembly, Executive Committee, and three Working Groups: for demersal fisheries, pelagic fisheries and for ecosystem-based fisheries management. The BSAC is run by a Secretariat and assisted by a Management Team to deal with administrative, management and operational things. There are terms of reference and rules of procedure for the BSAC and its Working Groups and Management Team, as well as a Code of Conduct for members and observers.

This nineteenth annual report covers the activities, meetings and outputs of the Baltic Sea Advisory Council from 1st April 2024- 31st March 2025. The work programme was adopted on 16th May 2024.¹

Main results/outputs from the BSAC during the year 2024 – 2025

The BSAC work programme 2024-2025 contained a number of focus areas. These are described here, with a few words on the outputs and achievements, where relevant.

The work programme has been implemented to a large degree and most tasks were carried out. At the same time some additional actions complemented the planned tasks.

The BSAC held 6 WG meetings, one of which was held as joint WG meeting, 4 Executive Committee meetings, 1 General Assembly, 1 Extraordinary General Assembly (to vote on the revised Rules of Procedure), 1 workshop on predators and one webinar (on climate change). The first kick off meeting of the Focus Group on science was also organised.

The BSAC has continued to implement the recommendations of the External Performance Review conducted in 2021. As a key element in this process the BSAC improved its internal working procedure. The next external performance review will take place in early 2026, in accordance with Article 7a of the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/204.

The main focus area of this year's work were:

Horizontal issues for all Working Groups

- **Recommendations on fishing opportunities for 2025.** ICES released its annual advice for the Baltic stocks at the end of May 2024. The BSAC held a working group to deal with this, and develop recommendations for the Baltic fishery in 2025. The

¹ [Past Meetings - Baltic Sea Advisory Council](#)

BSAC published its annual recommendations on fishing opportunities for 2025 following the Joint WG and the Executive Committee meetings in June 2024.

- **Follow up on the publication of the Communication on “The common fisheries policy today and tomorrow”² and how it connects with the BSAC White Paper published in 2022.** The EBM, Pelagic and Demersal Working Groups held in September and October 2024 revisited the BSAC White Paper with a view to producing BSAC recommendations on the CFP in response to the Commission’s evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy the Commission and a call for evidence launched in June 2024 to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).
- **Workshop on monitoring and enforcement of the Landing Obligation with European Fisheries Control Agency and BALTFISH.** The BALTFISH-EFCA-BSAC workshop on control and enforcement of the Landing Obligation to discuss the results of the report on the implementation of the landing obligation in the Baltic Sea in 2019-2021 published by EFCA was organised in November 2024.
- **Follow-up on the webinar on Climate Change organised in May 2023.** The BSAC decided to continue following developments on the topic and new scientific studies that can help understand the consequences of climate change to the Baltic ecosystem and stakeholders. The second webinar held on 29th August 2024 focused on the adaptation part of the climate-ocean nexus by presenting new perspectives on the impacts of climate change that can be expected on the Baltic Sea fish stocks and fisheries.
- **Management of seals and cormorants and interactions with fisheries:** Following on the successful workshop on predators in the Baltic in October 2023 (focused on current management regime and scientific knowledge), BSAC organised a follow-up workshop on 30th October 2024 focuses on an exchange of views around conservation and management of these seals and cormorants. BSAC recommendations on seals and cormorants were adopted by consensus.
- **Recreational fisheries.** The active participation of recreational fisheries representatives insured that this perspective was well taken into account in BSAC’s work and recommendations throughout the year. A special session on recreational fisheries was held during the General Assembly on 16th May 2024. The objective of this special session is to present the scientific work on recreational fisheries carried out by ICES but also give a picture of what is recreational fisheries in the Baltic, focusing on particular fishing techniques for salmon (trolling techniques). Kieran Hyder, CEFAS, Vice Chair of ICES WG on Recreational Fisheries Surveys and Harry Strehlow from the Thünen Institute had been invited.

Under the chairmanship of the Demersal Working Group

- *Relevant work to address selectivity to avoid unwanted catches of cod*
- *Continued-work related to the Technical Measures*
- *Work on species interactions between sprat, herring and cod (in close cooperation with the Pelagic WG)*

² https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/publications/common-fisheries-policy-today-and-tomorrow-fisheries-and-oceans-pact-towards-sustainable-science_en

The Working Group dealt with the Commission's evaluation of the CFP and revisited three chapters of the White Paper. The WG focused on three chapters of the White Paper (Ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, MSY and social dimension). The representative of DG MARE presented an update on the Delegated and Implementing Acts, regarding the obligation to use new flatfish gear in SDs 22-26 and informed that a corrigendum had been sent to the Parliament and the Council on 25th September 2025. At the end of November, if there are no objections, the Acts will be published and will enter into force, with a 120 days of transitory period before the provisions become an obligation. The representative of DG MARE presented the Commission's report on the implementation of Technical Measures Regulation

The Working Group continued the work on selectivity to avoid unwanted catches of cod and the work related to the technical measures through the discussion of the Commission report on implementation of the technical measures regulation³ published on 30th July 2024. The Working Group discussed a recovery plan for cod. The Working Group decided to recommend to the ExCom that a joint BSAC WG could meet in person in the autumn 2025 to discuss the cod recovery plan. The structure and components of such plan could first be discussed in the Focus Group on Science. The BSAC decided that salmon will be on the agenda of the Demersal and EBM WG in 2025-26. In February 2025, the Working Group hosted a presentation on the impact of climate change on salmon stocks in February 2025.

