

ASCOBANS
Species Action Plan (SAP)

for
North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin
(Delphinus delphis)



August 2019

Terms of Reference

The Common Dolphin Group has the following tasks:

- Coordinate and drive the implementation of the Species Action Plan for the North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin, including assessing funding options where appropriate;
- Collate reports on the progress of implementation, effectiveness, issues encountered and the results obtained;
- Evaluate progress in implementation, specifically with regards to each of the ten actions as defined in the SAP;
- Establish further implementation priorities and make appropriate recommendations;
- Report to each Advisory Committee meeting on the progress;
- Encourage countries to harmonise their national efforts, including allocation of funding;
- Encourage cooperation between ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS (in particular taking into consideration the ongoing initiative of ACCOBAMS/IWC Conservation and Management Plan for Mediterranean Common Dolphins) and other Range States;
- Promote the SAP to relevant stakeholders; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the SAP every six years to make recommendations for updating it.

Common Dolphin Group Members

France

- Florence Caurant – University of La Rochelle (Co-Chair)
- Vincent Ridoux – University of La Rochelle, France
- Sami Hassani - Oceanopolis
- Helene Peltier – University of La Rochelle
- Jerome Spitz – University of La Rochelle

Ireland

- Sinéad Murphy – Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (Co-chair)

Portugal

- Marine Sequeira - Instituto da Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas

Spain

- Graham Pierce - Instituto de Investigaciones Mariñas
- Begoña Santos - Instituto Español de Oceanografía

UK

- Farah Chaudry – Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Nikki Taylor – Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Kath Bell - Defra
- Allen Kingston – University of St Andrews

IGOs

- Greg Donovan – International Whaling Commission

NGOs

- Peter Evans - Sea Watch Foundation/Bangor University
- Mark Simmonds – Humane Society International
- Fiona Read – Whale and Dolphin Conservation
- Sarah Dolman – Whale and Dolphin Conservation
- Simon Berrow – Irish Whale and Dolphin Group

