

0. Date of submission	16.8.2022
1. Member State:	Finland
2. Name of the disease:	VHS
3. Contact details:	The government of Åland PB 1060 AX-22111 MARIEHAMN ÅLAND, Finland
a. E-mail:	registrator@regeringen.ax CVO-Finland.mmm@gov.fi
b. Responsibility within the competent authority:	The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is responsible for declaring compartments free of aquatic animal diseases in accordance with Article 83 of Commission Delegated Regulation 2020/689. The Finnish Food Authority is responsible for publishing provisional declarations of compartments free from disease on its website. The Government of Åland is responsible for implementing the rules on eradication and control of animal diseases in Regulation (EU) 2016/429 and the Finnish Act on Animal Diseases (76/2021). The Åland Environmental and Health Authority (ÅMHM) is the competent authority for carrying out inspections and controls on the holdings.
c. Name:	Government of Åland, Department of Social Affairs, Health, and Environment.
4. Identification of the grounds for recognition of disease-free status:	
a. absence of listed species:	
b. disease agent's incapacity to survive	
c. historical and surveillance data	
d. completion of an eradication programme	x
5. Territorial scope of the eradication programme:	

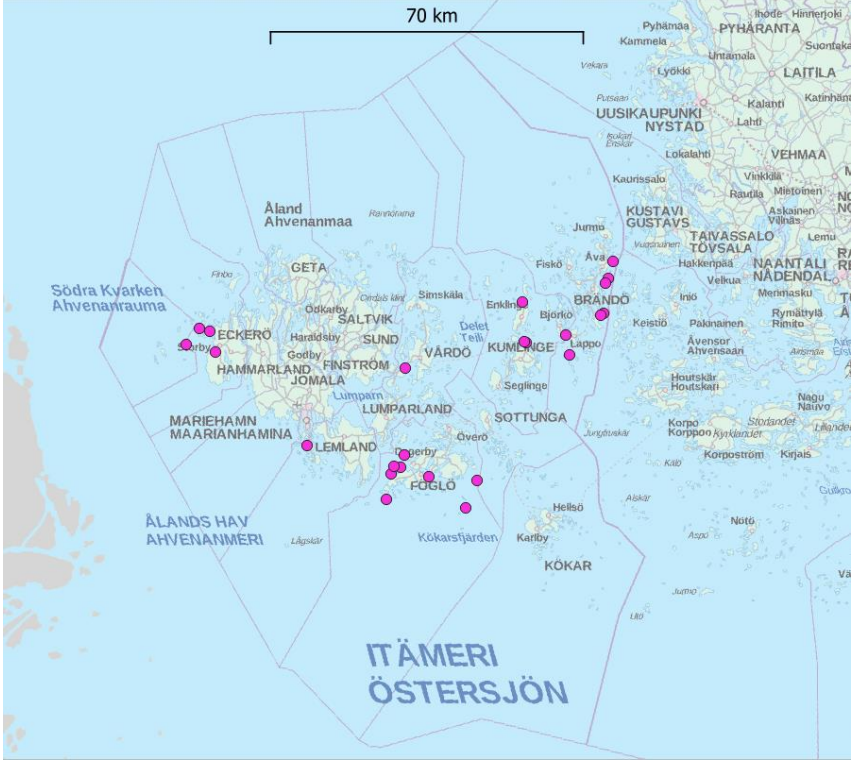
a. zone	
b. compartment	x
8. In the case of dependent compartments as referred to in point (b) of Article 73(2) of Regulation (EU) 2020/689:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the assessment referred to in point (a) of Article 73(3) of the same Regulation; and 	<p>(i) Geographical location of each establishment in the compartment and the nature of water supply</p> <p>Åland island compartment comprises of the sea area with hundreds of small islands in the province of Åland that lies between the Gulf of Bothnia and The Gulf of Finland in the South-Western Finland. This restriction compartment covers the fish farms in the whole province. It has had the status of an approved VHS-eradication programme since 2014, where 2014-2015 were supposed to be an eradication period and 2017-2020 a surveillance period. There are no physical barriers between this restriction compartment and other sea areas. All the surrounding sea areas are officially VHS free.</p> <p>There are six (<i>n</i> 6) companies with a variation of establishments, running from one (1) to nine (9) in open cage systems. Some companies have more than one approved establishment through purchases.</p> <p>i. Å 101 N: 60.01264 E: 20.18600</p> <p>ii. Å 101 N: 60.01116 E: 20.50278</p> <p>iii. Å 102 N: 60.24727 E: 20.19673</p> <p>iv. Å 103 N: 60.26150 E: 21.06300</p> <p>v. Å 103 N: 60.25320 E: 21.05900</p> <p>vi. Å 103 N: 60.21820 E: 21.05800</p> <p>vii. Å 103 N: 60.21650 E: 21.05050</p> <p>viii. Å 103 N: 60.19230 E: 20.57430</p> <p>ix. Å 103 N: 60.18710 E: 20.57070</p> <p>x. Å 103 N: 60.16480 E: 20.58650</p> <p>xi. Å 103 N: 60.17540 E: 20.47630</p>

