

Ref: BSAC/2018_2019/16

Friday 12th October 2018

BSAC input to the joint HELCOM/BALTFISH workshop on seals

Background

The BSAC Working Group on ecosystem based management met on 4th September 2018. The report, now adopted, can be read here:

<http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-Ecosystem-Based-Management-Working-Group>

At the Working group, **the Chair Nils Höglund** referred to the proposed joint HELCOM/BALTFISH workshop on seals and asked for topics and questions which should be brought up at the meeting. He noted that HELCOM seal experts will be involved in the meeting. No date has yet been decided for the workshop.

The BSAC addressed and discussed the planned HELCOM/BALTFISH workshop on seals and proposed topics and questions for such a workshop. A document with draft input was produced and sent to the BSAC Executive Committee for comments.

A final version was approved by the Executive Committee by written procedure.

BSAC proposed topics for the joint HELCOM/BALTFISH workshop on seals

This paper summarises the inputs put forward. It points to different topics that could be part of the programme for the workshop.

Practical solutions/knowledge available

An overview of the existing seal-safe gears used, as well as an evaluation of or results from trials etc. carried out. Proposals for concrete solutions that work. Lessons learned from those Member States where such solutions have already been tested.

Options for coastal fishermen to use passive gears.

Deterring devices; can they work? Examples.

Bring in examples and experts from, for example Norway to learn from their experience.

Management options

What management plans are being applied locally or regionally?

Compensation schemes; who is using them and how are they working? Do they work?
Presentation of best practices.

A fundamental discussion on management in relation to the co-existence between fisheries and seals. How to make the co-existence exist.

Does selective hunting work? An evaluation of the results from countries where it takes place. Can hunting have a scaring effect?

What are the economic consequences of increased grey seal population for fisheries and coastal communities?

Seal management practices in Norway and other similar countries. How is management thinking regarding conflicts? Specific examples of seal damage, e.g. decline of the vendace stock in Sweden.

Seal population status and environmental interactions

Agree on current population status of seal species.

Discuss relevant GES levels on grey seal in relation to the current situation in the Baltic, taking into account the carrying capacity of the environment with respect to seals and the fact that humans are also part of the ecosystem.

Does the growth of the grey seal population also affect other seal species? If yes, how?

Are we monitoring seals in efficient ways? Is enough funding available?

The seal worms in cod and other species and the impact on fish quality.

The impact of the seal related worms (mainly liver worms) on the growth and mortality of the Baltic cod and other species.