



WWF

REPORT

2016

The background of the cover is an underwater photograph showing a dense meadow of green seagrass growing from a sandy seabed. The water is clear and blue, with sunlight filtering through the plants.

Scorecard 2016

Marine Protected Areas in the Baltic Sea



Photo: Mats Westerborn / WWF Finland

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Healthy, resilient and productive ecosystems are vital both to marine flora and wildlife as well as to those whose livelihoods depend on a Sustainable Blue Economy. A healthy sea will generate dramatically more jobs and income than an unhealthy one.

Integrated Ocean Management (IOM) provides a strategic, ecosystem-based approach to the management of the oceans and seas which recognises the interconnected nature of living systems and human

activity. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are widely considered to be an essential tool for recovering, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, maintaining productivity and increasing the resilience of ecosystems in the face of a changing climate, and for securing these benefits for current and future generations.

Thus MPAs can form the bedrock for a truly Sustainable Blue Economy (see Box 1) for the Baltic Sea – and thereby be the very basis for any future sustainable ‘Blue Growth’ in the region. IOM recognises that protection of biodiversity cannot be delivered via a network of MPAs in isolation of the wider management of the oceans and seas and that networks of MPAs, nested within systems of wider marine planning can help to deliver protection of marine biodiversity as well as a Sustainable Blue Economy. Recent studies show that the benefits of expanding no-take MPAs significantly outweighs the costs¹, indicating that expansion of MPA networks is economically viable.

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Photo: Mats Westerboom / WWF Finland

BOX 1: WWF PRINCIPLES FOR A SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY

In summary form

A sustainable blue economy ...

- **Provides social and economic benefits** for current and future generations.
- **Restores, protects and maintains** diverse, productive and resilient marine ecosystems.
- **Is based** on clean technologies, renewable energy and circular material flows.

A Sustainable Blue Economy is governed by public and private processes that are ...

- **Inclusive**, with active and effective stakeholder participation.
- **Accountable and transparent**, so that stakeholders are well-informed and can exert their influence.
- **Holistic, cross-sectorial, and long-term**, with decisions based on integrating economic, social and environmental values in ways that provide multiple benefits to all, now and in the future.
- **Well-informed, precautionary, and adaptive**, based on sound science and taking into account all relevant risks.
- **Innovative and proactive**, meeting our economic needs in ways that preserve nature for future generations.

To achieve a Sustainable Blue Economy, we need:

- **Ambitious goals, targets and follow-up.** Aim high, and make sure we are heading in the right direction.
- **Level economic and legal playing field.** Taxes, fees, regulations, and private agreements must align with the goals.
- **Ecosystem-based marine spatial planning**, and other processes to ensure human needs and nature's needs are both met.
- **Sustainability standards and practices.** These must be widely adopted to steer business toward sustainability.
- **Cooperation among all key actors.** We need to reach across borders, sectors, and disciplines to make this a reality.

The Principles were developed through a global consultation process involving WWF and external experts. They are intended for use by all sectors: government, business, civil society and education.



OUR OWN FUTURES

AND THE FUTURE OF THE BALTIC SEA ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED

A direct consequence is that there is a growing array of policies, guidelines and resources promoting increased designation, investment and improved management of MPAs. But, is this increased awareness, and interest in the 'Blue Growth' potential of the region, being translated into increased action and protection by Baltic Sea countries? Are countries investing in MPAs, the capital that is needed to secure a healthy Baltic Sea for the future, in a way that is appropriate, sufficient and effective? Are MPAs properly integrated in the development of an ecosystem approach in the Baltic which should be the cornerstone of a Sustainable Blue Economy?

Measuring Progress

This WWF 'MPA Scorecard' continues WWF's tradition of evaluating the region's progress towards honouring their commitments – and in this case examines the progress made by the Baltic Sea countries in the development of an ecologically coherent network of well-managed MPAs in the Baltic Sea. The Scorecard is based on an analysis of delivery of international and regional commitments to protection of biodiversity and the existing network of HELCOM MPAs, and consists of four assessments:

FOUR ASSESSMENTS

- Meeting environmental protection commitments (p12)
- MPA designation (p14)
- MPA compliance (p17)
- MPA management effectiveness (p19)

¹ Brander L, Baulcombe C, van der Lelij, J A C, Eppink F, McVittie A, Nijsten L and van Beukering P, 2015. The benefits to people of expanding Marine Protected Areas. VU University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

² http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?247477/Principles-for-a-Sustainable-Blue-Economy



Photo: Metsähallitus

“Development of MPA networks must be integrated with ecosystem-based marine spatial planning processes.”

The assessments are based on actions taken by the nine Baltic Sea countries (effort indicators), rather than assessments of how well the marine environment is showing the results of the protection and management put in place (result indicators). Finally, the MPA Scorecard draws Conclusions (p23) from the assessments, and proposes a range of priority actions that need to be undertaken to maintain and enhance progress towards an ecologically coherent network of MPAs across the Baltic Sea (p26).

The protection and resilience of biodiversity cannot be delivered via a network of MPAs in isolation of the wider integrated management of the oceans and seas and additional measures to protect coastal and marine biodiversity such as species or habitat recovery programmes. Integrated management should provide a strategic, ecosystem-based approach to the management of the sea, while networks of MPAs should be nested within systems of wider marine planning, and will also be dependent on the health of the wider marine ecosystem.

Results

While it should be acknowledged that the Baltic countries have made some progress, such as achieving the Convention on Biological Diversity target of 10% of the Baltic Sea designated by 2010, the overall results demonstrate that all countries in the region are failing to adequately provide the protection needed to sustain and restore productivity and resilience of the natural capital in the Baltic Sea.

Achieving full marks for each of the MPA Scorecard's four assessments would simply reflect the minimum effort that has been agreed politically and should be delivered by each Baltic Sea country. So, only a score of 75% or higher can be considered to demonstrate that good progress is being made in implementing the agreements and establishing well-managed networks of MPAs; any score below 75% indicates that insufficient progress has been achieved.



Photo: Ola Jernersten / WWF

Achieving full marks for each of the MPA Scorecard's four assessments would simply reflect the minimum effort that has been agreed politically and should be delivered by each Baltic Sea country."

The overall percentage score for the whole Baltic Sea MPA Scorecard assessment at 62% (see Table 1) indicates that much greater effort is required.

Despite delivering the 10% global target for MPA designation across the Baltic Sea, the performance on MPA designation at a country level is disappointing. Only three countries, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, have designated new HELCOM MPAs in the six years since the 2010 HELCOM study which concluded that the network of sites in the Baltic were not ecologically coherent and that further sites should be designated. Three countries, Finland, Russia and Sweden, have designated an insufficient amount of their total marine area (less than 10%) and with the exception of Germany, all the Baltic countries have failed to designate 10% of their EEZs as committed to under the CBD Aichi Target.

Individually Denmark ranks at the top end of the scale followed by Sweden then Finland and Germany, though no country received a percentage score of more than 75%. Denmark scored maximum points for management effectiveness and Germany for the designation of MPAs, and all four countries scored well for the delivery of environmental protection commitments. However, Denmark, Finland and Sweden's MPA designation scores and Germany's management effectiveness score were disappointing. Russia, Estonia and Latvia come in the middle of the scoring range, with all three countries receiving disappointingly low scores for MPA designation, and Estonia and Latvia also have low scores for management effectiveness. Lithuania and Poland received mid to low scores across all four assessments, however it should be acknowledged that Poland and Lithuania have made good progress in designating a high percentage of the territorial waters (55% and 44% respectively) (see Table 3a).

Table 1: Overview of MPA Scorecard Results

| Countries | Meeting environmental protection commitments Max = 14 Max Russia = 9 | Designation of MPAs Max = 5 | Compliance with regional commitments Max = 26 Max Russia = 6 | Management effectiveness Max = 14 | Total Score* Max = 59 | Total Score % |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| DENMARK | 12 | 3 | 15 | 14 | 44 | 74.6 |
| SWEDEN | 12 | 1 | 19 | 9 | 41 | 69.5 |
| FINLAND | 13 | 1 | 17 | 9 | 40 | 67.8 |
| GERMANY | 12 | 5 | 18 | 5 | 40 | 67.8 |
| RUSSIA* | 6 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 22 | 64.7 |
| ESTONIA | 10 | 2 | 21 | 4 | 37 | 62.7 |
| LATVIA | 8 | 2 | 20.5 | 4 | 34.5 | 58.5 |
| LITHUANIA | 6 | 1 | 16.5 | 4 | 27.5 | 46.6 |
| POLAND | 11 | 3 | 11.5 | 2 | 27.5 | 46.6 |
| BALTIC SEA SCORE | 90 (74%) | 18 (40%) | 140.5 (66%) | 65 (52%) | 313.5** | 62 |

Note: *The maximum possible score for eight of the nine Baltic Sea countries is 59, but for Russia the maximum is only 34 as the European Union (EU) regulations assessments do not apply. ** The maximum possible score for the whole Baltic Sea region is 506 (8 x 59 + 34).

