

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Corystes cassivelaunus

English name: Masked crab, Helmet crab, Sand crab	Scientific name: <i>Corystes cassivelaunus</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Malacostraca Order: Decapoda Family: Corystidae	Species authority: Pennant, 1777	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: <i>Cancer cassivelaunus</i> Pennant, 1777 <i>Cancer personatus</i> Herbst, 1785 <i>Corystes dentatus</i> Latreille, 1801 <i>Hippa dentata</i> Fabricius, 1793	Generation length: –	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Sedimentation caused by eutrophication (H01.05) and bottom trawling (F02.02.01)	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Sedimentation caused by eutrophication (H01.05) and bottom trawling (F02.02.01), Construction (windmills, C03.03)	
IUCN Criteria: D2	HELCOM Red List Category:	NT Near Threatened
Global / European IUCN Red List Category NE/NE	Habitats Directive: –	
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/–, Estonia –/–, Finland –/–, Germany –/* (Not threatened, incl. North Sea), Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/–, Russia –/–, Sweden –/NT		

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

Within the HELCOM area the species has only been reported from the offshore banks Fladen, Röde bank and Stora Middelgrund in the Kattegat. Outside the area is known from the Skagerrak, south of Norway and the North Sea. It seems that the species is rare also in the Skagerrak and Norway. The habitat is probably quite rare within the HELCOM area, and may also be subject to sedimentation. As the species lives down in the bottom material, "digging" gear is required for sampling. Thus, the species is often difficult to detect with standard sampling.

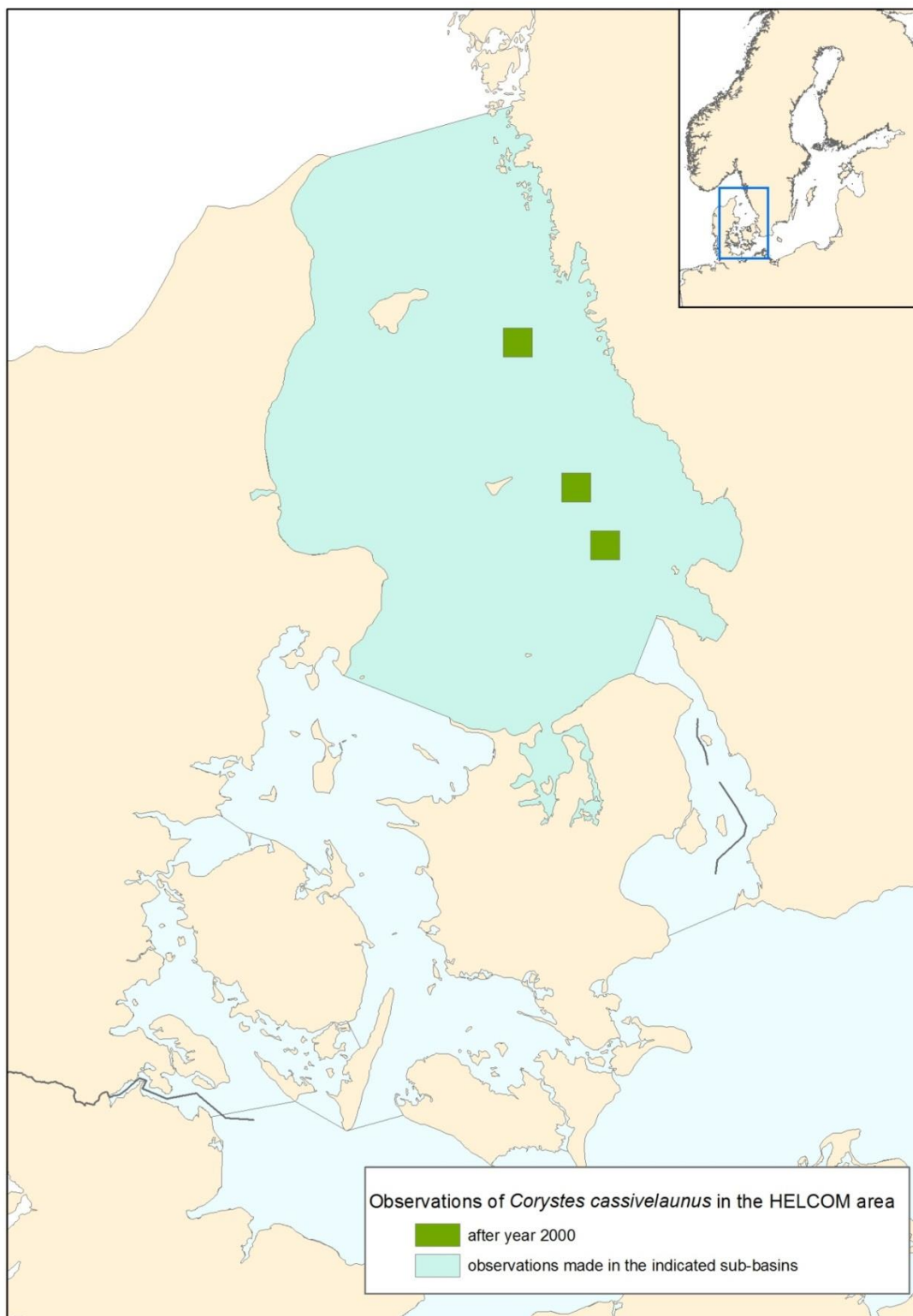


Corystes cassivelaunus. Photo by Anders Salesjö Photography, Undervattenbilder.se.

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*Corystes cassivelaunus***Distribution map**

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



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Habitat and ecology

C. cassivelaunus is a small digging crab, with a characteristic appearance (a “mask” on the carapace). It is typically found in burrows in the sand from the lower shore and shallow sublittoral to about 100 m. (MarLIN). The masked crab burrows backwards into the sand. Once it is in the sand, the crab forms a tube by fusing the bristles of the second pair of antennae together; it then draws water down this tube for respiration. It feeds on burrowing invertebrates, such as polychaete worms and bivalve mollusks. In the British Isles females carry eggs for around 10 months, and can reproduce repeatedly for several years (Fish & Fish 1996).

Description of major threats

At present it is not known whether the species is under a specific threat or not. However, the offshore banks where the species is found within the HELCOM area are vulnerable to sedimentation caused by e.g. eutrophication and trawling. As offshore banks are of interest for the windmill industry, exploitation will probably also be an issue in the near future.

Assessment justification

The species is probably naturally rare due to its habitat choice, but as it is difficult to detect with standard sampling it may also be more common than suspected. The number of locations within the HELCOM area is estimated to be less than 10. The limited number of locations qualifies for the category Near Threatened (NT) according to D2.

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

In general the negative effects of eutrophication and trawling on marine biotopes need to be reduced. More information on the species distribution and status within the HELCOM area is needed.

Common names

Denmark: maskekrabbe, Estonia: –, Finland: –, Germany: –, Latvia: –, Lithuania: –, Poland: –, Russia: –, Sweden: skråpukskrabba

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