



WWF
NEWSLETTER
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2018

WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme

EU SET FOR SERIAL DEPLETION OF BALTIC FISHERIES

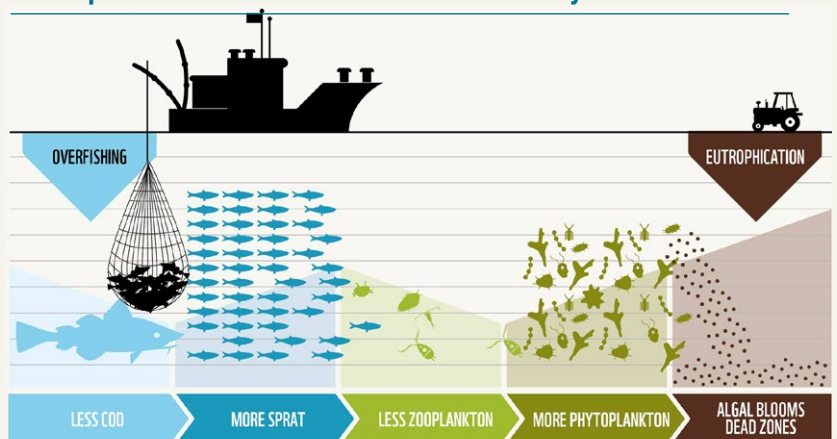
Brussels, October 14–15: The ocean economy is expected to double by 2030, offering significant investment opportunities, according to the OECD. The 'blue' economy sector is projected to outperform global economic growth. But how will this be possible without undermining ocean health when biological systems essential to any economy (green, blue or circular) are largely considered as externalities by our present accounting systems?

How are we utilizing the natural resources provided by the ocean, and how can we best maintain the renewable capacity of this 'free gift'? The latest negotiations on fishing limits for Baltic Sea stocks offer a cautionary example of the opposite approach - the track to serial depletion of ecological and economic potential.

The goal of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is clear: to achieve MSY by 2020. This is underpinned by a policy to guide all Member States to the delivery of that goal. Yet the Ministers at the October EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH) chose to disregard their CFP commitments, ignore the scientists and allow for higher catches in 2019 on a number of fish stocks.

As a result, **five out of ten of the catch limits set exceed the**

The importance of the cod to the Baltic Sea ecosystem



scientific advice of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) on sustainable catch levels. These include Eastern Baltic cod, Western Baltic herring, Central Baltic herring, salmon in the main Baltic Basin and in the Gulf of Finland. As one example, in just 10 years, commercial catches of the western cod stock have dropped by more than half, largely due to continuous overfishing. Yet the newly agreed fishing limit is an increase of 70% over 2018.

Cod is an important species in the Baltic ecosystem. The amount of cod has a direct and inverse link to the algal blooms in the Baltic Sea. Thus while overfishing can result in some species disappearing, more importantly it can cause severe changes to

the entire ecosystem. Is this the kind of blue economy we want for the Baltic region – a growth that repeatedly undermines the sea's health and the natural capital upon which the economy depends?

For a Sustainable Blue Economy, we need decision makers to lend their voice, their brainpower and their political clout to advancing an integrated vision of sustainable economic practice. The Baltic is in a critical state; dwindling fish stocks are a clear alarm bell. It is time to view the sea's health not as an 'environmental cost' but as a long-term investment opportunity for our region's economic future.

Contact: [Ottília Thoreson](#)

EDITORIAL: WAKE UP CALL - FARMERS TO EQUIP FOR CLIMATE SHOCKS

Climate change will continue to impact our planet on an ever greater scale. On September 9th, we missed the deadline for staying under the 1.5 degree heating scenario globally, according to climate experts [1].

In the Baltic region we are constantly reminded of how the climate change impacts on land also have a direct effect on the sea. Last summer's unexpected weather patterns, with dry and constant hot temperatures, caused drought here as well as across much of the rest of Europe.

Several Baltic countries battled forest fires. Sweden – a land associated with bountiful waterways and lush green temperate forests - suffered major forest fires across 21,000 ha. International aid was called upon to help extinguish peatbog fires such as in Valdgale, Latvia. Warm temperatures dry out bogs, making them more susceptible both to fires and to a deeper, more intense burning. A peat fire can smolder like a cigarette for months, in the process releasing several thousands of years' of stored carbon.

The long summer drought struck Baltic farmers hard. In addition to reduced crop growth which led to shortages of livestock feed, the limited rainfall diminished both groundwater levels and the rate of nutrient uptake by cropland. This can be highly damaging to the marine environment: if they reach the sea, the nutrients that promote agriculture cause algal blooms which ultimately lead to depleted oxygen levels and generally poor water quality (eutrophication). Warmer winters and increased rainfall will increase nutrient flows into the Baltic.

This is just one more example of why **continued engagement**



Photo: Pixabay.com

from the agriculture sector in water management is key for climate change adaptation in our region. Unfortunately, national regulations around agriculture and water protection generally do not reflect a holistic approach. In water management plans from the regional to local levels, we rarely see concrete targeted measures to reduce nutrients in order to achieve national environmental objectives for water affected by farming activity. To see how the Baltic program is addressing this issue, have a look at WWF Finland's new project on page 9.

Amid such challenges our work with farmers to apply methods that keep nutrients and water on land, use fertilizers more efficiently and reduce runoff is more important than ever. The leadership demonstrated in the best practices celebrated through the Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award remains a vital part of the solution. This year's regional winner is an inspirational champion in reducing nutrient leakage and retaining a functioning

water flow on his land. Read more on page 3.

In this edition we are pleased to introduce a new feature column to give you a chance to Meet the Team (p. 15). Also, make sure to check page 16 for the latest highlights from Brussels, then flip to the back page for some information on negotiations at the UN around a treaty to manage the entire global ocean in an integrated way.

