



WWF

NEWSLETTER

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2017

## WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme

# BALTIC ECOREGION NEWS

## Baltic driving SDGs regionally

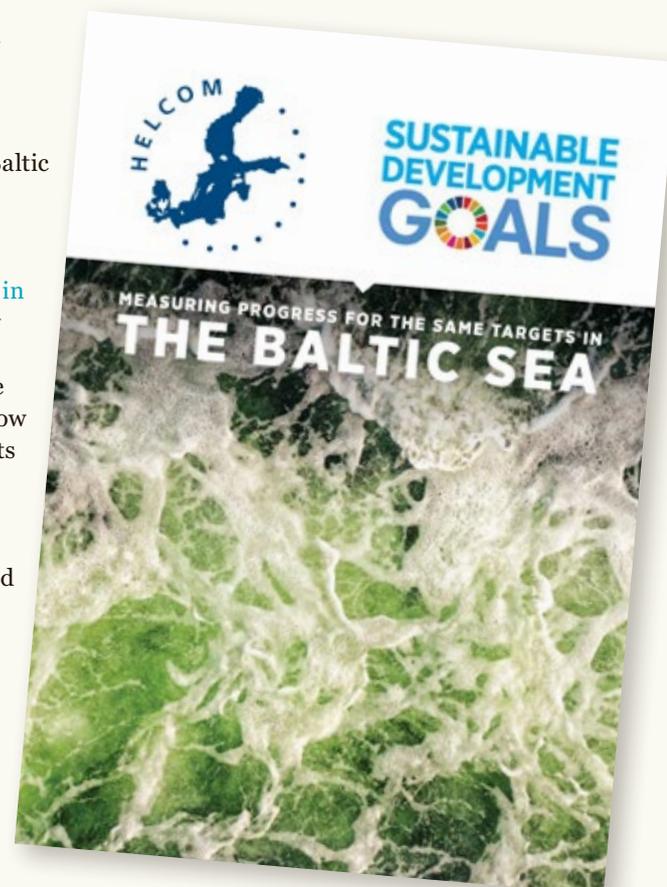
Regional approaches, solutions and partnerships are essential for the delivery of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14). This Ocean goal is itself both dependent upon and a core contributor to the other SDGs since healthy, productive and resilient oceans are indispensable to poverty eradication and sustainable development. National governments retain the primary responsibility for implementing commitments to achieve the SDGs. But Regional Seas Conventions provide a valuable platform to explore and coordinate regional actions and are well placed, for example, to apply the ecosystem approach and facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The HELCOM High-level segment (28 February), held on the occasion of the 38th Meeting of the Helsinki Commission, adopted “[HELCOM’s Implementation Outlook of the Ocean-related SDGs in the Baltic Sea - A Roadmap to Agenda 2030](#)”. The event highlighted that HELCOM targets are well aligned with the SDGs and that HELCOM can significantly contrib-

ute to the implementation of marine related SDGs in the Baltic Sea, also in a cross-cutting manner.

A new report “[Measuring progress for the same targets in the Baltic Sea](#)” identifies how HELCOM work supports the implementation of SDGs. The next possible occasion to follow up on SDGs and commitments is the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting to be held under the EU Chairmanship in 2018. The Ministerial Meeting could decide on a renewal process of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan.

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*Healthy, productive and resilient oceans are indispensable to poverty eradication and sustainable development.*

## EXCITING TIMES AND TRANSITIONS



Photo: Stefan Andersson / WWF Sweden

**W**e are living in exciting times. The historic 2030 Agenda includes an Ocean specific goal - SDG14. The UN has just concluded the first ever Ocean Conference, and the EU will host the fourth Our Ocean conference in October. All of this points to the watershed shift in attention and focus on the Oceans of our blue planet.

Regional approaches to delivering SDG14 are essential to success. Thus we remain committed to working in partnership with public and private sector actors and through regional platforms such as HELCOM. We see this as key to transforming the momentum around SDG14 into the real action and investment in ocean management and conservation needed to achieve the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda here in the Baltic Sea.

It is also an exciting time of transition for the WWF Network, its new Ocean Practice, and for the Baltic Programme. Personally, I am happy to share that I have the honor

*“I am confident that the Baltic will continue to pioneer innovative approaches to complex ocean governance issues”*

of joining the WWF Ocean Practice core team in the position of Policy Manager. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work over the past 12 years with the Baltic team, its Steering Group, and our many colleagues, partners and stakeholders across the region towards our shared objective of securing a healthy Baltic Sea. This work has been richly rewarding and I’m extremely proud of what we have achieved together.

Fortunately, this is not goodbye. This transition offers an opportunity for continued partnership in my new role and I am confident that the Baltic will continue to pioneer innovative approaches to complex ocean governance issues which will go on to inform and inspire other regions of the world. I am also delighted to share that Otilia Thoreson has agreed to take on the role of Acting Programme Director

for the Baltic Programme during this transition period. In this role, Otilia will lead the Baltic Programme supported by Anu Suono who will continue in her role as a Programme Assistant. We will follow up soon with the Baltic team, Steering Group and other partners to share our thoughts on this transition, and the opportunities it presents, as well as seek your thoughts and input.

I am grateful to have had the chance to work with and learn from such an extraordinarily talented, knowledgeable and committed group of professionals, partners and friends across the region. I look forward to our continued collaboration across the Baltic Sea and beyond.