PRIORITY ACTIONS

WWF believes that there is much that can be done to rectify the disappointing results of the assessments and to deliver an ecologically coherent network of well-managed MPAs in the Baltic Sea.

The following actions are identified as priorities. There is no hierarchy and the relevance of each action to individual Baltic Sea countries will vary according to the level of progress each has achieved in developing MPA networks. However, only through the delivery of all the actions will an effective ecologically coherent network of well-managed MPAs throughout the whole Baltic Sea be delivered.

“Achieving ‘good environmental status’, must be a priority for Baltic Sea countries.”

WWF URGES BALTIC SEA COUNTRIES TO:

- **Deliver the World Conservation Congress Hawai’i Motion** that 30% of each marine habitat should be included in systems of MPAs by 2030³, particularly given that recent research shows that expanding the coverage of MPAs to 30% globally is expected to generate major economic benefits that significantly outweigh the costs.
- **Designate further sites** to meet the Natura 2000 objectives under the Habitats Directive sufficiency criteria and to achieve as an absolute minimum the Aichi Target of 10% of area protected in all territorial waters and Baltic sub-basins, and in exclusive economic zones where scientifically justified by 2020.
- **Develop effective management plans** by 2020 for all MPAs in the Baltic Sea, including the one third of HELCOM MPAs currently without plans, and implement management measures for all MPAs, including monitoring of features and sites.
- **Introduce and enforce management measures** which facilitate conditional access, including restrictions on fishing activity, a minimum of 50% of the MPA network area as no take zones, and restrictions on other marine activities.
- **Improve the knowledge base**, along with exchange of experience and practise, to facilitate designation of important coastal and marine sites and improve the management of the MPA network and the wider Baltic marine environment.
- **Provide comprehensive reporting** on all parameters to the HELCOM MPA database, which in turn would facilitate evaluation of individual countries contribution to the ecological coherence of the Baltic Sea MPA network, including assessment of representativity, replication, adequacy, and connectivity.
- **Share responsibility for transboundary sites** and for the development of transboundary management plans or management measures (in line with HELCOM Recommendation 35/1).
- **Secure comprehensive implementation** of environmental protection commitments and measures addressing the wider integrated management of the seas, such as achieving “good environmental status”, must be a priority for Baltic Sea countries, and the development of MPA networks must be integrated with ecosystem-based marine spatial planning processes.
- **Address enforcement** both of international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, HELCOM Recommendation 35/1, and European Union Directives⁴, as well as enforcement of and compliance with MPA management plans and management measures necessary for individual MPAs and the Baltic Sea MPA network to be truly effective.

³ <https://portals.iucn.org/congress/motion/053>

⁴ In particular, the EU Habitats Directive, EU Birds Directive, EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive.



Photo: Mats Westerborn / WWF Finland

BALTIC SEA MANAGEMENT AND ECOLOGICALLY COHERENT NETWORKS OF MPAs

The Baltic Sea is important for its productivity, diversity and natural beauty, but it also provides the basis for a large and growing economy.

“Against a backdrop of increasing demand, multiple maritime activities, and an ever more crowded marine environment, it is even more critical to ensure the protection of marine biodiversity.”

The use of the Baltic Sea is increasing⁵ with tourism, shipping and offshore wind energy seen as examples of fast growing sectors. A healthy sea will generate dramatically more jobs and income than an unhealthy one. The difference between a healthy and an unhealthy sea as reflected in the best available economic projections is huge - over half a million jobs and 32 billion euros in annual value added by 2030⁶. Healthy, resilient and productive ecosystems are vital to marine flora and wildlife as well as to those whose livelihoods depend on a Sustainable Blue Economy⁷.

Against a backdrop of increasing demand, multiple maritime activities, and an ever more crowded marine environment, it is even more critical to ensure the protection of marine biodiversity. The protection and resilience of marine biodiversity cannot be delivered solely via a network of MPAs in isolation of a wider integrated management of the sea. There is a need to apply Integrated Ocean Management IOM which provides a more strategic, ecosystem-based approach to the management of the sea recognising the interconnected nature of living systems and human activity. It promotes cross-sectoral governance, based on sound science that nests policies, regulations and practice in a consistent and mutually re-enforcing planning and decision-making system. It is an adaptive and participative management system. IOM recognises that networks of MPAs should be nested within systems of wider marine planning known as maritime or marine spatial planning (MSP) developed as a key tool for ocean management which will help deliver a Sustainable Blue Economy as well as ensure the protection of marine biodiversity.

BOX 2: DEFINITIONS

Integrated Ocean Management (IOM) – a strategic and forward-looking framework to achieve both sustainable development and nature conservation⁸.

Maritime (or Marine) Spatial Planning (MSP) – the analysis and allocation of human uses or non-uses (e.g. MPAs) in time and space within a specified marine area or ecosystem.

Marine Protected Area (MPA) – an area protected to conserve a feature (habitat, species, ecosystem) or features of conservation interest.

There are a number of different designations that qualify as MPAs in the Baltic region. HELCOM MPAs, designated under the HELCOM Recommendation 35/1⁹, are the only designation that is specific to the Baltic Sea and aims to protect Baltic biodiversity. They do not however convey legal protection and are dependent on national protection measures. EU marine Natura 2000 sites are designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives¹⁰ to protect specified habitats and wildlife of European importance, as identified in the Directives. Both HELCOM MPAs and Natura 2000 sites are to be developed as networks and there is considerable but not complete overlap between sites identified as HELCOM MPAs (48,305 km²) and marine Natura 2000 sites (45,688 km²), with 37% of marine Natura 2000 sites not designated as HELCOM MPAs¹¹. As Russia is not an EU Member it is only expected to meet commitments under HELCOM Recommendations.



Photo: Mats Westerborn / WWF Finland

⁵ WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme, 2010. Future Trends in the Baltic Sea.

⁶ The Boston Consulting Group, 2013. Turning Adversity Into Opportunity – A Business Plan For The Baltic Sea.

⁷ There is no widely accepted definition of “Blue Economy” but WWF has developed a set of principles for a Sustainable Blue

Economy, see http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?247858/Principles-for-a-Sustainable-Blue-Economy. http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?254101/All-Hands-on-Deck-Setting-Course-to-a-Sustainable-Blue-Economy-in-the-Baltic-Sea-Region

⁸ WWF, 2009. Baltic Sea Scorecard 2009

⁹ HELCOM Recommendation 35/1

System of Coastal and Marine Baltic Sea Protected Areas (HELCOM MPAs) supersedes HELCOM Recommendation 15/5. <http://helcom.fi/Recommendations/Rec%2035-1.pdf>

¹⁰ Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and Council Directive

2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended).

¹¹ HELCOM 2016 Ecological coherence assessment of the marine protected areas network in the Baltic Sea. Baltic Sea Environmental Proceedings No 148. Helsinki. In preparation.



Photo: Mats Westerborn / WWF Finland

MPA designations in the Baltic Sea

Other MPA designations in the Baltic Sea include internationally important wetland or Ramsar sites under the Ramsar Convention, biosphere reserves under UNESCO's Man and Biosphere programme, along with national parks and nature reserves protected under national legislation. While it is recognised that these designations all make an important contribution to the protection of biodiversity in the Baltic Sea, the assessment presented in this MPA Scorecard focuses primarily on HELCOM MPAs since these sites can be designated across the whole Baltic Sea and information on both designation and management is held centrally and treated equally. Delivery of the EU Habitats Directive's marine Natura 2000 network is also considered however it is not applicable in Russian waters. Only HELCOM MPAs and marine Natura 2000 sites have been designated with the intention of creating ecologically coherent networks of MPAs in the marine environment, and the Natura 2000 network is restricted to a relatively small range of marine habitats and marine species.

The vision for regional and international bodies concerned with the management of the marine environment and the protection of marine biodiversity is to create ecologically coherent networks of MPAs."

The vision for regional and international bodies concerned with the management of the marine environment and the protection of marine biodiversity, including HELCOM, the EU and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), is to create ecologically coherent networks of MPAs (see Box 3).

BOX 3: ECOLOGICAL COHERENCE

An ecologically coherent network of MPAs is a network that:

- interacts with and supports the wider environment,
- maintains the processes, functions and structures of the protected features (habitats and wildlife) across their natural range,
- functions synergistically as a whole, such that the individual protected sites benefit from each other, and
- is designed to be resilient to changing conditions.

