

BIOTOPE INFORMATION SHEET

English name: Baltic aphotic rock and boulders or mixed hard and soft substrates dominated by stone corals (Scleractinida)		Code in HELCOM HUB: AB.A1G3, AB.M1G3	
Characteristic species: <i>Caryophyllia smithii</i>			
Past and Current Threats (Habitat directive article 17): Fishing (bottom trawling F02.02.01), Construction (siltation J02.11.02), Eutrophication (H01.05)		Future Threats (Habitat directive article 17): Fishing (bottom trawling F02.02.01), Construction (siltation J02.11.02), Eutrophication (H01.05)	
Red List Criteria: A1	Confidence of threat assessment: L	HELCOM Red List Category:	NT Near Threatened
Previous HELCOM Red List threat assessments			
BSEP 75 (1998): "3" Endangered 2.1.2.1 Solid rock bottoms of the aphotic zone 2.2.1 Stony bottoms of the aphotic zone 2.8.1 Mixed sediments of the aphotic zone		BSEP 113 (HELCOM 2007):	
Greater concern stated by:			

Habitat and Ecology

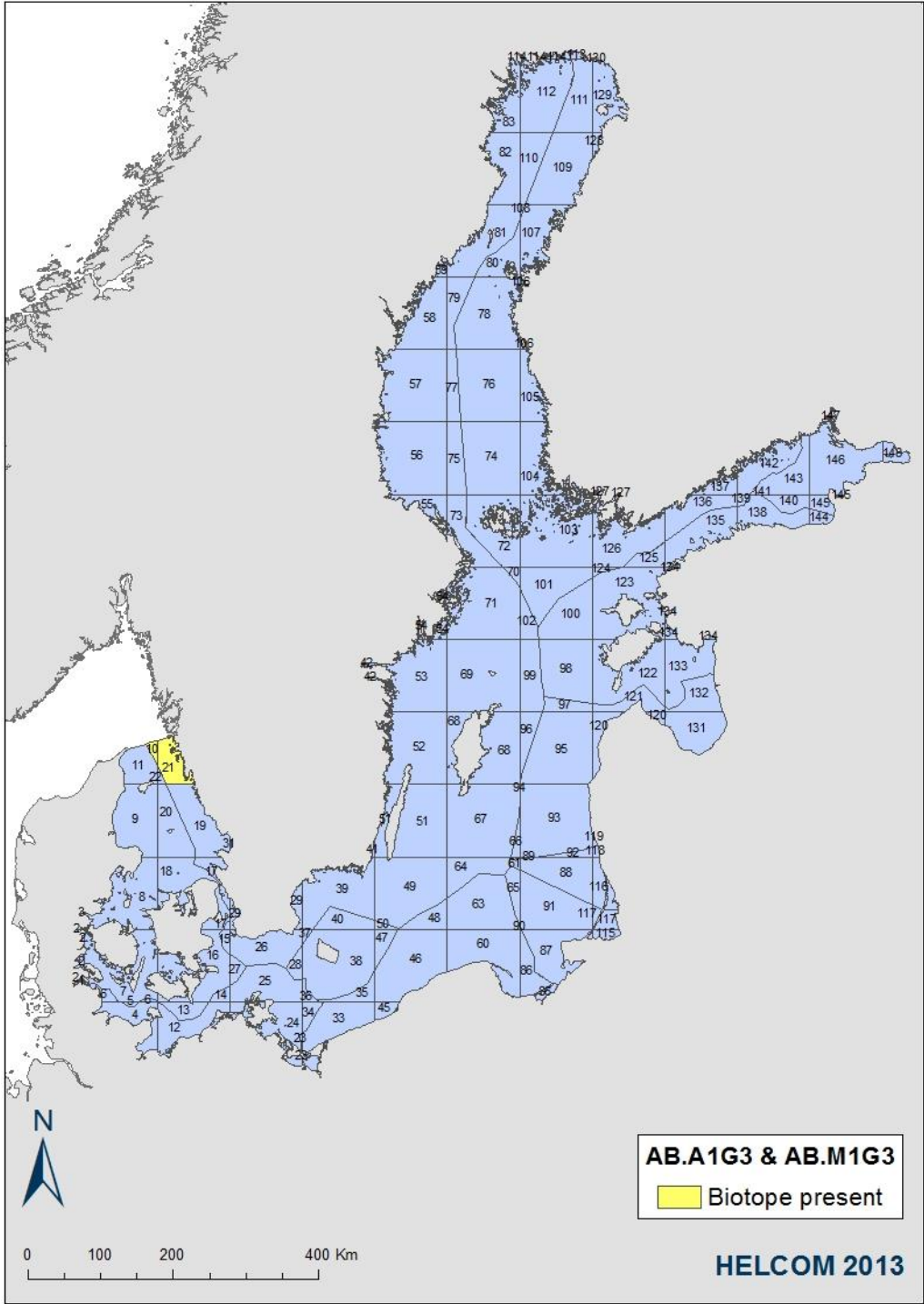
The biotope occurs in the aphotic zone on rock and boulders and is delineated based on a minimum coverage of 10% cnidarians of which hard corals constitute more than 50% of the biomass. In the Baltic Sea the biotope is only found in deep parts in the northern Kattegat where the environment is very nearly fully marine. The stone coral biotope is not typical for a brackish water sea.

Caryophyllia smithii is a solitary stone coral that grows to approximately 2 centimetres in height. The coral lives on rocky substrates. Small aggregations of individuals can occasionally be found. Individuals can live to over 20 years of age (Moen & Svensen 2009). The depth range is 20–130 meters. The coral is a passive suspension feeder, mainly relying on zooplankton (MarLin 2006).

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Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

The biotope is restricted to the north Kattegat, where environmental conditions are nearly fully marine. The distribution map indicates the area in the 100 x 100 km grid where biotope is known to occur. OCEANA (2013) encountered *Carophylla smithii* along the Swedish coast.



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Description of Major threats

The threats affecting the biotope are not quite clear. However, the characteristic species require clean substrates for settlement and are therefore adversely affected by activities that increase siltation. Invasive fishing methods such as bottom trawling are detrimental to the substrate integrity.

Assessment justification

A1

The biotope is thought to have decreased in quantity by more than 25% during the past 50 years.

Recommendations for actions to conserve the biotope

Conservation of the biotope

Common names

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References

- MarLIN (2006) BIOTIC - Biological Traits Information Catalogue. Marine Life Information Network. Plymouth: Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom.
<http://www.marlin.ac.uk/biotic/browse.php?sp=6000&show=biology> (viewed 25.7.2013)
- Moen, F., Svensen, E. (2009) Djurliv i havet – Nordeuropeisk marin fauna. Nordstedts. 768 pp.
- OCEANA (2013) Oceana proposal for a Marine Protected Area – Marstrandsskærgården. 8 pp. Available at: http://oceana.org/sites/default/files/euo/OCEANA_9_Marstrandsskargarden.pdf