Whichever route you take through the newsletter, we hope you enjoy the journey!

Best wishes,

Ottilia Thoreson and Anu Suono



Photo: Stefan Andersson / WWF Sweden

[1] From research institute MCC <https://www.mcc-berlin.net/en/research/co2-budget.html>

FOCUS ON KRZYSZTOF KOWALSKI – REGIONAL WINNER OF THE 2018 BALTIC FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Photo: A. Sosnowska / WWF

The Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award recognizes farmers who are taking exemplary steps to reduce nutrient runoff to the Baltic Sea. Each year, up to eleven national winners are selected from countries in the Baltic Sea catchment, from whom one regional winner is awarded the grand prize. This year, the regional winner is Krzysztof Kowalski, a conventional crop and pig farmer from Poland.

Krzysztof has been running Kowalski Farm - a multi-generational crop and livestock farm located in the Turka River basin - since 1984. The farm is celebrated for its production of award-winning cold pressed flax and rapeseed oils, and for breeding and conserving the Złotnicka Biała pig. More recently it has added proactive efforts to reduce nutrient runoff to the Baltic Sea to its list of credentials.

The jury was impressed by the wide range of measures employed by Krzysztof to reduce nutrient leakage, as well as by his holistic approach to sustainable farming. Alongside applying fertilizers in a careful and well-timed manner, he practices crop rotation and has created nine midfield wetlands and various buffer zones. Last year, Krzysztof and his family planted an

additional 1,080 trees along the river and between the fields. These help prevent runoff and create habitat for wild animals.

Q: How did you first learn about the problem of eutrophication?

A: In the 1980s, my wife and I were visiting family in Masuria near Goldapia lake. We went swimming in the lake and noticed that the colour of the water was intensely green. I learned from my family living in the area that the lake blooms every year, especially in sunny and hot summers. I realized that this process was caused by the intensification of agriculture. This experience influ-



Photo: A. Sosnowska / WWF

enced me to use mineral fertilizers more economically.

Q: What benefits have you experienced since implementing solutions to reduce nutrient runoff on your farm?

A: Analysis unambiguously confirms that the soil and flaxseed and rapeseed oils are free of nitrates and residues from plant protection products. Thanks to the high quality of my products, they win many prestigious awards and demand is greater than supply. They also arouse great interest among farmers and students of agricultural schools. One unexpected outcome is the purity of the river around my fields, as well as the thriving condition of the domestic and wild bee colonies.

Q: How can we encourage more farmers to adopt sustainable methods?

A: I always say that in order to convince someone of something, you have to teach them, make them aware, and demonstrate good examples.

Q: How does it feel to win?

A: It is a great surprise. It strengthens my belief that I have chosen the right path. I will not rest on my laurels and will continue to grow.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

A: I'm thinking very seriously about agri-tourism on the farm in the near future. If I develop my business, it will definitely be through investments in new environmentally friendly technologies.

Krzysztof Kowalski was presented with the Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award last month in Jönköping, Sweden, together with eleven national winners. Learn more about them on page 10.

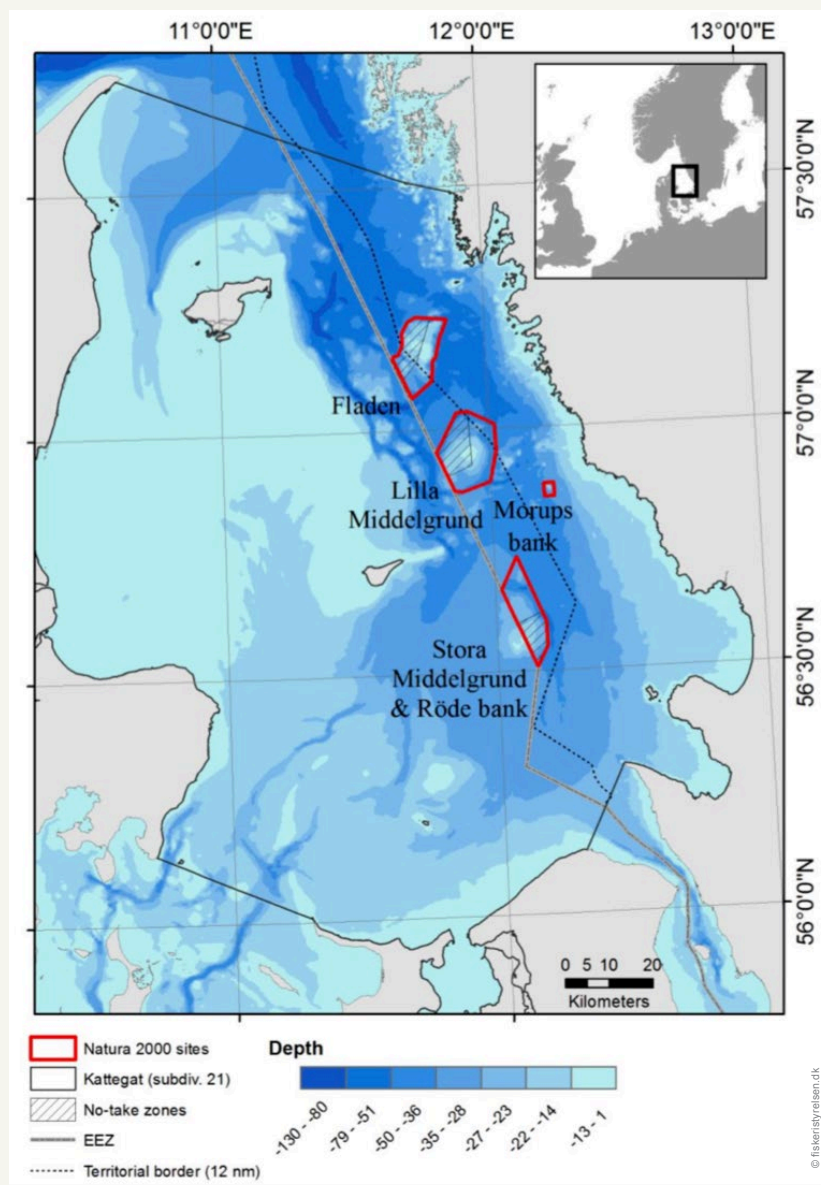
INTEGRATED OCEAN MANAGEMENT AND MARITIME ACTIVITIES

Stop fishing in protected areas!

