

Workplan of the Expert Group on Migratory Fish Species (EG Fish-M), 2024-2025

No	Task [BSAP action, support to BSAP action lead by another group or other task from ToR]	Lead, responsible bodies, and interlinked activities	Next steps and comments [including the timeframe]	Output [most likely from the criteria for achievement, including the deadline]
Theme: General/recurring tasks				
Topic: Recommendations				
1	Plan for the implementation, reporting and possible revision of HELCOM Recommendations of relevance for the group.	Lead: To be determined case by case [Rec 32-33/1 and proposed new Rec possibly related to EG Fish-M] Responsible: WG Fish	The Secretariat to submit a compilation of Recommendations related to the WG Fish to initiate the discussion in 2024. When revising individual Recommendations, lead countries should be identified on a case-by-case basis. EG Fish-M to discuss the added value of Rec 32-33/1 reporting and possible need for its revision.	HELCOM Recommendations of relevance for the group are up to date, implemented and reported on a regular basis.
Theme: Spatial conservation measures				
Topic: Conservation of fish				
2	BSAP B17: With the aim to protect and restore eel population, determine which measures set out in the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), EU Eel Regulation and other relevant instruments would benefit from regional cooperation on a Baltic-wide level. Finalize by 2024 and implement by 2025 a Baltic coordinated programme of such measures. National/Joint	Lead: EG Fish-M Responsible: WG Fish Interlinked activities: BSAC meetings and activities	EG Fish-M to plan the implementation of the action taking into account developments within BALTFISH, EU, EU member states and other relevant bodies. BALTFISH has taken initiative on eel and there might be attempts for coordinated action. The BSAC has issued advice on eel on the 5 May 2022. The recommendations outline concrete proposals for improving the situation from the regional view of the Baltic Sea that could be taken on board when drafting the coordinated programme of protective measures. Actions needed in all sea basins including the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (NB: the Eel	A coordinated programme of protective measures ensuring successful eel migrations, aligned with CMS, the EU Eel Regulation and other relevant instruments is in place by 2024 (Joint supporting action) and being implemented by 2025 (National measure).

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			<p>Regulation (EU) 1100/2007 does not apply to the Black Sea and its river system according to Commission Decision 2008/292/EC). Important to take into account all anthropogenic effects. All anthropogenic mortalities, all life stages of eel and all habitats should be taken into account, not only fisheries. But do not wait until all effects are identified.</p> <p>Sweden will check the possibility for funding for a physical meeting with CMS.</p> <p>Planning and preparation coordinated by the Secretariat.</p> <p>1) collect set of measures, 2) look where there is overlap, 3) which of these measures have regional component (outcomes of 2017 FISH-M WS on eel, BALTFISH technical group meeting on sales, transport and control to be taken into account).</p> <p>Based on this, coordinated programme of measures in place.</p>	
3	<p>BSAP B18: Restore functional populations of Baltic sturgeon by 2029 implementing the HELCOM Baltic Sea Sturgeon Action Plan.</p> <p>National/Joint</p>	<p>Lead: EG Stur, supported by EG Fish-M</p> <p>Responsible: WG BioDiv</p> <p>Contributing: WG Fish</p>	<p>HELCOM should activate cooperation with BALTFISH to come up with joint recommendations for modified fishing gear and for monitoring by-catch. Finalizing the Recommendation on large river restoration.</p> <p>The next steps are included in the European Sturgeon Action Plan, in 2023 invite EG STUR</p>	<p>Consistent ex-situ conservation programme is implemented, taking advantage of the specimens already secured. (National measure)</p> <p>Adoption of the Recommendation on large river restoration.</p> <p>In situ conservation programme is implemented and enforced, preventing</p>

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		Interlinked activities: activities related to the European Sturgeon Action Plan, EU Restoration law	<p>to plan the more detailed timeline for the implementation of the action at its next meeting (in autumn 2023) and how to approach the Recommendation in case of its approval.</p> <p>For WG Fish: Finalizing the draft Recommendation on large river restoration for sturgeon. Role of EG Fish-M to help fill in concrete gaps: determine the gaps (a survey to be submitted) data and knowledge of sturgeon catches, also angling/recreational fisheries (annual data collection? (open invitation to recreational fisheries organisations) minimize the risk of bycatch (national) further work on restoration of rivers and spawning site (national) carefully consider the overlap of measures related to eel</p>	<p>further loss of the remaining specimens. (National measure)</p> <p>A strategic long-term monitoring programme for population development and habitat use, to support adaptive management, is in place in all relevant countries. (National supporting action)</p> <p>A dedicated programme on habitat protection and rehabilitation has been developed, in order to ensure that spawning and nursery sites meet the needs of the species and are accessible for the respective life cycle stages. (Joint supporting action)</p> <p>A dedicated programme on habitat protection and rehabilitation, ensuring that spawning and nursery sites meet the needs of the species and are accessible for the respective life cycle stages, has been implemented where relevant. (National measure)</p> <p>Successful, self-sustaining, re-introduced population of Baltic sturgeon is in its potential spawning rivers and in key areas of its former natural range. (National measure)</p>
Theme: Fisheries management				
Topic: Fish stock management				