The four criteria of adequacy, representativity, replication of features and connectivity must be met to fulfil the requirements of this definition¹².

Representativity – requires a MPA network to protect the full range of marine biodiversity found in the region.

Replication – is the protection of the same feature across multiple sites within the MPA network.

Adequacy – refers to the overall size of a MPA network and the proportion (size, shape, location) of each site protected within the MPA network.

Connectivity – measures whether a group of MPAs function as a network and aims to support different life stages of populations in different parts of a species' range.

¹² See: OSPAR Commission, 2006. Guidance on developing an ecologically coherent network of OSPAR Marine Protected Areas (Reference Number 2006-3), <http://balance-eu.org/xpdf/balance-interim-report-no-25.pdf>, HELCOM 2010. Towards an ecologically coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas: implementation report on the status and ecological coherence of the HELCOM BSPA network. Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 124B. Helsinki.

From words to deeds

HELCOM has just released a first attempt at a quantitative integrated approach to assessing the ecological coherence of the network of HELCOM MPAs in the Baltic Sea. The study concludes “that it is highly unlikely that the network of HELCOM MPAs is ecologically coherent”¹³ (see Box 4). This report follows earlier studies, including one published in 2010, which investigated the status and ecological coherence of the Coastal and marine Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPAs) (now known as HELCOM MPAs) network. The 2010 study concluded that neither the HELCOM MPA network alone nor HELCOM MPAs and the EU’s Natura 2000 network combined could be considered to be ecologically coherent and called for further identification of sites to be protected and for management plans and / or measures to be applied for existing sites¹⁴.

Recent studies indicate that it is highly unlikely that the 10% target will generate the benefits aspired to by the CBD, and conclude that there is strong evidence that 30% or more of the sea should be included in highly protected MPAs.”

Recent studies indicate that it is highly unlikely that the 10% target will generate the benefits aspired to by the CBD, and conclude that there is strong evidence that 30% or more of the sea should be included in highly protected MPAs¹⁵. One study undertaking valuations of marine and coastal environments at regional and global scales¹⁶, assessed the net benefits of protecting different percentages of marine habitats, up to a maximum of 30% of the total sea area. Scenarios were developed for expanding MPAs globally and models created based on the results. The study concluded that the economic rate of return in creating and expanding networks of MPAs varies from three times to as high as 20 times the investments, depending on the scenario. Benefits of expanding no-take MPAs – the strictest form of MPAs (no-take zones (NTZs)) significantly outweighed their costs in all scenarios, indicating that MPA expansion is advisable even from a purely economic viewpoint. MPAs are an essential tool for recovering, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, productivity and resilience, and for securing these benefits for current and future generations¹⁷.

BOX 4: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE HELCOM STUDY INTO THE ECOLOGICAL COHERENCE OF THE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS NETWORK IN THE BALTIC SEA

The HELCOM 2016 study undertakes an assessment of the ecological coherence of the network of MPAs across the whole Baltic Sea and does not consider the performance of individual countries. It assesses representivity, replication, adequacy and connectivity on the basis of HELCOM MPAs and also on the basis of the combined HELCOM MPAs and Natura 2000 network which is 8,127km² larger than the HELCOM MPA network alone. The study concludes that only the replication criteria meets its target fully, and as a consequence the Baltic Sea MPA network is not yet ecologically coherent.

With respect to representivity, the targets were met in part since the total area protected exceeds the 10% target, but the HELCOM study concluded that further designations remain necessary in the open sea and in six of the sub-regional basins. The replication targets were all met, with at least three replicates included in the network for each of the assessed features.

The targets for adequacy, were assessed based on size, but only 68% met the recommended guidance for size of HELCOM MPAs. So the targets for adequacy were not achieved. The connectivity targets were partly met, with species-specific connectivity met for all but one of the assessed species, but theoretical connectivity inadequate for all categories.

The combined HELCOM MPA and Natura 2000 network of sites improved the assessment findings with respect to representivity, replication and connectivity.



¹³ HELCOM 2016.

¹⁴ HELCOM, 2010.

¹⁵ O’Leary B C, Winther-Janson M, Bainbridge J M, Aitken J, Hawkins J P, & Roberts C M, 2016. Effective coverage targets for ocean protection. Conservation Letters. Doi: 10.1111/conl.12247

¹⁶ Brander L, Baulcombe C, van der Lelij, J A C, Eppink F, McVittie A, Nijsten L and van Beukering P, 2015. The benefits to people of expanding Marine Protected Areas. VU University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

¹⁷ http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?247660/Increased-protection-would-provide-big-boost-to-the-ocean-economy



Photo: Gemma Sellgren

THE BALTIC SEA MPA NETWORK IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The first HELCOM MPAs were designated just over two decades ago in 1994. Ten years later, 3.9% of the Baltic Sea had been designated for protection as HELCOM MPAs, and in the last 12 years significant progress has now been made with the total area designated increasing to 11.6% (48,305km²) in 2016.

By 2016 the HELCOM Recommendation for 10% of each Baltic Sea sub-region to be designated has only been reached in 11 of 17 sub-basins despite the HELCOM's 2010 assessment concluding that the network could not be considered to be ecological coherent.”

This means that the Baltic Sea is one of the few regions of the world to have reached the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) target of 10% of coastal and marine areas being protected at the regional level. However, by 2016 the HELCOM Recommendation for 10% of each Baltic Sea sub-region to be designated has only been reached in 11 of 17 sub-basins despite the HELCOM's 2010 assessment concluding that the network could not be considered to be ecological coherent. The 10% coverage per sub-basin has not been reached in the Eastern Gotland Basin, the Western Gotland Basin, Northern Baltic Proper, Åland Sea, Bothnian Sea and Bothnian Bay.

A comparison of progress in establishing MPA networks across European Seas (based on the Natura 2000 network)¹⁸, shows that while the Baltic has the highest overall protection of all the European seas, the Baltic countries are by no means demonstrating significant leadership in all aspects of designating MPA networks. The total area designated for the whole North-East Atlantic Ocean including the Icelandic, Norwegian and Barents Seas is much lower than in the Baltic Sea, however 59% of nearshore waters (0 – 1nm), 31.5% of coastal waters (1 – 10nm) and 11.2% of offshore (>12nm) waters have been designated in the Greater North Sea.

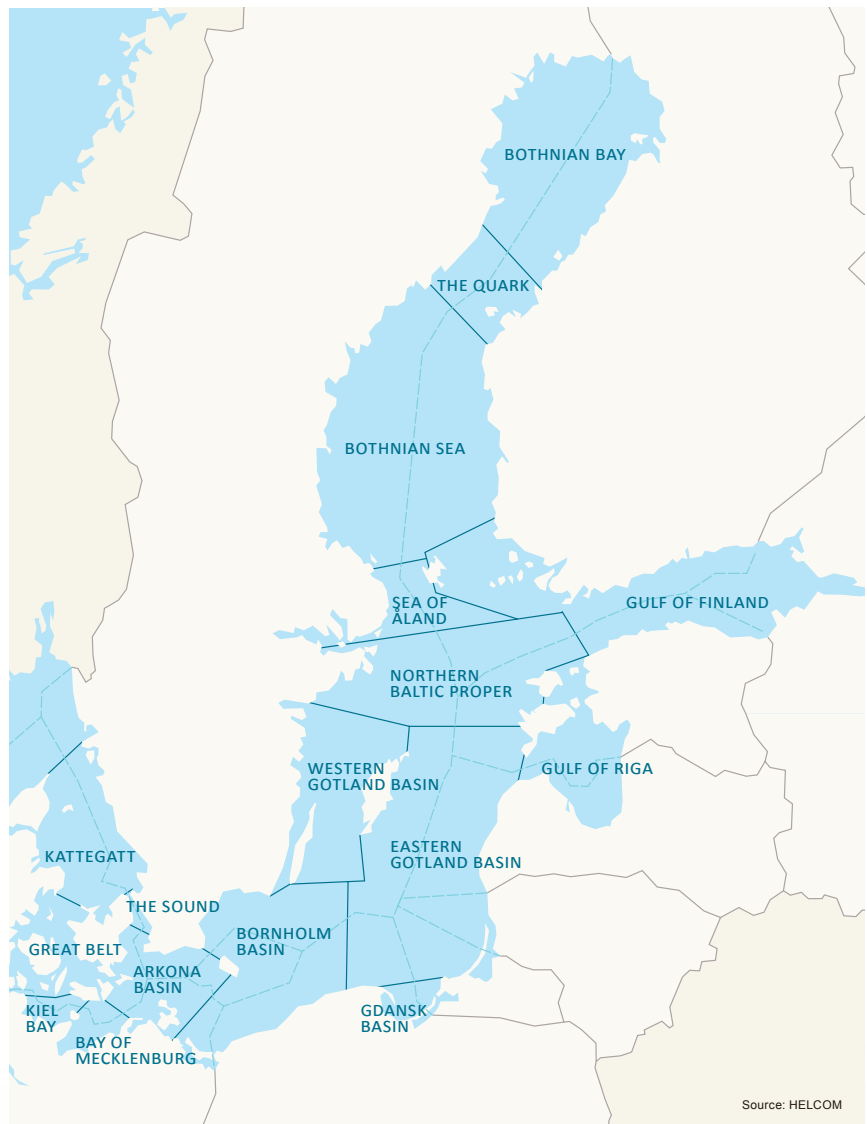
¹⁸ European Environment Agency, 2015. Marine protected areas in Europe's seas An overview and perspectives for the future. 35pp. Doi:10.2800/99473.



