HELCOM Monitoring Programme topic

Fish, shellfish and fisheries

Programme:

Fisheries by-catch

Contents

a. Metadata on monitoring strategies and monitoring programmes

a.1 Responsible HELCOM subsidiary body

Please indicate the relevant expert group/network if available, otherwise the responsible HELCOM Working Group.

	Permament Groups
☐	Gear – Group on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach
☐	Maritime – Maritime Working Group
☐	Pressure – Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area
☐	Response – Response Working Group
☒	State and Conservation – Working Group on the State of the Environmental and Nature Conservation
	Time-limited Groups
☐	Agri – Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices
☒	Fish – Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries
☐	HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG - Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group
☒	EG MAMA - Expert Group on Marine Mammals
☐	AIS EWG – Expert Working Group for Mutual Exchange and Deliveries of AIS data
☐	EN Hazardous Substances – Expert Network on hazardous substances
☐	EN Marine Litter – Expert Network on Marine Litter
☐	EN Noise – Expert Network on Underwater Noise
☐	ESA – Expert Network on Economic and Social Analyses
☐	EWG OWR – Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response
☐	EWG SHORE – Expert Working Group on Response on the Shore
☐	Green Technology and Alternative Fuels Platform for Shipping
☐	HELCOM/OSPAR TG BALLAST – Joint HELCOM/OSPAR Task Group on Ballast Management Convention Exemptions
☐	IN Benthic habitat – Intersessional Network on habitat monitoring

☐	IN-EUTROPHICATION - Intersessional Network on Eutrophication
☐	IWGAS – Informal Working Group on Aerial Surveillance
☒	JWG Bird – HELCOM-OSPAR-ICES Joint Working Group on Seabirds
☐	MORS EG – Expert group on monitoring of radioactive substances in the Baltic Sea
☐	PRF Cooperation Platform – Cooperation Platform on Port Reception Facilities in the Baltic Sea
☐	SAFE NAV – Group of Experts on Safety of Navigation
☐	SUBMERGED – Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects

a.2 Regional Cooperation (RegionalCooperation)

The monitoring of this programme is:

☐ Fully coordinated

☒ Partly coordinated. Indicate missing component(s):

There is no regional coordination in dedicated monitoring of bycatch of Protected, Endangered and Threatenes Species (PETS)[1]. Non-dedicated bycatch monitoring under the EU Data Collection Framework (DCF) is co-ordinated under the Regional Coordination Group (RCG) Baltic. However, the main focus of DCF Monitoring is data on fish stocks with emphasis on trawl fisheries. The high number of small vessels that operate with static nets are undersampled and regionally coordinated monitoring programmes on PETS bycatch need to be developed.

☐ Coordinated monitoring is under development. Indicate by which group/project and by when a recommendation on coordinated monitoring can be expected.

b. Monitoring strategies

b.1 Descriptor

The programme supports the following obligatory MSFD Monitoring Strategies. Tick one or more relevant boxes.

☒ **D1**	Biodiversity
☐ **D2**	Non-indigenous Species
☐ **D3**	Commercial fish and shellfish
☐ **D4**	Food webs

[1] PETS referring particularly to marine mammal and bird species throughout this document.

☐ **D5** Eutrophication

☐ **D6** Seafloor integrity

☐ **D7** Hydrographical conditions

☐ **D8** Contaminants

☐ **D9** Contaminants in seafood

☐ **D10** Marine litter

☐ **D11** Energy including underwater noise

b.2 BSAP segments

The sub-programme serves the following BSAP segments. Tick one or more relevant boxes.

☐Eutrophication

☐Hazardous substances

☒Biodiversity

☐Maritime activities

b.3 Monitoring strategy description

Monitoring strategy:

Monitoring is to be carried out to fulfill assessment requirements of MSFD Descriptor D1 and HELCOM ecological objectives that are specified through HELCOM core indicators. This includes that bycatch monitoring of PETS is carried out on fishing vessels representative for the fleet, irrespective of vessel size. Covering all métiers and fleet segments enables the management of fisheries and environment. Random sampling is desirable but implementation may in some cases be difficult due to vessel limitations for carrying observers. Sampling of a reference fleet would be another option. A high spatio-temporal resolution of fishing effort and PETS bycatch would be the basis for a robust assessment. Bycatch monitoring must be per species. Table 1D of the EU-MAP provides a list of species for which bycatch monitoring is mandatory for those Contracting Parties which are also Member States of the EU.

Available sampling methods include on-board observers or (more cost-efficient) remote electronic monitoring (REM) using CCTV cameras. With respect to mammal and bird bycatch, sampling of static gear such as set gillnets (GNS), trammel nets (GTR), set longlines (LLS), fykenets (FYK), and pots and traps (FPO) is of special relevance. All sampling needs to be related to observed effort in a meaningful metric to allow extrapolations from bycatch rate to overall bycatch numbers. However, this is only possible when all fleet segments use the same metric (e.g. net area x soak time) for recording fishing effort. BALTFISH needs to be involved to facilitate this in the Baltic Sea region. The *HELCOM Roadmap on fisheries data in order to assess incidental bycatch and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea* (HELCOM 2020) addresses these needs and proposes a way forward.

b.4 BSAP Ecological objectives

Choose only the most relevant option(s). Tick one or more boxes below.

