



MarinTrust Whole fish fishery assessment report

Document TEM-002 (prev. FISH2) - Version 3.0

Issued June 2024 – Effective June 2024

Denmark - Herring (Clupea harengus) and sprat (Sprattus sprattus) - FAO 27, ICES 3.d.28.1 (Gulf of Riga)

*Surveillance 1
WF07*

Table 1: Whole fish fishery assessment scope

Fishery name	Denmark - Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) and sprat (<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>) - FAO 27, ICES 3.d.28.1 (Gulf of Riga)
MarinTrust report code	WF07
Type 1 species (common name, Latin name)	Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) and Sprat (<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>)
Fishery location	FAO 27, ICES 3.d.28.1 (Gulf of Riga)
Gear type(s)	Pelagic trawl
Management authority (country/state)	European Union, Estonian government, Latvian government

Table 2: Applicant and Certification Body details

Application details			
Applicant(s)		FF Skagen A/S, Thyborøn (TripleNine)	
Applicant country		Denmark	
Certification Body details			
Name of Certification Body		LRQA	
Contact Information for CB (e.g. email address/address/telephone number)		E: fisheries-ca@lrqa.com LRQA, 3 Lochside Way, Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh, EH12 9DT T: +44 800 092 0452	
Fishery Assessor name		Jim Missen	
CB Peer Reviewer name		Sam Dignan	
Number of assessment days	3	Assessment period	09/2026 to 09/2027

Table 3: Assessment outcome

Assessment outcome (See Table 4 for a summary of assessment determination)	Approve	
Approval validity	Valid from: 09/2026	Valid until: 09/2027
CB peer reviewer evaluation	Agree with assessment determination	
Fishery Assessment Peer Review Group external peer reviewer evaluation	Agree with assessment determination	

Table 4: Assessment determination

Assessment determination
Summary of assessment and outcome
The Gulf of Riga pelagic trawl fishery targets herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) and sprat (<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>), which together comprise more than 95% of the total landings. Of the herring catch, an average of 7% originates from the Central Baltic stock. Bycatch occurs in small quantities and is primarily comprised of fourhorn sculpin (<i>Myoxocephalus quadricornis</i>), smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>), round

goby (*Neogobius melanostomus*), flounder (*Platichthys flesus*), three-spined stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*), and eelpout (*Zoarces viviparus*). All species considered in this assessment are listed as Least Concern by the IUCN and none are included in any CITES appendix, making them eligible for approval as MarinTrust Whole Fish material. Herring and sprat are managed under species-specific management frameworks and meet the MarinTrust management requirements (Category M).

Both herring stocks (Gulf of Riga and Central Baltic) and sprat were initially assessed against the MarinTrust Category A requirements, reflecting the presence of established management frameworks, surveillance, control, and enforcement arrangements. All three stocks are assessed annually by ICES as Category 1 stocks, with removals incorporated into the stock assessment process. Gulf of Riga herring passed all clauses of the Category A assessment. However, Central Baltic herring and sprat failed specific Category A clauses because removals exceeded the stock assessment advice by more than 10% for herring in 2023 and sprat in 2025. In addition, Central Baltic herring lacked sufficient evidence to demonstrate that a decline below the limit reference point would result in fishery closure. In accordance with MarinTrust guidance, both stocks were subsequently assessed against Category B, Table B(a), where they passed.

Fourhorn sculpin, smelt, round goby, flounder, three-spined stickleback, and eelpout are not managed under species-specific management regimes and each represents less than 5% of the total catch composition. Accordingly, these species were assessed as Category D and meet the requirements for a Productivity-Susceptibility Analysis (PSA).

The fishery uses pelagic trawls that operate within the water column and therefore have minimal interaction with seabed habitats. The ICES Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC) collates and analyses information on endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species, providing evidence that supports the assessment of compliance with MarinTrust ETP requirements. In relation to marine ecosystem impacts, the fishery is managed under an ecosystem-based approach that seeks to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of marine resources while safeguarding ecosystem function. Consequently, the fishery meets the MarinTrust requirements relating to marine habitats, ETP species, and ecosystem impacts.

The herring and sprat fishery in FAO 27, ICES 3.d.28.1 (Gulf of Riga) passed the MarinTrust requirements in this assessment; therefore, its re-approval is recommended for use as raw material in MarinTrust-certified products.

Last data accessed: 2 August 2026

Summary of CB peer review	<i>I have limited comments on this incredibly detailed report. Unrelated to the work of the assessor, I think this fishery might be incorrectly or misleadingly named as it is not a Danish fishery at all, but a Latvian/Estonian fishery where only the applicant commissioning this assessment is Danish.</i>
Summary of external peer review (see Appendix 1 for the full peer review report)	The assessor has prepared a thorough, clearly structured and well-referenced report, with sufficient evidence and robust rationales supporting the scoring decisions. The peer reviewer agrees with the assessment outcomes and assigned scores. Only a few minor comments are provided, none of which affect the overall conclusions.

Notes for on-site auditor	None
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Table 5: General results

Section	Outcome (Pass/Fail)
M1 - Management Framework	Pass
M2 - Surveillance, Control and Enforcement	Pass
E1 - Impacts on ETP Species	Pass
E2 - Impacts on Habitats	Pass
E3 - Ecosystem Impacts	Pass

Table 6: Species-specific results

See Table 7 for further details of species categorisation.

Category	Species name (common & Latin name)	Outcome (Pass/Fail/n/a)	
Category A	Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>), Gulf of Riga	A1	Pass
		A2	Pass
		A3	Pass
		A4	Pass
Category A	Sprat (<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>)	A1	Pass
		A2	Pass
		A3	Fail
		A4	Pass
Category A	Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>), Central Baltic	A1	Pass
		A2	Pass
		A3	Fail
		A4	Fail
Category B	Sprat (<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>) (failed A)	Pass	
Category B	Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) (failed A)	Pass	
Category C	-		
Category D	Fourhorn sculpin (<i>Myoxocephalus quadricornis</i>)	Pass	
Category D	Smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>)	Pass	
Category D	Round goby (<i>Neogobius melanostomus</i>)	Pass	
Category D	Flounder (<i>Platichthys flesus</i>)	Pass	
Category D	Three-spined stickleback (<i>Gasterosteus aculeatus</i>)	Pass	
Category D	Eelpout (<i>Zoarces viviparus</i>)	Pass	

Table 7: Species categorisation table

List of all the species assessed. Type 1 species are assessed against Category A or Category B. Type 1 species must represent 95% of the total annual catch. Type 2 species are assessed against Category C or Category D. Type 2 species may represent a maximum of 5% of the annual catch. Species that comprise less than 0.1% of the catch are not required to be assessed or listed here.

Species name (common & Latin name)	Stock	CITES listed yes/no	IUCN Red list Category	% catch composition	Management (Y/N)	Category (A, B, C or D)
Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>)	Gulf of Riga	No	Least Concern ¹	78.8%	Y	A
Sprat (<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>)	Baltic Sea	No	Least Concern ²	14.8%	Y	A (fail), B
Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>)	Central Baltic	No	Least Concern ¹	5.9%	Y	A (fail), B
Fourhorn sculpin (<i>Myoxocephalus quadricornis</i>)	Baltic Sea	No	Least Concern ³	2.2%	N	D
Smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>)	Baltic Sea	No	Least Concern ⁴	0.7%	N	D
Round goby (<i>Neogobius melanostomus</i>)	Baltic Sea	No	Least Concern ⁵	0.7%	N	D
Flounder (<i>Platichthys flesus</i>)	Baltic Sea	No	Least Concern ⁶	0.6%	N	D
Three-spined stickleback (<i>Gasterosteus aculeatus</i>)	Baltic Sea	No	Least Concern ⁷	0.3%	N	D
Eelpout (<i>Zoarces viviparus</i>)	Baltic Sea	No	Least Concern ⁸	0.2%	N	D

Rationale

The herring (*Clupea harengus*) and sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) fishery in the Gulf of Riga is exclusively shared by Latvia and Estonia. The Latvian fishery was previously MSC certified, but since the withdrawal of sprat, currently only herring is certified after being reassessed in 2026⁹. This assessment provides the most complete source of catch composition data, recognising that it only reflects the Latvian fishery.

Within this report, catch composition data are provided by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia in conjunction with the client (National Fisheries Producer Organisation, NZRO) and the Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment (BIOR). The BIOR dataset reported the average, minimum, and maximum proportion of the catch for each species across sampled observations, rather than annual catch composition totals. Consequently, the independently calculated average proportions summed to more than 100%, and this was reflected in the catch composition presented here⁹. Despite this, the dataset was retained because it provided greater taxonomic resolution, providing more complete representation of low-abundance bycatch species. These two sources were averaged over the three most recent years available, 2022 to 2024, to

produce the catch composition used in this report. In both cases, herring was not differentiated by stock. However, the five-year average of Central Baltic herring inclusion in catches in the Gulf of Riga is 7%, and this was used to differentiate the catches⁹.

The resulting catch composition was approximately 84.7% herring, 14.8% sprat, 2.2% fourhorn sculpin (*Myoxocephalus quadricornis*), 0.7% smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*), 0.7% round goby (*Neogobius melanostomus*), 0.6% flounder (*Platichthys flesus*), 0.3% three-spined stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*), and 0.2% eelpout (*Zoarces viviparus*).

Herring (both the Gulf of Riga and Central Baltic stocks) and sprat were assessed as Category A species, as they are listed as Least Concern by the IUCN, are not included in any CITES appendix, are managed by the Estonian Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture and the Latvian Ministry of Agriculture and collectively comprise more than 95% of the fishery's total catch.

Fourhorn sculpin, smelt, round goby, flounder, three-spined stickleback, and eelpout were all assessed as Category D species, as they are listed as Least Concern by the IUCN, are not included in any CITES appendix, are not managed under a species-specific management regime, and comprise less than 5% of the fishery's total catch.

References

1. International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2013). *Myoxocephalus quadricornis*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/155123/4717767>
2. International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2018). *Clupea harengus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/198583/143833310>
3. International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2018). *Osmerus eperlanus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/14214/135089892>
4. International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2018). *Platichthys flesus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/15631/135090814>
5. International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2018). *Gasterosteus aculeatus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/14524/135090645>
6. International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2020). *Neogobius melanostomus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/170759990/135112220>
7. International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2022). *Zoarces viviparus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/225345695/176077275>
8. International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2015). *Abramis brama*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/18181090/45904990>
9. Marine Stewardship Council. (2026). NZRO Gulf of Riga herring trawl fishery. Final Draft Report. <https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/nzro-gulf-of-riga-herring-trawl/@assessments>

Management requirements

This section, or module, assesses the general management regime applied to the fishery under assessment. It comprises two parts, M1, which evaluates the management framework, and M2, which evaluates surveillance, control and enforcement within the fishery.

- 1.1. All management criteria must be met (pass) for a fishery to pass the Management requirements.
 - 1.1.1. The sub-criteria offer a structured evidence base to demonstrate that the fishery sufficiently meets the management criteria. It is not expected that sub-criteria are assessed independently of the main criterion.

M1 Management framework

M1.1	M1.1 There is an organisation responsible for managing the fishery. <i>In reaching a determination for M1.1, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	M1.1.1 The management and administration organisations within the fishery are clearly identified.
	M1.1.2 The functions and responsibilities of the management organisations include the overall regulation, administration, science and data collection and enforcement roles, and are documented and publicly available.
	M1.1.3 Fishers have access to information and/or training materials through nationally recognised organisations.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale The herring and sprat fishery in the Gulf of Riga is carried out exclusively by Latvia and Estonia using pelagic and mid-water trawls and trap nets¹. Both countries are members of the European Union (EU), and as such their fisheries are managed in accordance with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the latest reform of which was introduced in 2013 through Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013². The CFP aims to ensure that the activities of the fishing and aquaculture sectors are environmentally sustainable in the long term and are managed in a way that aligns with the objectives of achieving economic, social, and employment benefits. Commercial fisheries management in Estonia is divided among four government bodies: the Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture, the Agriculture and Food Board, the Ministry of the Environment, and the Environmental Inspectorate³. The Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture, being the primary management authority, is responsible for implementing the Estonian Fisheries Policy, the development of the market organisation system, the awarding of structural supports and state aid, the management of the aquaculture sector, and commercial fishing (including issuing permits for commercial fishing, managing a national registry of fishing vessels, and catch accounting)⁴. The Agriculture and Food Board is involved in the development of commercial fishing (including issuing permits for commercial fishing, managing a national registry of fishing vessels, and catch accounting)³. The Ministry of the Environment prepares and implements the Policy on the Protection and Use of Fishery Resources, including the reproduction of fish stocks and the protection and restoration of spawning grounds and habitats, and also provides permits for scientific research and special purpose fishing³. The Environmental	

Inspectorate's remit includes monitoring fishing activities³. Since 2011, fishers in Estonia have access to training materials through the Fisheries Information Centre (FIC)⁵. The FIC forms part of the Department of Fish Biology and Fisheries at the Estonian Marine Institute and aims to enhance the knowledge of entrepreneurs active in fisheries and aquaculture and valorise aquatic biological resources to improve their economic and environmental sustainability⁵.

The responsibility for fisheries management in Latvia falls under the Ministry of Agriculture⁶. The Ministry is responsible for developing policy and management for the fisheries sector, including surveillance of the sustainable use of fish resources, restocking and research, as well as managing fishing rights in the territorial sea and high seas⁶. Training for fishers in Latvia is provided by a number of organisations. These include the Latvian Maritime Administration, which recognises seven educational institutions and training centres that offer seafarer training courses relevant to navigation, vessel operations, safety, and marine resources management; the Ministry of Transport, which provides certified training to qualify as a fisher; and the Latvian Maritime Academy^{7,8}.

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause M1.1.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2025). Baltic Fisheries Assessment Working Group (WGBFAS). ICES Scientific Reports, 7(61), 684 pp.
<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.29099786>
2. European Commission. (n.d.). Common fisheries policy (CFP). Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/common-fisheries-policy-cfp_en
3. Agriculture and Food Board. (n.d.). Commercial fishing.
<https://pta.agri.ee/en/food/commercial-fishing>
4. Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture. (n.d.). Fishing industry and commercial fishing.
<https://www.agri.ee/en/objectives-and-activities/fishing-industry-and-commercial-fishing>
5. Estonian Fisheries Information Centre. (n.d.). Kalateave. <https://www.kalateave.ee/et/>
6. Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia. (n.d.). About us.
<https://www.zm.gov.lv/en/about-us>
7. Latvian Maritime Administration. (n.d.). Training course programmes.
<https://www.lja.lv/jurniekiem/jurnieku-sagatavosana/macibu-kursu-programmas/>
8. Riga Technical University. (n.d.). Bridge Resource Management.
<https://www.rtu.lv/en/lma/training-centre/open/bridge-resource-management>

M1.2	M1.2 Fishery management organisations are legally empowered to take management actions. <i>In reaching a determination for M1.2, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	M1.2.1 There are legal instruments in place to give authority to the management organisation(s) which can include policies, regulations, acts or other legal mechanisms.
	M1.2.2 Vessels wishing to participate in the fishery must be authorised by the management organisation(s).
	M1.2.3 The management system has a mechanism in place for the resolution of legal disputes.
	M1.2.4 There is evidence of the legal rights of people dependent on fishing for food or livelihood.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale In EU Member States, all management actions are undertaken through national legislation arising from the implementation of CFP regulations, with some variations to reflect the characteristics of the fisheries in each country. In Estonia, the primary fisheries legislation is the Fishing Act (2015), as amended, which empowers the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Agriculture to implement the measures of the CFP¹. In Latvia, the primary fisheries legislation is the Fishery Law (1995), as amended, which similarly empowers the Ministry of Agriculture². Within both countries, vessels participating in the fishery must be authorised by the management organisation. In Estonia, the Transport Administration manages vessel registration, while the Agriculture and Food Board issues commercial fishing authorisations^{3,4}. In Latvia, vessel registrations are managed by the Maritime Administration, with required consent from the Ministry of Agriculture, and operational fishing permits are issued by the State Environmental Service, as set out in Regulation No. 467 (2006)⁵. Both Estonia and Latvia have legal mechanisms in place for resolving disputes under their fishing laws, typically through standard administrative and judicial channels, but also offer mediation mechanisms, which are alternative dispute resolution measures whereby a mediator helps those involved in a dispute to reach an agreement^{6,7}. The legal rights of people dependent on fishing for food or livelihoods in both countries are recognised. In Estonia, the Fishing Act explicitly grants a right to fish with a simple hand line on public waters without charge or licence, reflecting a kind of universal subsistence right: "Everyone may fish, free of charge and without having applied for the right to fish, with one simple hand line on a public water body and a water body designated for public use"¹. In Latvia, the Fishery Law differentiates between public waters (state-owned and controlled) and private waters, where fishing rights may belong to the landowner. Traditional or community-based fishing practices in shared private waters are regulated by mutual agreement among water owners². Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause M1.2.	
References 1. Republic of Estonia. (2015). Fishing Act. Riigi Teataja. https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/akt/529062015006?leiaKehtiv	

2. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2003). Fisheries Act (Estonia). FAOLEX. <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC037831/>
3. Transport Administration of Estonia. (n.d.). Estonian ship registers. <https://transpordiamet.ee/en/vehicle-ship-airplane/ships/estonian-ship-registers#second-register-of-b>
4. Republic of Estonia. (n.d.). Commercial fishing authorisation. Eesti.ee. <https://www.eesti.ee/eraisik/en/artikkel/licences-and-notice-of-economic-activity/agriculture/commercial-fishing-authorisation>
5. Republic of Latvia. (1998). Fisheries Law. FAOLEX. <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/lat190817ENG.pdf>
6. European Commission. (n.d.). Mediation in Estonia. European e-Justice Portal. https://e-justice.europa.eu/topics/taking-legal-action/mediation/mediation-eu-countries/ee_en
7. European Commission. (n.d.). Mediation in Latvia. European e-Justice Portal. https://e-justice.europa.eu/topics/taking-legal-action/mediation/mediation-eu-countries/lv_en

M1.3	M1.3 There is an organisation responsible for collecting data and (scientifically) assessing the fishery.
	<i>In reaching a determination for M1.3, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	M1.3.1 The organisation(s) responsible for collecting data and assessing the fishery is/are clearly identified.
	M1.3.2 The management system receives scientific advice regarding stock, non-target species and ecosystem status.
	M1.3.3 Scientific advice is independent from the management organisation(s) and transparent in its formulation through a clearly defined process.
Outcome	Pass
Rationale The EU's data collection framework outlines Member States obligations to collect, manage, and make available a wide range of fisheries and aquaculture data needed for scientific advice. This includes biological, environmental, economic, and social data. Member States data collection activities are financially supported by the EU. Data collection needs to ensure accuracy, reliability, and timeliness, safe storage, and improved availability of data¹. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), which is an intergovernmental marine science organisation meeting societal needs for impartial evidence on the state and sustainable use of our seas and oceans, through the Baltic Fisheries Assessment Working Group (WGBFAS), assesses each year the herring and sprat fisheries, providing advice on fishing opportunities, catch, and effort, including the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) each year and an overview of stock development over time². In Estonia, the Estonian Marine Institute (part of the University of Tartu) conducts in-depth marine ecosystem research with dedicated departments for fish biology and fisheries and carries out field surveys across multiple coastal stations. It contributes scientific findings to national and international bodies, such as ICES and the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM)³. In Latvia, the Fish Resources Research Department (within BIOR, the Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment) serves as the primary scientific body. It implements Latvia's National Fisheries and Aquaculture Data Collection Program, coordinating hydro-acoustic surveys,	

biological sampling, and monitoring of fleets, aquaculture, and processing sectors. This data enables annual fish stock assessments and forecasts and supports both national and EU-level fisheries advice⁴.

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause M1.3.

References

1. European Commission. (n.d.). Scientific advice and data collection. Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/science-observation-and-data/scientific-advice-and-data-collection_en
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (n.d.). About ICES. <https://www.ices.dk/about-ICES/Pages/default.aspx>
3. University of Tartu. (n.d.). Estonian Marine Institute. <https://mereinstituut.ut.ee/en/about>
4. Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment. (n.d.). Fish Resource Research Department. <https://bior.lv/en/bior/fish-resource-research-department-2/>

M1.4	M1.4 The fishery management system is based on the principles of sustainable fishing and a precautionary approach. <i>In reaching a determination for M1.4, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	M1.4.1 A policy or long-term management objective for sustainable harvesting based on the best scientific evidence and a precautionary approach is publicly available and implemented for the fishery.
Outcome	Pass
Rationale The CFP underscores the principles of sustainable fishing and a precautionary approach in Objective 1 of Regulation (EU) No. 1380/2013. Here, it states that the CFP “shall ensure that fishing and aquaculture activities are environmentally sustainable in the long-term and are managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits, and of contributing to the availability of food supplies”¹. As previously mentioned, the essence of this document is instilled within the national fisheries regimes of Estonia and Latvia through their domestic legislation. The Estonian Fishing Act states that the purpose of the Act is to “1) ensure conservation and sustainable use of fishery and aquatic plant resources on the basis of internationally recognised principles of conscientious fisheries; 2) ensure reproduction capacity of fishery and aquatic plant resources and productivity of bodies of water; 3) avoid undesirable changes in the ecosystem of bodies of water”². Similarly, the Latvian Fishery Law states: “The purpose of this Law is to manage the inland waters, territorial sea waters (hereinafter — territorial waters), and economic zone waters of the Republic of Latvia in a manner that, while taking into account the need to conserve biodiversity, ensures the sustainable use, protection, reproduction, and research of fish resources for the long-term development of the national fisheries sector”³. As part of the European Union, Latvia and Estonia's fisheries in the Gulf of Riga are managed according to a Multiannual Plan (MAP), which contains goals for fish stock management, a detailed roadmap for achieving objectives, fishing effort restrictions, specific control rules and technical measures, and measures for implementing the landing obligation, safeguards for remedial action, and review clauses⁴.	

Regulation (EU) No. 2016/1139 established the multiannual plan objectives and targets for herring and sprat stocks in the Baltic Sea, which includes the Gulf of Riga⁵. Objective 1 of Article 3 indicates that: “The plan shall contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the CFP listed in Article 2 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, in particular by applying the precautionary approach to fisheries management, and shall aim to ensure that exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce MSY.”⁵

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause M1.4.

References

1. European Parliament and Council. (2013). Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC. Official Journal of the European Union, L 354, 22–61. <https://eurlex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1380/oj/eng>
2. Republic of Estonia. (2015). Fishing Act. Riigi Teataja. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/akt/529062015006?leiaKehtiv>
3. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2003). Fisheries Act (Estonia). FAOLEX. <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC037831/>
4. European Commission. (n.d.). Multiannual plans. Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/fisheries-management/multiannual-plans_en
5. European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2016). Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 establishing a multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1098/2007. Official Journal of the European Union, L 191, 1–15. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016R1139>

M1.5	M1.5 There is a clearly defined decision-making process which is transparent, with processes and results made publicly available.
	<i>In reaching a determination for M1.5, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	M1.5.1 There is participatory engagement through which fishery stakeholders and other stakeholders can access, provide information, consult with, and respond to, the management systems’ decision-making process.
	M1.5.2 The decision-making process is transparent, with results made publicly available.
	M1.5.3 The fishery management system is subject to periodic internal or external review to validate the decision-making process, outcomes and scientific data.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale The fisheries management decision-making process relevant to this fishery is transparent, with resources and results being publicly available. This ethos is reflected both in the CFP and in Estonian and Latvian national legislation.	

The CFP foresees regionalisation for several instruments, including multiannual plans, discard plans, the establishment of fish stock recovery areas, conservation measures to comply with EU environmental laws, and technical measures, to ensure that joint recommendations reflect the views of stakeholders¹. According to the CFP, multiannual plans should be adopted in consultation with Advisory Councils, operators in the fishing industry, scientists, and other stakeholders having an interest in fisheries management.

ICES advice, which guides relevant fisheries management decisions, is published online, while decisions and relevant documents at the European Union level are released on the European Commission website. All information used in the production of this MarinTrust assessment is publicly available online.

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause M1.5.

References

1. European Commission. (n.d.). Multiannual plans. Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/fisheries-management/multiannual-plans_en

M2 Surveillance, control and enforcement

M2.1	M2.1 There is an organisation responsible for monitoring compliance with fishery laws and regulations.
	<i>In reaching a determination for M2.1, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	M2.1.1 There is an organisation responsible for monitoring compliance with specific monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) mechanisms in place.
	M2.1.2 There are relevant tools or mechanisms used to minimise IUU fishing activity.
	M2.1.3 There is evidence of monitoring and surveillance activity appropriate to the intensity, geography, management control measures and compliance behaviour of the fishery.
Outcome	Pass
Rationale Compliance with fishery laws and regulations in the EU is achieved through a multifaceted approach. The role of the EU fisheries control system is to ensure compliance with the CFP¹. Fisheries control is the remit of Member States, who are responsible for controlling their fishing activities in accordance with national regulations, while the European Commission verifies how they fulfil their responsibilities. In Estonia and Latvia, these are the Environmental Inspectorate and Ministry of Agriculture, respectively. The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) is a European Union agency established in 2005 to improve coordination of individual Member States' compliance activities. EFCA's mission is to promote the highest common standards for control, inspection, and surveillance under the CFP². Its primary role is to organise coordination and cooperation between national control and inspection activities so that the rules of the CFP are respected and applied effectively.	

In practice, organisational responsibility for monitoring compliance with fishery laws and regulations is carried out by the Member States' control authorities. Joint deployment plans (JDP) are a coordinated deployment of national means to monitor and inspect fishing activities relevant to the CFP. The JDP for the Baltic Sea, which coordinates actions between Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden, has been in place since 2007³.

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause M2.1.

References

1. European Commission. (n.d.). EU fisheries control system. Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/fisheries/rules/enforcing-rules/eu-fisheries-control-system_en
2. European Fisheries Control Agency. (n.d.). Mission and strategy. <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/about-us/mission-and-strategy>
3. European Fisheries Control Agency. (n.d.). Baltic Sea. <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/baltic-sea>

M2.2	M2.2 There is a framework of sanctions which are applied when infringements against laws and regulations are discovered.
	<i>In reaching a determination for M2.2, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	M2.2.1 The laws and regulations provide for penalties or sanctions that are adequate in severity to act as an effective deterrent.
	M2.2.2 There is no evidence of systematic non-compliance.
Outcome	Pass
Rationale All EU Member States are required to operate a system of sanctions in line with EU fisheries controls to ensure compliance with the CFP. These sanctions are to be 'dissuasive, proportionate, and effective'. To ensure continuity in the application of fishing rules and infringements between EU Member States, the Control Regulations set out minimum sanctions and points resulting from serious infringements¹. Since 2012, EU Member States have been required to operate a point system to sanction fishing licence holders and fishing vessel masters when they commit serious infringements. Any vessel that accumulates more than a certain number of points in a three-year period will have its fishing licence suspended for at least two months. For repeat offences, the penalty increases to four, eight, and twelve months, respectively. If, after the end of the fourth suspension period, the offender again incurs the necessary number of points, the fishing licence must be withdrawn permanently². This framework of sanction application, set out in the Control Regulations, has been transposed into national law under the Estonian Fishing Act and the Latvian Fishery Law^{3,4}. The Commission can monitor how countries enforce their sanctioning systems through investigations and audits. Starting in 2026, countries must report the number of inspections carried out and violations in their national annual report on control and inspections. Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause M2.2.	
References	

1. European Commission. (2023). Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2842 of 13 December 2023 amending Regulation (EU) 2015/2447 as regards the rules for the release for free circulation of goods following repair or alteration. Official Journal of the European Union, L 2023/2842, 1–5. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202302842
2. European Commission. (2024, January 9). Infringements and sanctions. Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/fisheries/rules/enforcing-rules/infringements-and-sanctions_en
3. Republic of Estonia. (2015). Fishing Act. Riigi Teataja. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/akt/529062015006?leiaKehtiv>
4. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2003). Fisheries Act (Estonia). FAOLEX. <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC037831/>

M2.3	M2.3 There is substantial evidence of widespread compliance in the fishery, and no substantial evidence of IUU fishing.
	<i>In reaching a determination for M2.3, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	M2.3.1 The level of compliance is documented and updated routinely, statistically reviewed and available.
	M2.3.2 Fishers provide additional information and cooperate with management/enforcement agencies/organisations to support the effective management of the fishery.
	M2.3.3 The catch recording and reporting system is sufficient for effective traceability of catches per vessel and supports the prevention of IUU fishing.
Outcome	Pass
Rationale The EFCA publishes quarterly reports detailing control and enforcement activities under the Baltic Sea JDP¹. The most recent available report is from January to December 2025, during which period there were 2,590 inspections conducted ashore, 581 at sea, and 498 aerial sightings. Those ashore resulted in a 5.14% suspected infringement ratio and 3.44% for those conducted at sea². The EFCA does not release fisher-specific compliance figures and, so the figures presented represent the whole Baltic Sea JDP. The efficacy of Estonian and Latvian compliance regimes is reflected in their Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing risk index scores as of 2026, of 1.91 and 1.83, respectively^{3,4}. This index evaluates the likelihood that a country is exposed to, and effectively responds to, IUU fishing. It assigns scores ranging from 1 (indicating low risk and strong performance) to 5 (indicating high risk and weak performance). Both countries IUU fishing risk index scores closely match those of the other Baltic Sea JDP members (Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Finland and Sweden). Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause M2.3.	
References 1. European Fisheries Control Agency. (n.d.). Baltic Sea Joint Deployment Plan. https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/what-we-do/operational-coordination/joint-deployment-plans/baltic-sea 2. European Fisheries Control Agency. (2026). 12-month report on the implementation of the Joint Deployment Plan for the Baltic Sea (2025).	

<https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-05/12M-2025-WEB%20report-JDP-BS.pdf>

3. Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Ltd. & Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2021). IUU Fishing Index: Estonia. <https://iuufishingindex.net/profile/estonia>
4. Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Ltd. & Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2021). IUU Fishing Index: Latvia. <https://iuufishingindex.net/profile/latvia>

Species requirements

This section, or module, comprises of four species categories. Each species in the catch is subject to an assessment against the relevant species category in this section (see clauses 1.2 and 1.3 and Table 6).

Type 1 species can be considered the ‘target’ or ‘main’ species in the fishery under assessment. They make up the bulk of the catch and are subjected to a detailed assessment. Type 1 species must represent 95% of the total annual catch. If a species-specific management regime is in place for a Type 1 species, it shall be assessed under Category A. If there is no species-specific management regime in place for a Type 1 species, it shall be assessed under Category B.

Type 2 Species can be considered the ‘non-target’ species in the fishery under assessment. They comprise a small proportion of the annual catch and are subjected to a relatively high-level assessment. Type 2 species may represent a maximum of 5% of the annual catch. If a species-specific management regime is in place for a Type 2 species, it shall be assessed under Category C. If there is no species-specific management regime in place for a Type 2 species, it shall be assessed under Category D.

Species that comprise less than 0.1% of the catch are not required to be assessed or listed here.

Category A species

- 1.2. All clauses must be met for a species to pass the Category A assessment.
 - 1.2.1. If a species fails any of the Category A clauses, it should be re-assessed as a Category B species.

Herring (*Clupea harengus*), Gulf of Riga

A1 Data collection

A1.1	A1.1 Landings data are collected such that the fishery-wide removals of this species are known.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale Data is submitted by Latvia and Estonia, as ICES Member Countries, to the Baltic Fisheries Assessment Working Group (WGBFAS). The CFP places a clear obligation on Member States to account for and land all catches unless specific exemptions apply. These reporting requirements are set out in the EU Fisheries Control System through the Fisheries Control Regulation (EC Regulation No. 1224/2009), which requires each vessel to record catch data (target species and bycatch) in logbooks and complete a landing declaration specifying all quantities of each species landed¹. This information must be transmitted to the competent authority of each Member State, which then provides the information to the European Commission. Herring catches within the Gulf of Riga between 1977 and 2025 are shown in Figure 1. The total catch of the stock in 2025 was 35,987 tonnes, while the total herring catch in the Gulf of Riga management area was 42,196 tonnes². Of this catch, 60% was landed by Latvia and 40% by Estonia. Discards were considered to be negligible in 2025.	

While not specifically referred to in the ICES Gulf of Riga herring advice, species misreporting of herring and sprat in mixed catches continues to be an ongoing problem encountered by the WGBFAS. The effects of this have been partially quantified and included in the assessment during the 2023 benchmarking where possible³. Since misreporting has only been partly included in the assessment, it still contributes to uncertainty in the assessment and advice.

An Intersessional Subgroup (ISSG) made an attempt to provide the benchmark with corrected time series of catch data, for which species misreporting had been corrected. Estonia and Latvia provided catch data to this process with Denmark provided an alternative time series of catch data, which was included in the benchmark assessment³. In the case of Estonia, for the years 2014–2021, the overall impression is that herring might be slightly overreported compared to sprat. For Latvia, the landings were compared to the alternative Danish time series and found that sprat landings appeared consistent between Danish control samples and Latvian logbook data. For herring, differences were larger; however, herring overall landings are significantly smaller than sprat, and thus differences by landing weight are considered negligible compared to the total weight of pelagic landings. For both countries, the ISSG concluded, based on the information provided at the time, that the national data should not be updated, as there were no indications from the analysis that the data could be improved. Misreporting will be further addressed at the next benchmark assessment.

