



WWF

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER

2014



WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme

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BALTIC ECOREGION NEWS

Governments and businesses are looking at a giant growth potential in the maritime sector. Will they choose sustainable cooperation or will it be a free-for-all fight for resources?

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Halted sewage ban raises concerns on Baltic cooperation

Despite the celebrated decision taken by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2010 to ban the discharge of sewage from cruise and passenger ships in the Baltic Sea, the implementation of the ban remains elusive.

The ban was agreed “in principle” already five years ago, with the only condition that countries be given time to provide sufficient port reception facilities.

Yet, during a meeting of the HELCOM ‘Heads of Delegation’ in December, Russia failed to support the proposal to notify the IMO regarding the adequacy of port readiness in the Baltic Sea area - effectively delaying the ban. This means that cruise and passenger ships will be able to continue to dump their waste directly into the Baltic Sea, leaving this long-stated priority and HELCOM Ministerial commitment unfulfilled.

Cruise tourism in the region continues to expand and the waste generated by these ‘floating cities’ is substantial.

WWF has argued that technology isn’t the primary barrier – but rather that the issue isn’t being prioritized enough, despite the fact that countries, port cities and coastal municipalities are making a good profit from the cruise ships docking at their ports.

Reports from both the ports and the cruise industry estimate that each average passenger spends just over 100 Euro in every port they visit, generating large revenues to coastal port communities. In Stockholm alone, this is estimated to be in the range of several hundred million Euros per year.

For more information, contact [Pauli Merriman](#), +46 767 886 185.

144,878

JOBS ARE EXPECTED TO BE CREATED IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION AS PART OF THE EU “BLUE GROWTH” STRATEGY.

“SIMPLY GETTING TO WORK”

The 2014 edition of the WWF Living Planet Report brought the chilling news that the earth's populations of wildlife have declined by over 50 percent, just in the last 40 years!

The report, however, also provides examples of people, organizations and communities who are turning the tide on the negative trends by demonstrating how to preserve natural capital, produce better, consume more wisely, redirect financial flows and share resources more fairly.

Many of these types of solutions were on display in Warsaw on 23 September by the current and past winners of the Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award competition.

Once again these farmers showed that while others spend valuable time arguing over what is, or is not, possible to achieve – they are simply getting to work making a difference through their inspired vision, determination and action.

We salute these ambassadors for providing examples that others can learn from and replicate and thank them for their positive spirit which provide energy and inspiration for us all.

Best wishes,
Pauli and Ottilia



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FARMERS FOR THE FUTURE

On 17 September, Latvian couple Juris Cīrulis and Vija Cīrule were presented with the WWF Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award at a ceremony in Warsaw, Poland. They were awarded for their holistic approach to running a conventional dairy and crop farm that optimizes the use of resources and by-products.

Juris Cīrulis and Vija Cīrule have stayed true to their core belief that farmers should take ownership of the negative effects their agricultural practices have on nature. For over 20 years, they have taken many measures to use resources to their full potential by developing a closed, and thereby environmentally friendly, production cycle. For example, manure is recycled in a biogas station that produces electricity and valuable by-products. Juris and Vija have also constructed wetlands, buffer zones and settling ponds and are keen to pass on their knowledge and experiences on sustainable agricultural practices to others.

This year, national competitions were held in all nine countries around the Baltic Sea. The international winner was presented at a ceremony, “A Greener Agriculture for a Bluer Baltic Sea” held in Warsaw, Poland.

Read more about the [WWF Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year](#) competition, or contact [Ottilia Thoreson](#), +46 8 624 74 15, for more information,

FOCUS ON BLUE GROWTH

50 SHADES OF BLUE

“Blue economy” seems to be a buzz-word currently on everybody’s lips. The EU Commission is placing hopes in “blue growth” as Europe’s new frontier for boosting jobs and economy on a financially faltering continent.

An EU [Blue Growth Strategy](#) was unanimously endorsed by European Ministers for Maritime Affairs in October 2012.

The Commission calculates that Europe’s “blue economy” already represents roughly 5.4 million jobs and generates a gross added value of almost €500 billion a year.

