

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Amphipholis squamata

English name: Brooding snake star	Scientific name: <i>Amphipholis squamata</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Ophiuroidea Order: Ophiurida Family: Amphipuridae	Species authority: Delle Chiaje, 1828	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: <i>Amphipholis lineata</i> Ljungman, 1872 <i>Amphipholis tenera</i> (Lütken, 1856) <i>Amphiura tenuispina</i> Ljungman, 1865 <i>Ophiura elegans</i> Leach, 1815 <i>Ophiura neglecta</i> Johnston, 1835	Generation length: –	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Eutrophication (anoxia; H01.05)	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Eutrophication (anoxia; H01.05)	
IUCN Criteria: –	HELCOM Red List Category:	DD Data Deficient
Global / European IUCN Red List Category: NE/NE	Habitats Directive: –	
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/–, Estonia –/–, Finland –/–, Germany –/V (Near threatened, incl. North Sea), Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/–, Russia –/–, Sweden –/DD		

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

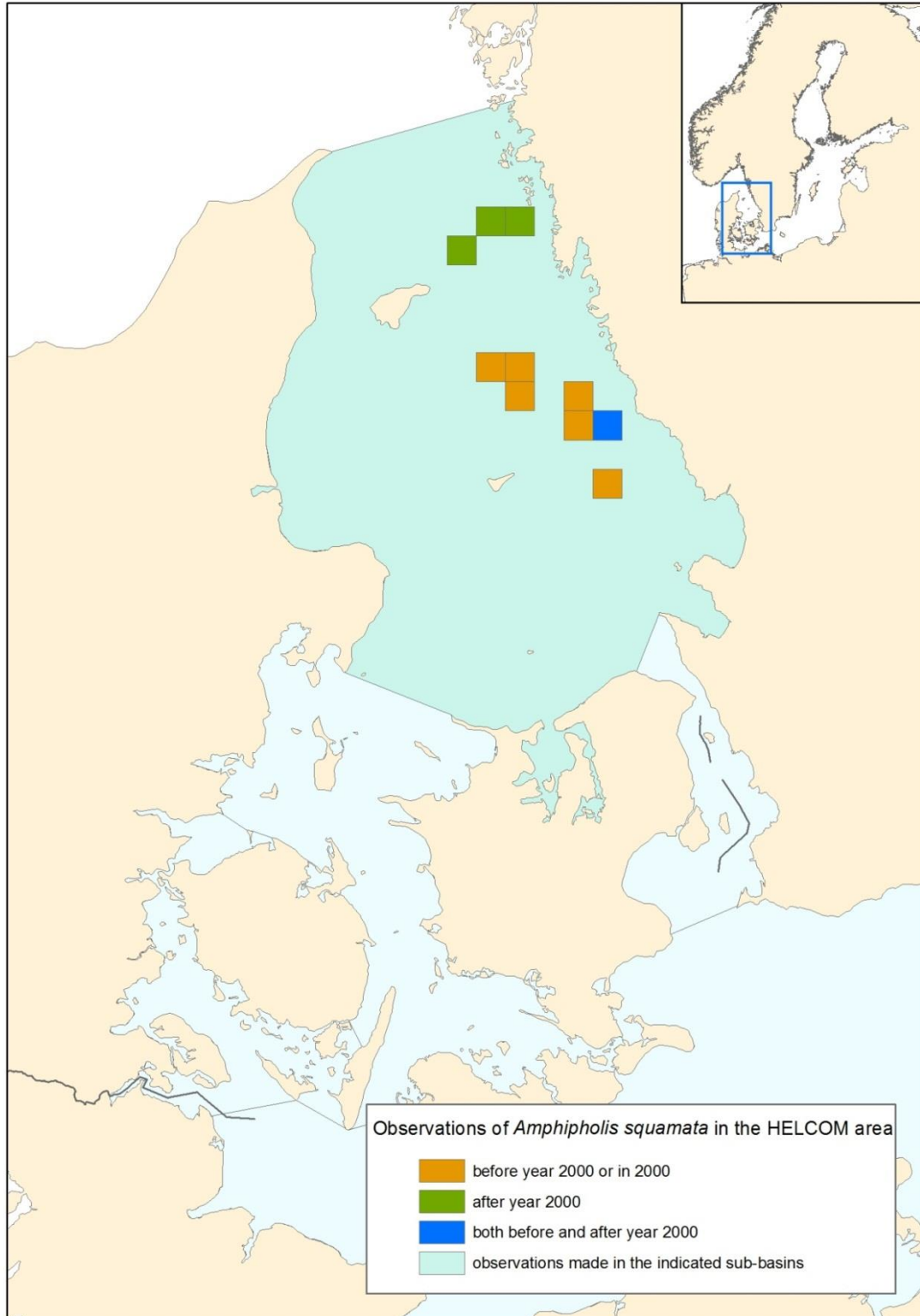
The main distribution of *A. squamata* within the HELCOM area is along the Swedish coasts of Kattegat and the shallow offshore banks in the Kattegat. The species is also reported from the Sound region, but no data has been available from this area. Outside the HELCOM area the species is reported from the Skagerrak and the North Sea. A comparison between historical and present Swedish data indicates a decline in distribution, both in the Kattegat and the Skagerrak. However, as the species is difficult to detect, it is also possible that the species is more common than suspected.

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Distribution Map

The records of species received from the species database of the Swedish Species Information Centre (Artportalen).



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Habitat and Ecology

Amphipholis squamata is a small inconspicuous brittle star with a characteristic appearance. It is a cosmopolitan species that occurs in temperate and warm temperate seas. It can be found intertidally (down to more than 800 m depth) and in shallow water from about mid-tide level down. The species is often hidden under stones in gravel and occasionally on sandy bottoms, and can therefore be difficult to find and sample. It can also be found amongst algal and bryozoan turfs and occasionally offshore among gravel and shells. *A. squamata* is luminescent with a greenish light. It is a deposit feeder collecting particles within its tube feet, and a suspension feeder via trapping detritus in mucus. It is hermaphroditic, possibly self-fertilising, and the eggs are brooded and hatched as juveniles possibly in May-September. The young are brooded in bursal slits near arm attachment sites (MarLIN, WoRMS). As the larvae have direct development the species ability to disperse and recolonize is limited.

Description of major threats

It is possible that the recurring events of anoxia in the Kattegat have had a negative effect on the species.

Assessment justification

Only limited data exist on the population of the species in the HELCOM area. These indicate a decrease in distribution but it is also possible that the species has been overlooked due to its small size and way of living. The information available is thus insufficient to determine which of the redlist categories would be most likely, and the species is categorized as Data Deficient (DD).

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

As the species status is not established and the threats are not well understood, it is difficult to suggest specific measures. In general, the emission of eutrophication substances leading to e.g. anoxia need to be reduced.

Common names

Denmark: –, Estonia: –, Finland: –, Germany: Schuppiger Schlangensterne, Latvia: –, Lithuania: –, Poland: –, Russia: –, Sweden: dvärgormstjärna

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References

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