

Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Expert Group on Migratory Fish Species (HELCOM EG Fish-M)

Approved by the HELCOM Fish Working Group via correspondence in December 2024.

Purpose

The purpose of the group is to facilitate and further develop the coordination of regional work on migratory fish species, towards the goal of a healthy and resilient Baltic Sea ecosystem in line with the goals and relevant actions of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (as updated in 2021).

Furthermore, the group functions as a platform to exchange information and experience in best practices for restoration activities and other measures related to migratory fish species.

The Expert Group mainly focuses on salmon, sea trout and eel, and other species as relevant (e.g. Baltic whitefish, sturgeon, river lamprey, smelt, sticklebacks, twaite shad, etc), taking note that sturgeon is specifically covered by the Expert Group on Sturgeon Remediation (EG Stur).

The Expert Group secures sufficient technical expertise within the HELCOM framework and ensures that information is available to support national and regional decision making and implementation processes, for the purpose of ecosystem-based management of migratory fish species in the Baltic Sea region.

The primary focus of the Expert Group is on nature conservation and habitat restoration measures and actions in freshwater as well as marine and biologically relevant areas for migratory fish species of the Baltic Sea area, while recognizing the exclusive competence on fisheries regulation under the European Union.

Duties

The duties of the Expert Group on Migratory Fish Species are to:

- I. Lead and support the **implementation of actions on migratory fish species** stemming from e.g. the Baltic Sea Action Plan, and Ministerial Declarations.
- II. Identify and develop actions for conservation that can simultaneously benefit the conservation of several migratory fish species as well as species-specific actions.
- III. Exchange information and experiences on best practices and developments on migratory fish in the Baltic Sea region, highlighting priority issues that might need addressing.
- IV. Contribute to **reporting on the implementation of HELCOM Recommendations regarding migratory fish** species, analysis of the reporting results, dissemination and utilization as appropriate to inform ecosystem-based management of human activities.
- V. Advice on the need to **update HELCOM Recommendations regarding migratory fish species**, support updating Recommendations and support implementation of the agreed actions as relevant.
- VI. Review and contribute to the development and assessment of **HELCOM indicators related to migratory fish species** and cumulative impacts on migratory fish.
- VII. Contribute to the work on **HELCOM monitoring guidelines** with the aim of having all relevant parameters for successful indicator assessments included.

VIII. Take note of relevant activities within and if appropriate cooperate with relevant actors and/or other international organizations and seek synergies with the work carried out relevant for the group.

Expected outcomes

Expected outcomes of the work conducted by the Expert Group on Migratory Fish Species are detailed in the 2-year workplan of the Expert Group, regularly updated by the Group and approved by the HELCOM Working Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (WG Fish).

Organization of work

The Expert Group on Migratory Fish Species consists of nominated delegates from the Contracting Parties depending on their expertise on certain species or issues as addressed in the workplan, and specifically salmon, sea trout, and eel and is open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures. Additional experts and representatives of organizations can be invited as guests to the meetings by the HELCOM Secretariat in consultation with the Chair.

The meetings of the Expert Group should be focused on specific species, topics or tasks to allow relevant participation or expertise.

The Expert Group on Migratory Fish Species will meet online or in person as needed and as defined in the workplan. The workplan should include a plan for the specification number of meetings and other work related to fulfilling tasks to enable resourcing of appropriate expertise. The Contracting Parties shall ensure that at least one delegate with sufficient knowledge of the focus topic attends the meetings whether physical or online.

Within HELCOM the Expert Group will, as relevant, seek synergies and cooperate with other HELCOM Groups.

The Expert Group on Migratory Fish Species will elect a Chair/topical Co-Chairs and a Vice-Chair for a 2-year mandate period. The maximum mandate period for the Expert Group Chair/Co-Chairs should be three consecutive mandate periods, consisting of 2 years per period, resulting in a maximum consecutive mandate period of 6 years.

The current Terms of Reference are to be reviewed periodically, every four years, or as the need arises.

The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the Expert Group.

The Expert Group on Migratory Fish Species reports to the HELCOM Working Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (WG Fish).

The updated (2024) HELCOM organigram is available [here](#) on the HELCOM website.