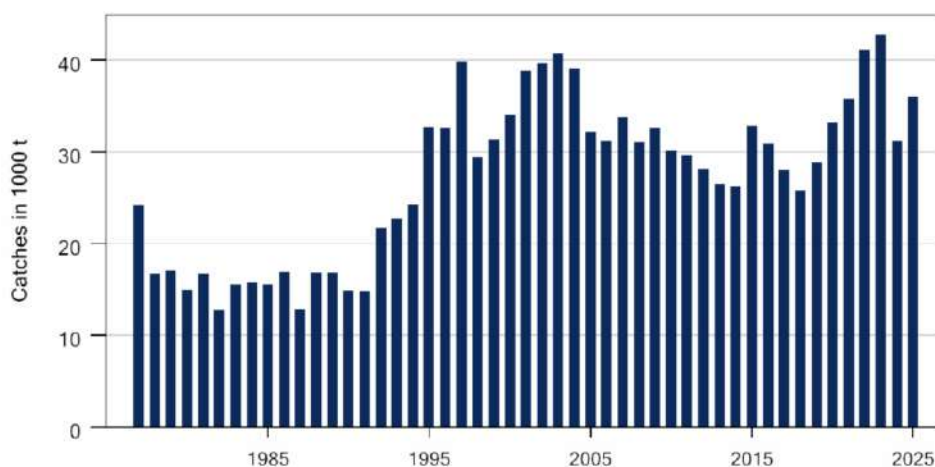


Figure 1. Herring catches in the Gulf of Riga (ICES subdivision 28.1) between 1977 and 2025².

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A1.1.

References

1. Council of the European Union. (2009). Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy. Official Journal of the European Union, L 343, 1–50. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1224/oj/eng>
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in Subdivision 28.1 (Gulf of Riga). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2025 (ICES Advice 2025, her.27.28). https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Herring_i_Clupea_harengus_i_in_Subdivision_28_1_Gulf_of_Riga_/30932084?file=65083623
3. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in

Subdivision 28.1 (Gulf of Riga). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2025 (ICES Advice 2025, her.27.28). https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Herring_i_Clupea_harengus_i_in_Subdivision_28_1_Gulf_of_Riga_/30932084?file=65083623

A1.2	A1.2 Sufficient additional information is collected to enable an indication of stock status to be estimated.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale The most recent ICES WGBFAS stock advice was produced in 2026, with the benchmarking completed in 2023¹. The fishery is categorised as an ICES Category 1 fishery, meaning that assessments are quantitative and include stocks with full analytical assessments and forecasts that are either age-/length-structured or based on production models. The input data used include commercial catches, one acoustic survey index (Estonian-Latvian hydro-acoustic survey in the Gulf of Riga, GRAHS), a fixed maturity ogive for the years 1977–1994, a time-varying maturity ogive from commercial catches from 1995 onwards, and natural mortality is assumed to be constant¹. The recruitment estimates in the final assessment year (2025) and interim year (2026) are considered uncertain, and this uncertainty is propagated into the forecasted catch and spawning stock biomass (SSB). The assessment and advice take into account the entire Gulf of Riga herring stock, both the portion caught in the Gulf of Riga and that outside of it. A mixture of central Baltic herring (subdivisions 25–27, 28.2, 29, and 32) and Gulf of Riga herring (subdivision 28.1) is caught in the Gulf of Riga. An example of how TAC setting could address the stock-mixing issues is presented based on the ICES maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach to catch advice for the Gulf of Riga herring stock (33,494 tonnes in 2027), plus the assumed catch of central Baltic herring caught in the Gulf of Riga, minus the assumed catch of Gulf of Riga herring taken outside the Gulf of Riga¹. Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A1.2.	
References 1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) in Subdivision 28.1 (Gulf of Riga). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2025 (ICES Advice 2025, her.27.28). https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Herring_i_Clupea_harengus_i_in_Subdivision_28_1_Gulf_of_Riga_/30932084?file=65083623 2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Pelagic stocks (WKBALPEL). ICES Scientific Reports, 5(47), 350 pp. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.23216492	

A2 Stock assessment

A2.1	A2.1 A stock assessment is conducted at least once every 3 years (or every 5 years if there is substantial supporting information that this is sufficient for the long-term sustainable management of the stock) and considers all fishery removals and the biological characteristics of the species.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale Gulf of Riga herring is subject to an annual stock assessment carried out by the ICES WGBFAS as a Category 1 stock. The stock was benchmarked in 2023, and the outcomes were implemented in the last assessment published in 2026^{1,2}. The benchmarking process ensures that the stock assessment recognises the most recent available scientific understanding of the species, the stock, the fishery, and the ecosystems within which they occur. The stock assessment is conducted as a whole following the ICES methodology³. The data used for the stock assessment included landing and catch data from all countries exploiting the stock, as well as biological data such as age composition, mean weights at age, maturity at age, and natural mortality. Additionally, fishery-independent information from GRAHS was also utilised². Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.1.	
References 1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Pelagic stocks (WKBALPEL). ICES Scientific Reports, 5(47), 350 pp. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.23216492 2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) in Subdivision 28.1 (Gulf of Riga). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2025 (ICES Advice 2025, her.27.28). https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Herring_i_Clupea_harengus_i_in_Subdivision_28_1_Gulf_of_Riga_/30932084?file=65083623 3. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Guide to ICES advisory framework and principles. In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.22116890	

A2.2	A2.2 The assessment provides an estimate of the status of the biological stock relative to a reference point or proxy.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale The annual WGBFAS stock assessment provides an indication of the status of the stock relative to target and limit reference points (Table 1). These were most recently updated in 2023 with MSY $B_{trigger}$ (and MAP MSY $B_{trigger}$) set as 72,907 tonnes and B_{lim} (and MAP B_{lim}) set at 52,076 tonnes¹. The 2026 catch advice estimates SSB to be 136,763 tonnes meaning that spawning stock size is above MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{PA}, and B_{lim} (Figure 2)¹. Additionally fishing pressure on the stock is below F_{MSY}. Table 1. Herring in Subdivision 28.1. Reference points, values, and their technical basis. Weights in tonnes¹.	

Framework	Reference point	Value	Technical basis	Source
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach	MSY $B_{trigger}$	72 907	B_{PA}	ICES (2023)
	F_{MSY}	0.28	Stochastic simulations (EqSim) with segmented regression with fixed breakpoint at B_{PA} stock-recruitment model from the full time-series (1977–2021)	ICES (2023)
Precautionary approach	B_{lim}	52 076	$B_{lim} = B_{PA}/1.4$	ICES (2023)
	B_{PA}	72 907	Average spawning-stock biomass (SSB) based on SSB–recruitment pairs where $SSB \leq$ median SSB and recruitment $\geq$ median recruitment	ICES (2023)
	F_{PA}	0.35	F_{POS} ; the F that leads to $SSB \geq B_{lim}$ with 95% probability	ICES (2023)
Management plan	MAP MSY $B_{trigger}$	72 907	MSY $B_{trigger}$	ICES (2023)
	MAP B_{lim}	52 076	B_{lim}	ICES (2023)
	MAP F_{MSY}	0.28	F_{MSY}	ICES (2023)
	MAP range F_{lower}	0.21–0.28	Consistent with the ranges resulting in no more than 5% reduction in long-term yield compared with MSY	ICES (2023)
	MAP range F_{upper}	0.28–0.33	Consistent with the ranges resulting in no more than 5% reduction in long-term yield compared with MSY	ICES (2023)

SSB

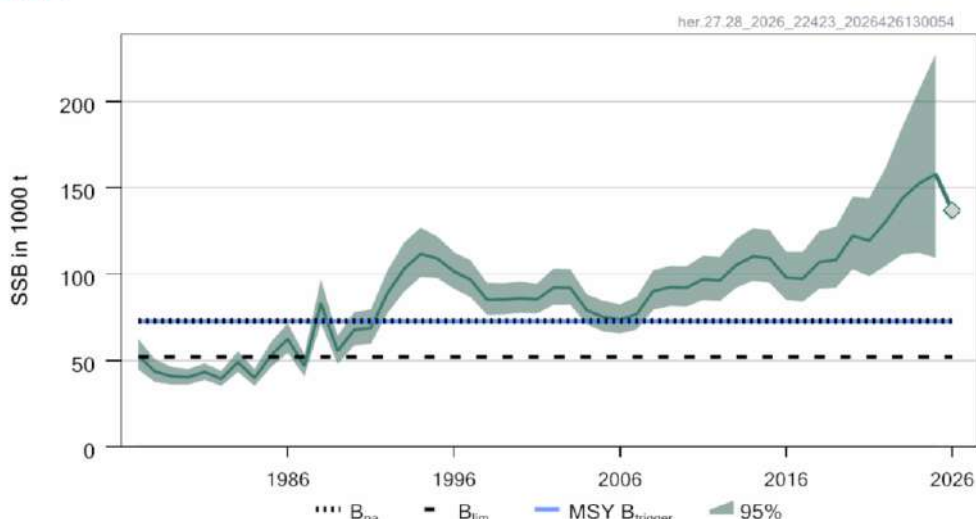


Figure 2. Herring SSB in Subdivision 28.1 relative to MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{lim} and B_{pa} . SSB at spawning time in 2026 is predicted and is shown with a grey diamond¹.

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.2.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in Subdivision 28.1 (Gulf of Riga). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2025 (ICES Advice 2025, her.27.28). https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Herring_i_Clupea_harengus_i_in_Subdivision_28_1_Gulf_of_Riga_/30932084?file=65083623

A2.3	A2.3 The assessment provides an indication of the volume of fishery removals which is appropriate for the current stock status.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale	
The ICES advice annually provides an indication of the volume of fishery removals that is	

appropriate for the current stock status in the form of recommended catches in the upcoming year. The latest catch advice indicates that, when the EU multiannual plan (MAP) for the Baltic Sea is applied, the catches in 2027 that correspond to the F ranges in the plan are between 25,832 tonnes and 38,696 tonnes¹. According to the MAP, catches higher than those corresponding to F_{MSY} (33,494 tonnes) can be taken only under conditions specified in the plan, while the entire range is considered precautionary when applying the ICES advice rule¹.

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.3.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in Subdivision 28.1 (Gulf of Riga). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2025 (ICES Advice 2025, her.27.28). https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Herring_i_Clupea_harengus_i_in_Subdivision_28_1_Gulf_of_Riga_/30932084?file=65083623

A2.4	A2.4 The assessment is subject to internal or external peer review.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale ICES Technical Guidelines outline a transparent review process for stock assessments, emphasising the importance of public availability of data and methodologies. This is exemplified by the ICES Transparent Assessment Framework, ensuring transparency of ICES advisory processes¹. It makes the data, methods, and results from ICES assessments easy to find, explore, and re-run. This allows stakeholders to examine the input data used in models, ensuring accountability and fostering trust in the assessment outcomes. The review process includes expert evaluations and opportunities for public comment. When the results of the assessments are agreed upon by the ICES groups, they are sent to the ICES Advice Drafting Group, which consists of National Experts who review them. They are finally reviewed by the Advisory Committee (ACOM), which delivers the ICES advice. The ACOM advice is grounded in 10 principles to support ecosystem-based management advice (Figure 3). This ensures that the advice is based on the best available science and data, considered legitimate by both authorities and stakeholders, and relevant and operational to the policy or management challenge in question².	

Figure 3. ICES advice principles².

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.3.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (n.d.). Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF). <https://www.ices.dk/data/assessment-tools/Pages/transparentassessment-framework.aspx>
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Guide to ICES advisory framework and principles. *In* Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.22116890>

A2.5

A2.5 The assessment is made publicly available.

Outcome

Pass

Rationale

This assessment and all others can be found on the ICES website¹.

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause A2.5.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (n.d.). ICES Library. <https://iceslibrary.figshare.com>

A3 Harvest strategy

A3.1

A3.1 There is a mechanism in place by which total fishing mortality of this species is restricted.

Outcome

Pass

Rationale

Total fishing mortality for the species is restricted through the implementation of fishing quotas. Within EU waters, TACs are set annually, generally guided by ICES species advice, which in turn is based on the Baltic Sea MAP (Regulation (EU) 2016/1139)¹. Once the TAC is set, it is apportioned among Member States through national quotas.

TACs for the fishery have been set within the range recommended by ICES since the implementation of the MAP in 2018, and the TAC appears to be an effective mechanism for limiting catches, as total removals from the Gulf of Riga stock have similarly been within the recommended range since that time². The TAC is set for the Gulf of Riga geographically, with the knowledge that some herring taken will belong to the Central Baltic stock and also that some herring taken under the Central Baltic TAC will belong to the Gulf of Riga stock.

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause A3.1.

References

1. European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2016). Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 establishing a multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1098/2007. Official Journal of the European Union, L 191, 1–15. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02016R1139-20240710>

2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in Subdivision 28.1 (Gulf of Riga). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2025 (ICES Advice 2025, her.27.28). https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Herring_i_Clupea_harengus_i_in_Subdivision_28_1_Gulf_of_Riga_/30932084?file=65083623

A3.2	A3.2 Total fishery removals of this species do not regularly exceed the level indicated or stated in the stock assessment. Where a specific quantity of removals is recommended, the actual removals may exceed this by up to 10% ONLY if the stock status is above the limit reference point or proxy.
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Outcome *Pass*

Rationale

The TAC for the species is consistently set below the advice provided by ICES, as shown in Table 2. In recent years, 4 to 11% of herring catch in the Gulf of Riga has been taken from the Central Baltic stock, meaning the TAC can be set higher than the advice, which is specific to the Gulf of Riga herring stock. Despite this, the TAC has consistently been set within the range recommended by ICES and, as expected due to catches being taken from two stocks, removals from the Gulf of Riga herring stock have consistently been below the TAC. This has been effective in maintaining the Gulf of Riga herring spawning-stock size above the B_{pa} and B_{lim} reference points¹.

Table 2. Herring in Subdivision 28.1. ICES advice, TAC for the Gulf of Riga, and catches of Gulf of Riga herring stock from the Gulf of Riga. All weights are in tonnes¹.

Year	ICES advice	Catch from stock corresponding to advice	Agreed TAC for Gulf of Riga	Catches of Gulf of Riga herring stock
2018	MAP target F ranges: F_{lower} to F_{upper} (0.24–0.38), but F higher than $F_{MSY} = 0.32$ only under conditions specified in the MAP	19 396–29 195, but catch higher than 24 919 only under conditions specified in the MAP	28 999	25 747
2019	MAP target F ranges: F_{lower} to F_{upper} (0.24–0.38), but F higher than $F_{MSY} = 0.32$ only under conditions specified in the MAP	20 664–31 237, but catch higher than 26 932 only under conditions specified in the MAP	31 044	28 922
2020	MAP target F ranges: F_{lower} to F_{upper} (0.24–0.38), but F higher than $F_{MSY} = 0.32$ only under conditions specified in the MAP	23 395–35 094, but catch higher than 30 382 only under conditions specified in the MAP	34 445	33 215
2021	Management plan	35 771 (ranges 27 702–41 423)	39 446	35 758
2022	Management plan	44 945 (range 34 797–52 132)	47 697	41 117
2023	Management plan	43 226 (range 33 519–50 079)	45 643	42 800
2024	Management plan	35 902 (range 27 696–41 370)	37 959	31 152
2025	Management plan	39 233 (ranges 30 394–45 235)	41 635	35 987
2026	Management plan	30 913 (ranges 23 962 – 35 643)	34 367	
2027	Management plan	33 494 (ranges 25 832 – 38 696)		

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause A3.2.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in Subdivision 28.1 (Gulf of Riga). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2025 (ICES Advice 2025, her.27.28). https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Herring_i_Clupea_harengus_i_in_Subdivision_28_1_Gulf_of_Riga_/30932084?file=65083623

library.figshare.com/articles/report/Herring_i_Clupea_harengus_i_in_Subdivision_28_1_Gulf_of_Riga_/30932084?file=65083623

A3.3	A3.3 Commercial fishery removals are prohibited when the stock has been estimated to be below the limit reference point or proxy (small quotas for research or non-target catch of the species in other fisheries are permissible).
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale The MAP requires that fishing opportunities are fixed in such a way that there is a less than 5% probability of the spawning stock biomass falling below B_{lim}. When scientific advice indicates that the SSB of the stock is below B_{lim}, further remedial measures shall be taken to ensure rapid return of the stock to levels above the level capable of producing MSY. Those remedial measures may include suspending the targeted fishery for the stock and the adequate reduction of fishing opportunities¹. Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause A3.3.	
References 1. European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2016). Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 establishing a multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1098/2007. Official Journal of the European Union, L 191, 1–15. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02016R1139-20240710	

A4 Stock status

A4.1	A4.1 The stock is at or above the target reference point; OR IF NOT: the stock is above the limit reference point or proxy and there is evidence that a fall below the limit reference point would result in fishery closure; OR IF NOT: the stock is estimated to be below the limit reference point or proxy, but fishery removals are prohibited.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale Based on the 2026 ICES assessment, the Gulf of Riga herring SSB is above MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{pa}, and B_{lim}¹. Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause A4.1.	
References 1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (Clupea harengus) in Subdivision 28.1 (Gulf of Riga). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2025 (ICES Advice 2025, her.27.28). https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Herring_i_Clupea_harengus_i_in_Subdivision_28_1_Gulf_of_Riga_/30932084?file=65083623	

Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*)

A1 Data collection

A1.1	A1.1 Landings data are collected such that the fishery-wide removals of this species are known.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale Data is submitted by Latvia and Estonia, as ICES Member Countries, to the WGBFAS. The CFP places a clear obligation on Member States to account for and land all catches unless specific exemptions apply. These reporting requirements are set out in the EU Fisheries Control System through the Fisheries Control Regulation (EC Regulation No. 1224/2009), which requires each vessel to record catch data (target species and bycatch) in logbooks and complete a landing declaration specifying all quantities of each species landed¹. This information must be transmitted to the competent authority of each Member State, which then provides the information to the European Commission. Sprat catches within the Baltic Sea between 1974 and 2025 are displayed in Figure 4. Total ICES catch of the stock in 2025 was 194,910 tonnes². Of the ICES catch, Russian Federation landings were not officially reported to ICES, but an estimate is included. Discards in this year were thought to be negligible. Species misreporting of herring and sprat in mixed catches continues to be an ongoing problem encountered by the WGBFAS. The effects of this have been partially quantified and included in the assessment during the 2023 benchmarking where possible³. Since misreporting has only been partly included in the assessment, it still contributes to uncertainty in the assessment and advice. An Intersessional Subgroup (ISSG) made an attempt to provide the benchmark with corrected time series of catch data, for which species misreporting had been corrected. Estonia and Latvia provided catch data to this process with Denmark provided an alternative time series of catch data, which was included in the benchmark assessment³. In the case of Estonia, for the years 2014–2021, the overall impression is that herring might be slightly overreported compared to sprat. For Latvia, the landings were compared to the alternative Danish time series and found that sprat landings appeared consistent between Danish control samples and Latvian logbook data. For herring, differences were larger; however, herring overall landings are significantly smaller than sprat, and thus differences by landing weight are considered negligible compared to the total weight of pelagic landings. For both countries, the ISSG concluded, based on the information provided at the time, that the national data should not be updated, as there were no indications from the analysis that the data could be improved. Misreporting will be further addressed at the next benchmark assessment.	