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4	<p>BSAP S50: Competent authorities to jointly further develop protective measures for Baltic Sea salmon to support the development of a new regional salmon management plan, and nationally establish salmon management plans by 2023, where appropriate. These management plans should be implemented by 2025 to achieve the set targets, including but not limited to smolt production, genetic diversity and distribution throughout the river habitat. In addition, nationally ensure that granting permits for activities in and near rivers does not compromise the ability to reach set river specific fish population targets.</p> <p>National/Joint</p>	<p>Lead: EG Fish-M, EG Fish-M invites Finland to take lead</p> <p>Responsible: WG Fish</p> <p>Interlinked activities: BSAP B16, BSAC meetings and activities, BALTFISH work on regional salmon management plan</p>	<p>A meeting of Fish-M should be organized during 2023 in order to consider the need of further development of protective measures for Baltic Sea salmon.</p> <p>A lead is needed for the joint part of this action to develop protective measures.</p> <p>The ICES WG on Baltic salmon and sea trout should be invited to provide input to the work on implementing this action.</p> <p>The European Commission has requested ICES to evaluate the existing Baltic Sea main basin salmon river list, with results expected at the earliest in 2023 or 2024.</p> <p>BALTFISH has agreed to continue the work on developing a regional salmon management plan, being aware that there is currently no related proposal from the European Commission.</p> <p>The BSAC fully supports cooperation between HELCOM BALTFISH and BSAC in the work of developing a long-term management plan.</p> <p>Back-to-back session with BALTFISH, BSAC and Fish-M. Proposal extended to BALTFISH to suggest a date. Background material possibly provided by CCB, Finland to possibly contribute with material and consider leading.</p>	<p>Protective measures for Baltic Sea salmon to support the development of a new regional salmon management plan have been further developed by 2023. (Joint)</p> <p>Long-term national management plans for salmon stocks are in place by 2023 and being implemented by 2025 and at least 10 threatened salmon rivers have active conservation. (National)</p> <p>National procedures are in place to ensure that granting permits for activities in and near rivers does not compromise the ability to reach set river specific fish population targets. (National)</p>
Theme: Ecosystembased management				
Topic: Indicators and assessment				

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5	Review and contribute to the development and assessment of HELCOM indicators related to migratory fish and cumulative impacts on migratory fish	Lead: EG Fish-M, Responsible: WG Fish Interlinked activities: BSAP B35, development work done by the respective indicator lead.	The workplan for development of the migratory fish indicators will be developed at a Workshop in March 2024, dedicated to identifying and planning towards HOLAS 4. The Workplans are expected to be approved in June 2024 and work to commence in autumn 2024. The next assessment is preliminarily planned for 2027-2028.	Contribution to keeping the HELCOM indicator catalogue up to date.

National Actions

The following actions are of relevance for the remit of the Expert Group, but their implementation is under the sole competence of the respective Contracting Party. Tasks of the Expert Group is focused on supporting the work, where relevant, and tracking the level and method of implementation, sharing best practices and troubleshooting.

No	Task <i>The codes SXX, BXX and HLXX refer to actions in the 2021 BSAP (S=sea based, B=biodiversity, HL=hazardous substances and litter)</i>	Lead, responsible bodies, and interlinked activities	Next steps and comments	Output
Topic: Conservation of fish				
6	<p>BSAP B16: To strengthen native strains and to reinstate migratory fish species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -By 2023 identify rivers where management measures for migratory fish species, including eel, would have the greatest positive impact. -Starting from 2023, in line with relevant international commitments, iteratively review and prioritize effective mitigation measures in the identified rivers and/or dams, including removal of dams and migration barriers where relevant and possible, especially in small waterways. -Develop and implement habitat restoration plans of spawning sites for anadromous species in relevant rivers by 2025. <p>National</p>	<p>Lead: Contracting Parties</p> <p>Responsible: WG Fish</p> <p>Contributing: EG Fish-M, EG Stur</p>	<p>Contracting Parties to inform the WG Fish in 2023 on identified rivers, that the Contracting Party deems the most appropriate for possible further measures for the improvement of the status of the migratory fish species.</p> <p>BALTFISH has taken initiative on eel by sending a letter to the EC suggesting concrete measures.</p> <p>ICES advice on European eel (published 3.11.2022) to be considered in the context of implementing this action.</p> <p>Draft HELCOM Recommendation on managing large rivers to ensure river connectivity for fish migration in relation to eel to be considered in the context of implementing this action.</p> <p>In advance of EG Fish-M session in 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intersessional process to ask EG Fish-M members to provide national data/information on the important waterbodies (rivers and lakes) • to compile material on waterbodies that are crucial to be able to make the identification and prioritization. 	<p>By 2023 rivers, where management measures for migratory fish species, including eel, would have the greatest positive impact, have been identified.</p> <p>Mitigation measures are widely in place including removal of dams and migration barriers where relevant. Where this is not possible, mitigation measures at dams (e.g. in connection with hydropower plants), especially in small waterways are being prioritized and applied by 2023.</p> <p>By 2025 national habitat restoration plans in relevant rivers are in place, in order to strengthen native strains and to reinstate migratory fish species.</p> <p>Migration barriers have been removed or mitigated by 2024 in at least three rivers of each</p>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> guidance material for CPs to consider (incl. important factors such as migration barriers etc.) when defining where measures would be the most effective for the identification and prioritization. 	Baltic Sea coastal countries, as applicable.
Theme: Fisheries management				
Topic: Fish stock management				
7	BSAP S51: Competent authorities to improve data related to sea trout stocks and to improve populations of sea trout stocks by implementing national measures at the latest by 2025 with the view to achieve good ecological condition in sea trout streams. National	Lead: Contracting Parties Responsible: WG Fish Contributing: EG Fish-M Interlinked activities: B16	Contracting Parties that are also EU Member States to fulfil their obligation to collect more data on sea trout stocks in accordance with the new data collection EU MAP. The role of EG Fish-M to collect a list best-practices for sea trout conservation and habitat restoration.	Active management, including effective conservation measures of sea trout stocks, including habitat restoration, are in place in each Baltic Sea coastal country and being implemented.