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BSAC recommendations for the fishery in the Baltic Sea in 2027

The BSAC recommendations on fishing opportunities for Baltic Sea stocks in 2027 were developed following the presentation of the ICES advice by the Vice-Chair of ACOM, Dorleta Garcia, and the subsequent discussions held during the Joint Working Group meeting on 9–10 June 2026 in Copenhagen and online. The draft recommendations were further refined through a written consultation of Working Group and Executive Committee members and were finalised by the Executive Committee on 25 June 2026 in accordance with Rule 32 of the BSAC Rules of Procedure.

The BSAC recommends setting the fishing opportunities for Baltic Sea stocks in 2027 at the levels indicated in the table below. For all stocks, the recommendations have been formulated following careful consideration of the available scientific advice, stock-specific circumstances and relevant environmental and socio-economic factors.

Where consensus could not be reached, minority positions are presented in full transparency and attributed to the supporting organisations. Members subscribing to a specific minority position are indicated in the relevant footnotes.

In the interest of transparency, the footnotes may also indicate where organisations attending the Executive Committee meeting as observers expressed support for a particular position during the discussions. Such references are provided for information only and do not affect the formal adoption of the recommendation by the Executive Committee in accordance with the BSAC Rules of Procedure.

Stock	ICES advice on fishing opportunities 2027 ¹		BSAC recommendation for EU TAC 2027	BSAC minority positions EU TAC 2027
Cod SDs 22-24	0 t (Advice for 2026 and 2027)	Precautionary approach	266 t (by-catch only) (roll-over of 2026 bycatch TAC)	• 0 t² • 532 t³ • 266 t⁴

¹ Note that reference is made to ICES headline advice only. More details and nuances may be found in the “Issues relevant for the advice” section of the ICES advice. Please note: The ICES advice for 2027 includes the estimated Russian catches.

² BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), WWF. Joint NGO recommendation [Joint NGO recommendations on Baltic Sea fishing opportunities for 2027](#)

³ National Chamber of Fish Producers, Association of Fishermen of Sea- PO

⁴ Association for Low Impact Coastal Fishery PO - FSKPO, Fishermen's Federation for Small-Scale Fishery in Sweden -SYEF: support a rollover with priority access for small-scale fishers using passive gears. The Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE), participating as an observer, expressed support for this position during the discussion.



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Cod SDs 25-32	0 t (Advice for 2027 and 2028)	Precautionary approach	Bycatch TAC 430 t (rollover of 2026 bycatch TAC)	• 0 t⁵ • 860 t⁶ • 430 t⁷
Plaice SDs 21-32	SDs 21-32: 19,334 t (+16% as compared to the advice for previous year) corresponding catch in SDs 22-32 = 11,237 tonnes (+2.5%)	MSY approach	SDs 22-32: 11,237 t (MSY approach)	• ≤ 1,593 (F=F2025)⁸ • 2,080 t⁹
Herring SDs 30-31	80,767 t – 90,391 t (+44% as compared to the advice for previous year)	EU multiannual plan (MAP) for the Baltic Sea	80,767 t (MAP F_{lower})	• 45,544 t (SSB = Btrigger)¹⁰ • 90,391 t¹¹ (MAP MSY)
Herring Gulf of	25,832 t – 38,696 t (+9% as compared to the advice for previous year)	EU multiannual plan (MAP) for the Baltic Sea		• ≤ 30,521 t¹³ (MAP F_{lower})

⁵ BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), WWF. Joint NGO recommendation Joint NGO recommendations on Baltic Sea fishing opportunities for 2027

⁶ National Chamber of Fish Producers, Association of Fishermen of Sea- PO

⁷ FSKPO, SYEF: support a rollover with priority access for small-scale fishers using passive gears. LIFE, participating as an observer, expressed support for this position during the discussion.

⁸ BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), WWF, EAA: F= F2025 of 2742 t. This would mean a corresponding TAC in the management area SD22 - 32 of ≤ 1593 t.

⁹ FSKPO, SYEF: in SDs 22-32 2,080 t = 20% increase of 2026 catches. LIFE, participating as an observer, expressed support for this position during the discussion.

¹⁰ BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), WWF, EAA, Association of Fisheries Protection. LIFE, participating as an observer, expressed support for this position during the discussion.

