



for a living planet[®]



Together We Can Save the Baltic Sea

WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme 2010



Together we will find
the best solutions
to save the Baltic Sea.”



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Taking the lead



We know that we will only succeed if we work together to restore the life, the richness and the beauty of the Baltic Sea. What the sea needs now is foresight, leadership and decisive action.

The WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme is an active, ambitious and highly influential force in the efforts to conserve and restore the Baltic Sea. We combine scientific knowledge and expertise with creative innovation and political determination to save the unique life and beauty of the Baltic Sea. Our team of highly experienced international experts works to forge unprecedented regional partnerships to save the Baltic Sea.

The WWF Baltic Ecoregion Pro-

gramme seeks cooperation with all relevant parts of society and engages individuals, NGOs, corporations and governments – the people and organisations who, together, can make a difference. We don't shy away from confrontation; we promote constructive interactions to create awareness, spread ideas, and stimulate discussion.

The WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme represents the largest membership network in the region. We

are represented in all the countries surrounding the sea and are funded through the generosity of all those individuals and organisations that place their trust in us.

We urge all citizens of the Baltic region to join us in ensuring that the Baltic Sea will once again be a clean sea, able to support abundant fish stocks, viable populations of marine life and thriving coastal communities. We need your support – only together can we save the Baltic Sea!

Fighting Eutrophication

Toxic algal blooms and vast dead zones are both results of eutrophication – too much nutrients in the water. WWF is working together with progressive farmers and others to reduce the amount of nutrients that enter the sea.

The WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme is working to reduce the threat of eutrophication to the Baltic ecosystem. We cooperate with progressive forces to reform agricultural policies and we help farmers restore wetlands and take other measures to reduce the negative impacts of environmentally-harmful agricultural production. The annual “Baltic Farmers Award” promotes better environmental practices among farmers in the region.

WWF has successfully worked together with manufacturers of detergents and is now close to securing a ban on the use of phosphates in detergents. We have built alliances with the cruise ship industry and with ports around the Baltic Sea to stop the discharge of polluted wastewater into the sea.



Every year large parts of the Baltic Sea are covered with algal blooms.

Eutrophication is the biggest threat to biodiversity

Eutrophication, or nutrient pollution, is the biggest threat to the biodiversity of the Baltic Sea. Every year, large amounts of nutrients, mainly nitrogen and phos-

phorus, are released into the Baltic Sea. Agricultural runoff represents the single largest source of nutrients entering the sea.

Saving the Fish – and the Fishing

The Baltic Ecoregion Programme is working to reform the Baltic Sea fisheries towards sustainability and long-term viability. Through collaborations with fishers and authorities, we have successfully reduced the level of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing dramatically in the Baltic Sea.

We are now pushing for a reform of the European Common Fisheries Policy to secure long-term management plans for all fish stocks and to ensure that fishers themselves are involved in the development of these plans.

We are continuing our work with consumers, retailers and producers to ensure that consumers can find sustainable fish products on the market. As a further step in this direction, WWF has successfully pushed for the introduction of a global seafood certification scheme, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), in all markets around the Baltic Sea.



WWF has successfully pushed for the introduction of a global seafood certification, MSC, the Marine Stewardship Council.

Poor fisheries management

Poor fisheries management – quotas set in excess of scientific advice, indiscriminate gear, too many boats and inadequate control mechanisms – continues to put fish stocks, marine ecosystems, livelihoods and coastal communities at risk. Changes in fish populations cause ripple effects for the entire ecosystem, causing changes at lower levels of the food chain and contributing to other problems such as eutrophication.



A responsible fisheries management can give fishers bigger catches in the future.

“ We can already now see the beginning of a recovery of fish stocks in the Baltic Sea.”



The busy port of Stockholm is just one example of an increased competition for space on the sea.

Supporting Better Management of a Crowded Sea

For thousands of years we thought the sea was endless – that we could use it as much as we wanted and that there would always be more sea. Those days are gone. We need a new approach to managing our shared sea.

Wind turbines, energy cables and pipelines are being projected at many places on the sea floor while shipping routes, boat traffic, fisheries and other human activities may already be affecting the same areas. More and new competing interests are anticipated in the near and longer-term future. These include a growing aquaculture industry, wind and wave power generation, energy transmission lines, submarine communication cables, as well as sand and gravel extraction. In addition, there is a growing need for areas partially or completely protected from human activities.

