

REPORT OF THE 20TH MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Warsaw, Poland

27-29 August 2013



**Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans
of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas**

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LIST OF ACTION POINTS AND DECISIONS

of the 20th ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Meeting

Scientific Session

1. All Action Points agreed at the 9th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group were endorsed by the Advisory Committee (Annex 6).
2. The Terms of Reference of the Jastarnia Group and the North Sea Group were amended to allow mutual representation between them (Annexes 7 and 8).
3. The Jastarnia Group will consider the representation of environmental and fisheries organizations and make a concrete proposal to the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.
4. All Action Points agreed at the 3rd Meeting of the North Sea Group were endorsed by the Advisory Committee (Annex 9).
5. The joint CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat will request the European Commission to provide information on the current status of the revision of EC Reg.812/2004 and the expected timelines for a decision on the European Parliament Fisheries Committee's proposal for a comprehensive review by 2015.
6. The Secretariat, with the support of the Bycatch Working Group, will compile a list of all previous recommendations made by the Advisory Committee and its working groups regarding cetacean bycatch to be submitted to the European Commission.
7. The Terms of Reference of the Bycatch Working Group were amended with an additional action point (Annex 10).
8. Data on fishing effort and bycatch rates provided by Parties to the EC and/or ICES should be submitted in the required reporting format, allowing for spatial (ICES divisions) and temporal (monthly/quarterly) stratification.
9. Terms of Reference for a working group for the further development of management procedures for defining the threshold of 'unacceptable interactions' were endorsed by the Meeting (Annex 12).
10. Parties that are members of OSPAR will provide their comments on the draft Marine Mammal Indicators through their national experts on ICG-COBAM.
11. It was agreed that the joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Noise Working Group should be extended to include CMS with appropriately amended Terms of Reference (see Annex 13). The Secretariats of ACCOBAMS and CMS are requested to present these to the appropriate bodies for endorsement.
12. It was agreed that the joint Noise Working Group should continue to have co-Chairs.
13. The offer from OceanCare to serve as co-Chair of the joint Noise Working Group was gratefully accepted.
14. The Secretariat will liaise with HELCOM and OSPAR to ascertain how ASCOBANS can best support their processes regarding underwater ordnance.
15. At appropriate fora of HELCOM and OSPAR, Parties will stress the importance of environmentally-friendly removal of underwater ordnance.
16. The Secretariat should collate the information that Parties submit to the appropriate fora in HELCOM and OSPAR relating to underwater ordnance (location, quantity and plans, methods and technologies for its safe removal) to enable the Advisory Committee to make progress with Work Plan Activity 5.

17. The Secretariat will ask Parties to provide details of those responsible for cetacean rescue, and what laws require, allow and prohibit in each country.
18. The meeting recognized SCANS-III as a priority and Parties are urged to provide the matching funding needed.
19. The project coordinators running SCANS-III are encouraged to liaise with their counterparts organizing the T-NASS survey in order to make the results as compatible as possible and exchange expertise.
20. Parties are encouraged to continue to provide support to appropriate monitoring work in the Baltic as a follow-up of the SAMBAH project.
21. Management units need to be established for all the regularly occurring small cetacean species in the area of overlap of ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS. Priority should be given to those species for which there is not only evidence of sub-structuring but also which appear to be especially vulnerable to anthropogenic activities. Species identified in the region include *inter alia* killer whale, bottlenose dolphin, Risso's dolphin, pilot whale and harbour porpoise.
22. The Secretariat was instructed to contact the Faroese authorities with a request to provide information on recent hunts.
23. Parties were invited to provide information on large cetaceans in their waters to the chair of the Informal Working Group, where appropriate with a regional focus.
24. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the donation by the Humane Society International to ASCOBANS outreach activities.
25. Parties were encouraged to provide voluntary contributions in support of the activities outlined in [AC20/Doc.6.2.b](#).
26. There was unanimous endorsement of the proposal by Poland to give the ASCOBANS Lifetime Award to Dr. Karl-Hermann Kock (see Annex 15). The Secretariat will have a glass award prepared and will look for the appropriate occasion to make the presentation.

Institutional Session

27. Belgium, Lithuania and the United Kingdom were encouraged to complete their acceptance procedures for the 2003 amendment to the Agreement.
28. The Secretariat will lead a consultation process with key players, including the chairs of the intersessional working groups, to determine the content of the new national reporting format.
29. The Joint Noise Working Group and the Secretariats of ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS, in consultation with ECS, are requested to prepare a proposal for a workshop on underwater noise to be held in the margins of the 2014 ECS Conference.
30. ASCOBANS National Coordinators should liaise with their CMS National Focal Points to feed any input into the working group developing the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species. ASCOBANS observers are invited to contribute to this process by submitting input to the working group.
31. The Advisory Committee endorsed ASCOBANS' participation in the Migratory Species Champion Programme.
32. The revised draft Terms of Reference of the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS MSFD Working Group were endorsed by the Meeting (Annex 16). The draft will be submitted by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat to their Scientific Committee and MOP for their approval.

33. Sinéad Murphy's offer to co-chair the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS MSFD Working Group on behalf of ASCOBANS was gratefully accepted. The ACCOBAMS Secretariat would seek a second co-chair from its region.
34. The Secretariat will seek and facilitate where appropriate stronger stakeholder engagement through meetings and other fora, in order to further the conservation objectives of ASCOBANS.
35. National representatives should seek opportunities to participate in local stakeholder meetings.
36. The representation of ASCOBANS in meetings of other relevant organizations was decided as reflected in Annex 17.
37. Parties accepted all the Secretariat's reports on administrative and budgetary matters for 2012 and 2013.
38. Parties agreed to allocate the funds available for conservation projects to the "Preparation for SCANS-III" submitted by the University of St. Andrews, United Kingdom.
39. The Secretariat will prepare a list of all intersessional working groups, including their membership and terms of reference, as an annex to the report of this meeting (Annex 18).
40. The 21st Meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held in Gothenburg at the kind invitation of Sweden. Dates will be confirmed in due course.
41. Documents for the next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be divided into meeting documents and information documents.
42. Sami Hassani (France) and Penina Blankett (Finland) were unanimously elected as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee for another term.

REPORT OF THE 20TH MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. Opening of the Meeting

1. Sami Hassani (France), Chair of the Advisory Committee, declared the meeting open and expressed his thanks to the Hosts. Borja Heredia (Secretariat) welcomed the participants, and thanked all those who had helped in the preparations of the meeting. The new Executive Secretary of CMS (and Acting Executive Secretary of ASCOBANS), Bradnee Chambers, would be attending the final day of the meeting. He added that a number of international processes of direct interest to ASCOBANS were under way: the UN had just held a meeting in New York on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, while the EU was reviewing its fisheries and marine policies. The Chair then called upon Janusz Zaleski, Under-Secretary of State and Chief Nature Conservator of the Polish Ministry of the Environment, to give the opening address.

1.1 Welcoming Remarks

2. Under-Secretary Zaleski welcomed the participants in the Advisory Committee to Warsaw, the symbol of which was appropriately enough a mermaid. All people gathered for the meeting shared a common interest in the cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas and the advancement of policies for the protection of the environment had to be progressed hand-in-hand with policies governing other uses of the sea. New challenges were constantly emerging, and the task of ASCOBANS was to meet them.

3. A text of the Under-Secretary's address is included in this report as Annex 5.

1.2 Adoption of the Agenda

4. There were no proposals for changes to be made to the Rules of Procedure; these were therefore adopted.

5. Subject only to minor changes to the proposed running order to allow more time to prepare the report of the North Sea Group, which had only met the previous day, the Agenda and Schedule were adopted as presented. There were no comments on the Annotated Agenda or list of documents.

1.3 Opening of the Scientific Session

6. The Chair invited Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) to present AC20/Doc.1.3. She explained that since this meeting was the first in the intersessional period, the progress indicated for most items in the Work Plan was limited. Actions were foreseen for a number of players – principally the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee. The Annotated Agenda contained comprehensive cross referencing to items in the Work Plan.

2. Implementation of the Harbour Porpoise Action Plans

7. Reminding participants that the report on the North Sea Group would be taken on the second day to allow time for it to be prepared, the Chair called upon Rüdiger Strempel (Coalition Clean Baltic), the Chair of the Jastarnia Group, to report on the meeting held in Gothenburg in April 2013.

2.1 Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan)

2.1.1 Report and Action Points of the 9th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

8. Rüdiger Stempel (Coalition Clean Baltic) reported that the 9th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group had been held back-to-back with a workshop on the SAMBAH project. The meeting had also for the first time dealt with the “gap area” (see agenda item 2. 3: Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat). The report of the meeting was available as AC20/Doc.2.1.1.a. The Group had agreed 24 Action Points related to the implementation of the Jastarnia Plan (Annex 6).

9. In view of the heavy agenda at its meeting, the Group had not been able to review its Terms of Reference (TOR), which would possibly have to be amended to accommodate two proposed changes, namely allowing cross representation between the North Sea and Jastarnia Groups and opening membership of the Jastarnia Group to more NGO representatives. The first proposal, which would allow the North Sea Coordinator to attend meetings of the Jastarnia Group, was uncontroversial and was adopted. A number of options were on the table regarding extending membership, ranging from having no limit on the number of NGOs to retaining the status quo which restricted numbers to one from the conservation sector and one from fisheries interests. Compromise options would be to allow two or three NGOs from each side to be approved by the Parties or requiring proof from candidate organizations that they would make a tangible contribution.

10. There was some discussion on the optimal size of the Jastarnia Group. The original TOR restricted the number of NGOs in order to keep the Group small and manageable. A slight relaxation of the rules would not compromise the original intention. It was also pointed out that interest on the part of fisheries organizations had been limited, with no one replacing the former representative when he retired. It was also possible that it was known that there were only two places for NGOs on the Group, and this had served as a disincentive for requests to attend. Maj Munk (Denmark) had not been aware of any problems in the operation of the Jastarnia Group and felt its relatively small size was an advantage especially with regard to logistical considerations. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) explained that one NGO had expressed an interest in participating but was unable to because of the limits set by the TOR.

11. Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International) suggested that not being inclusive and transparent was inconsistent with the aims of ASCOBANS, and there was no reason to have such restrictive provisions applying to the Jastarnia Group, especially when no such limitations had been considered necessary in the equivalent body in the North Sea. He and other NGO representatives felt that it was unlikely that there would be many requests to attend and in the event of attendance increasing, the Group could rely on its chair to manage the meetings and restrict speaking time if necessary. Mr Simmonds also pointed out that conservation and fisheries NGOs were not necessarily diametrically opposed, and certainly conservation NGOs did not consider themselves to be “anti-fisheries”.

12. Mr Stempel said that there might be organizations closely tied to the Baltic that would be interested in the Jastarnia Group and its work but not in ASCOBANS as a whole, so did not think that the Group could simply adopt the list of observers recognized for the Advisory Committee, as had been suggested. Oliver Schall (Germany) said that the Group was intended to provide scientific advice and should not be politicized. Margi Prideaux (Wild Migration) referred to the study recently conducted by her organization into the participation of civil society in the work of the CMS Family, and stressed the keen interest of the scientific community to be involved. She urged that as flexible an approach as possible be adopted, especially as ASCOBANS and the Jastarnia Group were likely to attract a specialized audience.

13. Monika Łaskawska-Wolszczak (WWF Poland) was concerned that allowing a limited number of organizations on a “first come, first served” basis could result in organizations such as Coalition Clean Baltic, which provided the Jastarnia Group’s chair, being prevented from participating. It was pointed out that there could be special provisions made for

exempting an NGO from the numeric restrictions in such circumstances. Doubts were expressed about whether a small number of NGOs could properly represent all interests, and Meike Schediat (Netherlands) suggested allowing greater access and reviewing the arrangements if difficulties arose. Christina Lockyer (NAMMCO) said that in her experience it was important to agree appropriate TOR for different bodies, and the criteria for the Jastarnia Group would not be the same as for the Advisory Committee.

14. As none of the Parties had strong views on the matter, Mr Stempel was asked to consult members of the Jastarnia Group during the meeting to ascertain their preference. He subsequently reported that some Parties favoured the option limiting the number of NGOs to two or three to ensure that they did not outnumber the Party representatives, while others were not concerned about numbers but wished to retain the right of approving participation. In the absence of a consensus the Advisory Committee referred the question of the TOR back to the Jastarnia Group, asking that its members consider the issues before the Group's next meeting so that a firm recommendation could be agreed for consideration at the next AC.

15. Ms Frisch announced that the preferred dates for the 10th meeting of the Jastarnia Group were 1-3 April 2014, shortly before the ECS meeting in Liège, Belgium. No offers had been received to host the meeting, and the Secretariat asked for offers to be made by the end of October 2013.

2.1.2 Reports from Parties

16. There were no further comments from Parties.

Action Points and Decisions

- 1) All Action Points agreed at the 9th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group were endorsed by the Advisory Committee (Annex 6).
- 2) The Terms of Reference of the Jastarnia Group and the North Sea Group were amended to allow mutual representation between them (Annexes 7 and 8).
- 3) The Jastarnia Group will consider the representation of environmental and fisheries organizations and make a concrete proposal to the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.

2.2 Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea

2.2.1 Report and Action Points of the North Sea Group

17. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) gave a presentation on AC20/Doc.2.2.1.c, underlining the three general considerations forming the backbone of the Conservation Plan: the need to address major information gaps in order to assess properly the conservation status of the harbour porpoise and to develop appropriate management actions; the necessity of carrying out monitoring to ascertain population trends and the effectiveness of any management actions; and carrying out periodic reviews for adjusting the Plan based on the results. She described the main roles of the Coordinator and the Steering Group, namely: promoting and coordinating implementation, documenting implementation, communication and evaluating effectiveness. In the period 2012-13 the focus had been on high priority actions: A1 (Coordination), A2 (Implementation of existing regulation), 3 (observation programmes on small vessel and recreational fisheries), 4 (Regular evaluation of all fisheries), 7 (Monitoring trends in abundance) and 8 (Stock structure). Actions also falling within the remit of other ASCOBANS WG (A5, Review of mitigation methods; A6, finalising a management procedure) and actions of medium priority (A9-12) were given lower priority. Ms Desportes outlined the achievements relating the principal activities since the

adoption of the Plan. Progress had been made, but targets were not fulfilled. The implementation of existing regulations (A2) was mostly limited to the implementation of EC Regulation 812/2004 (which was considered inadequate) disregarding wider measures under the Habitat Directives. Methods had been developed for monitoring in vessels under 15 metres in length (A3), but were not implemented at a representative scale nor in recreational fisheries. The regular evaluation of all fisheries (A4) had not been implemented, even in fisheries known to have high bycatch rate such as gillnet fisheries. In fact, less was known on bycatch at present than at the adoption of the Plan. Monitoring abundance trends had been done at a local scale but had not been coordinated and abundance data were patchy in space and time and could not be evaluated at a population level. Reviewing stock structure (A8) had led to different lines of evidence indicating sub-structures in North Sea populations, but no divisions emerged. In conclusion, some progress had been achieved but the conservation status of the harbour porpoise in the North Sea was still not known nor was the effectiveness of the mitigation measures adopted. Increased effort was needed in promoting the Conservation Plan.

18. There was a discussion of the best method of calculating fisheries effort. The weakness of using “days at sea” was that it took no account of the number of nets or the length of time they were deployed.

19. Martine van den Heuvel-Greve (Netherlands), Chair of the North Sea Steering Group (NSSG), reported on the third meeting which had taken place on 26 August and had been attended by representatives of all Range States. The discussion had focused on the progress of the implementation of several actions of the North Sea Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises using the report of August 2013 written by the Coordinator as a starting point. Ten Action Points arose from the third meeting (Annex 9).

20. The fourth meeting of the NSSG was scheduled to be held on the day before the next Advisory Committee meeting in 2014. In addition, a telephone conference was being planned for November/December 2013.

2.2.2 Reports from Parties

21. There were no further reports from Parties.

Action Points and Decisions

- 4) All Action Points agreed at the 3rd Meeting of the North Sea Group were endorsed by the Advisory Committee (Annex 9).

2.3 Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat

22. The Chair invited Rüdiger Strempele (Coalition Clean Baltic) as Chair of the Jastarnia Group to report on the first meeting of the Group dealing with the “gap area”.

2.3.1 Report and Action Points of the 9th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

23. Rüdiger Strempele (Coalition Clean Baltic) said that the wording of the Action Plan was quite specific, leaving little room for development and suggestions for further implementation. However, the Group had examined ways of delivering what was required and providing maximum added value. A list of 17 Action Points had been compiled during the meeting, which were endorsed by the Advisory Committee (Annex 6; see also AC20 Action Point 1).

2.3.2 Reports from Parties

24. Maj Munk (Denmark) reported that new data were available regarding the harbour porpoise population and population density in this area. The situation seemed to be better than had been feared. The report had only just been received and the authors were not present to take questions. Rüdiger Strempel (Coalition Clean Baltic) welcomed the fact that the report painted a more optimistic picture but stressed that the population in the “gap area” was still declining.

3. Review of New Information on Threats to Small Cetaceans

3.1 Bycatch

25. A number of documents had been submitted to the Advisory Committee for its consideration under this agenda item.

26. Kelly MacLeod (United Kingdom) introduced AC20/Doc.3.1.a “ICES 2013: Report on the Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC)”. She referred participants to the page on the ICES Website related to bycatch.

27. Yvon Morizur (France) provided further details of the ICES Workshop on Bycatch of Cetaceans and other Protected Species (WKBYC), the report of which was contained in AC20/Doc.3.1.b. The workshop had been an opportunity for ICES to refine its advice to the European Commission on issues such as the review of Regulation 812/2004, including the use of acoustic deterrent devices (“pingers”) and the collection of bycatch data on fisheries, as contained in AC20/Doc.3.1.c.

28. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) referred to AC20/Doc.3.1.d describing the processes within the European Union for amending Regulation 812/2004. Initially the European Commission had indicated that there would be no fundamental review of legislation, just an alignment of the texts to refer to the appropriate legal basis. However, the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament had proposed substantive changes. These proposals had been sent to the Council with a request that the Commission evaluate the effectiveness of the existing measures by 2015.

29. Oliver Schall (Germany) said that the North Sea Group had already considered how it could best influence the process and he suggested that the Jastarnia Group should do the same.

30. Ms Frisch thanked Germany for having kept the Secretariat informed and she asked what stage the iterative process of consultation between the European Parliament and Council had reached.

31. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) supported by Rüdiger Strempel (Coalition Clean Baltic) said that ASCOBANS had considered the issues in depth over the years. It would be helpful if the Secretariat could compile a list of decisions which could form the basis of any input or advice that the Agreement could contribute. Ms Frisch said that the Secretariat could compile such a catalogue of decisions but her understanding was that the European Parliament wanted a review of all measures relating to cetacean conservation, not just Regulation 812/2004. Consideration should be given to the potential role of ASCOBANS as well as of ASCOBANS Parties, all of which were EU member states. Ms Desportes suggested channelling any advice through the Bycatch Working Group rather than the sub-regional groups dealing with the three conservation plans.

32. Maj Munk (Denmark) said that Parties should ensure that what was said in EU forums was consistent with what was said in ASCOBANS. Mr Strempel agreed that Parties should ensure that their policies were consistent in both fora, and felt that ASCOBANS should contribute its unparalleled expertise to relevant fora and processes. He stressed that the EU and ASCOBANS operated in parallel, not discretely. It was for ASCOBANS as a whole rather than specific Working Groups to engage with the Commission and for Parties to

promote agreed positions within the European policy frameworks. Monika Lesz (Poland) urged that the findings of projects funded by ASCOBANS should be fed into EU deliberations. Martine Bigan (France) saw no obstacles to ASCOBANS seeking information from the Commission or for ASCOBANS to provide data and input based on its expertise in return. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that tactical considerations over the timing of any ASCOBANS input should be made, but that the importance of addressing bycatch as a global rather than just European problem should be stressed. Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS) said that the same considerations arose in the Mediterranean and it was important to keep track of the EU calendar so that interventions could be made at appropriate times. Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that other relevant policies were being developed in the EU beyond fisheries, particularly in the environmental field.

33. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Bycatch Working Group were amended to include the task of assisting the Secretariat with compiling the list of previous recommendations of the Advisory Committee and its working groups regarding cetacean bycatch (Annex 10).

34. Eunice Pinn (United Kingdom) gave a presentation on making choices necessary for the definition of unacceptable interaction (AC20/Doc.3.1.2; slides attached as Annex 11). ASCOBANS had at its last MOP re-endorsed its relatively simple approach to bycatch levels, which however needed further definition in order to become usable for modelling exercises. One of the issues that needed to be addressed was a definition of “the long term” for reaching the desired level of population recovery to 80 per cent of carrying capacity; some authorities used 100 years, while others used 200. Also, it was necessary to define whether this target needed to be met on average, or during a higher percentage of time. A related question concerned the definition of management units, which could be explored further by means of these modelling exercises.

