

Annex 4

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 32-33/1

This Recommendation supplements HELCOM Recommendation 19/2

Adopted 15 June 2011
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

CONSERVATION OF BALTIC SALMON (*SALMO SALAR*) AND SEA TROUT (*SALMO TRUTTA*) POPULATIONS BY THE RESTORATION OF THEIR RIVER HABITATS AND MANAGEMENT OF RIVER FISHERIES

THE COMMISSION,

KEEPING IN MIND that a commitment of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan is the active conservation of at least ten endangered/threatened wild salmon river populations in the Baltic Sea region as well as the reintroduction of native Baltic Sea salmon in at least four potential salmon rivers, and the development of restoration plans (including restoration of spawning sites and migration routes) in suitable rivers to reinstate migratory fish species,

BEING AWARE that many naturally reproducing salmon and sea trout populations have shown an encouraging development since the mid 1990's,

BEING CONCERNED that this development has not been observed in the whole Baltic Sea Area and that many salmon and sea trout populations are still in need of urgent measures for their recovery,

BEING AWARE that the HELCOM SALAR project that focused on the state of salmon and sea trout populations and habitats in rivers flowing to the Baltic Sea has:

- identified naturally reproducing original salmon and sea trout populations in urgent need of recovery measures;
- identified original salmon populations that are maintained in rearing facilities and that may be re-established in their native rivers
- identified salmon rivers with large potential for reproduction;
- proposed a definition of salmonid riverine habitats in good state;
- proposed that the accessibility for salmon and sea trout through rivers with migratory hindrances is assessed on a river-by-river basis; and
- proposed measures for managing river fisheries

RECOGNISING that a good state of the riverine habitats and the accessibility of reproduction areas to ascending spawners is a precondition for successful reproduction and development of salmon and sea trout populations,

BEARING IN MIND the European Union's exclusive competence in fisheries management in the Baltic Sea in the framework of the Common Fisheries Policy and the Agreement between the European Community and the Government of the Russian Federation on co-operation in fisheries and the conservation of the living marine resources in the Baltic sea,

BEING AWARE that for those HELCOM Contracting States being also EU Member States the implementation of this Recommendation will be connected with the EU long-term management plan for salmon stock in the Baltic Sea,

BEING CONVINCED that effective conservation and development of Baltic salmon and sea trout populations requires targeted management and restoration measures in the riverine habitats that complement and support measures in the marine area,

RECOMMENDS the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention:

1. To take urgent measures for the recovery of the original salmon and sea trout populations that reproduce at a level of less than 50 % of the potential smolt production capacity (PSPC). The list of original salmon populations that based on recent smolt production data reproduce at a level of less than 50 % of PSPC are listed in Annex 1.
2. To make assessments of man-made migration hindrances for salmon or sea trout. The assessments should be made for the historical distribution areas of salmon and sea trout in the river systems and cover the feasibility of removing the hindrances, providing fishways and/or transporting fish over them or of enhancing the functioning of current fishways. Passage through the rivers for salmon and sea trout should be provided where the results of the assessment justifies it.

The assessment may include elements such as cost-efficiency of the options, estimated natural smolt production, options for improving accessibility (e.g. fishways or transport of spawners/smolts), effects on existing fish populations, mortality during up- and downstream migration and migration behaviour. The assessment should where necessary include a mapping of the quantity and quality of suitable spawning and nursery areas.

3. Where justified following assessments under point 2 to re-establish the original salmon populations of Dalälven, Iijoki, Indalsälven, Ljusnan, Luleälven, Skellefteälven and Ångermanälven into their native rivers and to open migratory routes for salmon and sea trout to historical reproduction areas of the rivers Kemijoki, Kymijoki and Oulujoki.
4. To take action for the restoration of river waters and habitats that hold naturally reproducing salmon and sea trout populations towards a salmonid habitat in good state with the following characteristics:
 - The river has a natural meandering that provides for diversity of habitats;

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- The quantity and velocity of waters are sufficient and the flow is maintained at an adequate level corresponding to the needs of salmon and sea trout eggs as well as young and adult fish;
 - The water is cool and well oxygenated and stays within a limited pH range;
 - There are spawning and nursery areas with the necessary bottom substrates (permeable gravel, cobble and sand);
 - There are both deep pools and large boulders and stones as well as large woody debris suitable as hiding and resting sites for salmonids;
 - The load of nutrients, organic substances, sediments and sand from the river banks is low and littering or contaminants do not affect the waters or bottoms;
 - Vegetation along the river provides for shade and predator protection for fish as well as habitats for insects that may disperse over the waters as suitable food items for salmonids;
 - The growth of vegetation in the rivers is not excessive
5. To develop fishing rules for the management of river fisheries through a participatory and open process that includes local stakeholders. To apply a set of effective and proportionate fishing rules in the management of river fisheries based on *inter alia* the following elements:

Fishing culture and regulations

- The development of a sportfishing culture to allow large wild females of salmon and sea trout to be released back to the river;
- Where appropriate a ban on fishing and keeping of large wild salmon and sea trout;
- Where needed a total fishing ban on salmon and/or sea trout;
- The definition of appropriate catch sizes (minimum/maximum size) to protect juveniles or mature fish (e.g. salmon over 10 kg);
- A prohibition on the use of barbed hooks and restrictions on the number of hooks and their size on a lure;
- The introduction of a rule that requires salmonids that are hooked outside the mouth to be released and to eliminate “foul hooking”;
- The introduction of a bag limit (maximum catch) in terms of one or more salmon or sea trout per fisher per day;
- The introduction of a closed season during the spawning and smolt migration period and other important conservation periods or areas;
- The application of a scheme for regulating fishing effort by licensing or other means;
- The regulation of gillnetting in the river when salmon or sea trout are present;

Fish stock management, enforcement and sanctions

- Setting of targets for the number of spawners for each river/large tributary in addition to the level of smolt production in relation to PSPC;
- The use of original strains and as early life stages (eggs, alevins, parr) as possible when stocking salmonids;
- The clipping of the adipose fin of reared salmonids to be stocked;

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- The application of selective fishing methods that target reared fish (e.g. finclipped) or that allow the release of wild fish;
 - Arrangements for the reporting of catches in river fisheries;
 - Targeted inspection programs during important conservation periods;
 - The effective enforcement and control of rules and the application of deterring sanctions when they are breached
6. To prioritise the restoration of habitats of rivers that hold original salmon and sea trout populations that reproduce at a level of less than 50 % of PSPC and to apply a set of strict fishing rules for the management of river fisheries when the targeted salmon or sea trout populations reproduce at a level of less than 20 % of PSPC (cf. Annex 1).
7. That a natural life cycle of original salmon and sea trout populations is ensured and that stocking for enhancement purposes is conducted on a temporary basis until natural reproduction reaches stable levels and are based on original strains or if not available on nearby populations with genetic proximity and similar ecological conditions.

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the actions taken by the Contracting Parties for implementing this recommendation shall be reported to the Commission every three years in January, starting in 2012, in accordance with a format presented in Annex 2.

REQUESTS the Secretariat to maintain a list of original salmon populations (salmon red list populations) that reproduce at a level of less than 50 % of PSPC. The list in the Annex 1 shall be updated annually based on smolt production data of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and shall be displayed on the HELCOM website.

Annex 1. THE LIST OF ORIGINAL BALTIC SALMON POPULATIONS

Based on the estimates of the smolt production for 2007-2009 (for Kattegat estimates for 2005 - 2009) the following original salmon populations are reproducing at a level of less than 50 % of PSPC:

Population/river	Sea Basin	Attainment level of PSPC
Pärnu	Gulf of Riga	<1%
Vilia*	Baltic Proper	<1%
Luga	Gulf of Finland	6%
Rickleån	Bothnian Bay	9%
Vasalemma	Gulf of Finland	11%
Šventoji*	Baltic Proper	12%
Emån	Baltic Proper	14%
Žeimena*	Baltic Proper	17%
Vilnia*	Baltic Proper	19%
Keila	Gulf of Finland	20%
Göta älv tributaries**	Kattegat	22%
Öreälven	Bothnian Sea	23%
Neris*	Baltic Proper	23%
Kunda	Gulf of Finland	25%
Saka	Baltic Proper	29%
Nissan (tributary Sennan)	Kattegat	32%
Löftaån	Kattegat	33%
Tvååkersån	Kattegat	33%
Rönne å	Kattegat	35%
Kungsbackaån	Kattegat	36%
Gauja	Gulf of Riga	44%

* Tributaries of the Nemunas river system

** The Göta älv tributaries are Brattorpsån, Grönån, Lärjeån, Säveån and Västerlandaån

Annex 2. REPORTING FORMAT

- I. Salmon and sea trout populations that reproduce at a level of less than 50% of PSPC (cf. Annex 1)
 - a) List all original salmon and sea trout populations that have been subject to measures for the recovery of the populations. Specify for each population what the measures have been and group them according to the main factors as follows:
 - 1) Measures for restoring river habitats towards a salmonid habitat in good state as characterised in the Recommendation
 - 2) Measures for improving the accessibility of the rivers including the assessments of man-made migration hindrances
 - 3) Measures for the management of river fisheries through a participatory and open process
- II. Potential salmon populations and rivers
 - b) List potential original salmon populations (Dalälven, Iijoki, Indalsälven, Ljusnan, Luleälven, Skellefteälven or Ångermanälven) that have been subject to measures for re-establishment into their native rivers and describe the measures
 - c) List potential salmon rivers (Kemijoki, Kymijoki or Oulujoki) that have been subject to measures for opening the migratory routes to their historical reproduction areas and describe the individual measures
- III. Assessments of man-made migration hindrances for salmonids
 - d) Have significant migration hindrances in salmonid rivers been the subject of an assessment as provided for in the Recommendation? If yes, describe the main outcome of each individual assessment.
 - e) Have any new, permanent or temporary, migration hindrances been built that may negatively affect the accessibility of the rivers for salmonids? If yes, specify river name and type of construction.
- IV. Other actions for the implementation of the Recommendation
 - f) List other significant actions that have been taken for the implementation of the Recommendation. Describe the individual actions and group them according to the main factors as follows:
 - 1) Measures for restoring river waters or habitats towards a salmonid habitat in good state as characterised in the Recommendation
 - 2) Measures for improving the accessibility of the rivers including the assessments of man-made migration hindrances
 - 3) Measures for the management of river fisheries through a participatory and open process