



Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Expert Group on Sturgeon Remediation (HELCOM EG Stur)

Approved by the HELCOM Working Group on Biodiversity, Protection and Restoration via correspondence in June 2025.

Purpose

The purpose of the group is to facilitate and further develop the coordination of regional work on recovery and protection of Baltic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*) 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), with the main goal of implementing the objectives outlined in the [HELCOM Action Plan for the Protection and Recovery of the Baltic Sturgeon \(BSSAP\)](#).

Furthermore, the Expert Group functions as a platform to exchange information and experiences in best practices for protection and restoration of Baltic sturgeon as well as the development of guidelines for the main implementation steps of the BSSAP. The Expert Group also aims to intensify awareness-raising on sturgeon remediation among the public, national authorities, NGOs, fishermen, and other stakeholders.

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 restoring the Baltic sturgeon.

Duties

The duties of the Expert Group on Sturgeon Remediation are to:

- I. Lead the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Sturgeon Action Plan and support implementation of actions on sturgeon restoration stemming from e.g. the Baltic Sea Action Plan, and Ministerial Declarations.
- II. Exchange information and experiences on developments on Baltic sturgeon in the Baltic Sea region, discuss and define best practices for recovery actions to be applied in the implementation of the BSAP to improve the Baltic sturgeon populations, through the adaptation and implementation of the Guidelines adopted during the 44th Standing Committee meeting of the Bern Convention. Assess the necessity and the options to restore migratory routes and river habitats while highlighting priority issues that might need addressing.
- III. Lead reporting on the implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 42-43/9 on managing large and medium rivers to ensure river connectivity for fish migration to protect sturgeon and reduce sturgeon bycatch, and contribute to analysis of the reporting results, dissemination and utilization as appropriate to inform ecosystem-based management of human activities.
- IV. Advise on the need to update HELCOM Recommendation 42-43/9 on managing large and medium rivers to ensure river connectivity for fish migration to protect sturgeon and reduce sturgeon bycatch, support the revision of the Recommendation and support implementation of the agreed actions as relevant.
- V. Review and contribute to the development and assessment of HELCOM indicators.
- VI. Contribute to the work on HELCOM monitoring guidelines with the aim of having all relevant parameters for successful indicator assessments included.

VII. 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 Sturgeon Remediation are detailed in the 2-year workplan of the Expert Group, regularly updated by the Group and approved by the HELCOM Working Group on Biodiversity, Protection and Restoration (WG BioDiv).

Organization of work

The Expert Group on Sturgeon Remediation consists of nominated delegates from the Contracting Parties 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 Expert Group on Sturgeon Remediation will meet as needed, preferably twice a year, including at least one in person meeting. 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, including the Expert Group on Migratory Fish Species (EG Fish-M).

The Expert Group on Sturgeon Remediation will elect a Chair/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 Sturgeon Remediation works under the mandate of the HELCOM Working Group on Biodiversity, Protection and Restoration (WG BioDiv) and reports both to WG BioDiv and the HELCOM Working Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (WG Fish) especially on topics related to fish migration and bycatch.

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