Well designed and managed, marine protected areas (MPAs) have positive effects on ecosystems and fisheries. These in turn often translate into tangible benefits for people and livelihoods by offering refuge for the renewal of fish populations. But for this to be effective the areas need to be free of human pressure. Therefore, environmental organizations BirdLife, Greenpeace Nordics, Oceana, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and WWF have called on Denmark and Sweden to follow Sweden's proposal to limit fishing in four Natura 2000 MPAs shared by the two nations in Kattegat: Stora Middelgrund and Röde Bank, Morups Bank, Lilla Middelgrund, Fladen, and Sweden as a bare minimum to follow Sweden's proposal

“Sweden’s suggestion includes regulating fishing in some areas through a total fishing ban.”

On 14 September, Denmark, Sweden and Germany came together with the European Commission's DG Environment and DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries to discuss the fisheries regulation in marine Natura 2000 areas. Under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), countries that want to limit fishing activities in Natura 2000 areas need to negotiate and agree with all countries who are fishing in that area. Amongst the involved NGOs there is a concern that the suggestions to regulate fishing in these marine protected areas will be watered down during the multi-lateral negotiations since it has been shown in previous negotiations involving Denmark that the goals for marine protection are downplayed in



The location of the marine protected areas Fladen, Lilla Middelgrund, Stora Middelgrund och Röde bank and Morups bank in the Kattegat. The marine protected areas have restrictive fishing zones and some of the areas include no take zones.

favor of the interests of related industries.

Sweden's suggestion includes regulating fishing in some areas through a total fishing ban and in others through the use of low impact gear such as pots, handheld gear (e.g. rod and line) and pelagic floating trawls. "These types of measures are necessary in order for sustainable marine environments and thriving

fish populations in the long term", says Metta Wiese, marine management expert at WWF Sweden.

The negotiations are ongoing. The NGOs will keep an eye on developments to ensure the countries deliver on their international agreements on marine conservation.

Contact: [Metta Wiese](#)

INTEGRATED OCEAN MANAGEMENT AND MARITIME ACTIVITIES

A Manifest for political action in the Baltic Sea

Many Swedish citizens have **personal stories** about how the Baltic Sea has changed over time. By gathering the stories, WWF Sweden has sought to amplify these voices, highlight the urgency of saving the Baltic Sea, and demand both commitment and action from Swedish politicians and decision makers.

Personal stories and ‘calls for action’ were gathered through an interactive online chat robot called *Havsbottnen* (Seabed) through the summer. The stories were then compiled and published on a website called *The Baltic Sea Manifest*. The reach was fantastic, tallying over 10 million views on Facebook, more than 250,000 clicks and over 50,000 comments and reactions.

The stories were also compiled as a limited edition Manifest book. This was presented to a select group of politicians, thought leaders and



Inger Näslund from WWF delivered the Baltic manifest with Swedish citizens' asks and wishes for a healthy Baltic Sea to Vice Prime Minister Isabella Lövin.

important advocates during the annual political forum *Almedalen* in July in Gotland, to drive home the message that the Baltic Sea requires their long term commitment. The book was also given

personally to the Swedish political parties in the run-up to the September governmental elections to remind them of their responsibility to their citizens and the Baltic Sea.

Contact: [Anders Alm](#)

Race for the Baltic “Solutions Lab”

Stockholm, 16-17 October: The foundation Race for the Baltic is seeking solutions to help turn the tide on the challenges faced by the Baltic Sea. An event hosted by the foundation convened leading scientists, municipal representatives, blue-green entrepreneurs, solution providers and investors to identify large-scale solutions to local water challenges that will have positive social, environmental and economic impacts.

As one of the opening speakers, Otilia Thoreson, Director of the Baltic Ecoregion Programme

from WWF, shared the implications of current maritime growth projections for the region and emphasized the importance of steering the course towards a Sustainable Blue Economy based on the definition and **principles** WWF has developed. These start with the understanding that ***no economy can sustain itself when its natural resource base is systematically being degraded.***

A number of start-up initiatives were presented, showing promising innovations around circular material flows that maintain or restore the marine ecosystem.

These include digital applications to advise at a global scale on fertilizer precision, filtering phosphorus from wastewater for reuse and recycling, and producing beer from treated wastewater.

The Solutions Lab was an inspiring step on the journey to a Sustainable Blue Economy. Watch this space for updates on the new solutions sparked when a wide array of actors takes on the role of change agents for the common goal of improving the Baltic Sea.

Contact: [Otilia Thoreson](#)

FISHERIES AND BIODIVERSITY

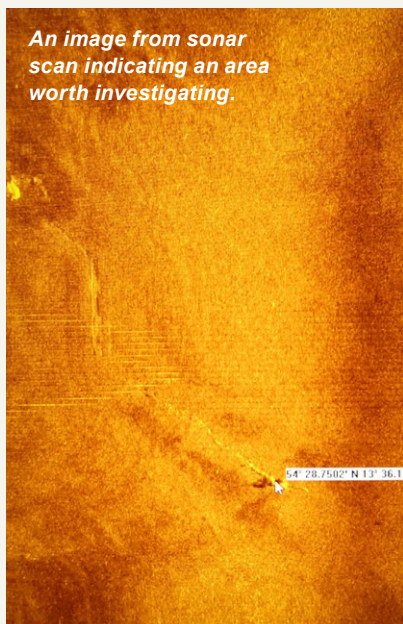
Solving marine litter with sonar smarts from Washington

Some 5,000-10,000 fishing nets and net pieces are lost each year in the Baltic Sea. In the MARELITT Baltic and Ghostnet projects, WWF is working with partners to better understand where such derelict fishing gear (DFG) can be retrieved in the most efficient way. The first crucial step is to identify where to find the lost gear.