Eutrophication	☐ Concentrations of nutrients close to natural levels
	☐ Clear water
	☐ Natural level of algal blooms
	☐ Natural distribution and occurrence of plants and animals
	☐ Natural oxygen levels
Hazardous substances	☐ Concentrations of hazardous substances close to natural levels
	☐ All fish safe to eat
	☐ Healthy wildlife
	☐ Radioactivity at pre-Chernobyl levels
Biodiversity	☐ Natural landscapes and seascapes
	☒ Thriving and balanced communities of plants and animals
	☒ Viable populations of species
Maritime activities	☐ No illegal pollution
	☐ Safe maritime traffic without accidental pollution
	☐ Efficient response capability
	☐ No introductions of alien species from ships
	☐ Minimum air pollution from ships
	☐ Zero discharges from offshore platforms

b.5 Gaps in monitoring

In relation to the GES criteria addressed, indicate when sufficient monitoring was in place or by when sufficient coverage will be in place (Coverage_GEScriteria)

☐ Adequate monitoring was in place in 2014

☐ Adequate monitoring was in place by 2018

☐ Adequate monitoring is in place by July 2020

☒ Adequate monitoring will be in place by 2024

☐ Monitoring is not being put in place for this descriptor due to a low risk

☐ Monitoring for this descriptor is not relevant

Description of the implementation gaps and plans to complete the establishment and implementation of this descriptor monitoring strategy (Gaps_Plans):

Bycatch number is calculated from bycatch rates per fishing effort and total effort. However, for both, no reliable data exists. Further, there is currently no coordination in dedicated monitoring of PETS by-catch and hence data are lacking for most species and areas. Current at-sea sampling programmes carried out under the EU Data Collection Framework (Commission Decision 2008/949, DCF) focus mainly on the status of commercially exploited fish stocks and cannot fill

this gap as currently only a very small fraction of vessels using passive gears are being monitored by Contracting Parties which are also Member states of the EU.

However, monitoring of PETS bycatch under DCF is required i. a. by the Commission Implementing Decision 2016/1251 (EU-MAP) in which Table 1 D specifies in a list for which species bycatch monitoring is required. But due to the main focus of DCF monitoring on fish stock data, PETS bycatch monitoring is currently mainly carried out opportunistically while observers monitor active gears such as trawls. In the Baltic Sea, trawl fisheries such as those using midwater otter trawls (OTM) are not the gears causing the greatest PETS bycatch in the Baltic Sea. With respect to PETS bycatch they are over-sampled whereas a number of static gear types such as gillnets (GNS), trammel nets (GTR), longlines (LLS), fyke nets (FYK) and pots and traps (FPO) are undersampled (ICES WGBYC, 2018). Moreover, vessels using passive gears are most often smaller than 15 m and thus are currently not covered at all by dedicated cetacean bycatch monitoring using on-board observers[2] required by the Technical Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 but also often carried out opportunistically under the DCF. There is also no monitoring in place which meets the requirements of Art. 12-4. Habitats Directive.

A full reporting of fishing effort is a prerequisite for calculating bycatch numbers from bycatch rates. In some EU Member States, small vessels report their effort only once a month and this, among other factors, can lead to large discrepancies between data bases such as the ICES RDBES and ICES WGBYC database. As a consequence existing effort data does not allow a robust bycatch estimate (ICES WGBYC 2019, p. 119) which is required for the assessment of the HELCOM CORE indicator *Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear* (HELCOM 2020). The reporting of fishing effort is currently not harmonized since effort is reported in various metrics across fleet segments. Effort of static gears needs to be reported in a meaningful metric such as net area x soak time for static nets or number of baited hooks for longlines.

In order to comply with monitoring requirements, reporting of fishing effort needs to be harmonized and optimized and a regionally coordinated monitoring programmes on PETS bycatch needs to be developed. The HELCOM Roadmap on fisheries data (HELCOM 2020) advises on how to fill the gaps and which actors to involve.

In Germany, there is still no agreement on a national monitoring programme

c. Monitoring programmes

c.1 Purpose of monitoring

c.1a Assessment purpose in general

The programme supports the assessment of:

Tick the relevant box.

Temporal trends	Spatial distribution	State classification
☒	☒	☒

The **programme** supports the assessment of: (MonitoringPurpose).

Note that the answer to this question will be decisive for whether to answer upcoming questions e.g.

[2] many vessels have limited space for on board observers

upcoming questions on pressures should only be answered if the monitoring is defined as supporting the assessment of pressures.

Tick the relevant boxes.

Environmental state and impacts	Pressures in the marine environment	Pressures at source (land-based, riverine, sea-based[3] and atmospheric sources)	Human activities causing the pressures	Effectiveness of measures
☐ If this is selected fill in the following questions: c.1b	☐ If this is selected fill in the following questions: c.1c, d	☒ If this is selected fill in the following questions: c.1c, d	☒ If this is selected fill in the following questions: c.1c, d	☒ If this is selected fill in the following questions: c.1c, d

Give any other monitoring purpose e.g. if the programmes include supporting parameters for other monitoring programmes

Input to status assessments of HD protected species and BD species (as pressures).

For questions 1b-1d, select when applicable for the sub-programme, the link from the Reporting on the 2020 update of Article 11 for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD Guidance Document 17, 2020) (Features) to:

- Ecosystem components (relevant for monitoring and assessment for Article 8(1a) for D1C2-C5, D3, D4, D6C3-C5, D7C2)
- Pressures and impacts in the marine environment (relevant for monitoring and assessment for Article 8(1b) for D1C1, D2, D5, D6C1-C2, D7C1, D8, D9, D10, D11)
- Pressure inputs to the marine environment (relevant for monitoring and assessment for Article 10)
- Uses and human activities (relevant for monitoring and assessment for Article 8(1c) and 13)

c.1b • Ecosystem components (Features)

Choose only the most relevant option(s). Tick one or more boxes below.

Theme	Sub-theme	Label feature
Species	☒ Birds	☒ Grazing birds
		☐ Wading birds
		☐ Surface-feeding birds
		☐ Pelagic-feeding birds
		☐ Benthic-feeding birds
	☒ Mammals	☐ Small toothed cetaceans
		☐ Deep-diving toothed cetaceans

[3] Sea-based 'Pressures at source' refers to monitoring pressures from sea-based activities where the monitoring is directly at the activity rather than at a distance from or time period after it is generated by the activity (e.g. D1 incidental by-catch when fishing, D2 ballast water discharges, D6 use of bottom fishing gear, D8 contaminant discharges and pollution events from a vessel or pipeline, D11 impulsive sound events from a vessel or platform).

