

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Palaemonetes varians

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| English name: Atlantic ditch shrimp/Grass shrimp | Scientific name: <i>Palaemonetes varians</i> | |
| Taxonomical group: Class: Malacostraca Order: Decapoda Family: Palaemonidae | Species authority: Leach, 1814 | |
| Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: – | Generation length: 2 years | |
| Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Eutrophication (H01.05), Construction (J02.01.02, J02.02.02, J02.12.01) | Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Eutrophication (H01.05), Construction (J02.01.02, J02.02.02, J02.12.01) | |
| IUCN Criteria: – | HELCOM Red List Category: | DD Data Deficient |
| Global / European IUCN Red List Category: NE/NE | Habitats Directive: – | |
| Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/–, Estonia –/–, Finland –/–, Germany –/V (Near threatened, incl. North Sea), Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/NT, Russia –/–, Sweden –/VU | | |

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

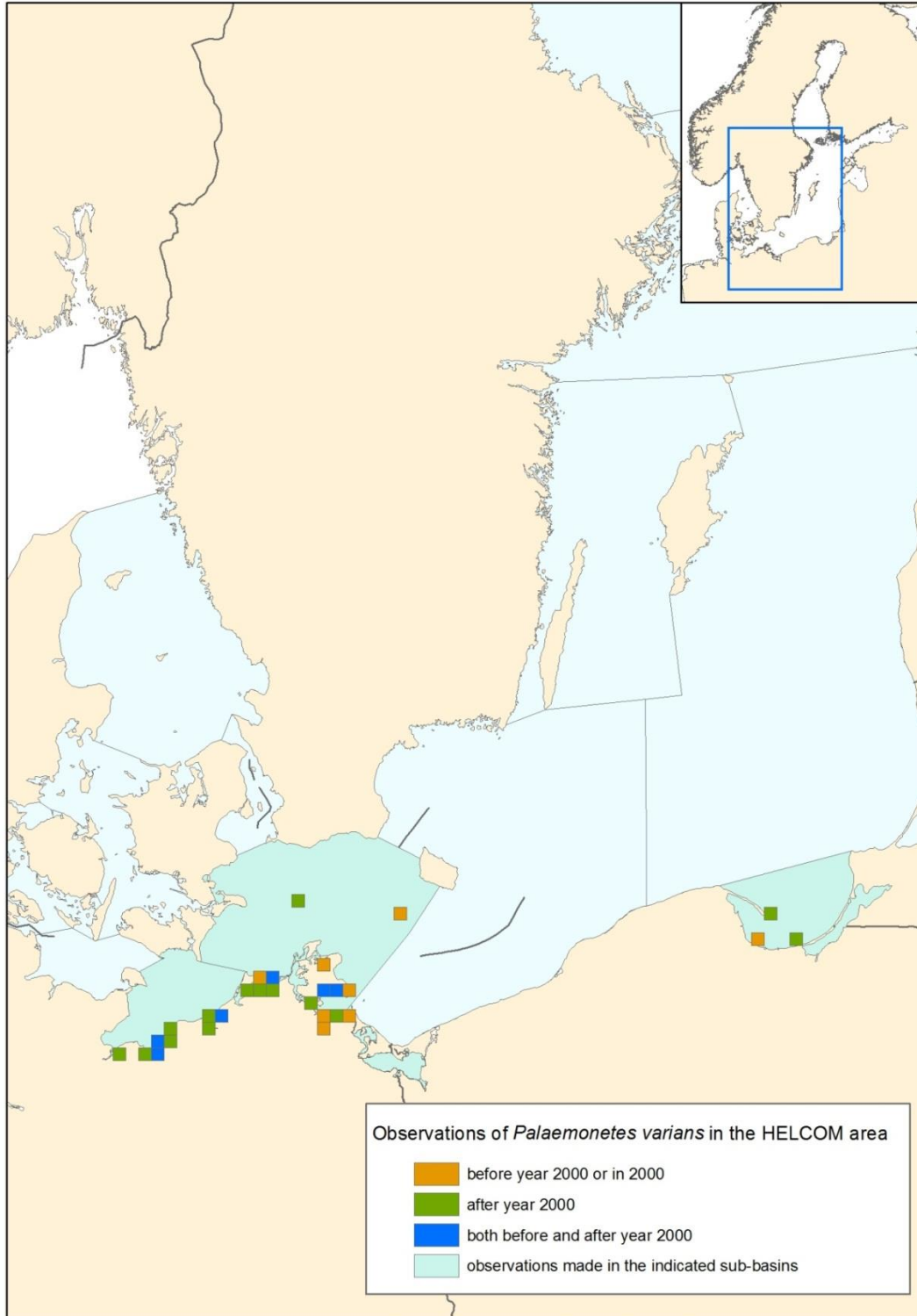
Palaemonetes varians lives in the southern Baltic Sea, in habitats that have potentially deteriorated considerably. It is not known how rare the species is currently and how the population has changed. Outside the HELCOM area this species ranges from the North Sea and British Isles southwards to the western Mediterranean.

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Distribution map

The georeferenced records of species compiled from the database of the Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research (IOW) and from Jazdzewski et al. (2005).



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Habitat and Ecology

P. varians is a brackish water shrimp that occurs in shallow waters, e.g. in sheltered and richly vegetated bays or in estuaries. It is often found together with the two *Palaemon* species. In the daytime it tends to stay in a shelter and it comes to feed on shoreline debris at night.

The species is omnivorous. It feeds on insect larva, plants or little animals in decomposition. The females carry eggs from May to September. The larvae are pelagic.

Description of major threats

Macrophyte meadows, which are the habitats of the species, have been negatively affected by eutrophication, turbidity and sedimentation-induced changes. Also shoreline constructions may have affected the species distribution negatively.

Assessment justification

The species is dependent on shallow water macrophyte-rich habitats that have potentially deteriorated considerably. The species probably also occurs along the Danish coasts but no data are available. Misidentification with other species is possible. It is not known how rare the species is currently and how the population has changed and therefore the species is categorized as Data Deficient (DD) in the HELCOM area.

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

The knowledge of the distribution of the species should be increased by targeted inventories in near shore macrophyte-rich habitats.

Common names

Denmark: brakvandsreje, Estonia: –, Finland: –, Germany: Brackwasser-Felsgarnele, Latvia: –, Lithuania: –, Poland: –, Russia: –, Sweden: brackvattensräka

References

- IOW database. Observational data from the database of the Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research.
- Jazdzewski, K., Konopacka, A., Grabowski, M. 2005. Native and alien malacostracan crustacean along the Polish Baltic Sea coast in the twentieth century. *Oceanological and Hydrobiological Studies* 34: 175-193.
- Marine Species Identification Portal. Available at http://species-identification.org/species.php?species_group=zmns&id=494
- Rachor, E., Bönsch, R., Boos, K., Gosselck, F., Grotjahn, M., Günther, C.-P., Guský, M., Gutow, L., Heiber, W., Jantschik, P., Krieg, H.-J., Krone, R., Nehmer, P., Reichert, K., Reiss, H., Schröder, A., Witt, J. & Zettler, M. L. 2012. Rote Liste und Artenliste der bodenlebenden wirbellosen Meerestiere. Vierte Fassung, Stand Dezember 2007, einzelne Aktualisierungen bis 2012. *Naturschutz und Biologische Vielfalt* 70(2). Bundesamt für Naturschutz.
- World Register of Marine Species WoRMS. Available at <http://www.marinespecies.org/aphia.php?p=taxdetails&id=107624>.