



1610 *Baltic esker islands with sandy, rocky and shingle beach vegetation and sublittoral vegetation*

Habitat code	1610
Priority	No
Habitat group	Coastal habitats
Regions	Boreal

Habitat 1610 Baltic esker islands with sandy, rocky and shingle beach vegetation and sublittoral vegetation.

The habitat is only present in the Boreal region in Finland and Sweden.

Esker islands are glaciofluvial islands consisting mainly of relatively well sorted sand, gravel or less commonly of till. May also have scattered stones and boulders. The vegetation of esker islands is influenced by the brackish water environment and often by the ongoing land upheaval, which causes a succession of different vegetation types. Several rare vegetation types (heaths, sands and gravel shores) and threatened species occur. The sea water around islands is part of the habitat down to the maximum depth range of macrophytes. Sweden has interpreted the maximum depth range as down to 15 meters depth.

Esker islands are also habitat complexes in that their area is partly overlapping with the area of other Annex I habitat types, e.g. Boreal Baltic sand beaches with perennial vegetation (1640), sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea all the time (1110), dune habitat types (2110, 2120, 2130, 2140, 2180, 2190, 2320), annual vegetation of drift lines (1210) and perennial vegetation on stony banks (1220).

Range and area are favourable, but structure functions and future prospects are inadequate deteriorating (U1-) in Finland and inadequate (U1=) in Sweden with the overall conclusion inadequate deteriorating (U1-).

Finland has 80% of this habitat and this is their evaluation of the structure and function:

The structure and function of Esker islands is unfavourable, because e.g. dispersed habitation and recreational use have altered many occurrences and caused trampling and overuse of sand beaches. On the other hand, sandy shores have also suffered from overgrowth by reed, trees and bushes including alien species *Rosa rugosa*. Human induced eutrophication has deteriorated the structure and function of both terrestrial and underwater parts of esker islands, especially in southern parts of the range. The underwater effects of eutrophication include increases in turbidity, silting and growth of annual filamentous algae, which narrows down the possible depth range for the macrophytes typical to the habitat type, such as the common eelgrass (*Zostera marina*). In the assessment of threatened habitat types in Finland (Kekäläinen et al. 2008) Baltic esker islands were evaluated as vulnerable (VU) habitat complex because of qualitative change in recent 50 years.

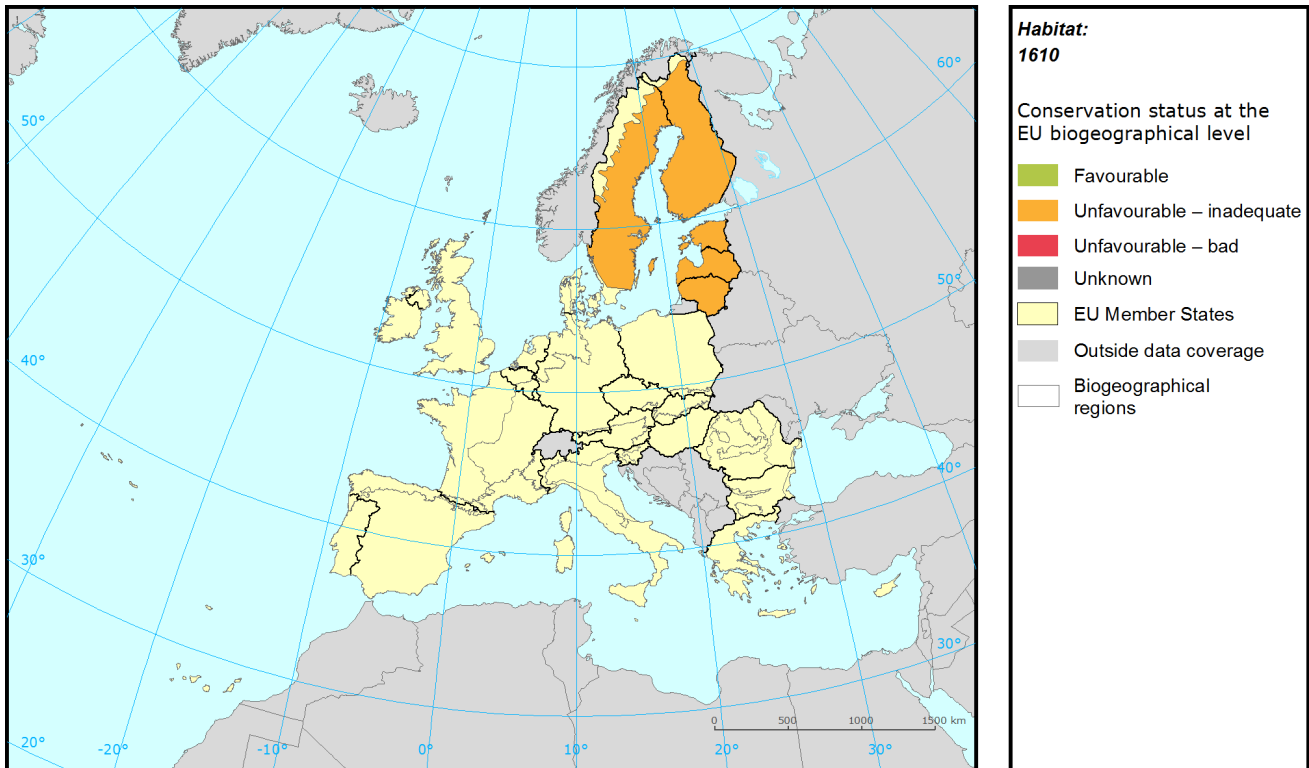
Finland assessed the habitat as inadequate U1 in 2007 and as inadequate deteriorating in 2013, but indicated “no genuine change”. Sweden assessed the habitat as favourable in

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2007 and as inadequate stable (U1) in 2013. The change is no genuine change but due to more accurate data and improved knowledge (b1). This, the assessment is inadequate deteriorating and did not change between periods.