ACCOBAMS

- Joan Gonzalvo - Tethys Research Institute, Italy

Fishing industry

- Eunice Pinn – SeaFish

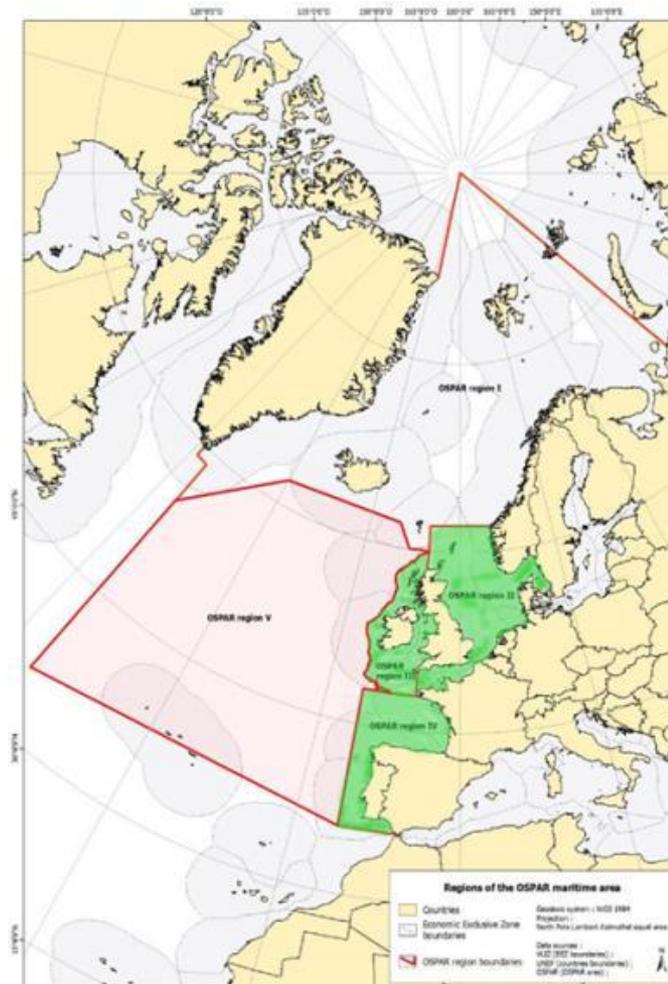
Summary of actions

Priority	Action	Code
Essential	Identify the priority bycatch issues	RES-01
Essential	Improve estimates of bycatch rates to support development of conservation strategy	RES-02
Essential	Implement and assess gear modifications and mitigation measures to reduce bycatch	MIT-01
High	Implement a wide-scale surveillance programme to monitor trends in distribution and abundance in the NE Atlantic	MON-01
High	Improve understanding of causes of seasonal and annual variation in abundance and distribution, particularly in relation to human activities	RES-03
High	Monitor health and nutritional status, diet, life history parameters, and causes of mortality in the NE Atlantic	MON-02
Medium	Further our understanding on population structure by assessing and developing suitable techniques for these highly mobile small delphinids	RES-04
Medium	Improve understanding of and develop mitigation for the risks of anthropogenic sound	MIT-02
Medium	Ensure screening and assessment of the occurrence and effects of hazardous substances	MON-03
Low	Monitor for potential increases in anthropogenic activities that lead to incidences of death, injury or adverse health effects	MON-04

1st Meeting of the Common Dolphin Group

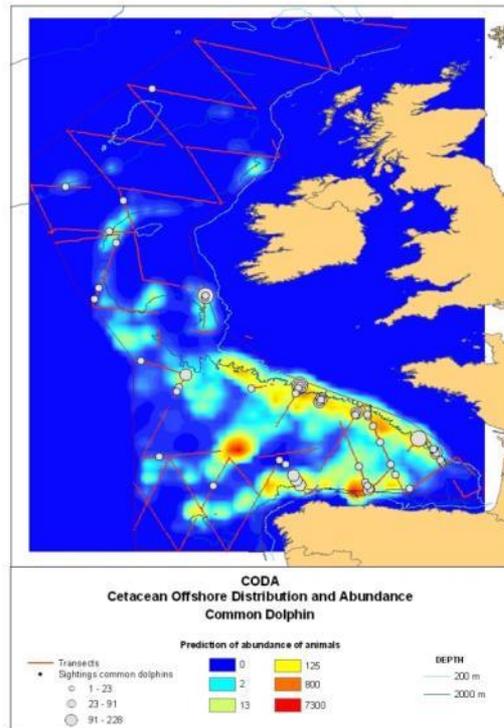
- Activities contributing to implementation of the Species Action Plan for the North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin
 - French National Working Group on Bycatch
- Update on activities of other WGs, and legislation
- Current status of the ACCOBAMS Conservation and Management Plan for Mediterranean Common Dolphins
- Bycatch as a threat to Common Dolphins
 - Current activities on bycatch monitoring and mitigation in the UK
 - Common dolphins and fisheries interactions in Galicia
 - Nature of fleets in the Bay of Biscay

One NE Atlantic Management /MSFD Assessment Unit - ICES WGMME (2014)



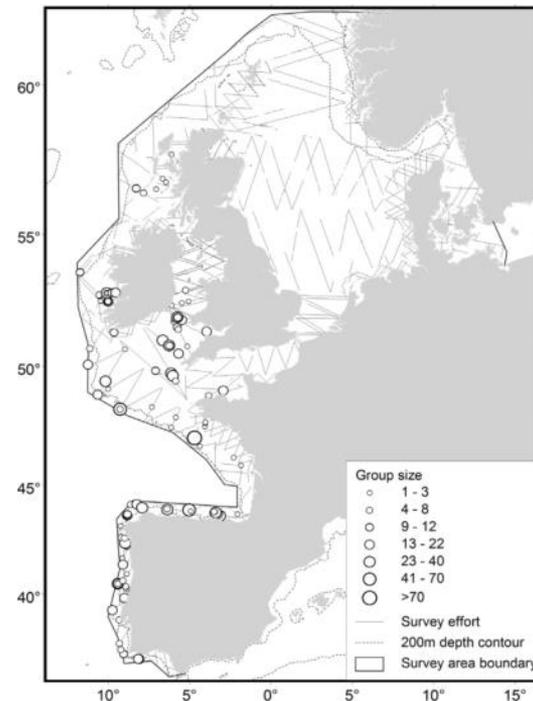
MU Abundance – 172,920 *D. delphis*

Common dolphin
(Coda 2009 -
Coda survey July 2007)



116,709 (CV=0.34)

Common dolphin
(Hammond et al. 2013 –
SCANS II survey July 2005)

