

The role of HELCOM in protecting the marine environment of the Baltic Sea

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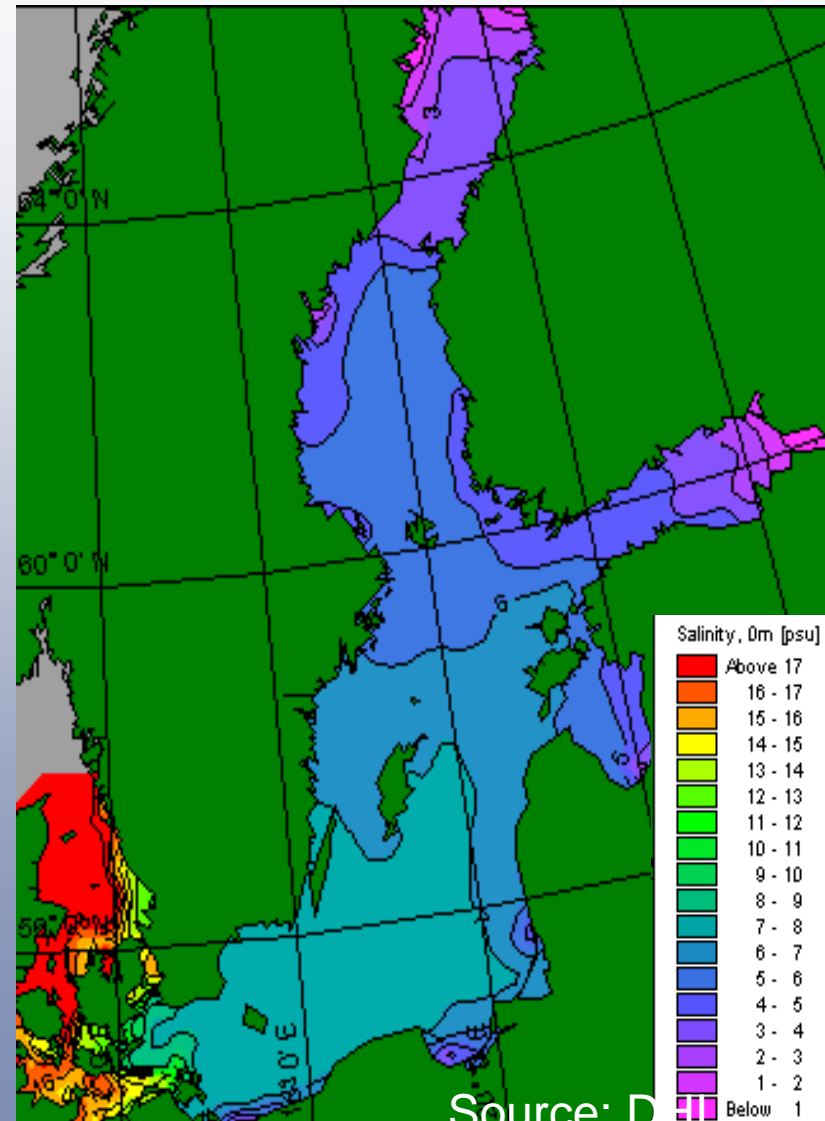




- Our seas are a common resource providing many goods and services
- Social and economic values
- Common responsibility to address the negative impacts of human activities

Baltic Sea

- A young, shallow, semi enclosed sea
 - Brackish water
 - Low water exchange rate
 - Low temperature
 - Low biodiversity
- > Sensitive to human pressures



Source: D.H.

Baltic Sea

- Area: 415000 km²
- 9 Coastal States
- Catchment area:
 - 1.72 million km²
(4 times the size of the sea area)
 - 14 countries
 - 85 million people



Main threats to marine environment

- Pollution from land-based sources e.g. industries, agriculture, municipalities, traffic (directly to the sea, via rivers, and via the atmosphere)
- Impacts of shipping (emissions to the air, discharges into the sea, accidents, introduction of alien species)
- Destruction of habitats (fishing gear, dredging, gravel extraction, coastal development, off-shore installations)
- Unsustainable use of resources, e.g. fisheries