¹¹ EFFOP

Riga SD 28.1			Total catch advice 33,494 t¹² corresponding to EU TAC share 38,183 t	
Herring SDs 25-29, 32	211,363 t – 324,914 t (+76% to +106% compared with previous advice range)	EU multiannual plan (MAP)	Total catch advice = 274,322 corresponding to EU TAC share = 243,572 t (MSY)¹⁴	211, 363 t corresponding to EU TAC of 186.595 t (MAP F_{lower})¹⁵ 159,972¹⁶ (F=0.5) - EU TAC ≤ 143.860 t (F= F₂₀₂₆)¹⁷
Herring SDs 22-24	0 t	MSY approach and precautionary considerations	788 t bycatch TAC (rollover)	0 t¹⁸ 788 t¹⁹
Sprat SDs 22-32	253,819 t – 332,885 t (+44% as compared to the advice for previous year)	EU multiannual plan (MAP) for the Baltic Sea	Total catch advice 324,277 t (FMSY) EU TAC = 291,590 t²⁰	332,885 t (MAP F_{upper}) EU TAC share = 299,330 t²¹ 253,818 t (FMSY_{lower}) EU TAC share =

¹³ BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), WWF, FSKPO, SYEF. LIFE, participating as an observer, expressed support for this position during the discussion.

¹² Calculation of the TAC for this management area **33,494 tonnes – 467 tonnes** (Gulf of Riga herring assumed to be taken in subdivision 28.2 in 2027) **+ 5 156 tonnes** (Central Baltic herring assumed to be taken in Gulf of Riga in 2027) = **38,183 tonnes (according to ICES assessment sheet for herring in SD 28, p.3**

¹⁴ The corresponding TAC in the central Baltic management area for 2027 would be calculated as: **274,322 tonnes – 9.5% Russian share + 467 tonnes – 5,156 tonnes = 243,572 t**

¹⁵ Swedish Fishermen PO, Swedish Pelagic Federation PO,

¹⁶ Association of Fisheries Protection, FSKPO, SYEF. LIFE, participating as an observer, expressed support for this position during the discussion.

¹⁷ BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic, WWF, EAA

¹⁸ BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic, WWF, EAA

¹⁹ Association of Fisheries Protection, FSKPO, SYEF: Support this if only small-scale fishery using passive gears can conduct directed fishery

²⁰ Total catch advice 324,277 t - Russian share of 10.08%: **291,590 t**. LIFE, participating as an observer, expressed support for this position during the discussion.

²¹ Latvian Fisheries Association: Fupper 332,885 t – Russian share of 10.08% = 299,330 t

				228,234 t²² 180,000-200,000 t²³ (0.5 FMSY)
Salmon SDs 22-31	Rollover of the 2026 advice²⁴	Precautionary approach	30,000 salmon	No targeted fishery²⁵
Salmon SD 32	Rollover of the 2026 advice²⁶	Precautionary approach	10,480 salmon²⁷	≤ 10,480 reared salmon²⁸

PLEASE NOTE that the recommendations relate to the TACs for the regulatory areas, not to the different stock components. Further explanation of how the recommendations for each stock have been reached is given in the text below.

²² BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic, WWF, EAA: 253,818 t - Russian share of 10.08% = **228,234 t**

²³ Association of Fisheries Protection, FSKPO, SYEF: 0.5 FMSY. LIFE, participating as an observer, expressed support for this position during the discussion.

²⁴ ICES will not carry out a new assessment for the Baltic Salmon stocks this year. This decision has been made to prioritise experts' time and resources on the ongoing benchmark process. ICES has reissued the advice sheet from last year, indicating that the advice also now pertains to 2027.

²⁵ BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic, WWF,

²⁶ ICES will not carry out a new assessment for the Baltic Salmon stocks this year. This decision has been made to prioritise experts' time and resources on the ongoing benchmark process. ICES has reissued the advice sheet from last year, indicating that the advice also now pertains to 2027.

²⁷ ICES advises that commercial sea catches of salmon in the Gulf of Finland in 2026 should be no more than 11 800 salmon. This advice also pertains to 2027. Applying the same catch proportions as those estimated to have occurred in 2024, this would correspond to reported commercial landings of no more than 10 480 salmon.

²⁸ BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic, WWF. LIFE, participating as an observer, expressed support for this position during the discussion.

General comments to the ICES advice for the fishery in the Baltic Sea in 2027

The BSAC once again acknowledges that many Baltic Sea species and habitats remain in poor condition, according to recent assessments. This situation adversely affects food web functioning, reduces ecosystem resilience and resistance to further environmental change, and limits the potential for socioeconomic benefits, including fishing opportunities²⁹.