*All my best,  
Pauli Merriman*

## FOCUS ON FILLING THE GLASS OF ACTION IN THE BALTIC SEA



Photo: Alan AtKisson

Consider the sustainability situation in the Baltic Sea. We know that in some respects, it is dire: dead zones, algae blooms, and missed policy targets are just the start of a long list of woes. In other ways, things have improved: seals have come back, Marine Spatial Planning is taking root, and the status of the sea is higher on the political agenda.

Should we declare the glass half empty, or half full?

This is the traditional way to divide the world into pessimists and optimists. But here is a better question to ask: Is the glass filling up? In other words, is our region moving in the right direction with its strategies, plans, and most importantly, actions?

I think the answer is a qualified yes. The “glass of action” in the Baltic Sea is far from full. But the glass is filling, not draining.

Efforts to restore the Baltic Sea received a major boost in 2015 with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The inclusion of SDG 14 — the goal to conserve the oceans and seas and use their resources sustainably — was a huge advance for marine sustainability awareness.

Without SDG 14, there would have been no first UN Ocean Conference in 2017. There would not be the rapid advance in understanding that I personally observe in working with people in government and business. There would not be the growing awareness that the sea, land, and fresh water systems are tightly connected, that we must care for all of them, together.

You might call this advance in awareness a “sea change”. Or as I like to say, “Ocean is the new climate.” (I am borrowing a phrase used in the fashion business to announce a change in colors for the season. You may know it from a popular television series, “Orange is the New Black.”)

For two decades, climate change has been the world’s dominant environmental issue, with good reason. We know that the climate and the sea are an integrated system. Yet up to now, the sea has been the forgotten half of that system in the public consciousness — even though the oceans and seas absorb at least one-quarter of the CO<sub>2</sub> we emit, as well as 90% of the heat trapped by the growing CO<sub>2</sub> in Earth’s atmosphere.<sup>1</sup>

Just as the atmosphere is essential for breath, the sea is essential for food and other resources. We depend on the sea for livelihoods, recreation, transport, and so much more. For all these reasons, the sea is finally starting to share center stage.

WWF has played a major role in this process regionally, as well as globally, with its reports on [the economic value of the Baltic Sea](#) (2014), [the Principles for a Sustainable Blue Economy](#) (2015), the call to action presented in the report [All Hands on Deck](#) (2016), and in the development of a global roadmap to create investment guidelines for steering finance in a sustainable direction (2017). The latter initiative has already contributed to action at the level of the European Commission.

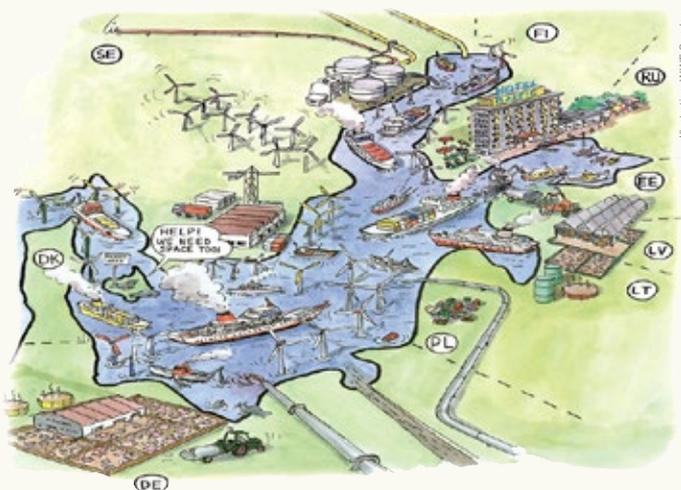
Thanks in no small part to WWF’s constant reminders like these, over many years, regional governments, institutions, and a growing number of industry actors appear to be taking marine sustainability far more seriously than ever before. There is a long journey ahead, but the ship has raised sail. It’s heading in the right direction. More and more people are getting on board. Now it’s “all hands on deck”: we have to push even harder, and get more speed out of those sails.

Or to return to our earlier metaphor of a “glass of action” that is filling up: keep pouring it on.

**Alan AtKisson** is president of AtKisson Group and a consultant to the Baltic Ecoregion Programme. AtKisson Group has launched a new internet platform tracking progress on marine sustainability issues: see <http://SDG14.net>

<sup>1</sup>“How much CO<sub>2</sub> can the oceans take up?”, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, 3 July 2013; and “Oceans Are Absorbing Almost All of the Globe’s Excess Heat,” New York Times, 12 Sept 2016

# INTEGRATED OCEAN MANAGEMENT AND MARITIME ACTIVITIES



## Pipeline puts Baltic's Good Environmental Status in Jeopardy

Sweden is developing three distinct marine spatial plans for its marine area, to be submitted by 2021 in line with the request from the EU. In early May, WWF Sweden provided comments on the [first drafts of the plans](#) which must address the complex puzzle involving many stakeholders from a range of marine and maritime interests.

Activities for consideration include agriculture, shipping, fishing, tourism, energy and research, among others. Around and within these, the government must deliver and maintain a coherent network of ecosystem-based marine protected areas with 'blue corridors' to enable marine wildlife and migration route for birds. Attention to marine cultural and archaeological sites adds another

important dimension. The environmental impact assessment (EIA) indicates that the marine spatial plans as proposed will not deliver Good Environmental Status for the Baltic Sea - a key area of concern for WWF. This is largely due to a projected rise in shipping activities.