International marine environment processes in the Baltic Sea

EU Maritime Strategy

BS Strategy

Marine direktive

Water Framework Directive

Helcom, Baltic Sea
Action Plan



Helsinki Convention



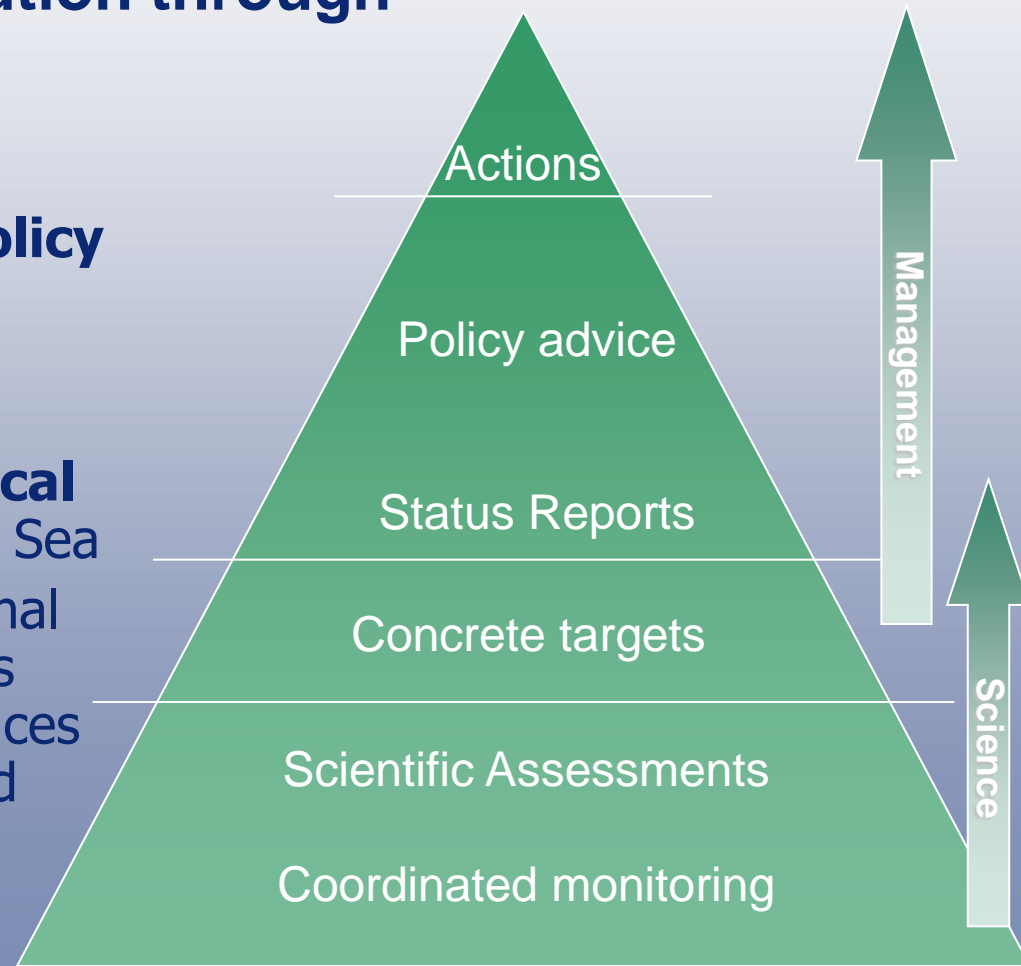
- Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (since 1974 – a new Convention signed in 1992)
- Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) - Governing body of the Convention
- 10 Contracting Parties (9 Baltic Sea Coastal States and the European Union)



HELCOM's role in the Baltic

Works to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution through intergovernmental cooperation

- **environmental policy maker** developing common objectives and actions
- **environmental focal point** for the Baltic Sea
- **coordinates** regional monitoring activities and regularly produces targeted, timely and scientifically sound assessments



