

BALTEEL-RECO

Baltic Sea eel recovery from
an ecosystem perspective

EUROPEAN EEL

The European eel has been in decline for decades and is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN, EU and HELCOM Red Lists, with no sign of recovery. ICES advises zero catches for all life stages in all habitats, including for restocking and aquaculture, as well as zero anthropogenic mortality.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This collaborative project started in 2021 with the long-term goal of more coordinated management of European eel in the Baltic region. We analysed the national Eel Management Plans (EMPs) and restocking practices in four Baltic countries, and held roundtables with national stakeholders, resulting in a policy brief and a report on restocking practices.

BALTEEL-RECO is a partnership between FishSec in Sweden, Eestimaa Looduse Fond in Estonia, Pasauls Dabas Fonds in Latvia and Lietuvos gamtos fondas in Lithuania. In 2023, phase two (**BALTEEL-RECO II**) with additional partners in Sweden, Finland and Germany began.

FINDINGS

- Transparency needs to improve.
- Management adaptive but plans not revised.
- Unclear calculations and assumptions behind management targets.
- Lack of ecosystem-perspective.
- Fishing reduced in Sweden and Lithuania.
- Restocking is heavily relied on to reach objective.
- Fewer efforts to restore natural habitats.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

- Focus on fisheries and restocking rather than long-term measures to improve natural recruitment, habitats and migration routes.
- Research and data collection may be too focused on the 40% escapement target.
- Poor coordination with the Water Framework Directive despite requirement.
- Production perspective rather than protection.
- Management not in line with current scientific advice.

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MORE ABOUT OUR PROJECT



The Fisheries Secretariat (FishSec) is a non-profit organisation working towards sustainable fisheries in Europe with a focus on the Baltic Sea.

www.fishsec.org



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