

National Progress Report for Sweden



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Increase involvement, awareness and cooperation



What has been done in terms of raising public awareness, by authorities, NGOs and other organisations?

- NRM completed education for teachers, and development of online teaching material.
- WWF made a video and website on the Baltic Proper porpoise and threats towards their conservation.
- CCB completed public awareness through social media channels.
- Press releases on:
 - The action program for porpoises (SwAM),
 - Availability of financing for pingers (Swedish Board of Agriculture).
- NRM, SVA, CCB, LU, SLU Aqua completed several interviews for newspapers, radio, podcasts.

Increase involvement, awareness and cooperation



What has been done in terms of raising public awareness, by authorities, NGOs and other organisations?

- Three popular science articles on porpoise monitoring have been produced:
 - “Akut läge för Östersjöns tumlare” (Emergency situation for Baltic porpoises) (NRM),
 - “Döda tumlare berättar livsviktiga historier” (Dead porpoises tell vital stories) (SVA/NRM),
 - “Vanlig tumlare inte vanlig i Östersjön” (The common porpoise (harbour porpoise) is not common in the Baltic Sea) (NRM).

Increase involvement, awareness and cooperation



What has been done to engage stakeholders in dialogue?

- SwAM has continuous dialog meetings with different fisheries.

What has been done to increase cooperation between authorities and stakeholders (incl. fishers)? Have any reference groups or similar been established?

- SwAM has completely closed fisheries in a Natura 2000 site (Nordvästra Skånes havsområde). However, County Administration Boards can still issue permits to individual fisherman. There are plans to make a reference group for management of this process.

Monitor and estimate abundance and distribution



Are there any new results from national monitoring programmes or large-scale surveys?

- MiniSCANS II report completed: the Belt Sea population has the lowest and most precise point estimate to date (TiHO, AU, NRM).
- Report summarising data collected in the national monitoring program in the Kattegat being produced (Belt Sea population) (NRM, SwAM).

Other work

- Co-lead for ICES WGMME ToR A on cetacean abundance and distribution, section on Baltic passive acoustic monitoring.
- Participation in OSPAR MMEG work on indicator development for QSR 2023 (abundance and distribution).

Monitor and estimate abundance and distribution



Other work

- Organised and ran a two day workshop (NRM/TiHO), and wrote two reports submitted to HELCOM S&C on the future development of the abundance indicator and the distribution indicator for harbor porpoises within HELCOM that included:
 - An expert-based qualitative assessment of the abundance of the Belt Sea population,
 - Need for future analysis of national monitoring programs to improve monitoring efficiency at the population level,
 - Report on the future needs to develop the distribution (and habitat quality) indicator.

Monitor and estimate abundance and distribution



What is being planned for the near future?

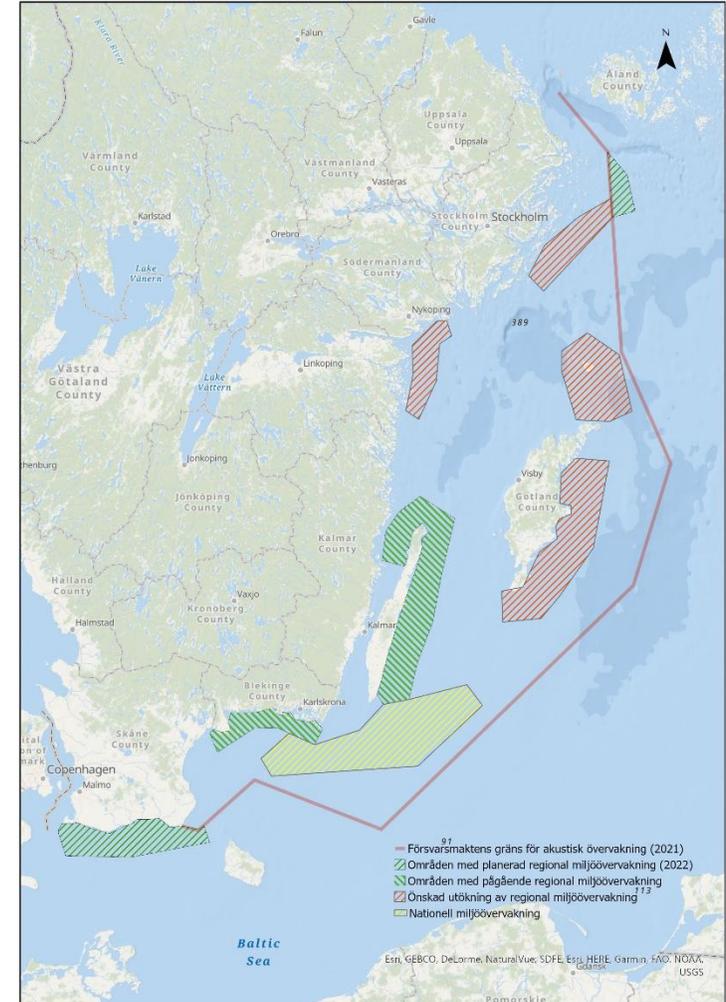
- SAMBAH II application: NRM still searching for funding opportunities. Sweden sees the project as a very high priority.
- Planning for SCANS IV in July 2022 is underway (Sweden financed by SwAM).
- NRM: Will finalise an expert-based qualitative assessment for HELCOM on the distribution and abundance of the Baltic Proper population by summer 2022:
 - Includes a review of all historic records of the population, many new records found to date.
- NRM: Assessment of west coast (Kattegat) monitoring data for potential future improvements.