But this is just the beginning. Further growth is expected in a number of areas, including tourism, energy production, aquaculture, mineral extraction and biotechnology.

ALSO IN THE BALTIC SEA

In May this year, the European Commission adopted a [Baltic Sea agenda for sustainable growth](#).

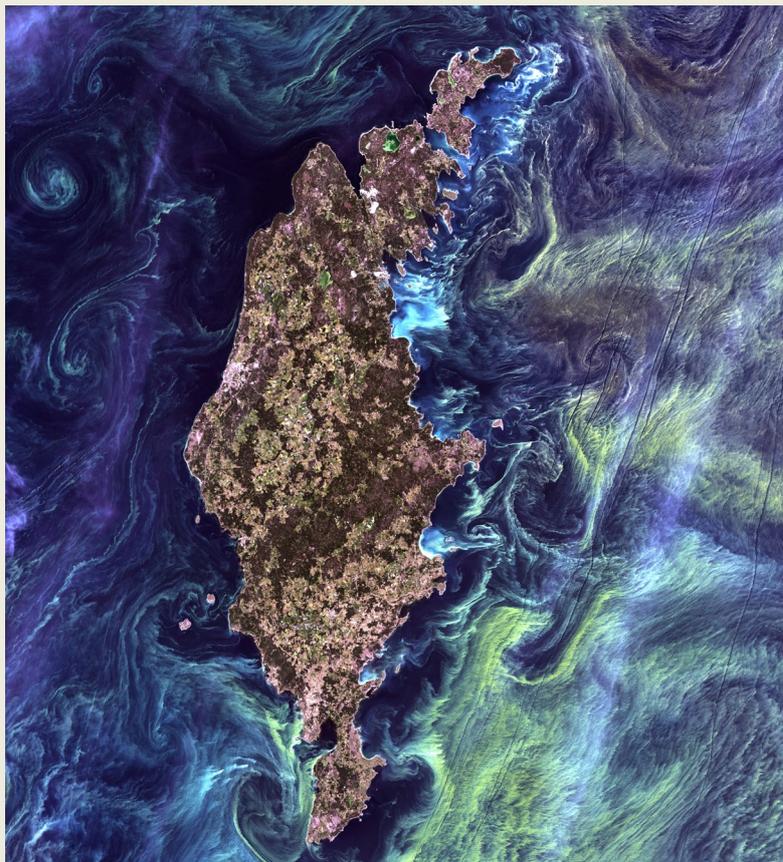
The agenda is aimed to provide a blueprint for harnessing the region’s strengths to boost innovation and growth in the maritime area through targeted financed projects.

The Commission sees growth potential in six main sectors in the Baltic Sea region: short sea shipping, coastal and cruise tourism, offshore wind, shipbuilding, aquaculture and blue biotechnologies.

The Commission is now ready to facilitate the implementation of the Baltic Sea agenda. The plan is to work together with stakeholders to organise a series of workshops dedicated to Blue Growth and funding opportunities in the Baltic Sea region.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE ECOSYSTEM?

While ‘sustainability’ and ‘ecosystem-based management’



© USGS/NASA LANDSAT

Bluegreen growth?

are briefly mentioned in the document, the crucial question remains as to whether or not this approach is seriously meant or if the higher principles will fall by the wayside when measured against potential new jobs and revenue?

The answer is not yet given. The prospects of a truly sustainable Blue Economy remain largely unexplored. The situation creates challenges for actors working to move development in a sustainable direction; but it also carries a great deal of opportunity.

MANAGING THE USE OF THE SEA

At the heart of the matter lie two key principles: ecosystem-based

management and inclusive and accountable governance processes.

Without a system for planning and managing our use of the sea that honours these two principles, there is nothing to stop short-sighted exploitation of resources with ensuing collapse of ecosystems.

In the end, blue growth can only be sustainable when it provides social and economic benefits for current and future generations in a long-term perspective, while protecting and maintaining the diversity, productivity, resilience, and core functioning of marine ecosystems.

