



OSPAR Recommendation 2021/03 on furthering the protection and conservation of the houting, Wadden Sea populations of *Coregonus oxyrinchus* in Region II of the OSPAR maritime area

Source: OSPAR 21/13/1, Annex 27

Preamble

RECALLING Article 2(1) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic ('the OSPAR Convention');

RECALLING Annex V to the OSPAR Convention on the protection and conservation of the ecosystems and biological diversity of the maritime area, and in particular Article 3(1)(b)(ii), which makes it a duty of the OSPAR Commission to develop means, consistent with international law, for instituting protective, conservation, restorative or precautionary measures related to specific areas or sites or related to specific species or habitats; and Article 3(1)(b)(iv), which aims for the application of an integrated ecosystem approach, subject to Article 4;

RECALLING Article 4(1) of Annex V, which provides that in accordance with the penultimate recital of the OSPAR Convention, no programme or measure concerning a question relating to the management of fisheries shall be adopted under that Annex, while recognising that where the OSPAR Commission considers that action is desirable in relation to such a question, it shall draw that question to the attention of the authority or international body competent for that question;

RECALLING OSPAR Recommendation 2003/03 as amended by OSPAR Recommendation 2010/02 that calls upon Contracting Parties to report to the OSPAR Commission sites selected for inclusion as components of the OSPAR network of marine protected areas and develop appropriate management plans and measures;

RECALLING OSPAR Recommendation 2010/05 on assessments of environmental impact in relation to threatened and/or declining species and habitats;

RECALLING the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats (OSPAR Agreement 2008-06), in which the houting is listed as a species occurring in OSPAR Region II and is categorised as a species under threat and/or in decline in that OSPAR Region;

RECALLING the Statement on the Common Understanding of the Recommendations on Species and Habitats (OSPAR Agreement 2013-13);

NOTING the Case Report (OSPAR publication 2008/358), the respective Background Document for this species (OSPAR publication 2020/755) and the scientific references therein which indicate that the numbers and

original range of the houting have declined significantly in OSPAR Region II. These documents also provide information on *inter alia* the threats and impacts on the houting from human activities;

NOTING the species listing in Appendix III of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention, 1979), and Annexes II and IV of the EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (“Habitats Directive”) and corresponding legislation of other Contracting Parties;

NOTING that, where appropriate, the actions and measures of this Recommendation will support the regional implementation of EU Directive 2008/56/EC establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive), of EU Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (“Water Framework Directive”) and corresponding legislation of other Contracting Parties.

The Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic RECOMMEND:

1. Definitions

1.1. For the purposes of this Recommendation:

“*Houting*” means the threatened population of *Coregonus oxyrinchus* found in Region II of the OSPAR maritime area within the Wadden Sea and adjoining rivers.

“*Marine protected area*” means an area within the maritime area for which protective, conservation, restorative or precautionary measures, consistent with international law, have been instituted for the purpose of protecting and conserving species, habitats, ecosystems or ecological processes of the marine environment.

“*Critical habitat*” or “*key area*” means a specific area within the geographic range of the species that is or may be occupied by the species concerned (i.e. the houting) within which are found those physical or biological features, which are essential to the conservation of the species.

2. Purpose and scope

2.1. The purpose of this Recommendation is to strengthen the protection of the houting in all life stages in order to recover its population, to improve its status and to ensure that the population is effectively conserved in the Wadden Sea in Region II of the OSPAR maritime area.

3. Programmes and measures

3.1 Individually, Contracting Parties bordering the Wadden Sea in Region II should consider:

- a. introducing national legislation or national management plans to protect the houting in all relevant life stages;
- b. maintaining silt free spawning gravels and areas with perennial winter-green submerged macrophytes;
- c. maintaining or enhancing access to spawning grounds for adults and safe passage for juveniles on the outmigration of houting;
- d. addressing national causes of mortality which are preventing recovery of houting;

- e. continuing or improving stocking programmes in rivers until natural reproduction is self-sustaining;
- f. designating marine protected areas to protect the houting as part of the OSPAR network;
- g. monitoring the houting in marine, estuarine and freshwater habitats;
- h. undertaking further research into the lifecycle of the houting, including adult mortality in coastal and marine areas;
- i. acting for the fulfilment of the purpose of this Recommendation within the framework of relevant competent authorities.

3.2 Acting collectively within the framework of the OSPAR Commission, with the aim of promoting an ecosystem-based approach, relevant Contracting Parties should consider:

- a. sharing data and information regarding houting in a consistent and co-ordinated manner;
- b. undertaking tracking studies to determine migration patterns of houting into the marine environment;
- c. communicating the current knowledge base regarding the houting to OSPAR Contracting Parties, stakeholders and other international competent authorities.

4. Entry into Force

4.1 This Recommendation has effect from 1 October 2021.

5. Implementation reports

5.1 Contracting Parties should report by 31 December 2025 on the implementation of this Recommendation to the appropriate OSPAR subsidiary body, and every six years thereafter.

5.2 When reporting on implementation, the format as set out in Appendix 1 should be used as far as possible.

Appendix 1

Format for implementation reports concerning OSPAR Recommendation 2021/3 on furthering the protection and conservation of the Wadden Sea population of Houting (*Coregonus oxyrinchus*) in Region II of the OSPAR maritime area

(Note: In accordance with Section 5 of the Recommendation, this format should be used as far as possible in implementation reports)

I. Implementation Report on Compliance

Country:

Reservation applies: yes/no

Is this measure applicable in your country? yes/no

If not applicable, then state why not.

II. Means of Implementation:

by legislation yes/no

by administrative action yes/no

by negotiated agreement yes/no

Please provide information on:

- a. specific measures taken to give effect to this measure.
- b. any special difficulties encountered, such as practical or legal problems, in the implementation of this measure.
- c. any reasons for not having fully implemented this measure should be spelt out clearly and plans for full implementation should be reported.