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Note that this document was submitted after the established deadline. It will be decided by the Session whether the document can be discussed or is postponed to the next meeting.

Background

This document provides a summary of CCB contribution to HELCOM work on underwater noise.

Action requested

The Session is invited to take note of the information.

CCB contribution to HELCOM work on underwater noise

This task contributes to implementation of actions S55-63 of HELCOM BSAP 2021

The impacts of underwater noise on marine species have increasingly become known. CCB has been actively engaged in the implementation of actions delineated in the new BSAP, fighting for ambitious efforts and practical action to reduce and mitigate the input of noise into the Baltic and their implementation. In the EU, the main legal framework addressing underwater noise is the EU MSFD, specifically in Descriptor 11, recognising underwater noise as a pollutant that endangers marine life, and should be managed. However, even though underwater noise has been increasingly more recognised as a significant problem, concrete actions to reduce it are still scarce. CCB's work was focused on increasing the knowledge and promoting discussions about possible mitigation measures to, ultimately, achieve a reduction of underwater noise into the Baltic Sea.

During 2024, CCB:

- through its German MO BUND, CCB followed closely the further process at IMO to implement the IMO guidelines on underwater noise. Staying in close contact with other international NGOs and underwater noise experts taking part in the process, CCB and BUND have been promoting the benefits of the Experience Building Phase (EBP) widely.
- CCB, through MO BUND, co-organised with HELCOM Secretariat, the Workshop on impact of underwater noise on noise-sensitive species ([IC WS NOISE IMPACT 1-2024](#)), which addressed the needs to steer discussions and progress on the assessment of impacts and the Level of onset of biological effects (LOBE) under EU and HELCOM processes. CCB/BUND carried out this activity, involving HELCOM Expert and Working Groups (e.g. EG NOISE, EG MAMA, EG FISH). The workshop allowed discussions on concrete suggestions of a way forward on how to implement the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and BSAP actions for the Baltic Sea on underwater noise.
- Led and finalised the implementation of the SI project [RED NOISE BALTSHIP](#) for networking actions and enhancing visibility towards reducing underwater noise from commercial shipping and recreational boating activities in the Baltic Sea (2023- 2024). The RED NOISE BALTSHIP project involved project partners and activities in different countries of the Baltic Seas (DE, PL, LV and SE), which included educational events and materials, awareness raising, policy advocacy and dissemination at, mainly HELCOM and EUSBSR levels (EUSBSR PA SHIP). Under the RED NOISE BALTSHIP project, CCB also co-organised, with FishSec, an online Webinar and panel discussion on "[Impacts of continuous underwater noise on fish in the Baltic Sea](#)" (co-funded by EU LIFE and SwAM). The event served to highlight the need for stronger regulations and measures to reduce underwater noise event and advocate for policy changes and identification of potential pilot projects. The discussions also emphasized the importance of regional coordination and the implementation of international frameworks like the MSFD and HELCOM BSAP.
- Another proposal for activities on underwater noise from recreational boating was submitted in September 2024 to the EU LIFE Circular Economy and Quality of Life Programme, however, the project application was not successful.

CCB organised, with support of HELCOM Secretariat, a [2nd workshop on BSAP actions related to recreational crafts](#) (December 2024). The workshop served to continue discussions from 2023 and brainstorm ideas on how to develop a HELCOM Clean Boating Guide for the Baltic Sea Region for Contracting Parties and relevant stakeholders during 2025, where underwater noise was a topic for discussion