35. Mr Haelters commented that the harbour porpoise population in the wider North Sea was estimated at 300,000. While this was not as high as it could be, it was not so low that extinction was an immediate possibility. He also asked about other species. Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International) asked whether the concept of “societal choice” was helpful to the cause of harbour porpoise conservation, advocating that political and scientific considerations should be dealt with separately. He enquired whether there were sufficient data available for “Management Units” to be defined in a way that was acceptable to all. The presentation had referred to various thresholds of bycatch, and Mr Simmonds asked about their scientific basis. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) said that “management units” (MUs) caused problems where they did not coincide with biological boundaries. Ms Pinn explained that the MUs were based on biological boundaries and that a paper outlining the units and the evidence used to determine them for UK waters was due to be published in the near future.

36. Fabian Ritter (WDC) stressed that nothing other than a zero rate was acceptable, and questioned whether a debate over acceptable removal rates was fruitful. Cumulative effects with other anthropogenic threats also had to be taken into account. MU boundaries should be based on the best available scientific information, and with the most precautionary approach. In his opinion there was considerable evidence to support the treatment of the North Sea as more than one unit for harbour porpoises. Hence, some time to reflect on this complex subject would likely be needed, especially as the actual determination of safe removal rates was a highly technical endeavour of specialists. It was crucial for the Advisory Committee to understand the matter and its implications fully. Also, considerable resources were needed that could potentially be used for other more pressing issues. Mr Haelters (Belgium) added that the boundaries of MUs needed to take account of the fact that the species concerned were mobile and migrated (as the SCANS I and II surveys had shown). Conservation measures had to be implemented and management units had been defined by ICES WGMME as shown in AC20/Doc.3.1.1. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) suggested that ASCOBANS should provide advice on the carrying capacity of the waters within its area.

37. Mr Haelters said that a number of the Parties to ASCOBANS had agreed through the OSPAR forum on certain processes and OSPAR was the channel through which MUs would enter legislation. Parties should be consistent in all fora where they were members. The OSPAR process was close to reaching a conclusion, so time to influence it was running out. ASCOBANS had observer status at OSPAR and he would circulate the names of the national representatives on OSPAR. Martine Bigan (France) agreed that a short-term Working Group should be established to define the threshold for 'unacceptable interactions' from an ASCOBANS point of view, but that it would need a clear remit as well as an illustrated presentation of the different options for decision. Margi Prideaux (Wild Migration) agreed that a Working Group would be a good idea, but it would need to be familiar with the complexities of the legal frameworks operating in Europe and handle the two aspects of policy management carefully, balancing scientific with political considerations. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) suggested that the Group should include someone familiar with the decision-making process for establishing management units; he had himself not been involved in the OSPAR process and he understood that scarcely any others from the ASCOBANS Population Structure workshop had been either. Mr Vis (Netherlands) saw a problem in the discussion over MUs because the boundaries that were suitable for fisheries were not necessarily appropriate for conservation interests. ASCOBANS should recognize that it operated in parallel with other processes, which it should seek to influence. He was sceptical whether establishing a Working Group would help identify solutions.

38. Terms of Reference for a working group for the further development of management procedures for defining the threshold of 'unacceptable interactions' were presented to the Meeting by a sessional drafting group and endorsed (Annex 12). Volunteers to serve on the Working Group were Jan Haelters (Belgium), Vincent Ridoux (France), Oliver Schall (Germany), Meike Scheidat (Netherlands), Eunice Pinn (UK), Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International), Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) and Margi Prideaux (Wild Migration). The modellers working on the related project, Phil Hammond and Russell Leaper, as well as Rus Hoelzel, would also be invited to join the discussions.

Action Points and Decisions

- 5) The joint CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat will request the European Commission to provide information on the current status of the revision of EC Reg.812/2004 and the expected timelines for a decision on the European Parliament Fisheries Committee's proposal for a comprehensive review by 2015.
- 6) The Secretariat, with the support of the Bycatch Working Group, will compile a list of all previous recommendations made by the Advisory Committee and its working groups regarding cetacean bycatch to be submitted to the European Commission.
- 7) The Terms of Reference of the Bycatch Working Group were amended with an additional action point (Annex 10).
- 8) Data on fishing effort and bycatch rates provided by Parties to the EC and/or ICES should be submitted in the required reporting format, allowing for spatial (ICES divisions) and temporal (monthly/quarterly) stratification.
- 9) Terms of Reference for a working group for the further development of management procedures for defining the threshold of 'unacceptable interactions' were endorsed by the Meeting (Annex 12).

3.1.1 Report and Recommendations of the Working Group

39. The Advisory Committee considered two documents, AC20/Doc.3.1.1.a and AC20/Doc.3.1.1.b, the report of the Bycatch Working Group and OSPAR's draft marine mammal indicators. Jan Haelters (Belgium) speaking on behalf of Russell Leaper, the Chair

of the Working Group who was unable to attend the meeting, said that Doc.3.1.1.a provided a concise overview of recent endeavours. Difficulties had been encountered trying to address the ambitious list of tasks. The Working Group had not met physically and had attempted to conduct its business electronically. Unfortunately response rates had sometimes been low.

40. Mr Haelters gave a presentation on the EC Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the obligations it imposed on member states, its aim of securing “good environmental status” (GES) and securing national implementation on the basis of a cross-border assessment of the state of the marine environment. Mr Haelters highlighted the importance of the work of Regional Seas Agreements (OSPAR, HELCOM (Coreset) and the Barcelona Convention), and in particular the role of the OSPAR COBAM Working Group which was developing common biodiversity indicators; three of the six common indicators relating to marine mammals were relevant to ASCOBANS. Overlaps with other initiatives were highlighted, namely the ASCOBANS North Sea Plan, the ASCOBANS Bycatch Working Group, the ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS MSFD Working Group, work on abundance and other bodies such as ICES, the EU CFP reforms, EEA and work being done at a national level.

41. Questions from the floor concerned how ASCOBANS could influence the development of indicators. It was explained that targets for each species had yet to be developed and the Management Units had only just been added. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) pointed out that OSPAR covered only part of the ASCOBANS Area so its geographic and species coverage did not fully overlap with the Agreement. Mr Haelters said the thematic overlap was considerable (e.g. bycatch) and the indicators and requirement for monitoring would be of interest to ASCOBANS and were areas where ASCOBANS and OSPAR could cooperate. The next meetings of OSPAR ICG-COBAM were scheduled for September and December 2013 and Mr Haelters invited those present that had not been involved in the process so far to read the summaries and provide feedback through their national representatives.

Action Points and Decisions

- 10) Parties that are members of OSPAR will provide their comments on the draft Marine Mammal Indicators through their national experts on ICG-COBAM.

3.1.2 Reports from Parties

42. Martine Bigan (France) said that some additional information not contained in the French National Report was now available. Yvon Morizur (France) explained that the French observation programme for the year 2011 included 287 days for static gear in ICES AREA VIII and 299 days at sea for towed gear in Areas VII and VIII (as required by Regulation 812/2004). Set nets had also been monitored in Area VII and IVc. These areas were not covered by the Regulation but were of interest to ASCOBANS. In total 900 fishing days had been monitored at sea and vessels under the 15 metre threshold were included in the programme. Recorded bycatch and estimated bycatch for various small cetacean species in different ICES Sea Areas and in various fisheries were contained in the addendum to the report which he could make available to those interested and which was also available online.

3.2 Underwater Noise

3.2.1 Report and Recommendations of the Working Group

43. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) introduced AC20/Doc.3.2.1.a and explained that no report had been received from the Noise Working Group. Nevertheless, progress had been made, which the Secretariat had summarized in the paper. She had attended the

ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee held in November 2012, and the Document contained a summary of the discussions held, the terms of reference for a consultancy that had been agreed there, and a summary of the documents under preparation as part of this consultancy prepared by the co-Chair of the Working Group.

44. Yanis Souami (France) gave a presentation of a synthesis of the work carried out with the help of a consultancy contract from ACCOBAMS. The synthesis included a brief history of the Noise Working Group and a detailed status report on three documents currently in preparation (1. anthropogenic noise and marine mammals – a review of the effort in addressing the impact of anthropogenic underwater noise in the ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS areas; 2. Implementation of underwater noise mitigation measures by industries: operational and economic constraints; and 3. Guidance to mitigate the impact of underwater impulsive noise). The first document had been completed and was available on the ACCOBAMS website. The other two would be ready in time for the ACCOBAMS MOP in November. Fabian Ritter (WDC) asked why three documents were being prepared, instead of a comprehensive one as originally foreseen, and whether the same people were involved in the preparation of all three. Mr Souami responded that the Noise Working Group would be consulted shortly on the second and third documents, and that the third would primarily be a methodological paper.

45. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) asked whether any more work was envisaged on the effects of wind farms on cetaceans, as a many such installations were being constructed in Dutch waters. Mr Souami explained that the Agreements had decided that the focus of the Working Group should be on mitigation advice, rather than on impacts.

46. Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International) congratulated the Working Group on doing a difficult job well, pointing out that ASCOBANS had been in the vanguard of organizations addressing the issue which was now seen as an emerging topic. He referred to new publications from the University of Aberdeen and new research into the reactions of large cetaceans to noise beyond their hearing range. He added that the IWC Scientific Committee would be considering noise again at its next meeting and voluntary guidelines on mitigating shipping noise had been tabled for discussion at the IMO's 2014 meeting. The role of MPAs in protecting whales from noise should also be examined.

47. Referring to AC20/Doc.3.2.1.b, Ms Frisch reminded participants that the joint ACCOBAMS-ASCOBANS Noise Working Group had been operating for a year. As the product of the fusion of two separate bodies, the Working Group was currently still operating under separate terms of reference, although they were similar and in places identical. It would be preferable for the Working Group to have a single set of terms of reference. A further change being proposed was to make the Working Group trilateral rather than bilateral with the inclusion of CMS, the parent Convention. The CMS Scientific Council did not possess sufficient specific expertise to take forward its mandated work on noise and so would benefit from the synergies offered by extending the remit of the Noise Working Group. The Chair of the CMS Scientific Council had been consulted and he fully supported the idea. The effect on the tasks assigned to the Working Group would be minimal, as CMS was interested in the current programme of activities. The forthcoming ACCOBAMS MOP (November 2013) and the CMS COP (late 2014) might adopt more resolutions relating to noise, which would have an effect on the Noise Working Group's mandate.

48. Sofia Brockmark (Sweden) supported the idea of including CMS in the Working Group in principle but was concerned that the focus on the two Agreements would be lost if its coverage became global and extended to other species. Penina Blankett (Finland) agreed. Mr Souami welcomed Sweden's support and gave the reassurance that the members of the Working Group could ensure that the Agreements' interests were protected. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) thought that the inclusion of CMS would enhance the Group's potential for outreach, but also warned that the workload might also increase considerably.

49. Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS), stressing that she had not had the opportunity of consulting her Parties, noted that she saw advantages in collaborating with

CMS, with which ACCOBAMS had a large overlap of members, but pointed out that CMS was of a different magnitude to the two Agreements. She agreed that a single set of terms of reference made sense but agreeing the text among the three separate bodies responsible for the Working Group posed institutional problems and said that she wanted to have a clear proposition to put to the ACCOBAMS Parties. Martine Bigan (France) requested that the opportunity be used to re-word the terms of reference, reflecting the progress that had already been made. It was suggested that a drafting group be established in session to report back later in the meeting. Ms Frisch sought guidance from Parties on how they wanted CMS to be integrated into the joint arrangements and confirmation that Parties had no fundamental objection to the proposal to include CMS. Oliver Schall (Germany) welcomed the move towards closer cooperation among the different members of the CMS Family. It was suggested that a tripartite agreement should include a disputes procedure and the option for one party to distance itself.

50. France, the United Kingdom, ACCOBAMS and the Secretariat formed a drafting group which was given the task of revising the terms of reference for the Joint Noise Working Group. Martine Bigan (France) reported on the outcomes of its deliberations. With the addition of further points suggested from the floor, the revised text was adopted (Annex 13).

51. Ms Frisch (Secretariat) introduced AC20/Doc.3.2.1.c which contained a letter received from Sigrid Lüber of OceanCare. OceanCare had expressed an interest in playing an active role in coordinating the Joint Noise Working Group, as Karsten Brensing was not able to continue in his role of co-Chair for family reasons. Martine Bigan (France) sought clarification of OceanCare's offer as it was not clear whether the organization was interested in replacing Mr Brensing as ASCOBANS' nominee for co-Chair alongside Mr Souami from the ACCOBAMS side or in taking over the entire coordination role. Ms Frisch said that her understanding was that OceanCare would be happy to do either.

52. Mr Simmonds said that from his experience of having chaired the ASCOBANS Working Group, the coordination role was very difficult, as sensitive issues were at stake. He welcomed OceanCare's interest, a view echoed by several others, and pointed out that the organization was a body with UN recognition. He warned however against having three co-Chairs with the inclusion of CMS, suggesting that two was the optimal number allowing mutual support and ease of communication. Ms Frisch agreed that it would be preferable for the co-Chairs to be equally responsible to all participating organizations, rather than be viewed as serving any one of them; therefore, there would be no need for a third person to be appointed. Mr Souami concurred saying that having two co-Chairs had worked well, whereas he felt that three would complicate matters. He preferred to have face-to-face contact rather than "Skype" calls, and opportunities often presented themselves for the co-Chairs to meet in the margins of other events.

53. Ms Frisch summarized by saying that there was a consensus for the Working Group to continue with two co-Chairs, responsible to all three participating organizations. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) sought clarification of the lines of responsibility and who would select the candidates for co-Chair in the event of other candidates coming forward. With the added complication of having a third participating organization, it was important to ensure that sound procedures were in place. Following discussions with the Chair of the CMS Scientific Council, Ms Frisch reported that it was evident that there was no obvious candidate from the CMS side at the moment. The Scientific Council was looking to the specialists in the regional instruments for guidance.

54. Mr Vis asked whether any other candidates had been sought to replace Mr Brensing whose departure had been sudden and had come as a surprise to some Parties. He understood the need to keep the work progressing but was uneasy about the rushed manner of appointing his successor. Maj Munk (Denmark) voiced similar concerns. Ms Frisch (Secretariat) recalled that previous chairs Mr Simmonds and Mr Brensing had been chosen to chair the original ASCOBANS Working Group through a show of hands, so there was no precedent for having a complicated procedure.

55. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) said that the Working Group had made good progress because of the dedication of a number of key individuals. It had benefitted from their experience of working in other fora, which helped with liaison and keeping informed about developments elsewhere. He felt however that the Working Group could benefit from more specialist scientific input.

56. Mr Souami commented that OceanCare was an active member of the Working Group already and had a good track record. He was open to persuasion on the need for a more formal procedure for nominating and electing the co-Chairs and agreed that it would be desirable to have more scientific input, but pointed out that members were not paid to participate and had to fit their contribution to the Working Group around their professional commitments.

Action Points and Decisions

- 11) It was agreed that the joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Noise Working Group should be extended to include CMS with appropriately amended Terms of Reference (see Annex 13). The Secretariats of ACCOBAMS and CMS are requested to present these to the appropriate bodies for endorsement.
- 12) It was agreed that the joint Noise Working Group should continue to have co-Chairs.
- 13) The offer from OceanCare to serve as co-Chair of the joint Noise Working Group was gratefully accepted.

3.2.2 Reports from Parties

57. There were no requests for the floor from Parties.

3.3 Negative Effects of Vessels and Other Forms of Disturbance

58. There was no document related to this agenda item and no further information had been provided by Parties.

59. Fabian Ritter (WDC) reported on developments under the IWC regarding ship strikes. The IWC had been taking an interest in this issue for many years and had established a database which had been online since 2009 and to which mariners and scientists had access. Ship strikes were also an issue for small cetaceans. Mr Ritter had set up an information display outside the meeting room and provided a copy of a recently published information leaflet. He requested that any incidents be reported.

60. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) informed the meeting of studies undertaken in Cardigan Bay, Wales, over the past ten years. Recent results indicated that bottlenose dolphins were being affected by disturbance through increased boat traffic. Numbers using the area had decreased with known individuals moving elsewhere, evidence of disruption in their social structure and changes to whistle characteristics. The University of Aberdeen was also conducting research on long-term effects of disturbance on the species in northeast Scotland.

61. Sofia Brockmark (Sweden) said that the Swedish Government was commissioning research into the effects of water scooters and smaller vessels with a view to issuing new guidance.

62. Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International) reported one incident off Padstow, Cornwall, where a pod of bottlenose dolphins had arrived and attracted public interest and one animal had been killed, possibly struck by a small vessel. The accident showed that people lacked understanding of the animals and were unaware that calves moved slowly and were unable to avoid collisions.

3.3.1 Reports from Parties

63. There were no requests for the floor from Parties.

3.4 Pollution and its Effects

64. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) introduced AC20/Doc.3.4, the final Draft Proceedings of the ECS Workshop on Chemical Pollution and Marine Mammals held in Cadiz, Spain in March 2011. A total of 50 participants had attended the meeting and 12 papers had been submitted. A foreword by Peter Reijnders would be added to the proceedings, which would be published shortly. The Workshop had concluded that chemical pollution should be accorded greater attention, and amongst other recommendations was the observation that bottlenose dolphins and orcas in parts of Europe might be suffering from high levels of contamination and required more attention. New compounds being used on land were making their way into the sea.

3.4.1 Report of the Pollution Working Group

65. Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International) said that further reports had been published showing continuing problems with PCBs especially in orcas, and a project funded by ASCOBANS was looking into this issue. Micro-debris was also causing concern as small particles of plastic were being ingested by cetaceans with internal injuries possibly the result. As was customary, Mr Simmonds had circulated a list of recent publications on pollution and he asked participants to add any papers that had been omitted. The amended list appears as Annex 14 to this report.

66. Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that two large cetaceans which had recently stranded in Belgium had been found to have plastic in their stomachs. Vincent Ridoux (France) reported on recent similar findings in Portugal and Galicia, Spain.

3.4.2 Report and Recommendations of the Marine Debris Working Group

67. In the absence of Marchien de Ruiter who was unable to attend the Advisory Committee, Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International) reported on the activities of the Marine Debris Working Group (AC20/Doc.3.4.2). The Group had produced a series of recommendations including collecting data on the distribution of debris and necropsies. Micro-debris (see also 3.4.1. above) was also a cause for concern with plastics introducing chemicals into the bodies of cetaceans. The Working Group was eager to continue its activities, and Chair Marchien de Ruiter of the North Sea Foundation was willing to continue in that capacity. Ms Frisch stressed that ASCOBANS needed to liaise with OSPAR and HELCOM to avoid duplication and to ensure that small cetaceans remained a main focus for attention.

68. The IWC workshop's recommendations would be considered by the next full meeting of the IWC. The question of plastic ingestion was also of concern in that forum, with deep diving species apparently worst affected. Possibly plastic bags were being mistaken for prey (squid) but plastic was also being inhaled. Entanglement in discarded nets was also being examined but this seemed mainly to affect larger species.

69. Vincent Ridoux (France) mentioned studies into macro- and micro-debris and said that a large set of samples had been collected.

70. James Gray (United Kingdom) asked to what extent the IWC workshop had addressed discarded and lost fishing gear and whether there were any recommendations regarding tagging. Mr Simmonds said that discussion of entanglement had taken a considerable amount of time, and discarded fishing gear was the main source especially off the north-east of the USA. There were also recommendations for greater monitoring of

debris type. He suggested that the present time offered an ideal opportunity to influence the IWC and any mitigation measures that it might adopt.

71. Jan Haelters (Belgium) pointed out that the National Reporting form requested information on collisions; he thought that entanglement and debris data should be added. Mr Simmonds agreed, adding that this would entail no further work for ASCOBANS Parties as they had to report on this to the IWC already.

72. Monika Lesz (Poland) said that the Polish project on ghost nets, which had resulted in the retrieval of 22 tons of ghost nets, would be continued (pending confirmation of funding applications) and was strongly supported by the Ministry of Environment.

73. Borja Heredia (Secretariat) said that CMS was also examining the subject of marine debris. Australia had sponsored a resolution at COP10 and had provided funds for reviews which were being undertaken by a UK-based consultancy firm. Results would be made available to ASCOBANS, too.

3.4.3 Reports from Parties

74. There were no requests for the floor from Parties.

3.5 Underwater Unexploded Ordnance

75. Fabian Ritter (WDC) presented AC20/Doc.3.5 on Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations' Perspective on Underwater Munitions, which had been forwarded to the Secretariat by German NGO NABU. The paper summarized the risk of unexploded ordnance in the marine environment, relating mainly to chemical contamination and acoustic impacts, both of which were of concern for environmental and human health reasons. There was a clear need to address the safe and environmentally-friendly removal of underwater munitions.

76. Monika Lesz (Poland) said that Poland participated actively in the HELCOM MUNI working group, which dealt with dumped chemical munitions in the Baltic Sea. Based on practical experiences, recommendations had been made that also covered the subject of underwater detonations.

77. There was agreement that ASCOBANS should not launch its own process, but that the most promising way to address the matter was by seeking to influence and support the ongoing work in other fora.

Action Points and Decisions

- 14) The Secretariat will liaise with HELCOM and OSPAR to ascertain how ASCOBANS can best support their processes regarding underwater ordnance.
- 15) At appropriate fora of HELCOM and OSPAR, Parties will stress the importance of environmentally-friendly removal of underwater ordnance.
- 16) The Secretariat should collate the information that Parties submit to the appropriate fora in HELCOM and OSPAR relating to underwater ordnance (location, quantity and plans, methods and technologies for its safe removal) to enable the Advisory Committee to make progress with Work Plan Activity 5.