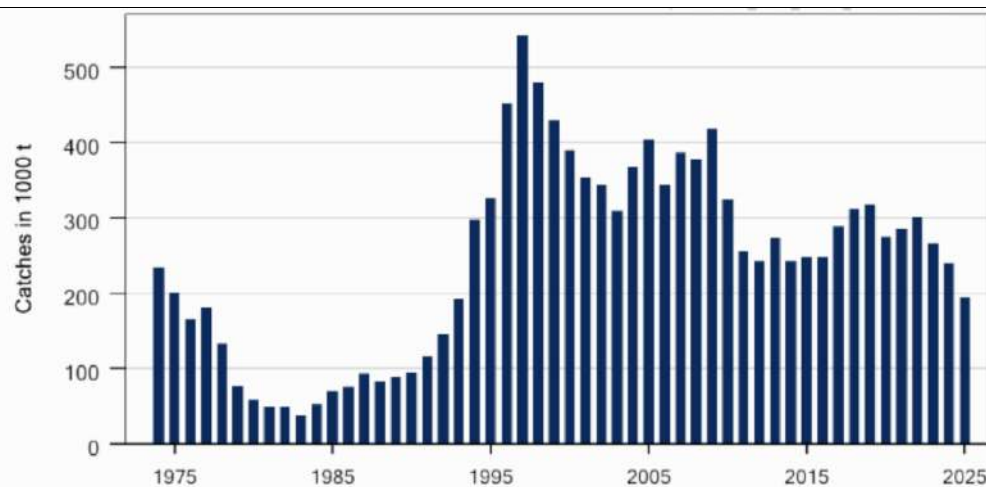


Figure 4. Sprat catch in subdivisions 22–32, excluding the Gulf of Riga between 1974 and 2025².

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A1.1.

References

1. Council of the European Union. (2009). Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy. Official Journal of the European Union, L 343, 1–50. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1224/oj/eng>
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) in subdivisions 22–32 (Baltic Sea). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026. ICES Advice 2026, spr.27.22-32. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932426>
3. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Pelagic stocks (WKBALPEL). ICES Scientific Reports, 5(47), 350 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.23216492>

A1.2	A1.2 Sufficient additional information is collected to enable an indication of stock status to be estimated.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale The most recent ICES WGBFAS stock advice was produced in 2026, with the benchmarking completed in 2023¹. The fishery is categorised as an ICES Category 1 fishery, meaning that assessments are quantitative and include stocks with full analytical assessments and forecasts that are either age-/length-structured or based on production models. The input data used include commercial catches, two acoustic surveys (Baltic International Acoustic Survey, BIAS and the Baltic Spring Survey, BASS), natural mortality from the multispecies model (SMS) until 2024, mortality in 2025 assumed to be equal to the SMS estimate of mortality for 2024, and a fixed maturity ogive. Catches for the Russian Federation since 2022 are taken from AtlantNIRO (2023) and the Russian Federation (2024–2026)¹. No information on Russian Federation catches for 2022–2025 was officially reported to ICES¹. Therefore, Russian Federation catches for these years included in the assessment were based on publicly available information, the quality of which cannot be evaluated. Russian catches account for around 21% of the total catch of sprat in 2025, which is an increase compared to 17% in 2024.	

No biological information on the composition of Russian catches was available to ICES, and the impact this has on the quality of the assessment cannot be quantified¹.

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A1.2.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) in subdivisions 22–32 (Baltic Sea). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026. ICES Advice 2026, spr.27.22-32. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932426>
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Pelagic stocks (WKBBALTPEL). ICES Scientific Reports, 5(47), 350 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.23216492>

A2 Stock assessment

A2.1

A2.1 A stock assessment is conducted at least once every 3 years (or every 5 years if there is substantial supporting information that this is sufficient for the long-term sustainable management of the stock) and considers all fishery removals and the biological characteristics of the species.

Outcome *Pass*

Rationale

Baltic Sea sprat is subject to an annual stock assessment carried out by the ICES WGBFAS as a Category 1 stock. The stock was benchmarked in 2023, and the outcomes were implemented in the last assessment published in 2026^{1,2}. The benchmarking process ensures that the stock assessment recognises the most recent available scientific understanding of the species, the stock, the fishery, and the ecosystems within which they occur. The stock assessment is conducted as a whole following the ICES methodology³.

The data used for the stock assessment included landing and catch data from all countries exploiting the stock, as well as biological data such as age composition, mean weights at age, maturity at age, and natural mortality. Additionally, fishery-independent information from the BIAS and BASS surveys was also utilised².

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.1.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Pelagic stocks (WKBBALTPEL). ICES Scientific Reports, 5(47), 350 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.23216492>
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) in subdivisions 22–32 (Baltic Sea). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026. ICES Advice 2026, spr.27.22-32. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932426>
3. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Guide to ICES advisory framework and principles. In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.22116890>

A2.2

A2.2 The assessment provides an estimate of the status of the biological stock relative to a reference point or proxy.

Outcome *Pass*

Rationale

The annual WGBFAS stock assessment provides an indication of the status of the stock relative to target and limit reference points (Table 3). These were most recently updated in 2023 with MSY $B_{trigger}$ (and MAP MSY $B_{trigger}$) set as 541,000 tonnes and B_{lim} (and MAP B_{lim}) set at 459,000 tonnes¹.

The 2026 stock assessment projected that SSB would be 1,123,434 tonnes and stated that “fishing pressure on the stock is at F_{MSY} and below F_{PA} . SSB is above MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{PA} , and B_{lim} ” as seen in (Figure 5)¹.

Table 3. Sprat in subdivisions 22–32. Reference points, values, and their technical basis. Weights in tonnes¹.

Framework	Reference point	Value	Technical basis	Source
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach	MSY $B_{trigger}$	541 000	B_{PA}	ICES (2023)
	F_{MSY}	0.34	Stochastic simulations with Beverton–Holt and segmented regression stock-recruitment model	ICES (2023)
Precautionary approach	B_{lim}	459 000	Biomass that produces half of the maximal recruitment in the Beverton–Holt stock-recruitment relationship	ICES (2023)
	B_{PA}	541 000	$B_{lim} \times \exp(1.645 \times \sigma)$, where $\sigma = 0.1$	ICES (2023)
	F_{PA}	0.35	F_{POS} ; the F that leads to $SSB \geq B_{lim}$ with 95% probability	ICES (2023)
Management plan	Multiannual plan (MAP) MSY $B_{trigger}$	541 000	MSY $B_{trigger}$	ICES (2023)
	MAP B_{lim}	459 000	B_{lim}	ICES (2023)
	MAP F_{MSY}	0.34	F_{MSY}	ICES (2023)
	MAP range F_{lower}	0.26–0.34	Consistent with the ranges that result in a $\leq 5\%$ reduction in long-term yield compared with MSY	ICES (2023)
	MAP range F_{upper}	0.34–0.35	Consistent with the ranges that result in a $\leq 5\%$ reduction in long-term yield compared with MSY, constrained by F_{POS}	ICES (2023)

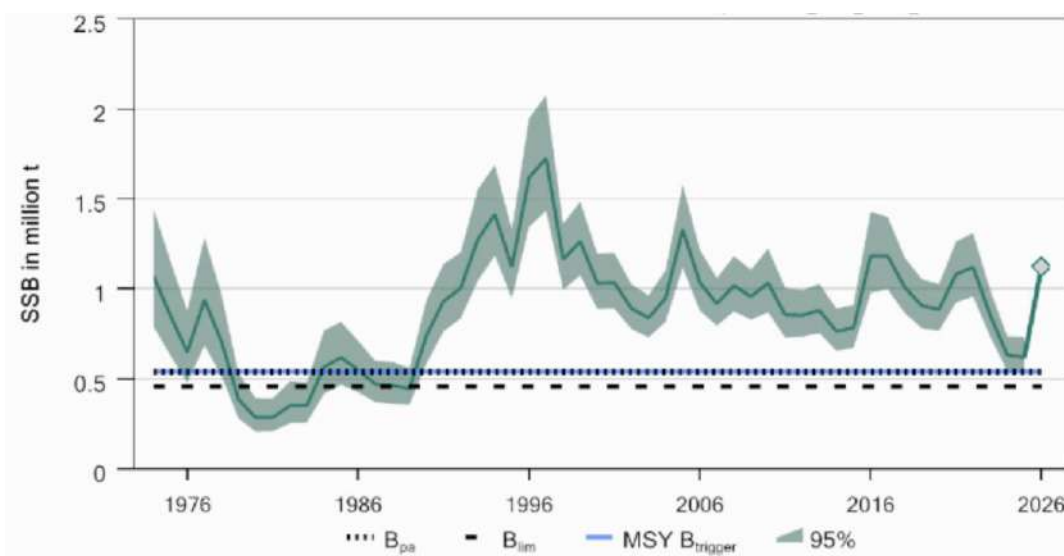


Figure 5. Sprat SSB in subdivisions 22–32 relative to MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{lim} and B_{pa} . The diamond indicates that SSB at spawning time is predicted for 2026¹.

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.2.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) in subdivisions 22–32 (Baltic Sea). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026. ICES Advice 2026, spr.27.22-32. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932426>

A2.3	A2.3 The assessment provides an indication of the volume of fishery removals which is appropriate for the current stock status.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale The ICES advice annually provides an indication of the volume of fishery removals that is appropriate for the current stock status in the form of recommended catches in the upcoming year. The latest catch advice indicates that, when the MAP for the Baltic Sea is applied, the catches in 2027 that correspond to the F ranges in the plan are between 253,819 tonnes and 332,885 tonnes¹. According to the MAP, catches higher than those corresponding to F_{MSY} (324,277 tonnes) can be taken only under conditions specified in the plan, while the entire range is considered precautionary when applying the ICES advice rule¹. Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.3.	
References 1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Sprat (<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>) in subdivisions 22–32 (Baltic Sea). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026. ICES Advice 2026, spr.27.22-32. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932426	

A2.4	A2.4 The assessment is subject to internal or external peer review.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale ICES Technical Guidelines outline a transparent review process for stock assessments, emphasising the importance of public availability of data and methodologies. This is exemplified by the ICES Transparent Assessment Framework, ensuring transparency of ICES advisory processes¹. It makes the data, methods, and results from ICES assessments easy to find, explore, and re-run. This allows stakeholders to examine the input data used in models, ensuring accountability and fostering trust in the assessment outcomes. The review process includes expert evaluations and opportunities for public comment. When the results of the assessments are agreed upon by the ICES groups, they are sent to the ICES Advice Drafting Group, which consists of National Experts who review them. They are finally reviewed by ACOM, which delivers the ICES advice. The ACOM advice is grounded in 10 principles to support ecosystem-based management advice (Figure 6). This ensures that the advice is based on the best available science and data, considered legitimate by both authorities and stakeholders, and relevant and operational to the policy or management challenge in question².	



Figure 6. ICES advice principles².

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.3.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (n.d.). Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF). <https://www.ices.dk/data/assessment-tools/Pages/transparentassessment-framework.aspx>
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Guide to ICES advisory framework and principles. In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.22116890>

A2.5

A2.5 The assessment is made publicly available.

Outcome Pass

Rationale

This assessment and all others can be found on the ICES website¹.

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause A2.5.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (n.d.). ICES Library. <https://iceslibrary.figshare.com>

A3 Harvest strategy

A3.1

A3.1 There is a mechanism in place by which total fishing mortality of this species is restricted.

Outcome Pass

Rationale

Total fishing mortality is restricted through the use of a TAC, which is generally based on the ICES advice, which in turn is based on the Baltic Sea Multiannual Plan (Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 as amended)¹. In Russia, the federal law on Fisheries and Protection of Aquatic Biological Resources mandates the establishment of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) levels for various fish stocks to ensure

the conservation of aquatic biological resources².

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause A3.1.

References

1. European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2016). Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 establishing a multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1098/2007. Official Journal of the European Union, L 191, 1–15. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02016R1139-20240710>
2. Russian Federation. (2004). Federal Law No. 166-FZ of 20 December 2004 on fishing and conservation of aquatic biological resources. Federal Agency for Fisheries. https://fish.gov.ru/wp-content/uploads/documents/documenty/federalnye_zakony/Federalnyj-zakon_166-FZ_ot_20-12-2004.pdf

A3.2	A3.2 Total fishery removals of this species do not regularly exceed the level indicated or stated in the stock assessment. Where a specific quantity of removals is recommended, the actual removals may exceed this by up to 10% ONLY if the stock status is above the limit reference point or proxy.																																																					
Outcome	Fail																																																					
Rationale																																																						
Since 2018, ICES has provided a range of potential catch recommendations to reflect the specifics of the Baltic Sea MAP. Since the MAP’s introduction, the total international quota (the sum of the EU TAC and the Russian autonomous quota) has exceeded the ICES catch advice by some degree in 5 out of the 9 years¹. Most recently, in 2025 and 2026, the international quota was exceeded by approximately 9% and 6%, respectively. In 2025, the resulting catch (which included an estimate of Russian Federation landings) exceeded the agreed international TAC by 6%¹. The cumulative impact was that the ICES catch advice was exceeded by 15%; this was the second time this has happened since the MAP’s introduction. The last occurrence was in 2020, when it was exceeded by 17%¹. Although the SSB has been estimated to be above the limit reference point and has been since the 1990s, the issue does appear to be somewhat persistent and describes an issue where agreed international catches exceed ICES advice, meaning that where catches are higher, they are significantly larger. Table 4. Sprat in subdivisions 22-32 (Baltic Sea). ICES advice, total allowable catch (TAC) for the Gulf of Riga, and catches of Gulf of Riga herring stock from the Gulf of Riga. All weights are in tonnes¹. <table><tr><th>Year</th><th>ICES advice</th><th>Catch corresponding to advice</th><th>Agreed TAC</th><th>ICES catch</th></tr><tr><td>2018</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>1000</td><td>1170</td><td>1000</td><td>1170</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td></tr><tr><td>2022</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td></tr><tr><td>2023</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td></tr><tr><td>2024</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td><td>1000</td></tr><tr><td>2025</td><td>1000</td><td>1060</td><td>1000</td><td>1060</td></tr><tr><td>2026</td><td>1000</td><td>1054</td><td>1000</td><td>1054</td></tr></table>					Year	ICES advice	Catch corresponding to advice	Agreed TAC	ICES catch	2018	1000	1000	1000	1000	2019	1000	1000	1000	1000	2020	1000	1170	1000	1170	2021	1000	1000	1000	1000	2022	1000	1000	1000	1000	2023	1000	1000	1000	1000	2024	1000	1000	1000	1000	2025	1000	1060	1000	1060	2026	1000	1054	1000	1054
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2026	1000	1054	1000	1054																																																		

2016	MSY approach (F = 0.26)	≤ 205 000	243 000**	247 100
2017	MSY approach (F = 0.26)	≤ 314 000	303 593**	288 497
2018	MAP target F ranges: F_{lower} to F_{upper} (0.19–0.27), but F higher than $F_{MSY} = 0.26$ only under conditions specified in MAP	219 152–301 722, but catch higher than 291 715 only under conditions specified in MAP	304 900**	312 188
2019	MAP target F ranges: F_{lower} to F_{upper} (0.19–0.27), but F higher than $F_{MSY} = 0.26$ only under conditions specified in MAP	225 752–311 523, but catch higher than 301 125 only under conditions specified in MAP	313 100**	317 655
2020	MAP target F ranges: F_{lower} to F_{upper} (0.19–0.27), but F higher than $F_{MSY} = 0.26$ only under conditions specified in MAP	169 965–233 704, but catch higher than 225 786 only under conditions specified in MAP	256 700**	274 064
2021	Management plan	247 952 (range 181 567–316 833)	268 458**	284 890
2022	Management plan	291 745 (range 214 000–373 210)	295 300**	300 788 [^]
2023	Management plan	249 237 (range 183 749–317 905)	269 200**	265 900 [^]
2024	Management plan	241 604 (range 191 075–247 704)	245 200**	239 938 [^] [^]
2025	Management plan	164 947 (range 130 195 – 169 131)	183 700**	194 910 [^]
2026	Management plan	224 616 (range 176 056–230 518)	245 175**	
2027	Management plan	324 277 (range 253 819 – 332 885)		