Selectivity was addressed during the ExCom meeting on 27th June 2024. a representative of the Commission referred to the Technical Measures Regulation, aimed at improving the exploitation pattern of commercial fisheries, minimising the impact on sensitive species and on the environment. The ExCom decided that the BSAC should continue to follow the work on technical measures and selectivity carried out by the Commission and engage in the STECF Expert Working group meetings on selectivity and Technical Measures Regulations when invited to do so.

Under the chairmanship of Pelagic Working Group

- *The BSAC will investigate further work on management of the western Baltic spring spawning herring.*
- *Closely follow scientific analysis and measures proposed for herring stocks including the ICES WK REBUILD.*
- *Follow up on stickleback and trial fisheries in the Baltic.*
- *Work on species interactions between sprat, herring and cod (in close cooperation with the Demersal WG)*
- *Discuss how to attract a new generation of fishers in the industry.*

The Working Group dealt with the Commission's evaluation of the CFP and revisited three chapters of the White Paper (on scientific advice, regionalisation and subsidies) and discussed what additional remarks could be made with a view to preparing the BSAC recommendations on the CFP. The Working Group discussed the ICES advice for herring in SDs 30-31, published by ICES on 16th September 2024. A representative of ProSea Marine Education presented the Catching the Potential project, as the first step in the

³ [COM/2024/349 final](#)

discussions foreseen by the BSAC on how to attract a new generation of fishers in the industry. An update of stickleback trial fisheries carried out in Denmark was presented. In February 2025, the WG discussed the implementation of the new Control Regulation. The WG decided to ask the BSAC Secretariat to draft letters to the Commission and BALTFISH asking for better stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the Control Regulation. The letters were sent to DG MARE and BALTFISH. A reply from the German BALTFISH Presidency was received on 17th March. BALTFISH will be open for BSAC's suggestions and remarks on specific topics connected with the revised Fisheries Control Regulation but noted that its Control Expert Group is not dedicated to systematic or comprehensive discussions of all possible aspects of the revised Fisheries Control Regulation. Those discussions are being held in the relevant Commission expert groups.

- *Work on species interactions between sprat, herring and cod (in close cooperation with the Demersal WG).*

The work on species interactions will be continued in the framework of the BSAC Focus Group on Science in 2025-26.

Under the chairmanship of the Ecosystem based Working Group

- *The Marine Strategy Framework Directive: ongoing work with its the review, including work on those descriptors that are relevant to fisheries.*
- *Integrated sea use management/maritime spatial planning: continue working in particular on offshore windfarms developments and consider organising a webinar on the topic.*
- *Discuss future multiannual plan for salmon in cooperation with BALTFISH and HELCOM, including on technical measures for salmon, as well as implementation issues in the salmon fishery.*
- *Eel: Reflect on the coordination of the application of the measures (including the flexible closures) and continue to put forward BSAC advice and proposed actions. Follow the publication of the latest ICES advice.*
- *BSAC will inform and advise on coming recreational fisheries management control and reporting measures (specifically concerning species with conservation measures).*

The main item on the agenda of EBM WG was the Commission's evaluation of the CFP, COM launched evidence in June 2024 to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The Working Group revisited two chapters of the White Paper (on climate adaptation and recreational fisheries) and discussed what additional remarks could be made with a view to preparing the BSAC recommendations on the CFP. The HELCOM Secretariat presented the ongoing work on the revision of the HELCOM Recommendations on salmon. The BSAC members were asked to submit any further input to the HELCOM draft recommendation on salmon after the meeting. The study "Invasive species in the Baltic Sea and their impact on commercial fish stocks was also presented. A general update on the eel was presented, including the ongoing work in the Joint Special Group and HELCOM. The BSAC Secretariat followed the work of HELCOM (EG Fish-M group) on HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1 focusing on salmon and the implementation of BSAP action S50. The BSAC decided that salmon will be on the agenda of the Demersal and EBM WG in 2025-26 (in the context of the HELCOM recommendation on salmon and

the Baltic Salmon Management Plan). Eel was discussed in the WG meeting in September 2024 in the context of the EU actions in the framework of the Marine Action Plan and planned HELCOM research proposal.

The functioning of the BSAC

In 2024-25, the Executive Committee was appointed for 2024-27⁴. Guillaume Carruel left the BSAC after very successful 2.5 years at the post of the Executive Secretary. A new Executive Secretary Andrea Ordaz-Nemeth was appointed as of 1st November 2024. Following her resignation from this post, Alexander Ben Embarek was appointed to the post of Executive Secretary as of 3rd January 2025.

