

THEME: MPAs and Ocean Policies

Workshop: Marine Protection in the Eastern Baltic: What is the status quo? Good practices, ongoing challenges, and possible solutions

**25 April 2024
11:00 – 12:45h
Hall I**

Agenda

11:00 - 11:15	Setting the scene: Findings of HELCOM's State of the Baltic report - Status quo in the region in achieving the 30x10x30 targets	Cecilia Nyman, Project coordinator PROTECT BALTIC, HELCOM
11:15 - 11:25	Interaction sli.do	All
11:25 - 11:35	LIFE REEF – Latvian national initiative for reaching the marine protection targets	Ingrida Andersone, Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology
11:35 - 11:45	The ÅlandSeaMap project - Åland good practice presentation	Karl Weckström, Åbo Akademi University
11:45 - 12:05	Panel session with Q&A	PROTECT BALTIC, LIFE REEF, The ÅlandSeaMap project, pitches from BLUE4ALL, MSP4BIO, Cool Blue
12:05 - 12:30	Interactive session - moderated discussions in break out groups	All
12:30 - 12:45	Reporting to the plenary and agreeing on the main action points	All

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Setting the scene: Findings of HELCOM's State of the Baltic report - Status quo in the region in achieving the 30x10x30 targets

Cecilia Nyman, Project coordinator PROTECT BALTIC, HELCOM

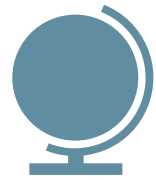


Workshop: Marine Protection in the Eastern Baltic: What is the status quo? Good practices, ongoing challenges, and possible solutions

The Baltic Sea



Catchment area:
4x area of the sea



9 different countries



Population (catchment):
85 million



One of the most heavily used marine areas in the world

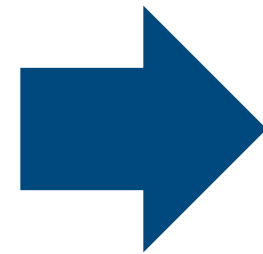
- HELCOM countries
- Baltic Sea area
- Catchment area



Global challenges – regional solutions

Triple planetary crisis.

- Global Biodiversity Targets
- EU Biodiversity Strategy
- Baltic Sea Action Plan



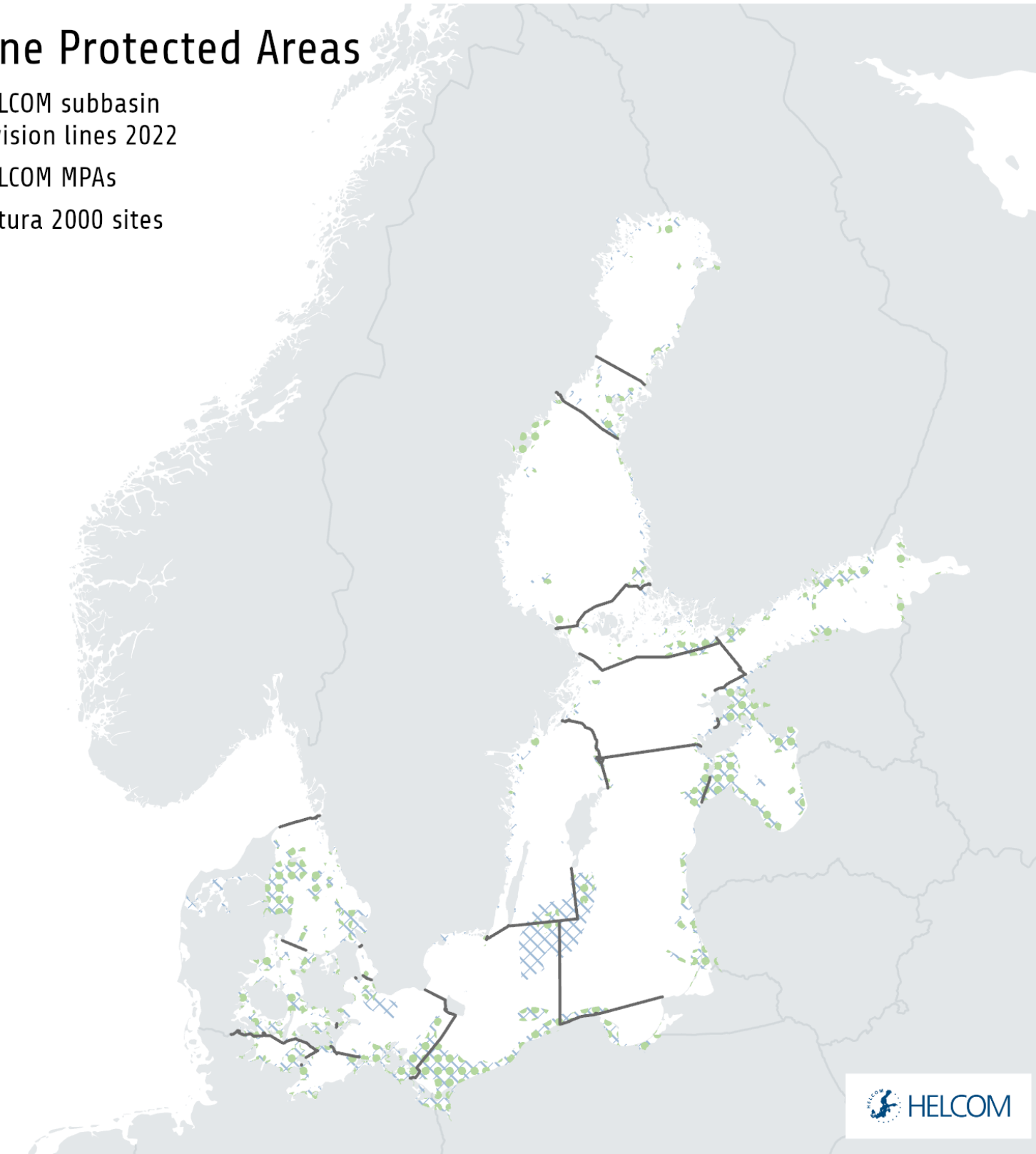
30% of marine area under protection,
1/3 under strict protection, by 2030.

Current situation – the good

- First region in the world to reach the global 10% target.
- As of December 2022, the Baltic MPA network covers approximately 16.5% of the Baltic Sea.
- Included in this are 178 HELCOM MPAs, amounting to about 13.2% of the Baltic Sea.

Marine Protected Areas

- HELCOM subbasin division lines 2022
- HELCOM MPAs
- ⊠ Natura 2000 sites

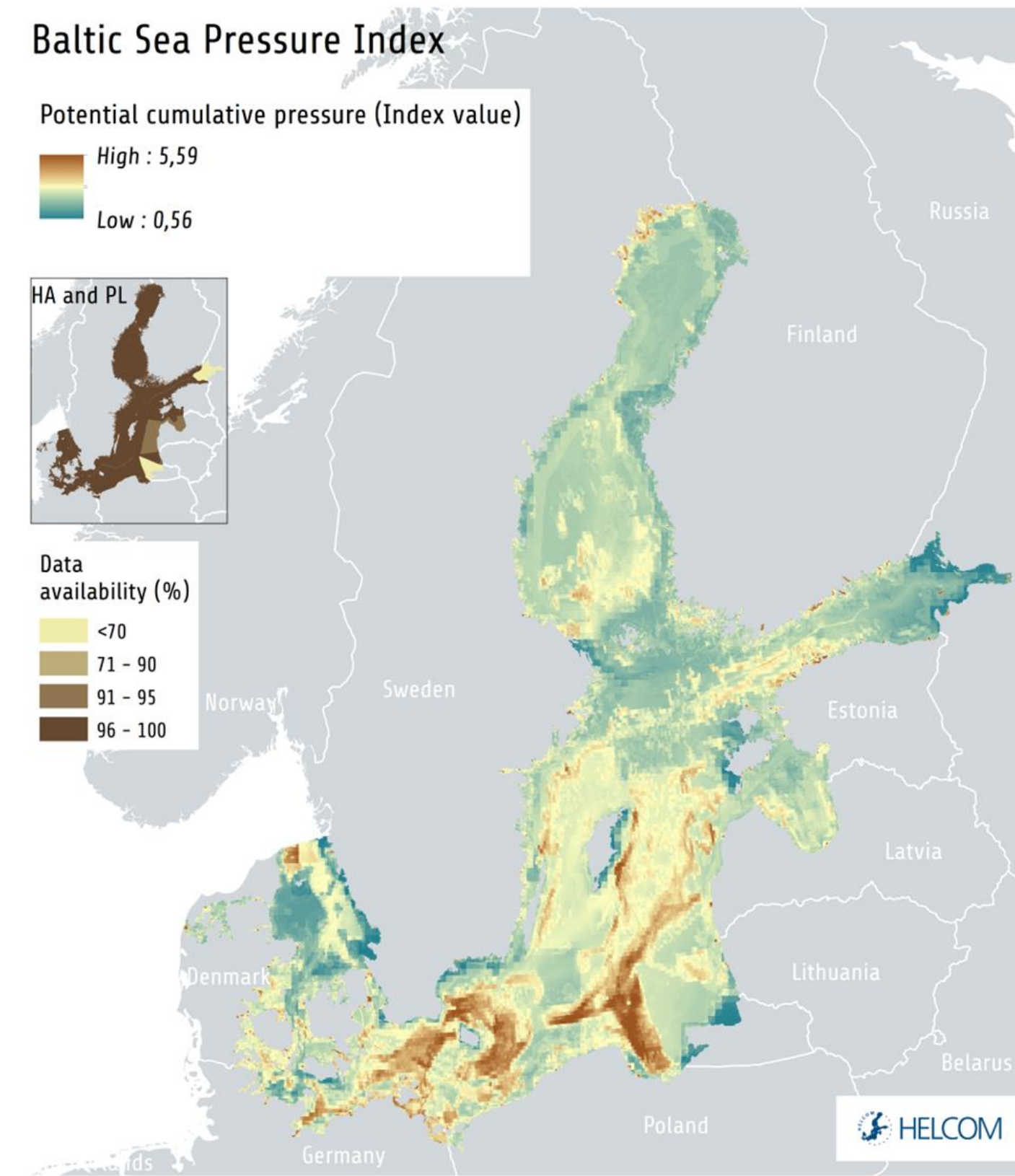
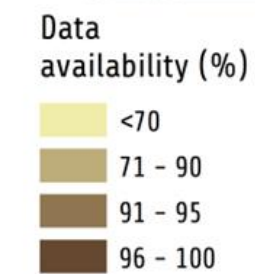
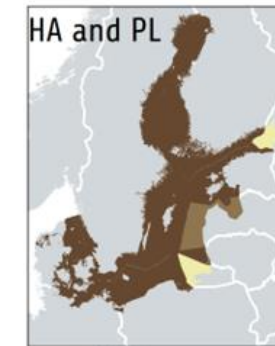
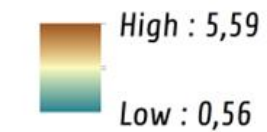


Current situation – the not so good

- Incomplete knowledge base for decision making and designation.
- Gaps in governance.
- Insufficient use of adaptive management.
- **It took 30 years to get where we are, now we need to double it in 7 years.**
- **But it isn't about getting to 30%, it's about getting there in a way that actually provides the biodiversity benefits.**

Baltic Sea Pressure Index

Potential cumulative pressure (Index value)



Third HELCOM holistic assessment 2016-2021 - background

State of the Baltic Sea 2023



What is the State of the Baltic Sea report?



The 2021 HELCOM **Baltic Sea Action Plan** (BSAP) includes measures that HELCOM countries have agreed on to halt the deterioration of the Baltic Sea environment.

HELCOM carries out **holistic assessments** every six years to follow up on how well the measures are functioning.

The **third HELCOM holistic assessment** (HOLAS 3) focuses on the years 2016-2021.

The **State of the Baltic Sea** (2023) is a synthesis report based on a wide range of assessment products produced within HOLAS 3.



Five themes of the assessments



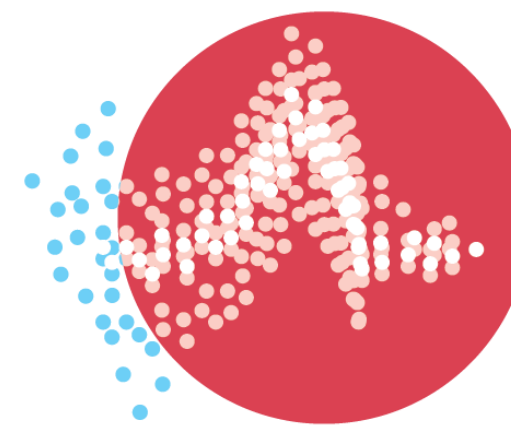
Biodiversity



Eutrophication



**Hazardous
substances, marine
litter, underwater
noise and non-
indigenous species**



**Spatial pressures
and impacts**

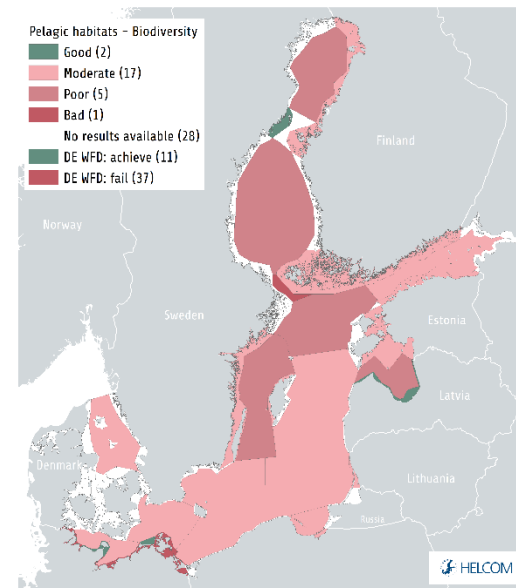


**Economic and
social analyses**

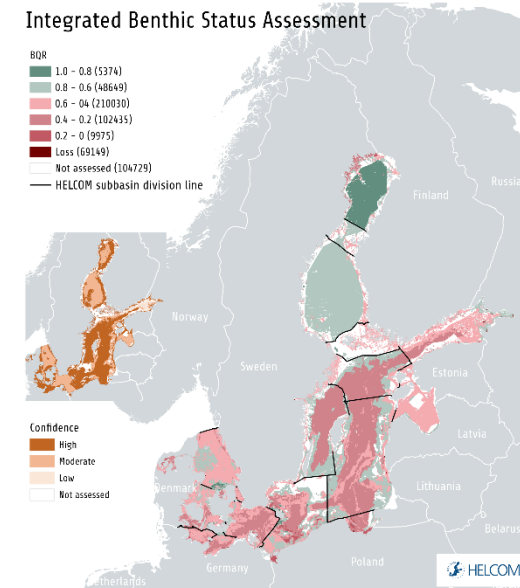
Biodiversity - Key takeaways



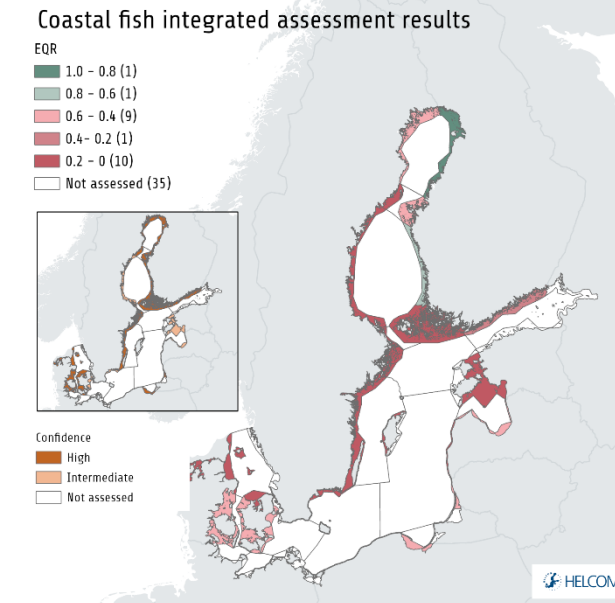
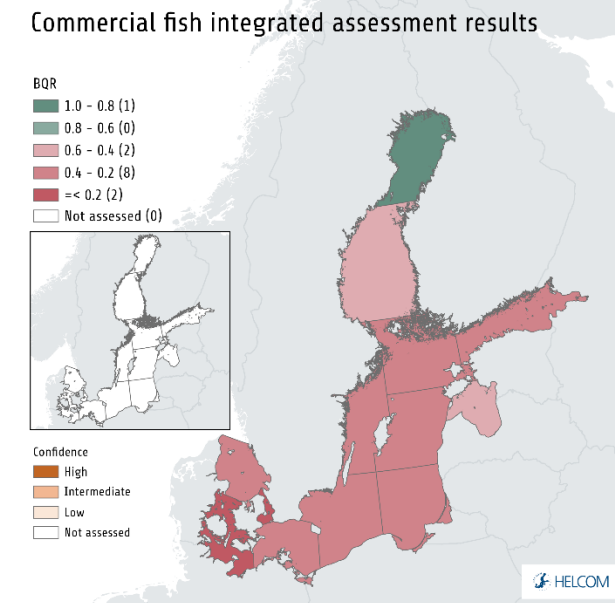
Pelagic habitats



