

PROTECTING THE BAL TIC SEA

What can I do?

BAL TIC SEA
COMMUNICATION
NETWORK OF FINLAND



OUR BALTIC SEA IS IN POOR HEALTH.

Without help, the unique brackish waters of the Baltic will remain under threat.

The state of Baltic Sea is worsened by pollution from our homes, traffic, food production and industries. Climate change is increasing the amounts of nutrients entering the sea in runoff from the surrounding land. Actions to mitigate climate change and other pollution also benefit the sea.

We can all make a difference through our everyday consumer choices and through wider social action.

The future of the Baltic Sea is not only in the hands of politicians. Even small actions count, and every one of us can help.

The time to act to save the Baltic Sea is now.

By following the tips presented in this booklet, you can help restore the Baltic Sea to a pristine condition. Below you can also test yourself to see how much are you doing on behalf of the Baltic Sea. Check every box that applies to you!

At home and country cottage

- I make sure that sewage does not contaminate water. Sewage entering the sea increases nutrient concentrations and worsens eutrophication. The best solutions apply technologies that promote the recycling of nutrients and keep sewage out of streams, rivers and lakes. Links to suitable solutions for sewage treatment in rural areas are provided at the end of this booklet.
- I try to use less water, since increasing amounts of wastewater add additional nutrients to the Baltic Sea.
- Dry compost toilets are a good option for rural holiday homes. I use water sparingly, and make sure that any water used in the sauna does not contaminate water courses. I also avoid cleaning rugs in places where the soapy water would end up in rivers and the sea.
- I use fertilizers sparingly in my garden, and use natural fertilizers instead of artificial products. I avoid using unnecessary pesticides. I make sure that no nutrient-rich runoff enters streams and watercourses from my garden/allotment.
- I use electricity sparingly, and turn off unneeded lights and appliances. I buy green electricity to support the use of renewable energy sources. When buying electronic appliances I choose energy-efficient models.

- I demand good quality wastewater treatment from my local water supplier, since well-purified effluent is less polluting.

In the kitchen

- I favour local food and produce that is in season. Winter greenhouse cultivation and the transportation of food for long distances burden the environment unnecessarily.

- I buy organic food products. Recycling natural nutrients between livestock farming and crop cultivation is the most efficient way to keep farmland fertile. Organic farmers do not use artificial fertilizers and pesticides whose production consumes a lot of energy, and whose use pollutes watercourses.

- I only eat fish of varieties that are sustainably fished. Many fish stocks around the world are overfished. I prefer fish from viable populations, such as Finnish perch and pike, and MSC-certified fish from stocks. This certification guarantees that fish are caught in ecologically sustainable ways. The WWF's fish guide provides a useful list of fish species and stocks that can be recommended. I always consider before buying farmed fish, since fish farms can be highly polluting.

- I eat less meat. According to dietary recommendations, we only need to obtain a small proportion of our nutrition from meat. Meat production results in high emissions of carbon dioxide and nutrients, so choosing vegetarian options can help to reduce the amounts of nutrients entering the Baltic Sea. Meals can be made with protein-rich vegetables instead of meat.



Shopping

I buy second-hand clothes whenever possible. I prefer clothes made of natural textiles like wool instead of artificial fibres, to help reduce the amounts of microplastics entering the sea.

I try to avoid plastic packaging and bags. Instead I reuse my own shopping bag.

I buy durable, easily reparable and recyclable goods, and use them to the very end. I avoid disposable plastic products.

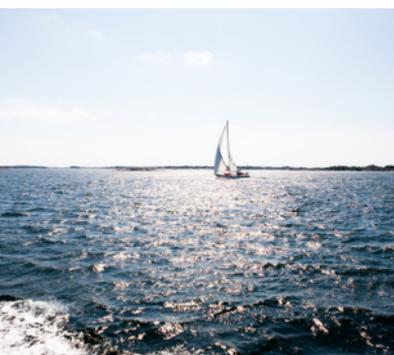
I choose environmentally friendly detergents and cleaning products.



On the move

- I walk, bicycle, use public transport or share rides instead of using my own car. This reduces emissions from traffic, so the amounts of particles and nitrogen compounds entering watercourses and the sea also decrease. Traffic is a major source of microplastics and rubber.

- I spend my vacations nearby. Flying consumes a lot of energy and worsens global warming. This leads to more intense storms, heavier rainfall and higher nutrient runoff – even here in Finland. Instead of flying I travel by train or bus whenever possible.