WWF is further deeply concerned about the possibility that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline could be drawn right through a newly designated marine Natura 2000 area south of the Island of Gotland. This major potential infrastructure project is not included in the drafts for the marine spatial plans, raising the question as to whether any other infrastructure projects are under consideration but not mentioned in the draft national marine plans.

### Nord Stream 2

Nord Stream 2 comprises the planning, construction and operation of a new twin subsea pipeline that would connect European consumers with Russian gas fields. It would run some 1200 km through the Baltic Sea via the Exclusive Economic Zone and territorial waters of Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany. Once completed, the pipeline will have the capacity to supply 55 billion m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas per year.

WWF believes that countries should prioritize investments in renewable energy and strictly limit any further investments in fossil fuel related projects and infrastructure. Replacing fossil fuels with renewable sources and increasing energy efficiency are essential to achieving the EU goal of reducing, by 2050, greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95% as compared to 1990 levels. Nord Stream 2 represents a massive investment in direct conflict with the EU goal. A [WWF policy statement](#) urges the relevant authorities around the Baltic Sea to include a number of considerations for this project as well as relevant for other, less advanced, future infrastructure projects.

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### Opposition to Nord Stream 2 in Estonia

The Estonian Fund for Nature (ELF) filed an argument against Nord Stream 2 with the Ministry of the Environment as part of the Espoo process.

ELF stressed the need to limit further investments in fossil fuel infrastructure, noting that the project ignores the goals of both the EU and the Paris Climate Agreement.

ELF noted that the Nord Stream 2 Espoo report fails to convince that the marine environment and biodiversity would not be negatively affected by these developments.

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# INTEGRATED OCEAN MANAGEMENT AND MARITIME ACTIVITIES

## Baltic Sea Fund Awards HELCOM Maritime Working Group

**11 April 2017** – The HELCOM Maritime Working Group was awarded the Baltic Sea Fund Prize 2017 for its work to reduce pollution from maritime traffic in the Baltic Sea. The €20,000 award was made in recognition of the Working Group's successful promotion of international agreements for the benefit of the Baltic Sea environment. Two successes highlighted were the ban on the release of sewage from ships in international waters and the implementation of the Baltic Sea as a special area in the emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx Emission Control Area, NECA) to reduce the nitrogen load.

Since 1990 The Baltic Sea Fund (Östersjöfonden) based in Mariehamn, Åland, has awarded the Baltic Sea Fund Prize to individuals and organizations for significant and outstanding contribution to the Baltic Sea environment.

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Photo: Mike Ambuck / WWF



Photo: Tuukka Troberg

## BONUS – 10 Years of Impact in Connecting Science and Policy

**3-4 May 2017** – BONUS – the joint Baltic Sea research and development programme - hosted stakeholders, researchers and funders in Helsinki to mark their 10th anniversary. Pauli Merriman joined these meetings on behalf of the WWF Baltic Programme and as a member of the BONUS Advisory Board. Pauli expressed her support for BONUS research which is providing critical scientific knowledge needed to help steer the Blue Economy in a sustainable direction.

The results of a [study of the impact of BONUS](#) on scientific excellence and dissemination was presented. According to the results, BONUS research has had a high impact on marine science and a strong, positive impact on the application of science to policy development, changes in funding patterns and on the involvement of different actors. Key policies

supported by the BONUS research programme include the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, as well as other coastal and marine environmental policies, directives and plans.

“Given the policy-driven nature of BONUS, we are delighted with these findings. The impact of BONUS on the progress of Baltic Sea science and the practical use of BONUS-generated knowledge for stakeholders is of critical importance to us - as stipulated in our strategic research agenda. Now we are reassured that the journey over the past decade is pointing in the right direction and lays a great foundation for the future,” says Dr Kaisa Kononen, Executive Director of BONUS.

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# INTEGRATED OCEAN MANAGEMENT AND MARITIME ACTIVITIES



Photo: Paivi Roseqvist / WWF-Finland

believes that the interaction would be better regulated through the introduction of “prevent-reduce-recover-compensate” methods. This approach would assess environmental impact in the initial phase and enforce compensation as a last resort only if “prevent-reduce-recover” were not feasible.

Emerging from the roundtable, BFN recommends the immediate introduction of two approaches toward minimizing negative impacts at an early stage:

- 1) strategic environmental impact assessments of planned projects, and
- 2) marine spatial planning.

Presentations from the Forum are available [here](#).

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## Building Biodiversity into Business

**23 March 2017** – The Baltic Fund for Nature (BFN) and the UNDP jointly convened a roundtable on “Maritime infrastructure projects and conservation of biodiversity” during the XVIII International Environmental Forum Baltic Sea Day. Close to 50 participants joined the roundtable, representing business, civil society (both national and international), scientific organizations such as the Russian Academy of Sciences and universities, students, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Rustam Sagitov (Director of BFN) and Igor Kostin (UNDP project lead: *Mainstreaming the biodiversity conservation into Russia’s energy sector policies and*

*operations*) led discussions to explore means of solving the challenges related to the conservation of biological diversity conflicting with large resource and infrastructure projects. Following nine presentations and extensive dialogue, the roundtable concluded that there is a need to involve big business in the conservation planning process.