Structure of HELCOM



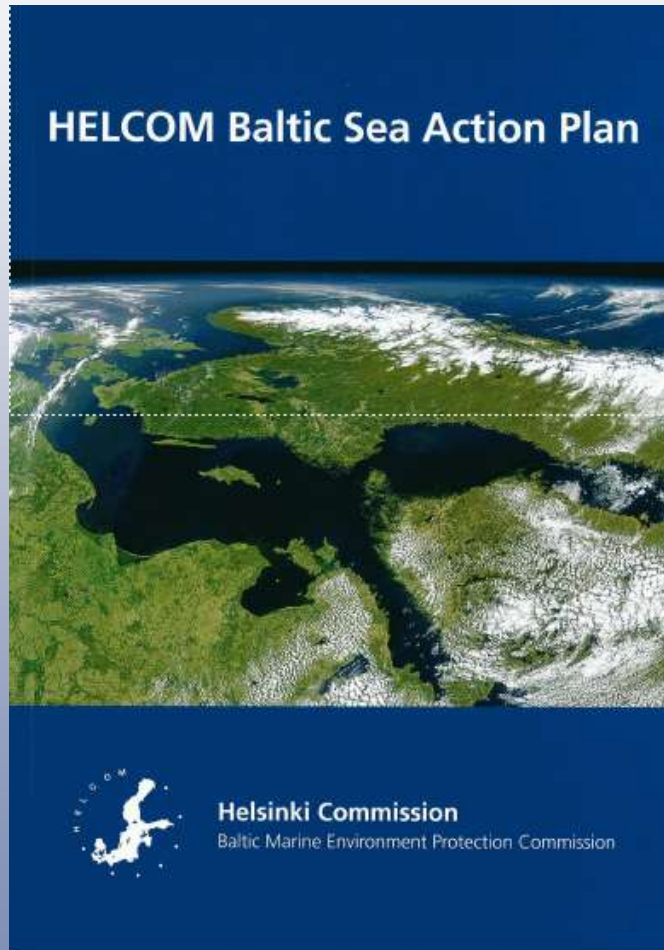
How do we do it?

The unique Baltic conditions require special regional consideration

- Helsinki Conventions
- Over 200 HELCOM Recommendations
- Ministerial Declarations
- Regional implementation of regional and global agreements
- Input to international fora (EU, IMO, and other global organisations)
- Joint initiatives and projects
- Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP)



HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan - adopted 15 November 2007



**Ecosystem approach to the
management of human
activities**

Only one hundred pages....

... but a great commitment for all us!



HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan

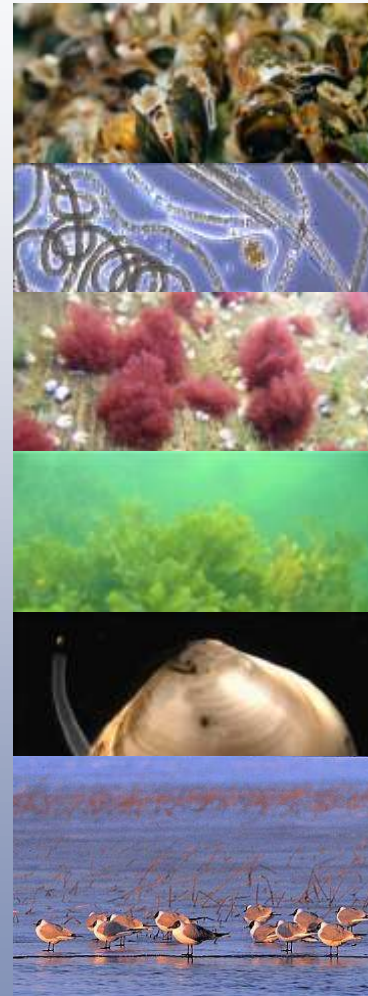
Eutrophication



Hazardous substances



Biodiversity



Maritime activities



BSAP actions



- Includes actions to be taken:
 - By the HELCOM Contracting Parties
 - In the non-HELCOM countries in the catchment area
 - In relevant international fora, including the EU and IMO
- Allows for tailor-made, cost-effective, implementation of measures by the countries (National implementation programmes)
- In addition:
 - assistance to EU Member States in coordination of their work within EU to reach Baltic environmental objectives
 - input to the European Community ensuring channelling of the Baltic environmental interests



Eutrophication as an example



- Priority issue in the BSAP
- HELCOM's integrated thematic assessment on eutrophication (2009) presents eutrophication status/classification for 189 areas in the Baltic
- Only 13 of the 189 areas where not eutrophied in 2001-2006
- The non-eutrophied areas were either in the Gulf of Bothnia or the Kattegat

Eutrophication Objectives

VISION

A healthy Baltic Sea environment, with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in a good ecological status and supporting a wide range of sustainable human economic and social activities