The General Assembly held in May 2024 re-elected by consensus Jarek Zieliński as BSAC Executive Committee Chair and Glenn Douglas as Executive Committee Vice-Chair. The General Assembly elected the ExCom members. The General Assembly elected by consensus Vesa Karttunen as the General assembly Chair and re-elected Christian Tsangarides as General Assembly Vice-Chair.

The Executive Committee held in May 2024 re-appointed the Working Group Chairs for the period of 3 years. In October 2024, following the departure of Nils Höglund, Matti Ovaska was elected new Chair of the Ecosystem-based Working Group.

The BSAC agreed on the Guidelines for the format and preparation of the annual BSAC recommendations on the fishery in the Baltic in order to reach more unified recommendations on different stocks and help elevating the impact of the BSAC on decision-makers.

BALTFISH

The BSAC has maintained close cooperation with the BALTFISH Polish and German Presidencies, endeavoured to align the timing of its work and its outputs with the BALTFISH work programmes, gave input and took initiatives. The BSAC still faces a challenge with deadlines when consulted on draft Joint Recommendations by BALTFISH. This usually prevents holding meeting on the topic and is perceived to reduce the level of consensus on these specific recommendations. The BSAC continued its new habit of organising January Executive Committee meetings in the same location as the BALTFISH Presidency to ensure smooth communication.

The BSAC representatives participated in two BALTFISH Forum meetings (in June 2024, under the Polish Presidency and in September 2024, under the German Presidency), but more importantly to streamline work, the BSAC Management Team has been meeting with BALTFISH Presidency regularly online through several structured “Virtual Coffee Meetings” following agreed agendas.

The BSAC has contributed to the BALTFISH-EFCA-BSAC joint workshop on Monitoring, control, and compliance with the Landing Obligation in the Baltic Sea, held on 28th November 2024.

Fisheries control and inspection, science, the advice and the advisory process

⁴ The list of BSAC ExCom members is on the website is on the website [Our Members - Baltic Sea Advisory Council \(bsac.dk\)](https://www.bsac.dk/Our-Members-Baltic-Sea-Advisory-Council)

The BSAC ExCom Vice Chair and Executive Secretary took part in the **EFCA** Advisory Board meeting on 23rd April 2024. The EFCA Advisory Board meeting on 15th October 2024 was attended by the Executive Secretary.

In 2024-25, the BSAC maintained active cooperation with **ICES**. In addition to the annual presentation of the ICES advice on Baltic fish stocks in June 2024, the BSAC representatives took an active part in the MIAC and MIACO meeting, both held in January 2025. The BSAC also participated in the pre-MIRIA meeting organised by the European Commission in January 2025.

The BSAC followed the relevant discussions taking place at the European Parliament and more specifically the Fisheries Committee. This included meetings on the Commission's proposal fixing the fishing opportunities in the Baltic for 2025 (September 2024), on the implementation of the Multiannual Plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea (October 2024), public hearing "How scientific advice is developed for EU Fisheries Policy decisions" (December 2024) and exchange of views with the new Commissioner responsible for Fisheries and Oceans, Costas Kadis (February 2025) on upcoming initiatives on oceans and fisheries.

Throughout the year, the BSAC meetings featured presentations of many scientists from research institutes from around the Baltic (CEFAS, SLU, DTU, NMFRI, LUKE, Thünen Institute) and from ICES.

Finally, the BSAC representatives took part in several external meetings organised by the European Commission, other organisations as well as other advisory councils, as listed below.

BSAC Recommendations/advice and letters sent 2024-2025⁵.

N°	Full title	Date of adoption
1	BSAC response to the Commission's survey to inform the second report on the implementation of the Multiannual Plan for the Baltic Sea	Sent 03.04.2024
2	BSAC recommendations on the Commission Communication on CFP today and tomorrow.	Sent 03.04.2024
3	BSAC response to the Commission's consultation on social indicators and allocation of fishing opportunities	Sent 22.04.2024
4	"Fishers of the Future" EU-wide participatory foresight project	Sent 03.06.2024
5	Recommendations for the fisheries in the Baltic in 2025	Sent 05.07.2024
6	BSAC response to the Commission's questionnaire ⁶ on the landing obligation	Sent 10.07.2024
7	Baltic roundtable discussion before Fisheries Council of October	Sent 07.08.2024
8	BSAC response to the Commission's questionnaire and call for evidence on the fitness check of the EU rules on trade in seal products	Sent 07.08.2024
9	BSAC recommendations on the BALTFISH draft Joint Recommendation regarding six Swedish MPAs in Öresund in the Baltic Sea	Sent 13.09.2024
10	BSAC response to the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council "Towards more sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2025".	Sent 30.08.2024
11	BSAC recommendation for the fishery in 2025 for the herring stock in SDs 30-31	Sent 18.10.2024
12	BSAC input to HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1 focusing specifically on salmon	Sent 17.10.2024
13	NSAC-LDAC-PeIAC-NWWAC-SWWAC-BSAC Advice on stakeholder engagement in ICES advice request formulation	Sent 30.10.2024
14	BSAC recommendations on the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy	Sent 05.12.2024

⁵ All on the website here: [Advice & Recommendations - Baltic Sea Advisory Council](#)

⁶ This questionnaire forms part of the "Study supporting the evaluation of the landing obligation – Common Fisheries Policy" under the framework contract CINEA/2021/OP/0011 – [Lot 1]. The study is being undertaken by a consortium of partners contracted by the EU Commission (CINEA), acting on behalf of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE).