Photo: Metasha Iltus

Figure 2: Baltic Sea sub-basin MPA coverage

| Sub-basin | % HELCOM MPA coverage per sub-basin |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| KATTEGATT | 23 |
| GREAT BELT | 39 |
| THE SOUND | 14 |
| KIEL BAY | 39 |
| BAY OF MECKLENBURG | 17 |
| ARKONA BASIN | 15 |
| BORNHOLM BASIN | 17 |
| GDANSK BASIN | 16 |
| EASTERN GOTLAND BASIN | 7 |
| WESTERN GOTLAND BASIN | 4 |
| GULF OF RIGA | 41 |
| NORTHERN BALTIC PROPER | 3 |
| GULF OF FINLAND | 13 |
| SEA OF ÅLAND | 6 |
| BOTHNIAN SEA | 4 |
| THE QUARK | 17 |
| BOTHNIAN BAY | 4 |



Source: HELCOM

The HELCOM recommendation for 10% of each Baltic Sea sub-region to be designated has only been reached in 11 of 17 sub-basins.”



Photo: Germund Sellgren / WWF

ASSESSMENT 1: MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITMENTS

The protection and resilience of biodiversity cannot be delivered via a network of MPAs in isolation of the wider integrated management of the oceans and seas and additional measures to protect coastal and marine biodiversity such as species or habitat recovery programmes.

Overall this assessment demonstrates to what extent the Baltic Sea countries are showing commitment to the delivery of wider environmental protection necessary to support networks of MPAs.”

IOM provides a more strategic, ecosystem-based approach to the management of the sea, while networks of MPAs should be nested within systems of wider marine planning, and will also be dependent on the health of the wider marine ecosystem. It is widely accepted that networks of MPAs will never be truly effective if the surrounding marine environment is polluted and exploited unsustainably.

A number of international and regional agreements (see Box 5) establish a wider context for marine environmental management and the protection of biodiversity while acting as drivers for the development of ecologically coherent networks of MPAs, including the CBD, the MSFD, the EU Habitats Directive and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Directive and HELCOM. The Scorecard’s first assessment focuses on Meeting Environmental Protection Commitments and considers two indicators, implementation of the CBD¹⁹ and delivery of the EU MSFD. Delivery of the EU Habitats Directive and recommendations under HELCOM form the basis of subsequent assessments, while the MSP Directive remains in the early stages of implementation having only been adopted in 2014.



Photo: Tekeyh / Bigstock

BOX 5: INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL AGREEMENTS RELEVANT TO MARINE MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY

The Convention on Biological Diversity focuses on conserving biological diversity, ensuring the sustainable use of its components and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources. Its Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 commits Parties to conserving 10% of coastal and marine areas through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas.

The EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) aims to protect the marine environment across Europe and to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) of the EU’s marine waters by 2020 for a range of eleven descriptors, including biodiversity, of the marine environment. The maintenance of biodiversity is a cornerstone for achieving GES.

The EU Habitats Directive focuses on ensuring the conservation of a wide range of rare, threatened or endemic animal and plant species, and with the EU Birds Directive establishes the Natura 2000 ecological network of protected areas.

The EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive establishes a framework for maritime spatial planning aimed at promoting sustainable growth of maritime economies, the sustainable development of marine areas and the sustainable use of marine resources.

The Helsinki Convention (HELCOM) commits Contracting Parties to prevent and eliminate pollution in order to promote the ecological restoration of the Baltic Sea Area and the preservation of its ecological balance. Article 15 focuses on conservation of natural habitats and biological diversity and protection of ecological processes.

Assessment

The assessment of the implementation of the CBD reviews ratification of the Biodiversity Convention, development of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAP), voluntary reporting on programmes of work on marine and coastal biodiversity, preparation of Action Plans for programmes of work on protected areas, delivery of the 5th National Report and the development of national targets reflecting the Aichi Targets. One point was allocated for each positive response, and countries received

¹⁹ Convention on Biological Diversity
<https://www.cbd.int/>

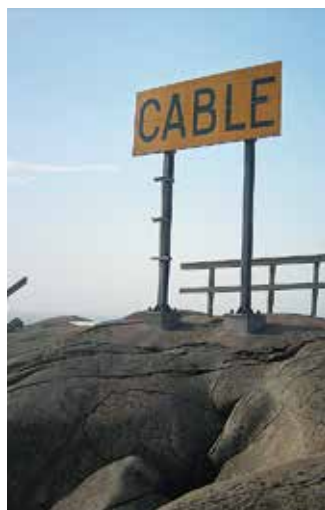


Photo: Metsähallitus

additional points if the NBSAP had been revised since the original publication, if the 5th National Report was submitted in line with deadline, and if the National Target makes specific reference to Aichi Target 11 on protected areas (i.e. potentially an additional three points).

All countries scored well on the ratification of the Convention and development of NBSAPs, however scoring for the preparation of Action Plans for programmes of work on protected areas and voluntary reporting on programmes of work on marine and coastal biodiversity was patchy with only Finland achieving both scores.

Scoring for the delivery of the 5th National Report and development of national targets reflecting the Aichi Targets was more variable but largely good, though only Denmark scored both additional points and Lithuania failed to score. The data for the implementation of the CBD was sourced from the CBD's website²⁰.

The assessment of the MSFD focuses on delivery of specific articles of the MSFD Directive²¹, which aim to deliver Good Environmental Status (GES) in Europe's seas by 2020. These include transposition of the MSFD, designation of competent authorities, undertaking of an initial assessment grouped with determination of GES and the setting of environmental targets and indicators, establishing monitoring programmes, and adopting programmes of measures. Overall this assessment demonstrates to what extent the Baltic Sea countries are showing commitment to the delivery of wider environmental protection necessary to support networks of MPAs, which in turn are critical to protect species, habitats and ecological functions, and ensure that the management and use of the Baltic Sea's resources supports a Sustainable Blue Economy. One point was allocated for delivery of each article or grouped articles. All Baltic Sea countries received maximum points with the exception of Article 13 on the adoption of programmes of measures where only Finland, Germany and Sweden received a point. It should be noted that the EU's Scoreboard²², from which the data for the assessment was collected, does not give any indication as to whether or not the reports submitted by the Member States meet the requirements of the articles. As a consequence, achieving a maximum score is the minimum that should be expected of the countries. Since the delivery of the EU MSFD milestones is not applicable to Russia the final percentage score has been adjusted accordingly.

The EU's Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Directive, adopted in 2014 and to be ratified by 16th September 2016, should establish the wider system of marine planning within which it is envisioned that MPA networks should be integrated. This would form a useful basis for a future Scorecard Assessment, along with an assessment of how MSP processes have benefitted MPA network targets. It is too early however to assess progress towards the delivery of MSP in EU waters in this Scorecard.

Table 2: Overall Result of Meeting Environmental Protection Commitments Assessment²³

| Country | Implementation of CBD score Max = 9 | Delivery of MSFD score Max = 5 | Overall Score Max = 14 Russia = 9 | Score % |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|---|------------|
| FINLAND | 8 | 5 | 13 | 93 |
| DENMARK | 8 | 4 | 12 | 86 |
| GERMANY | 7 | 5 | 12 | 86 |
| SWEDEN | 7 | 5 | 12 | 86 |
| POLAND | 7 | 4 | 11 | 79 |
| ESTONIA | 6 | 4 | 10 | 71 |
| RUSSIA | 6 | - | 6 | 67 |
| LATVIA | 4 | 4 | 8 | 57 |
| LITHUANIA | 2 | 4 | 6 | 43 |

²⁰ <https://www.cbd.int/information/parties.shtml>, <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/search/default.shtml>, <https://www.cbd.int/reports/search/?type=nr-vmc>, <https://www.cbd.int/protected/implementation/actionplans/>, <https://www.cbd.int/reports/nr5/>, <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/targets/default.shtml>

²¹ Article 26 Transposition of MSFD (due 15/07/2010), Article 7 Designation of competent authorities (due 15/01/2011), Article 8 Undertaking of an initial assessment (due 15/10/2012), Article 9 Determination of Good Environmental Status (due 15/10/2012), Article 10 Setting environmental targets and indicators (due 15/10/2012), Article 11 Establishing monitoring programmes (due 15/10/2014), Article 13 Adopting programmes of measures (due 31/03/2016).

