

Coalition Clean Baltic

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To

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We consider it extremely important that salmon experts from Baltic Sea region countries will develop adequate advice to decision-makers on salmon management. The experts role and views is crucial for the EC development of a new Baltic salmon management plan, that will safeguard the survival of the existing wild Baltic salmon populations.

Salmon scientists must understand their role, and develop and give advice for *very clear goals, that easily can be evaluated*, for Baltic salmon management, to the political decision-making level.

Your responsibility cannot be overestimated.

We see the following components to be very important for an EC Baltic Salmon Management Plan:

1. Propose Over-riding goals for Baltic salmon management

Baltic Sea has lost 60-100 wild salmon populations the last 100 years. The goal must be to safeguard the rest of the wild salmon populations, approx. 40 populations, with all means.

ICES proposed a couple of years ago the following goals:

- safeguard the genetic variability of the naturally spawning Baltic salmon
- safeguard all wild salmon populations , including the weakest

These goals should be proposed as over-riding goals for Baltic salmon management for the EC Baltic Salmon Management Plan.

Conservation biology goals must provide an over-riding component for fisheries management.

2. Advice for establishment of goals for “Returning female spawners” for each Baltic river with wild salmon populations

Clear goals for the number of returning female spawners will be developed for all wild salmon river populations, without support from released salmon. Individual goals will be developed for each river, with the purpose to maximise the production of naturally spawning salmon. The knowledge from potential production, e g areas of spawning bottoms etc, must be used. An updating process of the goal should be made every 3rd year.

The goal for returning female spawners should be a 3 year average value, and a yearly limit value corresponding to 75 % of the 3-year value.

More comments -

A goal, of e g 1000 returning female spawners, can be appropriate.

A suitable goal could be to adopt the same goal that have been adopted by Denmark for wild lowland salmon rivers at the Danish North Sea coast. The goal in Denmark is that each wild salmon river shall guarantee in average 1000 returning spawners migrating into the river each

year, without support of released salmon (see National forvaltningsplan for laks, 2004, Miljøministeriet, Skov-og Naturstyrelsen).

Norway is also developing goals for the number of returning spawners for salmon populations (see NINA report 226, Gytebestandsmål for laksebestander i Norge, 2007).

To avoid long term loss of genetic variation at least 500 individuals shall be guaranteed (according to a paper by Franklin, 1980). In accordance with such conclusions, the goal for returning spawners shall never be less than 500 individuals.

As there is wild salmon rivers with very different size, it could be appropriate to separate Baltic salmon rivers in 2 categories – big and small.

Goals for small rivers can be 500 returning female spawners, which could be appropriate.

3. Advice to develop individual Salmon River Management Plans for each Baltic river holding wild salmon populations.

The quality and ambition level for the active protection of salmon river populations and for rivers for introduction of native salmon should be set up by development of individual Salmon river management plans.

Besides the clear Goal for returning female spawners for every salmon river, the following components should be included individual Salmon River Management Plans :

- a) Mapping of all spawning- and breeding bottoms for wild salmon in the river, described on maps. Calculations of potential areas for salmon spawning to reach a maximum production capacity of natural spawning salmon in the river.
- b) A plan for protection of spawning- and breeding bottoms for wild salmon in each river and river-mouth area, e g proposed as Natura 2000-areas.
- c) A plan for rehabilitation/restoration of habitat-bottoms for salmon, including priorities, in each salmon river.
- d) Development of fisheries regulations in the river, river-mouth and the coastal area close to the river, to guarantee that the goal for the number of returning female spawners to the river will be fulfilled.
- e) Monitoring of salmon in the river.

Develop and safeguard an annual monitoring of returning spawners, e g via automatic fish-counters, and of out-migrating salmon smolts, e g via smolt wheel-counters or smolt-monitoring fisheries in the river mouth-area. The ambition must be to guarantee yearly reliable information for returning spawners and for out-migrating smolt to the Baltic Sea.

Besides this info from all rivers, we need *Index salmon river monitoring* for at least each Baltic salmon assessment unit, developed by ICES. Such monitoring should also include more research oriented studies, that cannot be performed in all salmon rivers.

- f) Give advice for – No release of salmon in rivers with wild salmon populations. To guarantee the long-term survival of each wild salmon population.

Best regards

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