Based on the information, the fishery fails Clause A3.2.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) in subdivisions 22–32 (Baltic Sea). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026. ICES Advice 2026, spr.27.22–32. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932426>

A3.3	A3.3 Commercial fishery removals are prohibited when the stock has been estimated to be below the limit reference point or proxy (small quotas for research or non-target catch of the species in other fisheries are permissible).
Outcome	Pass
Rationale The MAP requires that fishing opportunities are fixed in such a way that there is a less than 5% probability of the spawning stock biomass falling below B_{lim}. When scientific advice indicates that the spawning stock biomass of the stock is below B_{lim}, further remedial measures shall be taken to ensure rapid return of the stock to levels above the level capable of producing MSY. Those remedial measures may include suspending the targeted fishery for the stock and the adequate reduction of fishing opportunities¹. Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause A3.3.	
References 1. European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2016). Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 establishing a multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 and repealing Council Regulation (EC)	

No 1098/2007. Official Journal of the European Union, L 191, 1–15. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02016R1139-20240710>

A4 Stock status

A4.1	A4.1 The stock is at or above the target reference point; OR IF NOT: the stock is above the limit reference point or proxy and there is evidence that a fall below the limit reference point would result in fishery closure; OR IF NOT: the stock is estimated to be below the limit reference point or proxy, but fishery removals are prohibited.
Outcome	Pass
Rationale The most recent catch advice states that “spawning-stock size is above MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{PA} , and B_{lim} ” ¹ . Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause A4.1.	
References 1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Sprat (<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>) in subdivisions 22–32 (Baltic Sea). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026. ICES Advice 2026, spr.27.22-32. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932426	

Herring (*Clupea harengus*), Central Baltic

A1 Data collection

A1.1	A1.1 Landings data are collected such that the fishery-wide removals of this species are known.
Outcome	Pass
Rationale Data is submitted by Latvia and Estonia, as ICES Member Countries, to the WGBFAS. The CFP places a clear obligation on Member States to account for and land all catches unless specific exemptions apply. These reporting requirements are set out in the EU Fisheries Control System through the Fisheries Control Regulation (EC Regulation No. 1224/2009), which requires each vessel to record catch data (target species and bycatch) in logbooks and complete a landing declaration specifying all quantities of each species landed ¹ . This information must be transmitted to the competent authority of each Member State, which then provides the information to the European Commission. Herring catches within the Central Baltic excluding the Gulf of Riga between 1904 and 2025 are displayed in Figure 7. Total ICES catch of the stock in 2025 was 112,427 tonnes ² . Of the ICES catch, Russian Federation landings were not officially reported to ICES, but an estimate is included. Discards in this year were thought to be negligible. Species misreporting of herring and sprat in mixed catches continues to be an ongoing problem encountered by the WGBFAS. The effects of this have been partially quantified and included in the assessment during the 2023 benchmarking where possible ³ . Since misreporting has only been partly included in the assessment, it still contributes to uncertainty in the assessment and advice. An Intersessional Subgroup (ISSG) made an attempt to provide the benchmark with corrected time	

series of catch data, for which species misreporting had been corrected. Estonia and Latvia provided catch data to this process with Denmark provided an alternative time series of catch data, which was included in the benchmark assessment³. In the case of Estonia, for the years 2014–2021, the overall impression is that herring might be slightly overreported compared to sprat. For Latvia, the landings were compared to the alternative Danish time series and found that sprat landings appeared consistent between Danish control samples and Latvian logbook data. For herring, differences were larger; however, herring overall landings are significantly smaller than sprat, and thus differences by landing weight are considered negligible compared to the total weight of pelagic landings. For both countries, the ISSG concluded, based on the information provided at the time, that the national data should not be updated, as there were no indications from the analysis that the data could be improved. Misreporting will be further addressed at the next benchmark assessment.

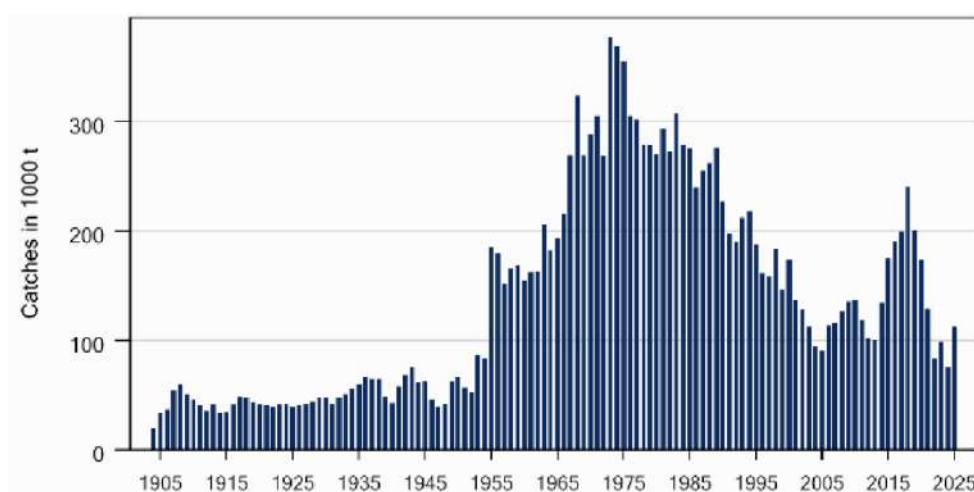


Figure 7. Herring catch in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga between 1904 and 2025².

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A1.1.

References

1. Council of the European Union. (2009). Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy. Official Journal of the European Union, L 343, 1–50. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1224/oj/eng>
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea). In *Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026*. ICES Advice 2026, her.27.25-2932. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932081>
3. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Pelagic stocks (WKBALPEL). ICES Scientific Reports, 5(47), 350 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.23216492>

A1.2	A1.2 Sufficient additional information is collected to enable an indication of stock status to be estimated.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale	

The most recent ICES WGBFAS stock advice was produced in 2026, with the benchmarking completed in 2023¹. The fishery is categorised as an ICES Category 1 fishery, meaning that assessments are quantitative and include stocks with full analytical assessments and forecasts that are either age-/length-structured or based on production models.

The input data used include commercial catches, one acoustic surveys (BIAS), natural mortality from the multispecies model (SMS) until 2021. Catches for the Russian Federation since 2022 are taken from the Russian Federation (2024–2026)².

No information on Russian Federation catches for 2022–2025 was officially reported to ICES¹. Therefore, the Russian Federation catches for these years included in the assessment were based on publicly available information, the quality of which cannot be quantified. Russian catches account for around 21% of the total². No biological information on the composition of the Russian catches was available to ICES, and the impact this has on the quality of the assessment cannot be quantified.

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A1.2.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Pelagic stocks (WKBALPEL). ICES Scientific Reports, 5(47), 350 pp.
<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.23216492>
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea). In *Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026*. ICES Advice 2026, her.27.25-2932.
<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932081>

A2 Stock assessment

A2.1	A2.1 A stock assessment is conducted at least once every 3 years (or every 5 years if there is substantial supporting information that this is sufficient for the long-term sustainable management of the stock) and considers all fishery removals and the biological characteristics of the species.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale Herring in the Central Baltic Sea, excluding the Gulf of Riga is subject to an annual stock assessment carried out by the ICES WGBFAS as a Category 1 stock. The stock was benchmarked in 2023, and the outcomes were implemented in the last assessment published in 2026^{1,2}. The benchmarking process ensures that the stock assessment recognises the most recent available scientific understanding of the species, the stock, the fishery, and the ecosystems within which they occur. The stock assessment is conducted as a whole following the ICES methodology³. The data used for the stock assessment included landing and catch data from all countries exploiting the stock, as well as biological data such as age composition, mean weights at age, maturity at age, and natural mortality. Additionally, fishery-independent information from the BIAS and BASS surveys was also utilised². Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.1. References	

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Pelagic stocks (WKBALPEL). ICES Scientific Reports, 5(47), 350 pp.
<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.23216492>
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea). In *Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026*. ICES Advice 2026, her.27.25-2932.
<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932081>
3. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Guide to ICES advisory framework and principles. In *Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023*.
<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.22116890>

A2.2	A2.2 The assessment provides an estimate of the status of the biological stock relative to a reference point or proxy.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>

Rationale

The annual WGBFAS stock assessment provides an indication of the status of the stock relative to target and limit reference points (Table 5). These were most recently updated in 2023 with MSY $B_{trigger}$ (and MAP MSY $B_{trigger}$) set as $B_{30\%}$ and B_{lim} (and MAP B_{lim}) set at $0.15 \times B_0$ ¹.

The 2026 stock assessment projected that SSB in 2026 would be 105% of the target reference point level, and stated, “fishing pressure on the stock is below FMSY, and spawning-stock size is below MSY $B_{trigger}$ and between B_{PA} and B_{lim} .” as seen in (Figure 8)¹.

Table 5. Herring in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga. Reference points, values, and their technical basis¹.

Framework	Reference point	Value	Technical basis	Source
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach	MSY $B_{trigger}$	$B_{30\%}$	Relative value. Set at 30% of B_0 *. Determined through management strategy evaluation with the objective to achieve high sustainable yields without exceeding a 5% probability of spawning-stock biomass (SSB) falling below B_{lim} in any single year.	ICES (2023a)
	F_{MSY}	$F_{B30\%}$	Relative value. Set as the F which will achieve 30% of B_0 . Determined through management strategy evaluation with the objective to achieve high sustainable yields without exceeding a 5% probability of SSB falling below B_{lim} in any single year.	ICES (2023a)
Precautionary approach	B_{lim}	$0.15 \times B_0$	Relative value. Set at 15% of B_0 .	ICES (2023b)
	$B_{pa}=MSY B_{trigger}$	$B_{30\%}$	Relative value. Set at 30% of B_0 . Determined through management strategy evaluation with the objective to achieve high sustainable yields without exceeding a 5% probability of SSB falling below B_{lim} in any single year.	ICES (2023a)
	F_{pa}	$F_{B25\%}^{**}=F_{MSY} \times 1.21$	F_{POS} . Relative value. Determined through management strategy evaluation. The F that leads to SSB $\geq B_{lim}$ with 95% probability.	ICES (2023a)
Management plan	MAP MSY $B_{trigger}$	$B_{30\%}$	MSY $B_{trigger}$	ICES (2023a)
	MAP B_{lim}	$0.15 \times B_0$	B_{lim}	ICES (2023a)
	MAP F_{MSY}	$F_{B30\%}$	F_{MSY}	ICES (2023a)
	MAP range F_{lower}	$F_{B40\%}=F_{MSY} \times 0.75$	Relative value. Determined through management strategy evaluation, consistent with the ranges that result in no more than a 5% reduction in long-term yield compared to MSY.	ICES (2023a)
	MAP range F_{upper}	$F_{B25\%}^{**}=F_{MSY} \times 1.21$	Relative value. Determined through management strategy evaluation, consistent with the ranges that result in no more than a 5% reduction in long-term yield compared to MSY. Capped to F_{POS} .	ICES (2023a)

Relative Spawning Biomass

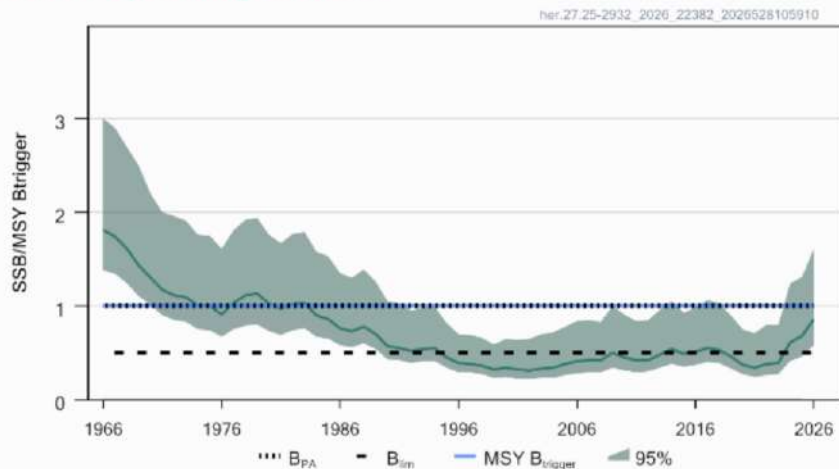


Figure 8. Herring SSB in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga relative to MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{lim} and B_{pa} ¹.

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.2.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea). In *Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026*. ICES Advice 2026, her.27.25-2932. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932081>

A2.3

A2.3 The assessment provides an indication of the volume of fishery removals which is appropriate for the current stock status.

Outcome Pass

Rationale

The ICES advice annually provides an indication of the volume of fishery removals that is appropriate for the current stock status in the form of recommended catches in the upcoming year.

The latest catch advice indicates that, when the MAP for the Baltic Sea is applied, the catches in 2027 that correspond to the F ranges in the plan are between 253,819 tonnes and 332,885 tonnes. According to the MAP, catches higher than those corresponding to F_{MSY} (324,277 tonnes) can only be taken under conditions specified in the plan, while the entire range is considered precautionary when applying the ICES advice rule¹.

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.3.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea). In *Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026*. ICES Advice 2026, her.27.25-2932. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932081>

A2.4

A2.4 The assessment is subject to internal or external peer review.

Outcome Pass

Rationale

ICES Technical Guidelines outline a transparent review process for stock assessments, emphasising the importance of public availability of data and methodologies. This is exemplified by the ICES Transparent Assessment Framework, ensuring transparency of ICES advisory processes¹. It makes the data, methods, and results from ICES assessments easy to find, explore, and re-run. This allows stakeholders to examine the input data used in models, ensuring accountability and fostering trust in the assessment outcomes. The review process includes expert evaluations and opportunities for public comment.

When the results of the assessments are agreed upon by the ICES groups, they are sent to the ICES Advice Drafting Group, which consists of National Experts who review them. They are finally reviewed by ACOM, which delivers the ICES advice. The ACOM advice is grounded in 10 principles to support ecosystem-based management advice (Figure 9). This ensures that the advice is based on the best available science and data, considered legitimate by both authorities and stakeholders, and relevant and operational to the policy or management challenge in question².



Figure 9. ICES advice principles².

Based on the above, the fishery passes Clause A2.3.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (n.d.). Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF). <https://www.ices.dk/data/assessment-tools/Pages/transparentassessment-framework.aspx>
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Guide to ICES advisory framework and principles. In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.22116890>

A2.5	A2.5 The assessment is made publicly available.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale	This assessment and all others can be found on the ICES website ¹ .
Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause A2.5.	

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (n.d.). ICES Library. <https://iceslibrary.figshare.com>

A3 Harvest strategy

A3.1	A3.1 There is a mechanism in place by which total fishing mortality of this species is restricted.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale Total fishing mortality for the species is restricted through the implementation of fishing quotas. Within EU waters, TACs are set annually, generally guided by ICES species advice, which in turn is based on the Baltic Sea MAP (Regulation (EU) 2016/1139)¹. Once the TAC is set, it is apportioned among Member States through national quotas. TACs for the fishery have been set within the range recommended by ICES since the implementation of the MAP in 2018. A mixture of Central Baltic herring (subdivisions 25–27, 28.2, 29, and 32) and Gulf of Riga herring (subdivision 28.1) is caught in the Central Baltic Sea. In the assessment and the advice, the Central Baltic herring stock is considered to be caught both inside and outside the Central Baltic Sea. The international TAC (the sum of the EU and Russian Federation autonomous quotas) is set for herring caught in the Central Baltic management area and also includes a small amount of Gulf of Riga herring caught in the Central Baltic Sea but excludes Central Baltic herring caught outside the Central Baltic Sea². Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause A3.1.	
References 1. Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 establishing a multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1098/2007. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32016R1139 2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea). In <i>Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026</i>. ICES Advice 2026, her.27.25-2932. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932081	

A3.2	A3.2 Total fishery removals of this species do not regularly exceed the level indicated or stated in the stock assessment. Where a specific quantity of removals is recommended, the actual removals may exceed this by up to 10% ONLY if the stock status is above the limit reference point or proxy.
Outcome	<i>Fail</i>
Rationale Since 2018, ICES has provided a range of potential catch recommendations to reflect the specifics of the Baltic Sea MAP. Since the MAP's introduction, the total international quota (the sum of the EU TAC and the Russian autonomous quota) has generally been within the bounds of the ICES advice. However, while the ICES catch advice for 2024 called for maximum catches within the range of 41,706 to 52,549 tonnes, the total international TAC for the year was set at 67,368 tonnes, nearly	

30% greater than the maximum recommended level (Table 5)¹. This was then exceeded again by the catches which reached 75,626 tonnes.