Despite the fact that the issues are all closely interrelated, they are not being dealt with in an integrated way. There is currently very poor coordination and integration in the management of the various uses of the Baltic Sea. Instead, we see a patchwork of governance approaches and regulatory frameworks at the local, regional and national levels. Too often, one decision contradicts another.

The journey towards an integrated and sustainable sea use management has just begun. The WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme has helped pave the way by bringing experts from

all over the world to share their experiences with our decision makers. We have developed tools for marine spatial planning and we have actively pushed for the development of policies that facilitate the integration of marine management.

We continue to work with policy makers and scientists at the cutting edge of marine management. We believe the region can take the lead and become a role model for Europe and the rest of the world in the art of managing a shared sea. Together, we can make the Baltic a sea we can all be proud of.

Delivering Results

Established in 1991 as part of a global network of experts, the WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme has been an active and effective agent of change in the conservation and sustainable management of the Baltic Sea.

These are a few highlights from over the years:

- In 2005, we helped convince the International Maritime Organisation to classify the Baltic Sea as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area.
- We were a main advocate for the establishment of a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Baltic Sea. In 2007, Helcom set a goal to establish such a network of MPAs in the Baltic Sea by the year 2010, making it one of the first comprehensive MPA schemes in the world.
- After convincing several large manufacturers of detergents to stop using phosphates as an ingredient, we are now pushing for a legal ban on phosphates in detergents. As a result, more and more countries are implementing a ban and discussions are now being held in the European Commission to institute a Europe-wide ban on phosphates in detergents.



We are pushing for a legal ban on phosphates in detergents.



We have helped preserve and restore a network of wetlands in the region to reduce inputs of nutrients to the Baltic Sea. Wetlands function as important filters between agricultural lands and the Baltic Sea, thereby reducing eutrophication.

- Through persistent work together with fishers, the seafood industry and governments, we managed to radically decrease the level of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing in the Baltic Sea. Cod and other fish stocks are now slowly recovering.
- We helped achieve a ban on drift-nets, a major cause of death in harbour porpoise, in the Baltic Sea in 2008. As an added bonus, the ban has contributed to the increased number of wild salmon.
- We were an active partner in establishing the Baltic Sea Action Plan and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, two international strategies intended to improve the environmental status of the Baltic Sea.
- We have helped preserve and restore a network of wetlands in the region to reduce inputs of nutrients to the Baltic Sea and help conserve biodiversity in the catchment area.
- In large transnational projects, we have facilitated sustainable farming in St. Petersburg, Kaliningrad, Estonia and other places around the Baltic Sea.
- By working together with cruise companies and ferry lines in the Baltic Sea, many industry members have now committed to stop discharging their wastewater in the Baltic Sea.

The Swedish consumer Seafood Guide has been printed in five editions so far.





“ We have been – and continue to be – a watchdog that monitors how governments manage our common resource – the Baltic Sea.”

- We introduced consumer “Seafood Guides” in major markets around the Baltic Sea. By working together with consumers and the industry, we managed to get major retail chains and restaurants to commit to only sell sustainably caught seafood.
- We reduced the risk of oil spill accidents and made shipping more secure by successfully calling for tougher regulations and voluntary agreements from the shipping industry.
- We helped save the grey seal, the white-tailed eagle and other species from declining numbers through determined and long-term conservation projects.



- We have implemented hundreds of environmental education projects in the region, raising awareness and understanding of the problems facing the Baltic Sea.
- With the help of thousands of volunteers, we have helped respond to oil-spill accidents and successfully pushed governments to improve their oil-spill response capacity.
- We have been – and continue to be – a watchdog that monitors how governments manage our common resource – the Baltic Sea.

We helped save the grey seal through determined conservation projects.

The following organisations are lead partners within the WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme:

WWF Finland (wwf.fi)

WWF Germany (wwf.de)

WWF Poland (wwf.pl)

WWF Sweden (wwf.se)

Baltic Fund for Nature
(Russia – www.bfn.org.ru)

Estonian Fund for Nature
(www.elfond.ee)

Lithuanian Fund for Nature
(www.glis.lt) and

Pasaules Dabas Fonds
(Latvia – www.pdf.lv)



WWF is one of the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organisations, with almost 5 million members and supporters and a global network active in some 100 countries.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.



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WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme
is part of WWF, set up to save the Baltic marine environment and restore vitality and beauty to the surrounding region.

Please contact us for more information!

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