15	BSAC recommendations on cormorants	Sent 29.11.2024 Reply 09.01.2025
16	BSAC recommendations on seals	Sent 29.11.2024 Reply 09.01.2025
17	Ocean Pact consultation - BSAC recommendations	Sent 16.03.2025
18	Letter to DG MARE calling for better stakeholder engagement in the implementations of the revised control regulation	Sent 31.03.2025

Here are short summaries from the meetings held by the BSAC in 2024 -2025. You can find full reports in the links.

- **BSAC Extraordinary General Assembly, 17th April 2024 – online**

The BSAC Honorary Chair welcomed the participants to the Extraordinary General Assembly meeting, convened to adopt the revised Rules of Procedure. The ExCom Chair expressed his satisfaction at the presence of many BSAC members. He appreciated the work of the Focus Group and thanked the Honorary Chair for his leadership. In the absence of dissenting comments to the revised Rules of Procedure, the General Assembly decided to adopt the Rules of Procedure without a vote.

Link to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **General Assembly, 15th May 2024, Copenhagen, in person only**

The ExCom Chair presented the annual BSAC Report. He underlined that the 18th year of operation of the BSAC had been a very productive year. The Working Group Chairs also presented their reports from the activities in 2023-24. The ExCom Chair presented the Work Programme for 2024-2025. The General Assembly elected the ExCom members for the years 2024-27. The agenda of the meeting included the elections of the ExCom Chair, Vice-Chair and the General Assembly Chair.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **Executive Committee, 16th May 2023, Copenhagen, in person only**

The ExCom renewed the approval of the Executive Secretary for a new mandate of one year and elected the Working Group Chairs for another 3-year term of office. The meeting discussed the Commission's planned evaluation of the CFP. Poul Degnbol and Peder Andersen, formal members of the Fisheries Commission presented the final report of the Danish Commission on the future of the fisheries. Bernd Söntgerath presented the report of the German Commission on the Future of the Baltic Sea Fisheries, established in spring 2022. Dorleta Garcia, ICES ACOM Vice-Chair presented the ICES advice on a roadmap for possible conservation measures for central and Gulf of Bothnia herring that was published in March 2023. Stakeholder involvement in the Commission's advice requests to ICES and STECF was discussed.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **Joint Working Group, 12th June 2024, Copenhagen, hybrid**

Dorleta Garcia, ACOM Vice-Chair explained the 2024 advice by stocks (cod, flatfish, pelagic stocks, sprat, salmon), and gave a power point presentation. She explained the principles of the advice. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and comment at the end of each category of stocks. The floor was opened for discussion stock by stock and the initial development of draft BSAC recommendations for the fishery for 2025. The Working Group asked the Secretariat to produce, after the meeting, draft BSAC recommendations for the fishery in the Baltic Sea in 2025,

taking into account the statements made by the BSAC members at the meeting. Participants were asked to submit further input to the recommendations.

LINK to the report: [Past Meetings - Baltic Sea Advisory Council](#)

- **Executive Committee, 27th June 2024, Brussels, hybrid**

The meeting focused on finalising the BSAC recommendations on fishing opportunities for 2025. The Executive Secretary informed that the draft recommendation prepared by the Secretariat had been sent to members for comments after the Joint Working Group meeting. He informed on the input received from members. In the spirit of looking for compromise, he proposed to discuss the proposed amendments. The BSAC members had comments to several stocks. These comments were duly noted by the Secretariat in the draft recommendations. After a further exchange of views, the ExCom asked the Secretariat to make the final necessary amendments to the draft recommendations as agreed by the meeting. It was decided that the revised document would be sent to the ExCom for final written approval, before being sent to the Commission and Member States in the beginning of July 2024. Martin Chemnitz Mortensen, Unit D3 of DG MARE presented the annual communication looking into progress in achieving sustainable fishing in the EU (legislative requirement), the balance between fleet capacity and fishing opportunities (legislative requirement), the socio-economic performance of the EU fishing fleet, the implementation of the landing obligation, the main orientations proposed for the 2025 fishing opportunities and the public consultation launched. Maria Moset Martinez, DG MARE gave a presentation on selectivity. Martin Mortensen, DG MARE presented a study launched to support the Commission's evaluation of the landing obligation (LO). Anne Delvaux DG ENV presented the Commission's fitness check of the EU rules on trade in seal products, starting with the policy context.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **BSAC Webinar: Climate change in the Baltic Sea: How to adapt to a changing climate?, 29th August 2024, online**