An argument could be made that this excess TAC has only occurred in one year and therefore does not represent removals that “regularly exceed” the level stated in the stock assessment. However, the severity of the excess TAC in 2024 is exacerbated by the conclusion of the 2023 stock assessment that this quota was set at a time when stock biomass was below the limit reference point. Some scientists and management stakeholders, including originally, the European Commission, argued that the TAC should be set to zero.

Table 6. Herring in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga. ICES advice, TACs, and catches. All weights are in tonnes².

Year	ICES advice	Catch corresponding to the advice	Agreed TAC	ICES catch SDs 25–29 and 32	ICES catch
2017	MSY approach ($F_{MSY} = 0.22$)	≤ 216 000	220 629 ^{^^}		199 428
2018	Multianual plan (MAP) target F ranges: F_{lower} to F_{upper} (0.16–0.28), but F higher than $F_{MSY} = 0.22$ only under conditions specified in MAP	200 236–331 510 but catch higher than 267 745 only under conditions specified in MAP	258 855 ^{^^}		240 739
2019	MAP target F ranges: F_{lower} to F_{upper} (0.16–0.28), but F higher than $F_{MSY} = 0.22$ only under conditions specified in MAP	115 591–192 787 but catch higher than 155 333 only under conditions specified in MAP	200 260 ^{^^}		200 957
2020	MAP target F ranges: F_{lower} to F_{upper} (0.16–0.28), but F higher than $F_{MSY} = 0.22$ only under conditions specified in MAP	130 546–214 553 but catch higher than 173 975 only under conditions specified in MAP	182 484 ^{^^}		174 520
2021	Management plan	111 852 (range 83 971–138 183)	126 051 ^{^^}		128 961
2022	Management plan	71 939 (range 52 443–87 581)	80 753 ^{^^}		83 821 ^{^^^}
2023	Management plan	95 643 (range 70 130–95 643)	97 822 ^{^^}		98 696 ^{^^^}
2024	Management plan	52 549 (range 41 706–52 549)	67 368 ^{^^}		75 626 ^{^^^}
2025	Management plan	125 344 (range 95 340–125 344)	110 881 ^{^^}		112 427 ^{^^^}
2026	Management plan	157 996 (range 120 378–157 996)	123 463 ^{^^}		
2027	Management plan	274 322 (range 211 363–324 914)			

* 1988–2003 including Gulf of Riga herring.

** TAC for subdivisions 22–29S and 32.

*** TAC for subdivisions 25–28.2, 29, and 32.

[^] EU TAC for subdivisions 25–28.2, 29, and 32.

^{^^} TAC is calculated as EU (subdivisions 25–28.2, 29, and 32) + Russian Federation autonomous quotas.

^{^^^} Russian Federation landings were not officially reported to ICES, but an estimate is included.

Based on the information, the fishery fails Clause A3.2.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea). In *Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026*. ICES Advice 2026, her.27.25-2932.

<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932081>

A3.3	A3.3 Commercial fishery removals are prohibited when the stock has been estimated to be below the limit reference point or proxy (small quotas for research or non-target catch of the species in other fisheries are permissible).
Outcome	<i>Fail</i>
Rationale The 2023 ICES advice stated that the stock was substantially below the limit reference point (LRP) and that the stock would likely remain under the LRP even with zero fishing in 2024¹. Additionally, the MAP requires fishing pressure to be set at a level that reduces the chance of SSB falling below the LRP to less than 5%. However, despite this, the ICES headline catch advice recommended a quota of between 41,706 and 52,549 tonnes¹. Due to the state of the stock, in August 2023, the European Commission proposed the closure of the targeted Central Baltic herring fishery². However, this proposal was not implemented, and the 2024 TAC was eventually set at 40,368 tonnes³. The 2024 ICES advice indicates that, when combined with the Russian Federation autonomous quota, the total international TAC in 2024 was 67,368 tonnes and as previously stated, this was exceeded by the landings. The agreed quota in 2025 and 2026 was within the bounds of the ICES advice⁴. Based on the information, the fishery fails Clause A3.3.	
References 1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea): Replacing advice provided in May 2023. In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023. ICES Advice 2023, her.27.25-2932. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.23310368 2. European Commission. (2023, August 29). Commission proposes fishing opportunities for the Baltic Sea for 2024. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_4287 3. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2024). Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2024. ICES Advice 2024, her.27.25-2932. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.25019276 4. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea). In <i>Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026</i>. ICES Advice 2026, her.27.25-2932. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932081	

A4 Stock status

A4.1	A4.1 The stock is at or above the target reference point; OR IF NOT: the stock is above the limit reference point or proxy and there is evidence that a fall below the limit reference point would result in fishery closure; OR IF NOT: the stock is estimated to be below the limit reference point or proxy, but
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	fishery removals are prohibited.
Outcome	<i>Fail</i>
Rationale As of 2026, the stock is currently estimated to be above the limit reference point (B_{lim}) but below the target reference points B_{pa} and $MSY B_{trigger}$¹. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that a fall below the limit reference point would not result in fishery closure, as was the case in 2023. The 2023 stock assessment concluded that stock biomass was below the limit reference point level². However, the fishery remained open in 2024, with a total international TAC of 67,368 tonnes, nearly 30% more than the maximum recommended by the ICES advice (52,549 tonnes)². Based on the information, the fishery fails Clause A4.1.	
References 1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea). In <i>Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026</i>. ICES Advice 2026, her.27.25-2932. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932081 2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea): Replacing advice provided in May 2023. In <i>Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023</i>. ICES Advice 2023, her.27.25-2932. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.23310368	

Category B species

Category B species are assessed using a risk-based approach.

- 1.3. The risk matrix in Table B(a) shall be used when assessing a Category B species when estimates of Fishing mortality (F), Biomass (B) and reference points are available.
- 1.4. The risk matrix in Table B(b) shall be used when assessing a Category B species when no reference points are available.

Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*)

B1	A3.3 Commercial fishery removals are prohibited when the stock has been estimated to be below the limit reference point or proxy (small quotas for research or non-target catch of the species in other fisheries are permissible).
Table used B(a) or B(b)	B(a)
Outcome	Pass

Rationale

Baltic Sea sprat is managed relative to established target and limit reference points but fails in the Category A assessment. As information about biomass, fishing mortality, and reference points is available, Table B(a) was used. In the last Baltic Sea sprat stock assessment, it was determined that fishing pressure on the stock is at F_{MSY} and below F_{PA} , and spawning stock biomass is above $MSY B_{trigger}$, B_{PA} , and B_{lim} (Figures 5 and 11)¹.

Taking into account current estimates of biomass and fishing mortality relative to reference points, and applying Table B(a), the outcome is that the stock passes the Category B assessment.

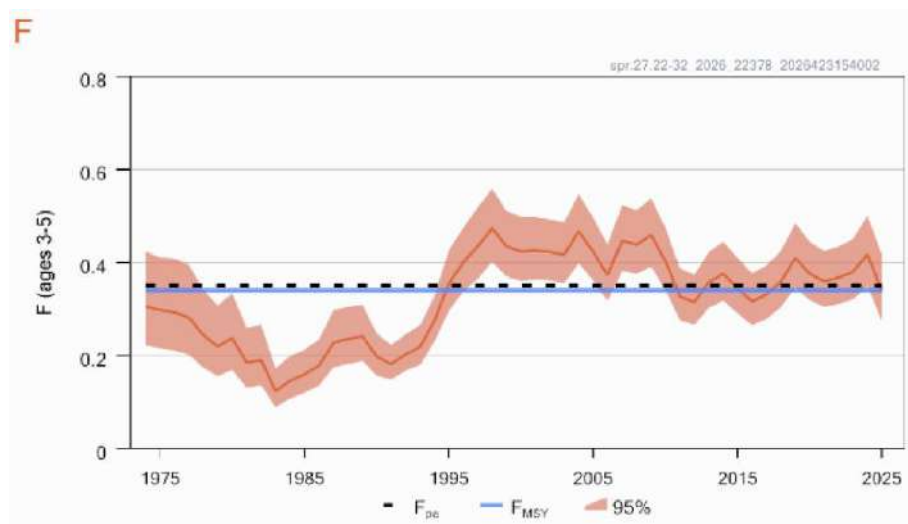


Figure 11. Baltic Sea sprat, relative fishing pressure¹.

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause B1 against the B(a) Table.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) in subdivisions 22–32 (Baltic Sea). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026. ICES Advice 2026, spr.27.22-32. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932426>

Herring (*Clupea harengus*), Central Baltic

B1	A3.3 Commercial fishery removals are prohibited when the stock has been estimated to be below the limit reference point or proxy (small quotas for research or non-target catch of the species in other fisheries are permissible).
Table used B(a) or B(b)	B(a)
Outcome	Pass

Rationale

Central Baltic herring is managed relative to established target and limit reference points but fails in the Category A assessment. As information about biomass, fishing mortality, and reference points is available, Table B(a) was used. In the last Central Baltic herring stock assessment, it was determined that fishing pressure on the stock is below F_{MSY} , and spawning-stock size is below $MSY B_{trigger}$ and between B_{PA} and B_{lim} (Figures 8 and 10)¹.

Taking into account current estimates of biomass and fishing mortality relative to reference points, and applying Table B(a), the outcome is that the stock passes the Category B assessment.

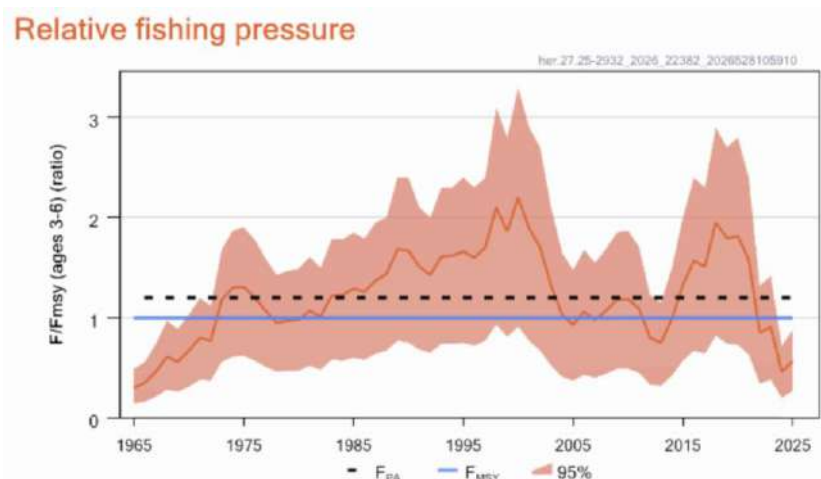


Figure 10. Central Baltic herring, relative fishing pressure¹.

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause B1 against the B(a) Table.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2026). Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga (central Baltic Sea). In *Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026*. ICES Advice 2026, her.27.25-2932. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932081>

Category C species

- 1.5. All clauses must be met for a species to pass the Category C assessment.
- 1.5.1. Where a species fails this Category C clause, it should be assessed as a Category D species instead, except if there is evidence that the species is currently below the limit reference point.

C1.1	C1.1 Fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process OR are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.
Outcome	Choose an item.
Rationale	
References	

C1.2	C1.2 The species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy), OR removals by the fishery under assessment are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.
Outcome	Choose an item.
Rationale	
References	

Category D species

Category D species are assessed against a risk-based approach.

- 1.6. The Productivity-Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) in Table D(a) shall be used when assessing Category D species.
- 1.7. Table D(b) shall be used to calculate the overall PSA risk rating for the Category D species.
- 1.8. Should the PSA indicate a high risk, further assessment shall be completed against the requirements in Table D(C).

Productivity Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) and scores

Table D(a) provides detailed values and scores for the species productivity and susceptibility attributes and attributes, the assessor shall use Table D(a) to the PSA table.

Table D(b) is used to calculate the overall PSA risk rating for the Category D species.

Fourhorn sculpin (*Myoxocephalus quadricornis*)

Species name	Fourhorn sculpin (<i>Myoxocephalus quadricornis</i>)	
Productivity attributes	Value	Score
Average age at maturity	4 years ¹	1
Average maximum age	14 years ¹	2
Fecundity	9,396 ¹	2
Average maximum size	60cm ¹	1
Average size at maturity	15.5cm ¹	1
Reproductive strategy	Nester/guarder ¹	2
Mean Trophic Level (MTL)	3.9 ¹	3
Density dependence (to be used when scoring invertebrate species only)	N/A	/
Susceptibility attributes	Value	Score
Areal overlap (availability): Overlap of the fishing effort with a species concentration of the stock	<10% overlap. Fourhorn sculpin are found in the Atlantic and Arctic Seas including the Baltic coast of Sweden, Finland, Russia and southwestern to eastern Poland, the western coast of Sweden to northern coast of Norway, eastward to White and Barents Sea basins. In Siberia eastward to about Anadyr estuary ¹ . This significantly exceeds the extent of the fishery.	1
Encounterability: The position of the stock/ species within the water column relative to the fishing gear, and the position of the stock/species within the habitat relative to the position of the gear	Low overlap with fishing gear (low encounterability). Fourhorn sculpin are found between 0 and 100m while herring are between 0 and 364m ^{1,2} . However, the fishery primarily operates within 6 and 54m range with very little fishing below 20m but considering the bycatch of the species is at 2.2% this suggests low realised overlap ^{3,4} .	1
Selectivity of gear type: Potential of the gear to retain species	Precautionary (no information found)	3
Post-capture mortality (PCM): The chance that, if captured, a	Retained	3

species would be released and that it would be in a condition permitting subsequent survival	
Average productivity score	1.71
Average susceptibility score	2
PSA risk rating (from Table D(b))	Pass
Compliance rating	Pass

1. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Myoxocephalus quadricornis* (Linnaeus, 1758). FishBase. https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Myoxocephalus_quadricornis.html
2. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Clupea harengus* (Linnaeus, 1758). FishBase. <https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Clupea-harengus.html>
3. Casini, M., Hjelm, J., Molinero, J. C., Lövgren, J., Cardinale, M., Bartolino, V., Belgrano, A., & Kornilovs, G. (2010). Trophic cascades promote threshold-like shifts in pelagic marine ecosystems. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 67(9), 1915–1922. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsq090>
4. FishSec. (2023). Gulf of Riga herring: The only healthy Baltic herring stock? FishSec. <https://www.fishsec.org/2023/11/16/gulf-of-riga-herring-the-only-healthy-baltic-herring-stock/>

Smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*)

Species name	Smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>)	
Productivity attributes	Value	Score
Average age at maturity	2.16 years ¹	1
Average maximum age	10 years ¹	2
Fecundity	Range of 6,500 to 50,000 eggs across available studies. The average of the reported range midpoints was approximately 26,900 eggs ¹ .	1
Average maximum size	45 cm ¹	1
Average size at maturity	12.8 cm ¹	1
Reproductive strategy	Broadcast spawner ¹	1
Mean Trophic Level (MTL)	3.5 ¹	3
Density dependence (to be used when scoring invertebrate species only)	N/A	/
Susceptibility attributes	Value	Score
Areal overlap (availability): Overlap of the fishing effort with a species concentration of the stock	<10% overlap. Smelt are found in the North Atlantic from White Sea southward to western coasts of France including Baltic Sea, southern North Sea and British Isles, with the Gironde estuary being the southern limit of this distribution. Landlocked populations in lakes of coastal areas of North, Baltic, White and Barents Sea. North to about 68° N in Scandinavia ¹ . This significantly exceeds the extent of the fishery.	1
Encounterability: The position of the stock/ species within the water column relative to the fishing gear, and the position of the stock/species within the	Low overlap with fishing gear (low encounterability). Smelt are found down to 50m while herring are between 0 and 364m ^{1,2} . However, the fishery primarily operates within 6 and 54m range with very little fishing below 20m but considering the bycatch of the species is	1

habitat relative to the position of the gear	at 0.7% this suggests low realised overlap ^{3,4} .	
Selectivity of gear type: Potential of the gear to retain species	Precautionary (no information found)	3
Post-capture mortality (PCM): The chance that, if captured, a species would be released and that it would be in a condition permitting subsequent survival	Retained	3
Average productivity score		1.42
Average susceptibility score		2
PSA risk rating (from Table D(b))		Pass
Compliance rating		Pass

1. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Osmerus eperlanus* (Linnaeus, 1758). FishBase. <https://fishbase.se/summary/Osmerus-eperlanus.html>
2. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Clupea harengus* (Linnaeus, 1758). FishBase. <https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Clupea-harengus.html>
3. Casini, M., Hjelm, J., Molinero, J. C., Lövgren, J., Cardinale, M., Bartolino, V., Belgrano, A., & Kornilovs, G. (2010). Trophic cascades promote threshold-like shifts in pelagic marine ecosystems. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 67(9), 1915–1922. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsq090>
4. FishSec. (2023). Gulf of Riga herring: The only healthy Baltic herring stock? FishSec. <https://www.fishsec.org/2023/11/16/gulf-of-riga-herring-the-only-healthy-baltic-herring-stock/>

