

5th MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO ASCOBANS
The Netherlands, 18 - 20 September and 12 December 2006

Resolution No. 7

**Research on Habitat Quality, Health and Status of
Small Cetaceans in the Agreement Area**

Recalling that the conservation, research and management measures listed in the Conservation and Management Plan in the Annex to the Agreement require an action plan for the full implementation of the Agreement;

Recognizing the commitments by the Parties in other international bodies and fora to cetacean conservation and other commitments that will aid cetaceans;

Reaffirming the importance of the need for Parties to cooperate and not to duplicate the work of other international bodies and the desirability of drawing upon their expertise;

Recognizing the requirements under EU legislation;

Recalling that ASCOBANS endorsed (MoP3, Res. No.7) the IWC programme of research that investigates the causative link between levels of pollutants and physiological responses in cetaceans, known as POLLUTION 2000+;

Recalling that OSPAR, HELCOM and the European Commission through its Chemicals Strategy are working towards reduction of emissions and sources of chemical pollutants and will develop their objectives and strategy with regard to hazardous substances further; and RECOGNIZING previous ASCOBANS action in drawing the attention of OSPAR and HELCOM to substances hazardous to small cetaceans;

Recalling that OSPAR and HELCOM are working towards the conservation of marine biodiversity. OSPAR has in 2005 adopted an Ecological Quality Objective for harbour porpoise bycatch in the North Sea. A network of Baltic Sea protected areas for harbour porpoises have been established under HELCOM. HELCOM acknowledged the actions taken by ASCOBANS and gives political support to the adoption and implementation of the Recovery Plan for Baltic harbour porpoise, the Jastarnia Plan (HELCOM Bremen Declaration 2003).

Noting that knowledge of the harbour porpoise is better developed than that of most small cetacean species;

Noting the recommendations related to noise impacts on cetaceans that were developed at the 58th IWC Scientific Meeting in 2006 and endorsed by the IWC.

Recalling the commitment of ASCOBANS to non-lethal research;

Commending existing efforts to identify and protect specific areas for small cetaceans;

In conjunction with Resolutions 1, 4 and 9 adopted at this meeting;

The Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS

Recommends a one day workshop to establish criteria and guidelines for the identification of sites of importance for small cetaceans should be held as soon as possible;

Invites Parties and Range States to

Continue or *Initiate* research aimed at identifying the location of any further suitable sites for the establishment of protected areas, and to implement appropriate management actions in these areas on their own or in the context of other intergovernmental bodies to ensure the protection of small cetaceans;

Continue or *Initiate* support for schemes that ensure that the bodies stranded and/or bycaught small cetaceans are, where appropriate, subject to full and expert post-mortem analysis for cause of death and any other studies relevant to conservation, including pathological indications for acoustic trauma, and take appropriate measures to reduce those impacts on small cetacean populations, recognised to increase mortality rates;

Continue to support the POLLUTION 2000+ initiative and *to support* research into the occurrence and potential effects of priority chemicals identified by OSPAR and HELCOM (including brominated flame retardants, organotins and other endocrine disrupting chemicals) with the aim of collecting information on the distribution and accumulation of these compounds and their effects, and to ensure that this information is brought to the attention of authorities responsible for the reduction of such pollution;

Continue to support co-operative work with the IWC Scientific Committee and the SCANS II programme on the management procedure approach for limiting anthropogenic removals from small cetacean populations in the agreement area ;

Continue to support efforts to develop efficient long-term monitoring methods for small cetaceans of sufficient power to detect trends in status and distribution to be of use to management;

Continue to support non-lethal research, with the emphasis on the less well-known cetacean species of the ASCOBANS area, in particular as regards life-history parameters and population structure;

Encourage further research relevant to ASCOBANS objectives on abundance, life history parameters, distribution, migration patterns and population structure of small cetaceans as a basis for an improvement of conservation measures;

Repeals Resolution 8 of the 4th Meeting of the Parties.