The BSAC decided to continue following developments on the topic and new scientific studies that can help understand the consequences of climate change to the Baltic ecosystem and stakeholders. The second webinar focused on the adaptation part of the climate-ocean nexus by presenting new perspectives on the impacts of climate change that can be expected on the Baltic Sea fish stocks and fisheries. Mats Pettersen presented the adaptive response to colonisation of the Baltic, using the example of cod and herring. Jari Raitaniemi focused on climate-induced changes, which affect fish in the northern part of the Baltic, including the Finnish coastal areas. Jane Behrens referred to the Round Goby project. Hannes Hall presented promoting commercial fishing of round goby in the Baltic Sea

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **BSAC Ecosystem Based Management Working Group, 24th September 2024, online**

The meeting discussed the Commission's evaluation of the CFP. He recalled that the Commission had launched a call for evidence in June 2024 to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The Working Group was asked to revisit the White Paper and consider what additional remarks could be made with a view to preparing the BSAC recommendations on the CFP. The Working Group discussed the relevant chapters of the BSAC White Paper with a view to producing the BSAC recommendations on the CFP evaluation. The meeting hosted the presentation of HELCOM FISH-M draft Recommendation 32-33/1 focusing specifically on salmon and preparation of BSAC advice on the topic. commercial stocks, published by the Commission in 2023. Peter Thor (SLU) presented the report prepared by scientists from several scientific institutions around the Baltic, under the lead of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) on invasive species in the Baltic Sea and their impact on commercial fish stocks. Niki Sporrang from Fisheries Secretariat gave a general update on eel.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **BSAC Demersal Working Group, 2nd October 2024, Skagen, hybrid**

The meeting discussed the Commission's evaluation of the CFP. He recalled that the Commission had launched a call for evidence in June 2024 to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The Working Group was asked to revisit the White Paper and consider what additional remarks could be made with a view to preparing the BSAC recommendations on the CFP. The Working Group discussed the relevant chapters of the BSAC White Paper with a view to producing the BSAC recommendations on the CFP evaluation. The representative of DG MARE presented an update on the Delegated and Implementing Acts, regarding the obligation to use new flatfish gear in SDs 22-26. The representative of DG MARE referred to the Commission's report on the implementation of Technical Measures Regulation, published in July 2024. Article 31 of the Regulation 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council requires the Commission to report every three years on the implementation of the Regulation.

LINK to the report: [Past Meetings - Baltic Sea Advisory Council](#)

- **BSAC Pelagic Working Group, 3rd October, Skagen, hybrid**

The meeting discussed the Commission's evaluation of the CFP. He recalled that the Commission had launched a call for evidence in June 2024 to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The Working Group was asked to revisit the White Paper and consider what additional remarks could be made with a view to preparing the BSAC recommendations on the CFP. The Working Group discussed the relevant chapters of the BSAC White Paper with a view to producing the BSAC recommendations on the CFP evaluation. Dorleta Garcia, ACOM Vice-Chair presented the advice for herring in SDs 30-31, published by ICES on 16th September. The WG discussed the BSAC recommendation for herring in SDs 30-31. The WG Chair informed that the BSAC Work Programme foresees discussions in the BSAC this year on how to attract a new generation of fishers in the industry. The Pelagic WG is tasked with producing a recommendation to the Commission and the Member States on Generational renewal in the fisheries sector. The presentation of Catching Potential project launched the discussions on the topic.

LINK to the report: [Past Meetings - Baltic Sea Advisory Council](#)

- **BSAC Executive Committee 29th October 2024, Helsinki, hybrid**

The meeting dealt with administrative issue and reports from meetings. The ExCom welcomed the new Executive Secretary, Andrea Ordaz-Németh, and approved her appointment by consensus. The new Secretary will sign her work contract starting as of 29th October 2024. The ExCom appointed Matti Ovaska as the EBM Working Group Chair for a new mandate of 2.5 years, aligning with the timing of the Demersal and Pelagic WG Chairs. The ExCom members were invited to consider the draft guidelines on the format of BSAC recommendations on fishing opportunities. The ExCom adopted the Joint AC advice on the topic of stakeholder involvement in the Commission's Advice requests to ICES and STECF and decided to co-sign the document with other ACs. 2023, the BSAC had decided to send a letter to STECF with a set of recommendations²¹. Raúl Prellezo presented the Baltic chapter of the 2024 Annual Economic Report on the EU fishing fleet (AER). The report provides a comprehensive overview of the latest information available on the structure and economic performance of the EU Member States fishing fleets. The meeting discussed the Swedish proposal for a time limited scientific project corresponding to spatial management of vessels fishing for pelagic stocks in the Baltic Sea.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **BSAC Workshop on seals and cormorants, second edition, 30th October 2024, Helsinki, hybrid**

The second workshop focused on an exchange of views around conservation and management of seals and cormorants. Participants were encouraged to share views on solutions as to how to achieve the delicate balance between conservation and management. The meeting hosted several presentations, among others by experts from DTU Aqua, EIFAAC FAO, Komodo project, LUKE and concluded by drafting key takeaways on seals and cormorants. BSAC recommendations on seals and cormorants were produced as the outcome of the meeting.