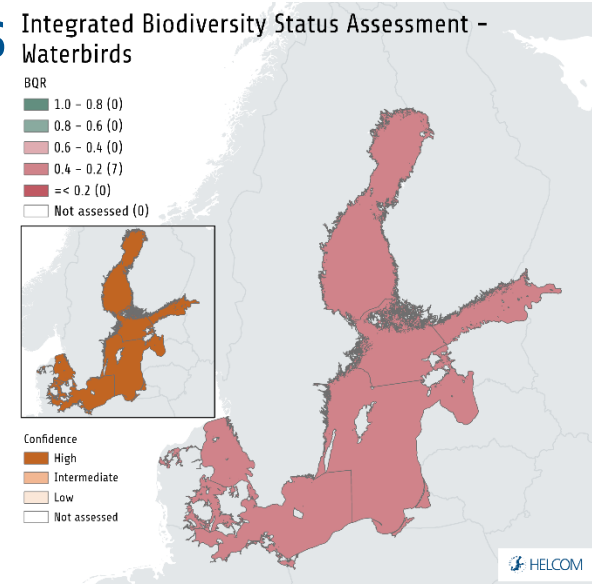
Benthic habitats



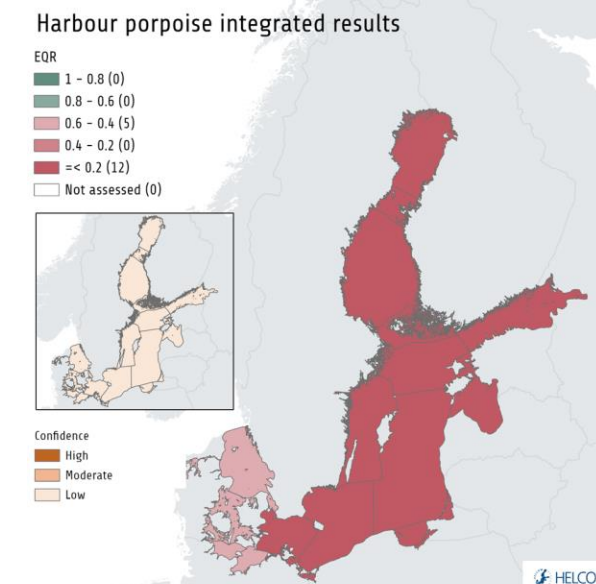
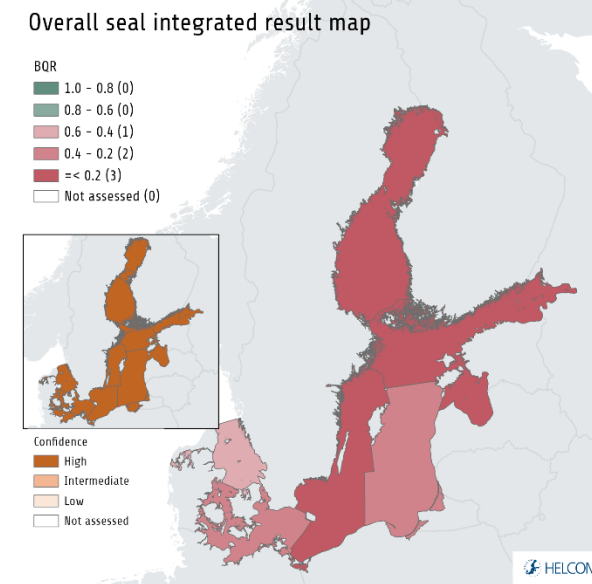
Fish



Waterbirds



Marine mammals



Biodiversity – status by topic



Pelagic habitats do **not** have **good** status in any open sea subbasin.



Benthic habitats **generally** do **not** have **good** status in the southern Baltic Sea, while their status is **good** in open sea areas in the northernmost subbasins.



For fish, **only 4/15** assessed commercial stocks have **good** status.



Waterbirds **generally** do **not** have **good** status.



Marine mammals exhibit **not good** status in the Baltic Sea.

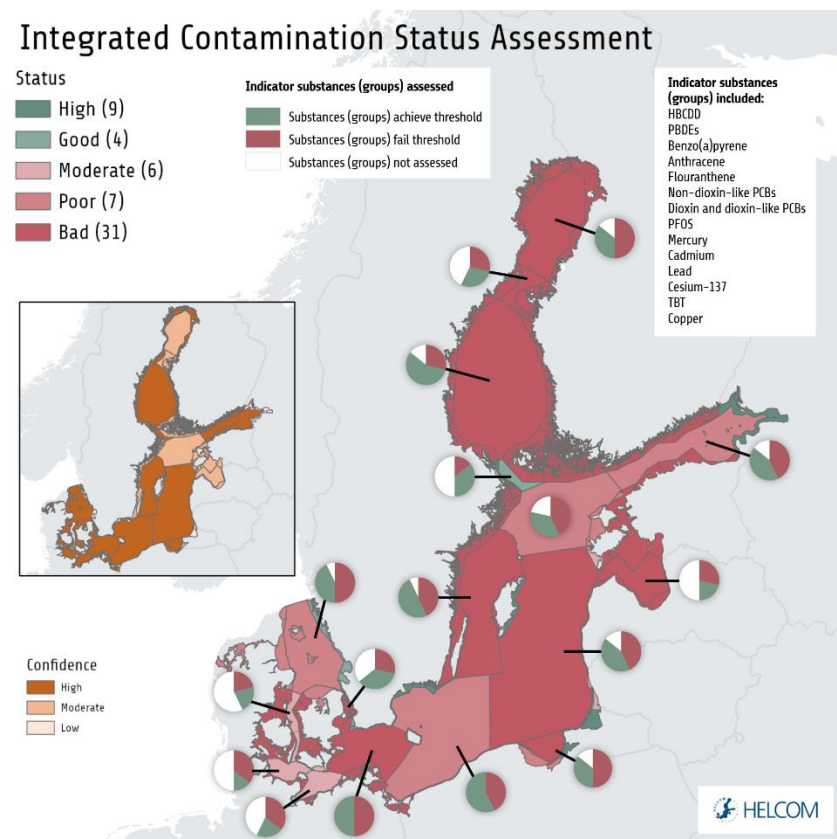


Food webs: Major changes in the abundance and biomass of species, driven by human pressures, have been associated with changes in the food webs of the Baltic Sea.

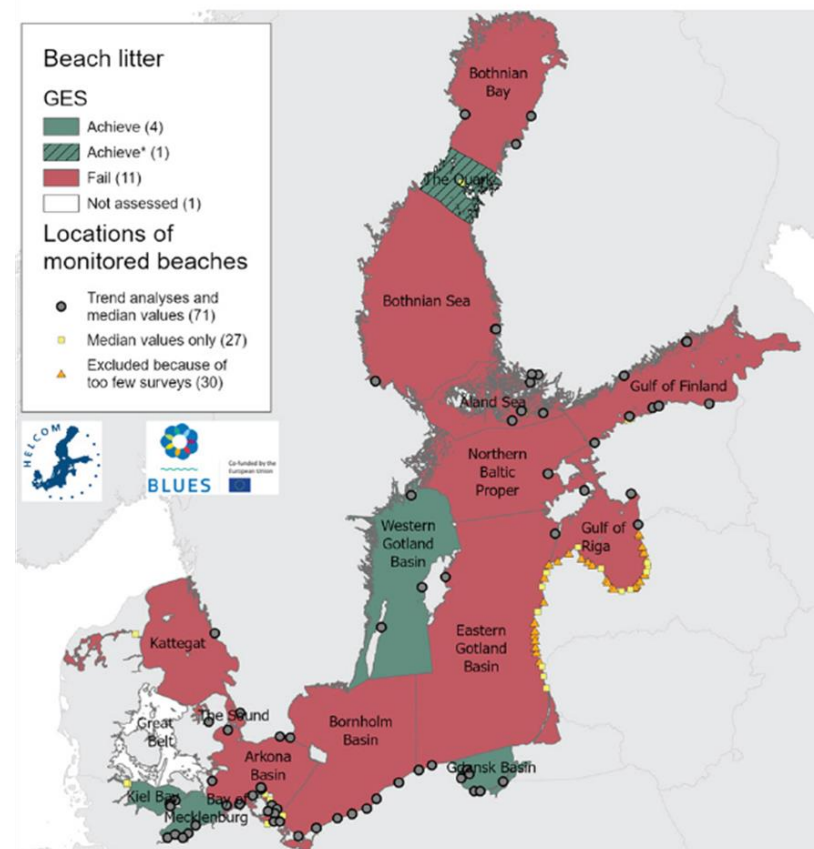
Hazardous substances, marine litter, underwater noise and non-indigenous species - Key takeaways



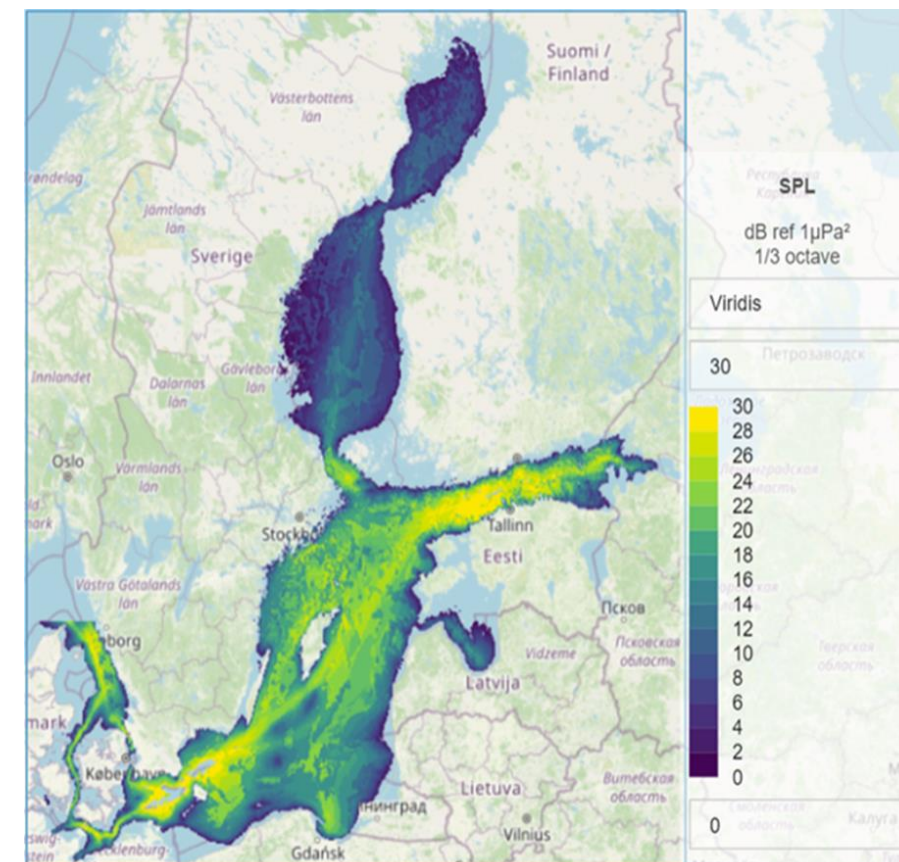
Hazardous substances



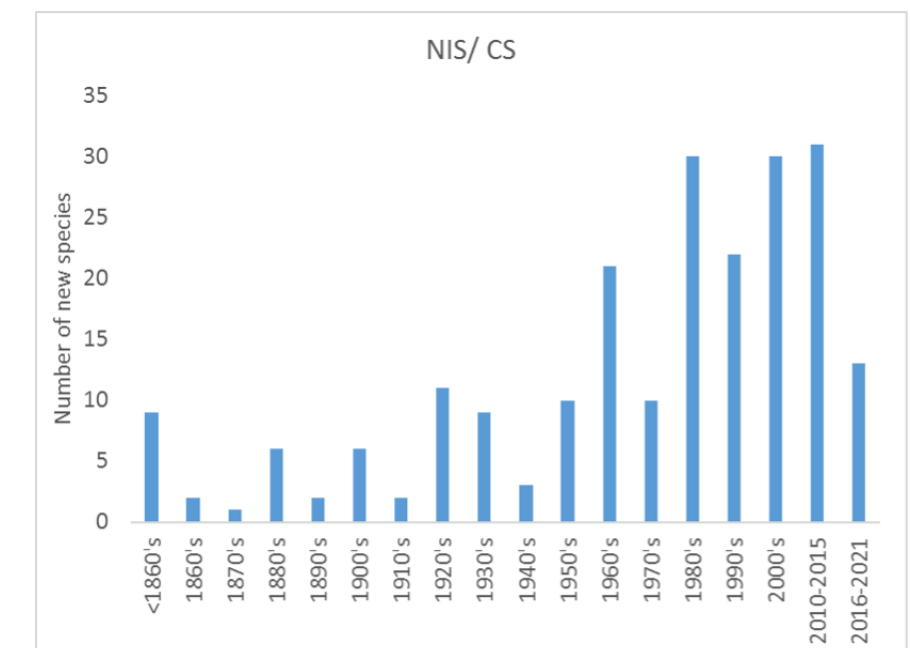
Marine litter



Underwater noise



Non-indigenous species



Hazardous substances, marine litter, underwater noise and non-indigenous species – status by topic



Hazardous
substances, marine
litter, underwater
noise and non-
indigenous species

Hazardous substances

Majority of the Baltic Sea show **bad** or **poor status**.

However, there are decreasing trends in concentrations of several substances.

Marine litter

11/16 sub-basins show **not good status** for beach litter. Two sub-basins indicate improving environmental conditions. 1 sub-basin shows a deteriorating littering trend.

Underwater noise

is **below threshold** for marine mammals but **exceeded threshold for masking for 9 out of 17 assessment units for fish**, although not for fish behavioural disturbance.

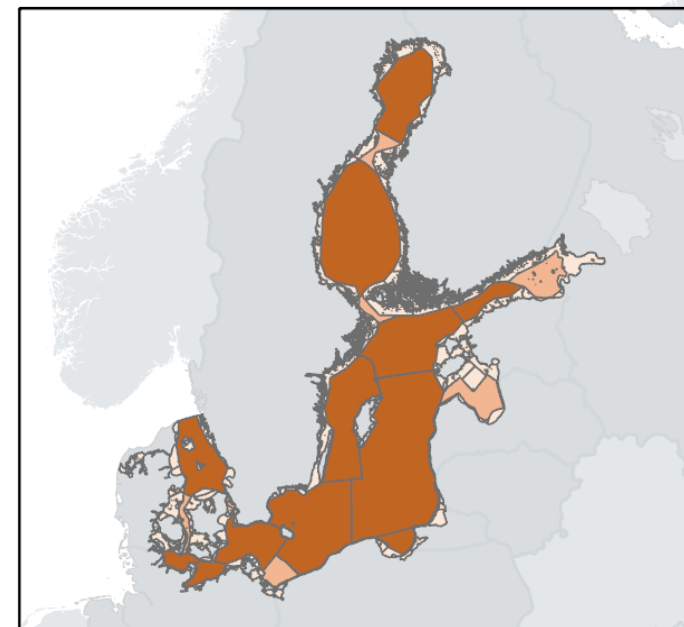
Non-indigenous species

Good status for non-indigenous species was **not achieved**.

