



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries

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Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the CCB proposal to estimate amount of recreational fishing nets and traps used with intent to address potential lost gears.

Ghost nets

Background

With reference to discussions at FISH 5 meeting with regards to ghost nets and recreational fishery, CCB propose to further gather knowledge about the potential lost fishing gears in the recreational fishery. It seems clear that current knowledge is limited and there are no clear indications of if lost gears are common or only occasional. However locally, also few lost gears per year can have considerable unwanted effects.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider

- An investigation in each country of amount of sales of gears per year as indication of “turnover” of gears such as nets and traps.
- Adding questions to future national monitoring and questionnaires about recreational fishing, asking direct questions about how many nets are used, how many new nets purchased, how old nets are disposed of and how many nets and gears have been lost.
- To initiate the work with a simple questionnaire to all Contracting parties during 2017 asking for estimations of amounts and types of gears used in recreational fishing based on what is known today.

CCB proposal to estimate amount of recreational fishing nets and traps used with intent to address potential lost gears

Lost fishing gears, ghost nets and traps is a serious problem already identified and acknowledged in the Baltic Sea region. It constitutes both a littering aspect and a matter of ghost fishing and bird and mammal mortalities. Most removal projects and studies have focused on commercial gears. We have a rather large recreational fishing sector in the Baltic Sea area and in a few countries the use of commercial style gears are allowed on the coasts and at sea.

It is likely that the amount of gears in use are in the range of 5 000 and up, and gears are being lost and replaced in an unknown amount. The gear use and losses of gears should be estimated by HELCOM contracting parties during 2017.

Background note: *Three country examples give an outlook of the amounts of gears in use (from coming CCB report on recreational fishery in the Baltic region):*

Finland

In 2016, around 1.6 million Finns were enjoying recreational fishing. Subsistence fishing involved around 800 000 people, with just under 100 000 using only stationary gears and the majority using both stationary gear and rod and line.

According to the national survey for 2012, of the 16 million recreational fishing days, a little over 25 per cent were spent fishing in the Baltic Sea. Of those roughly 4 million days, 32.5 per cent were spent using passive gear, such as gill nets or traps.

Sweden

Of the 1.6 million people engaging in recreational fishers in Sweden, a minority are “subsistence fishers”. There is also a long-term trend of decreasing subsistence fishing relative to angling.

The main gears used in the subsistence fisheries are gillnets, fyke nets and pots. Fishing with passive gears has decreased, whereas fishing with rods and reels has become more common. Of the 47 million occasions of recreational gear use, nets, pots and similar gear were used on 7 million occasions – less than 15 per cent.

Denmark

It is estimated that more than half a million people engage in recreational fishing in Denmark. In 2009, 34 000 subsistence fishermen using passive gear had the compulsory license issued and in 2011, 33 911 passive gear fishers had the annual license issued.