Thankfully, Fenn Enterprises and Innerspace Exploration Team based in Seattle, Washington have a solution. The Derelict Fishing Gear Program of the Northwest Straits Foundation has thus far retrieved 6,000 lost gillnets and several tens of thousands derelict crab pots in the Puget Sound area in Washington State. Sonar expert Crayton Fenn's team detected all of these lost items with the aid of a side-scan sonar.

In April this year, WWF Germany organized a workshop for Mr Fenn to share his knowledge on using side-scan techniques to search for DFG in the Baltic Sea.

An image from sonar scan indicating an area worth investigating.



Fishing trap found at the location by divers.

Photo: Wolfgang Frank / WWF Germany

The approach was then tested and found effective, starting with scans off the coast of Rügen Island. The evaluation of the data collected has just begun but looks promising. Of the eight locations thus far checked, divers found 7 nets in locations previously unknown to divers or fishers. Convinced by these results, WWF Germany purchased the sonar system and is planning for a larger scale overview of the DFG pollution

in the German part of the Baltic Sea.

Moreover, success is being taken to scale through an international project with WWF teams in Hong Kong and Peru and Mr Fenn. The project will transfer the knowledge and techniques to other places where DFG is a significant problem. Time at last to dig up the hidden “treasure” in heretofore hidden places.

Contact: [Gabriele Dederer](#)

Ghostdivers App

Detection with side-scan sonar and an eye for lines on sonar images is a promising way to uncover the hidden loads of derelict fishing gear (DFG) in the marine environment. Using this technique and a team of volunteer “citizen divers”, a real task force against DFG can be built up.

Support from BINGO SH and NUE MV is contributing to the development of the free app *Geistertaucher* (Ghostdivers). Together with 6 volunteer groups¹ and with the support of the Archeological State Offices of Schleswig Holstein and Mecklenburg Vorpommern, WWF Germany will run a one year

project to set up a team of volunteer divers to search for DFG. The divers will receive locations identified by fishers and verified by sonar images, and will post in return what they find underwater, on their dives.

This system is both an efficient means to retrieve discarded gear and to allow divers to contribute to saving what they love. The app is scheduled for presentation at the international “Boot” trade fair in 2020.

¹ Fundgrube Prora; Tauchsportclub Warnemünde e.V.; Forschungstaucher Uni Rostock; Scientific Diving Association e.V.; submaris; AMLA Kiel

FISHERIES AND BIODIVERSITY



Small-spotted catsharks released into the Skagerrak

Lysekil, 6 August: For the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Havets Hus aquarium, in Lysekil on the west coast of Sweden, a total of 25 small-spotted catsharks (also known as lesser-spotted dogfish, *Scyliorhinus canicula*) were released into the wild.

The 10 first sharks were released on 6 August at a public event organized by WWF in collaboration with Havets Hus. Media and a large crowd of inquisitive public visitors gathered at the docks as the sharks were released into the sea with the

help of skin divers. An underwater remote video, projected to the audience on a wide screen, showed the catsharks' first encounter with the sea before disappearing into their kelpy underwater habitat on the seafloor.

Over 80 tagged sharks have been released since the project launched in 2003. Thus far 5 have been reported. One swam all the way up to the Oslo fjord while the remainder were found close to where they were released.

"Sharks are important for the

balance of the marine ecosystem. Unfortunately many sharks today are threatened due to fishing and the fact that they mature slowly and reproduce at an old age," says Inger Näslund, marine and fisheries expert at WWF.

Although sharks are an important species in the marine ecosystem, we still know so little about them. Through labeling and tagging systems we learn more about sharks and their behaviour.

Contact: [Inger Näslund](#)

Systemic solutions for preventing gear loss



Tallinn, September: Under the MARELITT Baltic project, the first fishing gear marking tests at sea have been conducted in cooperation with fishermen from Ustka, Poland. Several prototypes of tags have been designed for different types of fishing nets. These tags hold data based on radio-frequency identification technology (RFID), which uses electromagnetic fields to automatically identify and track the tags.

Using this technology to prevent losing fishing nets and developing a database containing the information was discussed during the MARELITT Baltic meeting in Tallinn in September.

The system of marking fishing gear, once implemented into law, would be the part of the systemic solution for preventing gear loss in the future.

Contact: [Sylvia Migdal](#)

FISHERIES AND BIODIVERSITY



Fish Forward: sustainable seafood choices for people and nature

Worldwide, over 800 million people depend on fish for food and income but oceans and coastal livelihoods are under severe pressure. Ninety percent of fish are

classified by the UN FAO as either ‘overfished’ (31%) or ‘fully fished’ (59%). Climate change further impacts the productivity of marine ecosystems with drastic conse-

quences for livelihoods, food security and markets. Europe is the world’s biggest market and importer of fish, mostly from developing countries. A responsible choice of seafood in Europe is a global driver for change.

WWF’s **Fish Forward Project**, co-funded by the EU, raises awareness around sustainable seafood consumption. By 2020 the project aims to have European consumers and the corporate sector actively contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change mitigation and adaptation through their choices for sustainable seafood. Seventeen project partners, including WWF Poland, Denmark and Germany, are over the coming three years across 17 countries in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Contact: [Anna Sosnowska](#)

Two new fish paths for endangered migratory fish in Finland

In October, for the first time in decades, endangered migratory sea trout could pass through two dams to access their ideal spawning grounds in Southern Finland. For this they can thank WWF Finland and the Uusimaa ELY Center who built two horseshoe-shaped, natural fish paths in Kirkkojoki River in Siuntio.