Eutrophication- Key takeaways

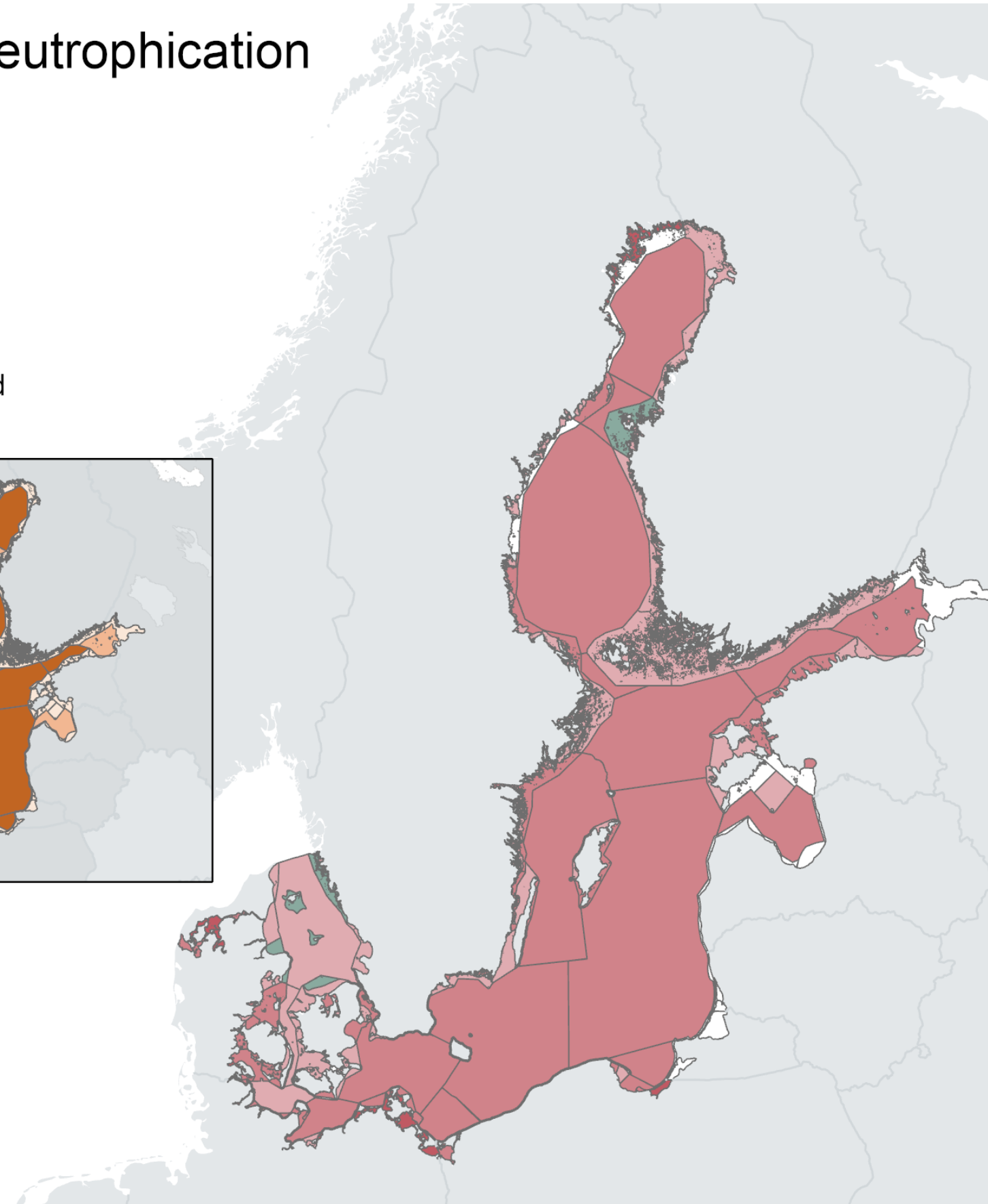
Integrated eutrophication status

- High
- Good
- Moderate
- Poor
- Bad
- Not assessed



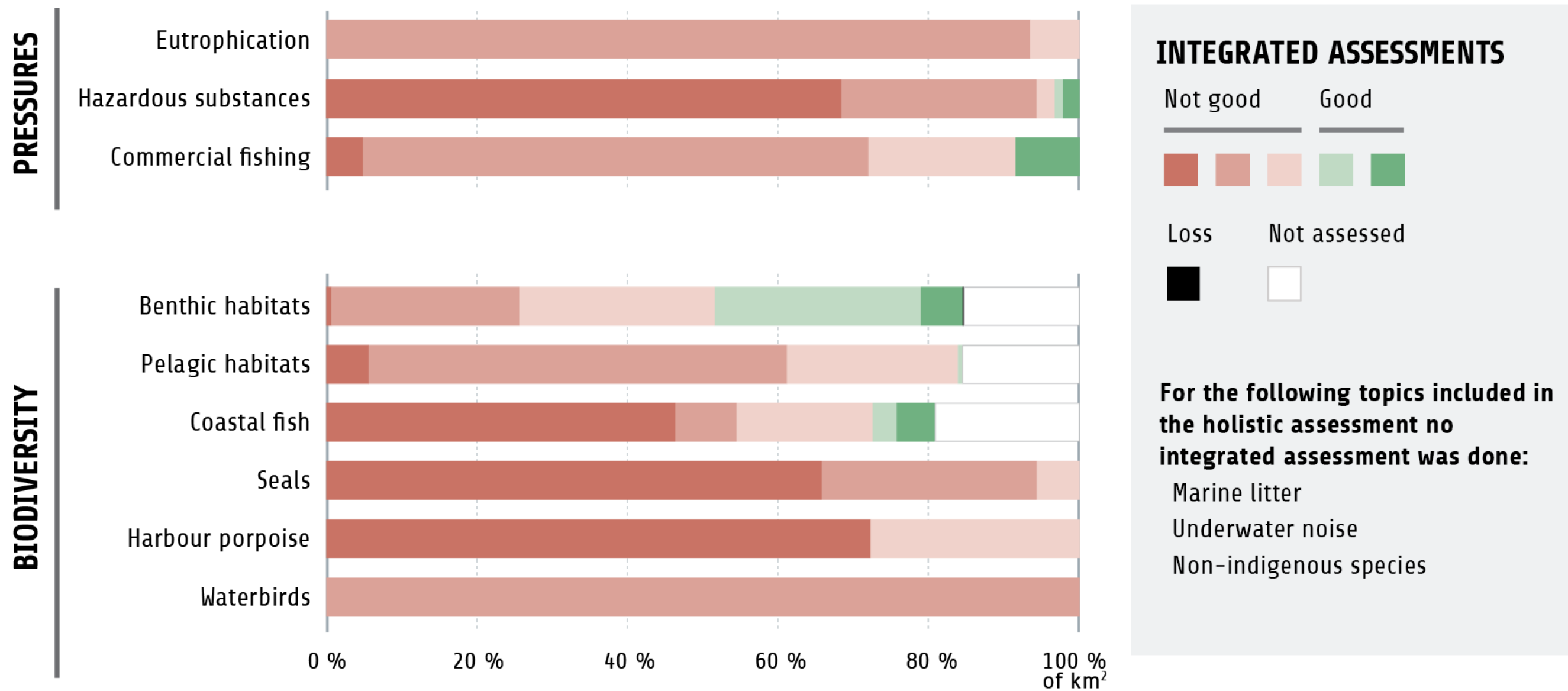
Confidence

- High
- Moderate
- Low



In summary: the state of the Baltic Sea ecosystem has not improved

State of Baltic Sea pressures and biodiversity 2016–2021



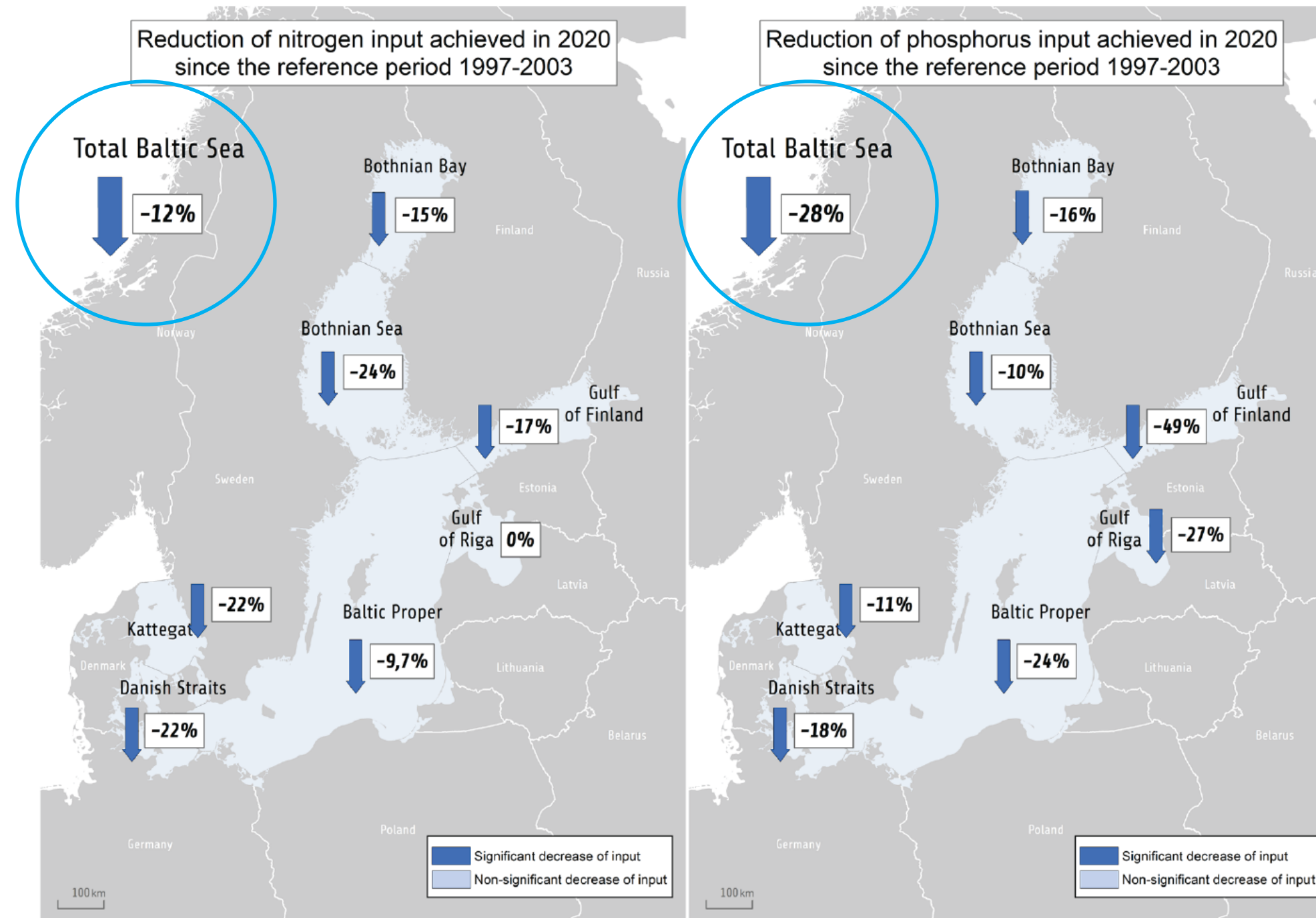
INTEGRATED ASSESSMENTS

Not good Good

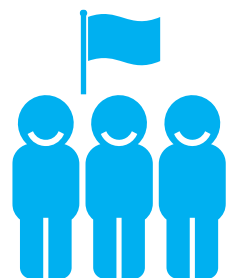
Loss Not assessed

For the following topics included in the holistic assessment no integrated assessment was done:
 Marine litter
 Underwater noise
 Non-indigenous species

Regional measures are working



Now that we know, where do we go?



National work in HELCOM countries is at the core of implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan and improving the health of the Baltic Sea.



The third HELCOM holistic assessment highlights the importance of measures to strengthen Baltic Sea biodiversity.



Achieving a healthy Baltic Sea ecosystem requires measures both to limit the extent and intensity of current human-induced pressures and to protect and restore species and habitats.



An urgent need to equip our shared Baltic Sea ecosystem with the capacity to withstand the future effects of climate change.



A central task for HELCOM is to incorporate current knowledge developments in an ecosystem-based management framework that promotes the sustainability of the Baltic Sea region through cooperation at national, regional, and global levels.

Thank you!

<https://stateofthebalticsea.helcom.fi>



Picture by Aino Ahvo

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2nd MISSION ARENA
25-26 April 2024 | Riga, Latvia

LIFE REEF – Latvian national initiative for reaching the marine protection targets

Ingrīda Andersone & LIFE REEF team

Workshop: Marine Protection in the Eastern Baltic: What is the status quo? Good practices, ongoing challenges, and possible solutions



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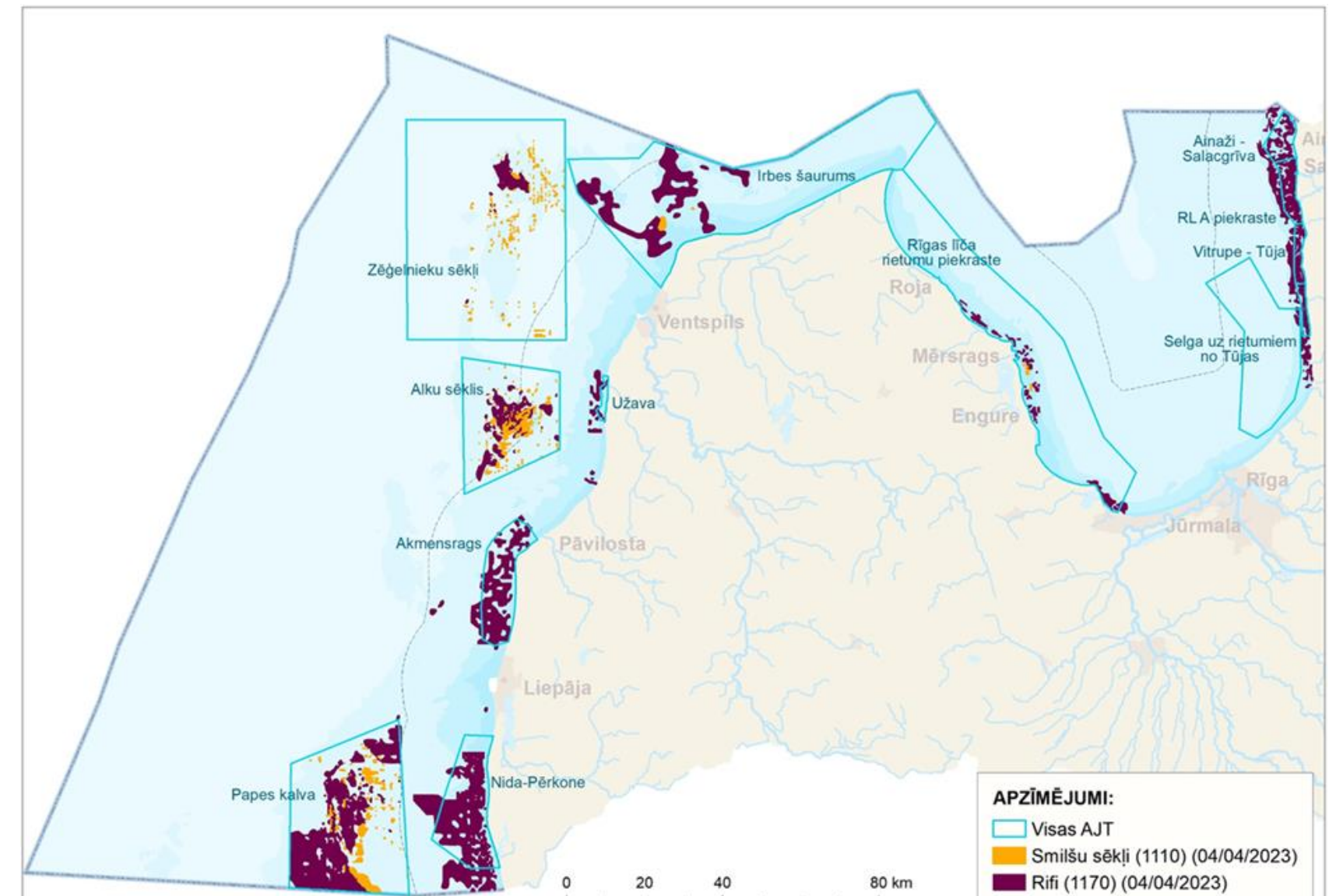
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History of Latvian MPAs