GOALS

Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication

Baltic Sea life undisturbed by hazardous substances

Favourable conservation status of Baltic Sea biodiversity

Maritime activities in the Baltic Sea carried out in an environmentally friendly way

OBJECTIVES

Concentrations of nutrients close to natural levels

Concentrations of hazardous substances close to natural levels

Natural marine and coastal landscapes

Enforcement of international regulations
-No illegal pollution

Clear water

All fish safe to eat

Safe maritime traffic without accidental pollution

Efficient emergency and response capability

Natural level of algal blooms

Healthy wildlife

Thriving and balanced communities of plants and animals

Minimum sewage pollution from ships

No introductions of alien species from ships

Natural distribution and occurrence of plants and animals

Minimum air pollution from ships

Zero discharges from offshore platforms

Natural oxygen levels

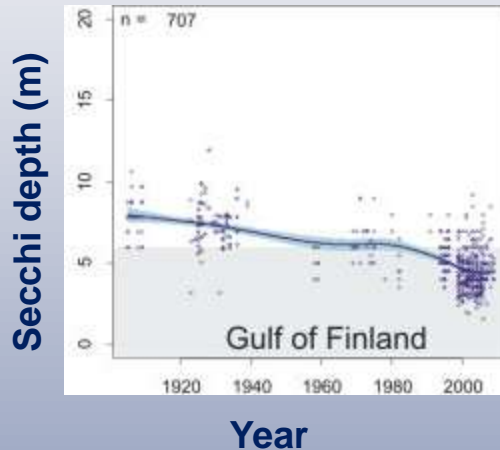
Radioactivity at pre-Chernobyl level

Viable populations of species

Minimum threats from offshore installations



Setting quantitative environmental targets for "Clear water"

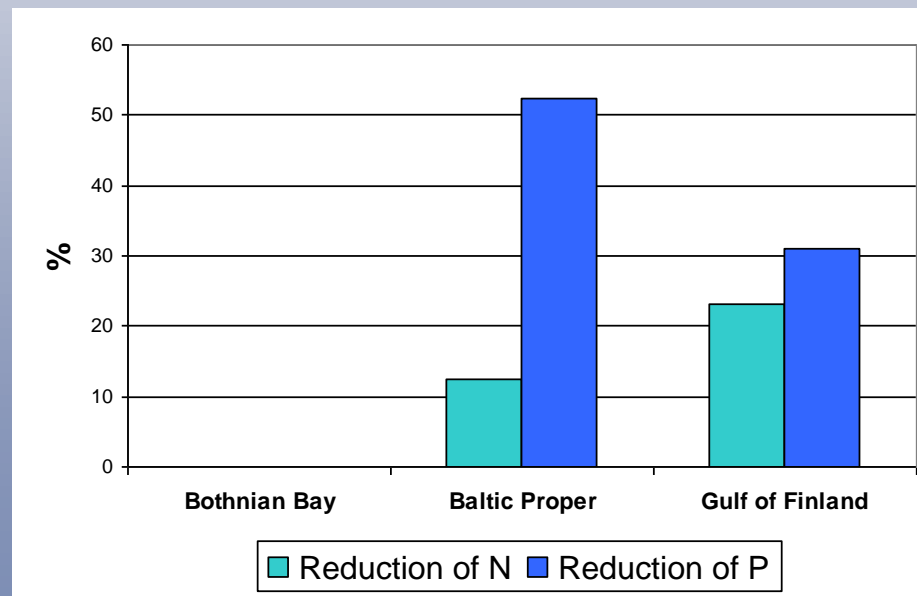


- Secchi depth used for describing water transparency and the quantity of planktonic algae in water
- Exact targets were set for each Baltic Sea sub-basin using data on historical levels of Secchi depth



How much does nutrient load need to be reduced to reach “Clear water”?

