

# The HELCOM Roadmap on fisheries data in order to assess incidental bycatches and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea

Prepared by DE, DK, FI, PL, SE and adopted by all HELCOM CPs during HELCOM 41 on 4-5 of March 2020



Photo: Markus Vetemaa

Sven Koschinski & Kate Kaminska

**ASCOBANS JASTARNIA, 8-9th of June 2020 on-line**

ASCOBANS Jastarnia Group meeting



## HELCOM

Presentation will  
concentrate on the CORE  
indicator on bycatch of  
mammals and waterbirds

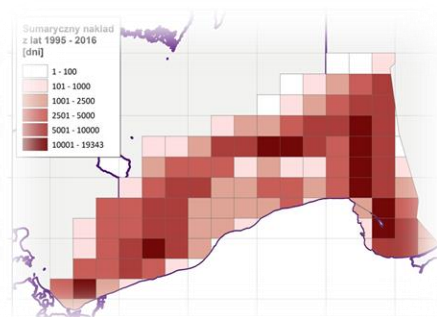
- HELCOM CORE indicator

**Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear;**

- HELCOM PRE CORE indicator

**Cumulative impact on benthic biotopes**

(the fisheries pressure on the sea bottom was of interest).



# Contents



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Helsinki Commission  
Helsinki, Finland, 4-5 March 2020

HELCOM 41-2020

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Document title	Draft Roadmap on fisheries data
Code	5-1
Category	DEC
Agenda Item	5 – Matters arising from the subsidiary bodies
Submission date	10.2.2020
Submitted by	Executive Secretary
Reference	HOD 57-2019 paragraph 4.73-4.74

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## Background

The HELCOM Expert Group on fisheries data for operationalizing indicators used for the purposes of assessment of the marine environment (EG Fishdata) has developed a draft Roadmap on collection of fisheries data in order to assess incidental bycatches and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea.

HOD 57-2019 approved the draft Roadmap, as set out in document 4-18-Rev.1 and agreed to submit it to HELCOM 41-2020 for adoption. HOD 57-2019 further agreed that initial follow up on the implementation of the Roadmap should be reported to HOD 59-2020.

## Action requested

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Roadmap on collection of fisheries data in order to assess incidental bycatches and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea, as set out in the Annex.

- **Setting the scene** (role of HELCOM FISH, CG FISHDATA and STATE&CONSERVATION);
- **Context** (HELCOM and EU requirements concerning bycatch monitoring of PETS);
- **Meeting data needs with currently available fisheries data** (what kind of data do we have on fishing effort, bycatch rate, what kind of data do we need);
- **Addressing remaining demands for improved data and data quality** (possible solutions);
- **Follow-up and Communication** (how the Roadmap should be communicated within and outside HELCOM).

Full text of the Roadmap can be found:

<https://portal.helcom.fi/meetings/HELCOM%2041-2020-679/MeetingDocuments/Outcome%20of%20HELCOM%2041-2020.pdf>

# Data needs

- data on bycatch related to monitored effort;
- regional, temporal and spatial overview of fishing effort for specific gear types (métiers), especially but not limited to gillnetters;
- data on the distribution and population size of the relevant species – **outside of the scope of the Roadmap as these are not fisheries data.**

# Analysis of available data

what sources of data collection can be utilised to get as much data as possible in the most cost-efficient way.

- Logbooks recordings, sales notes, monthly journals, coastal logbooks;
- VMS, AIS, or other sources of GPS data (Black box, etc.);
- Vessel register data (in some cases for assuming gear use);
- Monitoring under EU Regulation 812/2004, (currently EU Regulation 2019/1241);
- Monitoring under Data Collection Framework and pilot programs (scientific monitoring).

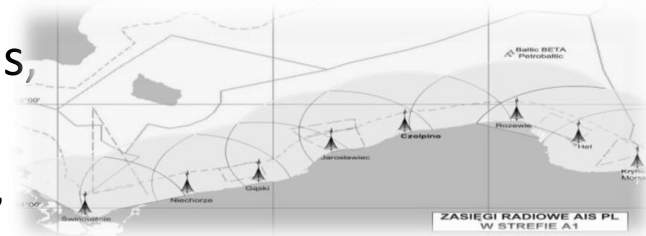
[illegible]

Photo by MIR-PIB

ICES Advice (2017) state that bycatch observations  
*“are insufficient to enable any assessment of the  
 overall impact of EU fisheries on [marine mammals]”*