- Fish spawning and nursery areas
- Fish feeding grounds
- Waterbirds feeding grounds
- Nutrient regulating and carbon sequestering ecosystem services

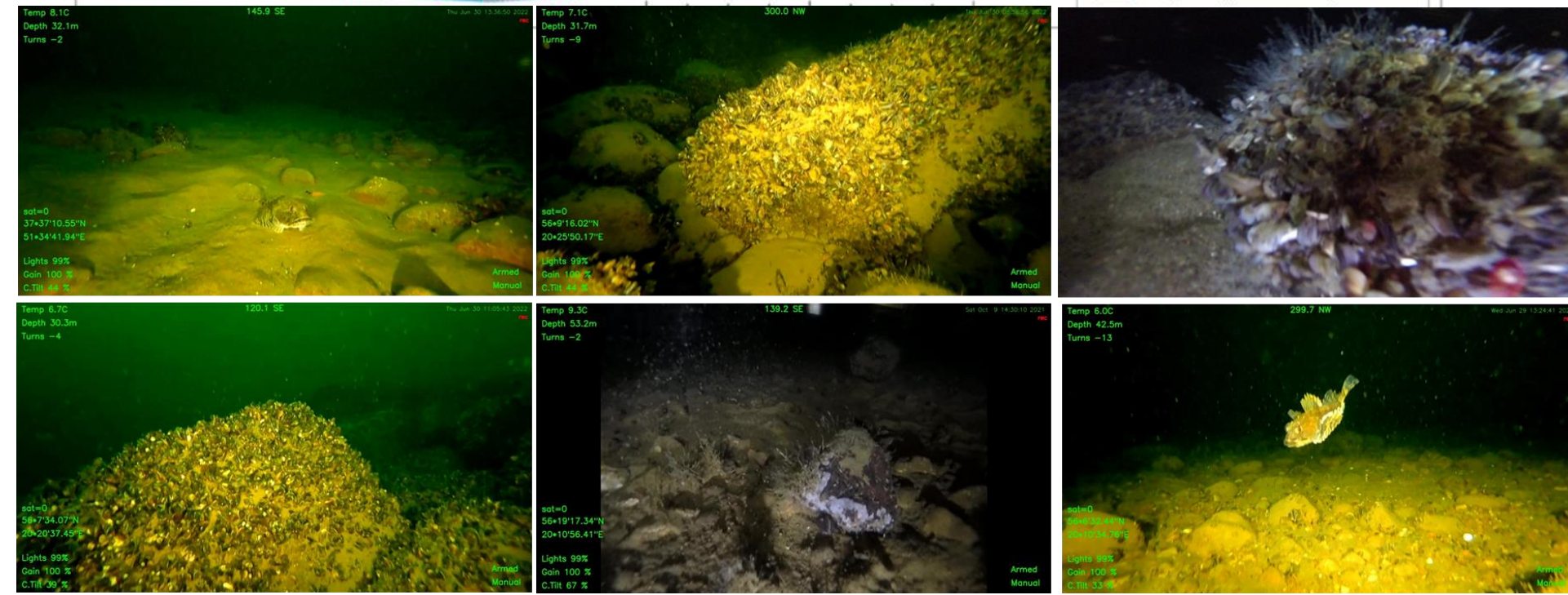


LIFE REEF results



APZĪMĒJUMI:
■ Visas AJT
■ Smišu sēkļi (1110) (04/04/2023)
■ Rifi (1170) (04/04/2023)

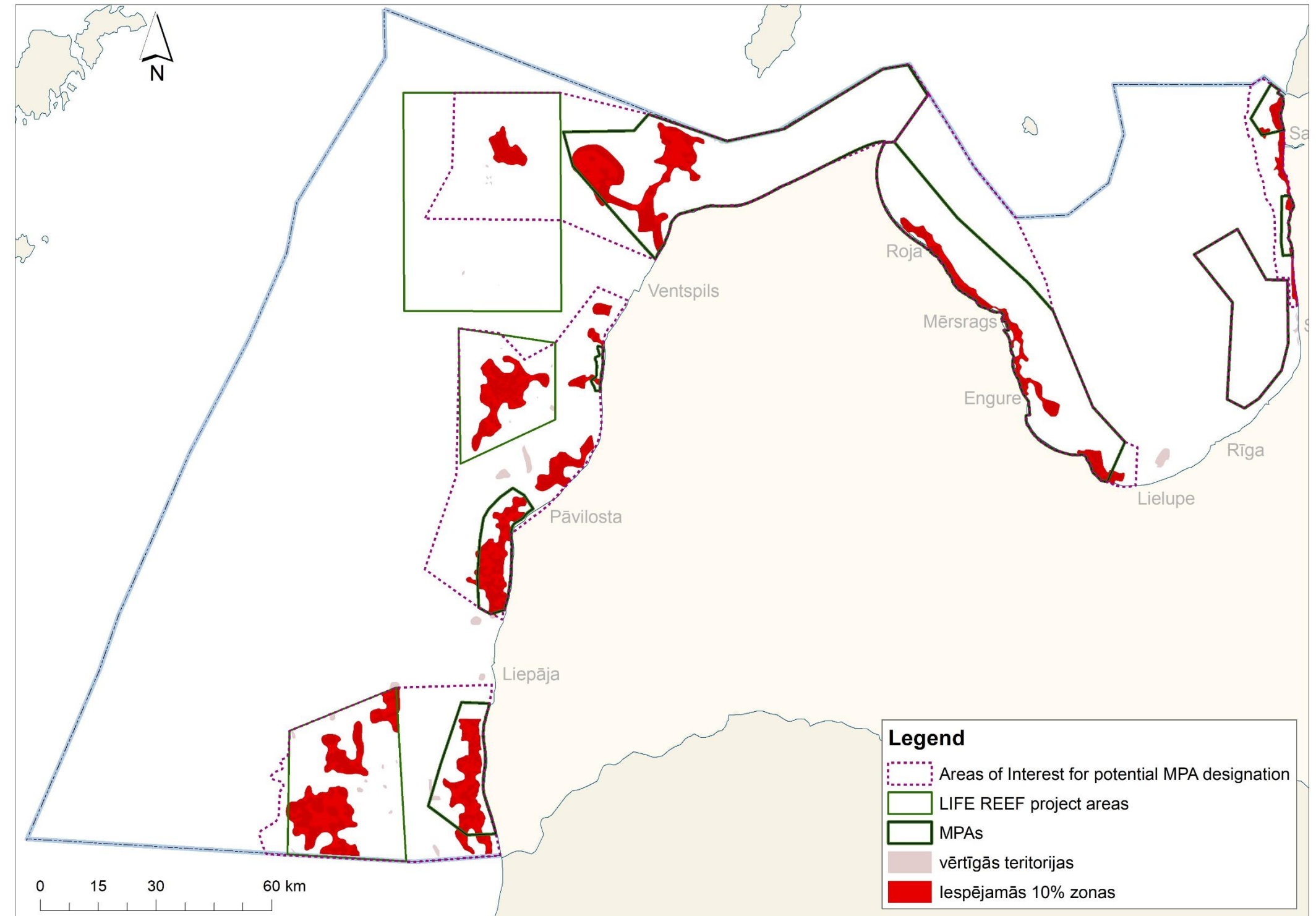
- Investigations show predominantly healthy reef habitats (1170)
- Rich fish and bird communities
- Complex, diverse habitats with no sign of invasive fish species influence!



Towards 30/10

Choice of 10% zone according to ecosystem services

New challenges?

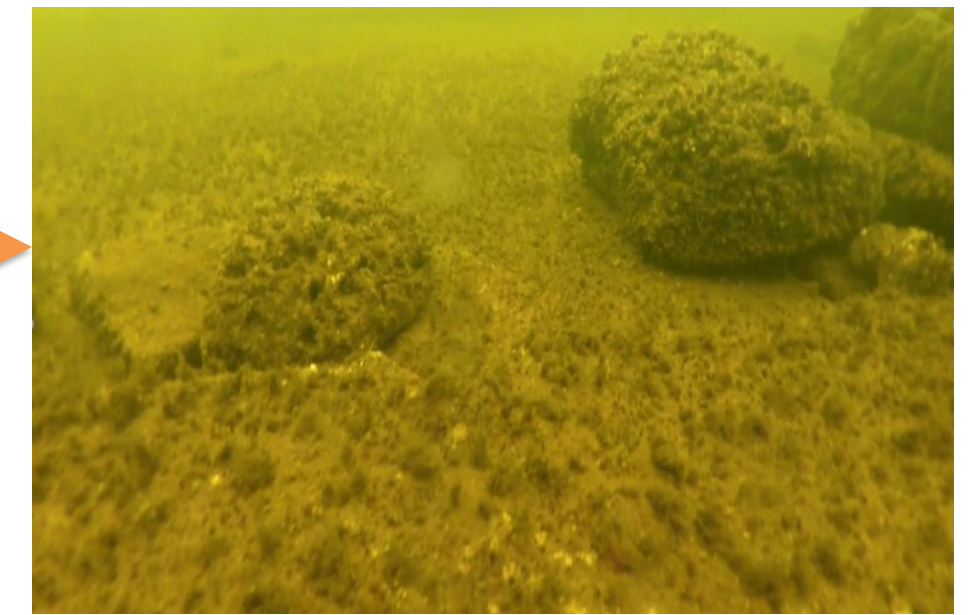


Challenges in the coastal zone

MPAs are area-based nature conservation measures that imply local management...

...While the main enemies are not local:

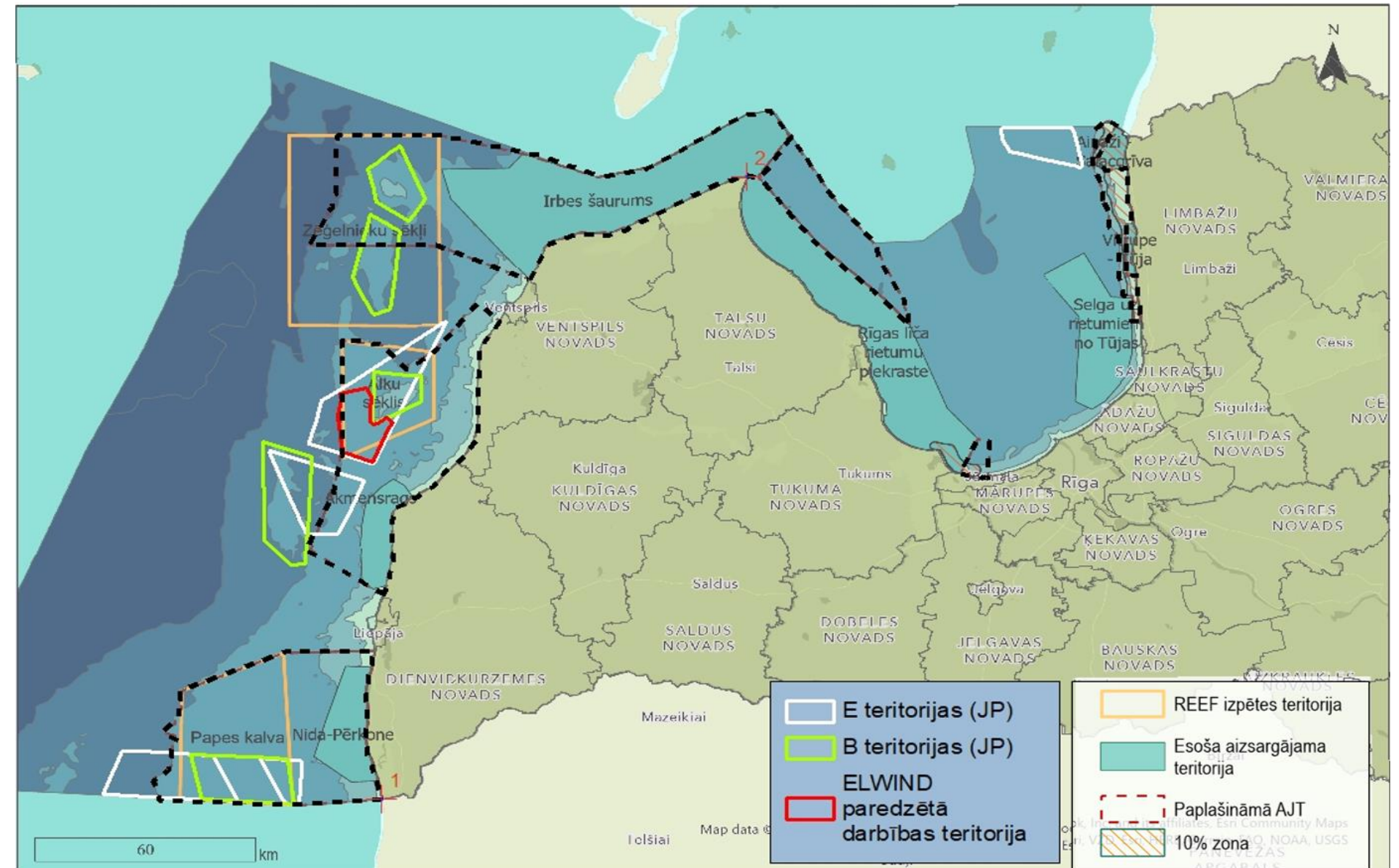
- Eutrophication
- Invasive species
- Hazardous substances



Challenges in EEZ zone

MPAs are area-based nature conservation measures that imply local management...

- Eutrophication
- Wind energy



Solutions?

- Mitigating eutrophication by effectively implementing WFD River Basin Management Plans and nutrient reduction targets set by the Baltic Sea Action Plan



A new geographical frame:
The river basin



- 4 innovative objectives:**
- Central role of aquatic life
 - Good water and ecosystem quality
 - Public participation in water management activities
 - Recovery of costs for water services



One main tool:

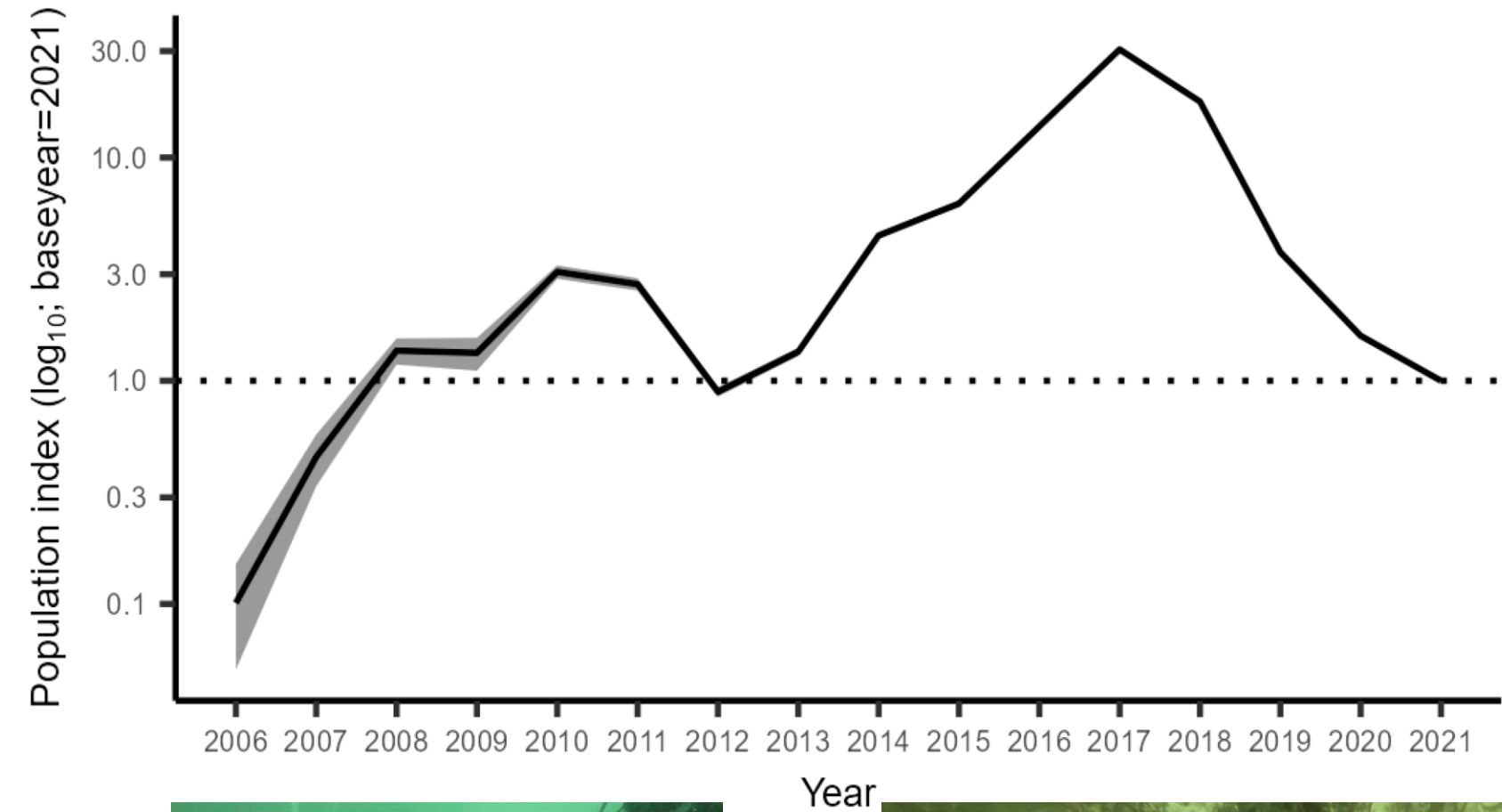
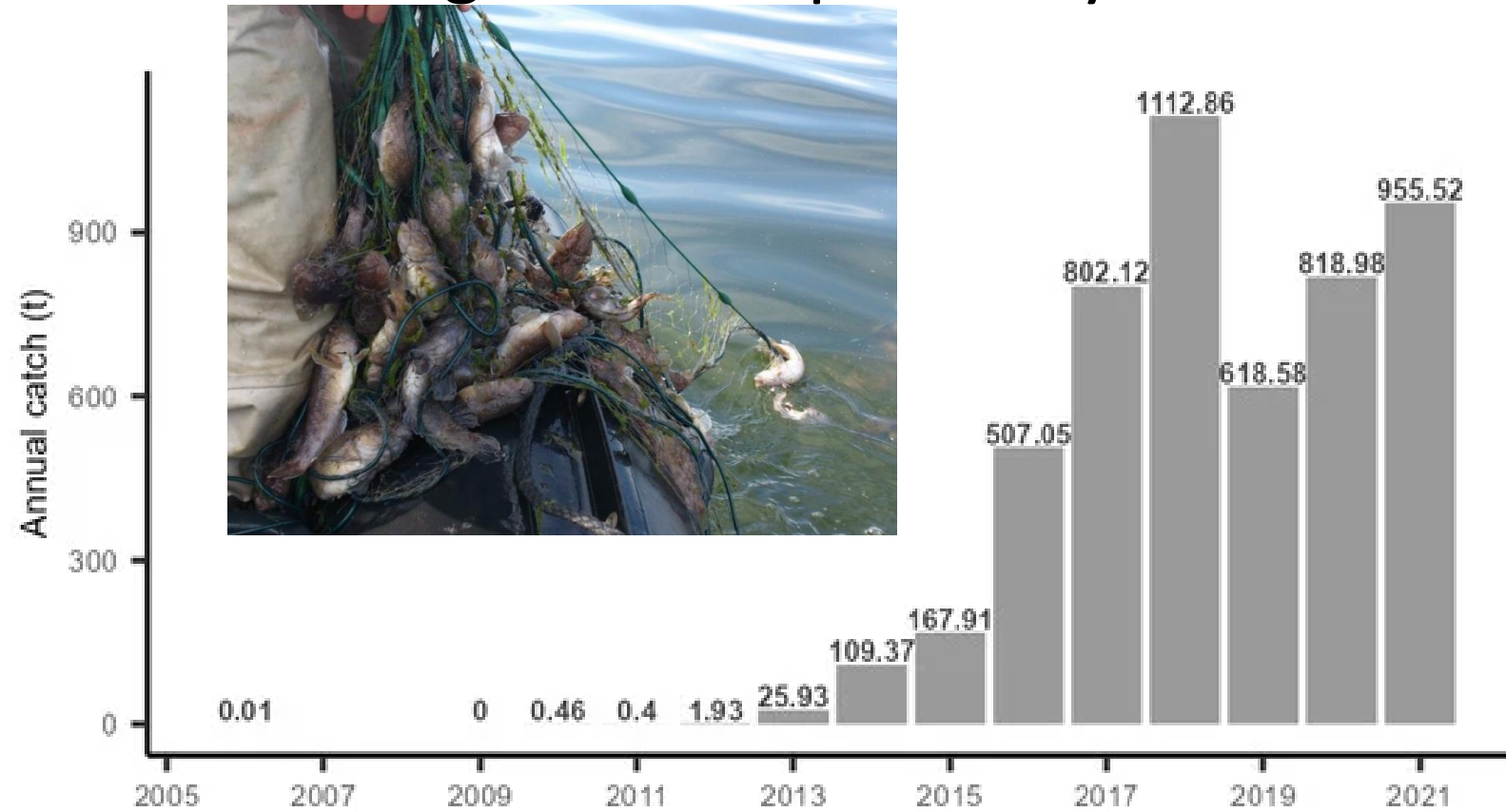
The river basin management plan (RBMP)

- ▶ What are the significant issues in the river basin?



Solutions?

- Controlling invasive species by effective fisheries management



Healthy mussel communities



Overgrazing



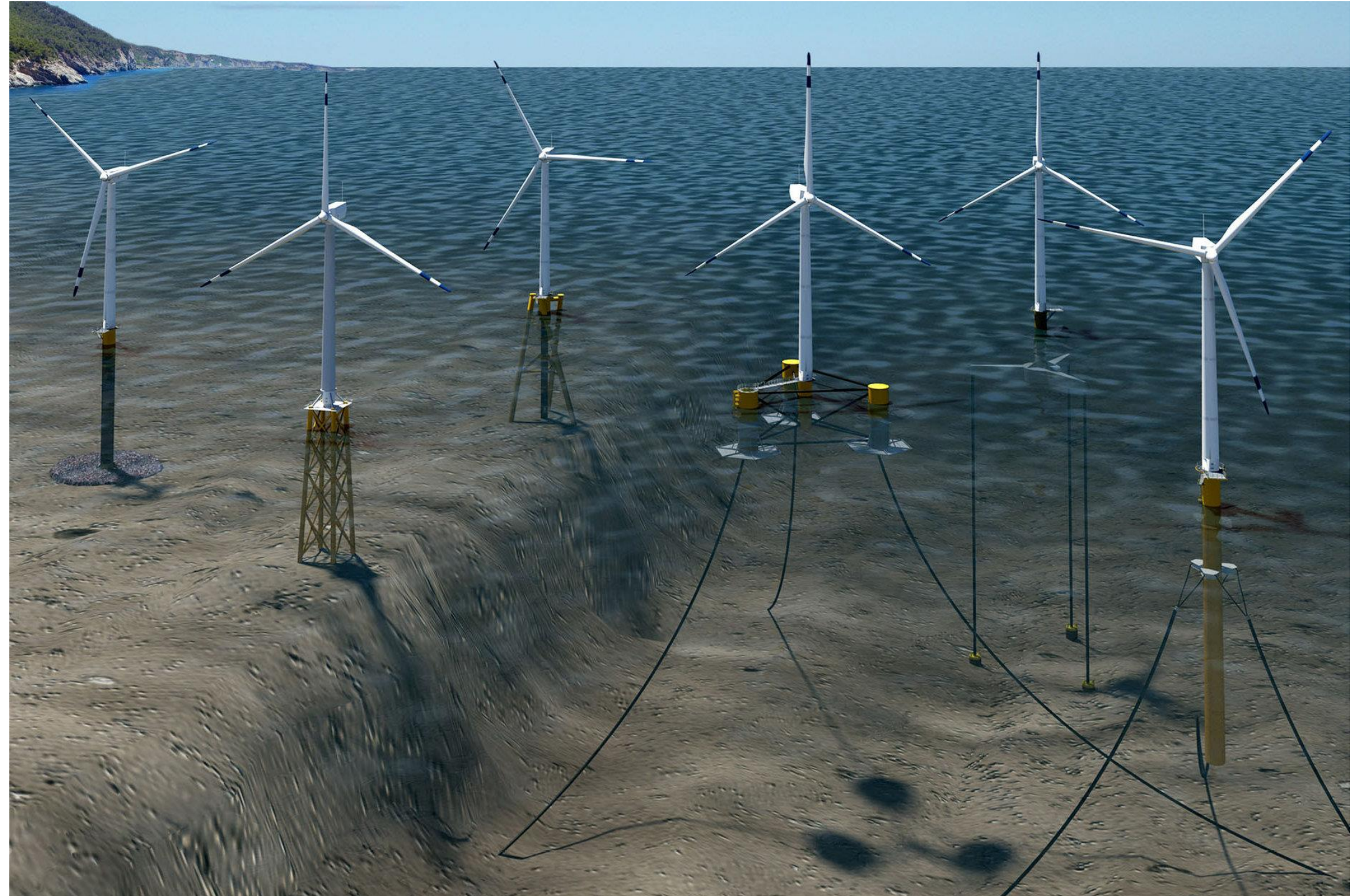
Regrowth of mussels



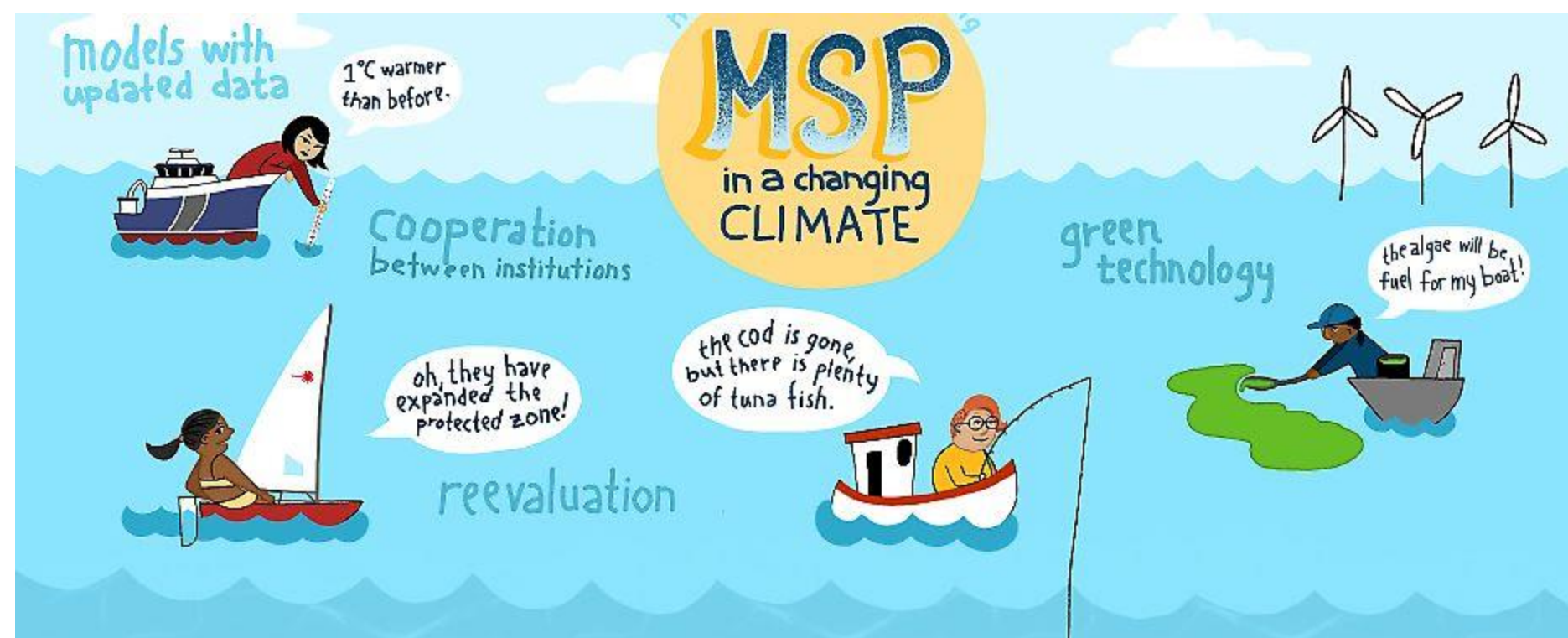
Return of macroalgal communities

Solutions?

- Effective communication
- Close cooperation between science and industry



Thank you for attention!



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2nd MISSION ARENA
25-26 April 2024 | Riga, Latvia

The Åland Islands – Good practices for marine protection

Karl Weckström, Åbo Akademi University

Workshop: Marine Protection in the Eastern Baltic: What is the status quo? Good practices, ongoing challenges, and possible solutions

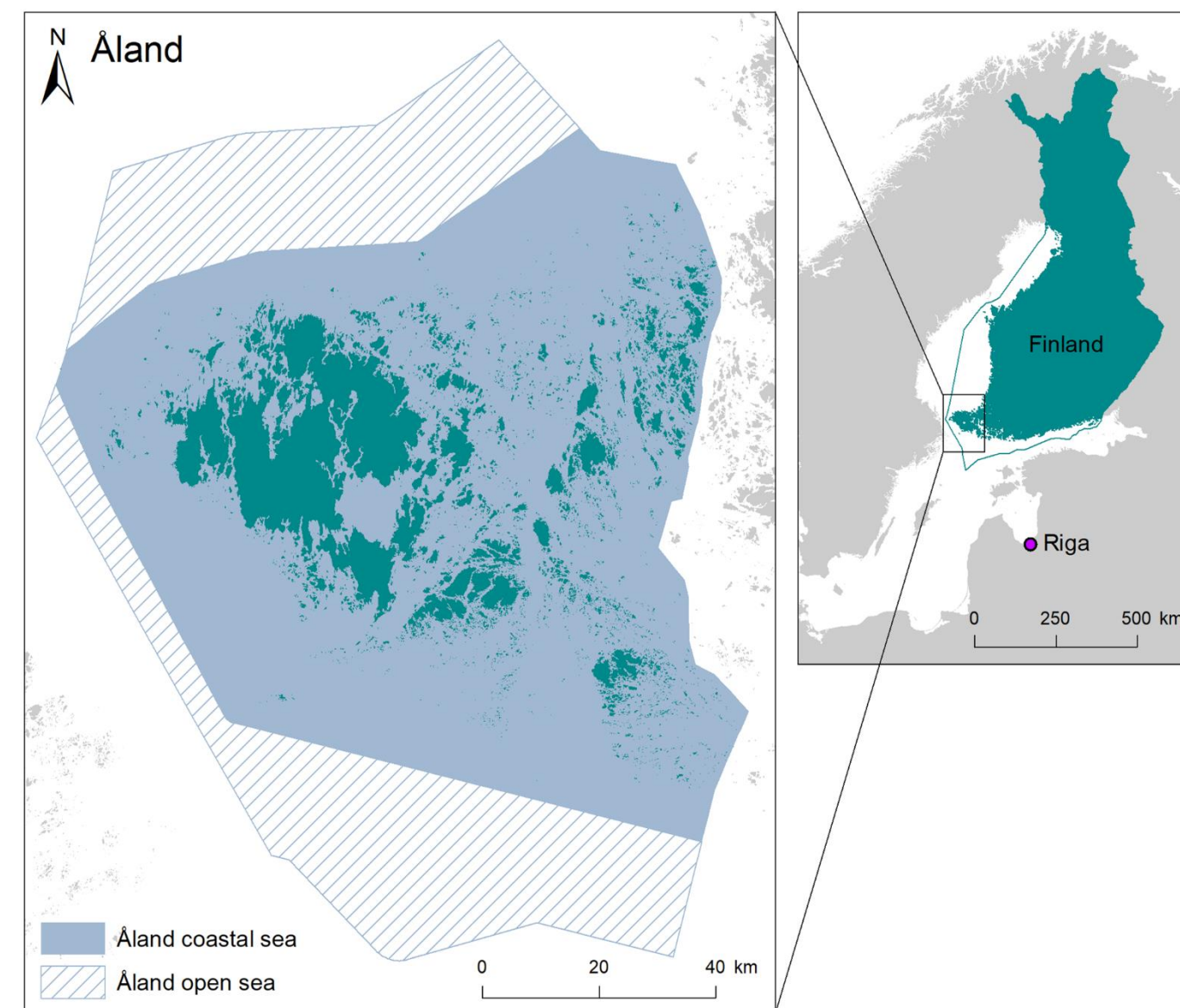
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Introduction