		☐ Baleen whales
		☒ Seals
	☐ Reptiles	☐ Turtles
	☒ Fish	☐ Coastal fish
		☐ Pelagic shelf fish
		☐ Demersal shelf fish
		☐ Deep-sea fish
		☐ Commercially exploited fish and shellfish
	☐ Cephalopods	☐ Coastal/shelf cephalopods
		☐ Deep-sea cephalopods
Habitats	☐ Benthic habitats	☐ Benthic broad habitats
		☐ Other benthic habitats
	☐ Pelagic habitats	☐ Pelagic broad habitats
		☐ Other pelagic habitats
Ecosystems	☐ Physical and hydrological characteristics	
	☐ Chemical characteristics	
	☒ Ecosystems, including food webs	☒ Coastal ecosystems
		☐ Shelf ecosystems
		☐ Oceanic/deep-sea ecosystems

c.1c • Pressures and impacts in the marine environment (Features)

Choose only the most relevant option(s). Tick one or more boxes below.

Theme	Label: Feature
Biological	☐ Newly introduced non-indigenous species
	☐ Established non-indigenous species
	☒ Species affected by incidental by-catch
Physical and hydrological	☐ Hydrographical changes
	☐ Physical disturbance to seabed
	☐ Physical loss of the seabed
Substances, litter and energy	☐ Eutrophication
	☐ Contaminants - non UPBT substances
	☐ Contaminants - UPBT substances
	☐ Contaminants – in seafood
	☐ Adverse effects on species or habitats

	☐ Acute pollution events
	☐ Litter in the environment
	☐ Impulsive sound in water
	☐ Continuous low frequency sound

c.1d • Pressure inputs to the marine environment (Features)

Theme	Label: Feature
Biological	☐ Input or spread of non-indigenous species
	☐ Input of microbial pathogens
	☐ Input of genetically modified species and translocation of native species
	☐ Loss of, or change to, natural biological communities due to cultivation of animal or plant species
	☐ Disturbance of species (e.g. where they breed, rest and feed) due to human presence
	☒ Extraction of, or mortality/injury to, wild species (by commercial and recreational fishing and other activities)
Substances, litter and energy	☐ Input of nutrients — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition
	☐ Input of organic matter — diffuse sources and point sources
	☐ Input of other substances (e.g. synthetic substances, non-synthetic substances, radionuclides) — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition, acute events
	☐ Input of litter (solid waste matter, including micro-sized litter)
	☐ Input of anthropogenic sound (impulsive, continuous)
	☐ Input of other forms of energy (including electromagnetic fields, light and heat)
	☐ Input of water — point sources (e.g. brine)

c.1e • Uses and human activities (Features)

Choose only the most relevant option(s). Tick one or more boxes below.

Theme	Label: Feature
Physical restructuring of rivers, coastline or seabed (water management)	☐ Land claim
	☐ Canalisation and other watercourse modifications
	☐ Coastal defence and flood protection
	☐ Offshore structures (other than for oil/gas/renewables)
	☐ Restructuring of seabed morphology, including dredging and depositing of

	materials
Extraction of non-living resources	☐ Extraction of minerals (rock, metal ores, gravel, sand, shell)
	☐ Extraction of oil and gas, including infrastructure
	☐ Extraction of salt
	☐ Extraction of water
Production of energy	☐ Renewable energy generation (wind, wave and tidal power), including infrastructure
	☐ Non-renewable energy generation
	☐ Transmission of electricity and communications (cables)
Extraction of living resources	☒ Fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational)
	☐ Fish and shellfish processing
	☐ Marine plant harvesting
	☐ Hunting and collecting for other purposes
Cultivation of living resources	☐ Aquaculture — marine, including infrastructure
	☐ Aquaculture — freshwater
	☐ Agriculture
	☐ Forestry
Transport	☐ Transport infrastructure
	☐ Transport — shipping
	☐ Transport — air
	☐ Transport — land
Urban and industrial uses	☐ Urban uses
	☐ Industrial uses
	☐ Waste treatment and disposal
Tourism and leisure	☐ Tourism and leisure infrastructure
	☐ Tourism and leisure activities
Security/defence	☐ Military operations (subject to Article 2(2))
Education and research	☐ Research, survey and educational activities

c.2 Other legislation

The sub-programme links with the following other international legislation (OtherPoliciesConventions). Tick one or more relevant boxes.

☐Bathing Water Directive

☒Common Fisheries Policy and Data Collection Framework

☒Habitats Directive

☒Birds Directive

☐Nitrates Directive

☐Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive

☐Water Framework Directive

☒OSPAR Convention

☐Trilateral Wadden Sea Convention

☒Other, Specify: EU Regulation 2019/1241

c.3 Implementation of Regional Cooperation (RegionalCooperation_implementation)

Indicate the level of implementation by selecting one of the following:

☐Agreed data collection methods

☐Common monitoring strategy (spatial and temporal design of programme)

☐Coordinated data collection (delivered separately by each country)

☐Joint data collection (multinational delivery using same platform and/or algorithms)

☒ No coordination

c.4 Monitoring concepts

Monitoring concepts table[4]:

Current means of coordination	Features or elements	Parameter	Method	QA/QC	Frequency[5]	Spatial resolution (density) of sampling	Link to HELCOM core indicators[6]	Spatial scope	Monitoring started (year)	CPs monitoring[7]
	Elements (Features) (Features_enum)	Parameters (Parameter) (ParametersOther)	MonitoringMethod (Monitoring Method) MonitoringMethodOther)	(Free text)	MonitoringFrequency	(ProgrammeDescription)	(RelatedIndicator) (RelatedIndicator_name	(SpatialScope)	(TemporalScope)	(CountryCode_Enum)
Irregular research projects DCF Monitoring by RCG Baltic	By-catch of marine mammals	Composition and number of incidental/ bycatch or absence of bycatch	Observer programmes, REM using CCTV surveillance (only as research projects), interviews with fishermen	By each country	Sporadic to yearly	Partial fleet métier coverage, currently very low coverage in GNS, GTR, LLS, FYK and FPO	Number of drowned mammals and water birds in fishing gear	Coastal waters and EEZ	2004	DK, EE, DE, FI, LV, LT, PL, SE

[4] Needed codelists can be found on 2020 update of Article 11 for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD Guidance Document 17, 2020).

[5] The option "Different for each country - see MORE overview" refers to the overview carried out in 2013

[6] Give the name of HELCOM core indicators that are based on the monitoring parameter.

[7] Provide information on the Contracting Partie(s) that are monitoring the parameter.

Current means of coordination	Features or elements	Parameter	Method	QA/QC	Frequency[5]	Spatial resolution (density) of sampling	Link to HELCOM core indicators[6]	Spatial scope	Monitoring started (year)	CPs monitoring[7]
Irregular research projects: none DCF Monitoring:by RCG Baltic	By-catch of seabirds	Composition and number of incidental/ bycatch or absence of bycatch	Observer programmes, REM using CCTV surveillance (only as research projects), interviews with fishermen	By each country	Sporadic to yearly	Partial fleet métier coverage, currently very low coverage in GNS, GTR, LLS, FYK and FPO	Number of drowned mammals and water birds in fishing gear	Coastal waters to EEZ	2008	DK, EE, DE, FI, LV, LT, PL, SE

PARAMETER

Element/Parameter pair
Harbour porpoise / number of specimens by-caught per effort unit, or absence of bycatch Seals / number of specimens by-caught effort unit, or absence of bycatch Wintering seabirds / number of by-caught birds per effort unit, or absence of bycatch Currently, bycatch data is related to *days at sea* which is the most common effort metric across métiers and fleet segments. For static gear this is not very meaningful and extrapolations from observed effort to total effort is inaccurate. With an additional effort metric allowing for extrapolations to total numbers the precision of data can be increased ; most meaningful for nets would be per *area*hrs*. However, *days at sea* is the only currently used metric allowing assessments across métiers and should be maintained as additional reporting unit, also to allow comparisons with earlier data (HELCOM, 2020).

METHOD (MonitoringDetails)

Element/parameter
Currently used methods are not standardized across the region. The main methods are the use of onboard observers. In scientific projects, also REM using CCTV cameras and interviews with fishermen (both commercial and recreational) are being used. Beached bird surveys are known from Lithuania. Observed bycatch related to observed fishing effort is extrapolated from bycatch rates to total bycatch numbers using reported fishing effort. Total bycatch numbers are related to the population size to assess the population status. Some methods such as stranding surveys cannot be related to fishing effort and thus not extrapolated to total numbers. Fishing effort needs to be recorded more reliably and in a more meaningful metric (see above) than *days at sea* or *hours fished*. Reliable spatio-temporal effort data would allow for risk-mapping and the identification of bycatch hot-spots for a more robust basis of assessments and more focused fisheries management measures as described in the *HELCOM Roadmap on fisheries data* (HELCOM 2020). Examples of current monitoring: Harbour porpoises; seals; seabirds - number of specimens by-caught per day at sea: Bycaught specimens are recorded in the DCF at-sea sampling programme, but the sampling scheme is not aimed at producing reliable seabird or marine mammal bycatch data. Static nets (GNS and GTR),

which have been identified as the gear which produce most harbour porpoise and bird bycatch in the Baltic Sea (ICES WGBYC, 2018; 2019), are undersampled in the DCF at-sea sampling programme and thus no reliable data are produced. A pilot study based on interviews also suggests high seal bycatch numbers in static gear such as FYK and FPO (Vanhatalo et al., 2014).

Due to spatial and temporal variability of marine mammal and bird bycatch, sampling must be representative to fishing effort and the spatio-temporal resolution of effort data needs to be improved, by means of tracking systems for all vessels (or at least daily reporting in logbooks) including small vessels. Some research projects using observers, REM Systems, or stranded bird and marine mammal surveys are available. Fishing effort must be recorded on a monthly basis to allow for extrapolations of seasonally fluctuating bycatch rates (ICES WGBYC 2019).

Self-reporting of fishermen is also carried out by some Contracting Parties. If fishing effort is not reported by fishermen, this method does not allow extrapolating to total bycatch numbers (ICES WGBYC, 2018; 2019).

QA/QC

Element/Parameter pair
Quality assurance and quality control is currently done by the reporting EU Member States. ICES WGBYC makes some plausibility checks of those data reported to them.

FREQUENCY

Frequency

Element/Parameter pair
Some data are currently collated on a yearly basis from across the range of methods (i.e. DCF, EU-Reg. 2019/1241). However, not all Contracting Parties which are also EU Member States fulfil PETS bycatch monitoring or reporting obligations. Observer coverage is not sufficient for the purpose of indicator assessments. This is the main reason why data gaps are so big. Other data is only collected sporadically, e. g., in research projects. To improve bycatch data, observer coverage in the annual DCF at-sea sampling programmes needs to be increased in the relevant métiers and fleet segments, e.g., by using cost-efficient REM on a representative reference fleet and by intensifying monitoring in (seasonal) high risk areas (HELCOM action project). If this is not possible, HELCOM (2020) suggests to initiate recurring research projects coordinated between Contracting Parties to collect dedicated bycatch data in relevant fishing métiers. If yearly sampling is not possible, the frequency of these projects should be

harmonized with assessment periods, e.g., every 3 years.