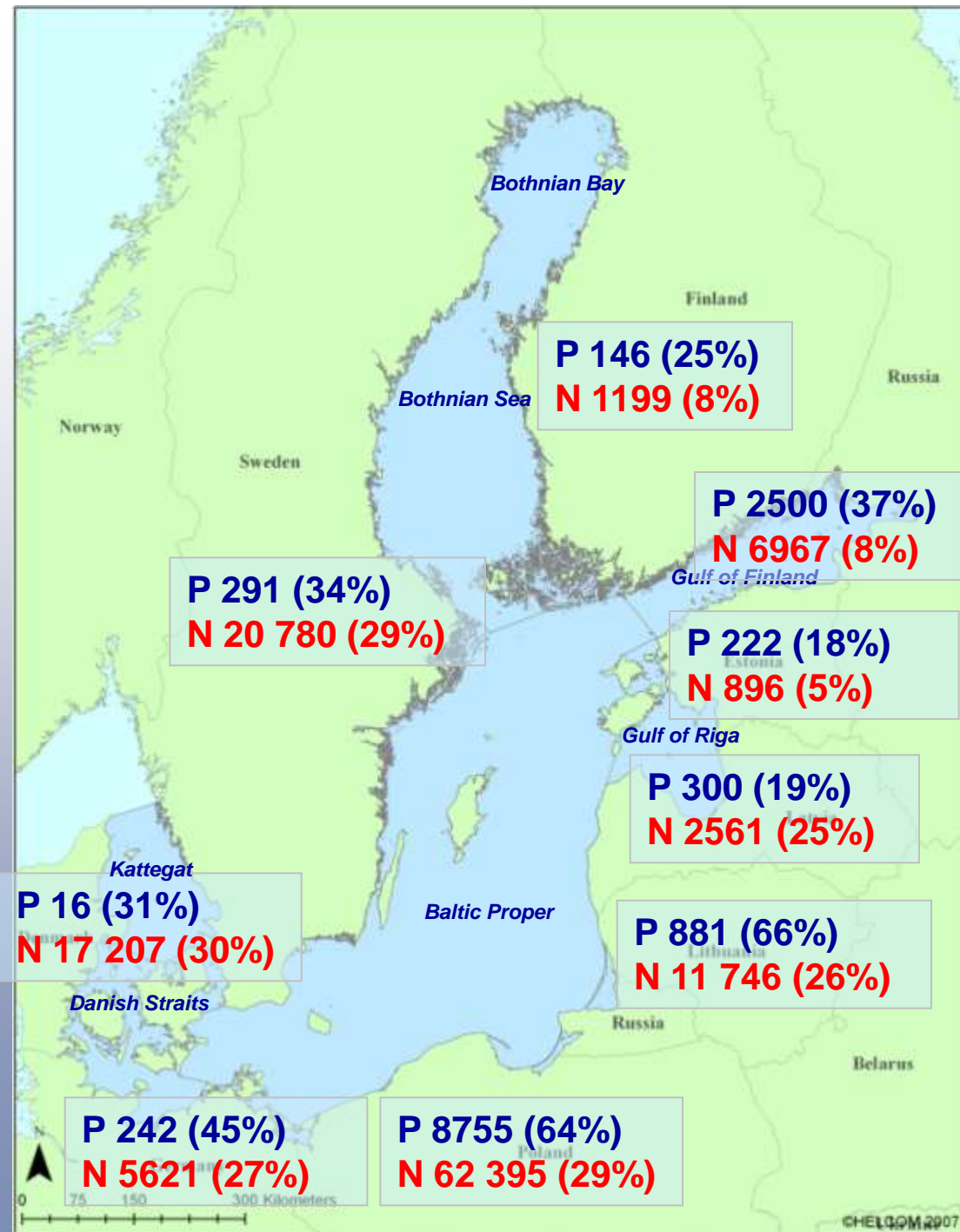
- MARE model suggests that reaching the water clarity target requires reduction of:
 - 42% total phosphorus input and
 - 18% total nitrogen input to the Baltic Sea
- Provisional nutrient reduction targets



Total
reductions
needed
(tonnes/year)

Reductions/
sub-basin
(tonnes/year)

Reductions/
country
(tonnes/year)



BSAP actions for eutrophication



- **Specific measures**
 - Efficient treatment of waste waters from municipalities, scattered settlements and single family homes (HELCOM Recommendations)
 - P-free detergents
 - Agriculture: requirements for animal farms, manure handling and fertilisation (revised Annex III of the Convention)
 - Curb emissions of nitrogen to air (e.g. shipping)
 - Lists of hotspots (animal rearing, waste water treatment) to facilitate establishment and funding of projects
- HELCOM countries presented their **national implementation programmes** in May 2010
 - to reach the provisional nutrient reduction requirements
 - flexibility to include most suitable and cost-effective measures



