CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE
ENVIRONMENT OF THE BALTIC SEA AREA

HELSINKI COMMISSION - Baltic Marine
Environment Protection Commission

19th Meeting
Helsinki, 23-27 March 1998

HELCOM 19/98
15/1
Annex 28

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 19/2

Adopted 26 March 1998,
having regard to Article 13, Paragraph b)
of the Helsinki Convention

PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE WILD SALMON*) (*Salmo salar* L.) POPULATIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA

THE COMMISSION,

BEING DEEPLY CONCERNED about the precarious status in most of the wild salmon populations in the Baltic Sea Area,

BEING AWARE of the fact that the proportion of wild salmon out of the total Baltic salmon stocks might decrease even further in following years,

BEING ALSO AWARE of the additional threat caused by the M74-syndrome,

RECOGNIZING the relevance of the Agreement on the Convention on the Conservation of Biological Diversity (Rio-Convention), the Agenda 21, the Action programmes for the Baltic Sea States cooperation in the Baltic Sea States Summit, 1996, the advice by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the recommendations and resolutions of the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission (IBSFC) on the Salmon Management and Protection Strategies for the Baltic,

ALSO RECOGNIZING that the wild salmon populations in the Baltic Sea Area constitute a most valuable natural resource,

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that exploitation of wild salmon populations can only be tolerated at a level, that allows each individual population to maintain a sustainable status, and that exploitation of mixed stocks on their feeding grounds adversely affects especially the wild populations,

BEING CONVINCED that the status of the vulnerable wild salmon populations calls for immediate actions in order to safeguard their survival and genetic diversity,

*) A wild Baltic salmon is defined as an offspring of naturally spawning salmon, having spent its entire life in the wild.

DESIRING to attain by 2010 for each salmon river a natural production of wild Baltic salmon of at least 50% of the best estimate potential and within safe genetic limits;

RECOMMENDS to the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention:

a) to undertake all necessary measures feasible to improve the environmental conditions in present and potential salmon rivers to facilitate future natural reproduction of salmon. Such measures can be improvement of water quality and quantity, restoration of rearing habitats, removal of man-made mechanical obstacles or by other measures facilitating salmon migration;

b) not to build any new, permanent or temporary, mechanical obstacles that can prevent migration in salmon rivers;

c) to take action in close cooperation with ICES to accelerate the investigations on the causes and the effects of M74;

d) to decide, or, where appropriate, invite IBSFC to declare, by taking up recent resolutions of IBSFC and ICES advice, a temporary moratorium/temporary time and area closures on commercial and recreational fishing directed on threatened wild salmon populations in coastal waters and rivers as well as in the Baltic open sea areas. Only incidental by-catches of wild salmon in those areas are accepted. This temporary moratorium/these temporary time and area closures should be reconsidered annually based on scientific advice;

e) to appeal to IBSFC to recommend appropriate management measures such as seasonal and area closures and annual TAC's (Total Allowable Catch) at a level consistent with the above mentioned management objectives, with the aim to increase the numbers of wild salmon spawners;

f) to carry out reestablishment activities in potential salmon rivers or necessary enhancement in present salmon rivers with individuals of appropriate populations, preferably of wild origin;

g) to stop, taking into account possible legally binding decisions, inappropriate river[1)], coastal[2)] or delayed releases[3)] of reared salmon, unless scientific evaluation indicates that the risk of negative genetic or other impacts on wild salmon is low. The releases of reared salmon should be carefully monitored and their genetic or other impact on wild salmon evaluated by scientists. Results of tagging experiments from coastal and delayed releases carried out by the Contracting Parties should be elaborated and reports should be presented as soon as possible,

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the actions taken by the Contracting Parties should be
./. reported to the Commission in 1999 and annually thereafter using the attached ***Reporting Format***.

Definitions by IBSFC:

1) River release
   Release of smolt and earlier Salmon life stages in rivers and river mouths
2) Coastal release
   Release of smolts into coastal waters
3) Delayed release
   Release of smolts kept in cages in the sea for some period before they are released

REPORTING FORMAT

a) List all appropriate rivers and the measures taken for each river to improve environmental conditions facilitating future natural salmon reproduction (include also names of rivers where no measures have been taken).

b) Have any new, permanent or temporary, mechanical obstacles been built that can prevent salmon migration in rivers? If yes, specify river name and type of construction.

c) List all projects conducted in your country dealing with causes and effects of M74. Indicate which of these have been conducted in co-operation with ICES.

d) Indicate areas (using geographical co-ordinates) where a moratorium/time and area closures on commercial and/or recreational fishing of wild salmon have been established. Indicate the time period over which this moratorium/these time and area closures are valid.

e) Have you approached IBSFC concerning management measures for wild salmon? If so, indicate when and which measures.

f) List all appropriate rivers and indicate whether and, if so, which reestablishment or enhancement activities have been carried out.

g) List all releases of reared salmon and indicate the scientific basis for these releases.