

Fish stock conservation: multiannual plan for the Baltic salmon stock

2011/0206(COD) - 22/11/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 599 votes to 23, with 14 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a multiannual plan for the Baltic salmon stock and the fisheries exploiting that stock.

Parliament's position, adopted at first reading, following the ordinary legislative procedure, amends the Commission proposal as follows:

Scope of the regulation: Parliament proposes that the scope of the regulation should be expanded to include all forms of recreational fishing.

Target levels for stocks of wild river salmon: Parliament considers that the level of smolt production should be set at 80% of the potential smolt production capacity for the different wild salmon rivers, in accordance with the recommendation of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helcom).

The amended text stipulates that after 12 years (rather than 10 years) from the entry into force of this regulation, the wild salmon smolt production shall be maintained at a level of at least 80% (rather than 75%) of the potential smolt production capacity in each wild salmon river.

Salmon caught at sea in recreational fisheries and from recreational coastal and river fisheries shall be counted against the national quota.

Minimum landing size for salmon and sea trout: by way of derogation from Article 14 of Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005, the minimum landing size for salmon should be 60 cm and the minimum landing size for sea trout should be 50 cm, in each of the ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) subdivisions.

Stocking: stocking of salmon may only be conducted in wild salmon rivers when this is required to prevent extermination of the local stock. Stocking shall be conducted in a way that safeguards the genetic diversity and variability of the different salmon river stocks.

Smolts for stocking shall be marked by clipping their adipose fins (finclipping).

Origin of mature fish and smolt: an amendment states that mature fish and smolt shall originate from the same wild salmon river, if possible, or failing that, from the nearest possible wild salmon river basin.

Transitional period: releases of salmon other than those made in accordance with the rules may continue until ten years after the entry into force of this Regulation on the basis of careful evaluation.

Parliament calls for a river-by-river approach to be used for the gradual phasing out. Administered by Member States' local, regional and/or national agencies, this approach shall also involve local stakeholders and make use of their competence with regards to habitat restoration and other measures.

Legally binding national decisions on the use of economical recourses, currently used for restocking, shall be redirected to support fishermen potentially adversely affected by the negative effects of a phasing-out.

Controls on catches: Parliament proposes that all types of recreational fisheries, regardless of type, shall complete a catch declaration and report to the competent authority of the flag Member State by the last day of every month.

Such landing inspections shall cover a minimum of 20 % inspection of the total number of landings. The European Fisheries Control Agency shall carry out effective controls and shall encourage Member States to undertake more focused and targeted inspections in areas where illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is suspected or reported to take place.

Data collection: no later than three years after the entry into force of the Regulation, the Commission shall present to the European Parliament and the Council:

- the findings of scientific research conducted into the impact of predators, in particular seals and cormorants, on the Baltic salmon stock. On the basis of those research findings the Commission shall draw up a plan for managing populations of predators that have an impact on the Baltic salmon stock, which shall be brought into force no later than in 2016;
- the findings of the scientific research conducted in respect of the discards and by-catch of salmon in all relevant Baltic Sea fisheries.