3.6 Responses to Hazards

78. Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International) introduced AC20/Doc.3.6, the draft proceedings of the ECS/BDMLR/WDC Workshop on Best Practice in Rescue. The meeting

had brought together experts including veterinarians from all over Europe to compare the different approaches used. The meeting examined ethical issues such as when to intervene and when not to, dealing with public perceptions and managing public expectations and how and when to euthanize the animals. The recommendations of the workshop highlighted in the proceedings included the maxim that prevention was better than cure, that actions should be dictated by the best interests of the animal and ensuring the safety of personnel and the public. There had been discussions about setting up a Europe-wide network so that data could be collated in a standard format and so that experiences could be shared. There was a possible role for ASCOBANS in coordinating such a network, although in most countries rescue teams came from NGOs and the role of government agencies varied, as did the legislation.

79. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that the Netherlands had produced new protocols aimed at voluntary organizations and the public with regard to appropriate actions in response to strandings. A recent incident involving a stranded whale had put the protocols to the test and they had proved to be effective. At the moment the protocols were only available in Dutch.

80. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that the ASCOBANS Work Plan required that liaison and skill-sharing be improved throughout the Agreement Area, and this required establishing who the right people were to approach in each country when strandings occurred, as well as understanding the legal situation in all countries. ACCOBAMS had considered the issue in some depth and had a Resolution, so much could be learned from their experience, and there might be opportunities for working together. ASCOBANS could also benefit from closer involvement with the ECS over its activities related to strandings, and might be able to provide support.

81. James Gray (United Kingdom) informed the meeting that the IWC was organizing a workshop in London on 11-13 September on techniques of euthanasia and he would ensure that the report was made available to the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.

82. Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS) said that ACCOBAMS would probably organize a workshop on the scientific and legal aspects of strandings in the course of 2014.

Action Points and Decisions

- 17) The Secretariat will ask Parties to provide details of those responsible for cetacean rescue, and what laws require, allow and prohibit in each country.

3.7 Emerging Issues

83. There was no document related to this agenda item, but Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS) said that climate change and its effects on cetaceans had been discussed by the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee. It had been hoped to organize a workshop in 2013 but this had proved impossible, so it would probably take place in 2014 instead, giving all Conventions and Agreements affected by climate change the opportunity to exchange experiences.

84. Sami Hassani (France) said that climate change was also on the agenda of the World Congress on Marine Protected Areas to be held in Marseille in October. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) undertook to provide a copy of a review of the effects of climate change on cetaceans in the region.

4. Review of New Information on other Matters Relevant for Small Cetacean Conservation

4.1 Population Size, Distribution, Structure and Causes of Any Changes

85. Claire Lacey of the University of St Andrews introduced AC20/Doc.4.1.on “Small Cetaceans in European Atlantic Waters and the North Sea (SCANS III): Project Introduction”. As SCANS I had taken place in 1994 and SCANS II in 2005, the next survey would be due soon if the same regular interval were to be maintained. The aim of the project would be to establish the current abundance of cetaceans in the European Atlantic; to use the results to assess the impact of mortality arising from human activities; and to compare methods to create a best practice guide for monitoring to inform European Directives. The indicative timetable entailed making an application for funding to the European Commission in 2014 leading to the main survey being carried out in the third quarter of 2016 and results being disseminated in 2017.

86. In the ensuing discussion, the exclusion of the Baltic from the survey was raised. The methodology proposed for the project did not lend itself to the Baltic with its very low density of cetaceans. The meeting felt that some other, more appropriate follow-up to SAMBAH should be considered. The project organizers would be approaching potential donors to secure matching funding or in-kind contributions, and the project was being designed to ensure its eligibility under the EU funding programmes and to maximize its chances of success. The frequency of the surveys was also questioned, as ten years seemed to be a long time between projects when the political cycle for reviews was generally three to four years.

87. Christina Lockyer (NAMMCO) reminded the meeting that at MOP7 she had circulated a paper on the T-NASS survey, which would be carried out in 2015. The area to be covered (six million square kilometres of the Atlantic south-east and south of Greenland and around Iceland and the Faroes) abutted and overlapped the area envisaged for SCANS III. The estimated cost of the survey was €3,000,000. Given the common interest in species, there was scope for T-NASS and SCANS III to collaborate.

88. Eunice Pinn (United Kingdom) briefly explained AC20/Doc.4.1.b “ICES 2013: Report of the Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME)”.

89. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) introduced AC20/Doc.4.1.c, the report of the workshop organized by the ECS, ASCOBANS and WDC ‘Towards a Conservation Strategy for White-beaked Dolphins in the North-East Atlantic’. Consideration had been given to the species’ conservation status, threats and relevant legislation and a number of recommendations had arisen from the workshop which might lead to reviewing the species’ listing on the CMS appendices; currently only the North Sea and Baltic population was included.

90. Vincent Ridoux (France) introduced AC20/Doc.4.1.d “Marine mega-vertebrates adrift: a framework for the interpretation of stranding data in a monitoring perspective with applications for small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Area”, which provided a context for interpreting stranding data sets of small cetaceans and other marine vertebrates that were likely to float after death. Spatiotemporal patterns in stranding followed a complex function of abundance and mortality, drift conditions and carcass buoyancy, as well as discovery and reporting rates. Of these confounding factors, drift was the one that would introduce most uncertainty into the stranding data series as it was mostly driven by wind and tidal currents. The proposed interpretation framework would allow the identification of likely areas of high interactions and would thus help to pinpoint where human activities were posing a particular threat to cetaceans.

91. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) presented AC20/Doc.4.1.e and AC20/Doc.4.1.f, “Abundance survey of harbour porpoises in Kattegat, Belt Seas and the Western Baltic, July 2012” and “Survey for the Abundance of Harbour Porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) in the Western Baltic, Belt Sea and Kattegat (“Gap Area”)”, which both presented results of the ‘Mini-SCANS’ conducted by Denmark and Germany. The densities discovered

were in line with the results of earlier surveys. The transect lines used were similar to those used in the SCANS projects, with variations necessitated by weather conditions. The abundance estimates for the Belt Sea harbour porpoise population, based on surveys in 1994, 2005 and 2012 for a comparable geographical area, survey method and data analysis, indicated that highest abundance estimate was found in 1994 which was 62 per cent higher than in 2005 and 34 per cent higher than in 2012. The results still indicated an overall negative trend from 1994 to 2012, encompassing a decrease from 1994 to 2005 and an increase from 2005 to 2012. The population decline seen in 2005 seemed to have stopped and might even be improving.

Action Points and Decisions

- 18) The meeting recognized SCANS-III as a priority and Parties are urged to provide the matching funding needed.
- 19) The project coordinators running SCANS-III are encouraged to liaise with their counterparts organizing the T-NASS survey in order to make the results as compatible as possible and exchange expertise.
- 20) Parties are encouraged to continue to provide support to appropriate monitoring work in the Baltic as a follow-up of the SAMBAH project.

4.1.1 Report and Recommendations of the joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Workshop 2013

92. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) gave a presentation on the outcomes of the Population Structure Workshop held in Setubal, Portugal, to complement the report contained in AC20/Doc.4.1.1. The presentation included a definition for the term "Management Unit" (a group of individuals for which there are different lines of complementary evidence suggesting reduced exchange (migration/dispersal) rates over an extended period (low tens of years)). The different lines of evidence were then explained as well as alternative approaches for assessing population structure. Examples of insights into different species were set out (bottlenose dolphin, striped dolphin, harbour porpoise, for which the Black Sea population was genetically isolated, fin whale, common dolphin, killer whale and northern bottlenose whale). A number of species were identified in the area where ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS overlap; these included the harbour porpoise, common dolphin, long-finned pilot whale and the bottlenose dolphin. Species identified as in need of priority attention were the killer whale in the Straits of Gibraltar and the Gulf of Cadiz, the common dolphin in Greek waters, Risso's dolphin in the Mediterranean, Cuvier's beaked whale in various hot spots and the harbour porpoise in the Black Sea and adjacent Aegean Sea.

93. The meeting endorsed the recommendations of the Workshop.

94. James Gray (United Kingdom) asked whether either Denmark or the Secretariat had any comments on the reports of increased numbers of animals being taken in the Faroese hunts. Maj Munk (Denmark) explained that the Faroe Islands were autonomous and the Danish authorities had no jurisdiction over their internal affairs. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) reminded the meeting that there had been previous correspondence with the Faroese authorities on related issues.

Action Points and Decisions

- 21) Management units need to be established for all the regularly occurring small cetacean species in the area of overlap of ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS. Priority should be given to those species for which there is not only evidence of sub-structuring but also which appear to be especially vulnerable to anthropogenic activities. Species identified in the region include *inter alia* killer whale, bottlenose dolphin, Risso's dolphin, pilot whale and harbour porpoise.
- 22) The Secretariat was instructed to contact the Faroese authorities with a request to provide information on recent hunts.

4.2 Management of Marine Protected Areas

95. There was no document related to this agenda item. Parties were invited to make oral statements if there were any developments to report. Oliver Schall (Germany) reported on progress being made with marine sites for the Natura 2000 network and asked other Parties to report on progress. In response, James Gray (United Kingdom) referred to an open infraction case with regard to the designation of further Special Areas of Conservation for harbour porpoise in the UK. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that five marine protected areas were being designated, none specifically for harbour porpoises. Monika Lesz (Poland) gave an update from Poland and Erland Lettevall (Sweden) said that minor survey work was underway.

4.2.1 Report and Recommendations of the joint ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop 2013

96. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) introduced AC20/Doc.4.2.1, the report of the Joint ECS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Workshop on 'The Challenge of spatially managing cetaceans – a highly mobile animal group'. Mr Evans illustrated his report with a presentation, and outlined some of the main conclusions from the Workshop, including that most environmental legislation lacked teeth, that a new attitude was needed towards use of the oceans and that communication between all parties had to improve.

4.3 New Agreement Area

97. There was no Document associated with this agenda item but Parties were invited to add any further information not included in other reports. There were no requests for the floor.

4.3.1 Report and Recommendations of the Extension Area Working Group

98. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) said that he had compiled his first report in early 2012 having received an encouraging high response to his round robin request for information from both Parties and non-Parties. The report contained in AC20/Doc.4.3.1 "Intersessional Working Group on Research and Conservation Actions Undertaken in the Extended Agreement Area: Update for the Period March 2012 to August 2013" while not comprehensive or complete, provided an update and highlighted for example a number of studies of genetics being undertaken at national level.

99. James Gray (United Kingdom) said that a further update of information from the UK would become available shortly after the meeting. Martine Bigan (France) found the report useful, especially the information obtained from Spain, and suggested that such reports continue to be provided to each AC meeting. The Chair assumed that the Working Group should be retained and that Parties should continue to provide information. He sought

clarification of what issues should be included and in what format the information should be provided.

4.4 Large Cetaceans

100. Ronan le Bras (Coalition Clean Baltic) gave a presentation on the Baleakanta Project. The name meant “whale song” in the Basque language. The project was making use of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization’s (CTBTO) network of hydrophones to listen to large cetacean calls and establish a database of these calls to chart the paths of large whales across the world’s oceans. The project was both about scientific research and outreach.

4.4.1 Report and Recommendations of the Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans

101. The Chair invited Parties to provide information. There were no requests for the floor.

102. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) said that he thought it would be desirable if the Large Cetacean Working Group followed the example of the one covering the Extension Area in providing information as this could help flag up emerging issues such as ship strikes and entanglement. Parties were willing to do so, as they were already required to report on these issues under the IWC so the information was readily available. Maj Munk (Denmark) said that as large cetaceans were outside the remit of the Agreement, related information could only be sought on a voluntary basis.

Action Points and Decisions

- 23) Parties were invited to provide information on large cetaceans in their waters to the chair of the Informal Working Group, where appropriate with a regional focus.

5. Publicity and Outreach

5.1 Reports of Parties, Range States and Partners

103. Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) showed examples of a trilingual leaflet and a booklet for children, as well as a film on harbour porpoises, available in Polish, English and German. Further information had been printed concerning the protected area of Puck Bay and Mr Skóra had appeared on Polish TV explaining the SAMBAH project. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) said that a smartphone app had been developed. Kai Mattsson (Finland) said that sales of the ‘Get a porpoise in your life’ T-shirts continued and several activities had been undertaken on the occasion of the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP), a new leaflet had been printed and the Dolphinarium website was being revamped. Jan Haelters (Belgium) showed a copy of a leaflet produced to explain what to do if a cetacean was found stranded. Erland Lettevall (Sweden) said that SAMBAH had attracted media interest and had featured on national radio. Oliver Schall (Germany) said that activities had been undertaken in connection with IDBHP. There had been some press coverage of the issue of the effects of noise on harbour porpoises and some of the negative effects of clean energy on wildlife. Sami Hassani and Vincent Ridoux (France) pointed out that there was a new exhibition on marine mammals in the aquarium of La Rochelle.

104. Fabian Ritter (WDC) gave a presentation on the creativity competition “The Last 300” (www.schweinswal.eu), which sought arts and design contributions on the topic of what Germany’s native whale meant to people. The competition focused on a German audience and had been launched on the occasion of the IDBHP 2013 by WDC, NABU, OceanCare and the ASCOBANS Secretariat. Entries would be accepted until 19 October. Mark

Simmonds (Humane Society International) felt that the main challenge was making a largely urban population aware of marine issues. Citing the example of Poland, he said that ASCOBANS could contribute to public education. To mark his first attendance at an ASCOBANS meeting representing HSI, Mr Simmonds announced a donation of US\$1,000 towards the Agreement's publicity work.

Action Points and Decisions

- 24) The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the donation by the Humane Society International to ASCOBANS outreach activities.

5.2 Report of the Secretariat

105. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) outlined the principal activities of the Secretariat described in AC20/Doc.5.2. Peter Evans was preparing a book on the occasion of the Agreement's Anniversary and many people present had been asked to write contributions to it. It was now hoped that the book would be published in 2014 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Agreement entering into force.

106. During 2012, the year of the 20th Anniversary of the Signing of the Agreement, the Secretariat had participated in "roadshows" with life-size inflatable models of cetaceans. The roadshows had been held in Galway, Ireland, the Museum Koenig in Bonn over the weekend of the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise and at the "WhaleFest" in Brighton immediately after the MOP. Activities included demonstrations on how to help stranded dolphins and various arts and crafts related to cetaceans. A new children's section of the ASCOBANS website had been developed with the help of the WDC's education officer, Jess Feghali-Brown, and the Secretariat was collaborating with CMS and the other Bonn-based Agreements over a joint web presence.

6. Project Funding through ASCOBANS

6.1 Progress of Supported Projects

107. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) introduced AC20/Doc.6.1.a, which provided an overview of the ASCOBANS-funded projects that had been concluded since AC19, and those still ongoing. AC20/Doc.6.1.b "Progress of Projects Supported through ASCOBANS", "Project Report: Understanding harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) and fisheries interactions in the north-west Iberian peninsula" and AC20/Doc.6.1.c, "Project Report: Distribution and relative abundance of harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) over Dogger Bank and surrounding waters, Southern North Sea" contained the final reports of two of these projects. The Aberdeen University's project on the North-West Iberian waters had also been presented at the ECS. The Agreement's involvement in the project had helped raise the profile of ASCOBANS.

6.2 Prioritization of Project Proposals and Other Activities

108. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented AC20/Doc.6.2.a, "Project Proposals Received for Future Funding". A ballot had taken place in advance of the meeting to rank the project outlines received and the University of St. Andrews' SCANS III proposal had emerged as top, with the SAMBAH-related LAMBDAH project second and a project on harbour porpoise abundance and distribution in the German Baltic third. She suggested that while funding would only allow supporting one project, the Secretariat offer the highest ranking ones letters of endorsement to support their fundraising efforts with other donors.

109. There were also some internal projects from the ASCOBANS Work Plan in need of funding described in AC20/Doc.6.2.b. The sum of €79,500 plus 13 per cent to cover the UNEP PSC was required for activities to be managed by the Secretariat, and €43,000 plus PSC for external projects that had previously been endorsed or were proposed as priorities by Parties. Parties were requested to consider making voluntary contributions to fund the projects identified as priorities and the Secretariat sought guidance on how to proceed.

Action Points and Decisions

- 25) Parties were encouraged to provide voluntary contributions in support of the activities outlined in AC20/Doc.6.2.b.

7. Introduction to the Advisory Committee Workspace (Training Session)

110. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) led an interactive training session at which participants were introduced to the many features of the Workspace, which, it was hoped, would facilitate communication and the exchange of ideas. During the demonstration participants were able to log onto the system and navigate through the Workspace as each feature was explained. A User Guide had been prepared as AC20/Doc.7 which would also be made available as a self-standing document in the Workspace for easy reference.

8. Any other Business

111. Monika Lesz and Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) referred to a paper that had been circulated (attached as Annex 15) and proposed that the ASCOBANS Award for Life-Time Achievement be given to Dr. habil. Karl-Hermann Kock of the Institute of Sea Fisheries of the Johann-Heinrich von Thünen Institute, Hamburg, Germany. Dr Kock was a trusted friend and colleague who had always been a constructive partner in a policy area where conservation and fisheries interests had not always seen eye to eye. He had recently retired. The meeting unanimously supported the nomination.

Action Points and Decisions

- 26) There was unanimous endorsement of the proposal by Poland to give the ASCOBANS Lifetime Award to Dr. Karl-Hermann Kock (see Annex 15). The Secretariat will have a glass award prepared and will look for the appropriate occasion to make the presentation.

9. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Scientific Session

112. The draft Action Points were projected onto the screen and subject to minor amendments they were adopted by the Meeting.

113. The Action Points arising from the Scientific Session appear as items 1-26 in the list at the front of this report.

10. Close of the Session

114. With the business successfully concluded, the Chair, Sami Hassani (France) closed the Scientific Session having thanked participants for their constructive contributions. He also welcomed Bradnee Chambers, the Executive Secretary of CMS and Acting Executive Secretary of ASCOBANS, to the podium.

11. Opening of the Institutional Session

115. Penina Blankett (Finland) assumed the chair and asked for notice of any business to be taken under agenda item 17.

12. Accession and Agreement Amendment

12.1 Report of the Secretariat

116. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented an extract from the Depositary's database (AC20/Doc.12.1) which showed that there were still ten Parties, seven of which had adopted the amendment; the three that had not were Belgium, Lithuania and the United Kingdom.

12.2 Reports from Parties

117. James Gray (United Kingdom) said that progress was being made and hoped the amendment would be adopted shortly.

Action Points and Decisions

27) Belgium, Lithuania and the United Kingdom were encouraged to complete their acceptance procedures for the 2003 amendment to the Agreement.

13. National Reporting

118. Parties were given the opportunity of highlighting elements of their National Reports.

119. Maj Munk (Denmark) reported that internal Working Groups had been established in the Ministries of Food, Fisheries and the Environment on harbour porpoises and another on Natura 2000. Their task was to plan activities and evaluate research. The report of the first Working Group was available in Danish.

13.1 Introduction to the Online Reporting System (Training Session)

120. Having introduced AC20/Doc.13.1 "Quick Guide for the ASCOBANS Online Reporting System", Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) led another training session to demonstrate how the online reporting system worked. She reminded the meeting that the MOP had agreed that ASCOBANS should adopt the Online Reporting System being developed by CMS and pioneered by AEWA. The old "Word" reporting forms had been adapted and transformed into the new electronic versions, additional features could be added in due course. The Secretariat expressed its gratitude to Parties for having so willingly participated in the initial trials of the system.

121. Some faults had come to light such as lack of accessibility to attached documents; these problems would be brought to the attention of the designer and would be investigated.

122. The system allowed one representative per country to be designated as 'respondent', a role that could only be taken on by the National Coordinator. This person should not pass on their log on details, as they were the only person authorized to submit the final report. They could however delegate all or parts of the report to others to complete. People designated as delegates would be notified by the system and passwords would be issued automatically.

13.2 Revision to National Reporting Format

123. There was no document associated with this agenda item. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) sought the Advisory Committee's guidance on how to deal with the task arising from Activity 20 in the ASCOBANS Work Plan, namely the consideration of revisions to the national reporting format. A need for additional questions to be added to the National Reports had repeatedly been voiced, in order to obtain all necessary information for assessing progress in the implementation of the Agreement and its Action Plans. The meeting had already proposed additional questions relating to marine debris and entanglement in abandoned gear. The new electronic system would also allow more sophisticated analysis of the data provided, if the questionnaire was designed accordingly. A balance had to be struck between seeking useful data and greater reporting burdens. The Secretariat suggested that a two-step approach be taken, with a working group being established to elaborate the content to be queried, and subsequently a transformation of this into an effective survey form.

124. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) suggested that information be sought at the sub-regional level to assist with developing and implementing the three conservation plans. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) suggested that the Chairs of Working Groups be invited to participate as they would have a better idea of the information that they wanted. Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that the suggestions should be filtered through the Secretariat as the Working Groups might come up with contradictory suggestions. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) suggested that the IWC be contacted as it too had recently adopted Online Reporting and had probably had to address similar issues.

125. The Chair said that every effort should be made to avoid duplicating work. ASCOBANS Parties were all member states of the EU and had to report under the EC Habitats and MSFD Directives. The Parties would have to guide the Secretariat.