Business engagement could include corporate ethics and the development and implementation of environmental protection measures. Yet there is at present little sign of a systematic approach or mechanisms for interaction between business and nature conservation in Russia. Business contributions are often sporadic with dubious lasting impact. BFN



Photo: Paivi Roseqvist / WWF-Finland

## A Long Awaited Launch

**25 May 2017** - After months of silence, the Estonian government officially launched a marine spatial planning process that was due to begin in January. The Estonian Fund for Nature - which had made a public call on the Prime Minister to stress the importance of the planning process and urge for an expedited launch date - welcomes the new momentum.

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# INTEGRATED OCEAN MANAGEMENT AND MARITIME ACTIVITIES



## Sustainable Blue Economy a Focus of the 4th World Ocean Summit

**22-24 February 2017** - WWF was intensively engaged in The Economist's 4th World Ocean Summit, Financing the Sustainable Ocean Economy, held in Bali, Indonesia. The Summit focused on applying sustainable investment approaches to the ocean ('Blue Economy') and addressing the need to integrate ocean uses within a more holistic and effective governance system.

WWF's approaches and solutions drew prominent references from a number of the speakers and participants. WWF introduced the draft [Sustainable Blue Economy Protocol](#) which builds upon the work with the [WWF Principles for a Sustainable Blue Economy](#). The discussions built momentum toward the UN Oceans Conference (5-9 June) and the EU Our Ocean Conference (5-6 October). Participants, in particular the finance sector, recognized that the oceans are under severe threat which potentially affects their bottom line. There was thus strong support for sustainable Blue Economy approaches and guidelines.

EU Commissioner Karmenu Vella, announced that the European Commission will work with the Prince of Wales International Sustainability Unit and WWF to advance a process to convene public and private financing institutions and other stakeholders around principles for sustainable investment in the Blue Economy.

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## Baltic Sea Future Congress

**6-7 March 2017** - [The Baltic Sea Future Congress](#) was initiated by Stockholm University, the City of Stockholm and Sustainable Seas Foundation. Some 350 participants attended from across the region, including Belarus and Ukraine. The Baltic Programme was represented by Otilia Thoreson and Anu Suono, and Edmundas Greimas and Julija Petrosiute from the Lithuanian Fund for Nature.

Key areas of focus were the need for the implementation of existing legislation, better cooperation, and leadership on both regional and local scales. Parallel sessions offered in-depth knowledge sharing on the various challenges and best practice solutions in the areas of eutrophication, hazardous substances, biodiversity, shaping the Blue Economy, shipping, governance and climate, to name a few.

Otilia Thoreson presented the experience of the Baltic Farmer of the Year Award project in a session on applying innovative solutions to address eutrophication. She was joined by Jan-Christer Carlsson from Sweden - winner in 2013 - who shared his personal experience of the competition and the important role of farmers in the region.

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# BIODIVERSITY AND FISHERIES



## Immediate Closure of the Western Baltic Flatfish and Cod Bycatch Fishery

The western Baltic cod is classified as a 'vulnerable' stock due to historical and recent overexploitation. To encourage cod spawning, the European Council agreed to close all fishing activities during February and March 2017.

However, Germany and Denmark decided to open the fishery targeting flatfish. This decision directly impacted the western Baltic cod, which is caught as bycatch in this fishery, and clearly ignored the closure period dictated by law. Such actions represent a contravention of the primary objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) basic regulation: to restore stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and apply the precautionary approach to fisheries management and are also non-compliant with the multiannual plan for the Baltic Sea and the Control Regulation.

Alarmed by the lack of compliance from these two Member States, WWF promptly demonstrated the proofs of non-compliance to the European Commission and requested the immediate closure of the fishery. This action was coordinated with colleagues at the national level and in partner organizations to put pressure on the German and Danish governments to close the fishery. One week after letters were sent to the European Commission and national administrations, and press and social media work at national level, WWF's European Policy Office met with the Commission and both countries decided to close the fishery.

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## Finns Sourcing More "Green" Fish than Ever Before

WWF Finland has played a leading role in turning the Finnish seafood trade around to source more sustainable seafood products. Between 2012 and 2015, WWF campaigned on this topic and challenged the most important seafood actors to make commitments to promote more sustainable seafood through adapting their procurement according to the WWF Seafood Guide. By campaign close, less than 2% of fish sold is classified as unsustainable (red according to the guide).

The campaign's success demonstrates the value of companies, fishing authorities, non-governmental organizations and citizens acting as one to help solve the overfishing crisis. There are important lessons learned that can be applied in other Baltic markets. [Read more from the English Summary of the WWF Finland Fish Campaign.](#)

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## Finnish Herring and Sprat Fishery Enter MSC Assessment

The Finnish Fishermen's Association has entered the Baltic herring and sprat fishery into full assessment for the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) Fisheries Standard. The fishery represents more than 90% of Finland's marine catch and is the first in Finland to enter MSC assessment. Finland is currently the largest fishing state in the Baltic area, in terms

of quota. Herring and sprat are extremely important species for the Baltic Sea ecosystem so it is critical that they are managed sustainably. [WWF welcomes](#) the Finnish Fishermen's Association's decision to put this fishery forward for MSC assessment.

