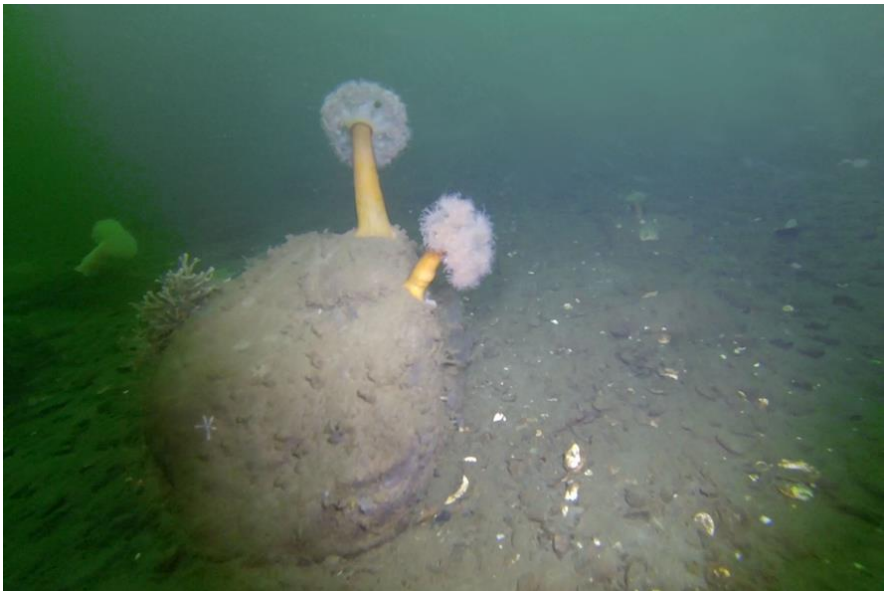
BIOTOPE INFORMATION SHEET

English name: **Baltic aphotic rock and boulders or mixed hard and soft substrates dominated by sea anemones (Actiniarida)**		Code in HELCOM HUB: **AB.A1G2, AB.M1G2**	
Characteristic species: *Metridium senile, Gonactinia prolifera, Urticina felina, Stomphia coccinea, Sagartia elegans*			
Past and Current Threats (Habitat directive article 17): Eutrophication (H01.05)		Future Threats (Habitat directive article 17): Eutrophication (H01.05)	
Red List Criteria: **A1**	Confidence of threat assessment: **L**	**HELCOM Red List Category:**	**NT Near Threatened**
Previous HELCOM Red List threat assessments			
BSEP 75 (1998): "3" Endangered: 2.1.2.1 Solid rock bottoms of the aphotic zone 2.2.1 Stony bottoms of the aphotic zone 2.8.1 Mixed sediments of the aphotic zone		BSEP 113 (HELCOM 2007):	
Greater concern stated by:			

Habitat and Ecology

The biotope occurs in the aphotic zone on hard substrates. At least 10% of the substrate is covered by attached sessile cnidarians, of which Actiniarida constitutes at least 50% of the biomass. Sea anemones are semi-sessile animals that require relatively high salinities.

Metridium senile is an anemone which lives attached to any suitable hard substratum as pier piles and rock faces down to 100m's depth. It is found in overhangs, caves and beneath boulders (Hiscock & Wilson 2007).



Mertidium senile growing attached to a rock on mixed substrate (Photo: IOW)

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The biotope can be encountered within the depth limit of the photic zone on the underside of rocks, in overhangs or caves where photosynthesising macrophytes cannot establish. *Sagartia elegans* is known to occur in high densities in overhangs, generally attached to a crack in the rock (Moen & Svenson 2009). As a rule anemones do not have strict requirements as to the quality of the substrate, as long as it its somewhat stable. Some species such as *Gonactina prolifera* may also attach to other sessile animals, however in such cases the coverage and biomass of the sea anemones might not be high enough to define the biotope as an anemone biotope in accordance with HELCOM Underwater Biotope and habitat classification system (HELCOM HUB). *Gonactina prolifera* reproduces by splitting and therefore small relatively dese clusters of the anemone can be found on suitable substrates (Moen & Svenson 2009). *Stomphia coccinea,* occurs in the Belt Sea and is always attached to hard substrates such as rock or in some cases *Modiolus modiolus* shells. If attacked by a predator the anemone is known to detach from the substrate.

Urticina felina is a rather common sea anemone in the Kattegat. The species lives from the water surface down to 200 meters depth with the largest individuals living deeper down, attached to stones. This anemone is a predator catching different crustaceans and even small fish.