Action Points and Decisions

- 28) The Secretariat will lead a consultation process with key players, including the chairs of the intersessional working groups, to determine the content of the new national reporting format.

14. Relations with other Bodies

14.1 Reports by the Secretariat, Parties and Partners

126. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented a compilation of reports of meetings attended by representatives of the Agreement (AC20/Doc.14.1.a). She had herself attended two ECS conferences, back-to-back with both there had been workshops jointly organized with the ECS, for which thanks were due to Peter Evans. The workshops were an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of the Agreement with scientists. Ideas for the themes of the next meeting would be welcome. Monika Thiele, the CMS staff member based at the UN Regional Office in Washington D.C. had attended the CBD SBSTTA where underwater noise and marine debris had been discussed.

127. Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International) referred to his reports from the IWC Scientific Committee, which had also held two meetings since the last report. He drew particular attention to the deliberations on small cetaceans and beaked whales and the impacts of noise. The IWC Scientific Committee had also held a workshop on marine debris. He mentioned that there was a fund dedicated to small cetacean work available to the Scientific Committee, supported through voluntary contributions from the Parties.

128. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) suggested that the topic for the next ECS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Workshop could be related to noise as this could assist that Working Group. He also suggested inviting representatives from the key industries; a

proposal that was generally endorsed. There had been a Workshop on pollution quite recently so it was not yet time for another. Mr Simmonds agreed that while chemical pollution, in particular PCBs remained an important issue in the ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS areas, this might be better addressed in 2015 in order to allow sufficient time since the last ASCOBANS workshop on the topic for new research to be completed. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) agreed with Mr Simmonds on the importance of taking work on pollutants forward. The Netherlands had an ongoing research programme on stranded harbour porpoises. Yanis Souami (France) welcomed the suggestion of noise being the theme for a Workshop as this might inject some more dynamism into the joint Working Group. The questionnaire sent to industry had raised many issues which could be explored. Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS) undertook to put the proposal to the Parties at the forthcoming MOP.

129. Penina Blankett (Finland) urged that ASCOBANS cooperated with HELCOM over a GIS system for modelling and plotting anthropogenic threats and for information on cetaceans for spatial planning.

130. Margi Prideaux (Wild Migration) thanked the meeting for the opportunity of presenting the ideas behind AC20/Doc.14.1.b, "A Natural Affiliation: Developing the Role of NGOs in the CMS Family". She reminded the meeting that she had spoken at the MOP when she had expressed the view that the NGO contribution to the implementation and development of CMS and its instruments was not fully appreciated. The document was a summary of the contributions of 100 individuals and organizations. The importance of CMS was recognized by all but there was a degree of frustration at the lack of implementation and at the fact that the threats to migratory species persisted. Potentially important protected areas remained undesignated and the work of NGOs on the ground was not always taken into account. National reporting seemed ad hoc and unstructured. While the scientific base of ASCOBANS was recognized as very sound, the general perception of the CMS family as a whole was that implementation of conservation objectives was not strong and there was little flexibility to respond to emerging threats.

131. Wild Migration was now preparing for the second phase of its support for the CMS Family as promised at MOP7. There was strong mutual respect between ASCOBANS and the NGOs working with it and this was something to build on.

132. James Gray (United Kingdom) supported by Mr Vis (Netherlands) welcomed the report and looked forward to further collaboration with Wild Migration.

133. Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS) said that ACCOBAMS was in the process of establishing a five-member Compliance Committee which would include two representatives from partner organizations.

Action Points and Decisions

- 29) The Joint Noise Working Group and the Secretariats of ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS, in consultation with ECS, are requested to prepare a proposal for a workshop on underwater noise to be held in the margins of the 2014 ECS Conference.

14.2 Cooperation and Joint Initiatives with CMS

Strategic Plan for Migratory Species

134. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) introduced AC20/Doc.14.2.a concerning the development of a Strategic Plan for Migratory Species, for which CMS Parties had established a Working Group by Resolution 10.5 adopted at the COP in Bergen in 2011. The Working Group with representatives from all CMS regions including Europe had met in November 2012. It had been agreed to widen the scope of the Strategic Plan along the same lines as CBD so that it did not concentrate on CMS only, but on migratory species as a

whole and therefore be equally relevant for the Agreements and MOUs established in the CMS framework. Links would be established to the Aichi Targets agreed under CBD. A twin-track approach was being followed with plans for a strategic document targeting higher political echelons and a companion document with the technical details.

135. As part of the CMS Family, ASCOBANS was invited to contribute. Comments should be sent to the Working Group by 30 September and could, if it was felt appropriate, be channelled through countries' National Focal Points to CMS. Partners were also welcome to contribute their ideas.

Migratory Species Champion Programme

136. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) introduced AC20/Doc.14.2.b. rev 1 which described another new initiative from CMS. An earlier version of the document had been circulated for comments, all of which had been taken on board in this revision. It was the case that for most CMS instruments the core budget did not cover activities, so Secretariats had to raise funds separately. For ASCOBANS, Germany provided a regular voluntary contribution, but other Parties gave funds only for ad hoc purposes, and the situation was similar for other Agreements.

137. It was proposed to establish Champions as a new status of donor for those prepared to commit regular sums over the medium-term. The contributions would be made towards broader areas of activities allowing more flexibility in their use than contributions earmarked for specific projects. The Secretariat sought the Advisory Committee's endorsement of ASCOBANS' participation in the scheme, for which the CMS Secretariat would take the lead.

138. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that the idea seemed fine in principle but wondered whether the scheme itself needed a champion or "ambassador" to promote it. Also some form of evaluation process should be included to assess the level of success achieved.

139. Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International) noted that in the examples of initiatives there was no mention of cetaceans and he asked whether any potential "champions" would be deemed unsuitable partners. Ms Frisch confirmed that the list of examples was not intended to be exhaustive and cetaceans were an important part of the CMS Family's work.

140. Regarding the suitability of champions, Bradnee Chambers (Secretariat) explained that UNEP had procedures in place to vet donors and the Champion Programme would follow these.

Action Points and Decisions

- 30) ASCOBANS National Coordinators should liaise with their CMS National Focal Points to feed any input into the working group developing the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species. ASCOBANS observers are invited to contribute to this process by submitting input to the working group.
- 31) The Advisory Committee endorsed ASCOBANS' participation in the Migratory Species Champion Programme.

14.3 Cooperation with European Union Institutions

141. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) reminded participants that as outlined in AC20/Doc.14.3, a Joint Working Group on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) had been established at the 19th Meeting of the Advisory Committee and 28 members from both the ACCOBAMS and the ASCOBANS Areas had come forward. In the absence of a chair, however, work had not yet commenced, and as the deadline for starting some activities had passed, the terms of reference (TOR) needed to be revised. Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that the TOR should be amended to avoid duplicating work done by Regional Seas

Conventions. Rüdiger Stempel (Coalition Clean Baltic) said that cross references should be made to other Working Groups. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) felt that the aims of the Working Group were too ambitious; its role should be to identify gaps and liaise with others. Martine Bigan (France) thought that ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS needed to bring their expertise on cetaceans to bear in influencing the MSFD. A drafting group was established to work on the TOR; the members were Jan Haelters (Belgium), Jeroen Vis (Netherlands), Rüdiger Stempel (CCB), Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS) and Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation). The drafting group presented its revised text for the TOR (see Annex 16) but pointed out that these could only be provisionally adopted as ACCOBAMS Parties would need to approve them too. Ms Grillo-Compulsione undertook to send them to the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and MOP and revert to the ASCOBANS Secretariat as soon as possible with their response.

142. Ms Frisch reported that shortly before the meeting, Sinéad Murphy of the Zoological Society of London, United Kingdom, had expressed an interest in chairing the group but had suggested that she share responsibilities with someone better acquainted with the ACCOBAMS region. The meeting agreed to this proposal and Ms Grillo-Compulsione undertook to make enquiries from members of the Working Group from the ACCOBAMS area.

Action Points and Decisions

- 32) The revised draft Terms of Reference of the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS MSFD Working Group were endorsed by the Meeting (Annex 16). The draft will be submitted by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat to their Scientific Committee and MOP for their approval.
- 33) Sinéad Murphy's offer to co-chair the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS MSFD Working Group on behalf of ASCOBANS was gratefully accepted. The ACCOBAMS Secretariat would seek a second co-chair from its region.

14.4 Cooperation with Other Stakeholders

143. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) drew attention to AC20/Doc.14.4, a report from a SAMBAH Stakeholder Workshop, held immediately before the Jastarnia Group meeting in Gothenburg in April 2013. The workshop had sought to establish a dialogue with stakeholders and build anticipation for the expected results of the project. Thirty-nine participants had attended including representatives from DG Mare of the European Commission, the Swedish navy and Danish fisheries. Everyone found the workshop useful and it was an example for others to follow.

144. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) agreed that the workshop had been successful but commented that outreach to stakeholders was still rather piecemeal and he wondered how ASCOBANS could reach a wider audience. Penina Blankett (Finland) said that HELCOM held many stakeholder meetings and ASCOBANS should consider doing the same, or participating in those as appropriate. Ms Frisch suggested that contributing to such events might be attractive to Champions (see 14.2).

145. Mr Evans added that local events were also an excellent idea; those held for the Safe Sea initiative in Portugal had worked very well, but had required proper funding (in this case from the European Commission) and a time commitment from the organizers. Rüdiger Stempel (Coalition Clean Baltic) said advantage should be taken of links with NGOs and their stakeholder meetings should be attended where appropriate. It was also agreed that ASCOBANS should support the end of project meetings that would be held in connection with SAMBAH.

146. The chair, Ms Blankett (Finland) pointed out that the ASCOBANS Work Plan envisaged participation in regional fisheries meetings and she understood that Geneviève

Desportes, the North Sea Coordinator, had attended some. Ms Desportes said that these meetings were an opportunity to promote ASCOBANS and raise certain concerns. However, unfortunately RACs did not usually have representatives of the small-scale fisheries that were responsible for much bycatch. She added that Denmark had started holding fisheries-related forums for Natura 2000, which she had found very useful to attend. Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) suggested that ASCOBANS should also engage with high level players such as Ministers.

147. In summary, the Chair said that ASCOBANS should continue to attend RACs when the agenda was relevant and that top-down and bottom-up approaches to engaging stakeholders should be adopted as appropriate. It seemed more sensible for National Coordinators to attend events in their countries rather than the Secretariat.

Action Points and Decisions

- 34) The Secretariat will seek and facilitate where appropriate stronger stakeholder engagement through meetings and other fora, in order to further the conservation objectives of ASCOBANS.
- 35) National representatives should seek opportunities to participate in local stakeholder meetings.

14.5 Dates of Interest 2013/2014

148. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented the list of forthcoming meetings and asked whether any important events had been omitted and whether anyone present would be attending and able to represent ASCOBANS or at least report back to the next Advisory Committee.

149. The revised list of forthcoming meetings and who, if anyone, would be representing ASCOBANS is attached as Annex 17 to this report.

Action Points and Decisions

- 36) The representation of ASCOBANS in meetings of other relevant organizations was decided as reflected in Annex 17.

15. Report of the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues

15.1 Administrative Issues

150. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) introduced AC20/Doc.15.1, "Report on Administrative Issues 2012/2013". Resolution 6 adopted at MOP7 asked the Secretariat to explore further opportunities for joint working arrangements and further integration into the CMS Secretariat in the context of the CMS Future Shape initiative. The CMS Secretariat had come up with a proposed new structure which would be presented to the CMS Standing Committee. While this would have some effect on the structural setting of the ASCOBANS team within the Secretariat, it would not affect ASCOBANS staffing.

151. The new Executive Secretary of CMS, Bradnee Chambers, had entered on duty in March 2013, replacing Elizabeth Mrema as Acting Executive Secretary of ASCOBANS. Ms Mrema had taken a new posting in the UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi. Thanks were due to Bert Lenten, the CMS Deputy Executive Secretary, for his support in the time between Ms Mrema's departure from Bonn and Mr Chambers' arrival.

152. The Administrative Assistant, Bettina Reinartz had reverted to working 50 per cent of the time, after a period of working 75 per cent in the run-up to the MOP and to assist with activities related to the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Agreement.

153. Ms Frisch pointed out that much of the progress made in particular with regard to the workspace and enhancements to the website had been possible only through the dedication of a series of unpaid interns. Parties were requested to promote the intern programme, which was open to students engaged in tertiary education in any relevant subject (biology, zoology, environmental science, law, communications etc.). The work was unpaid but was interesting, varied and of good quality.

15.2 Accounts for 2012

154. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented AC20/Doc.15.2 with an overview of the budget for 2012 divided into three sections. The first was receipts from Parties and as was customary, all Parties had paid their assessed contributions on time and in full. The second section showed actual expenditure against the agreed budget. Because of the increased working hours of the Administrative Assistant (see 15.1 above) there was a smaller surplus than usual on that budget line. The Meetings budget line was overspent because the Advisory Committee in 2012 was held without a host government and the Secretariat had had to bear the cost. The final section contained details of voluntary contributions. The Secretariat thanked Germany for its generous regular contribution and France for its support of activities relating to the WhaleFest. The remainder of France's contribution was earmarked for the anniversary publication.

155. The surplus for the year of approx. €12,286 was carried over into 2013 and in accordance with instructions from the MOP7 budget resolution it was allocated to the budget line for conservation projects.

156. Bradnee Chambers (Acting Executive Secretary) explained that the 13 per cent PSC charge levied by UNEP helped pay for the Administrative and Financial Services Unit that supported CMS and the Bonn-based Agreements.

15.3 2013 Budget

157. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented the mid-year financial statement covering the first six months of 2013. To date seven of the Parties had paid their contributions. Expenditure was on track; certain items such as the staff cost adjustments between CMS and ASCOBANS and payment for IT services were made towards the end of the year. The conservation project line had been increased with the surplus carried forward from 2012 (see 15.2 above).

158. The United Kingdom had provided a voluntary contribution for the continuation of the contract of the North Sea Coordinator, which was expiring in October. For administrative reasons, it would be re-advertised with appropriately modified terms of reference, which would be consulted on with the North Sea Group. The incumbent was eligible to reapply.

159. Germany was again thanked for its regular voluntary contribution, part of which in 2013 had been allocated to the ECS spatial management workshop.

160. Maj Munk (Denmark) undertook to investigate why the Danish contribution had not been paid since as far as she was aware payment had been authorized.

Action Points and Decisions

- 37) Parties accepted all the Secretariat's reports on administrative and budgetary matters for 2012 and 2013.

16. Project Funding

161. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) reminded the meeting of the discussion during the Scientific Session. There had been a good response to the call for projects and the proposal which came top of the ballot was the one related to the SCANS III survey, submitted by the University of St. Andrews. The Committee endorsed the allocation of funds to this project and the Secretariat undertook to make the necessary arrangements. ASCOBANS did not have sufficient funds to support other projects and the Secretariat asked whether Parties could consider supporting them instead.

Action Points and Decisions

- 38) Parties agreed to allocate the funds available for conservation projects to the "Preparation for SCANS-III" submitted by the University of St. Andrews, United Kingdom.

17. Any other Institutional Issues

162. Maj Munk (Denmark) requested that the Secretariat prepare a list of all the current Working Groups with details of their Chairs, members and terms of reference. The Secretariat undertook to compile such a list and include it as an annex to the report of the meeting.

163. There was no other business discussed under this agenda item.

Action Points and Decisions

- 39) The Secretariat will prepare a list of all intersessional working groups, including their membership and terms of reference, as an annex to the report of this meeting (Annex 18).

18. Date and Venue of the 21st Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2014

164. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) announced that Sweden had offered to host the next meeting of the Advisory Committee. In view of the new four-year cycle and the desirability of spreading the meetings of the Advisory Committee as evenly as possible between the Meetings of the Parties and the need to avoid clashes with the CMS Conference of Parties and the IWC, the optimal date seemed to be in the second week of September 2014. Dates for the CMS and IWC meetings would be set shortly, after which the Secretariat would seek to confirm the dates promptly. Sweden's offer to host the meeting in Gothenburg was warmly welcomed.

165. Oliver Schall (Germany) requested that ASCOBANS followed other Conventions and split substantive and information documents. This proposal was supported by other Parties and the Secretariat agreed to adopt this practice.

Action Points and Decisions

- 40) The 21st Meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held in Gothenburg at the kind invitation of Sweden. Dates will be confirmed in due course.
- 41) Documents for the next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be divided into meeting documents and information documents.

19. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

166. Borja Heredia (Secretariat) explained that the terms of office of the Chair and Vice-Chair expired at the end of the Advisory Committee meeting following the Meeting of Parties (MOP). As this was the first meeting of the Advisory Committee following the MOP, elections were due. There were no limits on the number of terms officers could serve, so Mr Hassani and Ms Blankett were eligible to stand again and had confirmed their willingness to continue. No other candidates were nominated and therefore Mr Hassani (Chair) and Ms Blankett (Vice-Chair) were elected to serve another term and thanked for their efforts for the Committee.

Action Points and Decisions

- 42) Sami Hassani (France) and Penina Blankett (Finland) were unanimously elected as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee for another term.

20. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Institutional Session

167. The draft Action Points were projected onto the screen and subject to minor amendments they were adopted by the Meeting.

168. The Action Points arising from the Institutional Session of the Meeting appear as items 27-42 in the list at the front of this report.

21. Close of Meeting

169. The Chair expressed his appreciation to all those who had contributed to the organization and smooth running of the meeting. Bradnee Chambers (Secretariat) warmly thanked in particular the Government of Poland for the excellent facilities and support provided for this meeting. The Chair declared the 20th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee closed.

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Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
 - 1.1 Welcoming Remarks
 - 1.2 Adoption of the Agenda
 - 1.3 Opening of the **Scientific Session**
2. Implementation of the Harbour Porpoise Action Plans
 - 2.1 Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan)
 - 2.1.1 Report and Action Points of the 9th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group
 - 2.1.2 Reports from Parties
 - 2.2 Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea
 - 2.2.1 Report and Action Points of the North Sea Group
 - 2.2.2 Reports from Parties
 - 2.3 Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat
 - 2.3.1 Report and Action Points of the 9th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group
 - 2.3.2 Reports from Parties
3. Review of New Information on Threats to Small Cetaceans
 - 3.1 Bycatch
 - 3.1.1 Report and Recommendations of the Working Group
 - 3.1.2 Reports from Parties
 - 3.2 Underwater Noise
 - 3.2.1 Report and Recommendations of the Working Group
 - 3.2.2 Reports from Parties
 - 3.3 Negative Effects of Vessels and Other Forms of Disturbance
 - 3.3.1 Reports from Parties
 - 3.4 Pollution and its Effects
 - 3.4.1 Report of the Pollution Working Group
 - 3.4.2 Report and Recommendations of the Marine Debris Working Group
 - 3.4.3 Reports from Parties
 - 3.5 Underwater Unexploded Ordnance
 - 3.6 Responses to Hazards
 - 3.7 Emerging Issues
4. Review of New Information on other Matters Relevant for Small Cetacean Conservation
 - 4.1 Population Size, Distribution, Structure and Causes of Any Changes
 - 4.1.1 Report and Recommendations of the joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Workshop 2013
 - 4.2 Management of Marine Protected Areas
 - 4.2.1 Report and Recommendations of the joint ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop 2013

- 4.3 New Agreement Area
 - 4.3.1 Report and Recommendations of the Extension Area Working Group
 - 4.4 Large Cetaceans
 - 4.4.1 Report and Recommendations of the Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans
 - 5. Publicity and Outreach
 - 5.1 Reports of Parties, Range States and Partners
 - 5.2 Report of the Secretariat
 - 6. Project Funding through ASCOBANS
 - 6.1 Progress of Supported Projects
 - 6.2 Prioritization of Project Proposals and Other Activities
 - 7. Introduction to the Advisory Committee Workspace (Training Session)
 - 8. Any other Business
 - 9. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Scientific Session
 - 10. Close of the Session
-
- 11. Opening of the **Institutional Session**
 - 12. Accession and Agreement Amendment
 - 12.1 Report of the Secretariat
 - 12.2 Reports from Parties
 - 13. National Reporting
 - 13.1 Introduction to the Online Reporting System (Training Session)
 - 13.2 Revision to National Reporting Format
 - 14. Relations with other Bodies
 - 14.1 Reports by the Secretariat, Parties and Partners
 - 14.2 Cooperation and Joint Initiatives with CMS
 - 14.3 Cooperation with European Union Institutions
 - 14.4 Cooperation with Other Stakeholders
 - 14.5 Dates of Interest 2013/2014
 - 15. Report of the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues
 - 15.1 Administrative Issues
 - 15.2 Accounts for 2012
 - 15.3 2013 Budget
 - 16. Project Funding
 - 17. Any other Institutional Issues
 - 18. Date and Venue of the 21st Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2014
 - 19. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair
 - 20. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Institutional Session
 - 21. Close of Meeting