SPATIAL SCOPE

Spatial Scope

Element/Parameter pair
The monitoring is not consistent across Contracting Parties and the metiers of fishing activity are not consistently covered either. The spatial scope of PETS bycatch assessments needs to be at population or management unit level. For example, in the case of the harbour porpoise which has two populations within the Baltic Sea, it must be possible to differentiate between areas which are inhabited by the Baltic Proper population and the Kattegat/BeltSea/Western Baltic population, respectively. Bycatch risk mapping takes variations in animal density and effort distribution as well as local bycatch hotspots into account. This is only possible by increasing the coverage in monitoring of static gear.

SPATIAL RESOLUTION (DENSITY) OF SAMPLING

Spatial resolution

Element/Parameter pair
Currently, some limited data on PETS bycatch are opportunistically collected under DCF, but it is not possible to estimate total bycatch numbers due to low coverage in passive fishing métiers and a low spatio-temporal resolution of effort data. Bycatch risk differs across regions in the Baltic Sea due to seasonality and variability in mammal or seabird abundance and fishing effort. Robust data can be acquired if sampling schemes take this into account and representative fisheries are sampled with a sufficient coverage. Only a high spatial resolution of both, bycatch and fishing effort data, ideally with exact geographical positions, would allow for robust assessments. Mobilephone app based data acquisition would aid in increasing the spatial resolution and thus the accuracy of such data. Bycatch data can be improved and cost-effectiveness of monitoring schemes increased by putting the emphasis of sampling on regions identified as high bycatch risk areas (HELCOM 2020). This is especially true for bird species overwintering in concentrations in specific habitats (such as coastal waters or shallow offshore banks). Sensitivity estimates on how the precision of bycatch estimates changes according to sample size can be used to determine what coverage would be sufficient (e.g. Fangel et al., 2015).

Provide considerations for the scale of aggregation of data for an indicator-based assessment Tick one or more relevant boxes below:

☐HELCOM assessment unit Level 4: Subbasins with coastal WFD division

☐HELCOM assessment unit Level 3: Subbasins with coastal and offshore division

☒HELCOM assessment unit Level 2: Subbasin

☒HELCOM assessment unit Level 1: Baltic Sea

☐MSFD Region

☐EU

☒Other (specify) By species groups/species/population (eg (ringed) seals bycatch a year)

☐Unknown

c.5 Monitoring and assessment requirements

Monitoring requirements:

The current monitoring carried out under DCF and 2019/1241 has a number of weaknesses and does not produce the intended data required for bird and marine mammal bycatch assessments. Static gear fisheries which are proven to produce bycatch of birds and mammals (GNS, GTR, LLS, FYK, FPO) are inadequately covered (ICES WGBYC, 2018). Instead observer coverage focuses on larger vessels although the majority in Baltic set net fisheries are small vessels. This is because fishing metiers under DCF have been selected with respect to fishery data needs rather than bird and mammal bycatch data needs. As all bycatch monitoring relates to fishing effort, the quality of effort data recording, especially from small vessels must be increased. The effort of recreational fisheries using the same gear types must also be monitored accordingly.

A monitoring of by-caught marine mammals and seabirds must be at species or population level. It would rather need an approach allowing to estimate annual (seasonal) mortality from all fishing metiérs including all vessel sizes and the recreational set net fisheries to be compared to the population dynamics of the respective species or population. Due to the high mobility of the species involved, only the implementation of a coordinated Baltic Sea wide monitoring would sufficiently take into account that fishing methods causing drowning of mammals and birds differ between sub-regions or even on a local level. Also different species may be affected in various sub-regions. Therefore, a mix of monitoring methods including the use of REM/CCTV and bycatch risk mapping to identify hot-spot areas with subsequent aggregation of results to sub-areas is more promising than relying on only one method in a monitoring scheme not specifically designed for PETS bycatch (i.e. on-board observers under DCF).

Besides the unsatisfactory data collection of the DCF and 2019/1241 regarding seabirds and marine mammal bycatch, there are currently only case studies limited in time and space available. Hitherto existing results enable to address the problem of by-catch in general, but do not allow to quantify impacts in order to propose tailored management measures such as (temporary) closures of specific fisheries. Only a systematic and dedicated monitoring at a much larger temporal and spatial scale can deliver data required for assessments.

Effort data is needed in a meaningful metric (e. g., *net area * hours soaked* or *number of baited*

hooks) on a fine spatio-temporal scale in order to relate by-catch to fishing effort. This includes also recreational fisheries using the same gears as commercial fisheries. Other parameters e.g. mesh size, net drop and other gear characteristics should be documented, too.

The total number of drowned animals compared to annual adult mortality in birds (OSPAR and HELCOM, 2019) or model approaches such as potential biological removal PBR, catch limit algorithm CLA, or (where demographic data are lacking) a certain percentage of the best population estimate will allow to assess the state of the species or population compared to GES, to identify the pressure in more detail and to propose relevant management measures. The core indicator 'Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear' has to be developed further to define reference points (for GES).

Following the principles outlined here would also help to fulfill the overdue obligation of the Habitats Directive to establish a system to monitor the incidential capture and killing of the animal species listed in its Annex IV (e.g., all cetaceans).

Adequacy for assessment of GES:

Monitoring should provide adequate data and information to enable the periodic assessment of environmental status, and distance from and progress towards GES as required by MSFD under Article 9 and Article 11.