At the same time, the BSAC notes that some fish stocks in the Baltic Sea are showing signs of recovery and that efforts to rebuild stocks and improve fishing selectivity are ongoing. While three stocks continue to face zero-catch advice (eastern Baltic cod, western Baltic cod, and western Baltic herring), the catch advice for central Baltic herring and sprat is significantly higher than last year.

The BSAC agrees that the focus must remain on the overall ecosystem while also recognising other factors that affect fish stocks.

The Baltic Sea is a shallow and semi-enclosed brackish sea that is highly prone to natural and human-induced changes. Fishing is only one of several pressures influencing the stocks.

Fisheries management must be able to respond to rapid changes in the ecosystem and fish populations, and implement an adaptive and fast decision-making process at the regional level. Changes in natural mortality, distribution, age and size structure of a fish stock, food web dynamics etc., should be rapidly assessed with a view to refining the provisions on fishing opportunities. The adaptive fisheries management should also support reaching good environmental status (GES) as defined in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and its descriptors, hereunder on fish populations size-age structure and seabed integrity³⁰.

BSAC agrees that in the Baltic Sea context restoring productive marine ecosystems and ensuring the long-term sustainability of fisheries are necessary. The BSAC emphasises that restoration and fisheries objectives are closely interconnected. Restoration supports healthier and more productive fisheries and reduces the risk of future stock decline. Fishers, together with other on-the-ground stakeholders, should be considered as key actors in restoration. Their local ecological knowledge, practical experience and involvement in monitoring are essential for effective implementation.

The BSAC considers that restoration efforts in the Baltic Sea should prioritise measures that deliver clear ecological benefits while minimizing conflicts with existing fishing activities. These include e.g. nutrient reduction measures in the catchment area, restoration of spawning and nursery habitats, reopening of migration routes, and the recovery of key habitats such as eelgrass meadows, stone reefs and mussel beds.

In this context, BSAC also stresses that the interspecies interactions and the role of predators, such as seals and cormorants, should be properly assessed and recognised as part of ecosystem dynamics, and taken into account when evaluating the expected outcomes of restoration measures.

One of these objectives of the CFP is to implement the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management. This has been a legal requirement since 2013.

Because of the hugely complex issue the implementation of that approach is still ongoing, and the BSAC recommendations set out in this paper in February 2026³¹ are aiming to help speed up this implementation.

The BSAC calls for implementing a broader approach to fisheries management by moving away from considering single-stock yields and by requesting more comprehensive, broader-in-scope, scientific advice,

²⁹ ICES ecosystem overview Baltic [Baltic sea ecosystem overview](#)

³⁰ BSAC recommendation on EBFM [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

³¹ BSAC recommendation on EBFM [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

including interdependence between fish species and the role of non-fish species predators such as seals and cormorants.³²

The BSAC is of the opinion that it is a matter of urgency to estimate and quantify the effects of species interactions. An ecosystem-based advice still needs to be further developed and implemented.

Over recent decades, the rapid growth of seal and cormorant populations has created significant challenges for fisheries in the Baltic Sea. The BSAC considers predation by seals and cormorants to be a major factor affecting the profitability and viability of the fisheries sector in the region.

In recommending the fishing opportunities for the Baltic stocks, the BSAC members have taken into account both environmental and socio-economic considerations intending to ensure that fishing practices are sustainable while supporting the livelihoods of people in the fishing sector, to ensure a viable sector for the future.

Recommendations on the fishing opportunities

Cod SDs 22-24

The BSAC recommends that the 2027 TAC for cod in SDs 22-24 should be a rollover of the 2026 bycatch TAC of **266 tonnes** (commercial catches). **The BSAC** considers that a bycatch TAC for cod is needed to enable other fisheries to continue.

A group of NGOs (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic, WWF) recommends that the TAC for 2027 should be set at zero for all targeted cod fishing in SDs 22-24.

With regards to the closures for cod spawning, **the BSAC** calls to amend Articles 7.2.b and c as well as Articles 7.4.b and c of the Council regulation fixing the fishing opportunities in the Baltic³³ so that the depth exemption is harmonised for both fleet segments. The current exemption which allows some vessels to fish to a depth of 50 metres while the passive gear fleet is limited to 20 metres is not supported by the scientific advice.

Representatives of Polish fisheries organisations (National Chamber of Fish Producers, Association of Fishermen of Sea- PO) recommend setting the western cod bycatch TAC for 2027 at **532 tonnes**, as they consider the current bycatch quota to be insufficient and a constraint on the viability of the flatfish fishery.