- Åland is an autonomous region of Finland
- The archipelago region comprises one main island and 6 700 smaller islands
- 30 359 inhabitants
- 1 554 km² land and 11 770 km² water
- In 2019, 3% of the sea was protected
- The Government of Åland and Åbo Akademi University have collaborated on water-related research since 1961

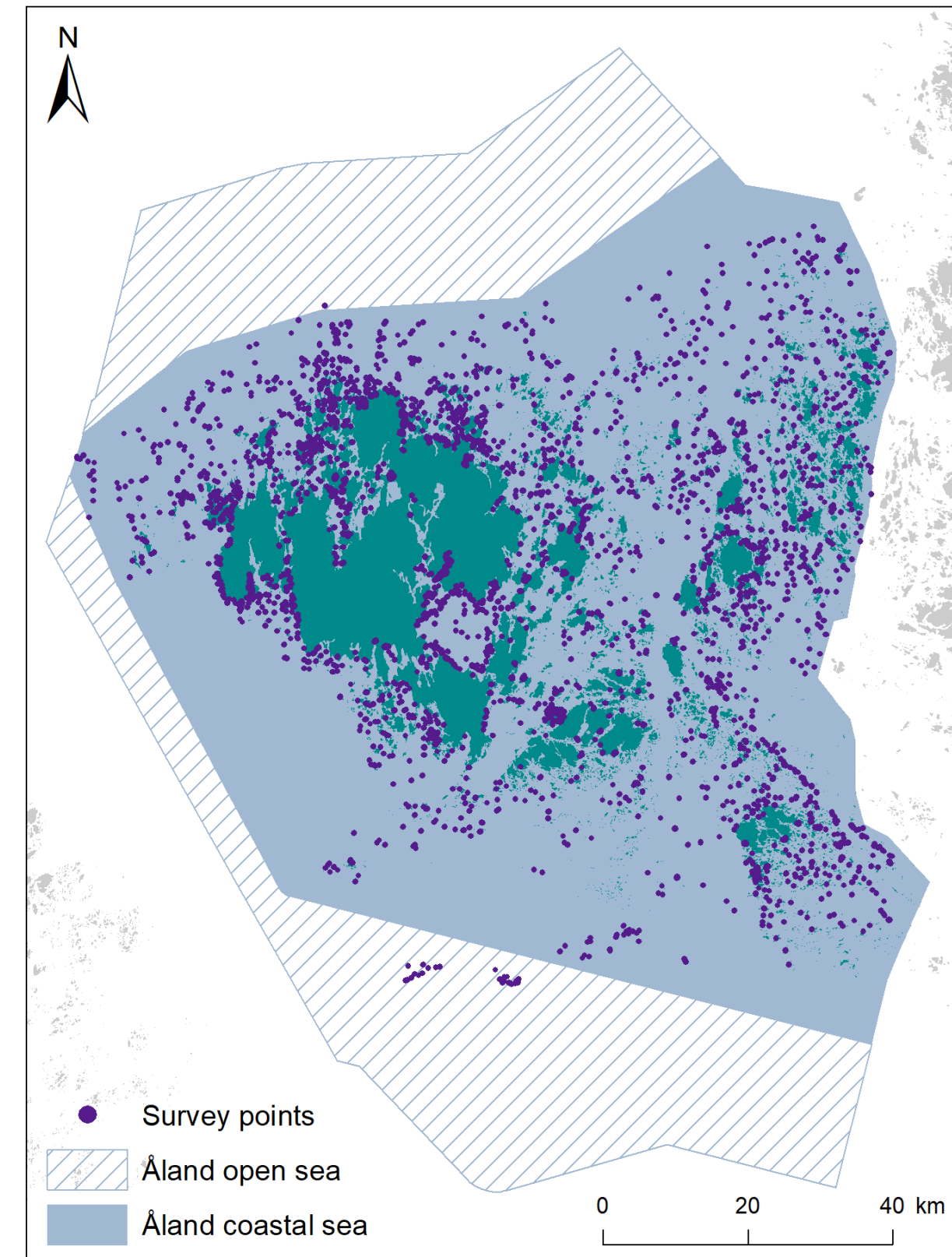


Projects

- Husö biological station projects (2022-2023)
- Mapping of Natura2000 habitats (2017-2018)
- ÅlandSeaMap (2019-2023)
- LIFE-IP BIODIVERSEA (2021-2029)

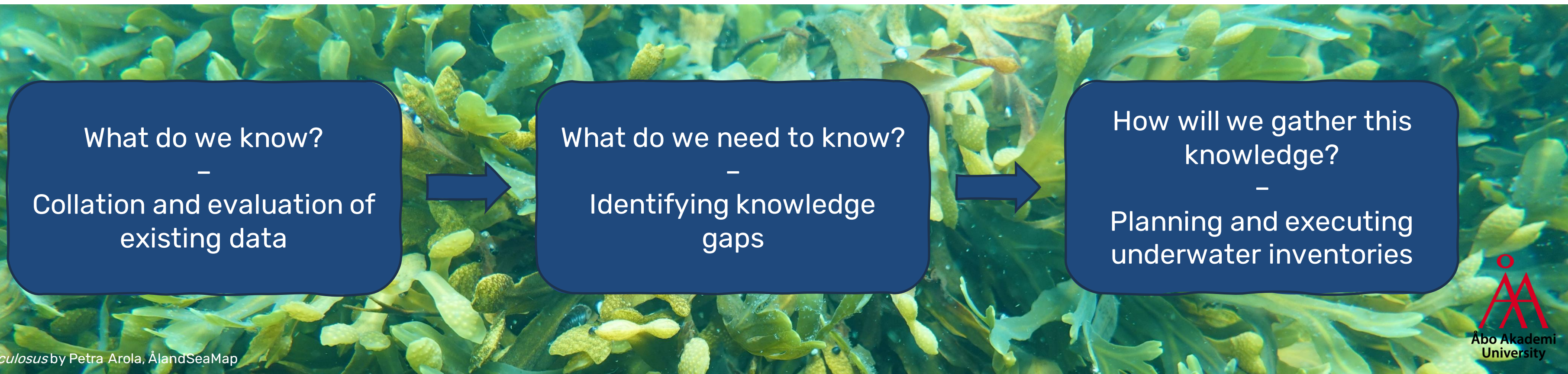


LIFE-IP BIODIVERSEA (LIFE20 IPE/FI/000020)

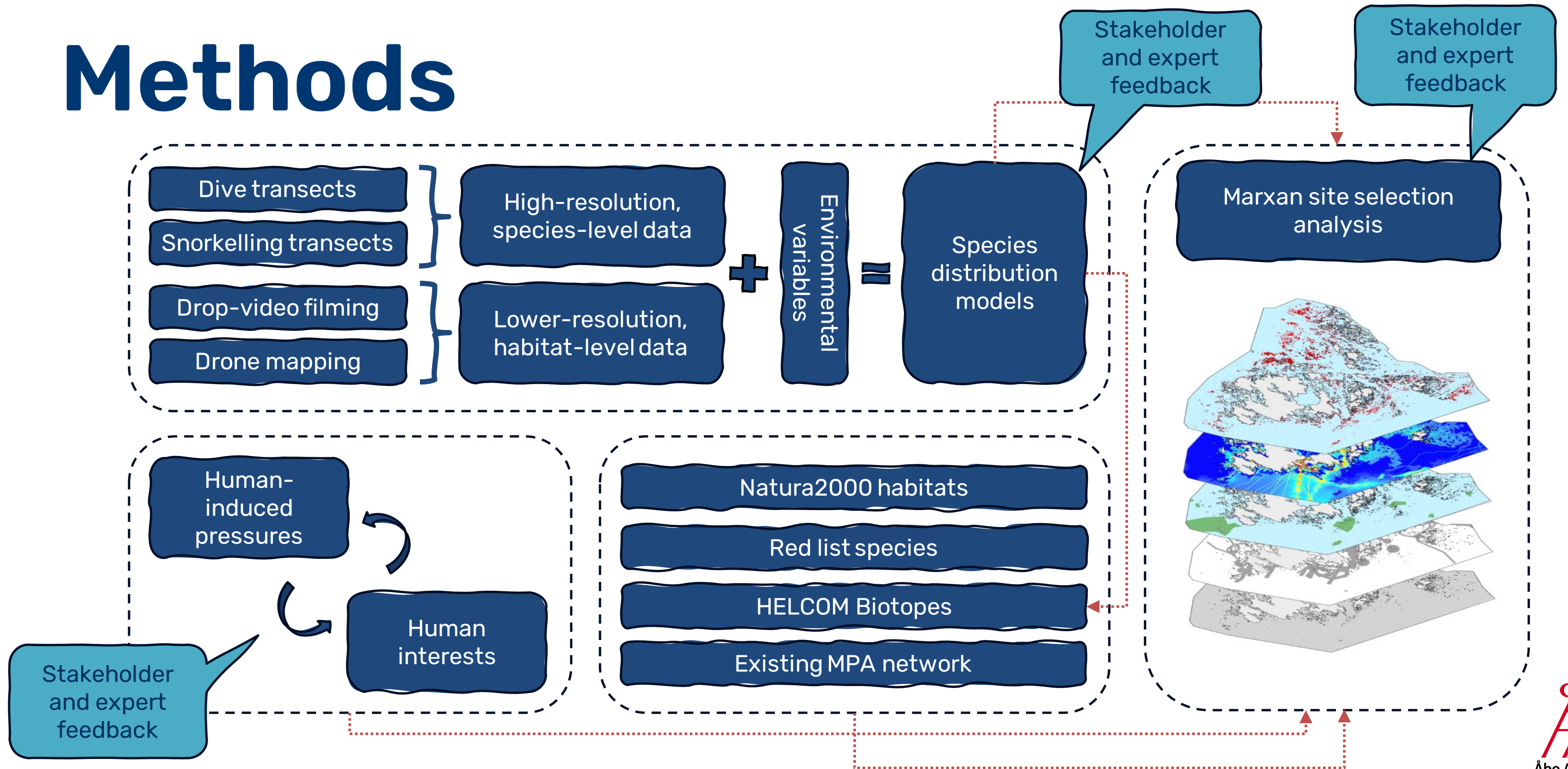


Background

- *We cannot protect what we do not know* - The Finnish Inventory Programme for Underwater Marine Diversity
- Science-based marine conservation and management is possible but data-hungry