	Yes	No
Adequate data?	☐	☒
Established methods for assessment?	☐	☒
Adequate understanding of GES?	☐	☒
Adequate capacity to perform assessments?	☐	☒

Assessment of natural variability

Not relevant

c.6 Data providers and access

From which database the data can be made available? Tick the relevant boxes below:

☐ HELCOM COMBINE ☐ HELCOM PLC ☐HELCOM MORS

☒Other: ICES RDBES and ICES WBBYC databases

If the previous answer is “Other” please fill in the next questions (In case the answer is a HELCOM database, the HELCOM Secretariat will do it)

Data type Tick the relevant boxes below:

☒Unprocessed/raw Data

☒Processed Data sets

☐Data Products

☐Modelled data

Data management: General description of data management (DataManagement, Free text)

Data collated by ICES (RDBES and WGBYC) Restricted by specif licence – currently these data area associated with the DCF so access is unclear. These data will be provided to DG MARE every year.

What method/mechanism will be used to make the data available? Tick the relevant boxes below and provide location (DataAccess):

☐ Providing URL to view data:

☐ Providing URL to download data:

☐ Provide location of data in national data centre: Click here to enter text.

☒ Provide location of data in international data centre (e.g. RSC, ICES, EEA, EMODnet):

When will the data first become available? (DataPublicationDate)

Enter the date of reporting, or even a past date if desired (MM/YYYY):

No information

How frequently are the data expected to be updated thereafter? Tick the relevant box below:

☐Every 6 years	☐Weekly
☐Every 3 years	☐Daily
☐Every 2 years	☐Hourly
☒Yearly	☐Continually
☐6-monthly	☐One-off
☐3-monthly	☐As needed
☐Monthly	☐Other (specify)
☐2-weekly	☐Unknown

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Has the data been used or is it planned to be used in HELCOM assessments? Tick the relevant box below:

☒Yes ☐No

Select if data is used in the following Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets (BSEF) Tick the relevant boxes below:

Biodiversity

☐Abundance and distribution of marenzelleria species

☐Abundance and distribution of Round goby

☐Abundance and distribution of the Zebra mussel

☐Biopollution level index

☐Observed non-indigenous and cryptogenic species in the Baltic Sea

☐Population development of Great Cormorant

☐Population development of Sandwich Tern

☐Population development of Southern Dunlin

☐Population Development of White-tailed Sea Eagle

☐Temporal development of Baltic coastal fish communities and key species

Eutrophication

☐Bacterioplankton growth

☐Chlorophyll-a concentrations, temporal variations and regional differences from satellite remote sensing

☐Cyanobacteria biomass

☐Cyanobacterial blooms in the Baltic Sea

☐Cyanobacteria bloom index

☐Impacts of invasive phytoplankton species on the Baltic Sea ecosystem in 1980-2008

☐Nitrogen atmospheric deposition to the Baltic Sea

☐Nitrogen emissions to the air in the Baltic Sea area

☐Phytoplankton biomass and species succession

☐Shifts in the Baltic Sea summer phytoplankton communities in 1992-2006

☐Spatial distribution of the winter nutrient pool

☐Unusual phytoplankton event

Hazardous substances

☐Atmospheric deposition of heavy metals on the Baltic Sea

☐Atmospheric deposition of PCDD/Fs on the Baltic Sea

☐Atmospheric emissions of heavy metals in the Baltic Sea region

☐Atmospheric emissions of PCDD/Fs in the Baltic Sea region

☐Cesium-137 in Baltic Sea sediments

☐Temporal trends in contaminants in Herring in the Baltic Sea in the period 1980-2010

☐Emissions from Baltic Sea shipping

☐Illegal discharges of oil in the Baltic Sea

☐Liquid discharges of Cs-137, Sr-90 and Co-60 into the Baltic Sea

☐Trace metal concentrations and trends in Baltic surface and deep waters

Hydrography

☐Development of Sea Surface Temperature in the Baltic Sea

☐Hydrography and Oxygen in the Deep Basins

☐Ice season

☐Total and regional runoff to the Baltic Sea

☐Water Exchange between the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, and conditions in the Deep Basins

☐Wave climate in the Baltic Sea

c.7 MSFD Criteria (GES criteria)

Choose only the most relevant option(s). Tick one or more boxes below.

Descriptor 1	☒ D1C1 – Primary: The mortality rate per species from incidental by-catch is below levels which threaten the species, such that its long- term viability is ensured. Member States shall establish the threshold values for the mortality rate from incidental by-catch per species, through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D1C2 – Primary:

	The population abundance of the species is not adversely affected due to anthropogenic pressures, such that its long-term viability is ensured. Member States shall establish threshold values for each species through regional or subregional cooperation, taking account of natural variation in population size and the mortality rates derived from D1C1, D8C4 and D10C4 and other relevant pressures. For species covered by Directive 92/43/EEC, these values shall be consistent with the Favourable Reference Population values established by the relevant Member States under Directive 92/43/EEC. ☐ D1C3 – Primary for commercially- exploited fish and cephalopods and secondary for other species: The population demographic characteristics (e.g. body size or age class structure, sex ratio, fecundity, and survival rates) of the species are indicative of a healthy population which is not adversely affected due to anthropogenic pressures. Member States shall establish threshold values for specified characteristics of each species through regional or subregional cooperation, taking account of adverse effects on their health derived from D8C2, D8C4 and other relevant pressures. ☐ D1C4 – Primary for species covered by Annexes II, IV or V to Directive 92/43/EEC and secondary for other species: The species distributional range and, where relevant, pattern is in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions. Member States shall establish threshold values for each species through regional or subregional cooperation. For species covered by Directive 92/43/EEC, these shall be consistent with the Favourable Reference Range values established by the relevant Member States under Directive 92/43/EEC. ☐ D1C5 – Primary for species covered by Annexes II, IV and V to Directive 92/43/EEC and secondary for other species: The habitat for the species has the necessary extent and condition to support the different stages in the life history of the species. ☐ D1C6 – Primary The condition of the habitat type, including its biotic and abiotic structure and its functions (e.g. its typical species composition and their relative abundance, absence of particularly sensitive or fragile species or species providing a key function, size structure of species), is not adversely affected due to anthropogenic pressures. Member States shall establish threshold values for the condition of each habitat type, ensuring compatibility with related values set under Descriptors 2, 5 and 8, through regional or subregional cooperation.
Descriptor 2	☐ D2C1 – Primary: The number of non-indigenous species which are newly introduced via human activity into the wild, per assessment period (6 years), measured from the reference year as reported for the initial asessment under Article 8(1) of Directive 2008/56/EC, is minimised and where possible reduced to zero. Member States shall establish the threshold value for the number of new introductions