The rapids of Lempansån in the Kirkkojoki River are an ideal spawning ground for trout, but the two dams have long blocked any possible passageways. The dams have also isolated a vulnerable population of trout that live upstream. Short of deconstructing the dams, WWF and the Uusimaa ELY Center identified the fish paths as the optimal solution for the fish.



The fish paths are the biggest freshwater project carried out by WWF Finland to date.

The fish paths are intended to allow returning sea trouts to help repopulate and head off the threat of eventually losing the entire isolated population. This is the biggest freshwater project carried out by WWF Finland to date. “We

expect the sea trouts to return to the rapids as soon as the fish paths are ready”, says Senior Freshwater Officer Elina Erkkilä from WWF Finland.

Contact: [Elina Erkkilä](#)

EUTROPHICATION AND AGRICULTURE

A better Baltic through innovative land-based load-reduction

WWF is launching a field project with concrete measures aimed at reducing loading and eutrophication in Finland's inland waterways. The benefits will eventually reach the Baltic Sea as most of the nutrient loading to the sea comes down the rivers.

The project's tool kit includes constructed wetlands, restoration of natural wetlands and improving biological quality and water management in farm lands. WWF is searching for farmers to participate. For the farmers, this is a great opportunity to find funding to implement innovative measures for which they do not otherwise receive financial support. Farmers are invited to propose the measures that would be best suited for their fields.

The project will run until December 2020 as a cooperation between the landowners, agricultural advisors, local environmental associations, municipalities and other local actors. The Ministry of the Environment is providing €250,000, out of a total budget of €400,000.

"Managing water is most efficient, when measures are implemented at a large scale, encompassing whole catchment areas, and with multiple actors working together. This project will improve the status of rivers in Uusimaa and improve the possibilities for people to enjoy them", says Finland's Minister of the Environment, Kimmo Tiilikainen.

Contact: [Jenny Jyrkänkallio-Mikkola](#)

An award for farmers who make a difference

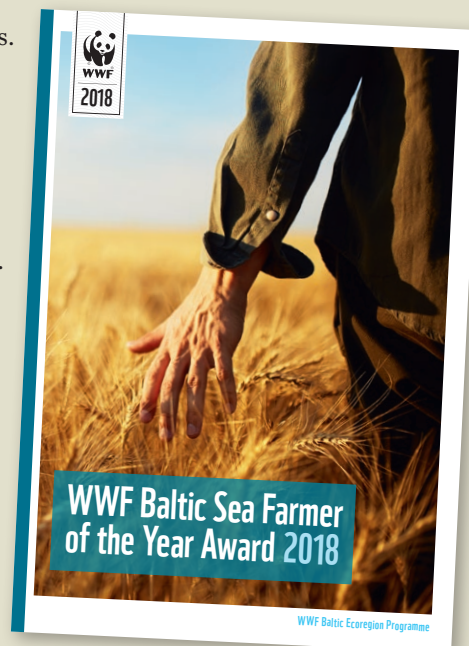
The WWF Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award was launched in 2009 to highlight best practices and recognize farmers who are leading the way in reducing nutrient runoff on their farms. Candidates include farmers from the eleven countries within the Baltic Sea catchment who are practicing organic or conventional farming across various different types of agriculture. National winners, chosen by a jury in each country, receive a prize of €1,000. From these national winners, an international jury selects a regional winner who receives the grand prize of €10,000.

"Around 97% of the Baltic Sea is affected by eutrophication. Agricultural measures remain a critical part of the solution," says Otilia Thoreson, head of the Baltic Ecoregional Programme. "This year's winners not only prove that taking effective measures to reduce nutrient runoff is possible, they also show us that these solutions can yield clear joint benefits for farm productivity and the surrounding community and ecosystem."

Thus far, some 60 farmers around the Baltic Sea have been awarded for their innovative measures. This year's winning farms are diverse in size and type, ranging from a small biodynamic enterprise to an 800 hectare conventional crop and livestock farm. Each farmer has a unique story to tell about the methods tested and implemented to reduce nutrient runoff to the Baltic Sea.

On page 10 you will find this year's winners. For the full story, please read the [brochure](#).

Contact: [Anu Suono](#)



See all the
2018
winners
on p.10

"Managing water is most efficient, when measures are implemented at a large scale, encompassing whole catchment areas, and with multiple actors working together."

Kimmo Tiilikainen, Finland's Minister of the Environment

EUTROPHICATION AND AGRICULTURE

The winners of the 2018 Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award have all taken measures on their own initiative to reduce nutrient runoff.

Denmark: Ole Lyngby Pedersen, I/S Faugård

Type of farm: Conventional crop and livestock farm (250 ha)

Ole Lyngby Pedersen is among the first to establish constructed wetlands, and believes that cross-discipline collaboration is the key to innovation.

Finland: Tuomas and Iiris Mattila, Kilpiä Farm

Type of farm: Organic crop farm (255 ha)

Tuomas and Iiris run their farm as an ecosystem, with strong soil health in focus.

Sweden: Christoffer Bonthron and Erik Bengtsson, Karlsfäls Farm

Type of farm: Conventional crop and livestock farm (800 ha)

The future vision for Karlsfäls Farm is to achieve zero emissions and a closed nutrient loop.

Poland: Krzysztof Kowalski, Kowalski Farm

Type of farm: Conventional crop and livestock farm (130 ha).

These farming methods protect nearby waters, preserve biodiversity and yield better products.

Germany: Alfred and Angelika Stender, Kroghof Farm

Type of farm: Conventional crop and livestock farm (182 ha)

A careful and effective use of nutrients resides at the heart of all management decisions at Kroghof Farm.