LINK to the report: [Past Meetings - Baltic Sea Advisory Council](#)

- **BALTFISH CEG / BSAC / EFCA joint workshop Monitoring, control, and compliance with the Landing Obligation in the Baltic Sea, 28th November 2024, Berlin, hybrid**

The meeting focused on the implementation of the landing obligation in the Baltic. In his opening speech, the BSAC ExCom Chair welcomed the publication of the eagerly awaited report of compliance with the landing obligation in the Baltic. He stated that the BSAC takes note of the conclusions and recommendation included in the report, among others on the fact that for some fleet segments, in some parts of the Baltic overall compliance with the provisions of the landing obligation does not appear to have improved. Marie Storr-Paulsen, co-chair of the ICES Baltic Fisheries Assessment Working Group (WGBFAS) gave a presentation on scientific data on discards. A representative of EFCA presented the results of the 2019-2021 compliance evaluation in the Baltic. There was an exchange of views with the BSAC members on the implementation of the landing obligation and compliance.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **BSAC Executive Committee, 27th January 2025, Berlin, hybrid**

The Executive Secretary informed on the current status of expenditures and on the change of the BSAC office premises. The ExCom approved the draft work programme for 2025-2026 with some amendments proposed by a BSAC member. The ExCom adopted the draft budget for 2025-2026. Reports from meetings were presented. The Working Group Chairs reported on the current work and planned meetings. A representative of DG MARE informed on the Ocean Pact that will be part of the European Commission's political guidelines for 2024-2029. The Pact will focus on boosting the blue economy and ensuring the good governance and sustainability of our oceans in all of their dimensions. The participants had a first exchange of views on the Ocean Pact and the ExCom Chair's intervention at the roundtable meeting with the Commissioner on 21st February. The meeting discussed the format of the BSAC recommendations on the fishing opportunities and adopted the Guidelines. The representative of HELCOM presented an update on the outcome of discussions held in the 4th Informal Consultation of the Working Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (IC WG FISH 4-2024), as well as the planned HELCOM meetings

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **BSAC Demersal Working Group, 25th February 2025, online**

The WG Chair informed that according to the 2025-26 BSAC work programme, salmon will be dealt with by the Demersal and EBM Working Group. Valerie Ouellet, Head of Research of Atlantic Salmon Federation, based in Canada presented "Is the World too Hot for Atlantic Salmon". Valerie Ouellet presented combined effects of warming on Atlantic salmon. Net primary productivity declines by 4%–11% (depending on scenarios) and entire food web is affected. The Working group discussed the objectives of the BSAC Science Focus Group in the context of its Terms of Reference and first meeting. The meeting also discussed the cod recovery plan: which components it should include and what is the BSAC role in promoting such plan. The Working Group decided to recommend to the ExCom that a joint BSAC Working Group could meet in person in the autumn to

discuss the cod recovery plan. The meeting discussed the upcoming implementation of the new selective gears to reduce incidental catches of cod in the Baltic.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **BSAC Pelagic Working Group, 27th February 2025, online**

The Working Group discussed the new implementation of the new Control Regulation and decided to send a letter to the Commission and BALTFISH asking for better stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the Control Regulation. Kim Stobberup (MSC Baltic and Central Europe) presented the MSC Improvement Programme. The meeting exchanged views on the MSC certification processes in the Baltic. Francisco Leotte from Thai Union presented the Seachange Strategy, helping to drive important changes in seafood industry since 2016. Einar Eg Nielsen, DTU Aqua presented an update from projects – DNAMIX and DNACATCH aimed at transforming the way to monitor and manage species composition within mixed catches from mixed pelagic fisheries.

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **BSAC Focus Group on science, 17th March 2025, online**

The meeting discussed the objectives of the Focus Group. The Focus Group agreed that making better use of science in fisheries management should be the main objective of the Focus Group. headline advice. The Focus Group decided to revise the Terms of Reference to include: the work of the FG will be finalised in the form of a recommendation subject to approval by the ExCom; the FG should explore the need to set up a permanent Working Group on science; the topics for discussion should not be carved in stone. Other relevant topics could be added if need arises. The work plan for the group will be produced at the next meeting. The Focus Group decided to ask the Secretariat to draft a revised ToR and distribute it to the members of the FG for comments. The draft ToR will be submitted to the Executive Committee for adoption through written procedure. The date of the next meeting of the FG will be decided by correspondence (tentatively end of April 2025).

LINK to the report: [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

- **Management Team meetings**

The BSAC Management Team held 9 meetings during its the year 2024-2025.

