



# Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSA) – should we have these in the Baltic Sea?

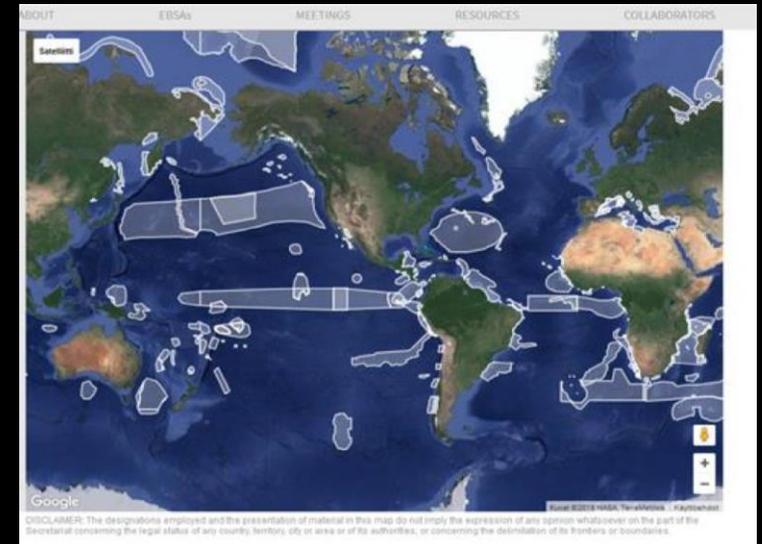
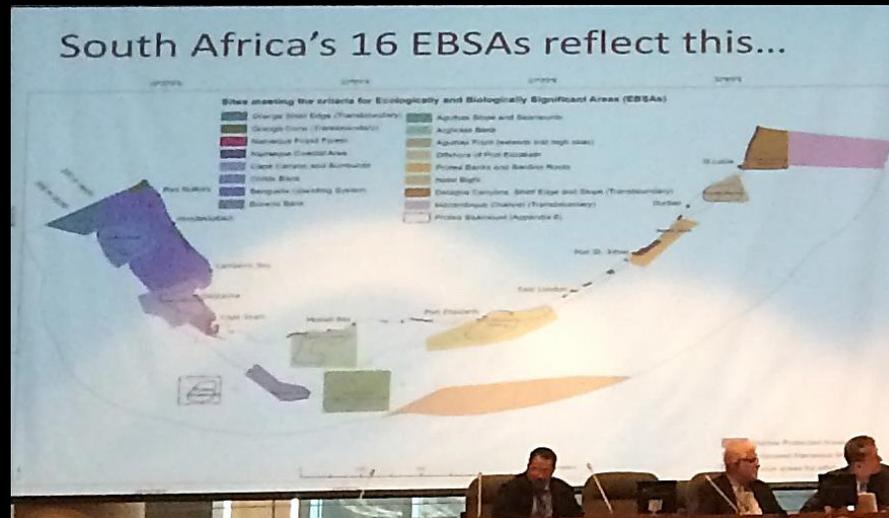
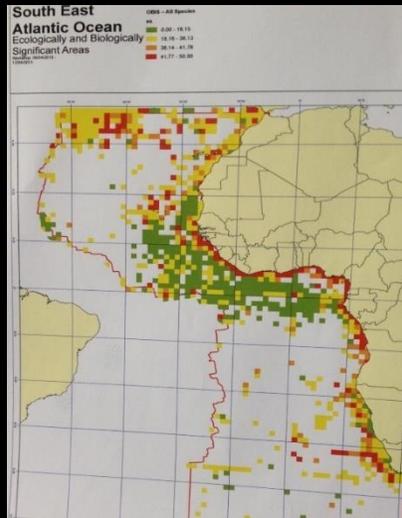
Jan Ekebon<sup>1</sup>, Penina Blankett<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Parks & Wildlife Finland, <sup>2</sup>Ministry of the Environment