Methods



Site selection analysis

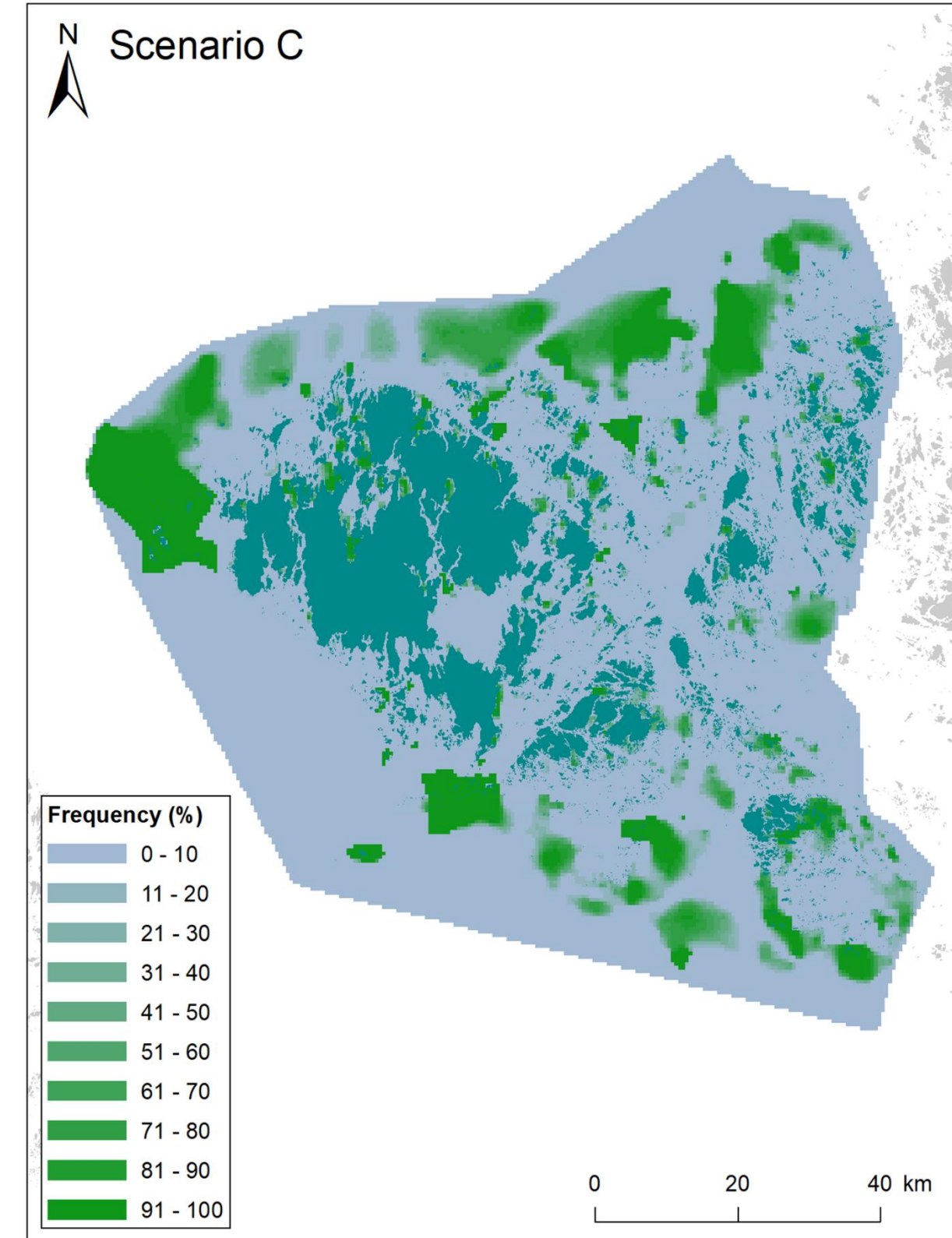
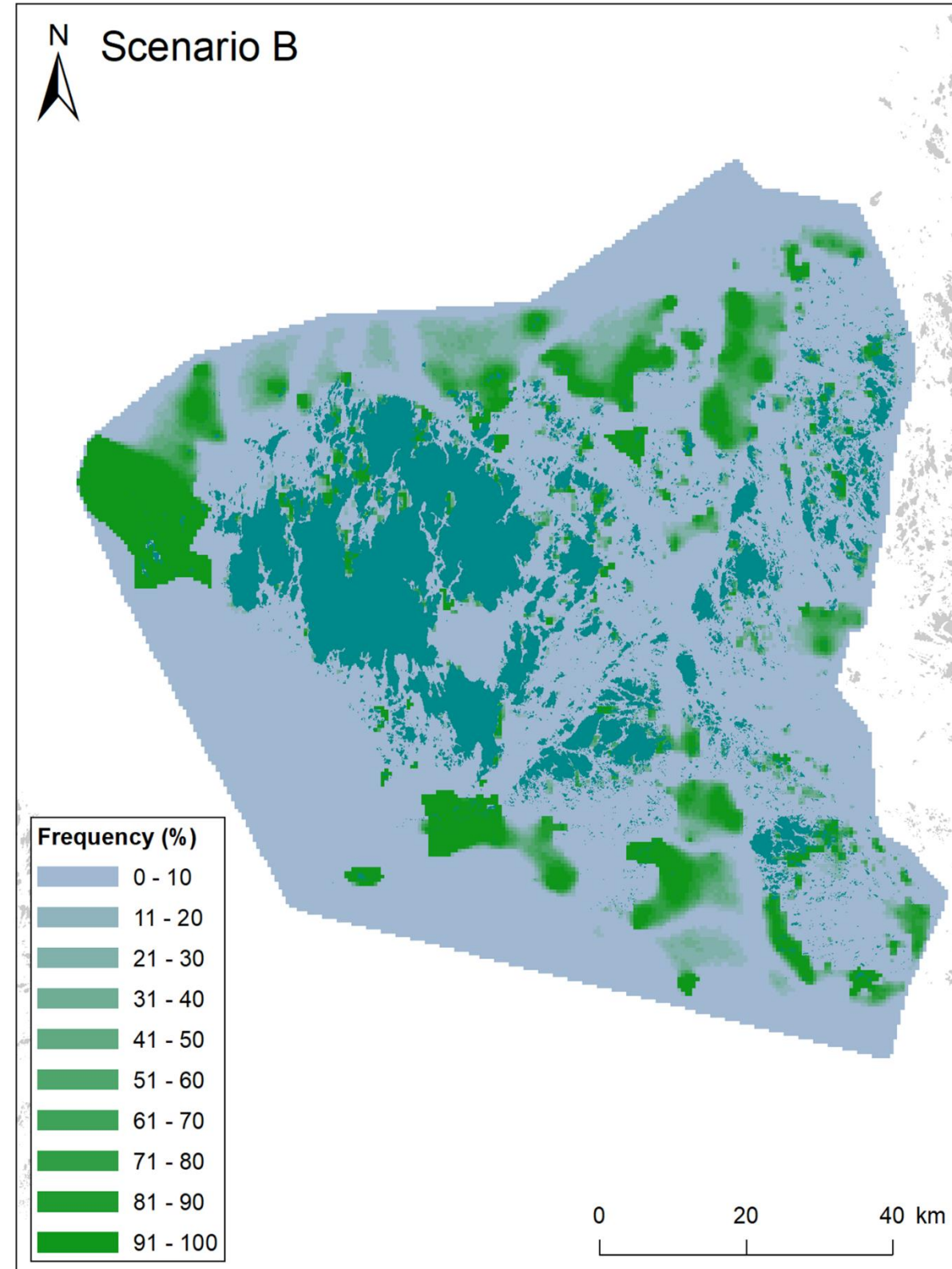
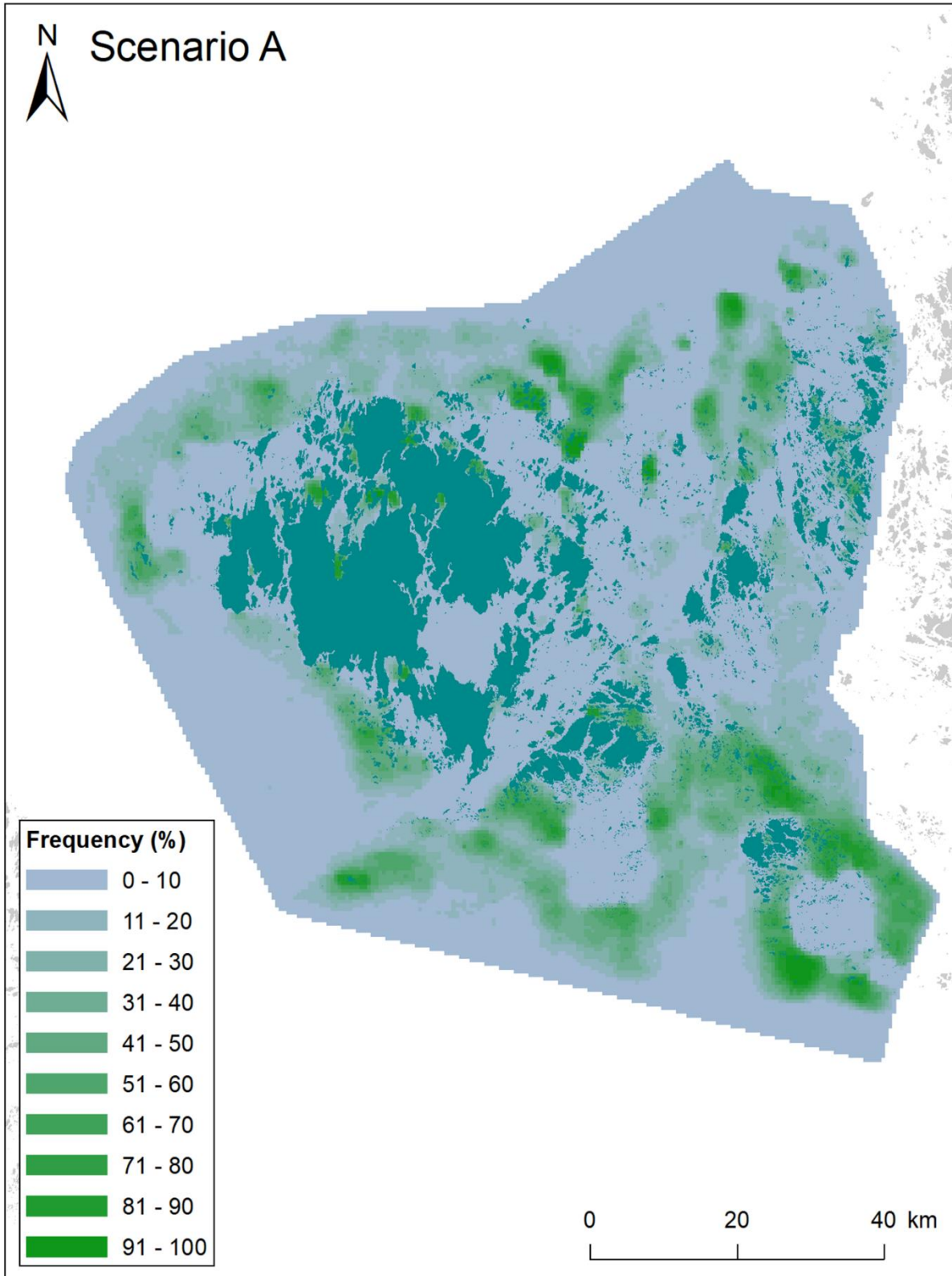
- 36 nature values considered
 - ✓ Protection targets (%) were defined according to national and international assessments
- 16 human activities considered
 - ✓ 9 included as a "cost" layer
 - ✓ 7 defined as "lock-out" areas
- Three scenarios (A, B, & C) were devised
 - A. Only nature values considered
 - B. Nature values + human activity + MPAs
 - C. Nature values + human activity + MPAs + ownership

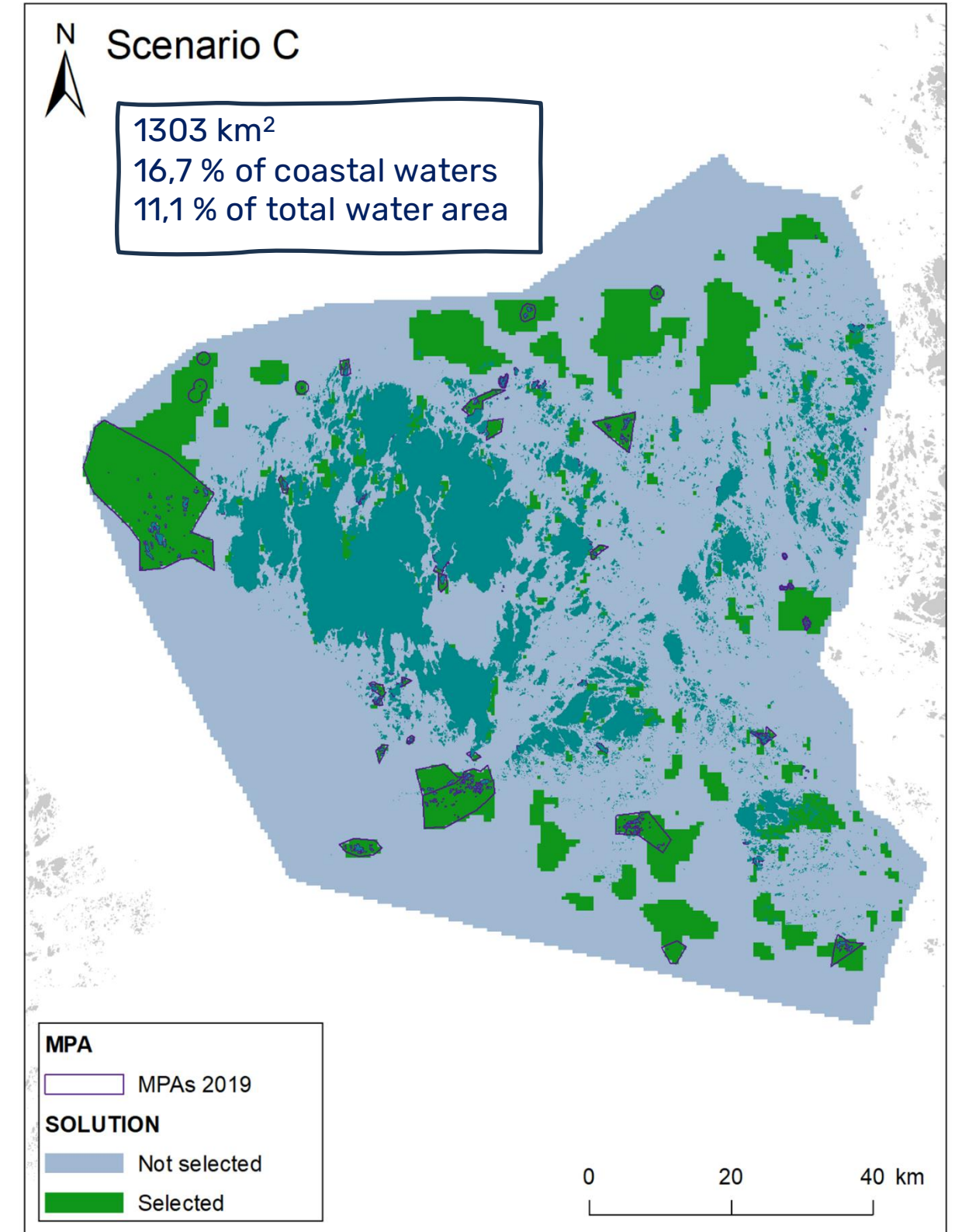
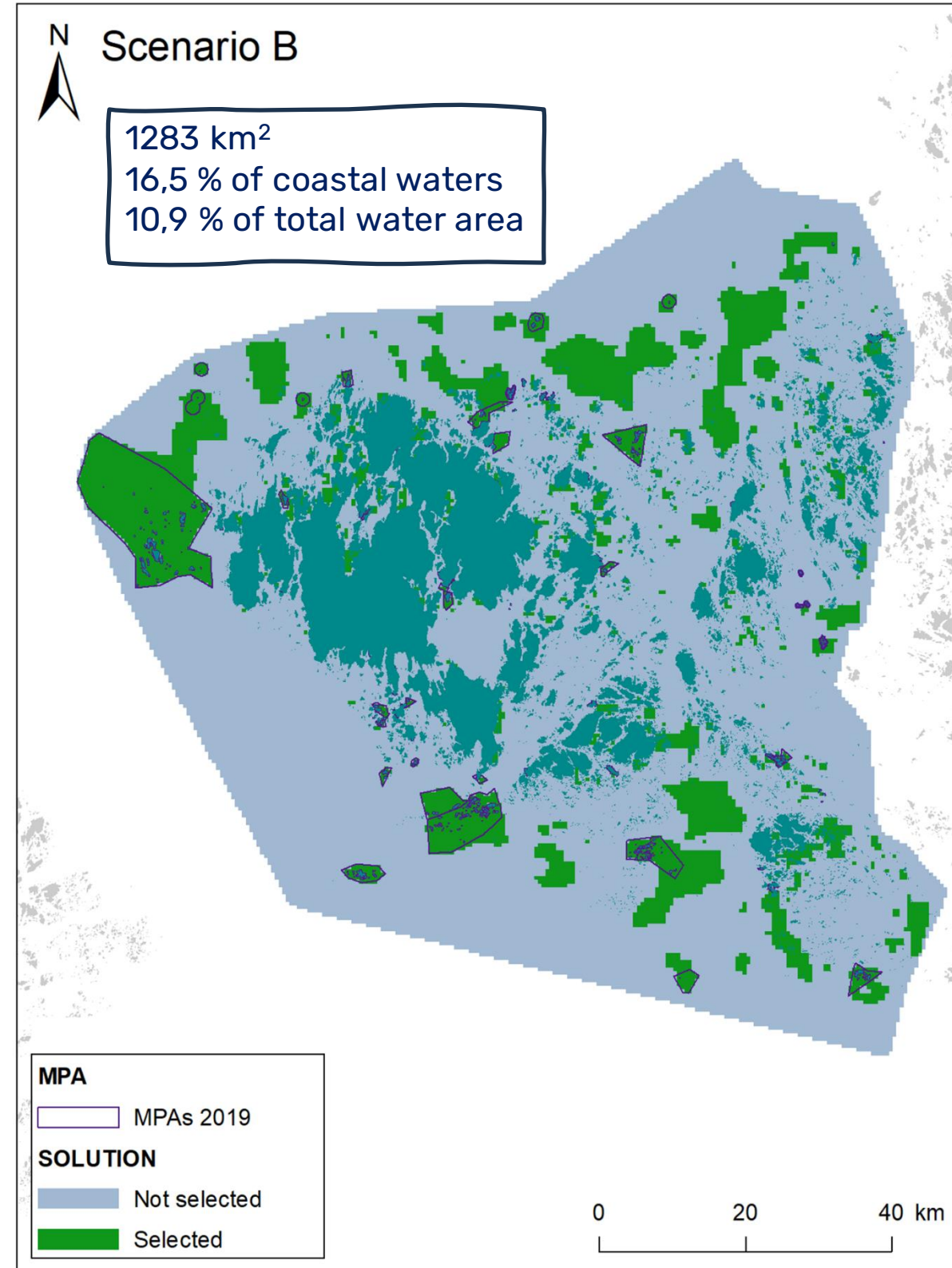
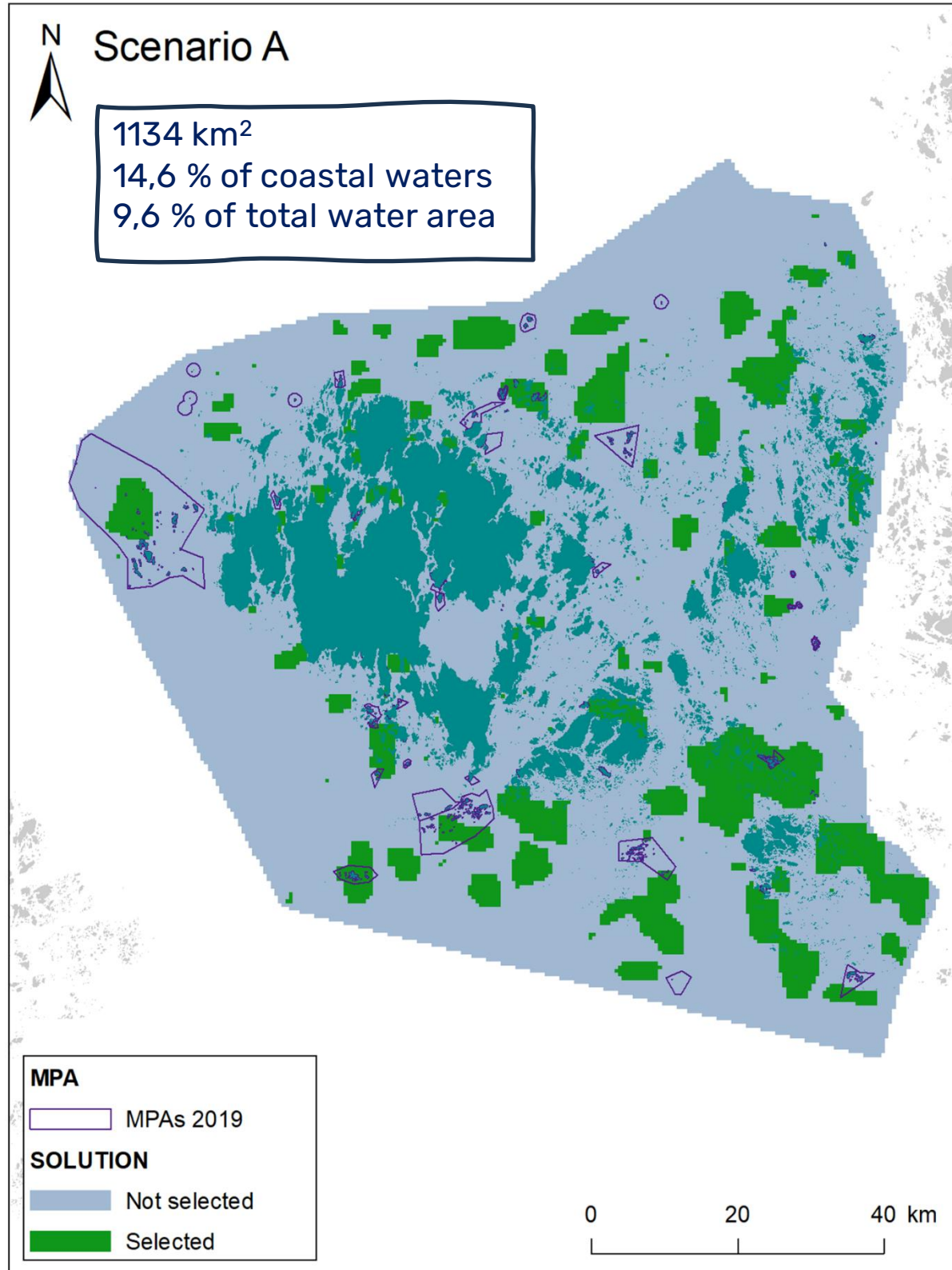