Ukraine: Bogdan Kostiv, Kostiv R.P. Farm

Type of farm: Organic farm (5 ha)

"Live in harmony with nature – take care of life!"

Russia: Igor and Irina Rudenko, Zarechye Farm

Type of farm: Conventional livestock farm (27 ha)

"Our success is bringing new life to adjacent villages."

Estonia: Viljar Veidenberg, Pajumäe Farm

Type of farm: Organic dairy farm (400 ha)

"Working with nature has been our natural way of doing things since the very beginning."

Latvia: Andris Kalniņš, Ozoli Farm

Type of farm: Organic and biodynamic crop and livestock farm (132 ha)

Andris Kalniņš created his own methodology for minimizing nutrient leakage.

Lithuania: Vaiva Jundulaitė-Kosienė and Giedrius Kosas, Miško Sodai Farm

Type of farm: Biodynamic organic crop farm (7 ha)

"We have always dreamed of a healthy and harmonious relationship with nature."

Belarus: Kanstantsin Chychyra, Kanstantsin Chychyra LPH

Type of farm: Organic farm (4 ha)

Producing crops in a way that benefits both nature and community is a top priority on Kanstantsin's farm.

EUTROPHICATION AND AGRICULTURE

Eutrophication closes Poland's beaches in the height of summer

Marine biologists know that eutrophication causes 'dead zones' in the sea, starving marine life of oxygen. This horror can be hard to communicate to the broader public but this year the Polish population also suffered firsthand with the closure of numerous bathing areas due to the toxicity of the bacteria in eutrophication-induced phytoplankton bloom.

In one of the hottest summers on record, tourists at the Polish coast were banned from the water at some point at most bathing areas. A total of 358 temporary bans on bathing were issued by the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate. Coastal waters were not available for bathing for an average of 7 days in the season; in Chałupy the bathing area was closed for 15 days.

To help communicate on eutrophication to the wider public, WWF Poland prepared an infographic which explains the sources of nitrates and phosphates in the Baltic Sea, and animation explaining the process. This was shown in a popular science television program.

Contact: [Anna Sosnowska](#)



Baltic Brunch was an opportunity to taste products from the Russian winner of Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year award.



Photos: Evgeny Genelt-Yanovsky

Baltic Brunch 2018

St Petersburg, 7 October: How tasty is the food produced at farms participating in the WWF Baltic Farmer of the Year Award competition? The Baltic Fund for Nature arranged an event at the Four Seasons Lion Palace Hotel in St. Petersburg to celebrate this year's national winners – Igor and Irina

Rudenko – and to provide the opportunity to taste several wonderful canapé dishes prepared by the skilled team of Chef Matteo Guida.

The Baltic Brunch has become an annual event that attracts growing numbers of people involved in sustainable farming, restaurants, research and nature conservation.

The invitation was sent to the consulates of Baltic countries, and we were again delighted to have representatives from Estonia, including Consul General Carl Eric Laantee Reintamm, join us this year.

Contact: [Evgeny Genelt-Yanovskiy](#)

PEARLS FROM THE BALTIC SEA REGION

So ... what's the deal?

Is there a connection between wine production and climate change? How does the environment impact our daily life in the city? Do the environment and economic development have anything in common? Does the environment influence war?

These are questions that Pasaules Dabas Fonds, together with the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Latvia, tried to answer last summer. The seminar series “Kāds sakars?” (What's the deal?) was organized with the aim of getting the general public involved in a discussion that explores how some industries, that at first glance seem to have nothing to do with the environment, are impacted by it.

Once a month, together with an industry expert, we explored one of the four topics: **1) environment and economics, 2) environment and war, 3) environment and wine, and 4) environment and urban planning.**

Each event convened various sector representatives. A lecture



Historian Kārlis Dambītis during 'What's the deal – environment and war?'

followed by a fruitful discussion and accompanied by a glass of wine allowed participants to explore different environmental aspects and problems outside of the usual 'green bubble'. To raise a wider awareness about the importance of environmental as well as economic and social elements in people's everyday lives, these topics were discussed on Latvijas Radio.

Most importantly, the seminars helped to engage and inform the general public – people who were attending an environment-related event for the first time - and invited them to actively think about global and local challenges such as climate change, migration and sustainable investment.

Contact: [Elza Ozoliņa](#)



Photo: GLACIAL

Trade your plastic for recycled steel

The world's overconsumption of plastic is a widespread problem and the large quantities of plastic that end up in our oceans have devastating impacts on our marine wildlife and ecosystems. One part of the solution to plastic waste is to reduce the volume of plastic bottles purchased globally and replace them with metal bottles that can be reused time and time again.

As a step towards reducing plastic waste globally, WWF has formed a partnership with [GLACIAL](#), producers of one of the most sustainable and durable bottles. GLACIAL produce completely non-toxic bottles from recycled stainless steel, good for cold or hot drinks.

GLACIAL in turn supports WWF's efforts to combat the global plastics problem, as well as contributing to ocean conservation through fundraising campaigns. The agreement between WWF and GLACIAL is a combined partnership and license agreement through which GLACIAL will donate €1 per bottle to help WWF in saving the Baltic Sea.

Contact: [Elin Bergman](#)

PEARLS FROM THE BALTIC SEA REGION



Photo: N. Yushchenko

Public awareness on Baltic nature in Russia

The Baltic Fund for Nature continues work within the Barents-Baltic Nature and People Programme in the St. Petersburg and Leningrad region. Last spring and summer, there was much activity to share information about the natural values of the Baltic region.

