Estonian fisheries control action program for the Baltic Sea cod, sprat, herring and salmon in 2026.

Pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 2016/1139 and to Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 Article 46 and Commission Implementing Decision (EU) No 2018/1986, the Estonian Environmental Board (hereinafter EEB) has defined Estonian national control action program for the Baltic Sea cod, sprat, herring and salmon in 2026.

According to the Estonian National Fishing Act, adopted 19th February 2015, the Estonian Environmental Board, the Agriculture and Food Board, and the Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture have comprehensive responsibility in the field of fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance in Estonia, which has been divided between different bodies as described in Table 1.

NAME OF THE AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITY
Estonian Environmental Board	1. Inspection and surveillance 2. Enforcement and follow-up to infringements, including assignment of penalty points 3. Operating VMS 4. Collection of prior notifications from vessels not involved in electronic reporting or in the event of the break-down of the system . Cross-check of data on fishing activities, landings, take-over and first sales, VMS and prior notifications
Agriculture and Food Board	1. Collection of commercial fishing data . Management of the Electronic Recording and Reporting System 3. Quota management . Cross-check of data on fishing activities, landings, take-over and first sales, VMS and prior notifications Ministry of Rural Affairs
Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture	1. Management of Fisheries Information System on commercial fisheries and keeping it updated 2. Management of FLUX transfer of VMS data

Table 1.

The Agriculture and Food Board as the collector and manager of commercial fisheries data is conducting general cross-checks between catch, landing and first sales data. The results of these cross-checks are shared with the Environmental Board. Inspectors of Environmental Board also conduct cross-checks on the basis of individual cases (inspections or proceedings).

To achieve the best results, the above-mentioned authorities operate in full collaboration with Police and Border Guard Board, Transport Administration, Tax and Customs Board and all other relevant authorities.

MEANS OF CONTROL

Human resources in 2026

Shore based and sea-going inspectors: 17

The deployment of inspectors shall be carried out in full compliance with The Joint Deployment Plan Baltic Sea 2026. National inspectors not active in joint inspections, carry out fisheries surveillance, control and inspection in waters under Estonian jurisdiction and Estonian ports, thereat paying special attention to the fisheries and landings of cod, sprat, herring and salmon.

Technical resources

For 2026 the Environmental Board in cooperation with the Police and Border Guard Board has the possibility to use the following type of aircraft and patrol vessels for the monitoring, control and surveillance activities at sea:

Aircraft: Airplane: ES-PKY

Patrol vessels: PVL-112 „VALVE“, PVL-103 „PIKKER“, PVL-101 „KURVITS“ and PVL-203 „RAJU“

Environmental Board other possible resources: 90 boats (all equipment) - 55 boats at sea

Financial resources for fisheries control tasks:

Budget of the human resources	856 764 €
Budget of the technical resources (all technique used on the sea)	115 000 €
Special budget for implementation of the Baltic Sea JDP 2026	485 000 €
Total	1 456 764 €

Tabel 2.

ELECTRONIC RECORDING AND REPORTING OF INFORMATION RELATING TO FISHING ACTIVITIES

All fishing vessels more than 12m LOA have been provided with the electronic recording and reporting devices.

Estonia participates in the central node project in order to exchange sales notes and logbook data between Member States.

Until electronic message exchange between Member States has become fully operational, the e-mail address for sending landing declarations etc is ers.haldus@pta.agri.ee.

All fishing vessels in length more than 12 m flying Estonian flag and fishing vessels flying the flag of some other Member States in Estonian EEZ are monitored by the Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) (fisheries@keskkonnaamet.ee), located in the central unit of the EEB.

Pursuant to our domestic legislation, fishing vessels are obliged to transmit a prior notification of entry into port and total catches retained on board at least 2 hours in advance of arrival via ERS. The requirement also applies for the trips were the fishing vessel has not been involved in fishing activities.

As the FMC responsible for receiving reports and recording of information related to the fishing activities, is not operational 24/7, for vessels not involved in electronic reporting or in the event of the break-down of the system, EEB operates a 24-hour contact point for prior notifications. That contact point can be communicated by the following contacts: e-mail: 1247@1247.ee; phone: 1247 (short number), +372 600 1247 (full number / international).