Some small-scale fisheries representatives (Low Impact Fishers of Europe, Association for Low Impact Coastal Fishery PO-FSKPO, Fishermen's Federation for Small-Scale Fishery in Sweden - SYEF) support the rollover of the 2026 TAC for western cod (bycatch quota of 266 tonnes), on the condition that the quota is allocated to fishers who use passive gears.

A group of NGOs (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, CCB, WWF) also recommends developing a rebuilding plan to ensure rapid recovery above B_{MSY} , implementing habitat restoration efforts, focused on the reduction of eutrophication to improve bottom oxygen content, as advised by ICES, increasing at-sea monitoring and control on all vessels using active gears in all areas but prioritised in cod concentration areas, combining both REM and traditional controls. **A group of NGOs** additionally calls on managers to introduce additional measures to avoid and minimise cod bycatch in any fisheries using active gears. They also recommend setting the plaice TAC well below the respective single-stock headline advice to prioritise cod protection and recovery, introducing trawl-free areas in essential cod habitats and spawning areas and continuing with recreational measures agreed for 2026. They also recommend boosting food availability for

³² BSAC advice on cormorants [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#) and BSAC advice on seals [\[Modtagerfelt\]](#)

³³ [Council Regulation \(EU\) 2025/2454 of 1 December 2025 fixing the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Baltic Sea for 2026 and amending Regulation \(EU\) 2025/202 as regards certain fishing opportunities in other waters](#)

cod by setting the TACs for key forage fish species (sprat and herring) well below the single-stock headline advice for those stocks.

The representatives of recreational anglers (European Anglers Alliance, Deutscher Angelfischerverband (DAFV)) recommend preserving the recreational fishing opportunities for cod in 2027. They also recommend³⁴ a combination of management measures that ensure equivalent protection at simultaneous higher anglers' satisfaction: introduce a maximum landing size for anglers, increase the minimum landing size and combine both with seasonal closures and bag limits; intensify the dialogue between the interest groups, science, and politics. They recommend no dedicated fishing activities on spawning cod, improvement and obligatory use of selective gear to reduce bycatch of cod in commercial fisheries. The representatives of recreational anglers support the adoption of the Framework towards development of a European Management Plan for the Great Cormorant³⁵ to reduce the impact of cormorant predation on cod stocks.

Cod SDs 25-32

For 2027, the BSAC recommends maintaining a bycatch quota of **430 t**, to give some opportunities for targeting other species.

A group of NGOs (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, CCB, WWF) recommends combining a **zero TAC** with development of a rebuilding plan to ensure rapid recovery above B_{MSY} .

The fisheries representatives are of the opinion that immediate measures for the management of seal and cormorant populations are needed to allow the recovery of cod stock.

The representative of the Polish fisheries organisation (Fish Producers' Organisation Bałtyk) draws attention to pressing issue of cod stock recovery in the context of the enormous predation pressure exerted by predators, particularly cormorants. According to data presented at BSAC meetings last year, cormorants consumed approximately 5,000 tonnes of cod, with individual fish weighing between 20 and 50 grams. Unless remedial measures are taken to address this issue, the condition of the cod stock is unlikely to improve. He also draws attention to the impact of cod catches taken by Russia. According to information presented by ICES, nearly 85% of the bycatch quota allocated for cod, which is essential to allow EU fishing vessels operating in the Baltic Sea to continue fishing for other species, has been taken by Russian fisheries. This situation significantly restricts the fishing opportunities available to EU vessels while effectively favouring vessels from Russia.

The representatives of two other fisheries organisations from Poland (National Chamber of Fish Producers, Association of Fishermen of Sea-PO) recommend setting the eastern cod bycatch TAC for 2027 at **860 tonnes**, as they consider the current bycatch quota to be insufficient and a constraint on the viability of the flatfish fishery.

A group of NGOs (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, CCB, EAA, WWF) recommends taking urgent steps towards this ahead of this year's negotiations and developing a rebuilding plan to ensure rapid recovery above B_{MSY} , implementing habitat restoration efforts, focused on the reduction of eutrophication to improve bottom oxygen content, as advised by ICES. They also recommend increasing at-sea monitoring and control on all vessels using active gears in all areas but prioritised in cod concentration areas, combining both REM and traditional controls, ensuring that any vessels fishing for flatfish are conditioned to use gear that successfully minimises cod bycatch and introduce additional measures to avoid and minimise cod bycatch in any fisheries using active gears. Additionally, the group of NGOs recommend implementing

³⁴ EAA position [EAA adopts 2 new position papers on recreational fishing for Western Baltic cod and Atlantic Salmon in Baltic Sea for 2027 - EAA Europe](#)

³⁵ Cowx IG, Jepsen N, Van Anrooy R (2025). Framework towards development of a European Management Plan for the Great Cormorant. Draft – May 2025. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/ae045ae8-df8e-47d9-b733-b062cfd4a83c/content>

habitat restoration efforts, focused on improving bottom oxygen content, as advised by ICES, and continuing with recreational measures agreed for 2026.