Nature watching in the St. Petersburg and Leningrad region is a promising but underdeveloped sector of tourism. More recently this has been prioritized by regional authorities and tourist companies. Today the heightened interest in

nature tours requires infrastructure and information to bring visitors closer to nature. In May, the Baltic Fund for Nature organized a study trip for representatives of tourist companies and individual guides along the South coast of the Gulf of Finland to demonstrate the region's natural attractions. The trip was designed to inspire and educate the companies and guides to develop their own nature excursions as a part of existing tours or as independent routes along the South coast of the Gulf of Finland as a new

destination for nature and wildlife watching tourism.

The Baltic Fund for Nature also prepared a permanent exhibition in the country hotel Dubki on the coast of the Gulf of Finland, close to the Kurgalsky nature reserve. Located in the scenic countryside, the hotel offers various outdoor activities for guests, including wildlife watching. The exhibition contains information about fish, coastal habitats and birds; handmade figures of mushrooms; wooden silhouettes of birds; and much more, all prepared by the Baltic Fund for Nature's experts.

Public awareness about the environment and nature values is an important part of the marine spatial planning process. Partners of the Barents-Baltic Nature and People Programme in cooperation with WWF are working to promote distribution of information and involving society and stakeholders in decision making around the Baltic region.

Contact: [Tatiana Ivanova](#), [Evgeny Genelt-Yanovskiy](#)

Bringing wildlife closer to people

WWF Wildlive – a website launched by WWF Finland – brings nature to you no matter where you are. The website features live footage of rare and endangered Finnish animals such as wolverine, forest reindeer and Saimaa ringed seal that have gone online to highlight their plight. Normally, it takes extraordinary luck to see these species in the wild, but WWF is changing those odds. At least one camera will be streaming 24/7, year-round. The newest camera focused on the endangered trout during its spawning period in October.



The endangered trout is one of the stars of the WWF Wildlive.

© Wild Wonders of Europe / Martin Falkind / WWF

The inspiration for WWF Wildlive came from previous success with streamed live footage of endangered Saimaa ringed seals basking in the sun. The live stream, *Norppalive*, went viral in 2016 and 2017 with more 5 million views.

According to Google it was one of the most trending searches in Finland in 2016. WWF Finland is considering expanding the project to other species and habitats.

Contact: [Joonas Fritze](#)

PEARLS FROM THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's a bat at sea!

The Estonian Fund for Nature is investigating migrating bats in its national waters of the Baltic Sea. It is common knowledge that birds migrate long distances. Fewer people know that bats do too. Unlike birds, bats do not fly in flocks, but rather solo and at night. Bat migration is more active in the fall. This year the migration started early, toward the end of August.

The first study of the migration of bats in the Baltic Sea took place in 2016, when bat-researcher Lauri Lutsar used ultrasound recorders at open sea, 16 miles from the coast-line. They recorded four different species of bats, the first study in Estonia to record bats so far offshore.

This year the study has been wider and uses three ultrasound recorders in different areas of

Estonia's territorial waters. The first recordings suggested that the migration has been active. The conclusions of this year's bat migration should be finalized by the end of this year for use in Estonia's marine spatial planning process. It is relevant for the planning of offshore wind parks: studies have shown that the wind turbines cause bats fatal barotraumas, i.e. changes in pressure which causes the bats' auditory organs and lungs to explode.

In the near future, the research will get more detectors to use at sea. This will help to cover the Estonian bat migration research needs and hopefully provide scientific input to make marine spatial planning a bat-friendly operation.

Contact: [Kertu Hool](#)



Photo: Indre Ceidaite

From big to small – education for all on microplastic pollution

The Lithuanian Fund for Nature (LFN) is steadily building public awareness about plastic and microplastic pollution through education at many levels. A simple filtering system and microscope help show microplastic particles in our environment. The LFN receives many invitations from schools and other children's organizations, as well as to participate in various public events.

In schools and summers camps specialists go to short expeditions with the children to filter water samples from nearby lakes or rivers. After taking a sample, children can look closely and – with just a little assistance – find microplastic particles by themselves.

Last summer one of the biggest vegan food festivals in Lithuania – VegFest – invited LFN specialists to speak about plastic and microplastic problems and thus spread awareness of plastic pollution.

After each activity, LFN opens a discussion with the audience about our daily habits and how we can make changes in our daily life, step by step. These discussions often revolve around primary changes such as refusing single-use plastic cups, replacing plastic with reusable bags, and having a closer look at the ingredients lists in personal care and cosmetic products.

Contact: [Indre Ceidaite](#)

World Cleanup Day – one day, one planet, one goal



September 15: Volunteers and partners worldwide came together to rid our planet of trash – cleaning up litter and mismanaged waste from our beaches, seas, rivers, forests, and streets.

A powerful 'green wave' of cleanups started in New Zealand and ended 36 hours later in Hawaii, with millions of people working towards one goal: a clean and healthy planet.

The movement was born 10 years ago in Estonia, when 4% of the population came out to clean the

entire country of illegally dumped waste, in a matter of hours. This captured the imaginations of people worldwide, who were inspired to follow suit with the same ambitious 'one country, one day' formula.

This was the beginning of a global bottom-up civic movement, *Let's Do It! World*. The movement has grown to be the biggest of its kind in the world – uniting people from all corners of the planet to work together in cleaning the world of trash.

On 15 September 150 million people in 158 countries united to clean up our world, in the biggest civic action in human history. Some 550,000 volunteers from Baltic Sea countries came together to clean up the region.

Contact: [Kertu Hool](#)

PEARLS FROM THE BALTIC SEA REGION



Meet the Team – Aleksei (Alex) Lotman

1. What was your previous job?

I studied biology once upon a time. My previous job before joining ELF was a brief period of 4 years working as a Member of Parliament for the Estonian Greens. My responsibility was as Deputy Chair of the Rural Affairs Committee and Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Prior to working with policy processes I worked at the State Nature Conservation Centre and as Deputy Director of Matsalu Nature Reserve. I am bloody old, you see.