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# BIODIVERSITY AND FISHERIES



Photo: Cez Krawak

## Mapping Ghost Nets in the Baltic Sea

**10-11 April 2017** - WWF Poland organized an international workshop in Szczecin, Poland focused on the Marelitt Baltic project to reduce the negative impact of derelict fishing gear (“ghost nets”) on the Baltic Sea. The workshop was attended by partners from Germany, Estonia, Poland and Sweden, alongside scientific experts, fishers and divers. The dual aim was to identify locations for action at sea this summer and to agree on a common methodology for sampling to estimate the quantity of ghost nets in the Baltic.

A survey conducted among fishers and presented at the meeting showed that the majority of lost nets are gillnets – thin lines made of mostly plastic, which are usually suspended in the water column. Trawl nets are rarely lost. Bycatch by lost nets suspended in the water is the primary environmental consequence of the ghost nets phenomenon, although it is possible that the release of micro-particles from the plastic in the nets is also having major negative impacts.

The survey results led to the conclusion that action at sea in 2017-2018 should be focused in particular where the gillnet fishery is present. Further discussions took

### Sustainable Seafood Guides

**11 May 2017** – Several of the WWF offices and partner offices in the Nordic and Baltic region jointly launched the latest Sustainable Seafood Guides, using the familiar traffic light colours to inform consumers and influence market behaviour – green (Best Choice), yellow (Think Twice) or red (Avoid!).

The seas are in a dire state and many fish stocks are in serious decline. Overfishing is a major threat to marine wildlife and habitats. We need to reverse this trend, rebuild overexploited stocks and strive for restoration and conservation of healthy and balanced ecosystems. Consumer demand for sustainable seafood can act as a powerful incentive for better fisheries management.

WWF publishes these Seafood Guides in approximately 20 countries in 17 different languages. In the Baltic region, WWF Germany and Sweden have published consumer guides since the early 2000s; other offices have followed suit. The guides help consumers make environmentally responsible and sustainable seafood choices by insisting that the seafood we eat comes from sustainably managed fisheries or is farmed in a responsible and environmentally friendly way. The seafood you choose can determine whether or not coming generations will continue to enjoy the riches of the seas. Consult [WWF’s Sustainable Seafood Guides](#) to identify seafood products that carry the MSC or ASC ecolabels.

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**Find the Baltic Seafood Guides Here:**

<a href="#">Finland</a>	<a href="#">Poland</a>
<a href="#">Sweden</a>	<a href="#">Denmark</a>

place with fishers across the four countries in May and June. Further to this as well as joint data collection among the project partners to designate marine areas for new searches for ghost nets by fishing vessels and divers, a map of ghost

net hot spots is in development, for use this summer. Stay tuned for more information and updates on this important work!

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# EUTROPHICATION AND AGRICULTURE



Photo: Kristiina Kõosaalu

## Invitation to CAP 2020

The Estonian Fund for Nature is pleased to invite you to join the conference [CAP 2020 - Towards Sustainable Agriculture](#) to be held on 1-2 September 2017. The conference is an international event dedicated to the future of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Farmers, farmers' organizations, civil society and public sector representatives from all over the Europe will share their views and hopes on the future CAP.

A newly launched blog by the Estonian Fund for Nature – "Towards sustainable agriculture"

- presents the case for radical reform of the CAP by 2020 and introduces the NGO perspective on this topic. Find the blog both in Estonian and English [here](#).

Aleksei Lotman from ELF and Kuno Kasak from the University of Tartu have also published a paper criticizing the CAP direct payment system and its environmental performance in the Estonian magazine Akadeemia, [overview available in English](#).

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258,708 European citizens and 600 organizations and businesses joined the Living Land action to request radical reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy

## Living Land Campaign

**February 2017** - The European Commission launched a public consultation on the future of our food and farming system. In response, BirdLife Europe & Central Asia, the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and WWF jointly launched the [Living Land Campaign](#). The aim was to mobilize their networks and stakeholders to take action toward a healthier and more sustainable food and farming system in Europe.

Five of the 34 questions in the European Commission's public consultation were selected for their relevance to public participation. An online tool was created to send answers to those questions through a simple process of signing an online petition. This resulted in 258,708 European citizens and 600 organizations and businesses joined the Living Land action to request radical reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Commission is expected to present its response to the consultation in a conference on 7 July.

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Photo: Hanna Virtanen

# EUTROPHICATION AND AGRICULTURE



Photo: Johan Sjögrava private

## Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award

Sustainable agriculture is central to reducing the threat of eutrophication of the Baltic Sea. Agriculture accounts for more than half of the nutrient inputs leading to the eutrophication and farmers have an important role in reducing these inputs. The Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year award has been presented to about 50 farmers since its launch in 2009 in recognition of those leading in innovative measures to reduce nutrient runoff from their farms. Its aim is to highlight best practices in Baltic-friendly farming.

The WWF Baltic Programme is pleased to announce the continuation of this important tradition. The next competition for the Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award will be launched in conjunction with a conference on the CAP organized by the Estonian Fund for Nature (1–2 September) in Tallinn. The national competitions will run through early spring 2018 and the nomination of a regional winner is expected in the fall. Stay tuned for more information!

