

Coalition Clean Baltic

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To

Second Expert Meeting of the HELCOM SALAR project, 5-6 October 2010

Recommendations for appropriate actions for the improvement of wild Baltic salmon populations

CCB proposes that the following aspects of salmon river management shall be included into the HELCOM SALAR-report.

Appropriate actions for High standard salmon monitoring

Baltic salmon rivers with naturally spawning salmon populations should have high standard of monitoring of returning spawners, parr densities and out-migration of smolts, as a prerequisite to establish a successful management of salmon rivers.

-Recommend in a long-term perspective, installation of automatic counting of salmon spawners in all wild Baltic salmon rivers. National programmes/projects should be established with priorities (for small rivers develop a system where equipment can be circulated).

-Establish monitoring routines for counting of out-migration of smolts on a yearly basis in wild salmon rivers.

Appropriate actions for River water and habitat

-Develop bottom-habitat restoration programmes/projects in wild salmon rivers, where such activities can have substantial impact on the salmon production

-Secure the water regime of salmon rivers, so water flow/level never will be below minimum level that can negatively affect salmon reproduction, e.g. survival of salmon parr/smolts in spawning/breeding areas. (Low water flow in combination with pollution of organic substances/suspended solids from e.g. dredging, peat mining etc in the river basin can have devastating impact).

Appropriate actions for Passage in rivers

Upstream adult migration

- construction of an well-functioning fish-ways, preferably “nature-like fishways”, for salmonids for migration to new spawning areas, where there is suitable bottom-structures upstream a man-made dam
- enhance the functioning of fish-ways and require, with reference to Habitat directive, guarantees that at least 50 % of the returning native stock that has entered the river will have a chance to enter across obstacles to reach spawning areas

Downstream migration of smolts/parr

Support to maximize out-migration of smolts

- Open gates at dams with turbines, for some days during smolt out-migration peak period, to avoid killing of smolts in turbines
- Introduce, in rivers with hydro-power dams, an effective passage for out-migrating smolts from the dam to the downstream river. (The distance from the dam construction to the downstream river vary from some meters up to many hundreds of meters, which need different solutions)

Appropriate actions for River fisheries management

- Targets for the minimum number of spawners per river
Set up clear goals for the minimum number of spawners per river, related to the MSY goal, for all wild salmon rivers in the Baltic region.
- Existing minimum landing sizes shall be kept. Returning female wild spawners above the landing size of 10 kg (e.g. second cycle spawners) should be released in inland waters and rivers with wild salmon. The target is to safeguard individuals carrying most of the genetic diversity of the population.
- To support the return of all genetic forms with different homing schedules, all inland and river fisheries shall have closed periods e.g. seven days per month across the whole season, and be organized in an appropriate way.
- Introduce strict control of fisheries in salmon rivers/estuaries during adult salmon migration period to guarantee that river goals for minimum number of spawners will reach the spawning areas
- Introduce closed period in wild salmon rivers for all kind of fisheries, No-Take Zones, in river, estuaries and nearby coastal zones, at the period of smolt-migration. Closed fisheries season should also be prolonged for a longer period, if there is evidence that smolts stay on for longer periods in estuaries/coastal areas.

-Introduce system for reporting of major parts of salmon recreational fisheries, also including private right-fisheries (not classified as commercial)

-Introduce effective programmes/projects to phase-out illegal salmon fisheries (poaching) in rivers and estuaries

*Establish increased fisheries inspection control measures during the period of adult salmon migration

*Establish increased fisheries inspection control measures during the period of out-migration of smolts, and close all river/estuary fishing activities in this period to avoid by-catch of smolts in fisheries

-Phase-out all supporting releases of salmon in rivers with naturally spawning salmon populations. In the case of weak populations, where there are no other alternatives for stock recovery, the practice of restocking can be accepted if it does not threaten the recovery of wild salmon populations.

Original genetic composition with high diversity should be guaranteed in all kinds of release activity. As early a life stage as possible should be used in releases, as this will promote needed lifeskill adaption to the natural environment and put the stocked fish under natural selection instead of hatchery selection.

Best regards,

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