2. What is the most important thing you are trying to achieve right now?

I am focused on improving policy processes such as the CAP reform, maritime spatial planning, and national water legislation. All these things require attention in order to

make them better - or at least prevent them from getting worse.

3. What most inspires you about your work?

I manage to force myself off the computer from time to time and when going out and seeing that “nature is still out there” and there is some modest impact of my work that things aren’t worse than they are ... that is quite inspiring.

4. What is the most challenging thing about your work?

Bureaucracy. I am one of those who understands it a bit better than the average person but that doesn’t make me like it. I also see that to some extent it is unavoidable, but even this does not make it emotionally more acceptable.

5. What do you think the Baltic will look like in 50 years?

I hope it will have somewhat recovered from the present levels of eutrophication. I also hope that most of the pollution by hazardous substances will have decreased, and that not too many new substances that are now (or ten years from now) said to be ‘harmless’ will be shown to be damaging. I am afraid that we will not be able to totally avoid man-made climate change. I hope though that we will be able to keep it somewhere within “Paris limits”. It would still mean that part of the Baltic biodiversity, for example the southern sub-populations of the ringed seals, will be under severe pressure and it is not known if they would be able to adapt. I do hope very much that no major war would have happened in between and no other catastrophic events would have made all our efforts meaningless. I hope my grandkids and their grandkids will have a sea to live by.

ESTONIAN FUND FOR NATURE (ELF)

- Country: Estonia
- Active in Baltic since: 1991
- BEP focused staff members: ~5 staff including communications are working with Baltic as part of wider thematic conservation work. No-one is full-time dedicated to Baltic Sea issues.
- Main thematic focus: Eutrophication



PEARLS FROM THE BALTIC SEA REGION



NEWS FROM BRUSSELS

The European Union's ambition on the post-2020 funding for maritime and fisheries fails to deliver sustainability

In June, the European Commission presented its funding strategy for the maritime and fisheries sector (EMFF), a budget of €6.4 billion to finance some key challenges in the marine environment between 2021 and 2027. The strategy, however, falls significantly short of the EU's stated ambition to create sustainable business models for fishers and to contribute to the good environmental status of marine waters across all EU sea basins. It was also disappointing to see

that, when the European Parliament presented its draft report amending this strategy in September, it directly proposed giving funding to unsustainable marine activities which negatively impact the health of our seas.

Despite unhealthy fish stocks and a structural problem of fishing overcapacity – the EU fleet is estimated to be two to three times too large for the available resources –, the proposed fund continues to fuel overfishing. While we welcome the preferential access to funds for

small-scale fishing vessels (those under 12 meters in length, who have historically been at a disadvantage to secure funding), the proposal to grant certain small-scale fisheries subsidies for the acquisition of second hand vessels and to continue to allow the replacement of engines is worrying. This risks increasing fishing capacity in already unsustainable fisheries and moves the EU further away from ending overfishing – one of its key objectives in the Common Fisheries Policy.

Members of the European Parliament in the Fisheries Committee will vote on the EMFF budget on 23 January 2019. It is in their hands to guide the investment of public resources into positive change for our ocean by promoting sustainable fishing techniques and reducing the footprint of economic activities on the wider marine environment.

Contact: [Ignacio Fresco Vanzini](#)



WWF EU @WWFEU · Jun 12

BREAKING: @EU_Commission proposal on post-2020 funding for maritime and fisheries misses crucial opportunity to guide the investment of public resources into positive change for the ocean.

Read our full response: wwf.eu/?uNewsID=329290



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Stay tuned!

Has the current EU budget contributed to achieving sustainability in the fisheries sector? In December, WWF will release a scorecard report, detailing how EU Member States have been implementing the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy to achieve sustainable fisheries.

Contact: [Ignacio Fresco Vanzini](#)

ON THE HORIZON

WWF BALTIC ECOREGION PROGRAMME

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

17-29 November 2018

Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP14)

Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt

26-28 November 2018

Sustainable Blue Economy Conference

Nairobi, Kenya

4-5 December 2018

HELCOM

Head of Delegations meeting

Helsinki, Finland

13-14 December 2018

GRASS conference

Minsk, Belarus

5-6 March 2019

Baltic Sea Future Congress

Stockholm, Sweden

25 March - 5 April 2019

Ocean Treaty Session 2

New York, United States

A binding treaty for managing half of the planet – the high seas



Amphipod, Trondheimsfjord, Norway.

Photo: Erling Svensen/WWF

It's on! The first session of the Intergovernmental conference to negotiate an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (the 'high seas' and the international seabed) was held in September at the United Nations headquarters in New York. This is exciting: if we get it right, this new treaty will help establish integrated ocean management based upon the ecosystem for half the planet.

The important outcome of this first meeting is that all states are in tacit agreement on the need to conserve and sustainably use our ocean. The next step in this journey is to agree on defining what should be included in the binding instrument. Three UN sessions have been scheduled between now and 2020 to set the course.

WWF and many of our partners will be there to follow negotiations and ensure that we get a strong enough treaty which fosters the protection of important marine ecosystems and species, and promotes international cooperation to establish marine protected areas, marine

spatial planning and other management measures. The treaty we envisage would also set out guidelines for when and how to carry out environmental impact assessments of planned activities in the ocean beyond national jurisdiction to prohibit major negative impacts from occurring.

To be effective, the treaty needs to be acceptable to all states so one of our jobs is to ensure that all states understand what is in it for them. All the countries around the Baltic Sea are participating in the treaty conference. Its outcome will also have implications for national waters as standards for protection and other management tools set at the global level will inevitably also be applied at the regional level.

The ocean and all the creatures and people depending upon its bounty urgently need better management, especially in the face of climate change and the cumulative impacts that increasing industrial activities are putting upon ocean health.

Contact: [Jessica Battle](#)



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

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

[Otilia](#) and [Anu](#)