

## SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

*Nerophis ophidion*

English name: <b>Straight nosed pipefish</b>	Scientific name: <i>Nerophis ophidion</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Actinopterygii Order: Syngnathiformes Family: Syngnathidae	Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: <i>Syngnathus ophidion</i>	Generation length: 2.2 years	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): –	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): –	
IUCN Criteria: –	<b>HELCOM Red List Category:</b>	<b>LC Least Concern</b>
Global / European IUCN Red List Category NE/NE	Habitats Directive: –	
Previous HELCOM Red List Category (2007): VU		
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/LC, Estonia –/DD, Finland –/LC, Germany –/* (Not threatened, Baltic Sea), Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/Included in the Polish Red Book, Russia –/–, Sweden –/LC		

**Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region**

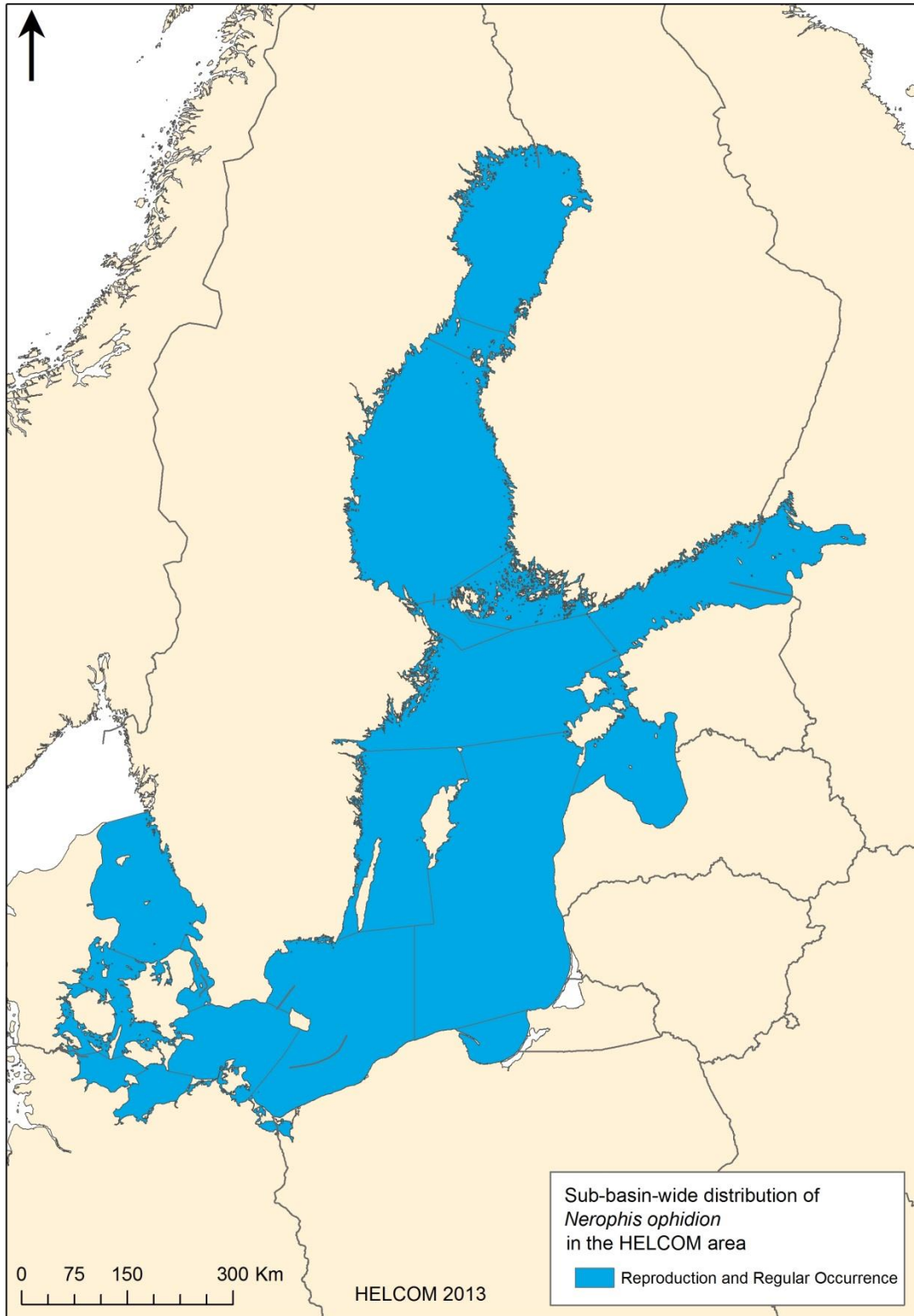
The straight nosed pipefish is commonly found along the west coast of Sweden and in the southern Baltic Sea, to a lesser extent in the Gulf of Bothnia. Elsewhere the distribution extends from central Norway south along the coast (including the British Isles) to Morocco and continues into the Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea. It is not distributed, however, along the North Sea coast between Denmark and the English Channel. Like most species of the *Syngnathidae* family, the distribution and abundance is not monitored well with standardized test fishing nets because of its snakelike body.