	<p>xii. Å 103 N: 60.17611 E: 20.47240</p> <p>xiii. Å 103 N: 60.15560 E: 20.25092</p> <p>xiv. Å 103 N: 60.51617 E: 21.06918</p> <p>xv. Å 104 N: 60.15154 E: 19.29476</p> <p>xvi. Å 104 N: 60.13121 E: 19.25906</p> <p>xvii. Å 105 N: 60.15223 E: 19.28523</p> <p>xviii. Å 105 N: 60.15160 E: 19.28498</p> <p>xix. Å 106 N: 60.04203 E: 19.95544</p> <p>xx. Å 106 N: 60.03305 E: 19.97513</p> <p>xxi. Å 106 N: 60.21830 E: 20.31799</p> <p>xxii. Å 106 N: 60.15218 E: 20.29118</p> <p>xxiii. Å 106 N: 60.13707 E: 20.29735</p> <p>xxiv. Å 106 N: 59.95201 E: 20.29361</p> <p>xxv. Å 106 N: 59.94946 E: 20.61340</p> <p>xxvi. Å 106 N: 60.00522 E: 20.45580</p> <p>xxvii. Å 106 N: 60.37270 E: 20.76352</p> <p>ii) health status of the other aquaculture establishments in the water system</p> <p>the surrounding sea-areas are free of VHS</p> <p>(iii) the location of the establishments referred to in point (ii) and their distance from the dependent compartment;</p> <p>the closest aquaculture establishments are located >20 km from the border of the restriction compartment</p> <p>(iv) production volume of the establishments referred to in point (ii) as well as their method of production and the source of their animals;</p>
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	<p>production of fish amongst the fish producing companies of Åland combined a year was 5438 t kg in 2014, 5520 t kg in 2015, 5621 t kg in 2016, 5998 t kg in 2017, 5827 t kg in 2018, 6182 t kg in 2019, 5571 t kg in 2020 and 4908 t kg in 2021</p> <p>(v) presence and abundance of wild aquatic animals from relevant listed species in the water system and their health status (vi) details of whether the species referred- to in point (v) are sedentary or migratory; (vii) possibility of the wild aquatic animals referred to in point (v) entering the compartment;</p> <p>wild fish move freely in the compartment. Anadromous Atlantic salmon cross the area during their migration. Some rainbow trout escapees may be found but wild rainbow trout does not exist in Åland. Wild fish were tested for VHS during the years 2005-2008 in the restriction compartment and the study showed wild fish were negligible transmitters of VHS in the restriction compartment.</p> <p>(viii) general biosecurity measures in the compartment;</p> <p>approved establishments are required to meet the biosecurity standards in the EU legislation. This is controlled on a regular basis. The application for approval must include a description of the health control system and biosecurity measurements of the company and each of its farms. All establishments in the compartment and elsewhere in Finland purchase fish from VHS free establishments.</p> <p>(ix) general hydrological conditions on the water system;</p> <p>the Åland island compartment comprises the sea area with hundreds of small islands in the province of Åland that lies between the Gulf of Bothnia and The Gulf of Finland in the South-Western Finland. Water is brackish water with a salt content of circa 0.30-0.35 %. There are no physical barriers between this restriction compartment and the sea, however all the surrounding areas are declared free of VHS.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of any measures which were imposed by the competent authority to prevent the introduction of the relevant disease to the compartment. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the assessment referred to in point (b) of Article 177 of Regulation (EU) 429/2016: 	<p>operator Å 102 has multiple cages for release fish that was tested at the main location. It is kept under one common biosecurity system and the aquaculture animals of the establishments form part of the same epidemiological unit.</p>
<p>9. Statement confirming that the relevant general criteria in accordance with point (a) of Article 66 of Regulation (EU) 2020/689 for zones, or with point (a) of Article 73(1) of that Regulation for aquatic compartments, are complied with.</p>	<p>It is confirmed that the relevant general criteria in accordance with point (a) of Article 73(1) of Regulation (EU) 2020/689 are complied with.</p> <p>VHS was first detected in Åland in the year of 2000 and the number of outbreaks rose in the following years due to problems with biosecurity. In 2006 a VHS research project was launched, and the number of outbreaks started decreasing. No VHS outbreaks has been found since the year of 2012, but not all previously infected establishments had been emptied, cleaned and disinfected and fallowed, and could therefore not be declared VHS free.</p> <p>A VHS eradication programme was launched in 2014. Establishments with previous outbreaks of VHS were emptied, sanitized with follow up control and kept empty for a period of >6 weeks with follow up control during the years 2014-2019. The number of establishments with previous positive VHS samplings which had not been emptied, cleaned, and disinfected and fallowed (however no positive findings since 2012) were as follows; year 2014: 14, year 2015: 10, year 2016: 10, year 2017: 4, year 2018: 3, year 2019: 3.</p> <p>In 2020 an intensive surveillance programme started with a plan of declaring the whole compartment free of VHS in two years. At that time, all the establishments in Åland had been declared officially free of VHS. According to the programme, each establishment keeping susceptible species >4 months per year was inspected and sampled twice a year with a sample size of 75 fish and each establishment keeping susceptible species <4 months per year was inspected and sampled once per year with a sample size of 75 fish. However, in 2021 two establishments keeping susceptible species >4 months were sampled only once due to the outbreak of IHN and lack of resources. Those two establishments were sampled in spring 2022 with negative test results.</p>
<p>12. When the grounds for recognition of disease-free status is based on the completion of an eradication programme, for each year of</p>	