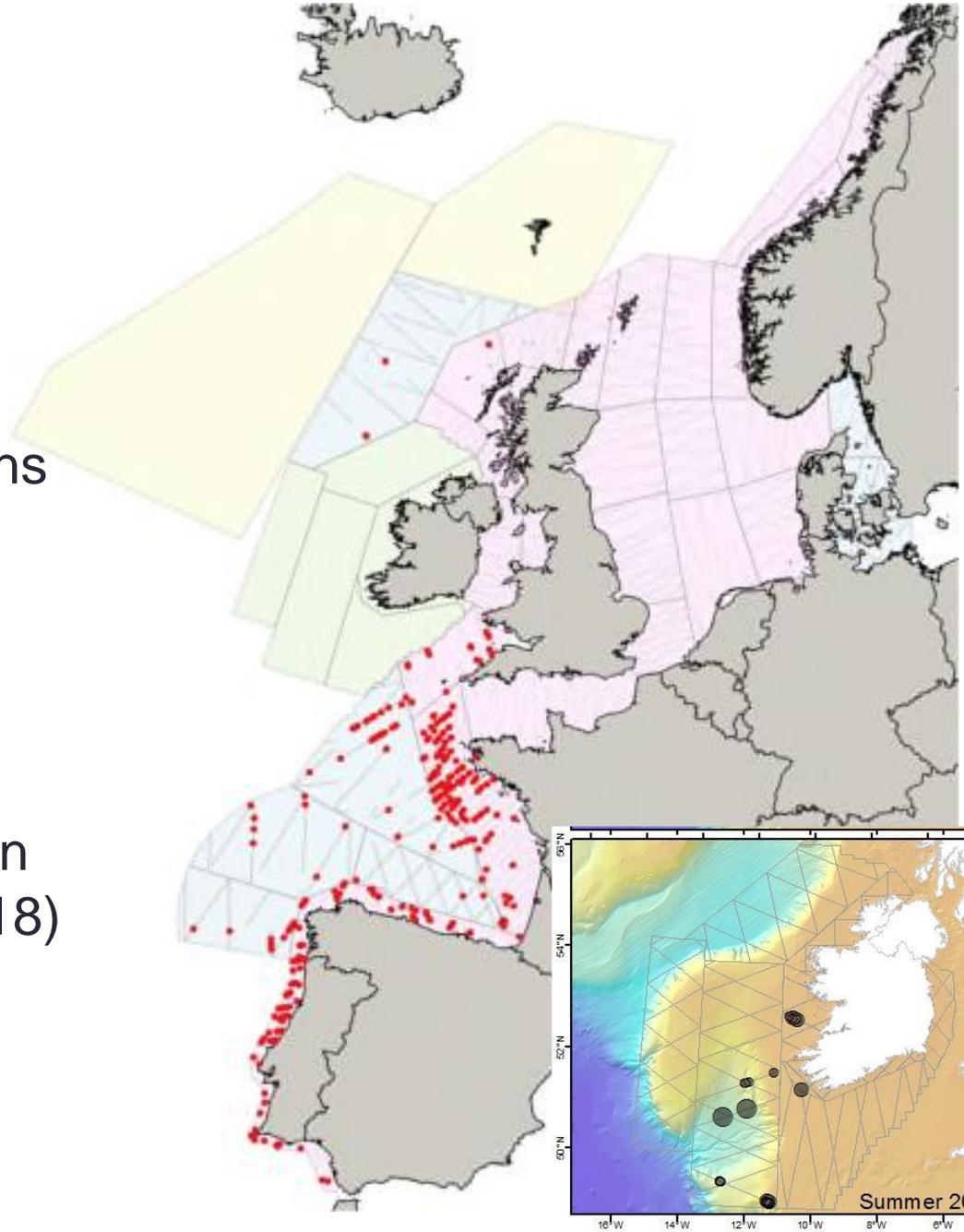


56,221 (CV=0.23)

SCANS III July 2016

>467,673 common dolphins
CV = 0.264
(Hammond et al. 2017)

Irish ObSERVE project
~ 33,215 possible common
dolphins (Rogan et al. 2018)



Establishment of a French National Bycatch Working Group

As a response to the multiple stranding events of Feb-March 2017

Establishment in April 2017 of a national **Working Group on cetacean bycatch** = administrations (central and regional services of Food and Agriculture Ministry + Ecology Ministry), scientists, fisheries, NGO:

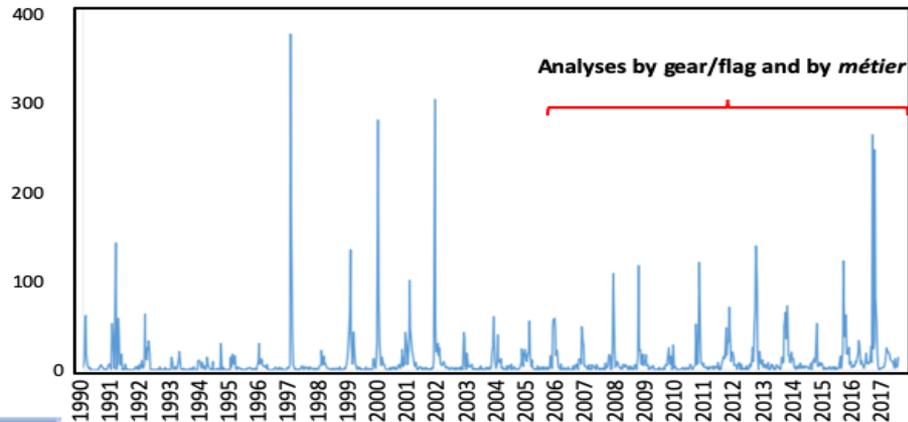
- **to improve knowledge** for a better understanding of the interactions between fisheries and small cetacean populations;
- **to prevent bycatch** by implementing mitigation actions;
- **to sensitize fishermen** for a better participation to above mentioned objectives.

First outcomes

- **Increased observer sampling rate of PTM_FR: 28% of fishing effort;**
- All vessels of the fleet of interest (PTM_FR) fitted with **pingers DDD-3;**
- **compulsory declaration** of marine mammal bycatch by all fishermen from **January 1st, 2019;**

Next meeting: this Friday

Analyses of multiple stranding events from 2006-2018



Nb of occurrences during MSE over last 13 years

OTB Esp Fr Gbr	9
GNS Fr	5
GTR Fr	4
PTM Fr	4
SDN Fr	4
OTM Fr Ndl	2
PS Esp	2
PTB Fr	1

Carcass drift modelling allowed to highlight spatial correlations between mortality at sea and fishing effort by gear/flag or by *métiers*.

Diversity of candidate gears (PTM, OT, GNS, GTR) and target species (CTC, CTL, MNZ, HKE, BSS, MAC) makes monitoring and mitigation more complex to design and expensive to implement.

Nb of occurrences during MSE over last 13 years

GNS HKE	8
PTM MAC/MAS	6
PTM BASS/SPU	3
GNS/GTR MNZ	3
OTT/OTB SOL/SQZ/CTC	3
PTM HKE	2
SDN WHG/MAC/BSS	2
OTM HKE	1



Recommendations

1. SAP Range States to complete the 'Achievements Table' by end of 2019 to identify data gaps and actions that are required going forward.
2. Letters of invitation to be sent from the Secretariat to request Non-Party Range States' participation in implementation of the SAP on Common Dolphins.
3. ASCOBANS Secretariat to ensure ACCOBAMS Secretariat is informed about the work of the Common Dolphin Group and invite input regarding the area and the threats covered by both Agreements (Exclusive Economic Zones of Portugal and Spain).
4. A review should be undertaken of aerial survey monitoring techniques to better discriminate small delphinid species to ensure explicit estimates of population size and uncertainty.
5. ASCOBANS Advisory Committee to consolidate some of the common/similar recommendations coming from ASCOBANS species conservation plans' Steering Groups, such as on bycatch and on fisheries involvement.
6. Support recommendations from the 8th Meeting of the North Sea Group that are relevant to the Common Dolphin and which could be adapted to apply to the North East Atlantic.
7. A joint ACCOBAMS-ASCOBANS workshop on the common dolphin to be held at the next ECS conference in 2021.
8. Call on all stakeholders to take note of section 6 of the SAP 'Public awareness and capacity building'.