Reports: [Past Meetings - Baltic Sea Advisory Council](#)

- **Virtual coffee meetings with the BALTFISH Presidency**

The BSAC Management Team held 8 Virtual coffee meetings with the Polish and German BALTFISH Presidencies, following agreed agendas. The reports can be found on the website. [Past Meetings - Baltic Sea Advisory Council](#)

External meetings

The BSAC representatives and in particular the BSAC Chair and Secretariat have taken part in a string of meetings. These are listed below. Reports are always uploaded on the website and informed of in the BSAC newsletter. They are all available on request to the secretariat. See more under the links: [External Meetings - Baltic Sea Advisory Council \(bsac.dk\)](#) and <https://www.bsac.dk/latest-news/>

Subject	Date	Name of who took part
Marine Expert Group	11/4/2024	Pelagic WG Chair and BSAC Secretariat
Decarbonising the EU fishing	16/04/2024	BSAC Secretariat

sector: skills and people OCEANA		
Energy Transition Partnership workshop	19/04/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Joint Special Group: Intersession technical workshop on eel	24/04/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Blue Mission BANOS' 2nd Mission Arena	25-26/04/2024	Executive Secretary
Meeting of the AC secretariats with DG MARE	07/05/2024	BSAC Secretariat
European Maritime Days: AC workshop on stakeholder engagement in policymaking for healthy and productive fisheries and aquatic ecosystems	30/05/2024	Executive Secretary
BALTFISH Forum	18/06/2024	Jarek Zieliński, the ExCom Chair (in person), Glenn Douglas, BSAC Vice-Chair (in person), Nils Höglund, EBM Working Group Chair (in person) and the secretariat (in person and online)
Joint Special Group on the EU Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries	18/06/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Fish-X1 webinar Understanding Recreational Fisheries	30/08/2024	BSAC Secretariat
BALTFISH Forum	03/09/2024	Jarek Zieliński, the ExCom Chair, Glenn Douglas, BSAC Vice Chair, Teija Aho, Demersal WG Chair and the BSAC Executive Secretary and rapporteur.
HELCOM HOLAS workshop	11/09/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Fishers of the Future workshop	16/09/2024	BSAC Secretariat
European Parliament PECH Committee on Com proposal on fishing opportunities	23/09/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Fisheries Science Seminar – Artificial Intelligence	25/09/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Inter-AC meeting	04/10/2024	Jarek Zieliński, the ExCom Chair, BSAC Secretariat
HELCOM IC WG BIODIV 4-2024	07-10/10/2024	BSAC Secretariat
EFCA Advisory Board meeting	15/10/2024	BSAC Executive Secretary
European Parliament PECH Committee: Multiannual Plans implementation	17/10/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Baltic Breakfast Baltic Sea Centre – Stockholm University	24/10/2024	BSAC Secretariat

HELCOM Working Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable fisheries	05-07/11/2024	BSAC Secretariat
Roundtable with the Commissioner Kadis	03/12/2024	Jarek Zieliński, the ExCom Chair, Matti Ovaska, EBM WG Chair
Wild Salmon Connections / Missing Salmon Alliance	27-29/01/2025	Glenn Douglas, ExCom Vice-Chair
High-Level Roundtable on Ocean Pact	21/02/2025	Jarek Zieliński, ExCom Chair
HELCOM Informal consultation workshop on Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management	04/03/2025	Matti Ovaska, EBM WG Chair
HELCOM Working Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries	05-07/03/2025	Matti Ovaska, EBM WG Chair
Harnessing the Wind: The Future of Offshore Energy in the Baltic Sea	18/03/2025	Jarek Zieliński, the ExCom Chair

Scientific experts and special guests invited to BSAC meetings during the year

At the General Assembly, General Assembly, 15th May 2024, Copenhagen: Kieran Hyder, CEFAS, Vice Chair of ICES WG on Recreational Fisheries Surveys, Harry Strehlow from the Thünen Institute.

Executive Committee, 16th May 2023, Brussels: Dorleta Garcia, ICES ACOM Vice-Chair, Poul Degnbol and Peder Andersen, formal members of the Danish Fisheries Commission.

Joint WG (Pelagic and Demersal), 12th June 2025, Copenhagen: Dorleta Garcia, ICES ACOM Vice-Chair, Simon Jennings, ICES ACOM Vice-Chair.

Executive Committee, 27th June 2024, Brussels: Martin Mortensen, DG MARE, Gurvinder Arora, Deloitte, Maria Moset Martinez, DG MARE, Martin Chemnitz Mortensen, Unit D3 of DG MARE.

BSAC Webinar: Climate change in the Baltic Sea: How to adapt to a changing climate?, 29th August 2024: Mats Pettersson, Uppsala University, Jari Raitaniemi, Natural Resources Institute Finland, Jane Behrens, DTU Aqua, Hannes Hall, Marine Centre, Simrishamn.

Ecosystem Based Management Working Group, 24th September 2024, online: Peter Thor SLU.

Demersal Working Group, 2nd October 2024, Skagen and online: Maria Moset DG MARE.

Pelagic Working Group, 3rd October 2024, Skagen and online: Dorleta Garcia, ICES ACOM Vice-Chair, Tamar Poppelier ProSea Marine Education, Karin Hüsey, DTU Aqua.

Executive Committee 29th October 2024, Helsinki: Miguel Nuevo EFCA, Raúl Puellezo STECF, programme. Fredrik Palm and Max Vretborn from the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management.