INTEGRATED SEA USE MANAGEMENT AND MARITIME ACTIVITIES

© HÅKAN FLANK



John Tanzer, Marco Lambertini, Liisa Rohweder and Håkan Wirtén

HIGH LEVEL ENGAGEMENT AT THE BALTIC SEA FESTIVAL

WWF International's new Director General, Marco Lambertini made his first visit to Stockholm, WWF Sweden and the Baltic Programme in August to participate in the Baltic Sea Festival Event, *Our Seas—Our Future*.

Marco was joined by John Tanzer, Director of the WWF Global Marine Programme and their schedule included not only fully packed days of high-level public and private sector meetings in Stockholm but also a full day's field visit in the Stockholm archipelago to learn more about the work of the Baltic Ecoregion Programme and meet with members of the Baltic Programme Shareholder group including Liisa Rowheder, CEO of WWF Finland and Håkan Wirtén, CEO of WWF Sweden.

For more information, contact [Pauli Merriman](#), +46 767 886 185.

Marine research volunteer camp

WWF Finland, in collaboration with officials and research institutes, organized in August the first ever voluntary marine research camp in Finland. The purpose of this camp was to explore how citizens can be used in collecting data for marine research.

Monitoring obligations of officials are increasing, but at the same time resources are not growing.

The volunteers successfully gathered information concerning

alien species, dead anoxic zones, water transparency, toxic algae blooms and marine litter in the Finnish archipelago.

Contact [Sampsa Vilhunen](#), +358 40 550 3854 for more information.

Maritime spatial planning

The Estonian Fund for Nature (ELF) has participated in maritime spatial planning activities concerning the Hiiumaa and Pärnu counties, where they contributed their expertise on bottom habitats and

migrating birds' distribution.

All important on-going activities and plans, as well as their environmental impacts, were mapped.

However, due to lack of some critical data and limited resources for strategic impact assessments, several important questions still remain open and final decisions are postponed.

For more information, contact [Alex Lotman](#), +372 50 60 879.

Baltic Sea Festival

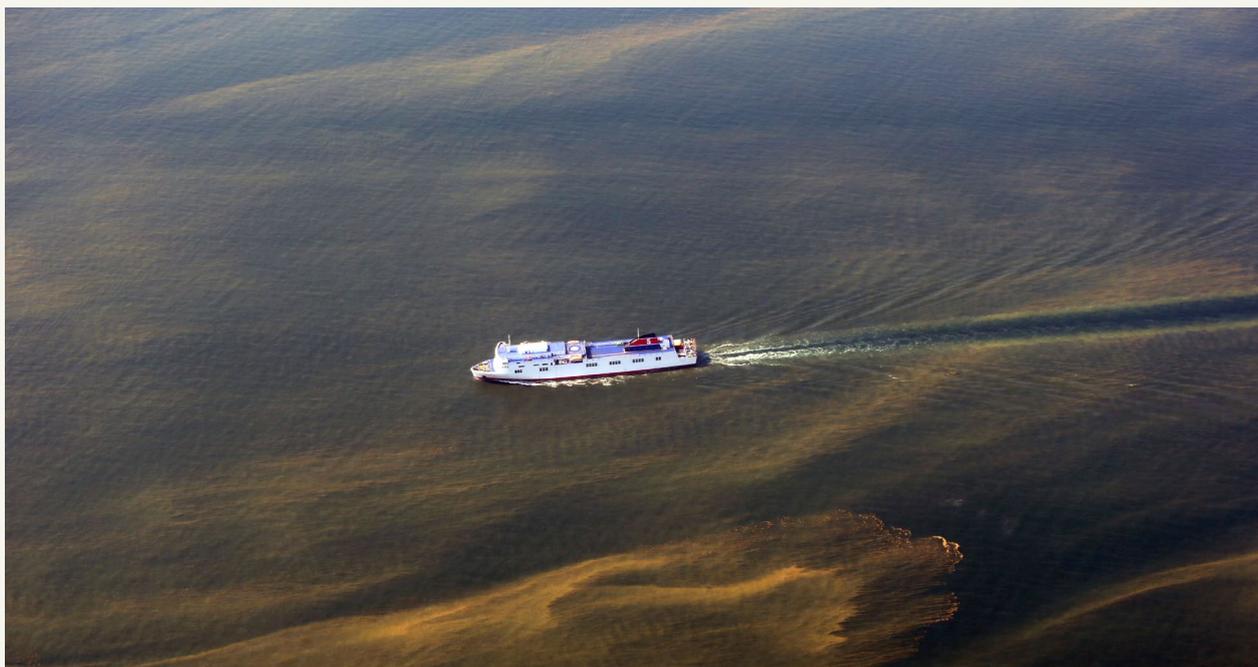
The Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden; the Swedish Environment Minister Lena Ek; Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, Director of the Global Change Institute, University of Queensland; WWF International's new Director General Marco Lambertini, and John Tanzer, Director of the WWF Global Marine Programme were among many high-level speakers and guests joining WWF Sweden and the Baltic Ecoregion Programme for this year's Baltic Sea Festival Event, *Our Seas—Our Future*, which was held at the Finnish Embassy in Stockholm on 27 August.