Code	description	Priority	Ireland	United-Kingdom	France	Spain	Portugal	Coordination Secretariat	/
Actions RES-01	Identify the priority bycatch issues	essential							
Tasks 1	Identify and monitor medium-to-high-risk fisheries activities with a high risk of common dolphin bycatch in order to ascertain more accurate assessments of bycatch rates in order to meet the agreed objective of Resolution 3 MOP 3 and Resolution 5 MOP 8.	essential			1* On board observer program conducted by IFREMER under 812, 2004 regulation; 2* increased observer effort on pelagic pair trawls during winter 2019 in BoB.3* Spatial analysis of stranding (areas of mortality) and fishing effort data, but results very insufficient				
2	Progress development of a management framework procedure for common dolphin in order to meet the agreed objectives of Resolution 5, MOP 8.	essential			Implementation of the 1 and 1.7 % threshold in MFSO- A European Maritime Fisheries Fund				
3	Facilitate the identification of factors influencing bycatch rates; including an assessment of temporal (seasonal) and spatial, gear characteristics, fishing practices and target/non-target species.	essential			Project to be funded by DPMA (fisheries directorate). Others projects: PERTUIS 2019-2022 (National), LICADO 2019-2022 European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Master 2 student January-June 2020				
4	Facilitate research in order to assess evidence of bycatch selectivity of age-sex groups in different fishing operations (e.g. gears, target species, seasons), (fisheries directorate)	essential			Not done so far but to be considered (actual PhD student will contribute to this topic)				
5	Monitor causes of death in the population through strandings programmes for aiding assessments of spatio-temporal relationships and trends in bycatch, aiding implementation of the agreed objectives of Resolution 10, MOP 8 on strandings.	essential			Included in the stranding network protocols- Part of the national bycatch WG				
Actions RES-02	Improve estimates of bycatch rates to support development of conservation strategy	essential							
Tasks 1	Ensure that existing regulations with respect to bycatch reduction measures are being effectively implemented and to collect data on their efficacy in reducing bycatch to meet the agreed objectives of Resolution 3, MOP 3 and Resolution 5, MOP 8	essential			Part of the National bycatch WG				
2	Drive coordination of bycatch monitoring observer programmes across Parties and non-Party Range States, one	essential			To be done				
3	Increase reliability of fishing effort data, particularly for medium-to-high risk activities, supporting the wider work of ICES.	essential			Realised at Ifremer, already improved				
4	Support innovation and further monitoring methods, e.g. remote electronic monitoring (REM) and liaise with the newly created By-catch Inference from Stranding Working Group of IWC, to improve bycatch estimates in high risk fisheries.	essential			discussed within National bycatch working group but not implemented so far				
5	Support OSPAR in the development of a pressure-state indicator for bycatch in order to meet the requirements of MSFD ¹¹ .	essential			Yes with participants to the OSPAR meeting, and MFSO national implementation				
Actions MIT-01	Evaluation of current gear modification and mitigation measures to identify effectiveness in the reduction of bycatch in high and medium-risk fisheries to meet the agreed objectives of Resolution 5, MOP 8.	essential							
Tasks 1	Implement proven mitigation measures for all high and medium-risk fisheries that are appropriate to the nature of the vessels and their size, with subsequent monitoring to ensure effectiveness and the ongoing need to meet the agreed objectives of Resolution 5, MOP 8.	essential			Project LICADO 2019-2022 (EMFF): understanding the affects of fishing practices on bycatch				
2	Identify opportunities for further gear innovation and/or other measures for medium to high-risk fisheries, and implementation of monitored trials of promising mitigation measures, in collaboration with the fishing industry.	essential							
3	Identify opportunities for further gear innovation and/or other measures for medium to high-risk fisheries, and implementation of monitored trials of promising mitigation measures, in collaboration with the fishing industry.	essential							
Actions MON-01	Encourage Parties and non-Party Range States to collaborate and fund regular systematic wide-scale surveys in order to establish trends in abundance and distribution relevant for transboundary reporting of conservation status in order to meet the agreed objectives of Resolution 7, MOP 4 and Resolution 7, MOP 5.	high							
Tasks 1	Develop a mechanism for collation of all relevant, standardised data at a relevant spatial scale (e.g. JCP or MERP), including complementary standardised data collection protocols, to enable seasonal trends to be evaluated to meet the agreed objectives of Resolution 7, MOP 4	high			SCANS survey and SAMM surveys every 6 years under MFSO (summer and winter), to be coordinated with SCANS				
2	Ensure that the outputs of this action provide a suitable mechanism to enhance transboundary reporting of conservation status and good environmental status.	high			French data delivered to MERP				
