

Agenda Item 14.1.4

Implementation of the ASCOBANS Triennial
Work Plan (2007-2009)

ASCOBANS Baltic Recovery Plan (Jastarnia
Plan)

Revision of the Jastarnia Plan

Document 41

**The Finnish Point of View of the
Jastarnia Plan Revision**

Action Requested

- take note of the information submitted
- comment

Submitted by

Finland



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

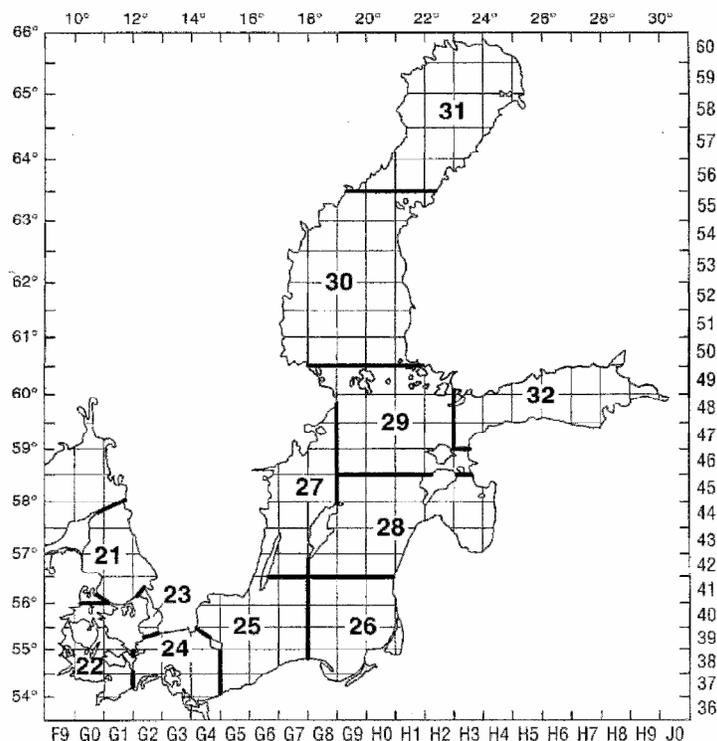
15th ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Meeting 31 March – 3 April

The Finnish point of view of the Jastarnia Plan revision

In general the Jastarnia Plan is too long, intricate and academic. The plan should be revised to be more precise and descriptive consisting of 1) a short introductory paragraph, 2) main objectives and targets and 3) actions/measures and 4) finally annexes. The text and references of the scientific work should mainly be transferred into the annexes. A good model for the Jastarnia Plan would be a new ASCOBANS Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea. The same format would be useful also to compare these two plans.

There is still need to discuss the objectives and actions in the Baltic Sea taking into account also the EU Commission plans to revise the EU –regulation 812/2004. We see that there is an urgent need to define geographically two different risk zones in the Baltic Sea, in particular, so called high risk areas. There is neither a reason to reduce fishing effort as a general objective nor to collect a standardised data regarding fishing effort in the whole Baltic Sea. It also would be a waste of resources to install pingers in all gillnets with extensive monitoring programs. This kind of measures would lead on to a negative publicity among the fishermen and the general public in the northern Baltic Sea and would work against the protection of the harbour porpoises. Furthermore extensive fishing effort surveys covering the whole Baltic are too laborious and expensive. These measures should more willingly be focused on classified key areas, where urgent actions are needed.

One of the starting points of the Jastarnia Plan should be a geographic definition of two zones i) high risk porpoise occurrence areas and ii) low risk areas. This could firstly be drawn as a rough estimate by experts. The occurrence of harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea is very scarce and species appear widely in the Southern Baltic Sea in the Danish, German, South Swedish and Polish waters due to its distribution and migratory character. This would imply that obviously all the ICES subdivisions 21-26



should be defined as a risk zone. Respectively ICES subdivisions 27-32 will be defined as a low risk zone (see the annexed map). For instances close the Finnish coast –line there are 0-5 sightings/year notified by the general public. The by-catch –rate of porpoises in fisheries is lower than 0,1/year in the whole northern Baltic Sea. However, this does not mean that no measures should be taken in these low risk areas, but the measures should reflect the situation in these areas (few harbour porpoises with very marginal by-catch).

There is already a lot of work in progress in the EU Member States to define high risk areas in connection with the definition of the Natura 2000 – marine protection areas. The present Natura 2000 - work in the EU Member States will give good results in a near future in the aspect of the protection of the harbour porpoises. The recent Danish studies regarding the movements and high density areas of harbour porpoises (Teilmann et al. 2008) point clearly out the high risk areas where more severe measures are needed.

The proposal for the content of the revised Jastarnia Plan:

1. Introductory part

The introductory part should give a short introduction to the Jastarnia Plan and reasons to revise it. The introductory part could also include a short description of the Baltic Harbour porpoise, its occurrence and threats and the latest international development of the legislation and measures (according to Mr Caddell’s presentation, EU driftnet ban etc.).

2. Objective

A more general goal is needed. There is no data or any firm information regarding the occurrence of harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea. The used ‘carrying capacity’ –concept is not very practical applied in the Baltic Sea and is based on the models. According to studies (Bergren and Wang and Palmé et al.) even the scientists themselves argue differently when they consider the base line or standpoint of the population size.

The **primary (long-term) objective** of the Jastarnia Plan should be formulated in the language used in the EU Habitats directive or the Baltic Sea Action Plan :

“to restore favourable conservation status of Baltic harbour porpoise” / “to achieve viable populations of harbour porpoises in the Baltic” -and then define it more accurately e.g. like below:

- the Baltic porpoise population is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats
- its natural range is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficient large habitat to maintain its populations

The **main short term objective** is to reduce the by-catch level in the Baltic as close as possible to zero.

3. Actions

Short term actions and measures: (specially for high risk areas)

1) implement actions of a precautionary nature in high risk zone to reduce the by-catch level in the Baltic as close as possible to zero –figure. The action advocates definitions of two different risk area zones and high risk areas in the Baltic.

Long- term actions (for both high and low risk areas)

- 2) improve knowledge in the key subject areas as quickly as possible and
- 3) define more refined (quantities) recovery targets as new information becomes

4. Annexes