A project that benefits the Baltic Sea...

Cyprinid fish stocks have been on the rise along the Finnish coastline, probably partly due to the eutrophication of the waterways. Cyprinid fish compete for nutrition and living space with other fish species that are economically more relevant. The efficient fishing of cyprinid fish could improve fish growth while also leaving more room for predatory fish, thus balancing out the structure of the fish fauna. According to estimates, in Finland approximately 600 tonnes of phosphorus are recycled annually from the waterways to solid ground by fishing.

...and the Finnish consumer

In the Baltic Sea and the Archipelago Sea, food production is one of the major sources of nutrient load. The project will increase consumer awareness of the connection between food production and natural water protection, and improve the perception of domestic fish as a food ingredient. Moreover, the project will support local primary production of foodstuffs through employment, income and increased investment. Introducing locally produced fish to the offerings of institutional kitchens, such as school canteens, is an ethical and ecological alternative to mass-produced meat or im-ported fish. Increasing the appreciation of cyprinid fish increases the profitability of professional fishing and, consequently, improves the availability of domestic fish to consumers.

The project will also benefit the traditional livelihood of coastal fishing, which is an integral part of the vibrant culture of the Archipelago Sea.

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SITRA'S publication *'Finnish road map to a circular economy'* highlights best practices and pilots that are easy to duplicate and provide added value on a national level. The Local Fishing project of the John Nurminen Foundation has been selected as one of the pilot projects of the sustainable food systems focus area.

LOCAL FISHING PROJECT is also one of the pilots of the NutriTrade project *(NutriTrade – Piloting a Nutrient Trading Scheme in the Central Baltic)*, which is partly funded by the EU Interreg Central Baltic programme (2015–2018). The NutriTrade project creates a system for providing and financing voluntary nutrient reduction measures in the Baltic Sea area. NutriTrade is a flagship project of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, and it is led by the John Nurminen Foundation.

JOHN NURMINEN FOUNDATION
NutriTrade Nutrient Offsetting for the Baltic Sea
EUROPEAN UNION European Regional Development Fund
Interreg Central Baltic

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THE ARCHIPELAGO SEA
LOCAL FISHING PROJECT

Of the Finnish coastal waters, the Archipelago Sea suffers from the greatest nutrient load. The objective of the Archipelago Sea Local Fishing Project is to recycle a significant amount of nutrients from sea to land by fishing that targets cyprinid fish and, at the same time, helps underused domestic fish find their way to the plates of the Finns.

CLEAN BALTIC SEA
JOHN NURMINEN FOUNDATION

ARCHIPELAGO SEA LOCAL FISHING PROJECT

TARGETS

- Recycle a significant amount of nutrients from sea to land and for practical utilization onshore by fishing cyprinid fish.
- Promote the use of domestic, underused cyprinid fish by the food industry in Finland.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Annual open call for contracted fishermen
- Committed partners in the production chain
- Duration approx. 5 years, operations expanded gradually from the Turku region to other parts of Finland.

OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- Shared ground rules for all partners
- Requirements based on fish stock management ensure the ecological and social sustainability of the project.
- All operations are open and transparent.

RECYCLE NUTRIENTS AND PUT CYPRINID FISH TO USE

FROM PILOT TO A PERMANENT PLACE IN THE FOOD CHAIN

The project seeks to create a permanent foodstuff chain as well as demand for the cyprinid fish products from both institutional kitchens and consumers. The project is estimated to last 3-5 years, and it will be implemented in two phases. In 2015–2016, during the pilot phase, a functioning production chain was built in cooperation with stakeholders from the Turku region.

In the second phase of the project, more municipalities of the coastal region are invited to join the project so that a steady demand for the fish products could be ensured from the outset, responding to the needs of, for example, institutional kitchens providing daily food services. Moreover, local fish product production and marketing are expanded, products are offered also for the consumer market, and companies from the grocery and retail fields who are prepared to commit to the productisation and marketing of the products are brought in. Created raw material side streams, such as fish offal, are to be utilised in the foodstuff chain (for example as fish feed, so-called Baltic Sea feed) or, alternatively, in energy production.

SHARED GROUND RULES ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY

All project participants are committed to the principles of sustainable fish stock management. Fishing is limited to underutilised cyprinid fish, with all endangered and predator fish released from traps. Similarly, traps must be placed so that the routes of migrating fish are not jeopardized. Project operations are as transparent as possible: fishing is monitored, and the progress of the project is communicated openly. All stakeholder groups from related fields are communicated with, and their views are heard in the project planning and implementation phases.

RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

In marine areas, the greatest benefits are achievable by removing nutrients contained in fish from the entire ecosystem, and recycling nutrients in a useful way by producing ethical local food. This, for its part, also reduces other activities that lead to nutrient discharges (e.g. industrial meat and animal feed production and imports). A balancing out of the fish stock is another possible benefit. During the project, the Natural Resources Institute of Finland will monitor the impact that the fishing of cyprinid fish has on the fish stock of the Archipelago Sea.