²² Marine Strategy Framework Directive http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/implementation/scoreboard_en.htm

²³ A full breakdown of the two components of this Assessment is available in a Technical Annex available per request



Photo: Germund Seilgren / WWF

ASSESSMENT 2: MPA DESIGNATION

Through international and regional frameworks, including the CBD, HELCOM and the EU, countries have made strong commitments to establish coherent networks of MPAs.



The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, and subsequently the CBD, adopted a global target of 10% of all marine ecological regions to be effectively conserved by 2012. A range of different MPA designations have been used to provide protection for Baltic Sea wildlife, habitats and ecosystems, including Ramsar sites and Biosphere Reserves (see Box 6), however while all make an important contribution to the protection of the Baltic Sea's fragile and vulnerable marine ecosystems, it is only the HELCOM MPAs and Natura 2000 sites which have been designated with the intention of creating ecologically coherent networks and for which data on designation and management is centralised.

BOX 6: MPA DESIGNATIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA

HELCOM MPAs (coastal and marine Baltic Sea Protected Areas (former acronym BSPAs)) are sites recommended to HELCOM and managed using national measures.

Natura 2000 sites are designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives where management must ensure "favourable conservation status" is achieved for the protected features.

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated to meet commitments under the Ramsar Convention.

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves aim to reconcile conservation of biodiversity with the sites sustainable use.

Emerald Network Sites, under the Bern Convention, form an ecological network of areas of special conservation interest. Natura 2000 sites make up the EU Members' contribution to the network.



HELCOM

HELCOM Recommendation 35/1, adopted in 2014, recommends that the governments of the Baltic Sea countries should both individually and jointly take all appropriate measures to establish an ecologically coherent and effectively managed network of HELCOM MPAs²⁴. It is envisaged that these designated sites would also fulfil other legal commitments including the obligations of the CBD and EU legislation. The Recommendation re-commits Baltic Sea countries to reach the target of 10% of the marine area protected in all the Baltic Sea sub-basins where scientifically justified, including the EEZ areas. The HELCOM 2010 study included a recommendation that there should be a focus on designating new offshore areas, and the 2016 HELCOM study repeated the call for new sites to be designated, particularly in the offshore area beyond territorial waters²⁵.

Aichi Targets

In Nagoya, Japan in 2010, Parties to the CBD agreed the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, a set of twenty time-bound, measurable targets. The targets aim to reduce, and eventually halt, the loss of biodiversity at a global level by the middle of the 21st Century. Through Aichi Target 11, countries agreed to conserve “at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas by the year 2020.”

Promise of Sydney

Four years later, in 2014, at the IUCN World Parks Congress, supported by over 6,000 participants from 170 countries, the Promise of Sydney recommended to: “urgently increase the ocean area that is effectively and equitably managed in ecologically representative and well-connected systems of MPAs or other effective conservation measures” by 2030. The recommendation includes an expectation that this network should address both biodiversity and ecosystem services and should include strictly protected areas that amount to at least 30% of each marine habitat, so that ultimately 30% of the global ocean has no-extractive activities²⁶. A commitment that was taken further at the Hawai'i World Conservation Congress 2016.

Assessment

The MPA Designation assessment focuses on the designation of HELCOM MPAs throughout the whole marine jurisdiction of each Baltic Sea country. It includes an additional score for the area designated in countries' EEZs, where, according to the HELCOM 2010 ecological coherence assessment²⁷, most countries had failed to meet the 10% target. The marine, TW, EEZ and MPA marine area data (km²) are sourced from the HELCOM ecological coherence assessment (2016)²⁸. The HELCOM study summarises the data as of November 2015, however no new MPAs have been added to the HELCOM database since that time. The assessment does not include marine Natura 2000 sites, since these are not designated in Russian waters and there is 63% overlap with HELCOM MPAs. However, this does mean that the total area of the Baltic Sea protected as a MPA will be somewhat higher than indicated by HELCOM MPAs alone. HELCOM's 2016 Study calls on HELCOM Contracting Parties to designate these areas as HELCOM MPAs when feasible²⁹.



Photo: Oia Jennersten / WWF

²⁴ <http://helcom.fi/Recommendations/Rec%2035-1.pdf>

²⁵ HELCOM 2010, HELCOM 2016.

²⁶ <http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/> and <http://worldparkscongress.org/downloads/approaches/ThemeM.pdf>

²⁷ HELCOM 2010.

²⁸ HELCOM 2016. It should be noted that HELCOM's data is based on shapefiles, while previous data for earlier assessments was based on both shapefiles and background data reported by the countries. As a result the latest numbers are not directly comparable with previous studies.

²⁹ HELCOM 2016.

Table 3a: Assessment of HELCOM MPA designation in the whole marine area and in the EEZ (November 2015³⁰)

| Country | Total marine area km ² | Total MPA marine area km ² | % | Score | Total TW area km ² | Total TW as MPA km ² | % | Total EEZ area km ² | Total EEZ as MPA km ² | % | Score |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----|-------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----|-------|
| DENMARK | 46,107 | 10,436 | 23 | 2 | 33,032 | 9,344 | 28 | 13,075 | 1,092 | 8 | 1 |
| ESTONIA | 36,923 | 5,997 | 16 | 1 | 25,084 | 5,954 | 24 | 11,840 | 43 | 0 | 1 |
| FINLAND | 81,318 | 6,367 | 8 | 0 | 52,622 | 6,285 | 12 | 28,696 | 83 | 0 | 1 |
| GERMANY | 15,544 | 4,627 | 30 | 3 | 11,041 | 2,158 | 20 | 4,504 | 2,469 | 55 | 2 |
| LATVIA | 28,765 | 4,363 | 15 | 1 | 12,642 | 4,199 | 33 | 16,123 | 164 | 1 | 1 |
| LITHUANIA | 6,527 | 992 | 15 | 1 | 2,275 | 992 | 44 | 4,253 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| POLAND | 29,583 | 7,230 | 24 | 2 | 10,091 | 5,562 | 55 | 19,492 | 1,668 | 9 | 1 |
| RUSSIA | 23,675 | 894 | 4 | 0 | 16,303 | 894 | 5 | 7,372 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SWEDEN | 148,683 | 7,398 | 5 | 0 | 77,281 | 4,649 | 6 | 71,402 | 2,750 | 4 | 1 |

SCORING

Zero points awarded for scoring under 10% of the sea area designated, one point for between 10% to under 20% sea area designated (CBD Aichi Target), two points for between 20% to under 30% sea area designated, and three points for over 30% sea area designated (Sydney Promise). Additional points have been awarded for designation of MPAs in the EEZ. Two points if 10% or more of the EEZ is designated and one point for designation of MPAs covering under 10% of the EEZ but which exceed the minimum size recommended for HELCOM MPAs.

Table 3b: Overview of MPA Designation assessment

| Country | Total score <i>Max = 5</i> |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| GERMANY | 5 |
| DENMARK | 3 |
| POLAND | 3 |
| ESTONIA | 2 |
| LATVIA | 2 |
| FINLAND | 1 |
| LITHUANIA | 1 |
| SWEDEN | 1 |
| RUSSIA | 0 |



Photo: Mats Westerborn / WWF Finland

³⁰ HELCOM 2016. Data as presented in HELCOM 2016.

ASSESSMENT 3: MPA COMPLIANCE

The HELCOM Recommendation also encourages countries to designate Natura 2000 sites as HELCOM MPAs when feasible.”



Photo: Ola Jennersten / WWF

The designation of protected areas will never be sufficient on its own. HELCOM’s Recommendation 35/1³¹ commits the Baltic Sea countries when selecting new sites, to ensure that the network of HELCOM MPAs is ecologically coherent taking into account the connectivity between sites, especially migration routes, species mobility and areas of special ecological significance such as spawning areas.

HELCOM’s 2010³² study determined that neither the network of HELCOM MPAs (formerly BSPAs) nor HELCOM MPAs and the EU’s Natura 2000 network combined could be considered to be ecologically coherent. The HELCOM 2010 study included a recommendation that more HELCOM MPAs should be identified, as well as recommendations on designating new offshore areas, and establishing management plans or measures (see MPA Scorecard Assessment⁴), and the 2016 HELCOM study repeats the call for further sites to be designated³³.