Some small-scale fisheries representatives (LIFE, FSKPO, SYEF) support the rollover of the 2026 TAC for eastern cod (bycatch quota of 430 tonnes), on the condition that the quota is allocated to fishers who use passive gears.

Plaice in SDs 22-32

The BSAC recommends setting the 2027 TAC for plaice in **SDs 22-32** in accordance with the ICES MSY approach at **11,237 tonnes**. This TAC is based on the ICES F_{MSY} catch scenario. The majority of BSAC members consider that there are currently sufficient scientific grounds to recommend a TAC at the level advised by ICES.

The BSAC takes note of the continued increase in spawning stock biomass (SSB) and at the same time to the declining weight-at-age and deteriorating condition of plaice observed in recent years. This may be due to a density-dependent effect at early life stages of plaice.

The Danish fishers (Danish Fishers Producers Organisation) call for the possibility to use modified T90 without the roofless selection device in SD 22. This lighter version of the gear is better suited to smaller vessels and could provide further opportunities to fish these abundant resources without any risk of cod bycatch.

Some small-scale fisheries representatives (LIFE, FSKPO, SYEF) draw attention to the low utilisation of the TAC for plaice in 2025 and the need to take this fact into account when setting the TAC for 2027. They recommend setting the TAC for plaice in SDs 22-32 at **2,080 tonnes** (20% increase of the actual catch) that the plaice fishery should be conducted only with passive gears to minimise bycatch of cod, reduce discards and implement the landing obligation.

A group of NGOs (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic, WWF, EAA) recommends not to increase fishing mortality from 2025, based on catch scenario (F no higher than F_{2025} of 2,742 t.) This would mean a corresponding TAC in the management area SD22 - 32 of **≤ 1,593 t.** They recommend prioritising protection and recovery of both Baltic cod stocks by setting the plaice TAC well below the protection and recovery of both Baltic cod stocks is prioritised by setting the plaice TAC well below single-stock headline advice and not allowing the fishing level to increase.

They recommend that management measures be developed in the context of a degraded ecosystem affected by cumulative anthropogenic pressures and climate change. Habitat restoration efforts, particularly those aimed at improving bottom oxygen conditions, are encouraged, as these are expected to have indirect positive effects on individual condition and natural mortality.

They further recommend requesting ICES to provide advice on relevant mixed-fisheries considerations to ensure that future plaice TAC setting does not compromise the recovery of depleted cod stocks. In addition, they suggest considering a spatial closure for vessels using bottom-towed gears in SDs 22, 24, 25, and 26, where eastern Baltic cod is most abundant, to reduce bycatch.

The installation of mandatory Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) systems on all vessels participating in the targeted flatfish fishery is also recommended, given the high levels of cod bycatch. Furthermore, the roofless fishing gear introduced under Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/3093 should be used to minimise cod bycatch in flatfish fisheries, and access to the plaice TAC should be made conditional upon the use of such gear. Finally, managers are encouraged to take into account the high catches of undersized plaice in demersal fisheries, as well as the increase in discarding resulting from the declining condition of plaice.

Herring SDs 30-31

The **BSAC** recommends setting the TAC for 2027 at **80,767 t** (in line the MAP range $F_{lower} \times SS(2027)/MSY B_{trigger}$). In their view, this approach would support the continued recovery of the stock.

One fisheries organisation (EFFOP) recommends setting the 2027 TAC for this stock in line with the headline scientific advice, at **90,391 t**.

Representatives of small-scale fisheries (LIFE, FSKPO, SYEF) recommend setting the TAC for this stock at 45,544 t. In this case SSB in 2028 is $F = 0,102$ whereas 0,5 FMSY is 0,105 and would leave the stock below $B_{trigger}$. They recommend eDNA analysis of unsorted pelagic catches to better identify the catch composition. eDNA analyses of unsorted mixed pelagic catches will allow for an objective and affordable method that compliments the existing control system. For listed ports which already have an exemption from the Margin of Tolerance in the EU Control Regulation this should be obligatory alongside scanning of salmon PIT tags.