3	Ensure that the outputs of this action provide a suitable mechanism to enhance transboundary reporting of conservation status and good environmental status.	high							
Actions RES-03	Review the collection and collation of appropriate standardised data on anthropogenic activities, and display in a format that will facilitate use in a geographic information system (GIS). This should aim to support implementation of the MSFD and assessment of good environmental status through OSPAR.	high							
Tasks 1	Complete seasonal risk assessment/risk mapping of relevant human activities and common dolphin distribution in order to meet the agreed objectives of Resolution 7, MOP 4, Resolution 7, MOP 5 and Resolution 5, MOP 8.	high			Work in progress at AFB (French Agency for Biodiversity)				
2	Collate and monitor data on important prey species of common dolphins to identify spatial areas of concern for fisheries management measures to meet the agreed objectives of Resolution 7, MOP 4 and Resolution 7, MOP 5.	high			Data collected in this aim: Project PERTUIS (2019-2022): aerial surveys in the Bay of Biscay. The area is 1000km ² , with sampling effort of 3500 Km: February, may, August, November 2019-2020. Will allow estimating seasonal variability of dolphin distribution and comparison with Ifremer boat surveys (Pelagas and Evohe)				
3	Regularly review of evidence for potential impacts of climate change on common dolphins to inform on appropriate mitigation management measures.	high			Ifremer fish stocks surveys (PELGAS and EVOHE surveys)				
4	Regularly review of evidence for potential impacts of climate change on common dolphins to inform on appropriate mitigation management measures.	high							
Actions RES-03	Funding of national stranding and bycatch observer programmes for collection of carcasses, assessment of health status, cause of death, diet analysis and life history parameters to meet the agreed objectives of Resolution 10, MOP 8.	high							
Tasks 1	Ensure implementation of the ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS/IWC strandings protocol to achieve standardised, comparable datasets.	high			Yes: National Stranding Network				
2	Support strandings programmes to enable the analysis of diet, including tissue samples for fatty acids/stable isotope analysis, and life history parameters.	high			Yes: ECS protocols and participation in the last joint ASCOBAMMS/ASCOBANS workshop in Italy				
3	Support expansion of drift prediction modelling capabilities for determining the origin of stranded common dolphins, e.g. MOTHY (Pellier <i>et al.</i> , 2016) to identify potential bycatch high risk areas/seasons.	high			continuous sampling and discontinuous analysis				
4	Explore opportunities to sample live animals (e.g. photo analysis, swabs), in addition to samples from stranded animals, facilitating agreed objectives of Resolution 7, MOP 8 to help determine population structure species. Such information is fundamental to the development of the high management procedure outlined in Action RES - 01 (Identify the priority bycatch issues).	high			Yes continuous work with H. Pellier and MétéoFrance				
5	Explore opportunities to sample live animals (e.g. photo analysis, swabs), in addition to samples from stranded animals, facilitating agreed objectives of Resolution 7, MOP 8 to help determine population structure species. Such information is fundamental to the development of the high management procedure outlined in Action RES - 01 (Identify the priority bycatch issues).	high			considered including telemetry				
Actions RES-04	To identify funding and develop a programme which can involve existing or potential new samples. This programme will identify areas from which we require improved information on population structure, e.g. differentiating groups within and beyond the continental shelf, and work required to delineate the population range. Strategic sampling approaches (i.e. temporal and spatial) and statistical power analysis should be undertaken to determine level of sampling required to detect appropriate units to conserve.	medium							
Tasks 1	Actively support and encourage development of suitable techniques for discriminating population structure in highly mobile small delphinids.	medium			Has to be considered with our partners (Interreg Program)				
2	Facilitate the provision of dead bycaught animals for population structure assessment and other appropriate studies. This may require repeal of national legislation to facilitate landing of bycaught common dolphins for research.	medium			Partly done: genetic markers, stable isotopes, trace elements and POPs				
3	Facilitate the provision of dead bycaught animals for population structure assessment and other appropriate studies. This may require repeal of national legislation to facilitate landing of bycaught common dolphins for research.	medium			only fresh stranded animals with by catch marks; reglementary issues for landing bycaught animals, discussed in the WG on bycatch				
Actions MIT-02	Parties and non-Party Range States should coordinate and support research on the effects of underwater noise on common dolphins to meet the agreed objectives of Resolution 4, MOP 5, Resolution 2, MOP 6 and Resolutions 6, 8 and 9, MOP 8.	medium							