All vessels, that experience problems with ERS or are not yet equipped with ERS, shall transmit their prior notifications to the above-mentioned contact point. After receiving any notification, the above-mentioned contact point enters this information to the database that can be accessed via the internet by all the inspectors and relevant authorities. Furthermore, on their request regional inspectors will be informed by SMS of the relevant prior notifications swiftly after the contact point has received it. In case a fishing vessel intends to land in some other EU Member State port then regarding to prior notification, it is obliged to follow the rules of Council Regulation 1224/2009 Articles 18.

DESIGNATION OF PORTS

According to the Environmental Minister's Regulation No 51 of 25. Nov. 2016 “Designated ports for landing Baltic Sea cod, sprat and herrings catches in Republic of Estonia” the vessels which have retained on board more than 250 kilograms of cod live weight or vessels which have retained on board more than 5000 kilograms of sprat and herring live weight are allowed to land exclusively at the following designated ports.

COD

Name of port	Region
Kalana sadam	Hiiu maakond
Lehtma sadam	Hiiu maakond
Loksa sadam	Harju maakond
Meeruse sadam	Harju maakond
Miiduranna sadam	Harju maakond
Mõntu sadam	Saare maakond
Nasva sadam	Saare maakond
Paldiski Lõunasadam	Harju maakond

Pärnu sadam	Pärnu maakond
Roomassaare sadam	Saare maakond
Suursadam	Hiiu maakond
Veere sadam	Saare maakond
Virtsu sadam	Pärnu maakond

Table 3.

SPRAT and HERRING

Name of port	Region
Bekkeri sadam	Harju maakond
Dirhami sadam	Lääne maakond
Heltermaa sadam	Hiiu maakond
Salme Jõesadam	Saare maakond
Kaavi Paadisadsam	Saare maakond
Kallaste sadam	Saare maakond
Kaunispe sadam	Saare maakond
Kihnu sadam	Pärnu maakond
Kunda sadam	Lääne-Viru maakond
Lahesuu sadam	Harju maakond
Lao sadam	Pärnu maakond
Lehtma sadam	Hiiu maakond
Leppneeme Kalasadam	Harju maakond
Lindi sadam	Pärnu maakond
Liu Väikesadam	Pärnu maakond
Loksa sadam	Harju maakond
Läätsa Paadisadam	Saare maakond
Manilaiu sadam	Pärnu maakond
Meeruse sadam	Harju maakond
Miiduranna sadam	Harju maakond
Munalaiu sadam	Harju maakond
Mõntu sadam	Saare maakond
Narva-Jõesuu sadam	Ida-Viru maakond
Nasva Jõesadam	Saare maakond
Nõva sadam	Lääne maakond
Paldiski Lõunasadam	Harju maakond
Peerni sadam	Pärnu maakond
Puise Kalasadam	Lääne maakond
Purtse Kalasadam	Ida-Viru maakond
Pärnu sadam	Pärnu maakond
Rannametsa sadam	Pärnu maakond
Ristna sadam	Harju maakond
Rohuküla sadam	Lääne maakond
Roomassaare sadam	Saare maakond
Saaremaa sadam	Saare maakond
Suaru sadam	Pärnu maakond
Sõru sadam	Hiiu maakond
Sõru Väikelaevasadam	Hiiu maakond

Tapurla sadam	Harju maakond
Toila sadam	Ida-Virumaa
Topu sadam	Lääne maakond
Treimani sadam	Pärnu maakond
Turja sadam	Saare maakond
Vana-Sauga sadam	Pärnu maakond
Varese sadam	Saare maakond
Veere sadam	Saare maakond
Virtsu sadam	Pärnu maakond
Virtsu Kalasadam	Pärnu maakond
Virtsu Vanasadam	Pärnu maakond
Võiste sadam	Pärnu maakond
Westmeri sadam	Lääne maakond

Table 4.

ENTRY INTO AND EXIT FROM SPECIFIC AREAS

To the supplement national regulation or supplementing measure has not been adopted.

LANDING CONTROL

All fishing vessels not implementing the electronic reporting and recording must have a fishing logbook on board at all the time during the fishing trip. In addition to that, information of fishing licenses and authorizations, can be received from the Fisheries Database.

During every inspection, inspectors have to analyze and estimate visually the need of sampling. In the event of doubts that percentage of fish or quantities by species do not match, a sampling must be taken. In purpose to determine the proportion of sprat and herring, at least 4 (four) samples, each exceeding 5 kg-s, from different part of the total catches, must be taken. The number of samples depends on the quantity of fish to be landed. Until 10 tons – 4 samples; 10 tons to 25 tons – 5 samples; 25 tons to 50 tons – 6 samples; and each additional 25 tons – 1 more sample.