A representative of the Baltic Salmon Fund draws attention to the need to postpone the fishing season until the wild salmon from the Gulf of Bothnia has already passed the Gulf of Finland, to avoid any salmon bycatch.

The BSAC members have divergent views as to the need to split the current management area (SDs 30-31) into two separate units. Several OIG members (**BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, CCB, WWF, EAA**) are in favour of such division, supported by clear genetic evidence of the existence of two stocks in SD 30 and SD 31, to protect vulnerable and distinct stock components and better tailored conservation measures. Some fisheries representatives (**Swedish Fishermen PO, Swedish Pelagic Federation PO, Finnish Fishermen's Association**) also support splitting the management unit, pointing to the different stock dynamics in SD 30 and 31 and arguing that separate management could improve the effectiveness of stock management.

Other fisheries representatives (DFPO, National Chamber of Fish Producers, Association of Fishermen of Sea-PO) oppose the proposed division. They argue that the northern stock in SD 31 remains data-limited and that the available information is insufficient to justify a change in the current management structure. They also express concerns about the potential management and socioeconomic implications of introducing separate management units.

A group of NGOs (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, CCB, WWF, EAA) recommend a 2027 TAC of no more than 45,554 t ($MSY B_{trigger}$). They draw attention to the fact that that even $F_{lower} \times SSB(2027)/MSY B_{trigger}$ catch option would decrease the current spawning stock biomass and is associated with a 62% probability that the stock remains below $MSY B_{trigger}$ in 2028. In line with Article 5(1) of the Baltic Sea MAP, the TAC should be set in line with the lowest possible probability of $SSB < MSY B_{trigger}$ in the following year. They also recommend research on the role of Bothnian herring as part of the Baltic Sea food web as size, species composition and location of available zooplankton could affect both size and condition of Bothnian herring. They recommend setting TACs and implementing measures that increase the share of older fish in the stock, which over the past decade has been very low. At the current target fishing mortality rate, it is unlikely that the proportion of older individuals will increase, according to ICES. They also recommend requesting scientific advice on dividing the Gulf of Bothnia herring stock into two separately managed herring populations; a north and a south one.

Herring SD 28.1 Gulf of Riga

The **BSAC** recommends that the 2027 TAC for Gulf of Riga herring should be set at **33,494 tonnes**, following the ICES MSY approach. The corresponding TAC in the Gulf of Riga management area for 2027 would be calculated as 33,494 tonnes – 467 tonnes + 5 156 tonnes = **38,183 tonnes**.

A group of NGOs and some small-scale fishers (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, CCB, WWF, EAA, LIFE, FSKPO, SYEF) recommend setting the TAC for herring in the Gulf of Riga at **≤ 30 521 t (lower**

F_{MSY} range)³⁶ in order to build ecosystem resilience by allowing the stock biomass to increase more substantially.

Herring SDs 25-29, 32, ex GoR

The BSAC recommends that the 2027 TAC for herring in the central Baltic management area should be **274,322 tonnes**, which is in accordance with the MAP F_{MSY} scenario in the ICES advice. Taking into account stocks mixing and the Russian share of 9.5%, this would mean a corresponding TAC in the central Baltic management area of $\leq 243,572$ t³⁷.

Some fisheries representatives from Sweden (Swedish Fishermen PO, Swedish Pelagic Federation PO) propose setting the 2026 TAC in line with the MAP F lower scenario (211,363 tonnes). In this case, the TAC would amount to **206,674 t**.

A group of NGOs (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic, WWF, EAA) recommends setting the 2027 TAC based on the catch scenario: F no higher than $F = F_{2026}$ of **164,143t**. Taking into account stocks mixing and the Russian share, this would mean a corresponding TAC in the central Baltic management area of ≤ 143.860 t. Because the population is below $MSY B_{trigger}$, they call to take urgent steps to request ICES advice on a rebuilding plan to ensure rapid recovery above B_{MSY} , ahead of this year's negotiations. They recommend requesting ICES to provide management measures to protect the genetically vulnerable sub populations. In their view, the TAC should be reserved exclusively for low-impact and coastal fishers.