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## Promoting Baltic-Friendly Farming in Russia



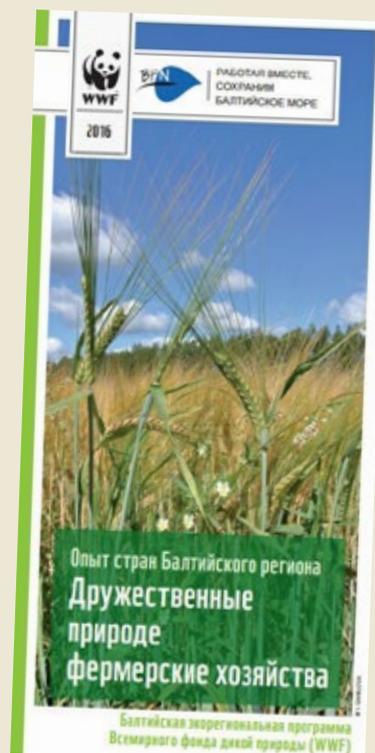
The Baltic Fund for Nature (BFN) in St Petersburg has compiled a package of communications material about the Russian winners of WWF's Baltic Farmer of the Year Award (BSFYA) over the past nine years.

A brochure entitled as [Nature-friendly farming practices: an experience from Baltic Sea Region countries and Russia](#) synthesizes the annual reports on the BSFYA across all participating countries and presents an overview of Russian national winners. The brochure is intended as a promotional tool to persuade Russian farmers to participate in the competition in the future. A film - [On the way to sustainable agriculture](#) - was also produced to tell the individual stories of Russian farmers who have taken part in and won the national BSFYA competition. All materials are available on the [BFN website](#) (in Russian).

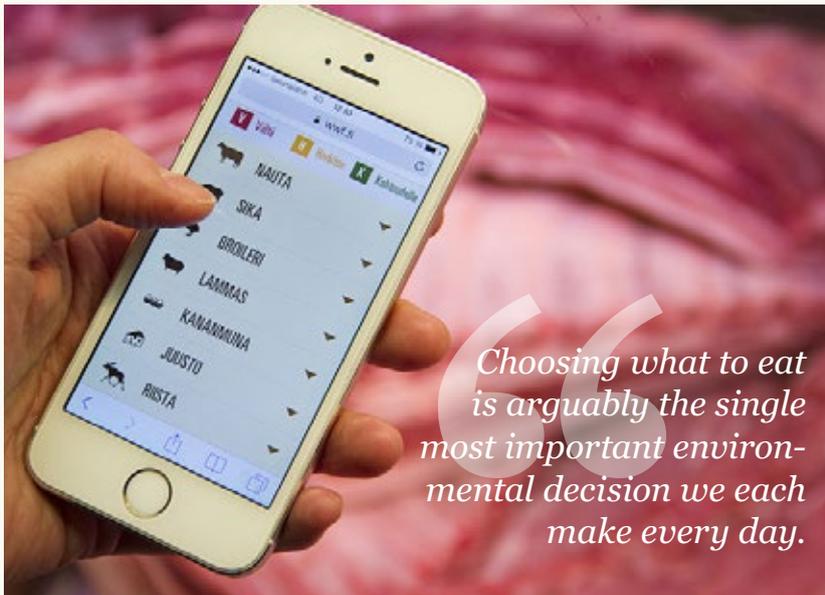
The BFN is planning to arrange a special event in June to feature and promote the products from the previous Russian winners' farms. The event will be

focused on chefs from restaurants and small 'organic' shops selling the meat, milk and other products from nature-friendly farms located around St. Petersburg.

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# EUTROPHICATION AND AGRICULTURE



*Choosing what to eat is arguably the single most important environmental decision we each make every day.*

Photo: Saara Tuomi / WWF-Finland

meat in their diet with vegetables and sustainably caught or farmed fish”, says Liisa Rohweder, Secretary General of WWF Finland.

The guide classifies different types of meats according to their environmental impact: red (avoid), yellow (consider) or green (consume within reason).

The negative impacts of meat production include loss of habitat and biodiversity. Growing meat consumption also drives climate change and contributes to an increase in nutrient runoff (and thus eutrophication) by driving growth in meat production. Reducing meat consumption in the region could significantly improve the state of the Baltic Sea.

The next step for the Baltic Sea region is to explore producing national meat guides in other Baltic countries. This work is linked to the [Consume Project](#) which is developing a mapping study of the meat production market in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

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## Less But Better - WWF Finland's Meat Guide

Choosing what to eat is arguably the single most important environmental decision we each make every day. For example, how much and what type of meat we choose to eat has implications for our contribution to climate change, the health of the Baltic Sea and biodiversity

richness. WWF Finland has therefore followed Sweden's example and released their first [meat guide](#), available in Finnish.

“The WWF Meat Guide recommends Finns to eat less and better meat for the environment. We encourage replacing some of the



Photo: Petteri Hautamaa / WWF-Finland

## Restoring Finnish River Continuity

Dams and similar structures depress the ecological status of rivers and streams throughout the Baltic Sea region. In Finland alone there are tens of thousands of small obstacles such as dams and culverts that block the continuity of these ecosystems. WWF Finland has thus started a two-year project to remove many of these obstacles, co-funded by the European Marine and Fisheries Fund. The project will seek to restore stream ecosystems and rehabilitate endangered migratory fish species such as sea trout, salmon and migratory whitefish, by reopening access to their spawning grounds.