the programme, information must be supplied concerning:	
a. the aquaculture establishments and where relevant, the sampling points in the wild in the zone/compartment:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of approved aquaculture establishments in the programme; 	five companies with a total of 30-34 establishments with susceptible species, mainly rainbow trout. Some establishments are not in use every year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of registered aquaculture establishments in the programme (where relevant); 	one aquaculture establishment is registered, holding whitefish, rainbow trout and pike for release
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of sampling points in wild populations (where relevant); 	during the years 2005-2008 a total of 1636 samplings from wild fish of 17 different species, at a water temperature of 2-13 °C, were collected in the immediate vicinity of two of the VHS-positive food fish farms. All samples tested negative by virus isolation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps showing approved and registered aquaculture establishments, and where relevant, sampling points in the wild; 	

	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of aquaculture establishments, and where relevant, sampling points in the wild, out of the total number of aquaculture establishments and sampling points in the wild, which are not infected; 	<p>year 2020: 30/30 establishments were free of VHS</p> <p>year 2021: 31/31 establishments were free of VHS at testing, two samples were not taken due to an outbreak of IHN and since lack of resources at ÅMHM the competent authority for carrying out controls,</p> <p>year 2022: 2/2 establishments tested were free of VHS when the remaining two samples since the year 2021 were carried out</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of aquaculture establishments, and where relevant, sampling points in the wild, out of the total number of aquaculture establishments and sampling points in the wild, with confirmed cases; 	<p>no establishments with confirmed cases since the year of 2012 and no establishments under restrictions since the year of 2020</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new aquaculture establishments, and where relevant, sampling points in the wild, out of the total number of aquaculture establishments and sampling points in the wild, with confirmed cases. 	<p>no new establishments were reinfected since 2012</p>

<p>b. animal health visits and sampling which have been completed:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of health visits per approved and where relevant, per registered aquaculture establishment; 	<p>two health visits per year in both registered and approved establishments keeping fish >4 months per year, one health visit per year in both registered and approved establishments keeping fish <4 months per year.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of samplings per approved, and where relevant, per registered aquaculture establishment, or samplings in wild populations; 	<p>establishments with fish of susceptible species for >4 months per year have been sampled two (2) times yearly, with one exception in 2021 when two (2) establishments were only sampled once due to an IHN outbreak followed by lack of resources. Establishments with fish of susceptible species <4 months have been sampled one (1) time yearly.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of animals sampled at each sampling event; 	<p>75</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species sampled; 	<p>rainbow trout, salmon trout, whitefish and pike</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results from each laboratory examination (positive/negative for the pathogen in question); 	<p>all negative since the year of 2012.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results from each clinical inspection; 	<p>no clinical signs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water temperature at the time of sampling. 	<p>under 14°C.</p>