Some small-scale fisheries representatives (LIFE, FSKPO, SYEF) recommend setting the 2027 EU TAC at **159,972 tonnes** (including Russian share and Riga herring mixing not accounted for). This TAC is based on $0.5 F_{MSY}$. They recommend that the management of central Baltic herring for the past two years should continue and also be the template for other stocks. For the past two years the stock has been fished in line with LIFE recommendations at $\approx 0.5 F_{msy}$. This has laid the foundation for a significant stock growth. Continuing to fish at this level will allow for the 3rd TAC increase in the past 4 years. In addition, for this stock they recommend amending Article 7.4.b of the TAC Regulation to allow for fishing with passive gears up to a depth of 50 metres, thereby bringing parity with other fleet segments and gears. At a minimum this should be lowered to a depth of 30 metres to account for the increased sea temperature which has led to higher concentrations of fishable flatfish in colder, deeper water.

Herring SDs 22-24

The BSAC recommends that the 2027 TAC for herring in SDs 22-24 should be set as a rollover of the 2026 TAC of **788 t**. The BSAC is of the opinion that the exemption currently in force for small-scale coastal fisheries should be maintained in 2027³⁸ and the quota should be allocated to small-scale fishers.

Some small-scale fisheries representatives (LIFE) recommend setting the 2027 TAC at **788 tonnes**, on the condition that the quota is allocated to fishers who use passive gears.

A group of NGOs (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, CCB, WWF, EAA) recommends developing a rebuilding plan to ensure rapid recovery above B_{MSY} and implementing additional measures to protect and restore known spawning habitats and nursery areas, as indicated in the ICES advice. They call for additional area and/or time restrictions on the herring fishery in the eastern parts of the North Sea divisions

³⁶ Calculated based on F lower (25,832t), and taking into account mixing by deducting 467t for Gulf of Riga herring to be taken in SD 28.2 and adding 5 156 t for Central Baltic herring taken in the Gulf of Riga = 30,521 t.

³⁷ The corresponding TAC in the central Baltic management area for 2027 would be calculated as: 274,322 tonnes + 467 tonnes – 5,156 tonnes = 269,633 tonnes

³⁸ Footnote to the table on herring in SDs 22-24 in the COUNCIL REGULATION (EU) 2025/2454 fixing the fishing opportunities in the Baltic states that the quota is allocated exclusively to bycatches. By way of derogation from the first subparagraph, fishing this quota is permitted for Union fishing vessels of less than 12 meters length overall fishing with gillnets, entangling nets, handlines, pound nets or jigging equipment.

4a, 4b and in division 3a, as catches of Western Baltic Spring herring in the fishery for North Sea herring will be inevitable. They recommend asking ICES advice on possible temporal and spatial management measures, in order to avoid by-catch of WBSS herring and secure a reduction of unwanted fishing pressure on this stock.

Sprat SDs 22-32

The BSAC recommend setting the TAC at F_{MSY} , corresponding to **324,277 tonnes³⁹**, corresponding to the EU TAC of **291,590 t**.

Fisheries representatives from Latvia (Latvian Fishermen Association) recommend a 2027 TAC (MAP F_{upper}) of **332,885 tonnes⁴⁰**, corresponding to the EU TAC of **299,330 t**. In their view, this TAC level is justified by the improved stock status and would allow the fishery to make full use of the available fishing opportunities while remaining within the framework of the agreed management plan.

Some small-scale fisheries representatives (LIFE, Association of Fisheries Protection, FSKPO, SYEF) recommend a 2027 TAC for sprat at the level between 180,000-200,000 tonnes including the Russian share. This is calculated as $0.5 F_{MSY}$. They point to the uncertainty in the forecasts in the ICES advice (reference numbers) and the fact that recruitment is concentrated in the eastern part of the Baltic.

A group of NGOs (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, Coalition Clean Baltic, EAA, WWF) recommend that the TAC should be set well below the lower end of the F_{MSY} lower range, at or less than **228,234 t**. The recommendation takes into account third country share⁴¹. They also recommend implementing spatial management and measures to account for species interactions. They recommend increasing control, enforcement, onboard monitoring and sampling of landings to ensure that the widespread misreporting of sprat as herring and of sprat as non-quota species such as flounder does not continue.

Salmon in SDs 22-31

The BSAC takes note that ICES has not carried out a new assessment for the Baltic Salmon stocks this year. This decision has been made to prioritise experts' time and resources on the ongoing benchmark process. ICES has reissued the advice sheet from last year, indicating that the advice also now pertains to 2027.

The BSAC recommends following the scientific advice and setting a **total catch of 30,000 salmon** in the Gulf of Bothnia and the Åland Sea, and a zero catch from the mixed-stock at sea-fisheries in SDs 22-29, in 2027, in accordance with the ICES advice. This would correspond to reported commercial landings of **no more than 25,537 salmon**.