List of Documents

No.	Document Title	Submitted by	Distributed
Doc.1.2.a rev.1	Provisional Agenda	Secretariat	19/07/13
Doc.1.2.b rev.1	Provisional Annotated Agenda	Secretariat	22/08/13
Doc.1.2.c	Rules of Procedure for the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee	Secretariat	05/07/13
Doc.1.2.d rev.1	List of Documents	Secretariat	23/08/13
Doc.1.3 rev.1	ASCOBANS Work Plan 2013-2016 – Progress	Secretariat	22/08/13
Doc.2.1.1.a	Report of the 9 th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group	Jastarnia Group	26/07/13
Doc.2.1.1.b	Proposals for Revised Terms of Reference for the Jastarnia Group	Jastarnia Group	21/08/13
Doc.2.2.1.a	Report of the 2 nd Meeting of the North Sea Group	North Sea Group	05/07/13
Doc.2.2.1.b	Report of the North Sea Plan Coordinator	Secretariat	05/07/13
Doc.2.2.1.c	Interim Report on the Implementation of the ASCOBANS North Sea Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises	Secretariat	21/08/13
Doc.3.1.a	ICES 2013: Report of the Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC)	United Kingdom	25/07/13
Doc.3.1.b	ICES 2013: Report of the Workshop on Bycatch of Cetaceans and other Protected Species (WKBYC)	Secretariat	26/07/13
Doc.3.1.c	ICES Special request, Advice April 2013: Request from EU concerning monitoring of bycatch of cetaceans and other protected species	Secretariat	26/07/13
Doc.3.1.d	Draft European Parliament Legislative Resolution on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council Amending Council Regulation (EC) No. 812/2004	Secretariat	16/08/13
Doc.3.1.1.a	Report of the Bycatch Working Group	Bycatch Working Group	09/08/13
Doc.3.1.1.b rev.1	Draft OSPAR Marine Mammal Indicators	Bycatch Working Group	22/08/13
Doc.3.1.2	Societal decisions required for the determination of safe bycatch limits for harbour porpoise, common dolphin and bottlenose dolphin	United Kingdom	05/07/13
Doc.3.2.1.a	Activities of the Noise Working Group	Secretariat	25/07/13
Doc.3.2.1.b	Draft Terms of Reference for a Joint Noise Working Group of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS	Secretariat	25/07/13

No.	Document Title	Submitted by	Distributed
Doc.3.2.1.c	Offer to Coordinate the ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on Noise	Secretariat	25/07/13
Doc.3.4	Final Draft Proceedings of the ECS Workshop <i>Chemical Pollution and Marine Mammals</i>	ECS	13/08/13
Doc.3.4.2	Report of the Marine Debris Working Group	Marine Debris Working Group	24/07/13
Doc.3.5	Environmental Nongovernmental Organizations' Perspective on Underwater Munitions	Secretariat	16/08/13
Doc.3.6	Draft Proceedings of the ECS / BDMLR / WDC Workshop on Best Practice in Rescue	WDC	24/07/13
Doc.4.1.a	Small Cetaceans in European Atlantic waters and the North Sea (SCANS-III): Project Introduction	University of St. Andrews	24/07/13
Doc.4.1.b	ICES 2013: Report of the Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME)	UK	25/07/13
Doc.4.1.c	Proceedings of the ECS / ASCOBANS / WDC Workshop <i>Towards a Conservation Strategy for White-beaked Dolphins in the Northeast Atlantic</i>	WDC	13/08/13
Doc.4.1.d	Marine megavertebrates adrift: a framework for the interpretation of stranding data in a monitoring perspective with applications for small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS area	France	16/08/13
Doc.4.1.e	Abundance survey of harbour porpoises in Kattegat, Belt Seas and the Western Baltic, July 2012	Denmark	16/08/13
Doc.4.1.f	Survey for the abundance of harbour porpoises (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) in the Western Baltic, Belt Sea and Kattegat ('Gap-Area')	Denmark	16/08/13
Doc.4.1.1	Report of the Joint ECS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Workshop on Cetacean Population Structure	ECS	19/07/13
Doc.4.2.1	Report of the Joint ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop on <i>The challenge of spatially managing cetaceans – a highly mobile animal group</i>	ECS	26/07/13
Doc.4.3.1	Intersessional Working Group on Research and Conservation Actions Undertaken in the Extended Agreement Area: Update for the Period March 2012 to August 2013	Extension Area Working Group	23/08/13
Doc.5.2	Report on Outreach and Education Activities	Secretariat	26/07/13
Doc.6.1.a	Progress of Projects Supported through ASCOBANS	Secretariat	23/07/13
Doc.6.1.b	Project Report: Understanding harbour porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) and fisheries interactions in the north-west Iberian Peninsula	Secretariat / University of Aberdeen	11/07/13

No.	Document Title	Submitted by	Distributed
Doc.6.1.c	Project Report: Distribution and relative abundance of harbour porpoises (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) over Dogger Bank and surrounding waters, Southern North Sea	Secretariat / MCR International	11/07/13
Doc.6.2.a	Project Proposals Received for Future Funding	Secretariat	18/07/13
Doc.6.2.b	Activities Requiring Funding	Secretariat	17/07/13
Doc.7	Quick Guide for the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Workspace	Secretariat	21/08/13
Doc.12.1	Status of Accession and Acceptance of the Agreement's Amendment	Secretariat	25/07/13
Doc.13.a rev.1	2012 Annual National Report Belgium	Belgium	20/08/13
Doc.13.b	2012 Annual National Report Denmark	Denmark	05/07/13
Doc.13.c	2012 Annual National Report Finland	Finland	05/07/13
Doc.13.d	2012 Annual National Report France	France	17/07/13
Doc.13.e	2012 Annual National Report Germany	Germany	05/07/13
Doc.13.f	2012 Annual National Report Lithuania	Lithuania	05/07/13
Doc.13.g rev.1	2012 Annual National Report Netherlands	Netherlands	23/07/13
Doc.13.h	2012 Annual National Report Poland	Poland	05/07/13
Doc.13.i	2012 Annual National Report Sweden	Sweden	29/07/13
Doc.13.j	2012 Annual National Report United Kingdom	United Kingdom	23/07/13
Doc.13.1	Quick Guide for the ASCOBANS Online Reporting System	Secretariat	21/08/13
Doc.14.1.a	Reports of Representation of ASCOBANS at Meetings	Secretariat	19/08/13
Doc.14.1.b	A Natural Affiliation: Developing the Role of NGOs in the CMS Family	Wild Migration	23/07/13
Doc.14.2.a	Strategic Planning and "Future Shape" Activities	Secretariat	24/07/13
Doc.14.2.b rev.1	Migratory Species Champion Programme	Secretariat	23/08/13
Doc.14.3	Terms of Reference of the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Working Group on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)	Secretariat	26/07/13
Doc.14.4	Report from the SAMBAH Stakeholder Workshop	Secretariat	29/07/13
Doc.14.5 rev.2	Draft List of Dates of Interest to ASCOBANS in 2013/2014	Secretariat	22/08/13
Doc.15.1	Report on Administrative Issues 2012/2013	Secretariat	17/07/13
Doc.15.2	Report on Budgetary Issues 2012	Secretariat	24/07/13
Doc.15.3	Mid-Term Report on Budgetary Issues 2013	Secretariat	24/07/13

Rules of Procedure for the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee

as adopted by the 19th Meeting, Galway, Ireland, 20-22 March 2012

PART I

DELEGATES, OBSERVERS, SECRETARIAT

Rule 1: Delegates

- (1) A Party to the Agreement (hereafter referred to as a "Party")¹ shall be entitled to be represented at the meeting by a delegation consisting of a Committee Member and Alternate, when appropriate and such Advisers as the Party may deem necessary.
- (2) The Committee Member shall exercise the voting rights of that Party. In the absence of the Committee Member, the Alternate or an Adviser may be appointed by the Committee Member to act as a substitute over the full range of the Committee Member's functions.
- (3) The appointed Committee Member or alternate shall be available for consultation intersessionally.
- (4) Seating limitations may require that no more than four delegates of any Party be present at a session of the Advisory Committee or any working group established by it in accordance with Rule 18.

Rule 2: Observers

- (1) All non-Party Range States and Regional Economic Integration Organizations bordering on the waters concerned, as well as organizations listed in Footnote 3 may be represented at the meeting by observers who shall have the right to participate but not to vote.^{2 3}
- (2) Any other body or individual qualified in cetacean conservation and management which has informed the Secretariat not less than 60 days before the meeting of its desire to be represented at the meeting by observers, shall be entitled to be present unless at least one-third of the Parties have opposed their application at least 30 days before the meeting.⁴ Once admitted, these observers shall have the right to participate but not to vote.

¹ See Agreement, paragraph 1.2, sub-paragraph (e), and paragraphs 8.4 and 8.5. A Party is a Range State or a Regional Economic Integration Organization which has deposited with the United Nations Headquarters its consent to be bound by the Agreement

² See Agreement, paragraph 6.2.1

³ The United Nations, acting as the Depository to this Agreement; the Secretariats, insofar as they are not included under Rule 3, and technical advisory bodies of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and its daughter Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding; the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention); The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR); the Common Secretariat for the Co-operation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea (CWSS); the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC); the International Whaling Commission (IWC); the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM); the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES); the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN); the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO); the European Cetacean Society (ECS); the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

⁴ See Agreement, paragraphs 6.2.2

- (3) Seating limitations may require that no more than two observers from any non-Party Range State or body be present at a session of the Advisory Committee or of any working group established by it in accordance with Rule 18.

Rule 3: Secretariat

Unless otherwise instructed by the Parties, the Secretariat shall service and act as secretariat for the meeting. Secretariat services are provided through the UNEP/CMS Secretariat.

**PART II
OFFICERS**

Rule 4: Chairpersons

- (1) The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee shall hold office until the end of the first meeting of the Advisory Committee following each Meeting of Parties.
- (2) The Chairperson and Vice-chairperson may be nominated for re-election at the end of a term of office. In the event of the election of a new Chairperson or Vice-chairperson, the Advisory Committee shall elect these persons from among the Committee Members or their advisers.

Rule 5: Presiding Officer

- (1) The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Advisory Committee.
- (2) If the Chairperson is absent or is unable to discharge the duties of Presiding Officer, the Vice-Chairperson shall deputize.
- (3) In the event that both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are absent or unable to discharge the duties of Presiding Officer, the appointed Committee Member of the Party hosting the Meeting shall assume these duties.
- (4) The Presiding Officer may vote.

**PART III
RULES OF ORDER OF DEBATE**

Rule 6: Powers of Presiding Officer

- (1) In addition to exercising powers conferred elsewhere in these Rules, the Presiding Officer shall at Advisory Committee meetings:
 - (a) open and close the sessions;
 - (b) direct the discussions;
 - (c) ensure the observance of these Rules;
 - (d) accord the right to speak;
 - (e) put questions to the vote and announce decisions;
 - (f) rule on points of order; and
 - (g) subject to these Rules, have complete control of the proceedings of the Meeting and the maintenance of order.

- (2) The Presiding Officer may, in the course of discussion at a meeting, propose:
 - (a) time limits for speakers;
 - (b) limitation of the number of times the members of a delegation or observers from a State which is not a Party or a Regional Economic Integration Organization, or from any other body, may speak on any subject matter;
 - (c) the closure of the list of speakers;
 - (d) the adjournment or the closure of the debate on the particular subject under discussion;
 - (e) the suspension or adjournment of any session; and
 - (f) the establishment of drafting groups on specific issues.

Rule 7: Right to Speak

- (1) The Presiding Officer shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak, with precedence given to the Committee Members.
- (2) A Committee Member, adviser or observer may speak only if called upon by the Presiding Officer, who may call a speaker to order if the remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
- (3) A speaker shall not be interrupted, except on a point of order. The speaker may, however, with the permission of the Presiding Officer, give way during his speech to allow any Committee Member, adviser or observer to request elucidation on a particular point in that speech.

Rule 8: Procedural Motions

- (1) During the discussion of any matter, a Committee Member may raise a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately, where possible, decided by the Presiding Officer in accordance with these Rules. A delegate may appeal against any ruling of the Presiding Officer. The appeal shall immediately be put to the vote, and the Presiding Officer's ruling shall stand unless a majority of the Parties present and voting decide otherwise. A delegate raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion, but only on the point of order.
- (2) The following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the Meeting:
 - (a) to suspend the session;
 - (b) to adjourn the session;
 - (c) to adjourn the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion;
 - (d) to close the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion.

Rule 9: Arrangements for Debate

- (1) The Meeting may, on a proposal by the Presiding Officer or by a Committee Member, limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times Committee Members, advisers or observers may speak on any subject matter. When the debate is subject to such limits, and a speaker has spoken for the allotted time, the Presiding Officer shall call the speaker to order without delay.
- (2) During the course of a debate the Presiding Officer may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Committee, declare the list closed. The Presiding Officer

- may, however, accord the right of reply to any individual if a speech delivered after the list has been declared closed makes this desirable.
- (3) During the discussion of any matter, a Committee Member may move the adjournment of the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, a Committee Member may speak in favour of, and a Committee Member of each of two Parties may speak against the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this Rule.
 - (4) A Committee Member may at any time move the closure of the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion, whether or not any other individual has signified the wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion for closure of the debate shall be accorded only to a Committee Member from each of two Parties wishing to speak against the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this Rule.
 - (5) During the discussion of any matter a Committee Member may move the suspension or the adjournment of the session. Such motions shall not be debated but shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time allowed to the speaker moving the suspension or adjournment of the session.

Rule 10: Submission of Documents

As a general rule, documents intended for discussion at the meeting shall be submitted to the Secretariat at least 35 days before the meeting, who shall circulate them to all Parties at least 30 days before the meeting.

PART IV VOTING

Rule 11: Methods of Voting

- (1) Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 1, Paragraph 2, each Committee Member shall have one vote.
- (2) The Committee shall normally vote by show of hands, but any Committee Member may request a roll-call vote. In the event of a vote during an inter-sessional period, there will be a postal ballot, which may include ballot by email or fax.
- (3) At the election of officers, any Committee Member may request a secret ballot. If seconded, the question of whether a secret ballot should be held shall immediately be voted upon. The motion for a secret ballot may not be conducted by secret ballot.
- (4) Voting by roll-call or by secret ballot shall be expressed by "Yes", "No" or "Abstain". Only affirmative and negative votes shall be counted in calculating the number of votes cast by Committee Members present and voting.
- (5) If votes are equal, the motion or amendment shall not be carried.
- (6) The Presiding Officer shall be responsible for the counting of the votes and shall announce the result. The Presiding Officer may be assisted by the Secretariat. Inter-sessional voting by postal ballot, email or fax will be co-ordinated by the Secretariat.
- (7) After the Presiding Officer has announced the beginning of the vote, it shall not be interrupted except by a Committee Member on point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. The Presiding Officer may permit Committee Members

to explain their votes either before or after the voting, and may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations.

Rule 12: Majority and Voting Procedures on Motions and Amendments

- (1) Except where otherwise provided for under the provisions of the Agreement or these Rules, all votes on procedural matters relating to the forwarding of the business of the meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of Parties.
- (2) Financial decisions within the limit of the power available to the Advisory Committee shall be decided by three-quarter majority among those Parties present and voting.
- (3) Amendments to the Rules of Procedure require a three-quarter majority among those present and voting.
- (4) All other decisions shall be taken by simple majority among Parties present and voting.
- (5) When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. If the amendment is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.

PART V LANGUAGES AND RECORDS

Rule 13: Working Language

English shall be the working language of the Committee meeting and working groups.

Rule 14: Other Languages

- (1) An individual may speak in a language other than English, provided he/she furnishes interpretation into English.
- (2) Any document submitted to a meeting shall be in English.

Rule 15: Summary Records

Summary records of Committee meetings shall be kept by the Secretariat and shall be circulated to all Parties in English.

PART VI OPENNESS OF DEBATES

Rule 16: Committee Meetings

All sessions of meetings shall be open to the public, except that in exceptional circumstances the Meeting may decide, by a two-thirds majority of Parties present and voting, that any single session be closed to the public.

Rule 17: Sessions of the Working Groups

As a general rule, sessions of working groups shall be limited to the Committee Members, their advisers and to observers invited by the Chairs of working groups.

PART VII

WORKING GROUPS

Rule 18: Establishment of Working Groups

- (1) The Advisory Committee may establish such working groups as may be necessary to enable it to carry out its functions. It shall define their terms of reference. The Advisory Committee as well as the working groups may nominate members of each working group, the size of which may be limited according to the number of places available in assembly rooms.
- (2) The working group can appoint committee members, advisers as well as observers as its Chair and Vice-Chair.

Rule 18: Procedure

Insofar as they are applicable, these Rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of working groups.

PART VIII

FINAL PROVISIONS

Rule 20: Omissions

In matters not covered by the present Rules, the Rules of Procedure as adopted by the last regular Meeting of the Parties shall be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

Rule 21: Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

- (1) The Committee shall, by three-quarter majority, establish its own Rules of Procedure.
- (2) These rules may be amended by the Committee as required. They will remain in force until and unless an amendment is called for and adopted.

Opening Speech by Minister Janusz Zaleski

Under-Secretary of State and Chief Nature Conservator of the Polish Ministry of the Environment

“Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome most warmly the delegates of Member States of the ASCOBANS Agreement, representatives of the Agreement Secretariat, CMS Convention and the representatives of the world of science and non-governmental organisations.

We are glad that after our meeting in 2004 we now have another opportunity to welcome all of you in Poland at the meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.

We all share the concern for protection of small cetaceans in the Baltic waters, the North Sea and the North-Eastern part of the Atlantic Ocean. For Poland it is particularly important to protect its only small cetacean – the harbour porpoise.

The membership in the ASCOBANS Agreement is of great value to us. It gives us a chance to share our doubts and problems, and - most importantly - allows us to arrive at the solutions together. Membership in the Agreement also lets us gather objective, scientifically sound data that can serve as a basis for our future decisions and tasks.

Through the cooperation under the ASCOBANS Agreement Poland participates in the SAMBAH Project. The information acquired during meetings held as a part of the implementation of that Agreement are used for building national legislation – the habitat protection programme and the species protection programme, including the harbour porpoise protection programme.

So far, most of the meetings of the Advisory Committee were held close to the sea. We already had the opportunity to show you the Polish coast, thus – taking this into consideration along with some logistic aspects – this time we decided to meet in Warsaw.

Warsaw may not have direct access to the sea, however the city can boast a historical presence of a sea mammal – the Warsaw Mermaid, which is the city’s emblem. The Warsaw Mermaid presents a good example of an international cooperation, as according to the legend it came to us from the North Sea, as well as cooperation between sectors, as the mermaid was kidnapped by a greedy merchant and set free by a brave, honest and caring fisherman. The Mermaid was so grateful that she decided to stay with us forever.

Our work within the field of environmental protection is never done – even when there is an improvement in some area, there are always new problems to solve. We hope, however, that the meeting, which I have the privilege of opening today, will bring us closer to the goal of improving the welfare of small cetaceans and allow us to reach the beneficial status of biodiversity protection of the Baltic Sea and all the waters falling under the ASCOBANS Agreement.”

Action Points of the 9th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

JASTARNIA PLAN

- 1) ASCOBANS and Parties are encouraged to continue efforts to promote SAMBAH and its use for harbour porpoise conservation in the Baltic Sea.
- 2) If required, Parties are asked to consider providing additional funding for the SAMBAH and RUMBAH projects.
- 3) Parties are strongly encouraged to use the data provided by SAMBAH once these become available, in particular in connection with the establishment of management plans for harbour porpoises, as well as with regard to mitigation measures.
- 4) ASCOBANS and the Parties should explore the possibility of co-funding and/or otherwise supporting dedicated follow-up studies for SAMBAH, for instance in connection with other studies such as BIAS starting in December 2013.
- 5) ASCOBANS should request HELCOM to provide updated and high resolution data on fisheries effort in gillnet and trammel net fisheries in their web-database.
- 6) Parties should supply VMS data and coastal gillnet and trammel net fisheries data to the Secretariat for use in connection with the SAMBAH project and other follow-up projects.
- 7) The Secretariat and the Chair of the Jastarnia Group should write to the President of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, encouraging them to provide the additional funding required to enable the German Oceanographic Museum to supply the expertise needed for the finalization of SAMBAH.
- 8) ASCOBANS should explore the possibility of commissioning a desk study examining what definitions of the term 'fishermen' exist in the various Baltic Sea states.

Bycatch Reduction

- 9) The Secretariat and the Chair of the Jastarnia Group should write to ICES requesting statistics on IUU fisheries in the Baltic Sea, broken down by ICES areas. An intersessional working group should be established to evaluate the data received prior to the next meeting of the Jastarnia Group.
- 10) A small drafting group comprising Sofia Brockmark, Rüdiger Strempel, Penina Blankett and Geneviève Desportes should develop briefing notes on ASCOBANS positions regarding bycatch, insofar as possible based on any drafts that the North Sea Coordinator may prepare for fora in this area. These should be used by anyone representing ASCOBANS at Baltic RACs and other meetings of relevant EU and Baltic Sea bodies in order to maintain a consistent and appropriate approach.
- 11) The ASCOBANS Secretariat should produce a synopsis of bycatch-related regulations of relevance to individual fishermen, especially with regard to legal sanctions for bycatch and incentives for those delivering carcasses with a view to using the carcasses obtained for porpoise conservation research. The ASCOBANS Secretariat, with the support of the ASCOBANS Coordinators should also investigate what incentives are offered to those delivering carcasses, irrespective of whether such incentives are laid down in national legislation.
- 12) Noting the successful application of cod pots in Sweden, Parties should undertake or continue efforts to test and implement pots, traps and other porpoise-friendly gear.