BSAC Workshop on seals and cormorants, second edition, 30th October 2024, Helsinki: Niels Jepsen & Mathis Olesen DTU Aqua, Raymon van Anrooy EIFAAC FAO and Ian G. Cowx Hull International Fisheries Institute, Katja Mehrwald, Tyrell de Weber KoMoDo project, Mats Westerborn LUKE.

BALTFISH CEG / BSAC / EFCA joint workshop Monitoring, control, and compliance with the Landing Obligation in the Baltic Sea, 28th November 2024, Berlin: Marie Storr-Paulsen, co-chair of the ICES Baltic Fisheries Assessment Working Group (WGBFAS).

Demersal Working Group, 25th February 2025: Valerie Ouellet, Head of Research of Atlantic Salmon Federation.

Pelagic Working Group, 27th February 2025: Kim Stobberup MSC, Francisco Leotte Thai Union, Einar Eg Nielsen, DTU Aqua.

Projects supported

The BSAC supports research and projects, but is not in a position to participate or provide support. Secretariat clear and swift in informing members, encouraging participation. This year, the BSAC had given its formal support to the **CIBBRiNA EU LIFE Bycatch project** proposal that has started in 2023.

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Keeping the BSAC members informed

BSAC members have received regular newsletters⁷ from the BSAC Secretariat. There has been a total of 12 during the year. These have also been made available to observers and put on the BSAC website.

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Who are the members of the Baltic Sea Advisory Council?

The BSAC started the year 2024-25 with 42 General Assembly members from fisheries associations, producer organisations, processors, market and trade organisations, environmental NGOs, and recreational and sports fishers. Amongst this membership, all Baltic Member States are represented. The number of BSAC General Assembly members went down from 42 to 38.

Who was who on the General Assembly 1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

Fisheries Interests (26)	
The Fishermen's Association of Bornholm and Christiansø	Danish Fishers Producer Organisation
European Association of Fishmeal and Fish Oil Producers	Danish Pelagic Producers Organisation
Association for Low Impact Coastal Fishery	Estonian Fishermen's Association

⁷ <https://www.bsac.dk/newsletters/>

Federation of Finnish Fisheries Associations	Finnish Fishermen's Association
Bundesverband der Deutschen Fishindustrie und des Fischgrosshandels E.V.	German Cutter-and Coastal-Fishermen's Association
Union of German Cutter Fishery	Association of Fisheries Protection
Latvian Fisheries Association	Lithuanian Fisheries Producers' Association
The Association of Fishermen and Fish Processors Baltijos zvejas	Association of Fishermen's of Sea- PO
National Chamber of Fish Producers	Darłowska Group of Fish Producers and Shipowners
The Fishermen Fish Producers Organisation ORL-PR	Sweden Pelagic Federation PO (SPF)
Fish Producers' Organisation Bałtyk	The Swedish Fishermen Producer Organisation
Åland Islands Fishermen's Association	Fishermen's Federation for Small-Scale Fishery in Sweden
LIFE Low Impact Fishers of Europe	Polish Association of Fish Processors
Other Interest Groups (12)	
Swedish Society for Nature and Conservation	The Fisheries Secretariat
Danish Recreational Fishermen	Coalition Clean Baltic
Finnish Association for Nature Conservation	German Angling Association
European Anglers Alliance	CIPS International Confederation for Sport Fishing
Baltic Salmon Rivers Association	Polish Ecological Club
World Wide Fund for Nature WWF	BalticWaters

What about the Executive Committee?

There is room for maximum 30 organisations on the Executive Committee, nominated and elected by the General Assembly. This means 18 for the fisheries interests and 12 for the other interest groups (OIG). The current Executive Committee runs from 2024 until 2027 (elected May 2024). The 18 seats of the fisheries college are full. Of the 12 seats for the OIG, 8 are filled. All updated on the website.⁸

⁸ <http://www.bsac.dk/BSAC-Members/Executive-Committee>

Who are the office bearers?

Honorary Chair of the BSAC General Assembly

Vesa Karttunen
Federation of Finnish Fisheries Associations
vesa.karttunen@ahven.net

Vice Chair of the BSAC General Assembly

Christian Tsangarides
Low Impact Fishers of Europe
bans@lifeplatform.eu

Chair of the BSAC ExCom

Jarek Zieliński
Fish Producers' Organisation Baltyk
chair@bsac.dk

Vice-Chair of the BSAC ExCom

Glenn Douglas
Sportfiskarna
glenn.douglas@sportfiskarna.se

Chair of the Demersal Working Group

Teija Aho
Swedish Fishermen PO
teija@guldhaven.se

Chair of the Pelagic Working Group

Lise Laustsen
Danmarks Pelagiske Producentorganisation
ll@pelagisk.dk

Chair of the Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Working Group

Matti Ovaska
WWF
Matti.Ovaska@wwf.fi

The BSAC Secretariat

Executive Secretary

Guillaume Carruel until 30 October 2024
Alexander Ben Embarek from 3rd January 2025
ab@bsac.dk

Rapporteur Information Assistant

Ewa Milewska
em@bsac.dk

Volunteer

Klavs Skovsholm
volunteer@bsac.dk