	of non-indigenous species, through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D2C2 — Secondary: Abundance and spatial distribution of established non-indigenous species, particularly of invasive species, contributing significantly to adverse effects on particular species groups or broad habitat types. ☐ D2C3 — Secondary: Proportion of the species group or spatial extent of the broad habitat type which is adversely altered due to non-indigenous species, particularly invasive non-indigenous species. Member States shall establish the threshold values for the adverse alteration to species groups and broad habitat types due to non-indigenous species, through regional or subregional cooperation.
Descriptor 3	☐ D3C1 — Primary: The Fishing mortality rate of populations of commercially-exploited species is at or below levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield (MSY). Appropriate scientific bodies shall be consulted in accordance with Article 26 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013. ☐ D3C2 — Primary: The Spawning Stock Biomass of populations of commercially-exploited species are above biomass levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield. Appropriate scientific bodies shall be consulted in accordance with Article 26 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013. ☐ D3C3 — Primary: The age and size distribution of individuals in the populations of commercially-exploited species is indicative of a healthy population. This shall include a high proportion of old/large individuals and limited adverse effects of exploitation on genetic diversity. Member States shall establish threshold values through regional or subregional cooperation for each population of species in accordance with scientific advice obtained pursuant to Article 26 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.
Descriptor 4	☐ D4C1 — Primary: The diversity (species composition and their relative abundance) of the trophic guild is not adversely affected due to anthropogenic pressures. Member States shall establish threshold values through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D4C2 — Primary: The balance of total abundance between the trophic guilds is not adversely affected due to anthropogenic pressures. Member States shall establish threshold values through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D4C3 — Secondary: The size distribution of individuals across the trophic guild is not adversely affected due

	to anthropogenic pressures. Member States shall establish threshold values through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D4C3 — Secondary (to be used in support of criterion D4C2, where necessary): Productivity of the trophic guild is not adversely affected due to anthropogenic pressures. Member States shall establish threshold values through regional or subregional cooperation.
Descriptor 5	☐ D5C1 — Primary: Nutrient concentrations are not at levels that indicate adverse eutrophication effects. The threshold values are as follows: (a) in coastal waters, the values set in accordance with Directive 2000/60/EC; (b) beyond coastal waters, values consistent with those for coastal waters under Directive 2000/60/EC. Member States shall establish those values through regional or subregional cooperation ☐ D5C2 — Primary: Chlorophyll a concentrations are not at levels that indicate adverse effects of nutrient enrichment. The threshold values are as follows: (c) in coastal waters, the values set in accordance with Directive 2000/60/EC; (d) beyond coastal waters, values consistent with those for coastal waters under Directive 2000/60/EC. Member States shall establish those values through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D5C3 — Secondary: The number, spatial extent and duration of harmful algal bloom events are not at levels that indicate adverse effects of nutrient enrichment. ☐ D5C4 — Secondary: The photic limit (transparency) of the water column is not reduced, due to increases in suspended algae, to a level that indicates adverse effects of nutrient enrichment. The threshold values are as follows: (e) in coastal waters, the values set in accordance with Directive 2000/60/EC; (f) beyond coastal waters, values consistent with those for coastal waters under Directive 2000/60/EC. Member States shall establish those values through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D5C5 — Primary (may be substituted by D5C8): The concentration of dissolved oxygen is not reduced, due to nutrient enrichment, to levels that indicate adverse effects on benthic habitats (including on associated biota and mobile species) or other eutrophication effects. The threshold values are as follows:

	(g) in coastal waters, the values set in accordance with Directive 2000/60/EC; (h) beyond coastal waters, values consistent with those for coastal waters under Directive 2000/60/EC. Member States shall establish those values through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D5C6 — Secondary: The abundance of opportunistic macroalgae is not at levels that indicate adverse effects of nutrient enrichment. The threshold values are as follows: (a) in coastal waters, the values set in accordance with Directive 2000/60/EC; (b) should this criterion be relevant for waters beyond coastal waters, values consistent with those for coastal waters under Directive 2000/60/EC. Member States shall establish those values through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D5C7 — Secondary: The species composition and relative abundance or depth distribution of macrophyte communities achieve values that indicate there is no adverse effect due to nutrient enrichment including via a decrease in water transparency, as follows: (a) in coastal waters, the values set in accordance with Directive 2000/60/EC; (b) should this criterion be relevant for waters beyond coastal waters, values consistent with those for coastal waters under Directive 2000/60/EC. Member States shall establish those values through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D5C8 — Secondary: (except when used as a substitute for D5C5): The species composition and relative abundance of macrofaunal communities, achieve values that indicate that there is no adverse effect due to nutrient and organic enrichment, as follows: (a) in coastal waters, the values for benthic biological quality elements set in accordance with Directive 2000/60/EC; (b) beyond coastal waters, values consistent with those for coastal waters under Directive 2000/60/EC. Member States shall establish those values through regional or subregional cooperation.
Descriptor 6	☐ D6C1 – Primary: Spatial extent and distribution of physical loss (permanent change) of the natural seabed. ☐ D6C2 – Primary: Spatial extent and distribution of physical disturbance pressures on the seabed. ☐ D6C3 – Primary: Spatial extent of each habitat type which is adversely affected, through change in its biotic and abiotic structure and its functions (e.g. through changes in species composition and their relative abundance, absence of particularly sensitive or fragile species or species providing a key function, size structure of species), by physical disturbance.

