

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Spinachia spinachia

English name: Fifteen-spined stickleback	Scientific name: <i>Spinachia spinachia</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Actinopterygii Order: Gasterosteiformes Family: Gasterosteidae	Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: –	Generation length: 1.3	
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 –/DD, Finland –/DD, Germany –/D (Data deficient, Baltic Sea), Latvia –/RA, Lithuania –/–, Poland <i>Prohibited to kill, catch or disturb this species under strict protection</i> /–, Russia –/–, Sweden –/LC		

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

This marine species is widely distributed and reproducing as far into the Baltic Sea as the Bothnian Sea. It is considered very rare in Poland but common in other areas. It is not caught in regular coastal fish monitoring due to its slender body shape and small size. The only known trend data are from catches in Swedish nuclear power plant cooling water intake in Kattegat where the population show no overall trend in the last 10 years.



Fifteen-spined stickleback. Photo by Timo Moritz Deutsches Meeresmuseum.

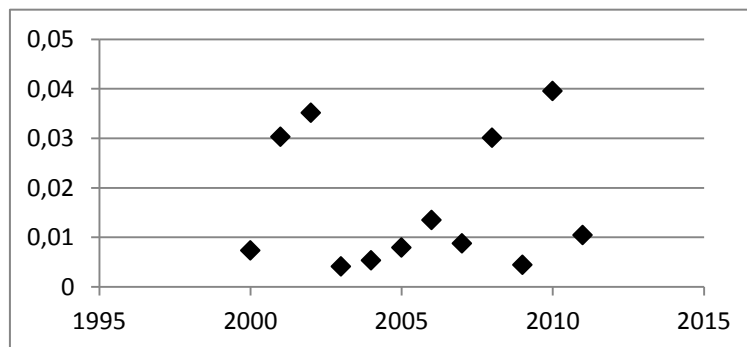
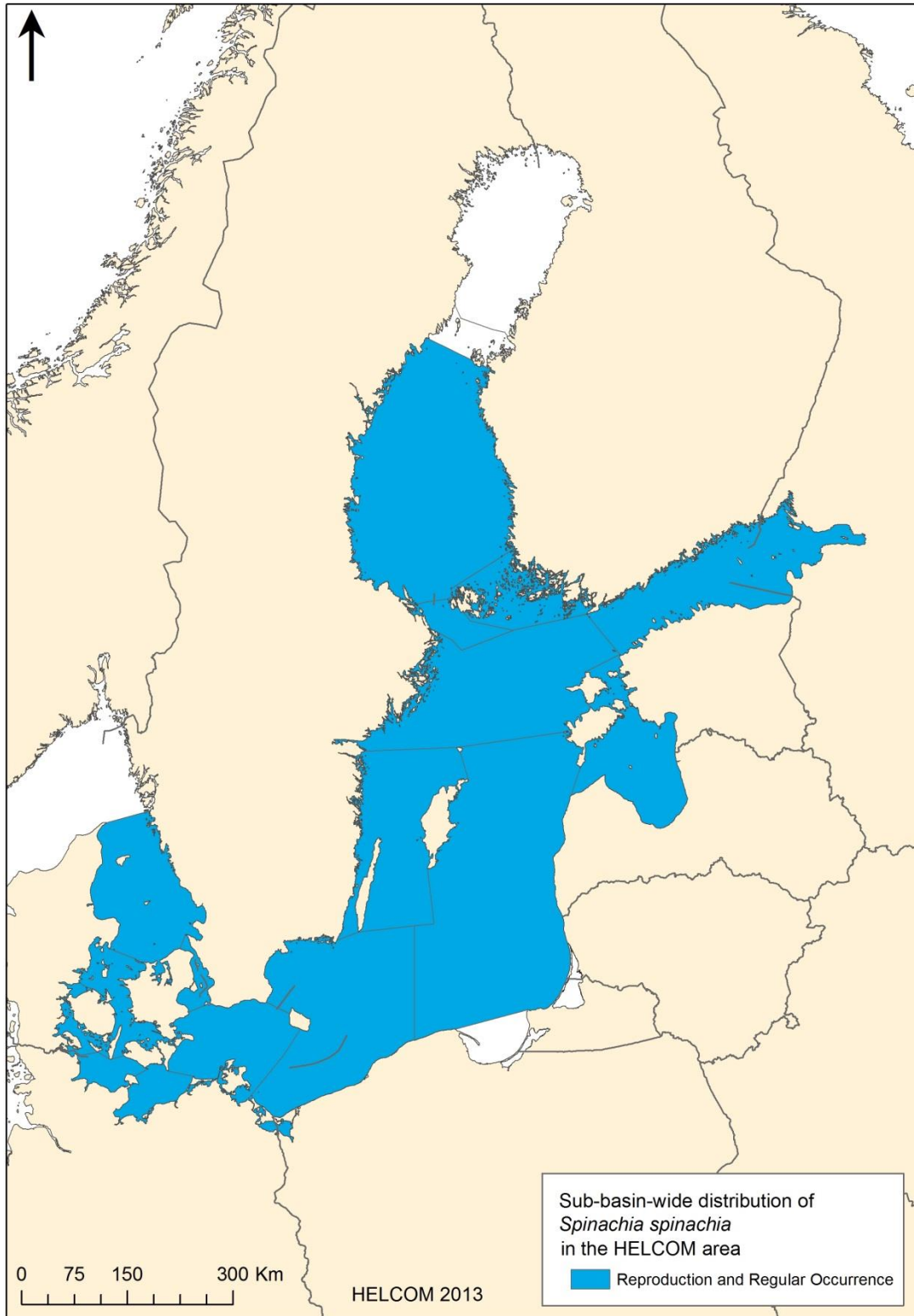


Fig1. Number of fifteen-spined sticklebacks caught per hour using a small-mesh sized Isaac Kidd trawl in a monitory fishing in the cooling water intake in a Swedish nuclear power plant in the Kattegat. Mean number of individuals caught yearly was 22.

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 fifteen-spined stickleback is a small and shortlived species which reaches maturity at one year of age and a size of 10–15 cm total length. Adults live solitary or in pairs in weedy, shallow coastal areas. During spawning in early summer the male build a nest where the female deposits hundreds of eggs. The male care for and defend the nest until the eggs hatch a few weeks later. Adults often die after the spawning season. The fifteen-spined stickleback feed on small invertebrates like amphipods, mysids and copepods. (Froese and Pauly 2012 and Kullander et al 2012)

Description of major threats

No major threats have been identified.

Assessment justification

This species is widespread and occurring in most coastal parts of the HELCOM area. The only available time series, Isaac-Kidd trawling in a Swedish nuclear power plant cooling water intake in the Kattegat shows no population trend during the assessment period. The main habitat of the species, *Zostera* meadows and *Fucus* spp. stands have declined or deteriorated 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 several decades ago and currently the situation has stabilized, if not improved. As the fifteen-spined stickleback is a short-lived species for which the time-period of population decline evaluation is only 10 years, the largest habitat changes, as well as the possible decline in population, have no effect on the assessment under criterion A. Therefore this species fulfils no criteria for being threatened according to the IUCN criteria and is hence considered Least Concern in the HELCOM area.

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

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

Common names

DE: Seestichling; DK: Tangsnarre; ES: Raudkiisk; FI: Vaskikala; GB: Fifteen-spined stickleback ; LA: Jūras stagars; LI: Penkiolikasyplė dyglė; PL: Pocierniec; RU: Dlinnorilaja koljushka; SE: Tång spigg

References

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