Monitor and estimate abundance and distribution



What is being planned for the near future?

- Swedish regional monitoring program is planned (County Administrative Boards/SwAM/NRM), but not yet allowed to deploy devices in many locations (red) due to the security situation in the Baltic.



Monitor and mitigate impact of underwater noise



What projects or research or monitoring is in place to monitor underwater noise and its impact on harbour porpoises? Are there any results to present?

- National monitoring of underwater noise at three stations.
- NRM & FOI: Joint monitoring of HP and underwater noise: N Midsea Bank (Baltic) and Hönö (S Skagerrak), plan to start off Sundsvall (Bothnian Sea).
- Tango project investigating the impact of a change in shipping lane location on harbour porpoise presence and foraging- results ready May 2022.
- Article submitted “Nui et al. Peaks in continuous noise, relative to predicted wind-generated noise, result in lower detection rates of a marine mammal species. Currently being revised for resubmission.

Monitor and mitigate impact of underwater noise



Are there any measures in place or planned to mitigate the impact of underwater noise?

- Report "Documentation for seismic surveys at sea and its impact on porpoises in the Baltic Sea" has been produced. Will now be reworked into a SwAM report and available on SwAM's website later in the year.
- Government assignment for the implementation of Helcom BSAP and Ospar NEAES is ongoing until April 2023- many noise-related measures, with a focus on porpoises, among other things.

Monitor and assess population health status



What is the status of collection of animals found dead, (approximately) how many animals have been sampled and necropsied?

- Numbers of dead reported animals not yet summarised, but collected by NRM in collaboration with SVA- will be available later in 2022.
- In 2021, a total of 31 animals around Sweden were collected for necropsy.

Any specific interesting cases to mention (for example bycatch or strandings in the Baltic Proper population range)?

- One animal was found on the island of Öland, and is most likely is from the critically endangered Baltic Proper population.

Any results to present?

- Bycatch (confirmed or probable, n=12) was the most common (39%) cause of death in 2021.

Other work

- Sweden is strongly involved in the indicator work on the reproductive status and nutritional status of marine mammals within HELCOM and OSPAR (NRM).

Investigate habitat use and protect important areas



Are there any projects or other research ongoing on porpoise distribution or habitat use? Any “new” important areas identified?

- Teilman et al. (2022) “The use of marine waters of Skåne by harbour porpoises in time and space”:
 - Kullen is an important habitat across time,
 - An increasing use of central Öresund (during spring, summer and fall) and southern Sweden (summer and fall),
 - Northern Öresund west of Kullen is the most important area for adult females in Skåne waters,
 - Need to keep data limitations in mind when interpreting results.

Are there any new protected areas designated for harbour porpoises?

- No.

Investigate habitat use and protect important areas



Any conservation measures and/or management plans in place for existing areas?

- New management plan for Hoburgs bank och Midsjöbankarna in the Baltic Sea.
- Plans to write two additional management plans for protected areas in Skåne during 2022.
- New EU legislation closing fisheries and making pingers mandatory in areas of Sweden.
- Belt Sea population will likely only be assessed under HELCOM, not OSPAR.
- NRM participates in EU project on management effectiveness of Natura 2000 sites and other EU marine protected areas (lead: SUBMON, Spain).

Relevant links



- MiniSCANS II report (https://www.tiho-hannover.de/fileadmin/57_79_terr_aqua_Wildtierforschung/79_Buesum/downloads/Berichte/20210913_Report_MiniscansII_2020_revised.pdf)
- Report on mPBR mortality limits for the Belt Sea population (<https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1645775/FULLTEXT01.pdf>)
- Akut läge för Östersjöns tumlare (<https://www.havet.nu/havsutsikt/artikel/akut-lage-for--ostersjons-tumlare>)
- Döda tumlare berättar livsviktiga historier (<https://www.havet.nu/havsutsikt/artikel/doda-tumlare-ger-information>)
- WWF video on Baltic proper porpoises (<https://wwfwhales.org/news-stories/bycatch-of-critically-endangered-baltic-sea-harbour-porpoise-must-stop>)