BSAP implementation

- Measures in non-Contracting Parties to address transboundary inputs
 - bi- and multilateral projects
 - involving also private initiatives
- Strong link to regional and global processes
 - e.g. EU Baltic Sea Strategy, EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Maritime Policy
 - joint input from HELCOM Contracting Parties to processes within international fora to reach Baltic environmental objectives, e.g. IMO, EU, UNECE CLRTAP



Success stories

- Reductions in inputs of nutrients and hazardous substances
- 'No special fee' at port reception facilities – reduced illegal pollution by ships
- Annual transnational exercises for response to accidents at sea
- Improving status of populations of white-tailed eagle, Baltic wild salmon, seals
- Establishment of a network of Baltic Sea Protected Areas

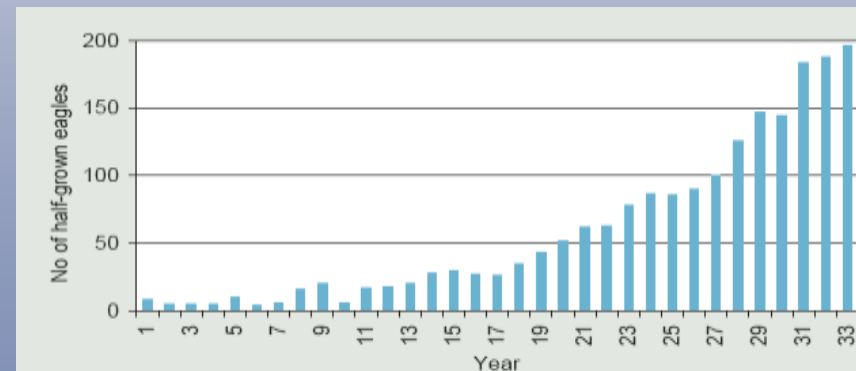
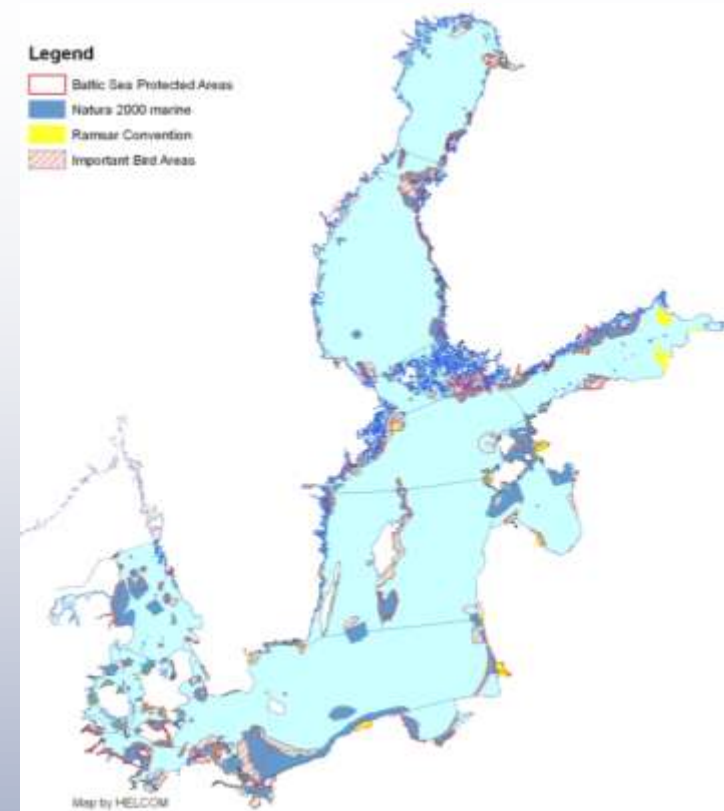


Figure 42.
Number of young white-tailed eagles hatched per year in Finland, 1970-2002 (Source: WWF Sea Eagle Working Group, Finland).



Ingredients for success

- Well established regional co-operation
- High public awareness
- Good scientific environmental knowledge
- Uniform environmental legislation in large part of the catchment area
- Political will and funding commitments



Thank you!

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