Research and Monitoring

- 13) Given the positive experiences in the Danish fishery, Parties should implement video surveillance widely in order to document bycatch of porpoises and identify and implement effective mitigation measures, and at the same time reduce discards of fish. Currently video surveillance is the most accurate measure for bycatch estimates and total documentation of the fishery, applicable also to small vessels, and meets the requirements of Article 12 of the Habitats Directive.
- 14) Parties should collect data on the extent of ghost nets in their waters, including net types and locations. Regular assessments should then be made of the total quantities of nets lost or discarded, taking account of the distribution of different types of fisheries.
- 15) Taking into consideration the future requirements under the MSFD, Parties should implement mitigation measures for ghost nets, such as regular clean-ups, provision of disposal containers at ports, deposit systems, mandatory reporting of lost gear, marking of nets etc. Wherever possible fishing communities and other relevant stakeholders should be actively involved. A review of progress should be conducted by JG10.

Marine Protected Areas

- 16) Parties, Range States and NGOs seeking to develop management plans for SACs and MPAs designated for the harbour porpoise are encouraged to make use of the expertise available within the Jastarnia Group.
- 17) Noting the ongoing process of elaborating a conservation programme for harbour porpoises in Poland the Jastarnia Group encourages all stakeholders involved to maintain the momentum of the process and to adopt and implement the programme as soon as possible.

Public Awareness

- 18) Parties should establish sightings and strandings programmes, preferably in a coordinated fashion for all Baltic Sea states. They should consider initiating sightings days or weeks, comparable to the National Whale and Dolphin Watch in the UK. They should also consider developing a sightings and strandings app for smartphones.
- 19) Parties are encouraged to consider producing an updated and slightly modified English-language version of the German Oceanographic Museum's publication on marine mammals of the Baltic Sea. Depending on the reaction of HELCOM HABITAT, this publication could be produced jointly with HELCOM.

Cooperation with Other Bodies

- 20) Parties are strongly encouraged to fulfil their obligations under the current EC Regulation 812/2004 and the Habitat Directive.
- 21) The Chair of the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat should continue approaching the European Commission and the ICES Bycatch Working Group to draw attention to the need to address the bycatch problem in the Baltic.

OTHER MATTERS

- 22) ASCOBANS should request environment ministers to note the critical status of the harbour porpoise in the Baltic Sea and to address decisive action to work towards a favourable conservation status by implementing the ASCOBANS Jastarnia Plan and in part by addressing the pressing problem of bycatch.

- 23) Parties, the Secretariat and the Jastarnia Group are requested to review and update the overview of recommendations by 31 December 2013, providing guidance as to how to proceed with past recommendations.
- 24) The Secretariat should consult the Jastarnia Group by email on the revision of the Terms of Reference.

WESTERN BALTIC, BELT SEAS AND KATTEGAT PLAN

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

- 25) National Coordinators should provide an overview of measures currently ongoing in their countries to actively engage fishing communities and other stakeholders in the implementation of the Plan, in order to identify existing gaps and lessons learnt of interest to all Parties. Parties should provide the funding required for measures needed to fill the gaps. Parties should explore the possibility of obtaining EU funding for this purpose.
- 26) National Coordinators should commence the process of establishing the stakeholder working group required under Objective a. of the Plan.

BYCATCH MITIGATION

- 27) Parties are strongly encouraged to take all necessary steps to develop as soon as possible:
 - a. agreements on mutual observance of fisheries regulations to minimize bycatch rates within Harbour Porpoise SACs,
 - b. agreements to implement immediately the controlled use of pingers in gillnet fishery associated with bycatch irrespective of vessel size or type, as provided for in the Plan.
- 28) Parties should allocate resources for a study aimed at obtaining an overview of promising alternative fishing gear and practices and provide funding for related research as needed.
- 29) ASCOBANS should seek to influence existing eco-labelling programmes to take full account of the need to avoid cetacean bycatch in certifying fisheries. ASCOBANS should offer to provide advice to fishermen as to how to achieve this aim. The Terms of Reference of the Bycatch Working Group should be amended to enable them to provide such advice.
- 30) Parties and the EU should be mindful of the need to observe the principles of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. National authorities should make fishermen aware of the Code of Conduct and the principles it contains.

ASSESSMENT OF BYCATCH LEVEL

- 31) Parties should advise the Jastarnia Group and the Secretariat of any ongoing projects regarding bycatch estimation and of results of these projects.
- 32) Parties are encouraged to undertake or promote research regarding bycatch estimation.

POPULATION STATUS

- 33) Denmark, Germany and Sweden are strongly encouraged to continue to cooperate in order to survey the Western Baltic (gap area) harbour porpoise population and evaluate trends in population density and abundance.
- 34) Parties are strongly encouraged to lend their support to the projected SCANS III survey.
- 35) Parties should collect a certain number of stranded or bycaught animals annually. The number of animals to be collected should be determined by means of an informal consultation process between the responsible experts in the respective countries, possibly drawing on the experience gathered in other ASCOBANS Parties.
- 36) These animals should be necropsied and examined with regard to health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality. The resultant data should be fed into a common database, such as the future database required under MOP Resolution 7.4.

HABITAT QUALITY

- 37) Parties should without delay commission additional research into resolving potential habitat exclusion and the long-term effectiveness of pingers. One possible option would be to explore whether data collected under the SAMBAH project could be used for this purpose.
- 38) Parties should undertake efforts to collect data on relevant prey and prey communities.
- 39) Parties should undertake or promote long-term monitoring of the effects of projects with a potential impact on harbour porpoise behaviour and distribution, and baseline studies on this issue. Research is also required on the context in which porpoises are using the habitats.

OTHER MATTERS

- 40) With a view to facilitating the implementation of the Plan, the Group reiterates its recommendation, as endorsed by AC17, to appoint as soon as possible a Baltic Sea Coordinator.
- 41) The Coordinating Authorities of the countries hosting the Group's meetings are asked to ensure the attendance of an expert on the CFP at the respective meetings of the Group.

Terms of Reference for the Steering Group for the ASCOBANS Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (“Jastarnia Group”)

1. Introduction

The need for a Baltic harbour porpoise recovery plan was recognised for a considerable time not only by ASCOBANS, but also by other international bodies. In 2002, a recovery plan was elaborated under the auspices of ASCOBANS in a collaborative effort involving scientists, managers and stakeholders. This recovery plan is the culmination of a series of scientific initiatives and meetings. The Recovery Plan, now known as the Jastarnia Plan, was welcomed by the 4th Meeting of the parties to ASCOBANS in Esbjerg, Denmark, in 2003. It calls for periodic reviews of the plan. The present revised plan is the result of the first such review.

Since 2005, annual meetings of the so-called Jastarnia Group have been held. This expert working group, composed of representatives from the environment and fisheries sectors of the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea, discusses progress made and further implementation priorities for the Jastarnia Plan and makes recommendations to the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.

In the process of reviewing the Jastarnia Plan, it was agreed that the Jastarnia Group should continue its work and act as a Steering Group for the Jastarnia Process, in accordance with the Terms of Reference below.

2. Terms of Reference

The Jastarnia Group is a working group of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee within the meaning of Article 5.4 of the ASCOBANS Agreement. It is the Steering Group for the ASCOBANS Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises.

a) Tasks

The Jastarnia Group has the following tasks:

- Evaluate progress in the implementation of the Plan,
- Establish further implementation priorities;
- Promote the implementation of the Recovery Plan;
- Carry out the periodic reviews of the Plan.

b) Composition

The Group consists of representatives of all states bordering the Baltic Sea (“Baltic Sea States”), irrespective of their status as ASCOBANS Parties or Non-Party Range States, of the North Sea Coordinator, respectively the Chair of the North Sea Group, as well as Baltic Sea environmental non-governmental organisations and Baltic Sea fisheries organisations (hereinafter referred to as “Jastarnia Group Members”). Each Baltic Sea State shall be entitled to appoint two Jastarnia Group Members, one of whom shall represent the environmental sector, the other the fisheries sector and such Advisers as the Party may deem necessary. Baltic Sea environmental non-governmental organisations and Baltic Sea fisheries organisations shall be entitled to appoint one Jastarnia Group Member and such Advisers as they may deem necessary. The Jastarnia Group may, as appropriate, invite representatives of any other body or any individual qualified in cetacean conservation and management to participate in a meeting in the capacity of “Invited Experts”.

c) Meetings

The Jastarnia Group meets at least once annually.

d) Rules of Procedure

Pursuant to Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, those Rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of the Jastarnia Group insofar as they are applicable.

Terms of Reference for the Steering Group for the ASCOBANS Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea

1. Introduction

The Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) adopted a new Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea on 18 September 2009 at its 6th Meeting of the Parties in Bonn, Germany (at MOP6 and Resolution No. 1 of MOP6). This can be accessed at http://www.service-board.de/ascobans_neu/files/MOP6_7-02_NorthSeaConservationPlan.pdf.

The North Sea Group will, supported by a Coordinator (dependent on the availability of funding) and the Secretariat, ensure the implementation of Activity 8 in the Triennium Work Plan 2010-2012:

“Promote and coordinate the implementation of the Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea, gather information on its implementation and the results obtained, inform the public and evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan every three years to update it.”

2. Terms of Reference

The North Sea Group is a Steering Group of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee within the meaning of Article 5.4 of the ASCOBANS agreement. It is the Steering Group for the ASCOBANS Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea.

a) Tasks

The North Sea Group has the following tasks:

- Evaluate progress of development and implementation of the Plan, specifically with regards to each of the 12 actions as defined in the Plan;
- Promote and coordinate the implementation of the Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea
- Gather information on its implementation and the results obtained
- Inform the public and evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan every three years to make recommendations for updating it

b) Composition

The group consists of representatives of all states bordering the North Sea, irrespective of their status as ASCOBANS Parties or Non-Party Range States, preferably represented by members that are participating in the development and implementation of the national conservation plans for Harbour Porpoises. The group also consists of the Chair of the Jastarnia Group, North Sea environmental non-governmental organizations and North Sea fisheries organizations. The Group will be supported by a Coordinator (depending on funding) and the Secretariat. The group as described here will hereafter be referred to as “North Sea Group Members”.

Each North Sea State shall be entitled to appoint North Sea Group Members, who shall represent the environmental sector and the fisheries sector and such Advisers as the Party may deem necessary. Appointed North Sea Group Members should ensure sufficient national coordination.

North Sea environmental non-governmental organizations and North Sea fisheries organizations shall be entitled to appoint one North Sea Group Member per organization and such Advisers as they may deem necessary. The North Sea Group may, as appropriate, invite representatives of any other body or any individual qualified in cetacean conservation and management to participate in a meeting in the capacity of “Invited Experts”. The chair of the North Sea Group will be appointed after endorsement of the Terms of Reference and establishment of the actual North Sea Group.

c) Meetings

The North Sea Group will work intersessionally using email and will meet approximately once a year, preferably in the margins of a regular AC meeting. The envisioned time needed for such a meeting is currently estimated as 1 day.

d) Rules of Procedure

Pursuant to Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, those Rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of the North Sea Group insofar as they are applicable.

Action Points of the 3rd Meeting of the North Sea Group

Meeting venue: Ministry of the Environment, Warsaw, Poland

Date: Monday 26 August 2013, 9:00 AM - 6:30 PM

Present: 20 participants (FR, UK, BE, NE, D, DK, SE; Secretariat; WDC, ECS/Sea Watch Foundation)

The discussion was focused on the progress of the implementation of several actions of the North Sea Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises using the 'Interim report on the implementation of the ASCOBANS North Sea Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises – 5; with focus on progress in implementation of Actions 1,3,4,7 and 8 and attempts of characterising recreational fisheries in CPHPNS area (ICES areas IIIaN, IV, VIIed), written by Geneviève Desportes as Coordinator of the ASCOBANS North Sea Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in August 2013, as a starting point.

Recommendations of the NSSG3

- 1) To include a section on the implementation status of the North Sea Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises (NSCP), as well as regionally specific information, when the format for ASCOBANS Annual National Reports will be revised. Until that time, the North Sea Steering Group (NSSG) in collaboration with the Secretariat will develop a questionnaire specific to its needs, to be submitted annually by 31 March.
- 2) The Secretariat should provide a page on the ASCOBANS website for the North Sea Conservation Plan, summarizing the plan and the progress in implementation, to promote and explain the Plan to relevant stakeholders (see Task 2 of Action 1 of the NSCP).
- 3) In order to understand the legal implications of landing bycaught porpoises throughout the ASCOBANS Area, the Secretariat should produce a synopsis of relevant legislation at EU and national levels, as well as information on experiences of working with incentives for their landing (in line with JG9 AP11).
- 4) In order to obtain a reliable picture of bycatch, monitoring programmes should include all set net fisheries, particularly vessels <15m. These should cover commercial full- and part-time fisheries and recreational fisheries, as called for in Actions 3 and 4 of the CP. Parties are encouraged to implement such programmes, considering also the latest methodologies that have been developed.
- 5) The NSSG will dedicate attention in the next 1.5 years to collect information that can be of use for the revision of the EU cetacean bycatch regulation. The AC should transmit this information to the relevant EU fora.
- 6) Small cetacean bycatch mitigation should be enforced in the fisheries that have the highest impact on populations.
- 7) In order to assess the total bycatch of small cetaceans in the North Sea and the effectiveness of bycatch mitigation measures, monitoring programmes or scientific studies are needed in the fisheries where mitigation measures are applied, as is also required in Article 2(4) of EC Reg.812/2004.
- 8) To support by all means the realization and success of a third large SCANS-type survey.

- 9) To support the on-going development of international collaborative monitoring strategies for Harbour Porpoises in order to meet the surveillance requirements of the Habitat Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive, ensuring that the whole North Sea is covered.
- 10) Consideration should be given to the possibility of further sub-structuring the Harbour Porpoise population in the North Sea. In order to refine population structure, collaborative genetic analysis of existing samples taking into account precise location and date is needed.

The 4th meeting of the NSSG is scheduled to be held one day prior to the next AC meeting in 2014. In addition a telephone conference is planned for November/December 2013.

Terms of Reference for the ASCOBANS Bycatch Working Group

The group will work intersessionally with the provisional tasks listed below; these can be fine-tuned by the group itself where deemed necessary. A report will be submitted to the next AC meeting detailing *new* information. The group should coordinate its activities closely with the regional working groups of ASCOBANS.

Tasks:

- To further explore management procedures relating to bycatch, including those proposed under the SCANS II and CODA projects.
- To report on, and assist in, projects related to bycatch in which fishermen, gear technologists and cetacean scientists cooperate.
- To assess the best approaches to address the bycatch problem within fisheries fora.
- To identify relevant fisheries fora meetings where an ASCOBANS representation would be useful, and promote input as appropriate.
- To develop active ASCOBANS involvement at relevant RAC and other meetings, and report back from such meetings.
- To report on national initiatives concerning bycatch mitigation, alternative gear experiments, improvement of bycatch monitoring, etc.
- To report results of scientific studies on bycatch.
- To summarize the results of initiatives at, or meetings of other fora such as OSPAR, EC, ICES and HELCOM.
- To prepare an overview of problem areas (geographical and fishery type) and the status of knowledge of the problem, monitoring and mitigation in place to identify gaps.
- To produce for the AC a document, summarising any specific observations and limitations concerning EC Reg. 812/2004 with regard to the cetacean conservation objectives of ASCOBANS, taking the information highlighted by each of the ASCOBANS working groups.



Societal decisions required for the determination of safe bycatch limits for harbour porpoise, common dolphin and bottlenose dolphin

Eunice Pinn, Phil Hammond and Mike Lonergan



Societal decisions required for the determination of ~~safe bycatch limits~~ **thresholds of "unacceptable interactions"** for harbour porpoise, common dolphin and bottlenose dolphin

Eunice Pinn, Phil Hammond and Mike Lonergan



Sea Mammal
Research
Unit

Why?



Joint Nature Conservation Committee

MoP 3 (2000), Res 3: defines "**unacceptable interactions**" as being, in the short term, a total anthropogenic removal above **1.7 % of the best available estimate of abundance** with the precautionary objective to reduce bycatch to less than 1% of the best available abundance estimate

MoP 6 (2009), Res 1: Conservation Plan for harbour porpoises in North Sea: *Action 6: finalise a **management procedure approach** for determining maximum allowable anthropogenic removals in the region*



Sea Mammal
Research
Unit

Influence European policy



Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Development of MSFD indicators by ICG – COBAM: M6 is a bycatch indicator, monitoring needs to be implemented in 2014

EU Regulation 812/2004 - European Commission is revising approaches to bycatch (currently uses 1.7% best population estimate). Results expected 2015

Opportunity to rectify misinterpretation



Three management procedures for defining the threshold of "unacceptable interaction":

1. Rule of thumb (e.g. 1.7% or 1% of best population estimate)
2. Potential Biological Removal (United States)
3. Catch Limit Algorithm (International Whaling Commission)



Limits of unacceptable interaction



ASCOBANS 1.7%:	3679 porpoises
ASCOBANS 1%:	2164 porpoises
PBR:	1246 porpoises
CLA:	840 porpoises

Management procedures for North Sea are more precautionary for setting limits of unacceptable interaction

Data from Scheidat et al, 2013 (Open Journal of Marine Science)
using 95% probability that 80% carrying capacity objective is met



CLA is more precautionary because it is species specific and takes account of:

- population status**
- life history**
- population/stock structure**
- historical bycatch**
- environmental variability**
- uncertainty of all the above**



History



Joint IWC/ASCOBANS meeting (2000) recommended development of a management procedure approach using simulation studies for setting limits to achieve management objectives

SCANS II (2005) compared PBR and CLA to determine acceptable levels of bycatch for harbour porpoise. CODA (2007) applied the methods to common dolphins

ICES have consistently advised the European Commission to adopt such an approach for bycatch



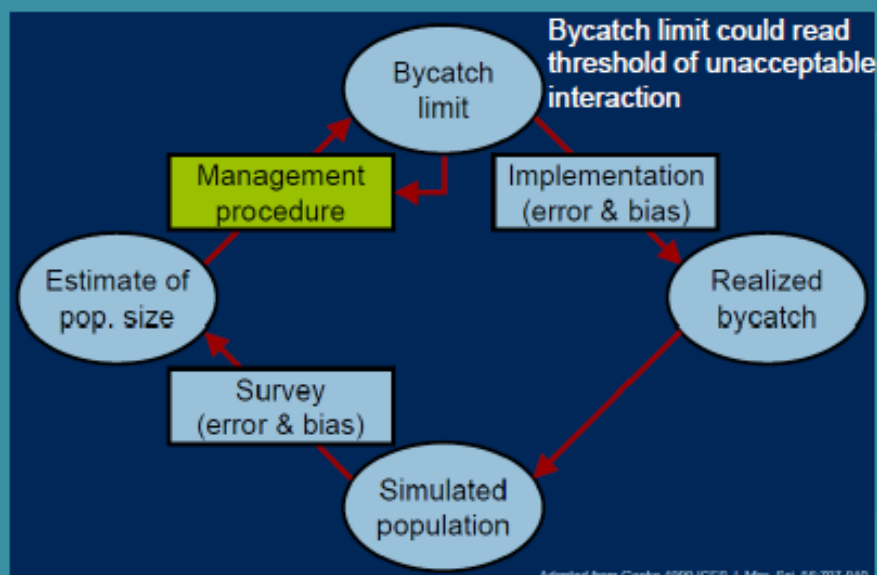
Sea Mammal
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Simulation Model



JNCC

Joint Nature Conservation Committee



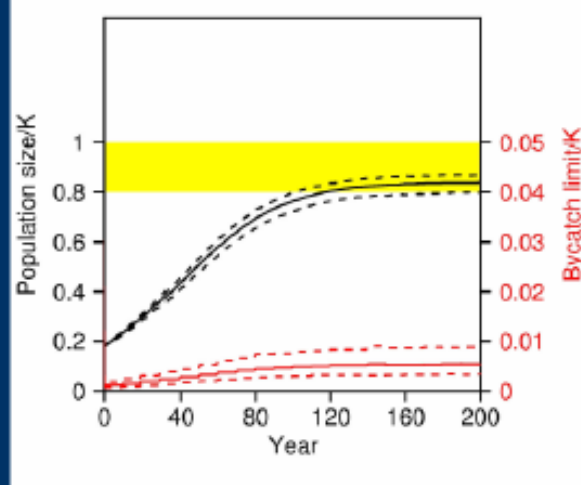
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Species specific simulation output



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Solid lines = median, dashed lines = 90% interval



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Conservation
Objectives



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Scientific methods can estimate:

- the probability of meeting objectives
- the consequences of decisions

but society/policy makers need to decide:

- appropriate conservation objectives
- what risks are acceptable

Is ASCOBANS willing to have a role in this?



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ASCOBANS Conservation Objective

**‘to allow populations to recover to and/or
maintain 80% of carrying capacity in the
long term’**

already initiated the process but...



What does 'in the long term' mean?

