

Introducing sustainability to coastal angling tourism in the South Baltic Region

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Recreational fishing in the Baltic Sea Region

The South Baltic Region provides a lot of interesting angling areas for recreational fishing. Furthermore coastal angling tourism offers a unique development chance for this region, especially for less developed coastal areas and even outside the holiday season. It is a new touristic trend and offers diversification of coastal tourism with promising market opportunities. Supplementary to the spending for the fishing experience itself, there are additional expenses for accommodation, gastronomic facilities and other services. Nevertheless, angling tourism is still a niche market based on very local initiatives and regulations – even though fish stocks migrate and angling areas do not end at regional or national borders. There is a lack of management concerning a sustainable expansion of this tourism sector in the whole South Baltic Region. To change this circumstance, it is indispensable to cooperate across borders and jointly promote coastal angling and its economic potentials.



Fig. 1: Recreational fishing in the Baltic Sea Region

CATCH – sustainable angling tourism on a transnational level

In this regard, the current project CATCH (Coastal Angling Tourism – a development chance for the South Baltic Region) is supporting the international cooperation between four exemplary case study areas in Lithuania, Poland, Denmark and Germany. In each region a stakeholder network has been established, launching the collaboration between the single interest groups. Local workshops with representatives of municipality authorities, angling associations, regional providers, tourism administrations, environmental associations and scientific and educational institutions were organized. The opportunities and benefits of a sustainability strategy for the coastal angling tourism were discussed and examples for good and bad practices were presented. The elaborated results of the workshops will be exchanged cross-border and the project partners will develop indicators and guidelines for a coastal angling tourism development, taking sustainability concerns in social, economic and environmental aspects into consideration. All gained knowledge will be combined in an information platform on coastal angling tourism and a label for sustainable recreational fishing in the Baltic Sea Region will be established.

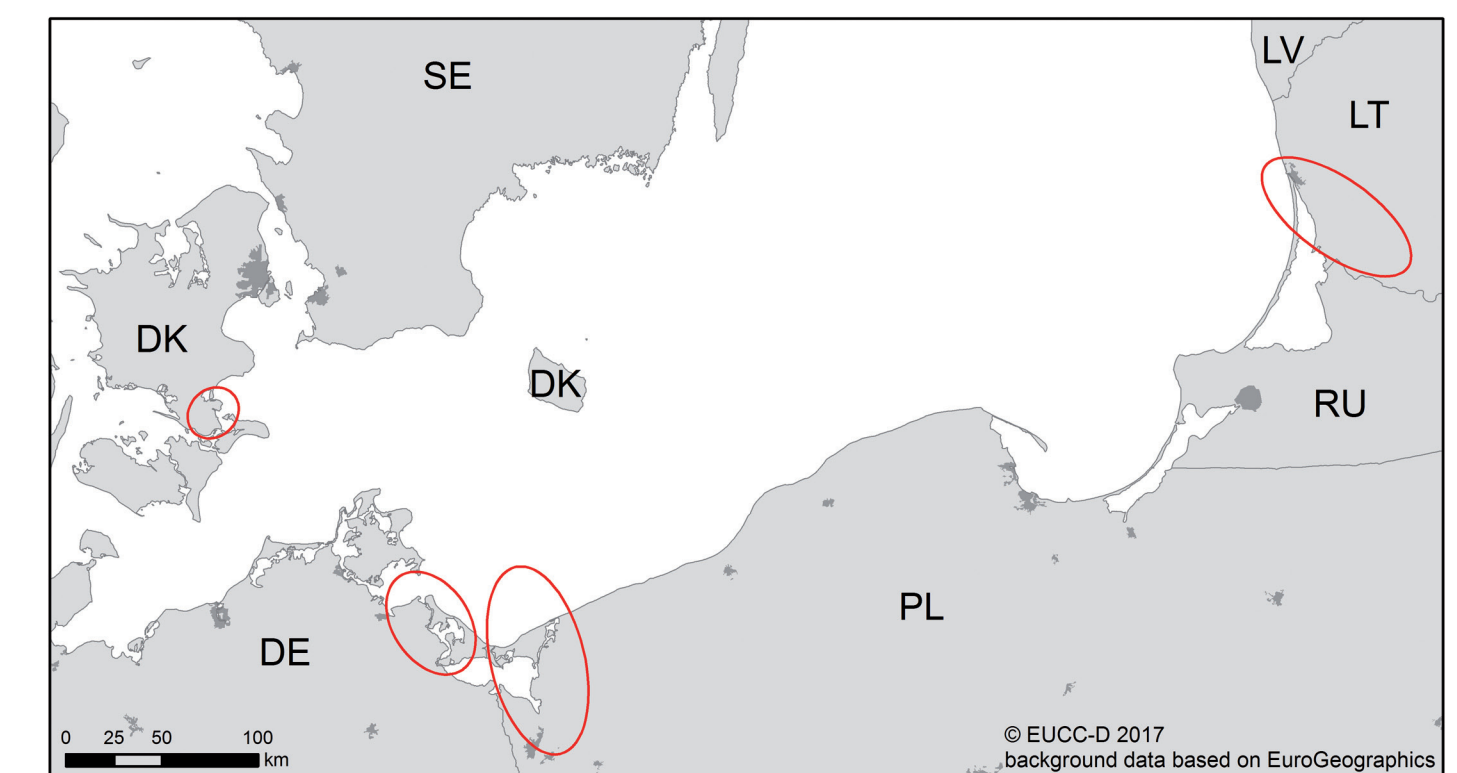


Fig. 2: The case study areas contemplated within the CATCH project

Some results of the first stakeholder workshops & further perspectives

- The national regulations for anglers should be clearly and neatly represented and the purchase of the required fishing licenses has to be easy (for example digital licenses or a vendor near the fishing spot).
- Concerning the ecological sustainability, it is very important to provide multilingual and catchy information leaflets and signs, showing the regional distinctions for anglers (closed seasons, required sizes, bag limits, etc. for each species).
- Recreational fishing camps are a great opportunity to teach the responsible handling of fish and other environmental issues to children and young people.
- Accommodations should provide a service infrastructure such as filleting spaces, a freezer, a smoking oven and other comfort specifically for angling tourists – Anglers should feel welcome.
- A wide range of activities for families and bad weather days can facilitate to make the region even more attractive for vacationers.
- A website and a mobile app, outlining all the offers for recreational fishing tours, accommodations and the other tourism services, would be reasonable.
- An active communication between the different stakeholder groups (for instance anglers, conservationist and fishermen) is very important to avoid potential conflicts.
- The establishment of well-functioning networks including local angling providers, tourism administrations and community facilities is required for a sustainable fishing tourism.

Gaps in knowledge which will be regarded for future workshops

- The potential target group needs to be defined more precisely – Which are the different types of anglers?
- More data about the magnitude of recreational fishing has to be collected (especially in Lithuania and Poland).
- The value chain of the coastal angling tourism should be analyzed. Illustrating the possible economic impact for the regional development and demonstrating in which extent municipal investments can be worthwhile.

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