

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Entelurus aequoreus

English name: Snake pipefish	Scientific name: <i>Entelurus aequoreus</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Actinopterygii Order: Syngnathiformes Family: Syngnathidae	Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: <i>Syngnathus aequoreus</i>	Generation length: 2.5 years	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): –	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): –	
IUCN Criteria: –	HELCOM Red List Category:	LC Least Concern
Global / European IUCN Red List Category NE/NE	Habitats Directive: –	
Previous HELCOM Red List Category (2007): VU		
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/–, Estonia –/–, Finland –/–, Germany –/– (Baltic Sea), Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/–, Russia –/–, Sweden –/LC		

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

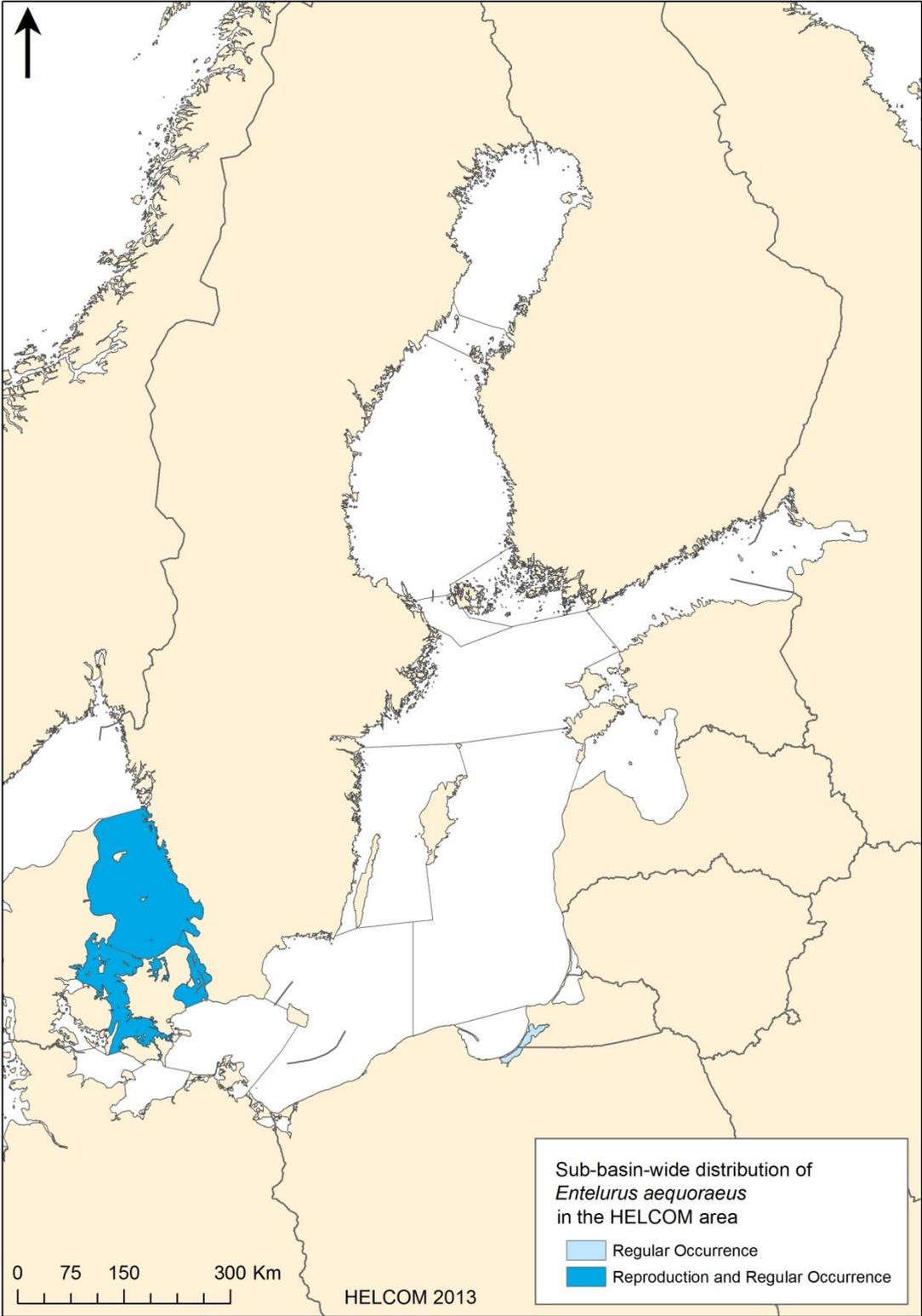
The snake pipefish is common in the Northeast Atlantic from Iceland and Norway south to the Azores and Portugal (Kullander et al. 2012). The snake pipefish is very common in the Skagerrak coast; it occurs sparsely in the Kattegat and is rare in the Sound and the southern Baltic. Like most species of the Syngnathidae family, the snake pipefish distribution and abundance is not monitored well with standardized test fishing nets because of its snakelike bodyform. However, there are indications of an increasing abundance of the species in the Northeast Atlantic since 2003 (Harris et al. 2007, van Damme & Couperus 2008).



Snake pipefish. Photo © Citron.

Distribution map

The map shows the sub-basins in the HELCOM area where the species is known to occur regularly and to reproduce (HELCOM 2012).



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Habitat and ecology

The snake pipefish is a marine species that lives along the coast from 5–10 meters depth sometimes down to 100 m. It prefers vegetated bottoms, like *Zostera marina*, *Chorda filum* or *Fucus* beds, but it can also be found further offshore in the vicinity of drifting algae. Their diet consists of fish larvae and small crustaceans. The spawning takes place in pairs in dense vegetation during June to July. The male broods the embryos attached to its abdomen. (Dawson 1986, Froese & Pauly 2012, Kullander et al. 2012)

Description of major threats

The species is not considered threatened at the moment but the loss of suitable habitats by fragmentation of *Zostera* beds and removal of algae has probably affected the species negatively within the HELCOM area.

Assessment justification

There is no trend during the last years in coastal monitoring data in the HELCOM area but in adjacent waters the species has increased considerably.

The main habitat of the snake pipefish, *Zostera* meadows and possibly also other macrophyte rich habitats have declined and deteriorated considerably within the HELCOM area and it could be assumed that the population of the species has also declined together with the habitat changes. However, these changes have in most areas happened e.g. more than 30 or even 100 years ago and currently the situation has stabilized, if not improved. As the snake pipefish is a short-lived species for which the time-period of population decline evaluation is only 10 years, the most drastic habitat changes, as well as the possible decline in population, have no effect on the assessment under criterion A. The extent of occurrence (EOO) is below the threshold for Near Threatened (<40 000 km²) according to the B1 criterion however none of the required additional criterias of severe fragmentation, continuing decline or extreme fluctuations in population size or habitat is fulfilled. The estimated area of occupancy is above the threshold for being threatened according to the IUCN. The species is categorized as Least Concern (LC).

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

No protection actions currently needed in the HELCOM area but more information should be collected on the status of this species.

Common names

D: Große Schlangennadel; DK: Snippe; FI: Merineula; GB: Snake pipefish; LI: Didžioji adatžuvė; LV: Lielā čūskzivis; PL: Wężyna; RU: Zmeyevidnaja igla-ryba; SE: Större havsnål

References

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