Examples

SCANS II and CODA used 200 years

IWC uses 100 years

IUCN uses 100 years or 3 generations

USA's MMPA uses 100 years

Does ASCOBANS have an opinion?



In the 'long term', how often is '80% of carrying capacity' required to be met?

- on average (e.g. 50% of the time)
- mostly (e.g. 95% of the time)
- something in between

Scheidat et al (2013) used 95% as the desired level of certainty of achieving the goal.



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Examples



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IWC aim for 72% carrying capacity on average (50% of the time);

Canada's OBFM for seals has target of 70% of maximum recorded abundance for 80% of the time;

MMPA aims for 50% of carrying capacity at least 95% of the time

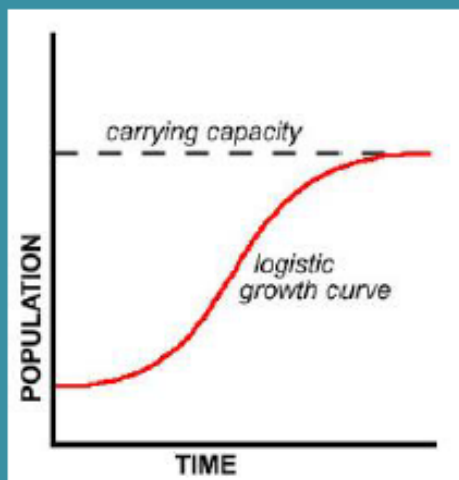


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Confidence in achieving goals



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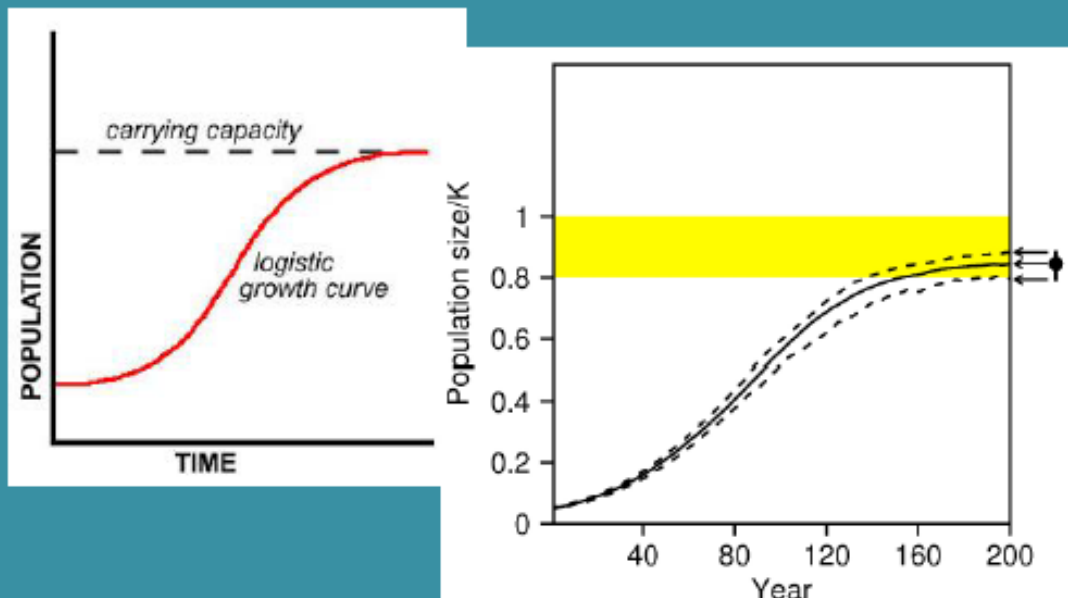


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Confidence in achieving goals



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What next?



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UK have requested that ASCOBANS advise on how they would explicitly define their conservation objective. Does the AC feel able to provide this?

Opportunity for ASCOBANS to influence and enable the further development of thresholds of unacceptable interaction:

ICG-COBAM work on GES indicators (bycatch)

European Commission have requested ICES advice on development of frameworks for assessing bycatch

**Terms of Reference for a Working Group
for the Further Development of Management Procedures for Defining the
Threshold of ‘Unacceptable Interactions’**

This working group will work intersessionally with the provisional tasks listed below; these can be fine-tuned by the group itself where deemed necessary.

The working group will:

- Seek to develop interim advice in a timely fashion in the context of ASCOBANS’ conservation aims to assist in the further development of thresholds for ‘unacceptable interactions’
- Prepare an input from ASCOBANS to the work on indicators undertaken by OSPAR COBAM in December (see for example AC20/Doc.3.1.1.b)
- Facilitate further discussion and interpretation of ASCOBANS conservation objectives (see for example AC20/Doc.3.2.1)

Draft Terms of Reference for a Joint Noise Working Group of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS

This Working Group will be comprised of members and observers of the scientific and advisory bodies of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS. External experts are invited to participate in the Working Group, too, in order to ensure the best possible advice can be generated for the Parties. The Working Group will generally operate by using the “ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Workspace” (workspace.ascobans.org) for its discussions.

The Working Group will address the mandates of relevant Resolutions of all three organizations, such as [CMS Res.9.19](#), [CMS Res.10.24](#), [ACCOBAMS Res.3.10](#), [ACCOBAMS Res.4.17](#), [ASCOBANS Res.6.2](#) and [ASCOBANS Res.7.2](#) and any relevant Resolutions still to be passed. It will present reports on progress and new information to each meeting of the CMS Scientific Council, ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and ASCOBANS Advisory Committee; if several of these meet in short succession, the same report with only relevant updates should be submitted.

The Working Group will carry out the following functions:

- i. Update and complete information on:
 - a) Relevant activities and developments in other international bodies (both regional and global) and under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive
 - b) Relevant developments and new literature especially with respect to technologies aimed at mitigating the propagation of marine noise and noise sources that may present a threat to marine life and how cetaceans are affected
 - c) Parties' progress in implementation of the resolutions mentioned above
- ii. Improvement of existing guidelines based on new scientific findings, detailing available mitigation measures, alternative technologies and standards required for achieving the conservation goals of the treaties, in particular by:
 - a) Updating and structuring the recommendations in the ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS noise guidelines and making them applicable globally
 - b) Updating the guidance on relevant mitigation technologies and management measures, and their effectiveness and cost
 - c) Continuing to consult stakeholders for advice on operational constraints to take into account
 - d) Recommending appropriate biological indicators and thresholds

The results will be presented for endorsement to Parties of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS.
- iii. Provision of advice on:
 - a) Collaboration with other international bodies, such as OSPAR, HELCOM, CBD, IMO and IWC
 - b) Requirements of the relevant other bodies that countries have elected to adhere to with respect to underwater noise, such as European Directives (i.e. the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive)
 - c) Opportunities for influencing decisions of other relevant bodies in order to achieve more effective protection of marine life from impacts of underwater noise

- iv. Design, and help implement as appropriate, pilot projects to test and improve the existing noise guidelines (ACCOBAMS Res. 4.17 and ASCOBANS AC17/Doc.4-08) and mitigation measures for their application in the field
- v. Responding to relevant Resolutions and priorities of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS

Pollution Working Group – Literature Review 2013

Report compiled by the ASCOBANS pollution review group: recent key publications concerning marine pollution

In addition to the ECS-ASCOBANS workshop report¹, the pollution review group drew attention to the following:

1. Pyrethroids: A new threat to marine mammals?

Mariana B. Alonso, Maria Luisa Feo, Cayo Corcellas, Lara G. Vidal, Carolina P. Bertozzi, Juliana Marigo, Eduardo R. Secchi, Manuela Bassoi, Alexandre F. Azevedo, Paulo R. Dorneles, João Paulo M. Torres, José Lailson-Brito, Olaf Malm, Ethel Eljarrat, Damià Barceló
Environment International 47 (2012) 99–106

The first investigation to demonstrating pyrethroid bioaccumulation in marine mammals, despite the assumption that these insecticides are converted to non-toxic metabolites by hydrolysis in mammals. Twelve pyrethroids were determined in liver samples from 23 male franciscana dolphins from Brazil and mother-to-calf transfer of pyrethroids by both gestational and lactation pathways in dolphins was also shown.

2. Immune Activity, Body Condition and Human-Associated Environmental Impacts in a Wild Marine Mammal

Brock, P. M., Hall, A. J., Goodman, S. J., Cruz, M., & Acevedo-Whitehouse, K.
PloS one (2013) 8(6), e67132. Available [online](#).

During the first three months of life, changes in antibody concentration were negatively correlated with changes in mass per unit length, skinfold thickness and serum albumin concentration, but only in a sea lion colony exposed to anthropogenic environmental impacts. It has previously been shown that changes in antibody concentration during early Galapagos sea lion development were higher in a colony exposed to anthropogenic environmental impacts than in a control colony. This study allows for the possibility that these relatively large changes in antibody concentration are associated with negative impacts on fitness through an effect on body condition. Our findings suggest that energy availability and the degree of plasticity in immune investment may influence disease risk in natural populations synergistically, through a trade-off between investment in immunity and resistance to starvation. The relative benefits of such investments may change quickly and unpredictably, which allows for the possibility that individuals fine-tune their investment strategies in response to changes in environmental conditions. In addition, our results suggest that anthropogenic environmental impacts may impose subtle energetic costs on individuals, which could contribute to population declines, especially in times of energy shortage.

¹ Evans, P.G.H. (editor). *Chemical Pollution and Marine Mammals*. Proceedings of the Joint ECS-ASCOBANS Workshop held at the European Cetacean Society's 25th Annual Conference, Cadiz, Spain, 20th March 2011. European Cetacean Society Special Publication Series No. 55. 96pp.

3. Infection with *Brucella ceti* and high levels of polychlorinated biphenyls in bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) stranded in south-west England.

N. J. Davison, L. L. Perrett, R. J. Law, C. E. Dawson, E. J. Stubberfield, R. J. Monies, R. Deaville, P. D. Jepson.

The Veterinary record 06/2011; 169(1):14. Available [online](#).

Eight bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) that stranded in Cornwall, south-west England, between June 2004 and December 2007 were examined using standardised postmortem examination and bacteriological methods. Evidence of *Brucella* species infection was found in four of these dolphins on culture. In addition, of the eight dolphins, four were positive and two were weakly positive for antibodies to *Brucella* species on serological analyses of pericardial and other fluids using a competitive ELISA and two indirect ELISAs. High or very high levels of the sum of 25 individual chlorobiphenyl congeners ($\Sigma 25\text{CBs}$) were also determined in blubber samples from two of the dolphins (45.5 and 446.6 mg/kg lipid weight).

4. The distribution and stratification of persistent organic pollutants and fatty acids in bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) blubber

Ellisor, D., McLellan, W., Koopman, H., Schwacke, L., McFee, W. and Kucklick, J.

Science of The Total Environment (2013) 463: 581-588.

To investigate the influence of sampling depth and location on POP concentration, full depth blubber samples were taken from one stranded bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) at six different body sites to assess variation in FA distribution and contaminant storage with body location. Three of the samples from different body locations were separated into histologically distinct layers to examine the effect of blubber depth and body location on POPs and FAs. In this individual, both POPs and FAs were heterogeneous with blubber depth and body location. POP concentrations were significantly greater in ventral (average ΣPBDEs 1350ng/g lipid) and anterior (average ΣPCBs 28700ng/g lipid) body locations and greater in the superficial blubber layer (average ΣPCBs 35500ng/g lipid) when compared to the deep (8390ng/g lipid) and middle (23,700ng/g lipid) layers. Proportionally more dietary FAs were found in dorsal blubber and in middle and deep layers relative to other locations while the reverse was true for biosynthesized FAs. Stratification was further examined in blubber from the same body location in five additional stranded bottlenose dolphins. Although FAs were stratified with blubber depth, lipid-normalized POPs were not significantly different with depth, indicating that POP concentrations can vary in an individual with blubber depth though the direction of POP stratification is not consistent among individuals.

5. The Pelagos Sanctuary for Mediterranean marine mammals: Marine Protected Area (MPA) or marine polluted area? The case study of the striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*)

Maria Cristina Fossi, Cristina Panti, Letizia Marsili, Silvia Maltese, Giacomo Spinsanti, Silvia Casini, Ilaria Caliani, Stefania Gaspari, Juan Muñoz-Arnanz, Begoña Jimenez, Maria Grazia Finoia

Marine Pollution Bulletin (2013), 70: 64-72

The concurrence of man-made pressures on cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea is potentially affecting population stability and marine biodiversity. This needs to be proven for the only pelagic marine protected area in the Mediterranean Sea: the Pelagos Sanctuary for Mediterranean Marine Mammals. Here we applied a multidisciplinary tool, using diagnostic markers elaborated in a statistical model to rank toxicological stress in Mediterranean cetaceans. As a case study we analyzed persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals combined with a wide range of diagnostic markers of exposure to anthropogenic

contaminants and genetic variation as marker of genetic erosion in striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*) skin biopsies. Finally, a statistical model was applied to obtain a complete toxicological profile of the striped dolphin in the Pelagos Sanctuary and other Mediterranean areas (Ionian Sea and Strait of Gibraltar). The paper provides the first complete evidence of the toxicological stress in cetaceans living in Pelagos Sanctuary.

6. Temporal trends and spatial differences of perfluoroalkylated substances in livers of harbor porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) populations from Northern Europe, 1991–2008

Sandra Huber, Lutz Ahrens, Bård-Jørgen Bårdsen, Ursula Siebert, Jan Ove Bustnes, Gísli A. Víkingsson, Ralf Ebinghaus, Dorte Herzke

Science of the Total Environment 419: 216–224

Long-term temporal trends (1991–2008) and spatial differences of perfluoroalkylated substances (PFASs) were investigated in harbor porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) liver samples of juvenile females from the Baltic and North Sea. Additionally, spatial differences between the populations in the Baltic Sea and Atlantic Ocean (i.e. Iceland and Norway) and the influence of the body mass, age and sex on the PFAS concentrations were examined. In terms of temporal trends, perfluoroalkyl sulfonates (PFSA) and PFOSA concentrations decreased over time, while, conversely, the C9–C13 perfluoroalkyl carboxylate (PFCA) concentrations increased. Spatial distribution of the contaminant concentrations showed consistently higher concentrations in the Baltic Sea and lowest concentrations in the Icelandic population of the Atlantic Ocean.

7. Butyltin compounds in liver of harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) from the UK prior to and following the ban on the use of tributyltin in antifouling paints (1992–2005 & 2009)

Robin J. Law, Thi Bolam, David James, Jon Barry, Rob Deaville, Robert J. Reid, Rod Penrose, Paul D. Jepson

Marine Pollution Bulletin 64 (2012) 2576–2580

Liver butyltin concentrations (monobutyl, dibutyl and tributyltin (TBT)) in harbour porpoises (n = 410) have been determined during 1992–2005, and again in 2009 following a ban on the use of tributyltin-based antifouling paints on ships. The aim was to assess the effectiveness of the regulation, which was implemented during 2003–2008. Since the ban was put in place summed butyltin concentrations have declined. Also, the percentage of animals in which TBT was detected has fallen sharply, indicating the cessation of fresh inputs. In 1992, 1993 and 1995, TBT was detected in 100% of samples analysed. In 2003–2005, once the implementation of the ban had begun, this fell to 61–72%, and in 2009, following the completion of the ban, had reduced to 4.3% (i.e. in only 1 of 23 samples analysed). Thus we conclude that the ban has proved effective in reducing TBT inputs to the seas from vessels.

8. Organochlorine pesticides and chlorobiphenyls in the blubber of bycaught female common dolphins from England and Wales from 1992–2006.

Robin J Law, Philippe Bersuder, Jon Barry, Jon Barber, Rob Deaville, James Barnett, Paul D Jepson

[Marine Pollution Bulletin](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2012.12.026): DOI:10.1016/j.marpolbul.2012.12.026

Concentrations of organochlorine pesticides (HCB, HCHs, DDTs, dieldrin) and PCBs in the blubber of 43 common dolphins bycaught in fisheries operating off the SW coast of the UK from 1992 to 2006 are reported. Concentrations of ΣDDT (summed p,p'-DDT and its

metabolites, p,p'-DDE and p,p'-TDE) and of 25 summed CB congeners ranged from 0.2 to 16.1 and 2.1 to 62.4mgkg(-1) lipid weight, respectively. Concentrations of sum HCH, HCB and dieldrin were lower, ranging from not detected to 0.14, 0.01 to 0.27 and 0.01 to 0.73mgkg(-1) lipid weight, respectively. All contaminants studied showed a downward time trend but only that for HCHs was statistically significant. Overall, 72% of the dolphins analysed had blubber PCB concentrations above an established toxicity threshold value.

9. Contaminants in cetaceans from UK waters: Status as assessed within the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme from 1990 to 2008

Robin J. Law, Jon Barry, Jonathan L. Barber, Philippe Bersuder, Rob Deaville, Robert J. Reid, Andrew Brownlow, Rod Penrose, James Barnett, Jan Loveridge, Brian Smith, Paul D. Jepson 2012

Marine Pollution Bulletin 64 (2012) 1485–1494

This paper describes the current status of cetaceans (primarily harbour porpoises, *Phocoena phocoena*) in UK waters in relation to pollution. Concentrations of BDEs, HBCD, and the organochlorine pesticides are declining. In contrast, concentrations of CBs have plateaued following earlier reductions due to regulation of use, and further reductions are likely to take decades. Blubber PCB concentrations are still at toxicologically significant levels in many harbour porpoises and regularly occur at even higher levels in bottlenose dolphins and killer whales due to their higher trophic level in marine food chains. Further reductions in PCB inputs into the marine environment are needed to mitigate risk from PCB exposure in these species.

10. Assessing the Effect of Persistent Organic Pollutants on Reproductive Activity in Common Dolphins and Harbour Porpoises

S. Murphy, G. J. Pierce, R. J. Law, P. Bersuder, P. D. Jepson, J. A. Learmonth, M. Addink, W. Dabin, M. B. Santos, R. Deaville, B. N. Zegers, A. Mets, E. Rogan, V. Ridoux, R. J. Reid, C. Smeenk, T. Jauniaux, A. López, J. M. Alonso Farré, A. F. González, A. Guerra, M. García-Hartmann, C. Lockyer and J. P. Boon

Journal of Northwest Atlantic Fishery Science 04/2010; 42(42):153-173

Ovarian scars were used as an index of reproductive activity. In harbour porpoises, high POP burdens tended to be associated with lower ovarian scar number, possibly indicating that high contaminant levels were inhibiting ovulation, or some females may go through a number of infertile ovulations prior to a successful pregnancy, birth, and survival of their first offspring during early lactation. In contrast, initial results identified that the common dolphins with contaminant burdens above a threshold level for adverse health effects in marine mammals (17 µg g⁻¹ total PCBs lipid) were resting mature females, with high numbers of ovarian scars. This suggests that (a) due to high contaminant burdens, females may be unable to reproduce, thus continue ovulating, or (b) females are not reproducing for some other reason, either physical or social, and started accumulating higher levels of contaminants. Additional analyses were carried out on a control group of "healthy" *D. delphis*, i.e. stranded animals diagnosed as bycatch and were assessed for evidence of any infectious or non-infectious disease that would inhibit reproduction. Results suggested that high contaminant burdens, above the threshold level, were not inhibiting ovulation, conception or implantation in female *D. delphis*, though the impact on the foetal survival rate (in both species) requires further examination. Investigations into accumulation and persistence of ovarian scars and use as an index of reproductive activity were also undertaken within this study

11. Improved reproductive success in otters (*Lutra lutra*), grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) and sea eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) from Sweden in relation to concentrations of organochlorine contaminants.

Anna M. Roos, Britt-Marie V.M. Bäcklin, Björn O. Helander, Frank F. Rigét, Ulla C. Eriksson.
2012

Environmental Pollution 170 (2012) 268e275

Indices of reproductive outcome were studied in three aquatic species in relation to organochlorine concentrations during four decades. In female otters, the frequency of signs of reproduction increased after 1990. In grey seals, pregnancy rate improved and uterine obstructions ceased after 1993. The number of sea eagle nestlings per checked nest increased, while the frequency of desiccated eggs decreased. Organochlorine concentrations decreased at annual rates between 3.5 and 10.2%. The estimated mean concentration (mg/ kg lw) for total-PCB decreased from 70 to 8 (otters), from 110 to 15 (seals) and from 955 to 275 (eagles). This study supports the hypothesis that PCBs and DDTs have had strong negative effects on the reproduction and population levels of these species and is included here to show how declining organochlorines have allowed reproduction to bounce back.

12. Cetaceans and Marine Debris: The Great Unknown

Mark Peter Simmonds

Journal of Marine Biology Volume 2012, Article ID 684279, 8 pages
doi:10.1155/2012/684279. Available at: <http://www.hindawi.com/journals/jmb/2012/684279/>

Plastics and other marine debris have been found in the gastrointestinal tracts of cetaceans, including instances where large quantities of material have been found that are likely to cause impairment to digestive processes and other examples, where other morbidity and even death have resulted. In some instances, debris may have been ingested as a result of the stranding process and, in others, it may have been ingested when feeding. Those species that are suction or “ram” feeders may be most at risk. There is also evidence of entanglement of cetaceans in marine debris. However, it is usually difficult to distinguish entanglement in active fishing gear from that in lost or discarded gear. The overall significance of the threat from ingested plastics and other debris remains unclear for any population or species of cetaceans, although there are concerns for some taxa, including at the population level, and marine debris in the oceans continues to grow.

