

Cooperation between the Universities and Water Authorities on Phytobenthic Monitoring in Finland

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Many local surveys on the phytobenthos have been conducted in past years along the Finnish Baltic coast. However, there is no regular phytobenthic monitoring program. The local surveys were done by using various methods which makes the comparison of the results quite difficult. The need of cooperative and effective phytobenthic monitoring system was emphasised after the committee work of the Working Group for Environmental Monitoring in Nordic countries in 1992. In their publication (Nord 1992:39) they summarised all the main targets of the whole integrated ecological monitoring in Nordic coastal waters. One of those aims was to assess the phytobenthic monitoring program.

The planning of the monitoring program which would be suitable for the Finnish Baltic coast was started in 1992. The first aim was to built up the guide-lines for regular vegetation surveys along the Finnish Baltic coast. This was based on information provided in BMB (Baltic Marine Biologists), literature and special field experiences by various members of the group. The working group for planning consisted of University research workers and members from different District Water Authorities and Institutes. The National Board of Water and the Environment and the Ministry of the Environment integrated the work into a whole. First of all the working group collected data and methods of different vegetation surveys which were carried out in past 20 years. The guide-lines for monitoring the vegetation of the Finnish Baltic coast was completed in spring 1993.

The first field work period was carried out in summer 1993. The aim is to form a network of permanent vegetation transects along the coast line which will be monitored in a regular basis. The coastal areas are divided in sections which are monitored either by the University research groups or the District Water Authorities. The special interest on monitoring is paid on the coastal or archipelago areas which were named in Nord 1992:39. These areas are less polluted and they represent areas of high protection values. In autumn 1993 the results are collected and the data analysed.