On the boat

- To prevent oil leaks I keep my boat and its motor in good condition.
- I keep the hull of the boat free clean to reduce fuel consumption. I do not apply toxic anti-fouling paint to the boat. If possible I do not paint my boat at all, and I clean its hull by brushing it or using pressurised water.
- When looking after my boat I ensure that any harmful wastes like paint and batteries do not pollute the environment, by taking them to a suitable hazardous waste reception point.
- I use dishwashing facilities where the wastewater is filtered on land whenever possible. I never wash dishes in the sea.
- I sort any wastes and take them off my boat for safe recycling and disposal.
- I always empty out the septic tank using suitable draining equipment.



Washing and cleaning

- I avoid using detergents that contain phosphates or synthetic surfactants. Natural detergents such as pine soap, vinegar and detergents marked with the Nordic Swan ecolabel are good alternatives.
- I avoid hygiene products that contain microgranules, such as toothpastes or skin-cleansing products. The CosmEthics app facilitates such choices.
- I do not wash my laundry or my rugs in the sea.
- I use water sparingly for washing and cleaning.

Disposing of wastes

- I dispose of trash carefully by using suitable containers and official recycling points, to ensure that I do not leave litter either on land or at sea.
- I try to consume less and recycle more.
- I sort my wastes and compost organic wastes. Reducing the amounts of waste also reduces the burden on water systems. I take hazardous wastes to the designated reception points. I return unused medicines to a pharmacy, and leave plastic waste in the proper recycling bins.

Social action

- I discuss environmental issues including the state of the Baltic Sea and try to influence other people including my family, friends and colleagues and urge them to act to protect the sea.
- I contact politicians and other local decision-makers urging them to support actions to save the Baltic Sea. I only vote for politicians who are truly prepared to take action on behalf of the Baltic Sea.
- I learn about other countries around the Baltic Sea and find contacts and partners there for international collaboration to help the sea.
- I follow related marine research and share the latest findings using social media.
- I take part in voluntary work that aims to protect the Baltic Sea, such as the WWF's oil spill response forces, sea rescue societies, and projects run by other organisations to combat marine pollution.
- I donate my time, energy and financial support to promote environmental protection – for instance by participating in coastal clean-up activities.
- I report my observations on the current state of the sea through citizens' science schemes, such as Meriwiki. Such observations may concern algal blooms or water transparency measurements.

Outdoors

- During spring and early summer I avoid areas where birds are nesting. I follow the regulations for visitors to national parks and nature reserves.
- When spending time outdoors I do not leave any trash or other traces behind. I stay on paths and avoid damaging or disturbing plants and wildlife.
- I do not light campfires on the bare ground, but instead use the campfire sites provided.
- I fish responsibly, and eat whatever I catch, not only larger predatory fish species. Smaller fish species like roach are also good to eat if cooked well. I also observe the minimum permissible catch sizes designated for certain fish.



Your score

How many boxes did you check? What kind of Baltic Sea citizen are you? Is there anything more you could do to help protect the sea?

0–12 boxes checked

You already do some good deeds in favor of the Baltic Sea, but there is still more you could do. This booklet provides helpful tips on possible actions.

13–23 boxes checked

You are on the right track, but there is still room for improvement. Look through this booklet again and think about what else could you do.

24–40 boxes checked

Congratulations! You are a true environmentalist and nature lover. Keep up the good work and share your tips with others.



Useful links

WWF's consumer guide on sustainable fish: www.wwf.fi/kalaopas (in Finnish)

Environmental tips for boaters: www.pidasaaristosiiistina.fi/in_english

Join beach clean-ups: www.siiistibiitsi.fi

Information on the state of the Baltic Sea and its protection:

www.ymparisto.fi/meri, www.facebook.com/itameri, www.itamerihaaste.net,
www.itameri-strategia.fi, www.bonusportal.org, www.helcom.fi

Calculate the impacts of your consumption patterns on the Baltic Sea:

syke.fi/itamertilaskuri, www.johnnurmisenasaatio.fi/itamertilaskuri (in Finnish)

Information about sewage treatment alternatives etc.:

www.environment.fi > Water resources

Information about algae and other marine issues: www.meriwiki.fi (in Finnish)

Protection Fund for the Archipelago Sea: www.saaristomerensuojelurahasto.fi/en

Citizens' observations of the Baltic marine environment:

www.ymparisto.fi/havainnot (in Finnish)

Information on marine litter: syke.fi/meriroskat, twitter.com/roskasakki (in Finnish)

Finnish environmental organizations working to combat water pollution:

www.sll.fi, www.luontoliitto.fi, www.naturochmiljo.fi, www.bsag.fi, www.johnnurmisenasaatio.fi