	Member States shall establish threshold values for the adverse effects of physical disturbance, through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D6C4 – Primary: The extent of loss of the habitat type, resulting from anthropogenic pressures, does not exceed a specified proportion of the natural extent of the habitat type in the assessment area. Member States shall establish the maximum allowable extent of habitat loss as a proportion of the total natural extent of the habitat type, through cooperation at Union level, taking into account regional or subregional specificities. ☐ D6C5 – Primary: The extent of adverse effects from anthropogenic pressures on the condition of the habitat type, including alteration to its biotic and abiotic structure and its functions (e.g. its typical species composition and their relative abundance, absence of particularly sensitive or fragile species or species providing a key function, size structure of species), does not exceed a specified proportion of the natural extent of the habitat type in the assessment area. Member States shall establish threshold values for adverse effects on the condition of each habitat type, ensuring compatibility with related values set under Descriptors 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8, through cooperation at Union level, taking into account regional or subregional specificities. Member States shall establish the maximum allowable extent of those adverse effects as a proportion of the total natural extent of the habitat type, through cooperation at Union level, taking into account regional or subregional specificities.
Descriptor 7	☐ D7C1 – Secondary: Spatial extent and distribution of permanent alteration of hydrographical conditions (e.g. changes in wave action, currents, salinity, temperature) to the seabed and water column, associated in particular with physical loss(1) of the natural seabed. ☐ D7C2 – Secondary: Spatial extent of each benthic habitat type adversely affected (physical and hydrographical characteristics and associated biological communities) due to permanent alteration of hydrographical conditions.
Descriptor 8	☐ D8C1 – Primary: Within coastal and territorial waters, the concentrations of contaminants do not exceed the following threshold values: (a) for contaminants set out under point 1(a) of criteria elements, the values set in accordance with Directive 2000/60/EC; (b) when contaminants under point (a) are measured in a matrix for which no value is set under Directive 2000/60/EC, the concentration of those contaminants in that matrix established by Member States through regional or subregional cooperation; (c) for additional contaminants selected under point 1(b) of criteria elements, the concentrations for a specified matrix (water, sediment or biota) which may give

	rise to pollution effects. Member States shall establish these concentrations through regional or subregional cooperation, considering their application within and beyond coastal and territorial waters. Beyond territorial waters, the concentrations of contaminants do not exceed the following threshold values: (a) for contaminants selected under point 2(a) of criteria elements, the values as applicable within coastal and territorial waters; (b) for contaminants selected under point 2(b) of criteria elements, the concentrations for a specified matrix (water, sediment or biota) which may give rise to pollution effects. Member States shall establish these concentrations through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D8C2 – Secondary: The health of species and the condition of habitats (such as their species composition and relative abundance at locations of chronic pollution) are not adversely affected due to contaminants including cumulative and synergetic effects. Member States shall establish those adverse effects and their threshold values through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D8C3 – Primary: The spatial extent and duration of significant acute pollution events are minimised. ☐ D8C4 – Secondary (to be used when a significant acute pollution event has occurred): The adverse effects of significant acute pollution events on the health of species and on the condition of habitats (such as their species composition and relative abundance) are minimised and, where possible, eliminated.
Descriptor 9	☐ D9C1 – Primary: The level of contaminants in edible tissues (muscle, liver, roe, flesh or other soft parts, as appropriate) of seafood (including fish, crustaceans, molluscs, echinoderms, seaweed and other marine plants) caught or harvested in the wild (excluding fin-fish from mariculture) does not exceed: (a) for contaminants listed in Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006, the maximum levels laid down in that Regulation, which are the threshold values for the purposes of this Decision; (b) for additional contaminants, not listed in Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006, threshold values, which Member States shall establish through regional or subregional cooperation.

Descriptor 10	☐ D10C1 – Primary: The composition, amount and spatial distribution of litter on the coastline, in the surface layer of the water column, and on the seabed, are at levels that do not cause harm to the coastal and marine environment. Member States shall establish threshold values for these levels through cooperation at Union level, taking into account regional or subregional specificities. ☐ D10C2 — Primary: The composition, amount and spatial distribution of micro-litter on the coastline, in the surface layer of the water column, and in seabed sediment, are at levels that do not cause harm to the coastal and marine environment. Member States shall establish threshold values for these levels through cooperation at Union level, taking into account regional or subregional specificities. ☐ D10C3 — Secondary: The amount of litter and micro-litter ingested by marine animals is at a level that does not adversely affect the health of the species concerned. Member States shall establish threshold values for these levels through regional or subregional cooperation. ☐ D10C4 — Secondary: The number of individuals of each species which are adversely affected due to litter, such as by entanglement, other types of injury or mortality, or health effects. Member States shall establish threshold values for the adverse effects of litter, through regional or subregional cooperation.
Descriptor 11	☐ D11C1 – Primary: The spatial distribution, temporal extent, and levels of anthropogenic impulsive sound sources do not exceed levels that adversely affect populations of marine animals. Member States shall establish threshold values for these levels through cooperation at Union level, taking into account regional or subregional specificities. ☐ D11C2 – Primary: The spatial distribution, temporal extent and levels of anthropogenic continuous low-frequency sound do not exceed levels that adversely affect populations of marine animals. Member States shall establish threshold values for these levels through cooperation at Union level, taking into account regional or subregional specificities.

d. References

Make a list of cited references and literature for further supportive information.

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