As the main fishing grounds for cod are far from Estonian ports, the landings exceeding 250 kg are rare. The total quantity of cod landings were 528 kg in 2013, 2539 kg in 2014, 3940 kg in 2015, 1904 kg in 2016 867 kg in 2017, 980 kg in 2018, 1860 kg in 2019, 1412 kg in 2020, 902 kg in 2021, 1106 kg in 2022, 1251 kg in 2023 and 863 kg in 2024. All of it was caught by the coastal fishermen.

Salmon fishing is actual only in coastal fisheries with passive gears and the control includes also seatrout as the main fishing period coincides with the spawning migration in autumn. Surveillance is mainly focused on rivers and deltas in closed season.

Weighing the fish

According to the Environmental Minister's Regulation No 4 of 30th of January 2018 "Additional requirements and methodology for weighing fish on landing"

Under the established regime, the landed fish must be weighed in the port unless landed in a tank lorrys. The master of the fishing vessel shall be responsible for carrying out the weighing.

INSPECTION PROCEDURES

Approximately 10 minutes in advance of the inspection at sea, master of the fishing vessel will be notified. After prior notice to the Master, he has to enable a safe boarding and later safe disembarkment of inspectors and facilitate the work of inspectors in every possible way. During inspection all documentation, fishing gear, fish size, quantities of fish by species and catch composition is to be inspected and verified. Cooperation with other Member States in this regard is coordinated via central office of EEB.

No specific procedures have been agreed for communicating with the competent authorities of other relevant Member States. Starting from 2009 Estonia and all the other EU Member States of Eastern Baltic Sea allow, if necessary, direct international communication between fisheries control regional administrations and relevant central units to achieve the best possible results. In the framework of Joint Deployment Plan Baltic Sea 2026 the agreements among relevant Member States and the EFCA on technical operational procedures will be followed.

Joint surveillance and exchange of inspectors, including specification of powers and authority of inspectors operating in other relevant Member States' waters will be in compliance with the Joint Deployment Plan agreed by all relevant Member States.

SPECIFIC INSPECTION BENCHMARKS

Species	Benchmark	Objective
Cod	Inspection of landings	Not less than 10% of the cod landings to Estonian ports must be inspected.
Herring and sprat	Inspection of landings	Not less than 8% of the pelagic landings to Estonian ports must be inspected.
Salmon	Number of inspector days	250 days of surveillance
Cod, salmon, sprat and herring	Inspection of marketing	Post-landing activities are inspected regularly by the Environmental Board
Cod, herring, sprat and salmon	Inspection at sea	Sea inspections are carried out in compliance with JDP Baltic Sea 2026.
Cod, herring, sprat and salmon	Aerial surveillance	In collaboration with Police and Border Guard Board regularly in Estonian EEZ

Table 5

LIST OF ESTONIAN VESSELS AUTHORISED TO FISH COD, SALMON, SPRAT AND HERRING IN THE BALTIC SEA IN 2026

There are 19 Estonian vessels which are authorized to catch cod.

Name	
ANN-MARI I	EK-0603
BALTIK	EK-2101
HERRY	EK-9714
HIIESAARE	EK-9219
INGEL	EK-1504
KAIRE	EK-9701
KOTKAS	EK-0903
LAVASSAARE	EK-9721
MARIE	EK-1803
MILTON	EK-2102
NARVIA	EK-9222
PIIRISAARE	EK-9520
PRINGI	EK-9240
RAMSI	EK-9248
RANDI	EK-2002
ROSSVIK	EK-0601
RYTAS	EK-1301
TEMACIOUS	EK-0602
VIRU	EK-1001

There are 19 Estonian fishing vessels more than 12m LOA, which are authorized to catch sprat and herring. List of Estonian vessels authorized to catch sprat and herring is established by the Ministry of Rural Affairs and could be found here.

Name	
ANN-MARI I	EK-0603
BALTIK	EK-2101
HERRY	EK-9714
HIIESAARE	EK-9219
INGEL	EK-1504
KAIRE	EK-9701
KOTKAS	EK-0903
LAVASSAARE	EK-9721
MARIE	EK-1803
MILTON	EK-2102
NARVIA	EK-9222
PIIRISAARE	EK-9520
PRINGI	EK-9240
RAMSI	EK-9248
RANDI	EK-2002
ROSSVIK	EK-0601
RYTAS	EK-1301