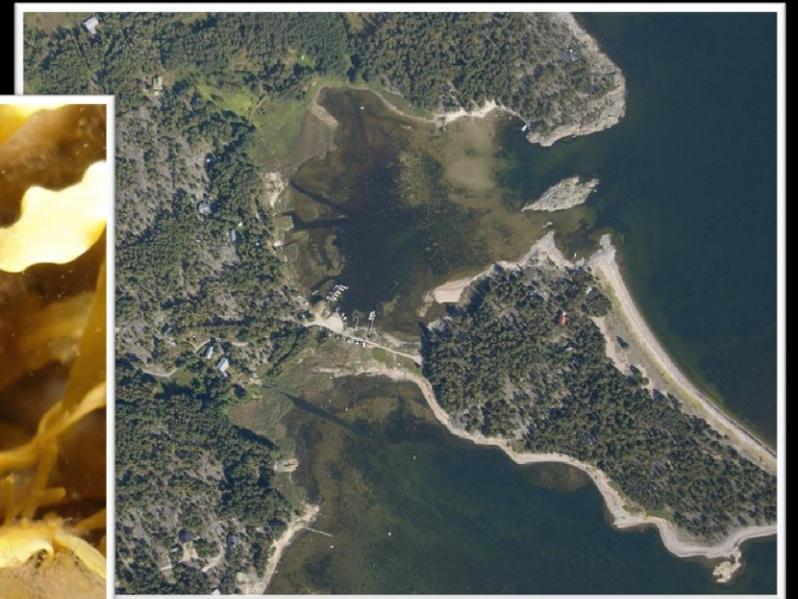
# What are EBSAs?

- EBSAs are (by definition): *"special areas in the ocean that serve important purposes, in one way or another, to support the healthy functioning of oceans and the many services that it provides"*.
- EBSAs are not: the same as MPAs (they do not have the same legal protection)
- The EBSA status doesn't shoehorn these areas to become MPAs but many of the existing MPAs may be included into EBSA areas due to similar selection criteria
- The first EBSAs were very large but, over the past years EBSAs e.g. around South Africa and the Mediterranean are small enough to make EBSAs relevant for the Baltic Sea as well



# The criteria for identifying EBSAs

- Uniqueness or rarity
- Special importance for life-history stages of species
- Importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats
- Vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity, or slow recovery
- Biological productivity
- Biological diversity
- Naturalness



# Organising an EBSA workshop: experiences from the Arctic

## EBSA workshop held in HELSINKI in 2014

- The workshop benefit from the CBD Secretariat's experience and the astonishingly excellent GIS experts from the Duke University
- At present the CBD Secretariat invite the Contracting Parties GIS experts for a preparative training held in Montreal
- About 14 EBSA workshop have been held so far
- HELCOM CPs will decide themselves which EBSAs they want
- The proposed timing of Baltic Sea EBSA is early 2018

**Arctic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs)**  
Helsinki, Finland, 3 to 7 March 2014

Workshop participants described 11 areas meeting the seven scientific criteria for EBSAs (annex I of decision IX/20). These descriptions are provided in the final report of the workshop, available on the meeting webpage: [www.cbd.int/doc/7meeting-EBSAWS-2014-01](http://www.cbd.int/doc/7meeting-EBSAWS-2014-01). The results of this workshop were submitted to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice for consideration at its 18th meeting, prior to the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP).

**Background**  
The Arctic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas was convened by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in collaboration with the Arctic Council Working Group on Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), with financial support from the Government of Finland.

**Participating organizations / initiatives**  
Arctic Council Working Group on the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme, Arctic Council Working Group on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, IUCN Global Marine and Polar Programme, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Marine Mammal Council, Natural Resources Defense Council, North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, OSPAR Commission Secretariat, Svalbard Council, United Nations University - Institute of Advanced Studies, WWF Russia, and the Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab of Duke University (technical support team).

**Participating Parties / Other Governments**  
Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States of America.

**Scientific data considered by the workshop**  
Scientific data and information were submitted by Parties and organizations, including workshop participants, prior to the workshop. The data include both relevant scientific documents/reports and submissions of potential areas that meet EBSA criteria, using a template provided by the Secretariat for that purpose. The Secretariat also compiled the following scientific data in 100 GIS layers, with the technical assistance of experts from Duke University, and made them available to the workshop for its consideration:

- Biological data: biological data from the AMSA II(c) report; biological data from the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment; distribution of endemic cetaceans; diversity and distribution of endemic cetaceans; biologically important areas for cetaceans in US waters; historical whale captures; Arctic seabird distribution modeling; Arctic seabird biodiversity modeling; Important Bird Areas (BirdLife International); Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS) data; predictions of deep-sea octocorals; distribution of macrobenthic organisms the Canadian Arctic and Atlantic waters.
- Physical data: seamounts; vents and seeps; International Bathymetric Chart of the Arctic Ocean (IBCAO); distribution of large submarine canyons; total sediment thickness of the world's oceans and marginal seas; global seascapes; seafloor geomorphology; sea ice concentration and occurrence; Arctic regional climatology; CSIRO Atlas of Regional Seas (CARS) physical ocean climatologies; ocean surface temperature; chlorophyll a; climatology; sea surface height; eddy kinetic energy; climate climatology of near-surface currents; surface current velocity.