Straight nosed pipefish. Photo Vivica von Vietinghoff, Deutsches Meeresmuseum.

**Distribution map**

The map shows the sub-basins in the HELCOM area where the species is known to occur regularly and to reproduce (HELCOM 2012).



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### Habitat and ecology

The straight nosed pipefish is a marine species that inhabit algal zone or eel-grass beds (*Zostera marina*) along the coastal zone from 2 to 15 meters depth. Adults spawn in May to August. It feeds on small crustaceans and fish fry. The male broods the embryos attached to their abdomen where paternity is ensured despite brooding of embryos outside of the male's body. Each male broods eggs from a single female, for each brood, but females may deposit eggs on several males. (Dawson 1986, Froese & Pauly 2012, Kullander et al. 2012)



Pregnant male straight nosed pipefish. Photo: Anders Berglund, Uppsala University.

### Description of major threats

The species is not considered threatened at the moment but the loss of suitable habitats by fragmentation of *Zostera* beds has probably affected the species negatively in the Baltic Sea.

### Assessment justification

Small catches in Swedish nuclear power plant cooling water intake in the Kattegat show no trend over the last 10 years and larger catches in the Åland Sea do not show any population trend over the last 10 years either but a positive trend can be seen in 1992–2011. Both extent of occurrence and area of occupancy exceed the levels for being threatened according to the B criteria. The main habitat of the straight-nosed pipefish, *Zostera* meadows and possibly also other macrophyte rich habitats have declined and deteriorated considerably within the HELCOM area and it could be assumed that the population of the species has also declined together with the habitat changes. However, these changes have in most areas happened e.g. more than 30 or even 100 years ago and currently the situation has stabilized, if not improved. As the straight-nosed pipefish is a short-lived species for which the time-period of population decline evaluation is only 10 years, the most drastic habitat changes, as well as the possible decline in population, have no effect on the assessment under criterion A. The species is widespread and still common in the Baltic Sea, and does not meet any of the other criteria either, and is therefore categorized as Least Concern (LC).

### Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

No protection actions currently needed in the HELCOM area.

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### Common names

D: Kleine Schlangennadel; DK: Stor næbsnog; ES: madunöel; FI: Siloneula; GB: Straight nosed pipefish; LI: Paprastoji jūru yla; LV: Čūskzivs; PL: Wężynka; RU: Pryamonosaja morskaja igla; SE: Mindre havsnål

### References

- Dawson, C.E., (1986). Syngnathidae. p. 628–639. In: Whitehead, P.J.P., Bauchot, M.-L., Hureau, J.-C., Nielsen, J., Tortonese, E. (eds.) Fishes of the North-eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Vol. 2. Unesco, Paris.
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- Kullander, S.O., Nyman, L., Jilg, K., Delling, B. (2012). Nationalnyckeln till Sveriges flora och fauna. Strålfeniga fiskar. Actinopterygii (in Swedish). Artdatabanken, SLU, Uppsala. 517 pp.
- Thiel, R., Winkler, H., Böttcher, U., Dänhardt, A., Fricke, R., George, M. Kloppmann, M., Schaarschmidt, T., Ubl, C. & Vorberg, R. (2013). Rote Liste und Gesamtartenliste der etablierten Neunaugen und Fische (Petromyzontida, Elasmobranchii & Actinopterygii) der marinen Gewässer Deutschlands. 5. Fassung, Stand August 2013. Naturschutz und Biologische Vielfalt 70(2): 11–76.