Round goby (*Neogobius melanostomus*)

Species name	Round goby (<i>Neogobius melanostomus</i>)	
Productivity attributes	Value	Score
Average age at maturity	2.8 years ¹	1
Average maximum age	5 years ¹	1
Fecundity	Range of 300 to 5,000 eggs with a mean of 2,650 ¹ .	2
Average maximum size	22.5 cm ¹	1
Average size at maturity	4.9 cm ²	1
Reproductive strategy	Demersal egg layer ¹	2
Mean Trophic Level (MTL)	3.3 ¹	3
Density dependence (to be used when scoring invertebrate species only)	N/A	/
Susceptibility attributes	Value	Score
Areal overlap (availability): Overlap of the fishing effort with a species concentration of the stock	<10% overlap. Round goby are found in the Europe and Asia including the Sea of Azov, Black Sea and Caspian basins. The species is also introduced in North America ¹ . This significantly exceeds the extent of the fishery.	1
Encounterability: The position of the stock/ species within the water column relative to the fishing gear, and the position of	Low overlap with fishing gear (low encounterability). Round goby are found down to 30m while herring are between 0 and 364m ^{1,3} . However, the fishery primarily operates within 6 and 54m range with very little fishing	1

the stock/species within the habitat relative to the position of the gear	below 20m but considering the bycatch of the species is at 0.7% this suggests low realised overlap ^{4,5} .	
Selectivity of gear type: Potential of the gear to retain species	Precautionary (no information found)	3
Post-capture mortality (PCM): The chance that, if captured, a species would be released and that it would be in a condition permitting subsequent survival	Retained	3
Average productivity score		1.57
Average susceptibility score		2
PSA risk rating (from Table D(b))		Pass
Compliance rating		Pass

1. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Neogobius melanostomus* (Pallas, 1814). FishBase. https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Neogobius_melanostomus.html
2. Grabowska, J., Przybylski, M., & Konecka, E. (2021). Reproductive biology of pioneer round gobies *Neogobius melanostomus* (Pallas, 1814). *Journal of Vertebrate Biology*, 70(4), 21026. <https://doi.org/10.25225/jvb.21026.full>
3. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Clupea harengus* (Linnaeus, 1758). FishBase. <https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Clupea-harengus.html>
4. Casini, M., Hjelm, J., Molinero, J. C., Lövgren, J., Cardinale, M., Bartolino, V., Belgrano, A., & Kornilovs, G. (2010). Trophic cascades promote threshold-like shifts in pelagic marine ecosystems. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 67(9), 1915–1922. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsq090>
5. FishSec. (2023). Gulf of Riga herring: The only healthy Baltic herring stock? FishSec. <https://www.fishsec.org/2023/11/16/gulf-of-riga-herring-the-only-healthy-baltic-herring-stock/>

Flounder (*Platichthys flesus*)

Species name	Flounder (<i>Platichthys flesus</i>)	
Productivity attributes	Value	Score
Average age at maturity	3.4 years ¹	1
Average maximum age	15 years ¹	2
Fecundity	Range of 110,000 to 2,920,230 eggs. The average of the reported range midpoints was approximately 1,190,000 eggs ¹ .	1
Average maximum size	60 cm ¹	1
Average size at maturity	22.4 cm ¹	1
Reproductive strategy	Broadcast spawner ¹	1
Mean Trophic Level (MTL)	3.3 ¹	3
Density dependence (to be used when scoring invertebrate species only)	N/A	/
Susceptibility attributes	Value	Score
Areal overlap (availability): Overlap of the fishing effort	<10% overlap. Flounder are found in the Eastern Atlantic including coastal and brackish waters of	1

with a species concentration of the stock	western Europe and from the White Sea to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The species is also introduced in the USA and Canada ¹ . This significantly exceeds the extent of the fishery.	
Encounterability: The position of the stock/ species within the water column relative to the fishing gear, and the position of the stock/species within the habitat relative to the position of the gear	Low overlap with fishing gear (low encounterability). Flounder are found down to 100m while herring are between 0 and 364m ^{1,2} . However, the fishery primarily operates within 6 and 54m range with very little fishing below 20m but considering the bycatch of the species is at 0.6% this suggests low realised overlap ^{3,4} .	1
Selectivity of gear type: Potential of the gear to retain species	Retained	3
Post-capture mortality (PCM): The chance that, if captured, a species would be released and that it would be in a condition permitting subsequent survival	Precautionary (no information found)	3
Average productivity score		1.42
Average susceptibility score		2
PSA risk rating (from Table D(b))		Pass
Compliance rating		Pass

1. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Platichthys flesus* (Linnaeus, 1758). FishBase. https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Platichthys_flesus.html
2. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Clupea harengus* (Linnaeus, 1758). FishBase. <https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Clupea-harengus.html>
3. Casini, M., Hjelm, J., Molinero, J. C., Lövgren, J., Cardinale, M., Bartolino, V., Belgrano, A., & Kornilovs, G. (2010). Trophic cascades promote threshold-like shifts in pelagic marine ecosystems. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 67(9), 1915–1922. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsq090>
4. FishSec. (2023). Gulf of Riga herring: The only healthy Baltic herring stock? FishSec. <https://www.fishsec.org/2023/11/16/gulf-of-riga-herring-the-only-healthy-baltic-herring-stock/>

Three-spined stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*)

Species name	Three-spined stickleback (<i>Gasterosteus aculeatus</i>)	
Productivity attributes	Value	Score
Average age at maturity	1.6 years ¹	1
Average maximum age	8 years ¹	1
Fecundity	Range of 50 to 1,300 eggs. The average of the reported range midpoints was approximately 350 eggs ¹ .	2
Average maximum size	11 cm ¹	1
Average size at maturity	5.5 cm ¹	1
Reproductive strategy	Demersal egg layer ¹	2
Mean Trophic Level (MTL)	3.3 ¹	3
Density dependence	N/A	/

(to be used when scoring invertebrate species only)		
Susceptibility attributes	Value	Score
Areal overlap (availability): Overlap of the fishing effort with a species concentration of the stock	<10% overlap. Three-spined stickleback are found in Circumarctic and temperate regions: Extending south to the Black Sea, southern Italy, Iberian Peninsula, North Africa; in Eastern Asia north of Japan (35°N), in North America north of 30-32°N; Greenland ¹ . This significantly exceeds the extent of the fishery.	1
Encounterability: The position of the stock/ species within the water column relative to the fishing gear, and the position of the stock/species within the habitat relative to the position of the gear	Low overlap with fishing gear (low encounterability). Three-spined stickleback are found down to 100m while herring are between 0 and 364m ^{1,2} . However, the fishery primarily operates within 6 and 54m range with very little fishing below 20m but considering the bycatch of the species is at 0.3% this suggests low realised overlap ^{4,5} .	1
Selectivity of gear type: Potential of the gear to retain species	Retained	3
Post-capture mortality (PCM): The chance that, if captured, a species would be released and that it would be in a condition permitting subsequent survival	Precautionary (no information found)	3
Average productivity score		1.57
Average susceptibility score		2
PSA risk rating (from Table D(b))		Pass
Compliance rating		Pass

1. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Gasterosteus aculeatus* (Linnaeus, 1758). FishBase. https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Gasterosteus_aculeatus.html
2. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Clupea harengus* (Linnaeus, 1758). FishBase. <https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Clupea-harengus.html>
3. Casini, M., Hjelm, J., Molinero, J. C., Lövgren, J., Cardinale, M., Bartolino, V., Belgrano, A., & Kornilovs, G. (2010). Trophic cascades promote threshold-like shifts in pelagic marine ecosystems. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 67(9), 1915–1922. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsq090>
4. FishSec. (2023). Gulf of Riga herring: The only healthy Baltic herring stock? FishSec. <https://www.fishsec.org/2023/11/16/gulf-of-riga-herring-the-only-healthy-baltic-herring-stock/>

Eelpout (*Zoarces viviparus*)

Species name	Eelpout (<i>Zoarces viviparus</i>)	
Productivity attributes	Value	Score
Average age at maturity	2 years ¹	1
Average maximum age	11 years ¹	2
Fecundity	Range of 30 to 400 developed young with an average of 230 ¹ .	2
Average maximum size	40 cm ¹	1

Average size at maturity	17 cm ¹	1
Reproductive strategy	Live bearer ¹	3
Mean Trophic Level (MTL)	3.5 ¹	3
Density dependence (to be used when scoring invertebrate species only)	N/A	/
Susceptibility attributes	Value	Score
Areal overlap (availability): Overlap of the fishing effort with a species concentration of the stock	<10% overlap. Eelpout are found in the Northeast Atlantic including the White Sea, Cheshskaya Guba and Murmansk coast (Barents Sea) southward to English Channel (River Somme); eastern coasts of Scotland, England, also Irish Sea; the Orkneys, Shetlands and in shallow waters of North Sea and Baltic ¹ . This significantly exceeds the extent of the fishery.	1
Encounterability: The position of the stock/ species within the water column relative to the fishing gear, and the position of the stock/species within the habitat relative to the position of the gear	Low overlap with fishing gear (low encounterability). Eelpout are found between 2 and 20m while herring are between 0 and 364m ^{1,2} . However, the fishery primarily operates within 6 and 54m range with very little fishing below 20m but considering the bycatch of the species is at 0.3% this suggests low realised overlap ^{4,5} .	
Selectivity of gear type: Potential of the gear to retain species	Retained	3
Post-capture mortality (PCM): The chance that, if captured, a species would be released and that it would be in a condition permitting subsequent survival	Precautionary (no information found)	3
Average productivity score		1.85
Average susceptibility score		2
PSA risk rating (from Table D(b))		Pass
Compliance rating		Pass

1. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Zoarces viviparus* (Linnaeus, 1758). FishBase. https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Zoarces_viviparus.html
2. Froese, R., & Pauly, D. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Clupea harengus* (Linnaeus, 1758). FishBase. <https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Clupea-harengus.html>
3. Casini, M., Hjelm, J., Molinero, J. C., Lövgren, J., Cardinale, M., Bartolino, V., Belgrano, A., & Kornilovs, G. (2010). Trophic cascades promote threshold-like shifts in pelagic marine ecosystems. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 67(9), 1915–1922. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsq090>
4. FishSec. (2023). Gulf of Riga herring: The only healthy Baltic herring stock? FishSec. <https://www.fishsec.org/2023/11/16/gulf-of-riga-herring-the-only-healthy-baltic-herring-stock/>

Further assessment for Category D species

Should the PSA indicate a high risk, further assessment shall be completed against the requirements D1 and D2 – Table D(c).

D1	D1. The potential impacts of the fishery on this species are considered during the management process, and reasonable measures are taken to minimise these impacts.
Outcome	Choose an item.
Rationale	
References	

D2	D2. There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on the species.
Outcome	Choose an item.
Rationale	
References	

Ecosystem requirements

This section, or module, assesses the impacts that the fishery under assessment may have on key ecosystem components: ETP species, habitat and the wider ecosystem.

- 1.9. All ecosystem criteria must be met (pass) for a fishery to pass the Ecosystem Requirements.
- 1.9.1. The sub-criteria offer a structured evidence base to demonstrate that the fishery sufficiently meets the ecosystem criteria, it is not expected that sub-criteria are assessed independently of the main criterion.

E1 Impact on Endangered, Threatened or Protected species (ETP species)

E1.1	E1.1 Information on interactions between the fishery and ETP species is collected. <i>In reaching a determination for E1.1, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	E1.1.1 ETP species which may be directly affected by the fishery have been identified.
	E1.1.2 Interactions between the fishery and ETP species are recorded and reported to management organisations.
	E1.1.3 Collection and analysis of ETP information is adequate to provide a reliable indication of the impact the fishery has on ETP species.
Outcome	Pass
Rationale ICES requires that, in line with the ICES data call specifications, Member Countries submit complete fishing effort and monitoring effort data for all métiers, even when no bycatch has been reported. ICES recommends that Member Countries use at-sea observers and electronic monitoring protocols, corresponding to systems with appropriately placed cameras and suitable species identification methods, for the collection of robust and reliable bycatch data. This data is most commonly linked to at-sea observations carried out for the purposes of fisheries monitoring in accordance with the EU Data Collection Framework Regulation 2017/1004 (DCF)¹. The Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC) was established in 2007 by ICES to cover the Northeast Atlantic and adjacent sea areas (Baltic, Mediterranean, and Black Seas). The working group collates and assesses information on bycatch monitoring and assessment for ETP species, including mammals, birds, turtles, and rare fish². Through the 2024 data call, 23 countries out of 25 responded and submitted data on fishing and	

monitoring effort, and 22 submitted data on bycatch observations for 2023. Estonia and Latvia have been participating in data submissions to ICES WGBYC regarding fishing effort, observer effort, and bycatch records since 2019³.

Additionally, at the time of writing, the Gulf of Riga herring fishery is MSC certified⁴. Previously, both herring and sprat were certified until sprat was withdrawn from the certification in 2025.

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause E1.1.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Bycatch of endangered, threatened and protected species of marine mammals, seabirds and marine turtles, and selected fish species of bycatch relevance. https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Bycatch_of_endangered_threatened_and_protected_species_of_marine_mammals_seabirds_and_marine_turtles_and_selected_fish_species_of_bycatch_relevance/27999401
2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (n.d.). Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC). <https://www.ices.dk/community/groups/Pages/WGbyc.aspx>
3. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2024). Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC). ICES Scientific Reports, 6(102), 354 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.27762723>
4. Marine Stewardship Council. (2026). NZRO Gulf of Riga herring trawl fishery. Final Draft Report. <https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/nzro-gulf-of-riga-herring-trawl/@assessments>

E1.2	E1.2 The fishery has no significant negative impact on ETP species.
	<i>In reaching a determination for E1.2, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	E1.2.1 The information collected in relation to E1.1.3 indicates that the fishery does not have a significant negative impact on ETP species.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale In the Baltic Sea ecoregion, 218 marine mammals (7 species), 390 birds (21 species), 3 elasmobranchs (1 species), 79,530 teleost individuals (3 species), 23 chondrosteians (2 species), and 40 lamprey (1 species) were recorded from 129,904 days at sea ¹ . However, of the most recent WGBYC reported Gulf of Riga bycatch species, none of them is an ETP species, indicating that interactions with ETP species in this area of the Baltic Sea are rare (Table 7). Table 7. WGBYC bycatch species for the Gulf of Riga ¹ .	

Species	Common name	IUCN Categorisation	Total Specimens
<i>Alosa fallax</i>	Twaite Shad	Least Concern	20
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Great Cormorant	Least Concern	19
<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>	European River Lamprey	Near Threatened	6
<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	Grey Seal	Least Concern	3
<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Red-throated Loon	Least Concern	1

The low probability of ETP interactions was indicated in the MSC fourth surveillance report (for both herring and sprat), which notes that there are no recorded interactions with any potentially ETP species². The lack of interactions for herring was again confirmed within the 2026 MSC reassessment of herring³. Furthermore, the list of potentially impacted ETP species provided within the report includes only one species that falls within the MarinTrust definition of an ETP species: the Baltic Sea subpopulation of the harbour porpoise (*Phocoena Phocoena*) that is IUCN Critically Endangered. The report states that the harbour porpoise does not occur regularly in the Gulf of Riga and that no interactions with the pelagic trawl fishery in the Gulf of Riga have been recorded².

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause E1.2.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2024). Bycatch [Data set]. GitHub. https://github.com/ices-eg/wg_WGBYC/blob/master/2024/WGBYC2TAF/output/TOR_A_long_table_bycatch_only.xlsx
2. Marine Stewardship Council. (2024). NZRO GULF OF RIGA HERRING (*Clupea harengus* membras) AND SPRAT (*Sprattus sprattus*) TRAWL FISHERY. Fourth Surveillance. <https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/nzro-gulf-of-riga-herring-trawl/@assessments>
3. Marine Stewardship Council. (2026). NZRO Gulf of Riga herring trawl fishery. Final Draft Report. <https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/nzro-gulf-of-riga-herring-trawl/@assessments>

E1.3	E1.3 There is an ETP management strategy in place for the fishery.
	<i>In reaching a determination for E1.3, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	E1.3.1 There are measures applied to the fishery which are designed to manage the impacts of the fishery on ETP species. E1.3.2 The measures are considered likely to achieve the objectives of regional, national and international legislation relating to ETP species.
Outcome	Pass
Rationale The management of ETP species is prevalent in the objectives of European fisheries policy. Objective 3 of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (EU 1380/2013) is to ensure that negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem are minimised¹. This includes avoiding and reducing unwanted catches of commercial and protected species. An assessment of ETP species mortality as a result of bycatch is required to fulfil the objectives of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD; 2008/56/EC)². Specifically, Descriptor 1, which states that biological diversity is maintained, should include species (birds, mammals, reptiles, and	

non-commercially exploited species of fish and cephalopods) which are regionally at risk from incidental bycatch³.

ETP management is also featured in EU Regulation 2019/1241 on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures. Here, the objective states that it aims to "ensure that incidental catches of sensitive marine species, including those listed under directives 1992/43/EC and 2009/47/EC that are a result of fishing, are minimised and where possible eliminated so that they do not represent a threat to the conservation status of these species"⁴.

