

Agenda Item 4.5

Reports

Reports from Observer Organizations

Information Document 4.5.c

**Reports from Observer Organizations:
ACCOBAMS**

Action Requested

- Take note

Submitted by

ACCOBAMS



**NOTE:
DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED
TO BRING THEIR OWN COPIES OF DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING**

ACCOBAMS PROGRESS REPORT

Since the last ASCOBANS MOP in 2012, ACCOBAMS has developed several activities relating to cetaceans conservation, especially regarding:

1/ IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT STATE OF CETACEANS

DISTRIBUTION OF CETACEAN POPULATIONS

The “ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative” (ASI) is a pilot initiative aimed at establishing an integrated and coordinated monitoring system for cetaceans throughout the Agreement area.

The final goal is to improve the conservation status of these species and their habitats through an appropriate management fostering a good status of the marine and coastal environments. ACCOBAMS developed a cetacean monitoring protocol in the framework of the Ecological Objective 01 “Biodiversity” of the EcAp process of UNEP/MAP. It contributes to achieving the goals of the MSFD on biodiversity in the Agreement area.

2/ REDUCE HUMAN PRESSURES ON CETACEANS

NOISE

ACCOBAMS developed guidance for implementing a monitoring framework for anthropogenic underwater noise in the ACCOBAMS area. It is done in the framework of the UNEP/MAP EcAp initiative for which ACCOBAMS was in charge of developing Ecological Objective 11 on “Energy including underwater noise”. The objective was to provide a document consistent with the efforts in addressing noise of other relevant legal frameworks such as MSFD of the European Union (Descriptor 11).

ACCOBAMS prepared also an inventory of noise-producing human activities, identified areas where such activities are carried out, and obtained cumulative maps of noise-producing human activities and proposed a first identification of noise-cetacean interaction hotspots. Finally, the overview proposed a methodology for implementing an international noise registry, based on the experience gathered during the data collection phase.

WHALE-WATCHING

ACCOBAMS, the Pelagos Sanctuary, several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and whale-watching operators collaborated for the creation of a consultative and voluntary management tool to ensure the sustainability of whale watching activities: the “High Quality Whale-Watching®” Certificate, a formal ACCOBAMS collective certification mark. It aims at encouraging the implementation of good practices and sustainable know-how by whale-watching operators involved in initiatives fostering

quality and environmental responsibility.

INTERACTION WITH FISHERIES

A project is coordinated by the Secretariats of ACCOBAMS and of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), in collaboration with the Regional Activity Center for Specially Protected Areas (UNEP/MAP-RAC/SPA).

It aims at improving the conservation of endangered marine species, such as cetaceans, marine turtles and seabirds, with respect to fishing activities in the Mediterranean Sea while responding to fisherman's concerns.

3/ ENHANCE EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS CRITICAL HABITATS

CETACEAN CRITICAL HABITAT

In order to update the map of Cetacean critical habitat and to facilitate the evaluation of the effectiveness of MPAs with CCH, a threat management approach is currently undertaken in ACCOBAMS. Moreover, an ACCOBAMS document "Place-based conservation of cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area: a handbook on management effectiveness" will be presented to the forthcoming Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS (22nd – 25th November 2016, Monaco).

More information will be provided in the ACCOBAMS report of the Secretariat (ACCOBAMS-MOP6/2016/Doc10) for the Sixth Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Parties in November 2016.