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# PEARLS FROM THE BALTIC SEA REGION



Photo: WWF/Finland

## Rare Seals on Camera

The Saimaa ringed seal (*Pusa hispida saimensis*) is a rare fresh water seal adapted to Lake Saimaa, after its connection to the Baltic Sea was cut off some 8000 years ago. It is one of the most endangered seals in the world, with only few hundred individuals remaining due to threats from fishing nets and climate change. Spotting one in the wild takes extraordinary luck, but thanks to WWF Finland it was possible for a brief time for

everyone to get a glimpse. In May, for the second year, a live cam was installed to follow the daily life of the seals. The seal caught on camera was named Pullervo last year, after his chubby appearance. Pullervo attracted 3 million views before moving on to other parts of Lake Saimaa. With any luck there will be another chance to spot them in 2018.

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Photo: Maarit Rautavaara / WWF

## Estonian Wetlands Seminar

**16 May 2017** – A seminar was held near the Vända constructed wetlands in Uhti, Estonia to introduce this type of artificial wetland and water protection measures in general to farmers and relevant government officials. The Vända constructed wetlands are the result of a project funded by WWF.

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## Out to Sea

**23 March–30 June 2017**

– A highly recommended exhibition entitled 'Out to Sea' is in its final days in Stockholm. WWF-Sweden and the Baltic Programme were among the many sponsors of the thought-provoking exhibition designed to raise awareness around marine pollution and advocate for action toward clean seas. Focused on plastic consumption in our daily lives, the exhibition is part of a **wider effort** to share information with the public and create momentum for the UN SDG14 Ocean conference in New York (5–9 June, co-hosted by Sweden and Fiji).



Photo: Anthony B. Rath / WWF

WWF-Sweden presented some of its ongoing work on the oceans at an event held in conjunction to the Out to Sea exhibition at the Tekniska Museet May 10th.

A representative from the Swedish Water Authority and Alan AtKisson, who initiated the process that brought the exhibition to Stockholm, also spoke at the event.

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# PEARLS FROM THE BALTIC SEA REGION



Photo: K. Wrzesniakowski



Photo: W. Czuchryla



Photo: Lukasz Barnaszkiewicz



Photo: I. Pawlowski

## Polish Pups and the Blue Patrol

Each year in February and March seals are in their pup stage along the Polish coast, signalling a season of intensive work for WWF Blue Patrol volunteers. For a range of largely unpredictable reasons, seal pups can be separated from their mums and are found dehydrated and undernourished on the beaches. So Blue Patrol volunteers remain on standby awaiting reports of young seals in need.

Upon receipt of such a sighting, volunteers immediately set out for the beach. Once on site, they assess the health of the affected pup and, if necessary, care for them until staff from the Hel Marine Station of the University of Gdansk arrive. In

March-April 2017, a total ten seal pups were delivered to the Hel Marine Station "sealarium" and are now in recovery.

In April, Blue Patrol volunteers also held workshops on protecting birds during their breeding season.

Workshops were hosted by the Research Group of Water Birds KULING. Over 120 volunteers took part and learned how to find ringed plovers' nests on the coast. They also learned how to protect nests by constructing and placing a protective cage over them.

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# PEARLS FROM THE BALTIC SEA REGION

## Let's Do It!

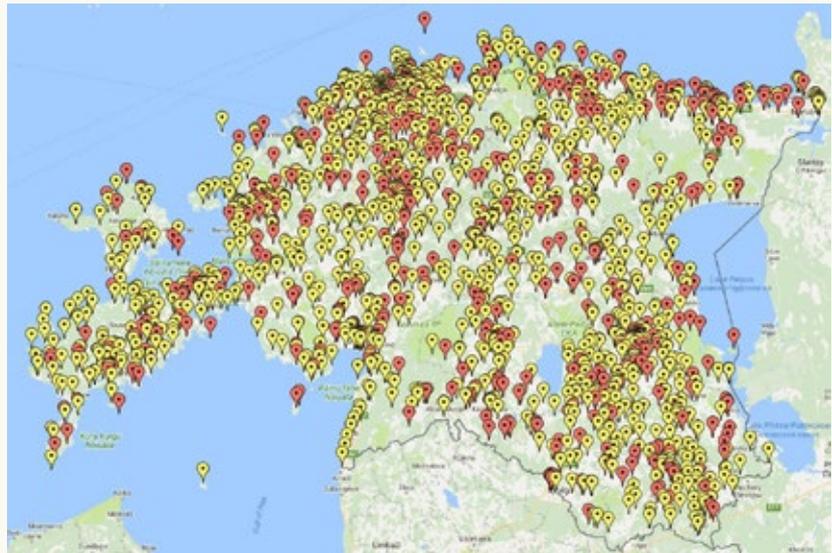
**6 May 2017** – More than 50,000 Estonian volunteers took part in the community activity day “Let’s do it”.

With 2,130 different actions all over Estonia involving nearly 4% of the entire country’s population the day was a huge success.

Each community, organization and citizen had the opportunity to determine what needed to be done, and to invite others to join accordingly. The main purpose of the event is to promote civil society contributions in Estonia through encouraging active attitudes, strengthening local communities and supporting the development of local leaders.