Further, the reduction of the impact of fisheries on sensitive species is one of the objectives of the European Commission-adopted 2023 Action Plan "Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries". It requires that threshold values for the maximum allowable mortality rate for incidental catches of selected species are developed and implemented in fisheries management measures⁵.

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause E1.3.

References

1. European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2013). Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC. Official Journal of the European Union, L 354, 22–61. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32013R1380>
2. European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2008). Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive). Official Journal of the European Union, L 164, 19–40. <https://eurlex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32008L0056>
3. European Commission. (n.d.). Descriptors under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/marine-environment/descriptors-under-marinestrategy-framework-directive_en
4. Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 establishing a multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1098/2007. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32016R1139>
5. European Commission. (2023). EU Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries (COM(2023) 102 final). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023DC0102>

E2 Impact on the habitat

E2.1	E2.1 Information on interactions between the fishery and marine habitats is collected.
	<i>In reaching a determination for E2.1, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	E2.1.1 Habitats which may be directly affected by the fishery have been identified, including any habitats which may be particularly vulnerable.
	E2.1.2 Information on the scale, location and intensity of fishing activity relative to habitats is collected.
	E2.1.3 Collection and analysis of habitat information is adequate to provide a reliable indication of the impact the fishery has on marine habitats.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale The herring and sprat fishery is a pelagic trawl fishery that operates in the midwater column¹. By design, this gear does not come into contact with the seabed; as such, it is not considered to impact marine habitats. Given the extensive body of evidence supporting this across all pelagic trawls, it is highly unlikely that the fishery is different in this regard. However, for fisheries in the region that interact with seabed habitats, measures are in place to manage and mitigate impacts through mechanisms such as the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), the requirements associated with Natura 2000 sites, and the technical measures outlined in EU regulations². Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause E2.1.	
References 1. Seafish. (n.d.). Pelagic pair trawl. Fishing Gear Database. https://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/fishing-gear-database/gear/pelagic-pair-trawl/ 2. Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM). (2021). Baltic Sea Action Plan. https://helcom.fi/baltic-sea-action-plan/	

E2.2	E2.2 The fishery has no significant impact on marine habitats.
	<i>In reaching a determination for E2.2, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	E2.2.1 The information collected in relation to E2.1.3 indicates that the fishery does not have a significant negative impact on marine habitats.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale The fishery uses pelagic trawls, which are designed to operate in the water column and not impact the marine habitat, and there is no evidence to suggest otherwise. Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause E2.2.	
References	

E2.3	E2.3 There is a habitat management strategy in place for the fishery. <i>In reaching a determination for E2.3, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	E2.3.1 There are measures applied to the fishery which are designed to manage the impact of the fishery on marine habitats.
	E2.3.2 The measures are considered likely to prevent the fishery from having a significant negative impact on marine habitats.
Outcome	Pass
Rationale Considering that pelagic trawl fisheries are not in contact with the seabed and therefore do not impact the marine habitat, a specific habitat management strategy is not considered necessary. Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause E2.3.	
References	

E3 Impact on the ecosystem

E3.1	E3.1 Information on the potential impacts of the fishery on marine ecosystems is collected. <i>In reaching a determination for E3.1, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	E3.1.1 The main elements of the marine ecosystems in the area(s) where the fishery takes place have been identified.
	E3.1.2 The role of the species caught in the fishery within the marine ecosystem is understood, either through research on this specific fishery or inferred from other fisheries.
	E3.1.3 Collection and analysis of ecosystem information is adequate to provide a reliable indication of the impact the fishery has on marine ecosystems.
Outcome	<i>Pass</i>
Rationale The fishery is assessed against an MSY-based management approach to ensure, among other things, that the stock continues to provide ecosystem services. This is underpinned by annual ICES stock assessments and scientific advice, ensuring that the management is robust and based on up-to-date data. Data for these assessments are provided annually by Member Countries through ICES data calls. Fisheries observer programmes contribute additional data on the fishery's ecosystem impacts. Together, these data sources support the development of management advice designed to minimise negative impacts on the marine ecosystem. Additionally, commercial fisheries in the Baltic Sea are managed according to a MAP (EU Regulation 2016/1139)¹. The objectives of the MAP include implementing the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, the precautionary approach, and EU legislation, including the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Directive 2008/56/EC. Article 3, Clause 3 of the MAP states, “The plan shall implement the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management in order to ensure that negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem are minimised”. Article 8 empowers the European Commission to adopt technical measures to “minimise the negative impact of fishing gears and fishing activities on the ecosystem”¹. ICES conducts Ecosystem Overviews, which utilise risk-based methods to identify the primary human pressures and explain how these pressures affect key ecosystem components in each ICES ecoregion. These overviews provide information on trends in the ecosystem over recent years and play a crucial role in providing the context for ecosystem-based management². The most recent Workshop for the Revision of the Ecosystem Overview of the Baltic Sea Ecoregion (WKBALEO) was carried out in 2024, where experts worked to synthesise the knowledge that underpins the revision of the ICES Baltic Sea Ecosystem Overview, aiming to determine the main human activity sectors that cause pressures impacting the ecosystem components³. WKBALEO experts have evaluated the links between sectors, pressures, and ecosystem components using a linkage framework and pressure assessment process that examines and scores all direct pressures and human activities for the Baltic Sea ecoregion, following the ICES technical guidelines methodology and using the most up-to-date scientific knowledge³.	

Herring and sprat are key forage fish in the Baltic Sea, transferring energy from zooplankton to higher predators such as cod, seabirds, and marine mammals. Since both species are zooplanktivores, their population fluctuations influence zooplankton abundance, which in turn affects phytoplankton blooms and overall ecosystem health by exerting stronger zooplankton grazing pressure and potentially enhancing eutrophication through trophic cascades. Additionally, variations in sprat stocks have been linked to changes in the fledgling mass of common guillemots (seabirds)^{4,5}.

The specific roles of herring and sprat in the Gulf of Riga ecosystem are taken into account in the development of the stock assessment process. This is apparent in the objectives of the 2023 benchmarking workshop that stated “as part of the assessment methods workshop, knowledge about environmental drivers, including multispecies interactions, and ecosystem impacts should be integrated into the methodology”⁶.

The benchmarking workshop report provides evidence that ecosystem knowledge was indeed factored into discussions. The Gulf of Riga herring section includes an extensive discussion of ecosystem drivers, stating, for example, that “the year-class strength of Gulf of Riga herring strongly depends on the severity of winter”⁶.

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause E3.1.

References

1. Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 establishing a multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1098/2007. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32016R1139>
2. ICES (2025). Ecosystem Overviews. <https://www.ices.dk/advice/ESD/Pages/Ecosystemoverviews.aspx>
3. ICES (2024). Workshop for the revision of Ecosystem Overviews of the Baltic Sea Ecoregion (WKBALEO). ICES Scientific Reports. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.27203316.v1>
4. Casini, M., Cardinale, M., & Arrhenius, F. (2004). Feeding preferences of herring (*Clupea harengus*) and sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) in the southern Baltic Sea. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 61(8), 1267- 1277. <https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2004ICJMS..61.1267C/abstract> Österblom, H.,
5. Casini, M., Olsson, O., & Bignert, A. (2006). Fish, seabirds and trophic cascades in the Baltic Sea. *Marine Ecology Progress Series*, 323, 233-238. <https://www.intres.com/abstracts/meps/v323/meps323233>
6. ICES (2023). Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Pelagic stocks (WKBALTPEL). ICES Scientific Reports. 5:47. 350 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.23216492>

E3.2	E3.2 There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on the marine ecosystem.
	<i>In reaching a determination for E3.2, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	E3.2.1 The information collected in relation to E3.1.3 indicates that the fishery does not have a significant negative impact on marine ecosystems.

Outcome	Pass
Rationale In the most recent Ecosystem Overview for the Baltic Sea, results indicate that the most prevalent pressures in the Baltic Sea are related to nutrient discharge from multiple sources, as well as impacts from species extraction, e.g. fisheries, including bycatch, and substrate disturbance. Furthermore, contaminants and litter, mainly due to their persistence and widespread prevalence, were identified as significant pressures in the Baltic Sea¹. The most significant potential ecosystem impacts of the fishery arise from the removal of herring and sprat biomass; however, while fishing is the main activity impacting the ecosystem via selective extraction of species, agriculture and forestry, together with wastewater discharge, pose the major pressures on the ecosystem through nutrient and organic enrichment¹. Although the understanding of the Baltic Sea ecosystem is relatively advanced compared to other marine regions, significant knowledge gaps remain on the cumulative effects of pressures on ecosystem components. For instance, key areas of uncertainty include the mechanistic understanding of how changes in the diet composition of important species alter their trophic positions within the food web, particularly under the influence of human activities (such as fishing) and climate change. This type of information is currently fragmented, yet essential for thoroughly assessing the impacts of anthropogenic pressures and climate-driven shifts on ecosystem dynamics. Therefore, when evaluating the state of the environment in the Baltic Sea, there is a lack of indicators for food web status, and threshold values have not yet been defined¹. The Ecosystem Overview of the Baltic Sea states that since the late 1980s “the open-sea system has been dominated by small pelagic fish, such as sprat and herring”¹. Additionally, despite the knowledge gaps, ICES catch recommendations are calculated with ecosystem considerations to minimise fisheries ecosystem impacts. No other evidence was encountered during the completion of this report to indicate that the fishery has a significant negative impact on the marine ecosystem. Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause E3.2.	
References 1. ICES (2024). Workshop for the revision of Ecosystem Overviews of the Baltic Sea Ecoregion (WKBALOE). ICES Scientific Reports. Report. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.27203316.v1 ICES (2024). Workshop for the revision of Ecosystem Overviews of the Baltic Sea Ecoregion (WKBALOE). ICES Scientific Reports. Report. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.27203316.v1	

E3.3	E3.3 There is an ecosystem management strategy in place for the fishery. <i>In reaching a determination for E3.3, the assessor should consider if the following is in place:</i>
	E3.3.1 There are measures applied to the fishery which are designed to manage the impacts of the fishery on marine ecosystems.
	E3.3.2 The measures are considered likely to prevent the fishery from having a significant negative impact on marine ecosystems.
Outcome	Pass
Rationale ICES considers ecosystem-based management (EBM) the primary way of managing human activities affecting the marine ecosystem¹. Accordingly, ICES fishing opportunity advice incorporates EBM	

principles, accounting for ecosystem productivity changes with the overarching objective of achieving MSY. The goal is to inform policies that ensure high long-term yields while sustaining productive fish stocks within healthy marine ecosystems.

Additionally, the fishery is managed according to the MAP, which aims to implement an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management to minimise the negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem. Additionally, as documented throughout this report, the herring and sprat fisheries in the Gulf of Riga are subject to management measures aimed at mitigating their impact on the marine ecosystem, such as the establishment of TACs, technical regulations, regionalisation, the requesting of scientific advice, and enforcement and monitoring activities, all designed to ensure sustainable fishing practices and protect the broader ecosystem.

Based on the information, the fishery passes Clause E3.3.

References

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. (2023). Guide to ICES advisory framework and principles.
https://iceslibrary.figshare.com/articles/report/Guide_to_ICES_advisory_framework_and_principles/22116890

Annex 1: External Peer Review report

Assessment and determination summary

Fishery name	Denmark - Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) and sprat (<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>) - FAO 27, ICES 3.d.28.1 (Gulf of Riga)
MarinTrust report code	WF07
Type 1 species (common name, Latin name)	Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) Sprat (<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>)
Fishery location	FAO 27, ICES 3.d.28.1 (Gulf of Riga)
Gear type(s)	Pelagic trawl
Management authority (country/state)	European Union, Estonian government, Latvian government
Certification Body recommendation	Approved
FAPRG reviewer recommendation	Agree with CB determination

Summary of peer review outcomes

Summary
<i>Provide any information about the fishery that the reviewers feel is significant to their decision. This summary is used by the Certification Body in the Fishery Assessment Report.</i>
The assessor has prepared a thorough, clearly structured and well-referenced report, with sufficient evidence and robust rationales supporting the scoring decisions. The peer reviewer agrees with the assessment outcomes and assigned scores. Only a few minor comments are provided, none of which affect the overall conclusions.
General comments on the draft report provided to the peer reviewer

Peer reviewers should review the fishery assessment report with the primary objective of answering the key questions listed in the table below. When the situation is more complicated, reviewers may answer "See Notes" instead.

1. Has the fishery assessment been fully completed, using the recognised MarinTrust fishery assessment methodology and associated guidance?	Yes
2. Does the Species Categorisation section of the report reflect the best current understanding of the catch composition of the fishery?	Yes
3. Are the scores in the following sections consistent with the MarinTrust requirements (i.e. do the scores reflect the evidence provided)?	Yes
Section M – Management Requirements	Yes
Category A Species	Yes

Category B Species	Yes
Category C Species	n/a
Category D Species	Yes
Section E – Ecosystem Impacts	Yes

Detailed Peer Review Justification

Peer reviewers should provide support for their answers in the boxes provided, by referring to specific scoring issues and any relevant documentation as appropriate.

Detailed justifications are only required where answers given are one of the 'No' options. In other (Yes) cases, either confirm 'scoring agreed' or identify any places where weak rationales could be strengthened (without any implications for the scores).

Boxes may be extended if more space is required.

1. Has the fishery assessment been fully completed, using the recognised MarinTrust fishery assessment methodology and associated guidance?	Yes
The assessor has appropriately applied the MarinTrust assessment methodology and associated guidance. No further comments are necessary..	
Certification Body response	
N/A	

2. Does the species categorisation section of the report reflect the best current understanding of the catch composition of the fishery?	Yes
Species categorisation is based on two data sources covering only the Latvian fishery. However, the assessor clearly explains the rationale for using these sources, and there is no reason to consider that the data are unrepresentative of catch composition across the fishery in Latvia and Estonia.	
Certification Body response	
N/A	

3. Is the scoring of the fishery consistent with the MarinTrust requirements, and clearly based on the evidence presented in the assessment report?	Yes
The fishery's scoring is consistent with the MarinTrust standard and its requirements. The evidence presented is sufficient to support the assessment, and the scores in each section are clearly justified. The report is thorough and comprehensive, and no specific issues were identified.	
Certification Body response	
N/A	

3a. Are the “Category A Species” scores clearly justified?	Yes
Three Category A stocks were identified in the catch: Gulf of Riga herring, Central Baltic herring and sprat. The two herring stocks are caught together within the assessment area. All three are classified by ICES as Category 1 stocks, and the latest available stock assessment reports were used in the assessment. Misreporting of herring and sprat catches appears to have been a longstanding issue in the fishery. However, ICES has taken steps to address this during the stock assessment process, and the issue does not prevent the fishery from meeting the relevant clauses. Central Baltic herring failed clauses under A3 and A4, while sprat failed clause A3.2, owing to overfishing of these stocks. I agree with the assessor’s rationales and scores. Both stocks were subsequently assessed under Category B, in accordance with MarinTrust guidance.	
Certification Body response	
N/A	

3b. Are the “Category B Species” scores clearly justified?	Yes
As indicated above, the two species/stocks that failed Category A were assessed under Category B. Both meet the criteria outlined in Table B(a). No further comments are necessary.	
Certification Body response	
N/A	

3c. Are the “Category C Species” scores clearly justified?	n/a
No category C species identified in the catch.	
Certification Body response	
N/A	

3d. Are the “Category D Species” scores clearly justified?	Yes
Six Category D species were identified, consistent with the species categorisation table at the beginning of the report, and a PSA was conducted for each. This section provides	

comprehensive information and clear explanations for each score, a level of detail that is not always provided. All assessed species meet the criteria outlined in Table D(b).

Certification Body response

N/A

Are the scores in “Section M – Management Requirements” clearly justified?

Yes

The fishery is managed within the EU framework and by the respective national authorities, and all relevant EU fisheries regulations apply. A management plan is also in place. The rationales and supporting justifications are adequate.

My only minor comment concerns the infringement figures presented under M2.3. I understand that these refer to the Baltic Sea as a whole, rather than specifically to the fishery under assessment. Could the assessor confirm whether this is correct?

Certification Body response

You are correct in your interpretation. The EFCA does not release fishery or flag state specific compliance figures, and so the figures presented represent the whole Baltic Sea JDP. I have clarified this within the section.

Relative to the other countries within the Baltic Sea JDP, the IUU fishing risk index scores for Estonia and Latvia do not suggest that the risk of non-compliance within either country is higher than that of other countries within the JDP.

Are the scores in “Section E – Ecosystem Impacts” clearly justified?

Yes

The information provided by the assessor appears generally adequate and indicates limited interactions with ETP species and habitats. A multiannual plan (MAP) is in place, with objectives that include implementing an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management. The ecological roles of herring and sprat in the Gulf of Riga are considered in the stock assessment process, and an ecosystem management strategy is in place. No issues were identified.

Certification Body response

N/A

Optional: General peer reviewer comments on the draft report

The rationale for the assessment determination is adequate and addresses all relevant sections.

Certification Body response

Thank you for reviewing the report. Suggested amendments have been made.