The event included key public and private sector representatives and highlighted the plight of the global oceans and the solutions needed to secure innovative ocean governance and ocean health both in the Baltic Sea and around the globe.

It also provided an important forum to generate support for and commitment to the Baltic Ecoregion Programme.

For more information, contact [Pauli Merriman](#), +46 767 886 185.

INTEGRATED SEA USE MANAGEMENT AND MARITIME ACTIVITIES



© KUSTBEVAKNINGEN (SWEDISH COASTGUARD)

The Future of Ocean Economy

Åsa Ranung of WWF Sweden was invited by the Swedish Ministry of Environment to attend a Scenario Workshop on the OECD project “*The Future of the Ocean Economy*” held at OECD Headquarters on 6 October in Paris.

Åsa was invited to present WWF’s work on the topic through the *Baltic Sea Scenarios* report and the *BCG Business Plan for the Baltic Sea* report.

For more information, contact [Åsa Ranung](#), +46 706 699 290.

Polish round-table on MSP

The third Baltic Round Table was held in Poland on 18 November. This time the meeting was dedicated to the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) process.

Almost 100 participants attended the meeting, co-organised by the Polish Ministry of Environment and WWF Poland.

The participants, including the Deputy Ministers of Infrastructure and Environment, expressed their eagerness to cooperate with WWF and include the organisation in the planning process as a partner.

For more information contact [Piotr Prędko](#), +48 608 633 319.

Integrated Ocean Management

24 members of WWF’s international Integrated Ocean Management Team met in Singapore on 4-7 November, coming together to refine their strategies and work plan.

The team agreed to work on two sets of objectives for 2020, one focusing on helping states and

governing bodies to adopt an ecosystem-based approach to ocean management, and the other focusing on new agreements on oceans beyond national jurisdictions.

For more information, contact [Ottilia Thoreson](#), +46 8 624 74 15.

Focus on extractives

The final strategy development meeting for the WWF Extractives Team was also held in Singapore on 4-7 November.

The team agreed to work on two parallel strategies, one on seabed mining and one on infrastructure and transport.

An initial plan for staffing and resourcing was put forward for each strategy.

For more information contact [Sanna Kuningas](#), +358 50 401 7470.

BIODIVERSITY AND FISHERIES

Fisheries Ministers fail their targets

On 6 October, the EU Commission's proposal for a multiannual plan (MAP) for the key target species in the Baltic Sea was released as the first ever EU multispecies multiannual plan.

The Commission's scientific advisory body, ICES, had classified the Eastern Baltic cod stock as "without adequate data to make a regular assessment" and advised an interim solution: to abandon the existing cod management plan and instead implement stricter measures, resulting in a proposed 56% reduction of the 2015 TAC for cod in the Eastern Baltic. Still, the Commission's proposed multi-species plan put forward quotas similar to last year's TACs.

A week later, on 14 October, European fisheries ministers not only set quotas in line with the Commission proposal, but in several cases exceeded the suggested limits in direct conflict with a precautionary and ecosystem-based approach.