The minimum size recommended for a HELCOM MPA should be 3000 hectare (ha) or 30 km² and HELCOM’s 2016 study of the ecological coherence of HELCOM MPAs, uses MPA size as a component of the measure of adequacy³⁴. Although there is a minimum size recommendation, it is accepted that smaller MPAs can also form valuable components of MPA networks, so the 2016 HELCOM study uses a target of at least 80% of the MPAs meeting the size recommendation.

The HELCOM Recommendation also encourages countries to designate Natura 2000 sites as HELCOM MPAs when feasible, and although many Natura 2000 sites have been designated as HELCOM MPAs, the overlap is not perfect. The Natura 2000 network covers less area (45,688km²) than the HELCOM MPAs network (48,184 km²), however the combined network is 8,127 km² larger than the HELCOM network alone³⁵. As a consequence, implementation of the EU Habitats Directive can form a valuable component of assessing compliance with regional commitments to deliver ecologically coherent networks of MPAs in the Baltic Sea.

³¹ <http://helcom.fi/Recommendations/Rec%2035-1.pdf>

³² HELCOM 2010.

³³ HELCOM 2010, HELCOM 2016.

³⁴ HELCOM 2010, HELCOM 2016.

³⁵ HELCOM 2016.

Assessment

“Management plans and management measures will be essential to achieve the conservation goals of both individual sites and of the whole Baltic network”

The **MPA Compliance assessment** considers the number of new HELCOM MPAs designated between the 2010 and 2016 HELCOM studies, and the size of HELCOM MPAs based on data reported in the HELCOM database³⁶. It also assesses EU Habitats Directive compliance based on reporting and data conformity by Member States as assessed by the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity³⁷, and the sufficiency of designated sites as recorded in the EU’s Natura 2000 Barometer (latest assessment from December 2013)³⁸. Sufficiency is an assessment of the extent to which the species and habitats listed in Annex I and II of the Habitats Directive are represented by the EU Member State’s designated Natura 2000 sites. The sufficiency assessment is expressed as a percentage of species and habitats for which further areas need to be designated to complete the network in each country. A scientific reserve is given when further research is needed in order to identify the most appropriate sites to be added.

It should be noted that for Germany, Denmark and Sweden, the sufficiency assessment relates to all their marine Natura 2000 sites including those designated in the North Sea as well as those in the Baltic Sea. Since the EU Habitats Directive Compliance Assessment contributes one half of the four MPA Scorecard assessments, and the sufficiency assessment is only one element of the Habitats Directive compliance assessment, any impact for these three countries will be minimal when considering the overall progress towards establishing well-managed, ecologically coherent networks in the Baltic Sea. Since the delivery of the EU Natura 2000 network is not applicable to Russia the final percentage score has been adjusted accordingly.

Table 4: HELCOM and EU Habitats Directive Compliance Assessment

| Country | HELCOM Compliance (2016) | | | | EU Habitats Directive Compliance (Reporting and data conformity 2014 & Sufficiency 2013) | | | Total score Max = 26 Russia = 6 | Total score % |
|-----------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|--|-------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| | No. of sites | New sites since 2010 | Size of sites % | Score Max = 6 | Reporting & data conformity Max = 10 | Sufficiency Max = 10 | Score | | |
| ESTONIA | 7 | 0 | 100 | 3 | 8 | 10 | 18 | 21 | 81 |
| LATVIA | 7 | 3 | 100 | 4 | 9 | 7.5 | 16.5 | 20.5 | 79 |
| SWEDEN | 28 | 0 | 86 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 16 | 19 | 73 |
| GERMANY | 12 | 0 | 75 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 16 | 18 | 69 |
| FINLAND | 33 | 11 | 70 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 14 | 17 | 65 |
| LITHUANIA | 6 | 2 | 86 | 4 | 7 | 5.5 | 12.5 | 16.5 | 64 |
| DENMARK | 66 | 0 | 56 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 14 | 15 | 58 |
| POLAND | 9 | 0 | 89 | 3 | 6 | 2.5 | 8.5 | 11.5 | 44 |
| RUSSIA | 6 | 0 | 67 | 2 | – | – | – | 2 | 33 |

SCORING

HELCOM Compliance – new sites. If under 10% of the marine area was designated prior to 2010, one point is allocated for new sites designated. If between 10 – 30% of the marine area was designated prior to 2010, two points are allocated for new sites designated. If over 30% of the marine area was designated prior to 2010, three points are allocated for new sites designated.

HELCOM Compliance – size of sites. Three points allocated for 80% or more of sites meeting HELCOM minimum recommended size advice. Two points allocated for between 65% - 80% of sites meeting HELCOM advice, and one point for between 50% – 65% of sites meeting HELCOM advice.

EU Habitats Directive Compliance³⁹ on reporting and data conformity, and on designation sufficiency. Two points for good reporting and data conformity, one point for adequate reporting and data conformity, and zero points for inadequate reporting or data conformity. One point for each 10% of sufficiency achieved, and half point for each 10% of scientific reserve allocated.

ASSESSMENT 4: MPA MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

The benefits derived from individual MPAs are dependent on location, design, size, proximity to other protected sites, relationship to wider forms of management, and the management of the site itself. Effective surveillance and compliance by stakeholders with management measures are also critical to the delivery of results. Well-designed MPA networks will magnify the benefits of individual sites and protect the overarching processes that maintain healthy populations of wildlife.



Photo: Germund Seilgrén / WWF

Management plans and management measures will be essential to achieve the conservation goals of both individual sites and of the whole Baltic network. HELCOM's 2016 study indicates that only just over two-thirds (67%) of the HELCOM MPAs designated by 2014 have management plans or measures⁴⁰. While it is understandable that management plans still remain to be developed for newly designated sites, HELCOM Recommendation 35/1⁴¹ did require that management plans or measures to be developed and applied by 2015. Furthermore, HELCOM's Recommendation calls for the harmonisation of designation of neighbouring HELCOM MPAs in transboundary marine areas and where appropriate joining of forces between neighbouring states to establish management or management measures.

The Recommendation also calls on the governments of the Contracting Parties to HELCOM to conduct monitoring in order to assess the effectiveness of management plans or measures, while HELCOM's 2016 study recognises that monitoring is a prerequisite for evaluating the effectiveness of MPAs and their management. So far, based on the records in the HELCOM database, monitoring is being undertaken in 64% of HELCOM MPAs⁴².

Management measures, including restrictions of fishing activities and other activities or forms of development, may be required to protect the habitats or wildlife for which a site has been designated. Management measures should be identified and implemented on a case by case basis, ensuring that future uses within an MPA are compatible with the conservation objectives for the site and for the network. Despite evidence that the benefits of the strictest form of MPAs, NTZs, outweighs the costs⁴³, the HELCOM 2016 study reports that fishing activity still occurs in nearly two-thirds of sites, with intensive fishing activities still occurring in some HELCOM MPAs.



Photo: Páivi Rosqvist / WWF

Management measures may not be limited to the MPA site, but recognising that MPAs will be dependent on the health of the wider marine ecosystem, management of activities beyond the individual MPAs or the MPA network, through a system of IOM, will ensure a strategic, ecosystem-based approach to the management of the sea, allowing networks of MPAs be truly effective.

³⁶ <http://helcom.fi/action-areas/marine-protected-areas/database/>

³⁷ http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_17/Documents/Scoreboard_proposal_reporting.pdf, http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_17/Reports_2013/Timeliness_report_deliveries, http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_17/Reports_2013/Member_State_Deliveries.

³⁸ Natura 2000 Barometer 2015 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/info/pubs/docs/nat2000news/nat39_en.pdf.

³⁹ For further detail of the reporting and data conformity assessment (total five indicators) and on designation sufficiency see Technical Annex available per request.

⁴⁰ HELCOM 2016.

⁴¹ <http://helcom.fi/Recommendations/Rec%2035-1.pdf>

⁴² HELCOM 2016.

⁴³ http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?247660/Increased-protection-would-provide-big-boost-to-the-ocean-economy

The level and accuracy of reporting by Baltic Sea countries will influence the management effectiveness assessment and in some instances countries have received low scores as a result of lack of data in the database.”

Assessment

The assessment of management plans, monitoring of features within sites, and management measures within HELCOM MPAs is based on data recorded in the HELCOM MPA database⁴⁴. When restrictions on fishing activities are recorded, the level of restriction varies from prohibited in a few cases to rarely or partially regulated, spatially regulated or regulated for the majority of MPAs. Other restrictions recorded in HELCOM MPAs cover a wide range of over thirty different activities, including offshore marine infrastructure, cables and pipelines, extraction of oil and gas, extraction of sand and gravel, renewable energy generation, ports and other constructions, marine plant harvesting, aquaculture, agriculture, shipping transport and tourism recreation and sports.