Tasks 1	Parties and non-Party Range States should introduce precautionary guidance on measures and procedures for all activities surrounding the development of renewable energy production and other noise-producing industry to minimise risks to populations and mitigate possible effects following current best practice as agreed in Resolution 2, MOP 6.	medium			Work in progress				
2	Annually monitor and assess knowledge of the effects of anthropogenic sound through review of literature, including behavioural responses of common dolphins and the effectiveness of mitigation technologies as agreed in Resolution 2, MOP 6 and Resolutions 6, 8 and 9, MOP 8.	medium							
3	Where suitable samples exist, monitor the physical effects of exposure to anthropogenic sound, i.e. acoustic trauma, where access to stranded animals within the required timeframe is possible.	medium							
4	Parties and non-Party Range States should engage with OSPAR and other relevant fora to encourage noise data provision appropriate for the assessment of good environmental status.	medium			Navy Oceanographical and Hydrological Service (SHOM) ?				
Actions MON-03	Continue to monitor and assess emerging chemical pollutants and marine litter (including macro-, micro- and nanoplastics) in common dolphins through review of literature to progress agreed objectives of Resolution 4, MOP 7, Resolution 7, MOP 8 and Resolution 7, MOP 8.	medium							
Tasks 1	Monitor effects from exposure to legacy pollutants on immune, endocrine and reproductive functions in common dolphins against agreed thresholds, through continued analysis of strandings data to meet agreed objectives of Resolution 7, MOP 8.	medium			Work in progress				
2	Encourage Parties and non-Party Range States to work through OSPAR and other relevant fora to aid the development of an indicator of GES to meet Criteria D6C2 in order to ascertain that the health of the species is not adversely affected due to contaminants including cumulative and synergistic effects.	medium			Project on male reproductive tracts				
3	Encourage Parties and non-Party Range States to work through OSPAR and other relevant fora to aid the development of an indicator of GES to meet Criteria D6C2 in order to ascertain that the health of the species is not adversely affected due to contaminants including cumulative and synergistic effects.	medium			Participation in OSPAR and national MFSO group				
Actions MON-04	Encourage Parties and Range States to continue to give their full support to the activities related to applying an ecosystem approach to the management of human activities under the frameworks of OSPAR, HELCOM, the European Union and the Convention on Biological Diversity as agreed in Resolution 9, MOP 8.	low							
Tasks 1	Requests that Parties and Range States ensure that cross-sectoral and transboundary consultations take place as early as the planning stage of activities in marine areas (marine spatial planning) with the aim of identifying potential impacts and minimising or mitigating such impacts low effectively as agreed in Resolutions 6 and 9, MOP 8.	low			Political issue				
2	As part of the annual reporting for this plan, collect and review information to monitor changes in exposure to key anthropogenic pressures.	low							
3	Identify emerging pressures (e.g. wet renewables and ecotourism) and ensure monitoring is in place to establish risk.	low			French Agency for Biodiversity (?)				
4	Identify emerging pressures (e.g. wet renewables and ecotourism) and ensure monitoring is in place to establish risk.	essential							
Actions AWA-01	All key milestones (e.g. timetables for actions; assessment of progress against objectives etc.) to be publicised through ASCOBANS and Range State media outlets in a coordinated manner agreed through the SG.	essential							
Tasks 1	ASCOBANS webpages to host key documents and updates, to be publicised by SG members.	essential							
2	Presentation of the progress at relevant events and conferences.	essential							
3	Identification and publication of papers through journals and list servers/webpages to publicise lessons learned and successes.	essential							
4	Wider circulation of articles and news items through the media/social media to support the dissemination of factual information to the wider public.	essential							
5	Coordination with relevant NGO's with an interest in common dolphins, to join up approaches for public information campaigns.	essential							



Recommendations

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5. ASCOBANS Advisory Committee to consolidate some of the common/similar recommendations coming from ASCOBANS species conservation plans' Steering Groups, such as on bycatch and on fisheries involvement.
6. Support recommendations from the 8th Meeting of the North Sea Group that are relevant to the Common Dolphin and which could be adapted to apply to the North East Atlantic.
7. A joint ACCOBAMS-ASCOBANS workshop on the common dolphin to be held at the next ECS conference in 2021.
8. Call on all stakeholders to take note of section 6 of the SAP 'Public awareness and capacity building'.

Meetings

- Skype/Zoom meeting in Jan to discuss the implementation table
- In person meeting after MOP – Oct/Nov 2020