

Workplan of the Expert Group on Migratory Fish Species (EG Fish-M), 2025-2026

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]	Resource requirements	Output [most likely from the criteria for achievement, including the deadline]
Salmon					
Theme: General/recurring tasks					
Topic: Recommendations					
1	Revision of recommendation 19/2 and Recommendation 32-33/1 on salmon	Lead: Finland and Sweden under EG Fish-M Responsible: WG Fish	Draft revised Recommendation on salmon under development in 2024 by a drafting group led by Sweden and Finland. Draft Recommendation to be submitted for review to IC WG FISH 4-2024, work expected to continue through 2025.	at least one meeting/session at least one more correspondence round within 2025 (input by experts on the Rec and its annexes)	Revised Recommendation on salmon approved by HOD by end of 2025
Theme: Fisheries management					
Topic: Fish stock management					
2	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	Lead: EG Fish-M, EG Fish-M invites Finland to take lead Responsible: WG Fish Interlinked activities: BSAP B16, BSAC meetings and activities, BALTFISH work on regional salmon management plan	A meeting of Fish-M should be organized in order to consider the need for further development of protective measures for Baltic Sea salmon. A lead is needed for the joint part of this action to develop protective measures. The ICES WG on Baltic salmon and sea trout should be invited to provide		Protective measures for Baltic Sea salmon to support the development of a new regional salmon management plan have been further developed by 2023. (Joint) 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) National procedures are in place to ensure that granting permits for activities in and near

	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. National/Joint		input to the work on implementing this action. 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. 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. The BSAC fully supports cooperation between HELCOM BALTFISH and BSAC in the work of developing a long-term management plan. 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.		rivers does not compromise the ability to reach set river specific fish population targets. (National)
Theme: Ecosystembased management					
Topic: Indicators and assessment					
3	Proposal on the development of a new indicator on Salmon regarding sea mortality	Lead: Responsible: EG Fish-M Contributing: WG BioDiv, WG Fish	Initiate work with scoping in early 2025 and aim to complete work by end of 2026.	No major funding is needed, though resources to secure a lead and their time is needed. Data available through ICES assessment.	Indicator on salmon sea mortality finalized

Sea trout					
Theme: General/recurring tasks					
Topic: Recommendations					
4	Revision of Recommendation 32-33/1 on sea trout	Lead: Finland and Sweden under EG Fish-M Responsible: WG Fish	Start the revision of Recommendation 32-33/1 for sea trout related sections with the view to prepare an updated Recommendation specifically on sea trout.	at least two meetings/sessions at least two correspondence rounds within 2025 (input by experts on the Rec and its annexes)	Revised Recommendation on sea trout approved by HOD by end of 2025
Theme: Ecosystembased management					
Topic: Indicators and assessment					
5	Consideration on the need for a better spatial understanding of sea trout distribution	Responsible: EG Fish-M Interlinked activities: ICES WGBAST experts	Initiate work in early 2025 with scoping and complete work by mid-2026.	Funding through: EU DCF, WFD monitoring WG BAST to be consulted	
European eel					
Theme: Spatial conservation measures					
Topic: Conservation of fish					
6	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.	Lead: EG Fish-M Responsible: WG Fish Interlinked activities: BSAC meetings and activities, ICES WGEEL	Concept note for the project “ASCENT – Towards pan-Baltic Eel management” developed under the lead of Germany. The concept note was recommended by WG Fish and support for the project was received from the BALTFISH Forum meeting in June 2024. Implementation of the BSAP action is to be partly covered by the planned project. The expected outcomes of the planned project are:	Guidance needed from WG Fish and depending on funding	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).

	Finalize by 2024 and implement by 2025 a Baltic coordinated programme of such measures. National/Joint		1. Development of regional models for freshwater regions around the Baltic Sea, describing the yellow eel population and assessing silver eel escapement from inland habitats while accounting for spatial differences. 2. Development of a silver eel model for the marine area, assessing the importance of different regions and marine waters for silver eel production and considering mortalities during spawning migration in the Baltic Sea.		
Theme: Ecosystembased management					
Topic: Indicators and assessment					
7	Consideration of the need for an indicator on eel	Responsible: EG Fish-M Interlinked activities: OSPAR, ICES WGEEL. Links to the ASCENT project - Towards pan-Baltic Eel Management (currently a concept note) if funded. A suitable consortium would ideally also including members of EG Coastal fish.	Focused scoping (possible joint discussion with relevant institutions) in late 2024 followed by focused work from mid-2025 till end of 2026.	A project would be an optimal solution to develop this evaluation. A suitable consortium, including members of EG Coastal fish would be relevant to develop.	

Sturgeon					
Theme: Spatial conservation measures					
Topic: Conservation of fish					
8	BSAP B18: Restore functional populations of Baltic sturgeon by 2029 implementing the HELCOM Baltic Sea Sturgeon Action Plan. National/Joint	Lead: EG Stur, supported by EG Fish-M Responsible: WG BioDiv Contributing: WG Fish Interlinked activities: activities related to the European Sturgeon Action Plan, EU Restoration law	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. 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		Consistent ex-situ conservation programme is implemented, taking advantage of the specimens already secured. (National measure) Adoption of the Recommendation on large river restoration. In situ conservation programme is implemented and enforced, preventing further loss of the remaining specimens. (National measure) 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) 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) 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) 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)
Migratory fish species					
Theme: Ecosystembased management					
Topic: Indicators and assessment					
9	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
Migratory fish species				
Theme: Spatial conservation measures				
Topic: Conservation of fish				
10	BSAP B16: To strengthen native strains and to reinstate migratory fish species: -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. National	Lead: Contracting Parties Responsible: WG Fish Contributing: EG Fish-M, EG Stur	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. BALTFISH has taken initiative on eel by sending a letter to the EC suggesting concrete measures. ICES advice on European eel (published 3.11.2022) to be considered in the context of implementing this action. 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. In advance of EG Fish-M session in 2024: • intersessional process to ask EG Fish-M members to provide national	By 2023 rivers, where management measures for migratory fish species, including eel, would have the greatest positive impact, have been identified. 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. By 2025 national habitat restoration plans in relevant rivers are in place, in order to strengthen native strains and to reinstate migratory fish species. Migration barriers have been removed or mitigated by 2024 in at

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			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. - 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.	least three rivers of each Baltic Sea coastal countries, as applicable.
Sea trout				
Theme: Fisheries management				
Topic: Fish stock management				
11	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 of 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.