

HOUTING – A MIGRATORY FISH VULNERABLE TO WEIRS

Why is this important?

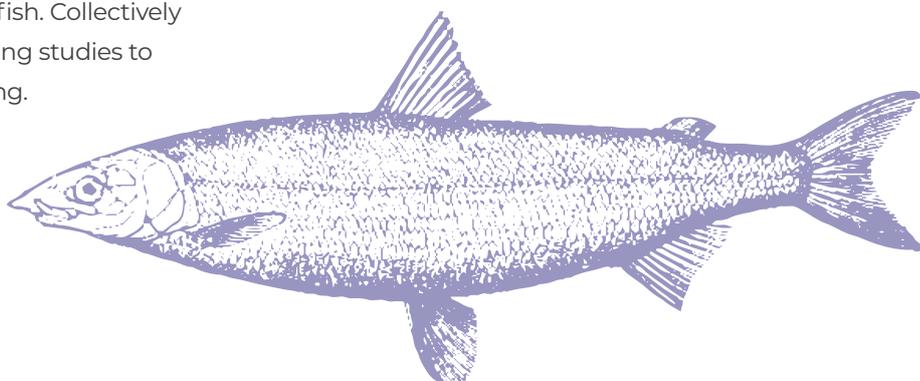
Houting (*Coregonus oxyrinchus*) are vulnerable to habitat modifications and obstruction by weirs and barrages. Only rivers with free passage can be used for spawning. If the Houting cannot reach suitable spawning grounds and nursery areas far enough away from the sea, the newly hatched larvae risk being swept into saline ocean waters where they cannot survive. The number of Houting in the Wadden Sea has declined significantly and the area in which they occur has shrunk. There is an urgent need to improve habitat quality of rivers to ensure this fish continues to migrate along the coasts of the North Sea.

What is OSPAR doing?

OSPAR is adopting a new measure to strengthen the protection of the Wadden Sea population of Houting. The new measure encourages relevant OSPAR Contracting Parties to take action to protect the Houting throughout all its life stages, to maintain silt-free spawning gravels in rivers that have rich underwater vegetation and to improve free passage of the migratory fish. Collectively OSPAR will consider undertaking tracking studies to determine migration patterns of Houting.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

Protection of the Houting will help to ensure that the ecosystem of the North-East Atlantic remains intact. Fish that migrate between freshwater spawning grounds and the salty ocean create a vital link between these ecosystems. This OSPAR measure will contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity.



For more information on houting please visit the [OSPAR website](http://www.ospar.org)