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Assessment of conservation status at the European biogeographical level



Region	Conservation status (CS) of parameters				Current CS	Trend in CS	% in region	Previous CS	Reason for change
	Range	Area	Structure & Functions	Future prospects					
BOR	FV	FV	U1	U1	U1	-	100	U1	

See the endnote for more informationⁱ








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Assessment of conservation status at the Member State level



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Distribution and conservation status at the Member State level

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Favourable |  EU Member States |
|  Unfavourable - inadequate |  Outside data coverage |
|  Unfavourable - bad |  Biogeographical region |
|  Unknown | |

The map shows both Conservation Status and distribution using a 10 km x 10 km grid. Conservation status is assessed at biogeographical level. Therefore the representation in each grid cell is only illustrative.

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MS	Region	Conservation status (CS) of parameters				Current CS	Trend in CS	% in region	Previous CS	Reason for change
		Range	Area	Structure & functions	Future prospects					
FI	BOR	FV	FV	U1	U1	U1	-	72.9	U1	
SE	BOR	FV	FV	U1	U1	U1	=	27.1	FV	Better data

Knowing that not all changes in conservation status between the reporting periods were genuine, Member States were asked to give the reasons for changes in conservation status. Bulgaria and Romania only joined the EU in 2007 and Greece did not report for 2007-12 so no reason is given for change for these countries. Greek data shown above is from 2001-06.

Main pressures and threats reported by Member States

Member States were asked to report the 20 most important threats and pressures using an agreed hierarchical list which can be found on the [Article 17 Reference Portal](#). Pressures are activities which are currently having an impact on the habitats and threats are activities expected to have an impact in the near future. Pressures and threats were ranked in three classes 'high, medium and low importance'; the tables below only show threats and pressures classed as 'high', for some habitats there were less than ten threats or pressures reported as highly important.

Ten most frequently reported 'highly important' pressures

Code	Activity	Frequency
E03	Discharges (household/industrial)	50
H01	Pollution to surface waters	50

Ten most frequently reported 'highly important' threats

Code	Activity	Frequency
H01	Pollution to surface waters	100

Proportion of population covered by the Natura 2000 network

Member States were asked to report the area of the habitat which is covered by the Natura 2000 network. The percentage of the habitat area covered by the network was estimated by comparing the area within the network and the total area in the biogeographical/marine region.

Percentage of coverage by Natura 2000 sites in biogeographical/marine region

BOR	
FI	30
SE	33

See the endnotes for more informationⁱⁱ

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Most frequently reported conservation measures

Member States were asked to report up to 20 conservation measures being implemented for this habitat using an agreed list which can be found on the Article 17 Reference Portal. Member States were further requested to highlight up to five most important ('highly important') measures; the table below only shows measures classed as 'high', for many habitats there were less than ten measures reported as highly important.

Ten most frequently reported 'highly important' conservation measures

Code	Measure	Frequency
5.0	Other marine-related measures	20
6.1	Establish protected areas/sites	20
6.2	Establishing wilderness areas/ allowing succession	20
7.3	Regulation/ Management of fishery in marine and brackish systems	20
8.3	Managing marine traffic	20

This information is derived from the Member State national reports submitted to the European Commission under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive in 2013 and covering the period 2007-2012. More detailed information, including the MS reports, is available at:

<http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/article17/reports2012/habitat/summary/?group=Coastal+habitats&period=3&subject=1610>

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i Assessment of conservation status at the European biogeographical level: Current Conservation Status (Current CS) shows the status for the reporting period 2007-2012, Previous Conservation Status (Previous CS) for the reporting period 2000-2006. Reason for change in conservation status between the reporting periods indicates whether the changes in the status were genuine or not genuine. Previous Conservation Status was not assessed for Steppic, Black Sea and Marine Black Sea regions. For these regions the Previous status is therefore considered as 'unknown'. The percentage of the habitat area occurring within the biogeographical/marine region (% in region) is calculated based on the area of GIS distribution.

ii Percentage of coverage by Natura 2000 sites in biogeographical/marine region: In some cases the population size within the Natura 2000 network has been estimated using a different methodology to the estimate of overall population size and this can lead to percentage covers greater than 100%. In such case the value has been given as 100% and highlighted with an asterisk (*). The value 'x' indicates that the Member State has not reported the habitat area and/or the coverage by Natura 2000. No information is available for Greece. The values are only provided for regions, in which the occurrence of the habitat has been reported by the Member States.