For more information, contact [Ottilia Thoreson](#), +46 8 624 74 15.

Derelict fishing gear

Derelict fishing gear is a growing problem in all parts of the world, including Europe. WWF Poland together with the Municipality of Simrishamn (in Sweden) and Keep the Estonian Sea Tidy are currently preparing a project aimed at retrieving derelict fishing gear in Polish, Swedish and Estonian waters, thereby helping to improve the state of the marine ecosystems.



POND TURTLES IN LITHUANIA

In July this year, almost 100 young pond turtles were released back into their native habitats.

The total number of European pond turtles in Lithuania is only between 400 and 500 individuals, so the release means quite a significant boost to the population.

Since 2011, the Lithuanian Fund for Nature had been collecting turtle eggs from sites that were considered unsafe. The eggs were sent to a Zoo for incubation and hatching.

For more information, contact [Julija Petrošiūtė](#), +370 8655 56090.

On November 6, a workshop was held in Warsaw, Poland, to discuss how the project can help improve the marine environment in the Baltic Sea region for the benefit of the fishing industry as well as local communities.

The workshop was organised with the support of the European Commission (DG Environment) through the [MARELITT](#) project.

For more information, contact [Katarzyna Ławecka](#), WWF Poland.

Marine litter

WWF Poland is engaged in the preparation of the HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter. The first expert meeting was organised in May where all contracting parties have pointed out the ghost net problem as one of the priorities under the focus on sea-based litter.

The next meeting on marine litter was organised by HELCOM in Stralsund, Germany on 22-23 October 2014.

In Poland, thanks to a WWF initiative, a special expert group was created to develop the Polish position for the meeting in Stralsund. A WWF representative was among the representatives of all involved ministries.

For more information, contact [Ewa Milewska](#), +48 785 851 401.

Biodiversity in Poland

WWF Poland has received funding from the Norway Grants for a two-year project, "Protecting the biodiversity of the seas and oceans".

The project includes a large TV campaign in Poland promoting responsible choices of fish products, workshops for Polish processors on traceability, a road show with the famous Polish chef Grzegorz Łapanowski to teach young chefs how to prepare fish dishes from "green" fish, as well as a conference for all interested stakeholders on responsible fisheries.

The project will be active from now until April 2016.

For more information, contact [Ewa Milewska](#), +48 785 851 401.

BIODIVERSITY AND FISHERIES

Blue Patrol

After several reports from the Blue Patrol volunteers and calls from tourists, WWF Poland has taken action to prohibit the release of so called Chinese lanterns on the Baltic coast. Symbolizing good luck and prosperity, the launching of sky lanterns had become a highly popular ritual along the Polish seashores.

Unfortunately, this is quite a dangerous procedure for the environment, especially for water organisms, because the lanterns return to the coast and the sea as debris.

WWF has sent letters to the relevant institutions asking for a ban on the use of these lanterns. At the same time WWF promotes an event on Facebook called "I am happy and do not release lanterns!" Over 3,500 people have taken part in this event.

For more information contact [Ewa Milewska](#), +48 785 851 401.

"Ghost nets - lethal traps"

From June to November, the maritime museum Meeresmuseum in Stralsund, has been showing the WWF-supported exhibition "Ghost nets - lethal traps".

The damage abandoned fishing nets cause to marine life is demonstrated together with retrieval initiatives and possible ways of recycling the nets.

The exhibition is designed as a travelling exhibition with captions in English and German.

For more information, contact [Jochen Lamp](#), +49 151 1885 4927.



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FIND ŁEBEK

On 28 May, three grey seals were released into the Baltic Sea in the Słowiński National Park. Among them was Łebek, a grey seal saved by WWF Poland's Blue Patrol.

This seal pup was found in April and was still covered with lanugo, the white fur that covers seal pups during their first days of life.

The Blue Patrol found this pup on the beach, 50 meters from the coastline. Since its mother had not been seen in the vicinity, the experts from Hel's Marine Station decided to transport the seal to the station. After a few weeks spent at the station, the seal was ready to go back to sea.

