



photo: Sergey Titov, GosNIORKh

PRIORITY AREA
BIODIVERSITY



“The creation of the protected zone will considerably contribute to the preservation of biodiversity in the South-East Baltic Sea”



EXTENSION OF THE MARINE PROTECTED ZONE OF THE CURONIAN SPIT NATIONAL PARK

SUPPORTING MANAGEMENT OF THE HELCOM MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPAS) IN KALININGRAD REGION

Implemented by Ecological Monitoring, Management, Audit and Consulting Ltd. (ECOMMAC) and the Biodiversity Conservation Center (Main Consultants)

BACKGROUND

The HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in Moscow 2010 expressed concern over the unfavourable conservation status in most of the Baltic Sea marine areas, and that all levels of Baltic biodiversity have been negatively affected by human activities, noting the need for additional designation of HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the development and application of proper management plans and measures for them.

Our project focused on the preparation of the documentation for the development of the marine protected zone of the Curonian Spit National Park by accession of the adjacent water area.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to validate the legal status of the marine protected zone adjacent to the boundaries of the Curonian Spit National Park. This will help in maintaining the ecological coherence of the MPA network in the South-Eastern part of the Baltic Sea.

MAIN OUTCOMES

A significant outcome of the project was the involvement of regional and federal authorities, including the Curonian Spit National Park authorities in Russia and in Lithuania as well as researchers in the development of a common approach to establish MPAs. Based on joint discussions, it was decided to apply for legal status for the extension of the protected zone into the sea.

The creation of the protected zone will considerably contribute to the preservation of biodiversity in the South-East Baltic Sea.

The proposed area entails 12 nautical miles of internal sea waters and territorial sea of the Russian Federation adjacent to the western coast of the Curonian Spit. The total area of the protected zone will be 15,517 ha.

In addition to putting together an application to extend the protected zone into the sea, a number of promotion activities have been carried out in the local communities of Kaliningrad region highlighting the assets of the Curonian Spit marine protected zone.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Russia to establish the marine protected zone following the submission of the application by the Curonian Spit National Park authorities. ●

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WILD SALMON IN THE RIVER LUGA

SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SALMON MANAGEMENT PLAN IN THE RIVER LUGA

Implemented by All-Russian Social Organisation "All-Russian Society of Nature Protection", Leningrad Region office (ARSoNP) (Main Consultant)

Support provided by Inland Fisheries Institute, Department of Migratory Fishes, Gdansk, Poland (EU Expert)

BACKGROUND

Our project prepared an inventory of rivers with salmon and sea trout populations in the Baltic Sea rivers within the Russian Federation.

The River Luga that empties into the Gulf of Finland is one of the identified rivers that hold an original salmon population that is in need of recovery. The River Luga is also listed by the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission (IBFSC) as an index salmon river.

The project's significance is increased by the fact that the population of At-

lantic salmon in the River Luga is currently the only salmon population in the Russian part of the Baltic Sea that is reproducing naturally; however, according to existing data, a clear decline in their population numbers is observed. In order to maintain and restore the small population of wild salmon in the River Luga a workable management plan must be developed.

OBJECTIVES

The first step in drawing up a management plan was to conduct a comprehensive study of the current state of the Luga salmon and its habitat in order to develop evidence-based recommendations for its restoration.

In addition to analysing available material and conducting additional research on the current status of the Luga salmon, public awareness activities play a key role. It was important to ensure the recommendations of the SALAR project and the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan would also materialise in the Russian Federation by involvement and cooperation with the relevant stakeholders. This would pave the way for the approval of a management plan and for better commitment of the local communities in the activities.

MAIN OUTCOMES

The research shows that the main reason for the decline of wild salmon numbers in the River Luga is their unreported catch, occurring mainly in the lower courses of the river and close to major settlements. Unreported fishing consists of illegal fishing (poaching) and also of overfishing by fishermen catching salmon for the needs of the Luga hatchery.

Poaching and the concealment of catches by professional fishermen are encouraged by high market cost of salmon and the lack of sufficient control by law enforcement authorities.

The results indicate that at the moment the River Luga can support a of wild salmon population of up to 170,000 individuals of juveniles of different age classes. This is due to the following conditions: good quality of water environment, sufficient potential areas of spawning and nursery grounds, and easily available food resources.

The salmon potential of the River Luga can be increased to 360,000 juveniles by means of the melioration of the part of the spawning grounds currently not used by salmon, as well as the elimination or attenuation of unreported (illegal) fishing. A significant part of spawning grounds and nursery areas

*“A clear decline in
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numbers is observed”*

photo: GosNIORKh



“Poaching has been and remains the most important factor resulting in the low quantity of salmon in the river”



in the main stream of the River Luga (730,000 m²) currently can't be used by salmon because of littering of the bottom, its 'cementation' and its bio-fouling with water vegetation. The only way to solve this problem is the re-cultivation of spawning grounds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- An effective conservation program is the most important and powerful method that can be used to restore the Luga salmon population since poaching has been and remains the most important factor resulting in the low abundance of this species in the river.
- The efficiency (*corr.*) of Luga salmon hatcheries should be increased to maintain the population of wild salmon in the River Luga.
- The improvement of the productive capacity of the River Luga to restore most of the spawning grounds located in the main course of the river could include cleaning the area of the Kingiseppskie rapids from household waste and metal products, and restoring the spawning grounds and nursery areas by changing the profile of the rapids and the stone and pebble banking in some cases.
- At the Sabskie and Storonskie rapids, it is essential to conduct reclamation

activities aimed at the removal of higher aquatic vegetation, which grows at these rapids in high densities.

- The efficiency of natural spawning grounds can be increased by using artificial 'spawning nests'.
- Strict compliance with scientific recommendations on the limitation of the construction of port facilities in Luga



photo: Sergey Titov, GosNIORKh

"...because people throw litter in the river which sinks to the bottom. The bottom is also disturbed by 'cementation' and bio-fouling with water vegetation."

Bay could be one of the most efficient ways to reduce anthropogenic pressure on the Luga salmon population.

- Some limiting measures are currently practised by GosNIORKh (State Research Institute on Lake and River Fisheries) for construction in Luga Harbour and have a real positive effect; for ex-

ample, the termination of any economic activity in Luga Bay and the mouth of the River Luga during the downstream migration of juvenile salmon during May and June, and during the mass spawning migration of salmon breeders.

- Conducting annual monitoring of nutrient inflows from agricultural farms and prohibiting logging activities in the water-protection zone is also crucial.

Major spawning grounds of salmon in the River Luga:

- The River Luga, Sabskie rapids.
- The River Luga, Storonskie rapids
- The River Luga, Kingiseppskie rapids

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