



THE BALTIC  
& its health

HUMANS  
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facing the sea

BIODIVERSITY  
& food webs

COMBINED  
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sea health

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## Biodiversity and food webs

### Why is this important?

100 %

of the coastal areas assessed  
exhibit an unfavourable status

35 %

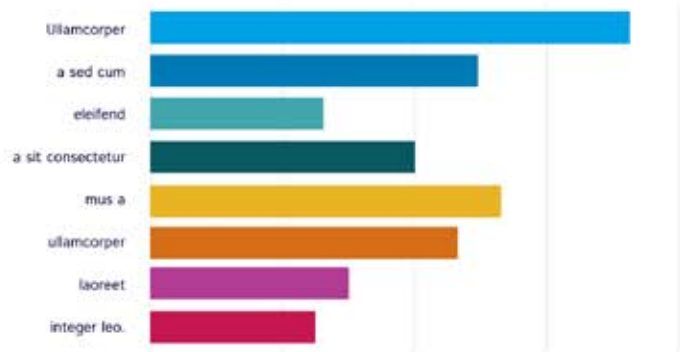
of the open basins of the Baltic  
Sea has an acceptable environ-  
mental status.

35 %

Pri in verear accusata, no eam  
nonumy oporteat omittantur. His  
ut dicam melius sanctus. Ali-  
quando eloquentiam et ius, illum  
senserit convenire cum no.

The Baltic Sea is home to about 2 700 macroscopic species and innumerable smaller microscopic species (HELCOM 2012, 2013). Around 1 700 of the macroscopic species are found in the most marine areas of the Baltic Sea, in the Kattegat, while only around 300 species occur in the Bothnian which is the most freshwater-influenced area, reflecting the effect of low salinity on the distribution of many species of marine origin (Figure 5a).

## H2 heading



Number of macroscopic taxa in the Baltic Sea within different species groups.  
Based on HELCOM (2012).



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The goal of the Baltic Sea Action Plan is to reach a favourable conservation status of the Baltic Sea biodiversity. HELCOM Recommendations are important regional agreements for achieving this goal. For example, HELCOM countries have agreed to take measures to improve the status of species that are threatened according to the 2013 HELCOM Red List (HELCOM 2013) with the aim to achieve a favourable conservation status of all species by 2021 (HELCOM Recommendation 37/2, 2016). Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are important tools to conserve both species and habitats in the Baltic Sea, expressed through a HELCOM Recommendation to establish an ecologically coherent and effectively managed network of HELCOM MPAs (HELCOM Recommendation 35/1, 2014).

The biodiversity assessment builds on work over many years in HELCOM to develop core indicators to evaluate the status of important species and species groups, also including their abundance, distribution, productivity, or physiological and demographic characteristics (HELCOM 2013). Hitherto, twelve regionally agreed biodiversity core indicators have been made operational and are included in this assessment. The assessment is a milestone in the continuous development, with the long term aim of the HELCOM countries to incrementally improving the regional assessment by including more aspects of biodiversity.

While the biodiversity assessment has been considerably strengthened since the initial holistic

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