Two other seals born at the station were released at the same time. Thanks to special transmitters, purchased in the framework of the project carried out by WWF Poland and the Marine Station in Hel, you can follow the migration route of Łebek and his companions on-line at wedrowkifok.wwf.pl.

Data gathered during this monitoring is highly valuable for scientists and indicates places that are preferred by seals.

For more information, contact [Ewa Milewska](#), +48 785 851 401.

Plastic debris

Throughout 2014, the Meeresmuseum and its partner museum, Ozeaneum, have put focus on plastic debris in the oceans. WWF Germany is a main contributor to the exhibitions.

A [leaflet](#) and a special edition of the WWF Young Panda club magazine have been published as well as a [short film](#) for children and volunteers have collected plastic debris from shores.

For more information, contact [Jochen Lamp](#), +49 151 1885 4927.

EUTROPHICATION AND AGRICULTURE

A platform for cooperation

The project *A Platform for Agri-Environment Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region* has concluded its initial phase. Several workshops, including partners and stakeholders, were held over the year, all reaching an overwhelming consensus on the need and usefulness of increased and organized cooperation on agri-environment issues in the region. The goals of the Platform are to:

- Create and facilitate a dialogue between Agri-Environment stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region
- Act as a bridge between completed and existing Agri-Environment projects to maintain knowledge and networks from these
- Share and leverage information from projects, research and meetings – within the Platform but also to the public, decision makers and stakeholders outside the Platform
- Establish best practices and promote technical solutions and innovative measures to address Agri-environment issues in the region.

For more information, contact [Jan Wärnbäck](#), +46 736 548 876.

Baltic-friendly cattle farms

In August, the Estonian Fund for Nature organized a seminar and a study-tour in Hiiumaa. The goal was to share good practices for cattle farms, including how to reduce nutrient emissions and new ways of marketing sustainable meat.

For more information, contact [Silvia Lotman](#), +372 5262 013.



LOOK AT "BLOOMING" WATER

This summer, the Lithuanian Fund for Nature organized an educational event called "Look at the 'blooming' water" in order to raise awareness of the problems of eutrophication.

Different samples from various water bodies all around Lithuania were analysed and showcased to the public through microscopes and on a big screen.

An algologist introduced the different species of algae and explained their life processes as well as the causes and effects of eutrophication.

For more information, contact [Julija Petrošiūtė](#), +370 8655 56090.

Not-so-friendly cattle farms

The Estonian Fund for Nature (ELF) has been involved in the preparation of a national reference document for Best Available Technologies for intensive cattle farms, which can be a significant source of nutrient pollution to the Baltic Sea.

ELF was critical of the initial

draft, which they found too weak, and was therefore invited to the working group. ELF worked hard to improve the document, thereby contributing to decreased nutrient run-off from manure handling.

For more information, contact [Alex Lotman](#), +372 50 60 879.

New wetland demonstration area

The first wetland demonstration area created in Latvia at the farm "Mezaciruli" was opened to the public this summer. The area has since been visited by national and international interested parties and promises to be a great demonstration site in the future.

The site is also being used for scientific research to test the effectiveness of the wetlands in reducing nutrient input to the Baltic Sea.

For more information, contact [Dārta Treija](#), +371 2 942 6313.

Resource efficiency in practice

On 18 November, Ottilia Thoreson attended a conference in Brussels on the dissemination of the project *Resource Efficiency in Practice*, a project making detailed analyses of the best practices to reduce the overload of nutrients be adopted in various regions of Europe.

The final report will be circulated in January and will list best practices to be adopted by region specific areas. Three of the regions are in the Baltic Sea area: Denmark, Germany and Poland.

For more information, contact [Ottilia Thoreson](#), +46 8 624 74 15.

BITS AND PIECES FROM THE BALTIC SEA REGION



© AUA KRÖDERE / PASAULES DABAS FONDS

Baltic Sea Film evening

On 30 August, Pasaules Dabas Fonds hosted a very special film night on the Majori beach on the Latvian coast.