# Identified data gaps

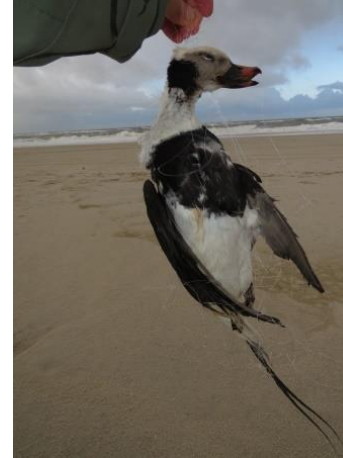
- **Bycatch data on species level**, especially for smaller vessels (below 15 m);
- **Representative (?) bycatch monitoring data** of fyke nets (FYK) trammel nets (GTR), and set gillnets (GNS), longlines (LLS), pots and traps (FPO);
- **Effort metric** (like days at sea, fishing hours) **not harmonised across different gear types** and between fleet segments (i.e. vessel sizes);
- **Spatial heterogeneity, mesh size or other gear characteristics**, in particular for static gears, as well as soak time and net length needed for precise assessment of fishing effort;
- **Precise recording rate of fishing positioning systems** (VMS, AIS or others). Small vessels (below 12 m) currently only report effort at the resolution of Baltic Squares.



Baltic squares



# Proposal for solutions – actions related to fishing effort



Photos: Rainer Borchering



- Increase precision of monitoring fisheries effort e.g. by changes in reporting intervals;
- Expand the obligation to keep a logbook which would contain the most needed information for all vessels independent of their size;
- Cover a certain % of métier and area under the DCF monitoring.

***Actors involved: fisheries authorities of HELCOM Contracting Parties, BALTFISH, MEP's, DG MARE, DG ENV, RCG Baltic***

# Proposal for solutions – actions related to bycatch data

Photo: by Polish  
fisherman

- **Initiate dedicated research projects to collect data on bycatch in relevant fishing métiers** coordinated between Contracting Parties;
- **Initiate research projects dedicated for identifying hot-spot bycatch areas;**
- **Improve recording of bycatch of marine mammals and birds by making it easier for fishermen to self-report** (electronic logbooks, incentives);
- **Enhance bycatch monitoring with onboard observers or - more cost-effective - with Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM)** (incentives and enforcement mechanism for non-compliance is needed);
- **Use of a reference fleet** to make calculations of numbers for total bycatch;
- **Identify possible national and international funds** for bycatch data collection.

***Actors involved: fisheries and environmental authorities of HELCOM Contracting Parties, funding agencies (EMFF and co-funding), DG MARE, DG ENV, RCG Baltic.***





# Proposal for solutions – increase precision of tracking

- The current revision of the EU Control Regulation provides an opportunity to ensure better monitoring and control of fishing operations, including implementation of a tracking system for vessels below 12 m;
- With respect to locating effort using passive gears such as gillnets, the use of smartphone apps by fishermen would provide the opportunity to enhance data quality and quantity. This is especially the case for small vessels.

***Actors involved: fisheries authorities of HELCOM Contracting Parties, BALTFISH, MEPs, DG MARE, DG ENV.***

# Things to do for RCG Baltic

Regional Coordination Groups will need to adapt at-sea sampling designs to include data on frequency of protected species bycatch events in all relevant fisheries by:

- **Increasing the number of vessels monitored in the following métiers which are currently undersampled:** fyke nets (FYK), trammel nets (GTR), set gillnets (GNS), set longlines (LLS), pots and traps (FPO);
- **Collecting data in different units of fishing effort** (days at sea, but also e.g. net length and soak time);
- **Except for observers onboard, using remote electronic monitoring (REM) in a certain fraction of the fleet**, especially on vessels <15 m for the entire Baltic Sea, or by establishing reference fleets.

# Things to do for BALTFISH

planned to be presented during the BALTFISH Forum  
8-9 of June 2020, by Markus Helavouri – HELCOM  
Secretariat



BALTFISH  
meeting, Poland

## **Co-ordinated efforts should be made by BALTFISH:**

- and the RCG Baltic to increase the number of vessels monitored in the following métiers which are currently undersampled: fyke nets (FYK), trammel nets (GTR), set gillnets (GNS), set longlines (LLS), pots and traps (FPO);
- to increase use of vessel tracking systems;
- to increase use of logbooks on smaller vessels (<10 m), preferably electronic logbooks;
- to harmonise reported units of fishing effort across different métiers and all size classes of vessels;
- to increase the EMFF and national financial contribution to bycatch monitoring of PETS to a certain level (BALTFISH EMFF working group).

Thank you for  
your attention