The level and accuracy of reporting by Baltic Sea countries will influence the management effectiveness assessment and in some instances countries, including Estonia, Germany, Latvia and Lithuania, have received low scores as a result of lack of data in the database. As a result in some cases the assessment may reflect the level of contribution of countries to reporting rather than an actual assessment of management plans. A report published by Oceana in 2014, indicated that Estonia, Germany, Latvia and Lithuania had management plans in place or in development, but that frequently rules and regulations to restrict or manage activities were generally limited or still in development⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ <http://helcom.fi/action-areas/marine-protected-areas/database/>

⁴⁵ Oceana, 2014. Management matters: Ridding the Baltic Sea of paper parks.

Table 5a: Assessment of status in management plans for HELCOM MPAs (as recorded on the HELCOM database)

| Countries | Number of sites | % sites with management plans | % sites with management plans in development | % sites with no plan | Comments | Score <i>Max = 5</i> |
|-----------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| DENMARK | 66 | 94 | 6 | 0 | | 5 |
| RUSSIA | 6 | 83 | 17 | – | | 5 |
| SWEDEN | 28 | 86 | 14 | – | Some sites partially managed | 5 |
| ESTONIA | 7 | 57 | 14 | – | No record for some sites. | 4 |
| LITHUANIA | 6 | 67 | 17 | – | No record for one site. | 4 |
| FINLAND | 33 | 36 | 18 | 42 | No record for one site. | 3 |
| GERMANY | 12 | 17 | 83 | 0 | | 2 |
| POLAND | 9 | – | 89 | – | No record for one site. | 2 |
| LATVIA | 7 | – | 29 | – | No record for five sites | 1 |

SCORING

Management plans. Five points are awarded if 75% or more of HELCOM MPAs have management plans implemented. **Four points** awarded for between 50% and 75% of HELCOM MPAs with management plans implemented and further management plans in development. **Three points** awarded for between 25% and 50% of HELCOM MPAs with management plans implemented and further plans in development. **Two points** awarded for over 25% of HELCOM MPAs with management plans implemented and further plans in development. Two points awarded if less than 25% management plans have been implemented but 75% or more of the country's HELCOM MPAs have plans in development. **One point** is awarded when countries have 25% or more of the HELCOM MPAs with management plans in development. This assessment does not attempt to evaluate the quality of management plans.

Table 5b: Assessment of monitoring and management restrictions in HELCOM MPAs (as recorded in the HELCOM database, July 2016)

| Countries | % sites with monitoring programmes | % sites with fishing restrictions in place | % sites with restrictions on other activities | Comments | Score Max = 9 |
|-----------|------------------------------------|--|---|---|------------------|
| DENMARK | 97 | 77 | 100 | Some monitoring only limited and particularly associated with marine features e.g. sandbanks. | 9 |
| RUSSIA | 100 | 83 | 83 | Two sites with fisheries restrictions not effectively enforced. | 9 |
| FINLAND | n/r | 94 | 97 | One site occasional monitoring. Most restrictions only partial. | 6 |
| SWEDEN | 50 | 32 | 43 | Monitoring in 50% of sites varied from occasional to some monitoring | 4 |
| GERMANY | 88 | n/r | n/r | Monitoring reliant on scientists / universities, | 3 |
| LATVIA | 86 | n/r | n/r | Only occasional monitoring for most sites. | 3 |
| ESTONIA | n/r | n/r | n/r | | 0 |
| LITHUANIA | n/r | n/r | n/r | | 0 |
| POLAND | n/r | 22 | 22 | | 0 |

SCORING

Points are awarded for each of the three indicators - monitoring, fisheries restrictions, and other activity restrictions. For a score of 75% or more of HELCOM MPAs with monitoring undertaken, fisheries restrictions in place, or other activity restrictions in place **three points** per indicator are awarded. **Two points** are awarded per indicator for a score between 50% - 75%, and **one point** awarded per indicator for a score between 25% - 50%. In a number of cases there was no data recorded (n/r).

Table 5c: Overall Management Effectiveness Assessment

| Countries | Overall Score Max = 14 | % |
|-----------|---------------------------|-----|
| DENMARK | 14 | 100 |
| RUSSIA | 14 | 100 |
| FINLAND | 9 | 64 |
| SWEDEN | 9 | 64 |
| GERMANY | 5 | 36 |
| ESTONIA | 4 | 29 |
| LATVIA | 4 | 29 |
| LITHUANIA | 4 | 29 |
| POLAND | 2 | 14 |



Photo: Bohman



Photo: Stockholms hamnar

SCORECARD 2016 – CONCLUSIONS

Assessment 1: Meeting Environmental Protection Commitments

Generally good progress has been made in implementing and delivering on actions under international agreements that focus on the protection of biodiversity and improving the environmental status of the seas. Finland, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Poland have all achieved more than 75% of the available points which is to be commended, however the assessment is focused on delivery of agreed international actions and further progress needs to be made by all Baltic Sea countries, with 100% achievement of the ultimate target. Disappointingly, Lithuania falls below 50%⁴⁶ and considerably greater effort is required.

Assessment 2: MPA Designation

Germany clearly leads the field receiving full marks for the designation of MPAs in the whole of Germany's marine area and receiving additional points for designation of sites in the EEZ. Other countries lag behind, particularly in respect to designation of MPAs in the EEZ where no other country has reached the 10% threshold. The results for Finland, Sweden and Russia are disappointing as these countries fail to reach the 10% target in their respective marine areas. So while the designation of a MPAs network across the Baltic Sea has reached the Aichi Target of 10% designated, some gaps remain both at a national level and a sub-basin level that need to be addressed.

Assessment 3: MPA Compliance

With respect to compliance with the requirements of the HELCOM Recommendation 35/1⁴⁷ and the EU Habitats Directive, the results are somewhat mixed. Disappointingly only three countries, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, have designated new HELCOM MPAs in the six years since the 2010 HELCOM study which concluded that the network of sites in the Baltic was not ecologically coherent and that further sites should be designated, particularly in the EEZ. Estonia (81%) and Latvia (79%) receive the highest scores in this section, with Poland (44%) and Russia (33%) failing to achieve 50% of the available marks. Russia has clearly designated few sites and one-third fail to meet the recommended size, while Poland scored poorly on the Habitats Directive sufficiency assessment despite having designated 25% of the marine area. Denmark had a mixed result, with many HELCOM MPAs below the recommended size, and low scores for Habitats Directive reporting and data conformity, but scored well with respect to sufficiency of Natura 2000 sites. Finland and Lithuania along with Poland, however scored poorly under the Habitats Directive sufficiency assessment – and all need to do more to comply with the expectations of the Habitats Directive. It should be noted that Russia only scored on compliance with the requirements under the HELCOM Recommendation.

Assessment 4: MPA Management Effectiveness

The Management Effectiveness assessment has to be considered with an element of caution, as the results are only as good as the data available in the HELCOM database. Full data was only available for Denmark and Russia and they both scored well. Data on monitoring was not available for Estonia, Finland, Lithuania and Poland and data on restrictions on activities (fishing and other activities) was not available for Estonia, Germany, Latvia and Lithuania. Interestingly, Denmark has more HELCOM MPAs than any of the other countries and Russia has the least. With respect to management plans, all countries had provided data into the HELCOM database, and Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Russia and Sweden scored well. Latvia disappointingly reported on only two sites. While Germany and Poland both have a lot of MPAs with management plans in development, the delay in progress is frustrating, particularly as neither country has designated new sites since 2010. Apart from Denmark, Finland and Russia, all countries scored low with respect to monitoring and implementation of management measures (fisheries restrictions or restrictions on other activities) due to the lack of information available.

“Only three countries, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, have designated new HELCOM MPAs in the six years since the 2010 HELCOM study which concluded that the network of sites in the Baltic was not ecologically coherent and that further sites should be designated, particularly in the EEZ.”

⁴⁶ Russia is only assessed against the implementation of the CBD and the percentage score calculated accordingly.

⁴⁷ <http://helcom.fi/Recommendations/Rec%2035-1.pdf>

Results and Summary

The overall result of the MPA Scorecard at 62% is disappointing (see Table 1). Each country should be striving to achieve a score of 100%, and this should be the target for the Baltic Sea as a whole. A score of 75% or more demonstrates that good progress is being made in implementing the agreements and establishing well-managed network of MPAs, but any score below 75% indicates that insufficient progress has been achieved. Thus the overall percentage score for the whole Baltic Sea assessment at 62% indicates that much greater effort is required. The MPA Scorecard Assessment is based on effort indicators and does not attempt to assess the results or outcomes of the efforts to implement the international and regional commitments to the protection of biodiversity, management of the marine environment and establishment of networks of MPAs. While it should be acknowledged that countries have made some progress, such as achieving the CBD target of 10% of the Baltic Sea designated by 2010, the overall results demonstrate that all countries in the region are failing to adequately provide the protection needed to sustain and restore productivity and resilience of the natural capital of the Baltic Sea.