Participants had a chance to watch three documentaries about the Baltic Sea - "Ghosts of the Baltic Sea", "Salty Life", "Requiem - prayer for the Baltic Sea" as well as the world-famous documentary "Planet Ocean".

All of the films provided in-depth knowledge about the complex problems of the Baltic Sea in an exciting and simple way that everyone could understand. The films also revealed secrets of the deep waters.

The show started immediately after sunset and ended at 2 am. Before the event, everyone was invited to attend environmental education workshops organised by Pasaules Dabas Fonds.

For more information, contact [Dārta Treija](#), +371 2 942 6313.

15 years of conservation holidays

This year ELF celebrated the 15th birthday of their "Nature conservation holidays".

During the summer, there were over 40 different nature conservation camps all over Estonia. The volunteers were mostly working on restoring semi-natural habitats. This year there was a special focus on butterflies and their habitats.

For more information, contact [Siim Kuresoo](#), +372 564 69026.

Opera star sings for the Baltic Sea

In the beginning of August, Inese Galante, a well-known Latvian opera star who performs on the stages of Germany, France, USA and Israel, held a concert for the protection of the Baltic Sea.

A special multimedia project dedicated to the Baltic Sea - "Requiem - prayer for the Baltic Sea" brought forward some of the

most excellent Latvian and international artists.

Pasaules Dabas Fonds supported the project both with knowledge about the Baltic Sea ecosystems and with joint communication activities.

For more information, contact [Dārta Treija](#), +371 2 942 6313.

New nature guides

In October this year, 15 new nature guides from the vicinity of Aukštumalė, were trained in the Nemunas Delta Regional Park, as part of a Lithuanian Fund for Nature project to preserve raised bogs.

During the training program, the guides learned how to raise public awareness about the natural values and importance of the ecosystem of the Aukštumalė raised bog.

The Aukštumalė raised bog is one of the most famous natural objects in the Nemunas Delta.

For more information, contact [Julija Petrošiūtė](#), +370 8655 56090.

INSIDE WWF BALTIC ECOREGION PROGRAMME

CALENDAR EVENTS

26-27 January

WWF Eutrophication team meeting
Stockholm, Sweden

8-9 December

HELCOM HoDs
Helsinki, Finland

8-10 December

SAMBAH end-of-project conference
Kolmården, Sweden

16-20 March

Global Marine Team Meeting
United States

FACES IN NEW PLACES

As of 1 December 2014, **Karolina Tymorek** has joined WWF Poland's terrestrial team to deal with the protection of foreign species. The office is now searching for someone to replace her in the Baltic team.

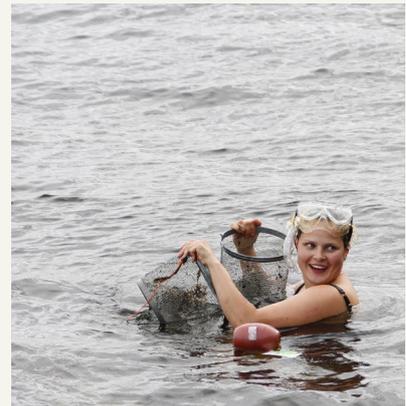
Ewa Milewska has taken the position of Deputy Head of Conservation at WWF Poland. **Piotr Predki** is replacing her as the new Coordinator of the Marine Team. Congratulations to both!

Mattias Rust is going on paternity leave from January until August 2015.

Mariliis Tago is expecting a new little panda to arrive in January. She will be replaced by **Kertu Hool** who is coming back in January.

Asa Andersson is now **Asa Ranung**. Congratulations Åsa!

MSC has now hired a representative in Poland, **Anna Debicka**, a former "panda" from WWF Poland.



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LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

We are currently reviewing the schedule and format of this newsletter.

What do you think about it? Is it needed and how can it be improved?

Please, send your views and comments to **Ottília Thoreson**.

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	<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/baltic</p>
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SHARE YOUR NEWS!

Send us your contributions to the next issue of the Baltic Ecoregion News!

Pauli and Ottília