Aurelia aurita, Ceramium tenuicorne, and Mytilus spp. by Petra Arola, ÅlandSeaMap



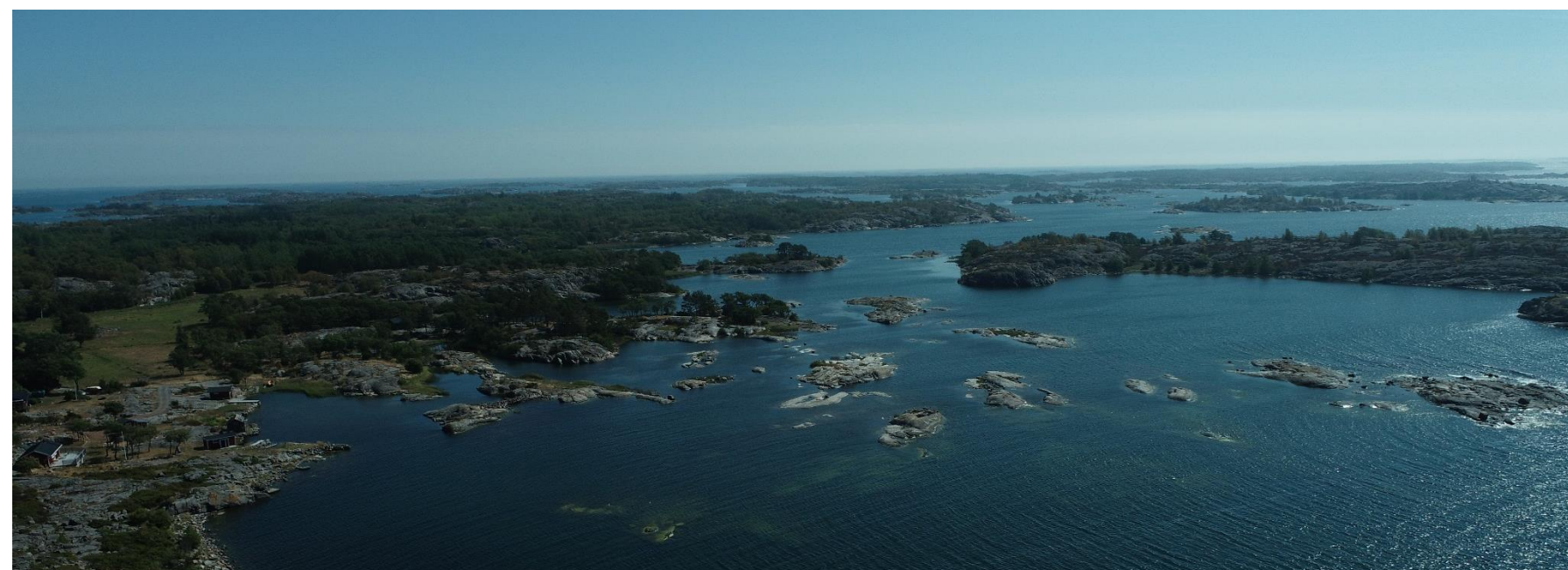
Chara tomentosa by Petra Arola, ÅlandSeaMap



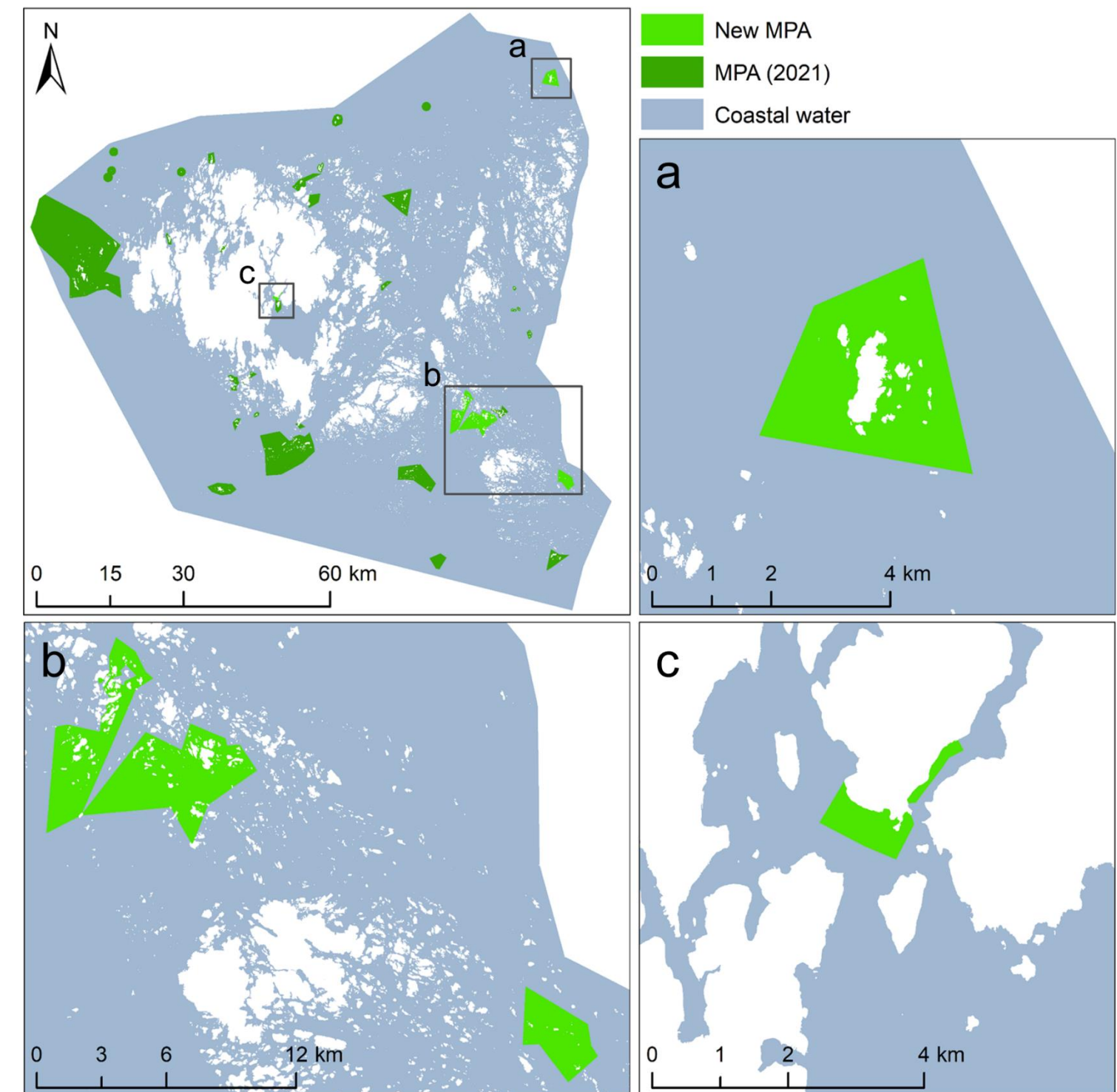


New MPAs

- Approx. 4000 ha new protected area
 - ✓ Storklyndan naturreservat, 795 ha (a)
 - ✓ Storskär – Kalhäran, 2088 ha (b, left)
 - ✓ Hemmingshärsfjärden, 806 ha (b, right)
 - ✓ Stornäset naturreservat, 270 ha (c)

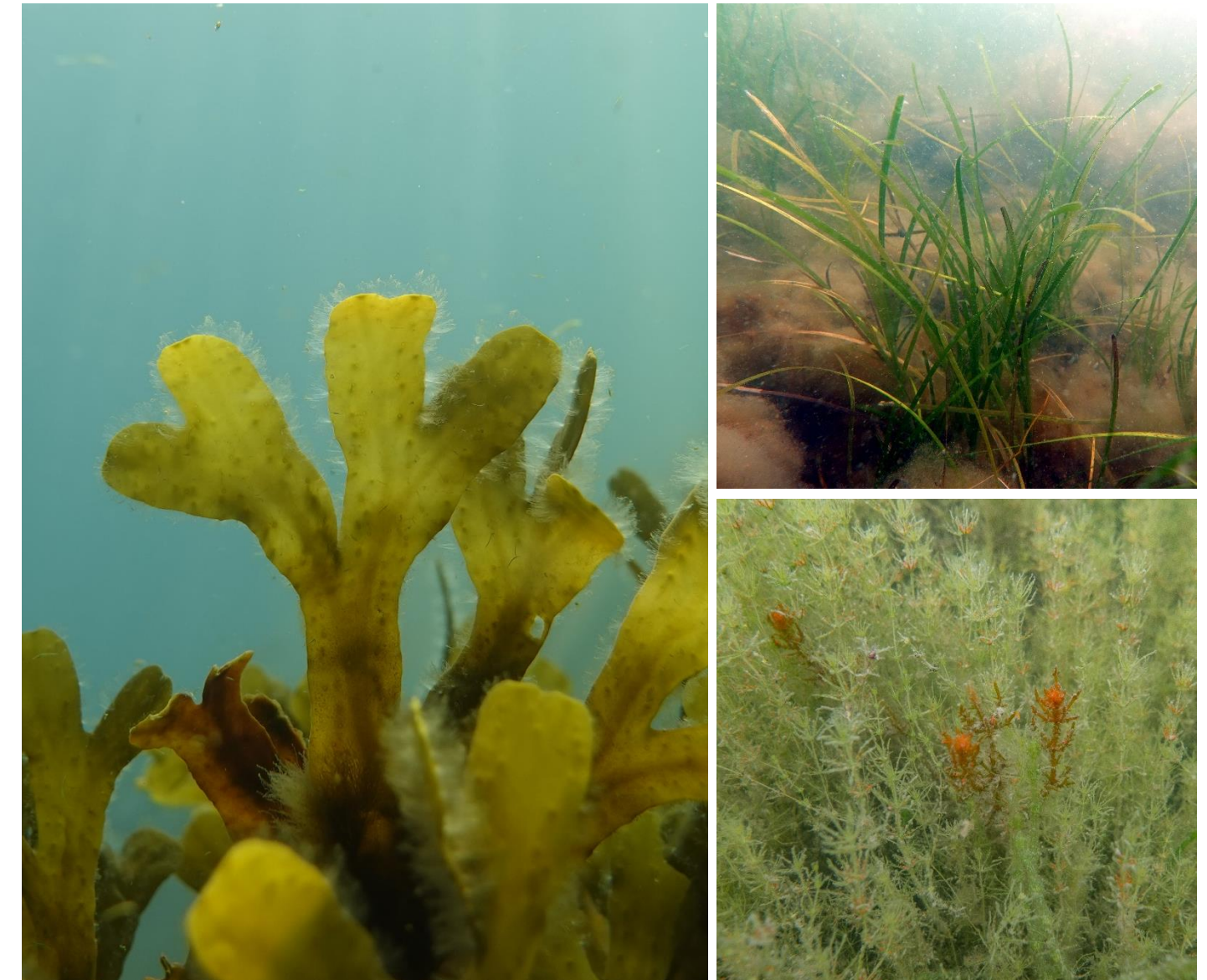


Kökar archipelago by Patrik Ståhl, ÅlandSeaMap



Concept

- The approach ensures that nature values are represented
 - ✓ All targets met, no prioritization
- Comprehensive solutions for large planning areas
- Creates a solid base on which to develop the MPA network
- Can be updated
- Results support ecosystem-based management:
 - ✓ Maritime Spatial Planning
 - ✓ Restoration planning
 - ✓ Environmental permits



Fucus vesiculosus, *Zostera marina* and a charophyte meadow by Karl Weckström, ÅlandSeaMap

Lessons learned and challenges ahead

- Tools are now available
- Close collaboration with regional managers and locals is essential
- Maps are powerful tools
- Management guidelines needed yesterday
- Private ownership, voluntary protection measures, and OECMs need considering
- Marine nature values are difficult to evaluate for the public – ocean literacy is key



Nature surveyors by Tony Cederberg, ÅAU

Thank you!



Karl Weckström, ÅAU



Maija Häggblom, ÅLR



Henna Rinne, ÅAU



Sonja Salovius-Laurén, ÅAU



Photo by Tony Cederberg
Petra Arola, ÅAU
Charlotta Björklund, ÅAU / ÅLR
Linn Engström, ÅAU



Martin Snickars, ÅAU



Tony Cederberg, ÅAU



Jean-Francois Blanc, ÅAU



Susanne Vävare, ÅLR



Photo by Tony Cederberg
All fieldworkers, ÅAU, Special thank you to Patrik Ståhl, Floriaan Eveleens Maarse and Johan Malmberg



○
**BLUE
MISSION
BANOS**

2nd MISSION ARENA
25-26 April 2024 | Riga, Latvia

**Panel session with Q&A:
PROTECT BALTIC, LIFE REEF, The ÅlandSeaMap
project, pitches from BLUE4ALL, MSP4BIO,
Cool Blue**

20 min

Workshop: Marine Protection in the Eastern Baltic: What is the status quo? Good practices, ongoing challenges, and possible solutions

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PANELISTS

Francisco Barboza, UTARTU

Paul Trouth, HELCOM

**Ingrida Andersone, Latvian Institute of
Aquatic Ecology**

Karl Weckström, Åbo Akademi University

Maija Viska

Agnė Lukoševičienė

BLUE4ALL/MSP4BIO

PROTECT BALTIC

LIFE REEF

ÅlandSeaMap project

COOL BLUE

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Interactive session - moderated discussions in break out groups

25 min

Workshop: Marine Protection in the Eastern Baltic: What is the status quo? Good practices, ongoing challenges, and possible solutions

Action points

- 1. Include all stakeholders in the MPA processes, in particular from currently underrepresented sectors such as industry/business (e.g. extractive sector), local communities and fisheries.**
- 2. Provide more funding for stakeholder involvement in the MPA establishment and management.**
- 3. Empower the local communities through co-management schemes on the establishment, management, and monitoring of MPAs**
- 4. Coordinate the design of local and regional conservation and restoration actions to guarantee their successful implementation.**

Discussion questions

- 1) What are the other challenges faced when designing MPAs? What can we do to prevent this in addition to the ongoing work in existing projects/initiatives? Any other good practice to be replicated and transferred?**
- 2) Many activities in the region on reaching the MPA coverage targets and their effective management. What else is needed? Maybe related to Finances? Monitoring of MPA effectiveness? Policy?**
- 3) Effective MPA management solutions, existing case studies/practices to be upscaled?**
- 4) Involvement of ALL, in particular local communities and citizens - are the ongoing projects covering all the needs? What else is needed? Which sectors are missing? Additional good practices?**
- 5) Suggestion for a next MPA project.**

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THANK YOU!

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Good practices, ongoing challenges, and possible solutions*

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