“A score of 75% or more demonstrates that good progress is being made in implementing the agreements and establishing well-managed network of MPAs, but any score below 75% indicates that insufficient progress has been achieved.”

Achieving full marks for each of the MPA Scorecard Assessments would reflect the minimum that should be delivered by Baltic Sea countries. None of the MPA Scorecard Assessments consider action or progress that goes “above and beyond” well-established global and regional commitments. This is supported by the most recent Article 17 assessment of the status of coastal habitats under the Habitats Directive which shows that for a selection of four coastal and marine habitats the majority are in an unfavourable condition (see Box 7, Technical Annex).

The percentage scores for the four individual MPA Scorecard Assessments show that progress has been made on the delivery of environmental protection and compliance with regional commitments based on Baltic Sea countries’ implementation and delivery of the requirements of the CBD, the MSFD, HELCOM Recommendation 35/1 and the EU Habitats Directive. However, despite delivering the 10% global target for MPA designation across the Baltic Sea, the performance on MPA designation at a country level is disappointing. Only three countries, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, have designated new HELCOM MPAs in the six years since the 2010 HELCOM study which concluded that the network of sites in the Baltic was not ecologically coherent and that further sites should be designated. Three countries, Finland, Russia and Sweden, have designated an insufficient amount of their total marine area (less than 10%) and with the exception of Germany all the Baltic countries have failed to designate 10% of their EEZs as committed to under the CBD Aichi Target.



Photo: Mats Westerborn / WWF Finland



Photo: Mats Westerborn / WWF Finland

Though no country received a percentage score of more than 75% ... a future Scorecard could consider an assessment of progress towards the delivery of IOM and MSP (effort indicators)."

Individually Denmark is the top performer, followed by Sweden then Finland and Germany, though no country received a percentage score of more than 75%. Denmark scored maximum points for management effectiveness and Germany for the designation of MPAs, and all four countries scored highly for the delivery of environmental protection commitments. However, Denmark, Finland and Sweden's MPA designation scores and Germany's management effectiveness score were disappointing. Russia, Estonia and Latvia come in the middle of the scoring range, with all three countries receiving disappointingly low scores for MPA designation, and Estonia and Latvia also have low scores for management effectiveness. Lithuania and Poland received mid to low scores across all four assessments, however it should be acknowledged that Poland and Lithuania have made good progress in designating a high percentage of the territorial waters (55% and 44% respectively) (see Table 3a).

A future Scorecard could consider an assessment of progress towards the delivery of IOM and MSP (effort indicators), along with a comprehensive review of the different types of MPAs including marine Natura 2000 sites and national designations, as well as an assessment of the benefits for a networks of Baltic Sea MPAs (result indicators). More detailed investigation of designation of NTZs, enforcement of management activities, and the management of activities beyond the boundaries of the MPAs (necessary to support effective MPAs) would also be useful, and the development of effective results indicators will be valuable to demonstrate the impact of the measures undertaken.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

WWF believes that there is much that can be done to rectify the disappointing results of the assessments and to deliver an ecologically coherent network of well-managed MPAs in the Baltic Sea. The following actions are identified as priorities. There is no hierarchy and the relevance of each action to individual Baltic Sea countries will vary according to the level of progress each has achieved in developing MPA networks. However, only through the delivery of all the actions will an effective ecologically coherent network of well-managed MPAs throughout the whole Baltic Sea be delivered.



Photo: Germund Sellgren / WWF

WWF URGES BALTIC SEA COUNTRIES TO:

- **Deliver the World Conservation Congress Hawai'i Motion** that 30% of each marine habitat should be included in systems of MPAs by 2030⁴⁸, particularly given that recent research shows that expanding the coverage of MPAs to 30% globally is expected to generate major economic benefits that significantly outweigh the costs.
- **Designate further sites** to meet the Natura 2000 objectives under the Habitats Directive sufficiency criteria and to achieve as an absolute minimum the Aichi Target of 10% of area protected in all territorial waters and Baltic sub-basins, and in exclusive economic zones where scientifically justified by 2020.
- **Develop effective management plans** by 2020 for all MPAs in the Baltic Sea, including the one third of HELCOM MPAs currently without plans, and implement management measures for all MPAs, including monitoring of features and sites.
- **Introduce and enforce management measures** which facilitate conditional access, including restrictions on fishing activity, a minimum of 50% of the MPA network area as no take zones, and restrictions on other marine activities.
- **Improve the knowledge base**, along with exchange of experience and practise, to facilitate designation of important coastal and marine sites and improve the management of the MPA network and the wider Baltic marine environment.
- **Provide comprehensive reporting** on all parameters to the HELCOM MPA database, which in turn would facilitate evaluation of individual countries contribution to the ecological coherence of the Baltic Sea MPA network, including assessment of representativity, replication, adequacy, and connectivity.
- **Share responsibility for transboundary sites** and for the development of transboundary management plans or management measures (in line with HELCOM Recommendation 35/1).
- **Secure comprehensive implementation** of environmental protection commitments and measures addressing the wider integrated management of the seas, such as achieving "good environmental status", must be a priority for Baltic Sea countries, and the development of MPA networks must be integrated with ecosystem-based marine spatial planning processes.
- **Address enforcement** both of international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, HELCOM Recommendation 35/1, and European Union Directives⁴⁹, as well as enforcement of and compliance with MPA management plans and management measures necessary for individual MPAs and the Baltic Sea MPA network to be truly effective.

Delivery of these Priority Actions will not only secure improvements in protection for the wildlife and habitats of the Baltic Sea but will also advance our region's progress towards achieving a Sustainable Blue Economy (see Box 1), and the globally agreed United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 14 which calls for conserving our oceans and seas and using them sustainably for economic prosperity.

Adequate investment in securing this protection as part of an integrated approach will help ensure that the Baltic Sea can once again support abundant fish stocks, viable populations of marine wildlife, thriving coastal communities and provide a global model of environmental stewardship and maritime prosperity through a truly Sustainable Blue Economy. WWF looks forward to working with all stakeholders and stands ready to assist in the delivery of these actions.

⁴⁸ <https://portals.iucn.org/congress/motion/053>

⁴⁹ In particular, the EU Habitats Directive, EU Birds Directive, EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| BSAP | Baltic Sea Action Plan |
| BSPA | Former acronym for the Coastal and Marine Baltic Sea Protected Area |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| EU | European Union |
| EEZ | Exclusive Economic Zone |
| GES | Good Environmental Status |
| HELCOM | Helsinki Commission |
| HELCOM MPA | Coastal and Marine Baltic Sea Protected Area |
| IOM | Integrated Ocean Management |
| IUCN | World Conservation Union |
| MPA | Marine Protected Area |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| MSFD | Marine Strategy Framework Directive |
| MSP | Maritime Spatial Planning |
| NBSAP | National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans |
| NTZ | No Take Zone (including all extractive activities) |
| SAC | Special Area of Conservation |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| SDG14 | Sustainable Development Goal for the oceans |
| TW | Territorial Waters |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| WSSD | World Summit on Sustainable Development |

WWF BALTIC ECOREGION PROGRAMME

The following organizations are lead partners within the WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme:

WWF Denmark (wwf.dk)

WWF Finland (wwf.fi)

WWF Germany (wwf.de)

WWF Poland (wwf.pl)

WWF Sweden (wwf.se)

**Baltic Fund for Nature
(Russia – www.bfn.org.ru)**

Estonian Fund for Nature (www.elfond.ee)

Lithuanian Fund for Nature (www.glis.lt)

**and Pasaules Dabas Fonds
(Latvia – www.pdf.lv)**

REFERENCES

A technical background report with numbers, score calculations and references can be ordered from WWF.



WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme

DELIVERING RESULTS

We are an active and effective change agent for the conservation and sustainable management of the Baltic Sea

COOPERATION

We promote constructive interactions to create awareness, spread ideas and stimulate discussion among stakeholders and partners




REGIONAL NETWORK

We represent one of the largest membership networks in the region and are present in every country surrounding the Baltic Sea

INFLUENCE REGIONAL POLICY

We are a diligent watchdog that monitors how governments manage our common resource, the Baltic Sea

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Why we are here To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.</p> <p>www.panda.org</p> |
|---|--|

Please contact us for more information!
WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme
www.panda.org/balticcontacts