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*With 2,130 different actions all over Estonia involving nearly 4% of the entire country’s population the day was a huge success.*



Photo: Kairi Plus

# PEARLS FROM THE BALTIC SEA REGION

## Swedish Campaign for our Blue Planet

Space has been far better explored than our blue planet. No wonder then that WWF Sweden's recent [ocean campaign](#) was met with reactions ranging from astonishment to surprise – and sorrow as people learned about the dramatic decline the oceans are experiencing. Nearly forty percent of life in the oceans has disappeared in the last 40 years! The campaign was highly successful in raising awareness due in large part to creative teamwork in reaching out to politicians and the public via a range of (social) media channels.

WWF-Sweden is planning another ocean-focused campaign in autumn 2017 to raise further awareness about our precious oceans and the life they sustain, with a particular focus on marine spatial planning – so watch this space!

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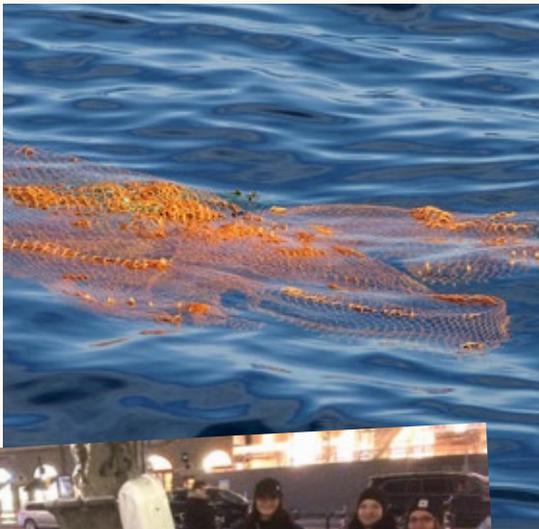


Photo: Marjke De boer / WWF



Photo: Metta Wiese



## Sustainable Blue Economy and Finance

**2 May 2017** – Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries hosted a meeting on 'Blue Economy Finance' in Brussels to embark on a process to define principles to underpin a sustainable Blue Economy to guide future investments globally. Co-organized by the EU, WWF and the Prince of Wales' Charities International Sustainability Unit (ISU), the meeting represented an important follow-up from the Economist World Ocean Summit. There, Commissioner Vella announced his intention to work with WWF and ISU to take forward a process to bring together public and private financing institutions and other stakeholders around principles for sustainable investment in the Blue Economy.

The meeting included a small, diverse group of representatives from organizations such as the World Bank, FAO, European Investment Bank and private sector finance organizations. The discussion was positive and will continue in order to explore how the development of Sustainable Principles for investments in the Blue Economy could be established. This process was acknowledged to be a part of the Commission's wider efforts to engage the private sector and NGOs to generate commitments on sustainable ocean use for the 'Our Ocean 2017' conference, hosted in Malta by the EU in October 2017.

The WWF delegation was led by Genevieve Pons (WWF EPO Director) and Margaret Kuhlrow (Head of the WWF Finance Practice). It included Louise Heaps (WWF UK), Sam Burgess (WWF EPO) and Pauli Merriman (WWF BEP).

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# ON THE HORIZON WWF BALTIC ECOREGION PROGRAMME

## Baltic Programme Sets Example for Arctic

For more than 20 years, the Arctic states have pursued conservation efforts through the Arctic Council to safeguard the Arctic environment. Following the example of the Baltic Programme, the WWF Arctic Programme has published the first ever [Arctic Council Conservation Scorecard](#) – an assessment of national and joint implementation of Arctic Council commitments related to biodiversity and conservation. It covers six key topics: Conservation Areas, Biodiversity, Shipping, Oil Spill Cooperation, Black Carbon and Adaptation, and Ecosystem Based Management.

WWF developed the scorecard to evaluate implementation progress of select Arctic Council direction relevant to conservation. The scorecard looks at the extent to which the Arctic states have implemented and endorsed Arctic Council direction within their respective national realms, and the Arctic Council has

delivered upon agreed commitments through its own work.

Indicators were established to capture the implementation performance of the individual countries and the Council. The indicators assess Council direction that was measurable, relevant to conservation, and specific in terms of action and accountability. The indicators were then analyzed, resulting in scores from A to D for each member state and for the Council. Taking all measures flowing from Council direction would result in a maximum score.

### Some key findings:

- The good news is that Arctic states have successfully established an administrative system for oil spill response, although concerns remain about a lack of on-the-ground capacity and infrastructure. They are also making progress toward implementing a framework to address black carbon emissions and taking early actions to reduce these emissions.
- There is much room for improve-



Photo: Florian Schulz / WWF-US

ment, however, in terms of mainstreaming Arctic biodiversity into development planning and reducing human disturbance outside protected areas. National strategies generally fail to include clear, concrete objectives and provisions for biodiversity.

- Arctic states have also been slow to implement ecosystem-based management as developed and approved by the Arctic Council, and most have not implemented measures to reduce air emissions from marine shipping.

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Photo: Robert Van Waarden / WWF

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2017

• 20-21 June

HELCOM HoDs meeting.  
Brussels

• 7 July

EU Commission CAP consultation conference.  
Brussels

• 1-2 September

“CAP 2020. Towards sustainable agriculture” conference. Tallinn

• 5-6 October

Our Ocean conference.  
Malta



### 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.

[www.panda.org/baltic](http://www.panda.org/baltic)

### SHARE YOUR NEWS!

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

Ottilia and Anu