Logos: UNEP, Convention on Biological Diversity

# Anticipated benefits of EBSAs

- a) All areas of ecological and biological importance in the Baltic Sea are identified (based on the current knowledge) and categorized in a structured way utilizing a recognized method offered by CBD;
- b) The identification of EBSA is an expert process;
- c) EBSAs, and the data for identification of EBSAs, can be recognized and utilized when carrying out MSP, especially, where the aim is to identify and spatially present areas of ecological significance, which are not limited to MPAs and their legal regime, to inform planning process and do so on a regional scale.
- d) Identification of EBSA could be an important milestone in implementing the concept of “green infrastructure” in MSP, where habitats and biotopes, their interconnectivity and seasonal variability are captured into spatial presentation. Identification of major pressures is part of the EBSA description, which can inform planning of future use of the sea.
- e) EBSA has become widely recognized and acknowledged in almost every marine topic dealt with by the CBD in the last years; if the Baltic Sea does not have any EBSA of its own then the Baltic Sea and HELCOM do not have representation in the future developments related to EBSA and could not benefit from opportunities it does and could offer; On the other hand, having EBSA identified in the data-reach region as the Baltic Sea, could open up for new possibilities to use the existing data, such as in MSP, and demonstrate contribution of the Baltic Sea region to the global efforts to protect biodiversity.

# We are well informed in HELCOM

Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 136

## HELCOM core indicators

Final report of the HELCOM CORESET project



Helsinki Commission  
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 122

## Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea

HELCOM Initial Holistic Assessment



Helsinki Commission  
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 139

## HELCOM HUB

Technical Report on the HELCOM Underwater Biotope and habitat classification



Helsinki Commission  
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 105

## Overview of the status of the network of Baltic Sea marine protected areas



HELCOM  
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 105

## Planning and management of Baltic Sea Protected Areas: guidelines and tools



Helsinki Commission  
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 116B

## Biodiversity in the Baltic Sea

An integrated thematic assessment on biodiversity and nature conservation in the Baltic Sea



Helsinki Commission  
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 125

## Towards a tool for quantifying anthropogenic pressures and potential impacts on the Baltic Sea marine environment

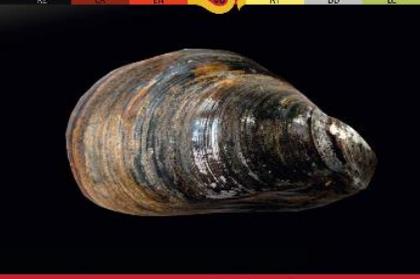
A background document on the method, data and testing of the Baltic Sea Pressure and Impact Indices



Helsinki Commission  
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 140

## HELCOM Red List of Baltic Sea species in danger of becoming extinct



Helsinki Commission  
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 124A

## Towards an ecologically coherent network of well-managed Marine Protected Areas

– Implementation report on the status and ecological coherence of the HELCOM BSPA network

Executive Summary



Helsinki Commission  
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 138

## Red List of Baltic Sea underwater biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes



Helsinki Commission  
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

The HELCOM Red List categories are used to identify species which are under threat of extinction. The categories follow the Red List criteria of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and are: Deficient (DD), Least Concerned (LC) and Not Evaluated (NE). More information is available on the HELCOM environment fact sheet for the [Red List of species](#).

Scientific name	English name	Species group	HELCOM Red List category	Link to Species Information Sheet (SIS)	Link to WORMS	MPAs where the species is reported
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common sandpiper	Birds	NT	<a href="#">SIS</a>	<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Alca torda</i>	Razorbill	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anas acuta</i>	Northern pintail	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Shoveler	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anas crecca</i>	Common teal	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anas penelope</i>	Eurasian wigeon	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anas querquedula</i>	Garganey	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anas strepera</i>	Gadwall	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anser albifrons</i>	Greater white-fronted goose	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anser anser</i>	Greylag goose	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anser fabalis fabalis</i>	Taiga bean goose	Birds	EN	<a href="#">SIS</a>	<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anthus petrosus</i>	Eurasian rock pipit	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Meadow pipit	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Grey heron	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Ruddy turnstone	Birds	VU	<a href="#">SIS</a>	<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Common pochard	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Tufted duck	Birds	NT	<a href="#">SIS</a>	<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Aythya marila</i>	Greater scaup	Birds	VU	<a href="#">SIS</a>	<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	Ferruginous duck	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	Brent goose	Birds	NT	<a href="#">SIS</a>	<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Canada goose	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>
<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Barnacle goose	Birds			<a href="#">WORMS</a>	<a href="#">show MPAs</a>



# We are soon even more well informed: HOLAS II





THANK YOU!