13. Assessing the potential impact of oil and gas exploration operations on cetaceans in the Moray Firth

Paul Thompson, Kate Brookes, Barbara Cheney, Isla Graham & Tim Barton

Third year Report for DECC, Scottish Government, COWRIE, and Oil & Gas UK. 1st March 2012. 18 pages

14. PCBs and DDTs in *Stenella coeruleoalba* dolphins from the French Mediterranean coastal environment (2007–2009): Current state of contamination

Emmanuel Wafo, Véronique Risoul, Thérèse Schembri, Véronique Lagadec, Frank Dhermain Chacha Mamaf, Henri Portugal

Marine Pollution Bulletin 64 (2012) 2535–2541

Organochlorinated compounds including PolyChloroBiphenyles, Dichloro-DiphenylTrichloroethan and metabolites were determined in *Stenella coeruleoalba* (n = 37) stranded on the French Mediterranean coasts from 2007 till 2009. In general, total PCBs are

the most abundant, followed by total DDTs. The concentration (in ng g⁻¹ of lipid weight) in blubber of *S. coeruleoalba*, varied from 2,052 to 158,992 for PCBs and from 1,120 to 45,779 for DDTs. The ratios DDE/ tDDTs are higher than 80% in almost all samples. The overall results of this work seem to confirm the tendency to a decrease of the contamination by organics compounds for the cetaceans in the Western Mediterranean Sea.

15. Application of Bayesian population physiologically based pharmacokinetic (PBPK) modeling and Markov chain Monte Carlo simulations to pesticide kinetics studies in protected marine mammals: DDT, DDE, and DDD in harbor porpoises.

Weijs, L., Yang, R. S., Das, K., Covaci, A., & Blust, R.

Environmental Science & Technology (2013) 47(9): 4365-4374.

Parameters from the literature were used as priors for the first "model update" using the Black Sea data set, the resulting posterior parameters were then used as priors for the second "model update" using the North Sea data set. As such, PBPK models with parameters specific for harbor porpoises could be strengthened with more robust probability distributions. As the science and biomonitoring effort progress in this area, more data sets will become available to further strengthen and update the parameters in the PBPK models for harbor porpoises as a species anywhere in the world. Further, such an approach could very well be extended to other protected marine mammals

16. Investigating links between polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) exposure and thymic involution and thymic cysts in harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*)

Xinli Yap, Rob Deaville, Matthew W. Perkins, Rod Penrose, Robin J. Law, Paul D. Jepson

Marine Pollution Bulletin 64 (2012) 2168–2176

The associations between polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) exposure and involution of lymphoid tissue and development of epithelial-lined cysts in the thymus of UK-stranded harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) (n = 170) were tested. Percentage of thymic lymphoid tissue (%TLT) was histologically quantified. Multiple regression analyses (n = 169) demonstrated significant positive correlation between %TLT and nutritional status (p < 0.001) and significant negative association between %TLT and onset of sexual maturity (p < 0.001). However, in a subgroup of porpoises with total PCB levels above a proposed threshold of toxicity (>17 mg/kg lipid weight) (n = 109), the negative association between %TLT (as dependent variable) and summed blubber concentrations of 25 chlorobiphenyl congeners (P25CBs) remained significant (p < 0.01) along with nutritional status (p < 0.001) and onset of sexual maturity (p < 0.001). These results suggest PCB-induced immuno suppression may be occurring in harbour porpoises in UK waters but only at concentrations that exceed proposed toxicity thresholds for marine mammals. In contrast, development of thymic cysts appears predominantly age-related.

Nomination of Dr. habil. Karl-Hermann Kock for the ASCOBANS Lifetime Award

Dear Colleagues,

As you are aware, Poland has nominated Karl-Hermann Kock for the ASCOBANS Lifetime Award. I will not repeat every one of the numerous good reasons for presenting this award to Karl-Hermann because I believe they are explained in our nomination document. But I would like to add a few brief personal remarks.

Karl-Hermann's career and mine have been similar in many ways. And we have known each other for a long time. One of the first occasions where our paths crossed was a meeting at the premises of the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge in the late seventies. We were both very young at the time and both very passionate about Antarctica.

Our passion for Antarctica has endured, but it has not kept us from also turning our attention to a region that is - for both of us - much closer to home. I am, of course, talking about the Baltic Sea.

ASCOBANS is an important organization for this region and I am proud to say that both Karl-Hermann and I belong to the ASCOBANS pioneers. For nearly two decades, I have had the pleasure of cooperating with him in the framework of this agreement. Karl-Hermann represents the fisheries side of the ASCOBANS community and I am also as an ichthyologist / fishery biologist one of the "green" people around the table - and we all know that these two groups are not always in complete harmony. But Karl-Hermann has always been a constructive partner in developing ideas and solutions that help to protect the Baltic harbour porpoise while at the same time keeping in mind the legitimate interests of the fishermen.

We have all benefited from the knowledge and wisdom he has contributed to the work of ASCOBANS. And I believe that like me, many of you will agree that he is more than just a partner or colleague, he is a friend.

Karl-Hermann will shortly retire and while I hope that he will continue to make his expertise available to ASCOBANS in one way or another, I believe this is the right moment to honour him with the ASCOBANS Lifetime Award. Please join me in thanking Karl-Hermann Kock for his long-standing contribution to the work of this Agreement and to the cause of cetacean conservation!

Krzysztof Skóra

Nomination by Poland:

In recognition of the fact that the conservation of small cetaceans is strongly based on research, outreach and education and that this work often benefits substantially from the unique contributions made in the course of a lifetime by committed individuals, the 6th Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS (Bonn, Germany, September 16–18, 2009, MOP 6) launched an ASCOBANS Lifetime Award. It was decided that this award should be bestowed occasionally on individuals whose careers have been marked by a continuous contribution to the work of cetacean conservation in general and ASCOBANS in particular. In the light of his long-standing involvement in the successful work of ASCOBANS, Poland would therefore like to nominate Dr. habil. Karl-Hermann Kock of the Institute of Sea Fisheries of the Johann-Heinrich von Thünen Institute, Hamburg, Germany, for the ASCOBANS Lifetime Award.

A marine biologist who holds a doctoral degree from the University of Kiel, Germany and was granted a post-doctoral lecturing qualification (Habilitation) by the University of Hamburg, Germany, Dr. Kock joined the Institute of Sea Fisheries (now Institute of Sea Fisheries of the Johann-Heinrich von Thünen Institute) in 1975. He has devoted his entire career to issues related to marine conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources. He has been a member of the Scientific Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) since 1984 and of the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) since 1988. In 1996 Dr. Kock joined the German delegation to ASCOBANS. In addition to his work in the Sea Fisheries Institute and as a German delegate in various international bodies, Dr. Kock continuously engaged in active research, as documented by his impressive list of publications (cf. Annex 1 below).

Specifically with regard to ASCOBANS, since 1996 Dr. Kock has continually taken part in and made notable contributions to the work of the ASCOBANS Meeting of the Parties and the Advisory Committee and he has been a member of the ASCOBANS Jastarnia Group, which he also chaired on two occasions, since its inception in 2005. Dr. Kock contributed his valuable expertise to the ASCOBANS Baltic Discussion Group (1997-2000), the 2001 Workshop aimed at developing a recovery plan for Baltic harbour porpoises (Jastarnia, Poland, January 9–11, 2002) and the subsequent intersessional work leading to the final elaboration of the plan, as well as the process of revising the plan prior to MOP 6. Moreover, Dr. Kock was instrumental in helping to organize the stakeholder workshop intended to facilitate the process of elaborating an ASCOBANS conservation plan for harbour porpoises in the North Sea (Hamburg, Germany, December 6-7, 2004) and in the development of the plan itself. In addition, Dr. Kock has also repeatedly supported activities in connection with the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP).

Dr. Kock's contribution to these various facets of ASCOBANS work was marked by a high degree of scientific as well as practical experience and expertise, derived from his long-standing activity as a researcher, and an active participant in international political and diplomatic processes. Dr. Kock was noted for his profound understanding of the environmental aspects of marine management and the intricate interconnection between sustainable fisheries management and marine conservation, his ability to see and both sides of the coin and to strike a balance between the needs of a viable fishing industry and the demands of environmental protection.

Dr. Kock is highly regarded throughout the ASCOBANS community and his input to the ASCOBANS process will be missed following his retirement this year. We therefore feel that presenting him with the ASCOBANS Lifetime Award would be an appropriate, if somewhat insufficient, token of our appreciation.

**Draft Terms of Reference for the
Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Working Group
on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)**

A final version of these ToR will be proposed to the members of the Advisory Committee of ASCOBANS after consideration by ACCOBAMS.

This working group will operate by correspondence. It should coordinate and cooperate closely with other relevant scientific bodies and working groups within both Agreements, in particular the sub-regional working groups. It should also liaise with relevant working groups established by other international bodies, such as HELCOM, OSPAR and ICES as well as national processes.

With a view to ensuring that cetacean conservation issues are adequately taken account of in the framework of ongoing work related to the MSFD, the joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS working group on the MSFD will:

- 1) Collect information on how the implementation of the MSFD is furthered in the various relevant regional fora with regard to (small) cetaceans (e.g. OSPAR, ICES, ...)
- 2) In close cooperation with other scientific bodies and working groups within both Agreements, ensure consistency and identify gaps in the implementation of the MSFD with regard to (small) cetaceans in these regional fora
- 3) Liaise with scientific bodies and working groups within ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS that work on matters relevant to the implementation of the MSFD
- 4) Report back on the conclusions of its work to the relevant working groups of ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS, and to its relevant scientific and technical bodies
- 5) Ensure that the conclusions of its work are brought to the attention of the relevant groups working on the implementation of the MSFD
- 6) Prepare draft ToR for work within ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS related to the further implementation of the MSFD after 2014

List of Dates of Interest to ASCOBANS in 2013/2014

Date	Organizer	Title	Venue	Participation/ Report
3-4 September 2013	HELCOM	42 nd Meeting of the HELCOM Heads of Delegation (HELCOM HOD 42/2013) (www.helcom.fi)	Copenhagen, Denmark	
11-12 September 2013	OSPAR	Meeting of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on the Coordination of Biodiversity Assessment and Monitoring (ICG-COBAM) (www.ospar.org)	Gothenburg, Sweden	
18 September 2013	North Western Waters RAC	General Assembly/AGM and Executive Committee (www.nwwrac.org)	Dublin, Ireland	
23-27 September 2013	ICES	Annual Science Conference 2013 (www.ices.dk)	Reykjavik, Iceland	United Kingdom (?)
24-25 September 2013	OSPAR	Meeting of the Intersessional Correspondence Group for the Implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (ICG-MSFD) (www.ospar.org)	Gothenburg, Sweden	
3 October 2013	HELCOM	Ministerial Meeting (www.helcom.fi)	Copenhagen, Denmark	Finland (?)
7-8 October 2013	North Sea RAC	Executive Committee Meeting and General Assembly (www.nsrac.org)	Copenhagen, Denmark	NSP Coordinator
9-11 October 2013	CMS	Scientific Council Strategic and Planning Meeting (www.cms.int)	Gaeta, Italy	AC Chair (?) & Secretariat
14-18 October 2013	CBD	Seventeenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-17) (www.cbd.int)	Montreal, Canada	

15-17 October 2013	HELCOM	Seventh Meeting of the ad hoc HELCOM SEAL Expert Group (HELCOM SEAL 7/2013 meeting) (www.helcom.fi)	Copenhagen, Denmark	Finland
21-27 October 2013	IMPAC3	3 rd International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC3) (www.IMPAC3.org)	Marseilles and Corsica, France	France
Autumn 2013	Baltic Sea RAC	Executive Committee (www.bsrac.org)	tbd	
4-5 November 2013	Planet Whale	International Whale Watch Conference (http://www.planetwhale.com/conferences-2013-home)	Cruiseport, Gloucester, MA, USA	
5-8 November 2013	ACCOBAMS	5 th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (MOP5) (www.accobams.org)	Tangier, Morocco	Secretariat
6-7 November 2013	Planet Whale	World Whale Conference (http://www.planetwhale.com/conferences-2013-home)	Cruiseport, Gloucester, MA, USA	
12-13 November 2013	European Commission	12th Marine Strategy Coordination Group (www.ec.europa.eu)	Brussels, Belgium	
18-19 November 2013	OSPAR	Intersessional Correspondence Group on Recommendations (ICG RECS) (www.ospar.org)	London, United Kingdom	ECS / SWF
27-28 November 2013	CMS	41 st Meeting of the Standing Committee (StC41) (www.cms.int)	Bonn, Germany	Secretariat
3-6 December 2013	ICES	Advisory Committee Meeting (ACOM) (www.ices.dk)	Copenhagen, Denmark	
9-13 December 2013	Society for Marine Mammalogy	20 th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals (www.marinemammalscience.org)	Dunedin, New Zealand	HSI

12-13 December 2013	OSPAR	Meeting of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on the Coordination of Biodiversity Assessment and Monitoring (ICG-COBAM) (www.ospar.org)	tbd	Belgium
before the end of 2013	OSPAR	Extraordinary Meeting of the OSPAR Commission (OSPAR(2) 2013) (tentative) (www.ospar.org)	tbd	
early 2014	Global Ocean	Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth (GPO partners) (www.globaloceansactionsummit.com)	The Hague, Netherlands	
4-7 February 2014	ICES	Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC) (www.ices.dk)	Copenhagen, Denmark	United Kingdom & NSP Coordinator
17-21 February 2014	OSPAR	Biodiversity Committee (BDC) (www.ospar.org)	tbd, Netherlands	Netherlands
24-26 February 2014	Global Ocean	World Ocean Summit 2014 (http://www.economistconferences.asia/event/world-oceans-summit/1505)	San Francisco, USA	
25-27 February 2014	NAMMCO	Twenty Second Meeting of NAMMCO Council (www.nammco.no)	tbd	
10-13 March 2014	ICES	Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME) (www.ices.dk)	Woods Hole, MA, USA	United Kingdom
31 March-4 April 2014	IMO	66 th Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 66) (www.imo.org)	London, United Kingdom	France
14-16 March 2014	Planet Whale	WhaleFest 2014 (www.whale-fest.com)	Brighton, United Kingdom	Secretariat
Spring 2014	ACCOBAMS	ACCOBAMS/RAC-SPA Workshop on the Impact of Climate Change on the Marine Environment (www.accobams.org)	tbd	HSI

March/April 2014	ACCOBAMS	9 th Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC9) (www.accobams.org)	tbd	Secretariat
1-3 April 2014	ASCOBANS	10 th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group (www.ascobans.org)	tbd	n/a
5-9 April 2014	ECS	28 th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society (www.europeancetaceansociety.eu)	Liege, Belgium	Secretariat
7-11 April 2014 (tbc)	CITES	27 th Meeting of the Animal Committee (www.cites.org)	Geneva, Switzerland (tbc)	Secretariat
15-16 April 2014	CMS & WDC	Joint WDC-CMS Workshop on Cetacean Social Complexity and Culture (www.cms.int)	London, United Kingdom	Secretariat
13-16 May 2014	HELCOM	Nature Protection and Biodiversity Group (HABITAT 16/2014) (www.helcom.fi)	tbd	Finland
June 2014	UNEP	First Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) (www.unep.org)	tbd	Secretariat
9-13 June 2014	FAO	31 st Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI 31) (www.fao.org)	Rome, Italy	
7-11 July 2014	CITES	65 th Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (www.cites.org)	Geneva, Switzerland	Denmark & Secretariat
14-19 August 2014	Society for Conservation Biology	International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC3) (www.conbio.org)	Glasgow, United Kingdom	HSI
15-19 September 2014	ICES	Annual Science Conference (www.ices.dk)	Coruña, Spain	
6-17 October 2014	CBD	12 th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12) (www.cbd.int)	PyeongChang, Republic of Korea	Secretariat

Sept/Oct 2014	IWC	2014 Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (SC65b) (http://iwc.int/home)	tbd	HSI
Sept/Oct 2014	IWC	65 th Biennial Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (http://iwc.int/home)	tbd	United Kingdom
November 2014	CMS	11 th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) (www.cms.int)	tbd	Secretariat
November 2014	ICMMPA	Third International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICMMPA-3) (http://icmmpa.org/)	Adelaide, Australia	
12-19 November 2014	IUCN	World Parks Congress: Parks, People, Planet – Inspiring Solutions (www.iucn.org)	Sydney, Australia	

Overview of Working Groups Operating Under the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee

Regional Working Groups:

A. Jastarnia Group

- ➔ Standing Working Group, meets annually
- ➔ Terms of Reference: [Annex 7](#) of the AC20 Report
- ➔ Reports accessible [online](#)

Representation at 2013 Meeting:

- Countries: Denmark, Finland, Germany, Poland, Sweden
- Others: North Sea Plan Coordinator, CCB (Chair), plus individual experts/advisors to the Chair (as needed)

B. North Sea Group

- ➔ Standing Working Group, meets annually
- ➔ Terms of Reference: [Annex 8](#) of the AC20 Report
- ➔ Reports accessible [online](#)

Representation at 2013 Meeting:

- Countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands (Chair), Sweden, United Kingdom
- Others: North Sea Plan Coordinator, ECS/Sea Watch Foundation, HSI, WDC

C. Extension Area Working Group

- ➔ Standing Correspondence Working Group
- ➔ Terms of Reference: none (established by [AC18](#))
- ➔ Reports accessible as [AC19/Doc.5-09](#), [AC20/Doc.4.3.1](#)

Contributors to 2013 Report: France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, ECS/Sea Watch Foundation (Chair)

Thematic Working Groups:

D. Bycatch Working Group

- ➔ Standing Correspondence Working Group
- ➔ Terms of Reference: [Annex 10](#) of the AC20 Report
- ➔ Reports accessible as [AC18/Doc.4-07](#), [AC19/Doc.4-06](#), [AC20/Doc.3.1.1.a](#)

Representation 2013:

- Countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom
- Others: North Sea Plan Coordinator, CMS Appointed Councillor for Bycatch, ECS/Sea Watch Foundation, EUCC, Future Oceans, HSI, University of Aberdeen (Chair), WDC, ZSL, plus individual experts

E. Underwater Noise Working Group (joint group with ACCOBAMS)

- ➔ Standing Correspondence Working Group
- ➔ Terms of Reference: [Annex 13](#) of the AC20 Report
- ➔ Reports accessible as [AC16/Doc.57](#), [AC17/Doc.4-08](#), [AC18/Doc.4-08 rev.1](#), [AC19/Doc.4-08](#)

Representation 2013:

- Countries: Belgium, France (Co-Chair), Germany, Monaco, Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom
- Others: North Sea Plan Coordinator, Blue World, ECS/Sea Watch Foundation, E.ON Climate & Renewables, EUCC, HSI, IFAW, ITAW/University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, Kai Marine Services, NABU, NOAA, North Sea Foundation, NRDC, OceanCare (Co-Chair), Shifting Values, Sinay, University of Aarhus, University of Pavia, UPC, University of Aberdeen, Wageningen University & Research Centre, WDC, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, plus individual experts

F. Pollution Working Group

- ➔ Exists only during Advisory Committee Meetings, convened by HSI
- ➔ Reports accessible as Annexes to [AC reports](#) starting from AC12

G. Marine Debris Working Group

- ➔ Standing Correspondence Working Group
- ➔ Terms of Reference: [Annex 8](#) of the AC19 Report
- ➔ Report accessible as [AC20/Doc.3.4.2](#)

Representation 2013:

- Countries: Netherlands, United Kingdom
- Others: North Sea Plan Coordinator, Cetacean Conservation Medicine Group, ECS/Sea Watch Foundation, HSI, ITAW/University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, KIMO International, NABU, North Sea Foundation (Chair), University of Aberdeen, WDC, ZSL, plus individual experts

H. Marine Strategy Framework Directive Working Group (joint group with ACCOBAMS)

- ➔ Standing Correspondence Working Group (one Co-Chair position still vacant)
- ➔ Terms of Reference: [Annex 16](#) of the AC20 Report

Representation 2013:

- Countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, United Kingdom
- Others: North Sea Plan Coordinator, Blue World, ECS/Sea Watch Foundation, EUCC, HSI, OceanCare, University of Aberdeen, University of La Rochelle, WDC, Wildlife and Countryside Link, ZSL (Co-Chair), plus individual experts

I. Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans

- ➔ Standing Correspondence Working Group
- ➔ Terms of Reference: agreed by [MOP6](#) (Agenda Item 5.5)
- ➔ Reports accessible as [AC18/Doc.5-04 rev.1](#), [AC19/Doc.5-09](#), [AC20/Doc.4.3.1](#)

Contributors to 2013 Report: France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, ECS/Sea Watch Foundation (Chair)

J. Working Group for the Further Development of Management Procedures for Defining the Threshold of ‘Unacceptable Interactions’

- ➔ Short-Term Correspondence Working Group
- ➔ Terms of Reference: [Annex 12](#) of the AC20 Report

Representation:

- Countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, United Kingdom (Chair)
- Others: ECS/Sea Watch Foundation, HSI, Wild Migration, plus SMRU/modellers