

15th Meeting
Helsinki, 8-11 March 1994

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 15/3

Adopted 9 March 1994
having regard to Article 13, Paragraph b)
of the Helsinki Convention

MEASURES AIMED AT THE REDUCTION OF DISCHARGES FROM MARINE FISH FARMING

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Paragraph 1 of Article 6 of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1974 (Helsinki Convention), in which the Contracting Parties undertake to take all appropriate measures to control and minimize land-based pollution of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area,

RECALLING ALSO Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Annex III to the Helsinki Convention, in which the Contracting Parties agree to minimize the polluting load of industrial wastes in an appropriate way,

HAVING REGARD to the Ministerial Declaration of 1988, to the Baltic Sea Declaration of 1990, and to the Baltic Sea Environmental Declaration of 1992, calling, *inter alia*, for a substantial reduction of the load of pollutants most harmful to the ecosystem of the Baltic Sea,

RECOGNIZING the importance of discharges, nutrients in particular, from marine fish farms as sources of pollution of the marine environment,

DESIRING to limit the pollution from the fish farms located in the Baltic Sea Area or at the coast, when discharging water directly to the Baltic Sea, by best environmental practice,

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

- a) plant operation, feeding methods and fish feed, which cause minimum nutrient discharges, should be used and developed;
- b) methods for sludge removal in fish farms should be developed and introduced, whenever appropriate, so as to decrease the nutrient and organic discharges;
- c) fish farming should be subject to permits or prior regulations by the competent authority or appropriate body in accordance with the following principles:

(i) limits to phosphorus and/or nitrogen discharges should be given in permits or prior regulations. Limits might also be expressed as maximum amounts of phosphorus and/or nitrogen in feed or maximum allowable feed consumption, if the contents of the feed, nitrogen and phosphorus in particular, are fixed;

(ii) environmental impacts shall be evaluated as part of the authorization process for fish farms;

(iii) permits and regulations shall be reviewed at appropriate intervals;

d) nutrient discharges from fish farms should not exceed the annual average of 10 g phosphorus (tot-P) and 80 g nitrogen (tot-N) per 1 kg fish produced;

e) regional planning should be employed as an instrument for directing fish farming activities to suitable areas and mitigating conflicts between fish farming and other uses of the water area. Fish farms should not be placed in areas reserved for nature protection, if that might conflict with the aims of protection.

Sites of the fish farms should be selected and discharges from them restricted by means of objective environmental impact evaluation methods in accordance with the holding capacity of the water environment affected;

f) the discharges from and the ecological effects of fish farms should be adequately supervised by competent authority or appropriate body e.g. by means of fish farm operation records, discharge calculations, monitoring and environmental impact models. The monitoring should focus on measuring reliably and cost-effectively the impacts of fish farming on the eutrophic status, oxygen depletion and the state of the sediments in the affected area;

g) the use of bioactive chemicals at fish farms should be effectively controlled to minimize hazards to the environment. The transfer of fish and introduction of new species should be undertaken according to the recommendations of EIFAC and ICES thus avoiding the possible negative effects. If a species with an effective breeding size well over 1 000 individuals and reproducing naturally and residing in a stable, undisturbed habitat is cultured, the interaction between cultured and wild fish must be avoided to protect the locally adapted stock;

h) wastes or waste waters resulting from the handling and processing of fish should be treated, disposed of and, when possible, utilized so as not to cause pollution of surface or ground waters,

RECOMMENDS ALSO that the objectives should be implemented before 1 January 1995,

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the Contracting Parties should report to the Commission in 1997 and every three years thereafter.

Reporting Format for HELCOM Recommendation 15/3 concerning measures aimed at the reduction of discharges from marine fish farming

Country _____ Year _____

Sub-area ¹⁾ _____

1. Cultivated species and total annual production of each species, t/a

2. Number of fish farms, classified as

- net cages or pens
- floating basins or vessels
- basins on shore discharging directly to the Baltic Sea

3. Total feed consumption, t/a, classified as

- dry feed (dry matter more than 80%)
- semimoist feed (dry matter 35-80%)
- moist (fresh) feed (dry matter less than 35%)

4. Total and specific phosphorus discharges; tot-P t/a and tot-P g/kg fish produced

5. Total and specific nitrogen discharges; tot-N t/a and tot-N g/kg fish produced

6. Measures taken to assess the impacts of fish farms on the water environment and to set limits to maximum allowable discharges from fish farms as part of the authorization process (e.g. site selection surveys, water quality models, objectives and investigations, permit conditions and limit values)

7. Measures taken to supervise the discharges and environmental effects of fish farms (e.g. monitoring programmes and obligations, fish farm operation records, control visits, use of models).

Footnote:

¹⁾Bothnian Bay, Bothnian Sea, Archipelago and Åland Sea, Gulf of Finland, Northern Baltic Proper, Western Gotland Basin, Gulf of Riga, Eastern Gotland Basin, Gdansk Basin, Bornholm Basin, Arkona Basin, Belt Sea, The Sound, Kattegat.