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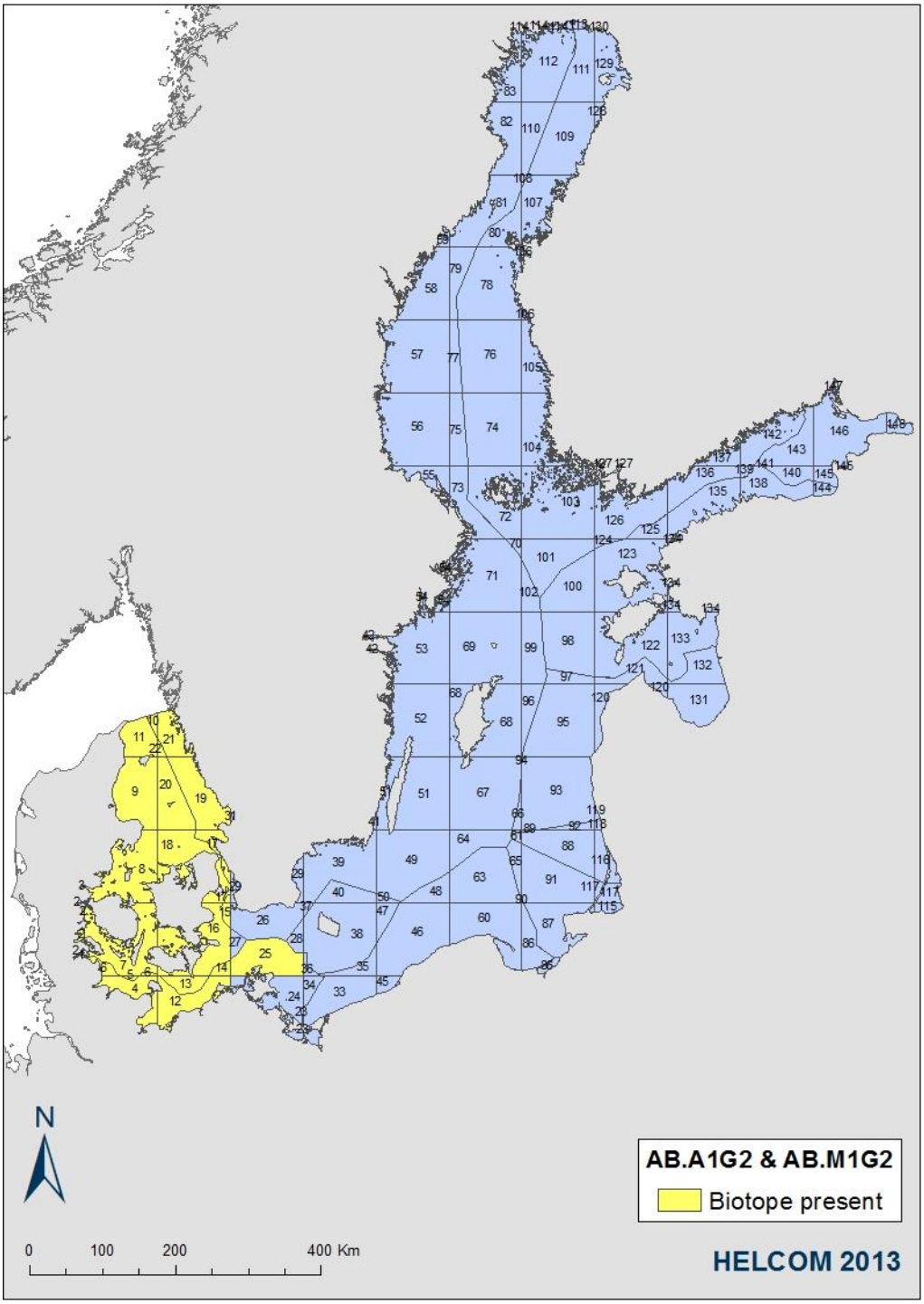
Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

The biotope occurs on hard substrates in the Kattegat and Belt Sea. The biotope is common on steep vertical cliffs and can also be encountered on the negative surfaces of rocks and overhangs. The distribution map indicates the area in the 100 x 100 km grid where biotope is known to occur



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Description of Major threats

Siltation of hard substrates is the major threat of the biotope. Eutrophication is known to increase the siltation rate. The availability of suitable substrate can also be affected by dredging or stone fishing activities.

Assessment justification

A1

The biotope shows a tendency to decline, but the decline has not been very severe during the past decades. During the past 50 years the quantity of the biotope has decreased by more than 25%.

Recommendations for actions to conserve the biotope

All actions to reduce eutrophication will benefit the conservation status of the biotope.

Common names

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References

Hiscock, K., Wilson, E. (2007). *Metridium senile*. Plumose anemone. Marine Life Information Network: Biology and Sensitivity Key Information Sub-programme. Plymouth: Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom. Available at: http://www.marlin.ac.uk/speciesfullreview.php?speciesID=3806

Moen, E., Svenson, E. (2009) Djurliv I havet – Nordeuropeisk marin fauna. Nordstedts. 768 pp.