

HAPLOOPS HABITAT – CRITICAL SEAFLOOR HABITATS

Why is this important?

Healthy and productive muddy seafloor habitats are an essential part of a healthy marine environment. Haploops species are small crustacean amphipods. In areas where they occur in high numbers, the small tubes they build as their homes can create a special structure in the mud sediment that creates a vital habitat for other species which in turn provide an important food source for demersal fish. These Haploops habitats are very sensitive to disturbance from bottom trawling and periodic anoxia. The area covered by this habitat has shrunk substantially from its historical distribution.

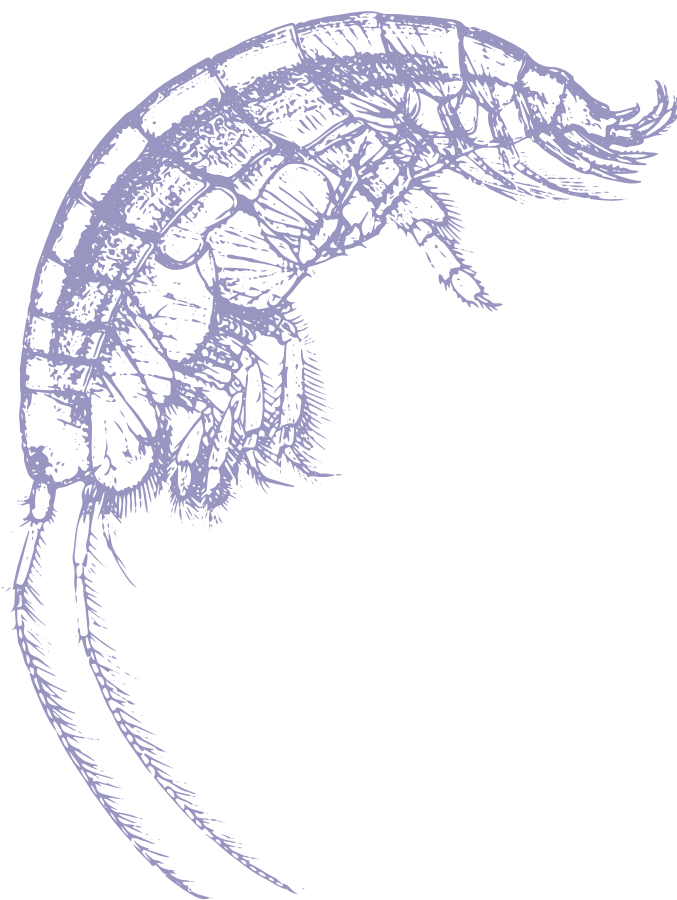
What is OSPAR doing?

OSPAR is adopting a new Recommendation to strengthen the protection of Haploops habitat. The new measure will encourage relevant OSPAR Contracting Parties to put in place measures to improve information on where Haploops habitats occur, protect Haploops habitat and work collaboratively with HELCOM to ensure coherent management and research of this habitat.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

Protecting the Haploops habitat will ensure that beneficial functions for the coastal ecosystems remain intact. The dense mats of Haploops tubes in muddy seafloor sediment provide structure to the overall seascape and filtering, feeding grounds for fish such as cod and flatfish, and increase the primary production of the seafloor community.

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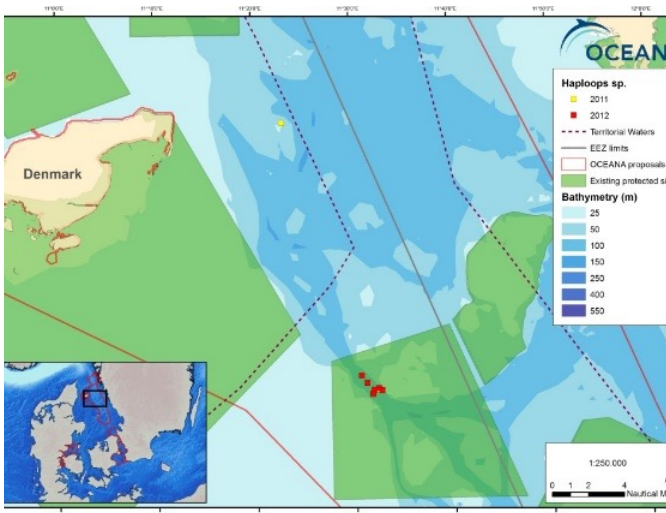
MUDDY SEDIMENT DOMINATED BY HAPLOOPS SPECIES (“HAPLOOPS HABITAT”)



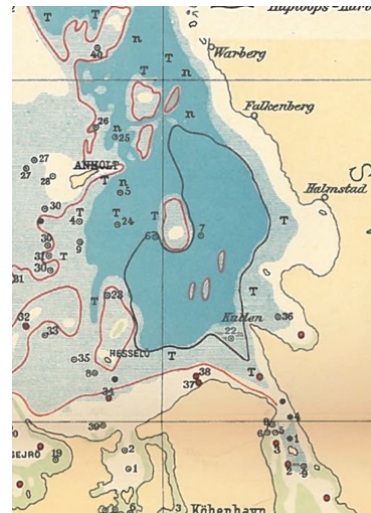
Figure 1: Photo of Haploops habitat in Kattegat, Denmark. Photo taken by ROV (Oceana, 2011)



Figure 2: A bottom sample of Haploops spp. tubes from Kattegat (OCEANA/Carlos Minguell, 2012)



a) Haploops habitat in the Kattegat, Denmark, Region II (Oceana 2014);



b) Mapping of the Haploops habitat in southern Kattegat by Petersen (1913). Community distribution encircled with black line;

For more information on Haploops,
please visit the [OSPAR website](#)

For more information on HELCOM,
please visit the [HELCOM website](#)



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