A small-scale fishery representative (LIFE, FSKPO, SYEF) and a representative of the Baltic Salmon Fund draw attention to the need to use e-DNA analysis and PIT tags in pelagic catches to determine the scale of the salmon bycatch in pelagic fisheries.

The representatives of recreational anglers (EAA, DAFV)⁴² recommend the following regulations and actions concerning Baltic salmon for 2027:

- *It is essential to maintain recreational angling opportunities for Atlantic Salmon in the Baltic Sea.*
- *Recreational trolling north of 59.30 N should be subject to member state regulation and not be unnecessarily regulated by a 4 nautical mile boundary.*
- *Take into account that ICES acknowledges that most of the catch-and-release (C&R) salmon in recreational trolling survive when discarded.*

³⁹ Russian share 10.08% deducted: EU TAC 291,590 t.

⁴⁰ Russian share 10.08% deducted: 299,330 tonnes

⁴¹ Russian estimated share amounts to 10.08%

⁴² [EAA adopts 2 new position papers on recreational fishing for Western Baltic cod and Atlantic Salmon in Baltic Sea for 2027 - EAA Europe](#)

- Regulations demanding landing of whole unfileted fish should only be for salmonids (salmon and sea trout), not for other species such as pike, perch and pikeperch.
- Utilise more EMFAF funding for the removal of fish migration barriers in the rivers.
- An ecosystem-based and adaptive management plan for salmon must be adopted.
- Adoption of the Framework towards development of a European Management Plan for the Great Cormorant to reduce the impact of cormorant predation on salmon stocks.

A group of NGOs (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, CCB, WWF) recommend that *there should be no targeted salmon fishery in 2027 unless the new assessment shows that this year's spawner numbers exceed the levels required to produce MSY. In their opinion, fishing should only take place on compensatory released salmon or salmon from rivers where stocks are at full reproductive capacity. If ICES advice on catches is adopted for SDs 29N-31, the start of the fishing season should be delayed until 1 July to protect weak stocks. Measures should be adopted that allow salmon fisheries, both at sea and in rivers, to be adaptively managed during the fishing season. If the achievement of spawning stock targets is at risk due to low returns, then measures such as fisheries closures should be deployed immediately. Rapidly adaptive regulatory safeguards should be critically important tools in preventing the collapse of salmon stocks.*

Mixed-stock fisheries present particular threats and should not be allowed. As there are substantial uncertainties regarding the level of salmon caught in fisheries targeting other species, such as the pelagic trawl fishery for herring and sprat and the coastal fishery for whitefish, NGOs call on ICES and the Member States to improve data collection on bycatch.

The current approach of setting TACs on an annual basis and including technical measures in the TAC Regulation does not deliver sustainable long-term management of the stocks. Therefore, a holistic management approach, covering TAC-setting as well as relevant technical measures, should be developed as part of a comprehensive new multiannual management plan.

A representative of the Baltic Salmon Fund recommends a zero catch from the mixed-stock at-sea fisheries in SDs 22 – 30 and a total catch of 5,000 reared salmon in the SD 31, in 2026, taken only from close proximity to rivers with compensatory releases. Fishing in SD 31 should be allowed after the migration period (from 1st July).

Salmon in SD 32 (Gulf of Finland)

The BSAC recommends that the 2027 TAC for salmon in SD 32 should be no more than **11,800 salmon**. This would correspond to reported commercial landings of **no more than 10,480 salmon**.

In addition, a **group of NGOs (BalticWaters, Baltic Salmon Fund, CCB, WWF)** recommends that:

- *No wild salmon should be targeted in the Gulf of Finland (GoF). Salmon in the GoF can be targeted only by fishing gear that is proven to do no harm to released wild salmon bycatch.*
- *The current approach of setting TACs on an annual basis and including technical measures in the TAC Regulation does not deliver sustainable long-term management of the stocks. Therefore, a holistic management approach, covering TAC-setting as well as relevant technical measures, should be developed as part of a comprehensive new multiannual management plan.*

A representative of the Baltic Salmon Fund and the group of NGOs (BalticWaters, CCB, WWF) underlines that the fishery should target only reared fin-clipped salmon to keep fisheries-related mortality on wild salmon as low as possible. Currently fishing early in the season catches a substantial number of wild salmon from Gulf of Bothnia populations. In order to avoid wild salmon, the season start should be postponed until the wild salmon from the Gulf of Bothnia has already passed the Gulf of Finland.