Agenda Item 2 — Annual National Reports 2009

Document 2-08

Annual National Report Poland

Action Requested

- Briefly present highlights from reports (max. 5 minutes)
- Take note of the information submitted
- Comment

Submitted by — Poland

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

ASCOBANS Annual National Report

General Information

Name of Party:	Period covered: **2009**
POLAND	Date of report: 30 **06.2010**

Report submitted by:	
Name: Krzysztof E. Skóra & Iwona Pawliczka	Function: Research Experts
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Any changes in coordinating authority or appointed member of advisory committee: NO	

List of national authorities, organizations, research centres and rescue centres active in the field of study and conservation of cetaceans, including contact details

1/ Ministry of the Environment, Department of Nature Protection,
00-922 Warszawa, Wawelska Str. 52/54,
phone: (+48 22) 57-92-366, fax: (+48 22) 57-92-730,
e-mail: departament.ochrony.przyrody@mos.gov.pl

2/ Hel Marine Station, University of Gdansk,
84-150 Hel, Morska Str. 2,
phone +48 58 67 50 836,
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NEW Measures / Action Towards Meeting the Objectives of the Conservation and Management Plan and the Resolutions of the Meeting of Parties

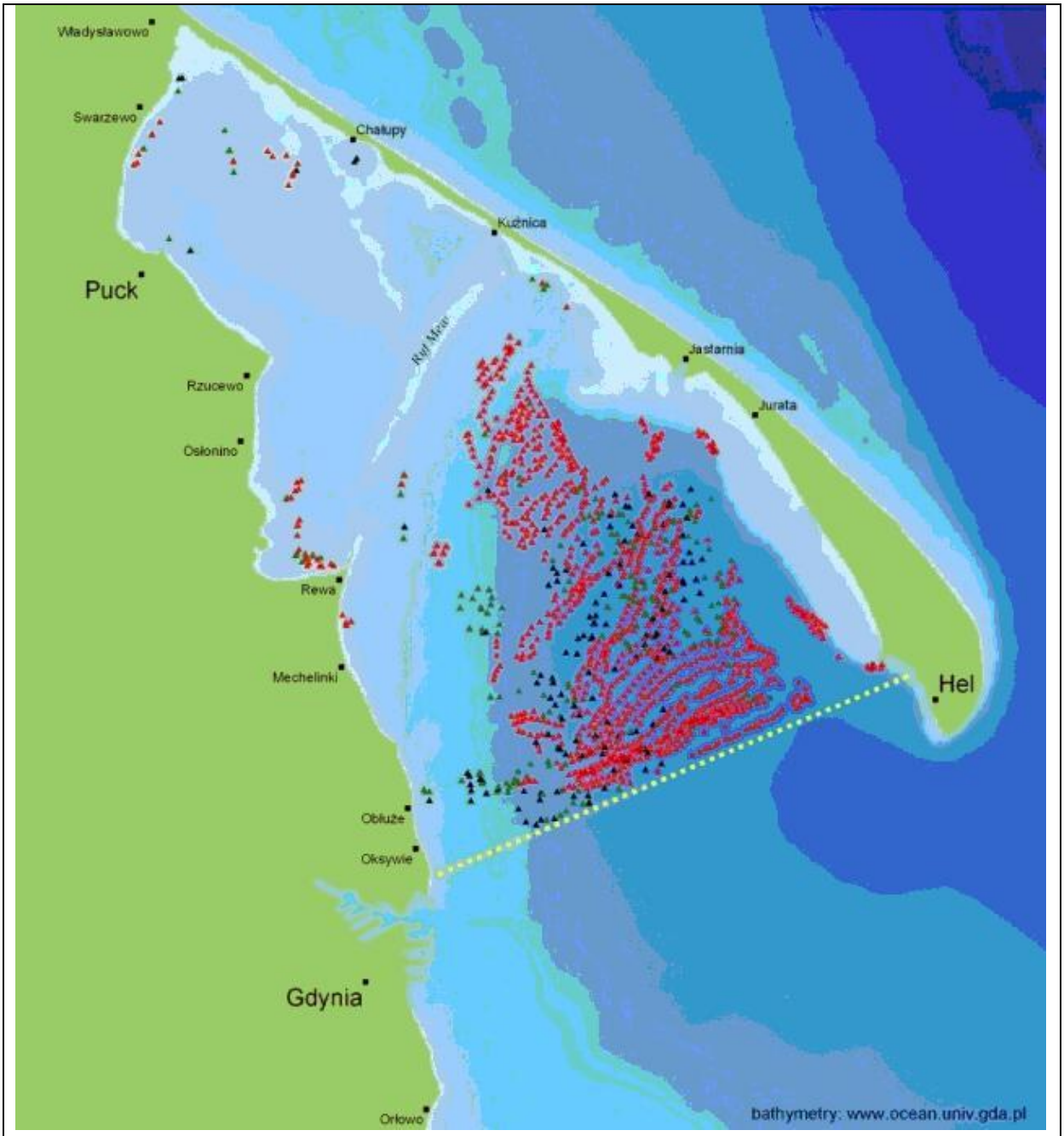
Please feel free to add more rows to tables if the space provided is not sufficient.

A. HABITAT CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

1 Direct Interaction with Fisheries

Investigations of methods to reduce bycatch:

Among the research on methods of reducing bycatch in Poland last year was the project "Active Protection of Harbour Porpoises against Bycatch". 2009 was another year in the preparatory period before the introduction of a linear barrier of acoustic scares at the entrance to the Puck Bay to stop the porpoises from entering an area where there is a high density of bottom gillnets and anchored surface gillnet (GNS). The project is carried out by the Hel Marine Station of the IOUG, financed by the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management and the University of Gdańsk.



Explanation: Red points – surface gears, black points – bottom-set gears, green points – unrecognized gears. Side - method of anchoring the pingers on the seafloor.

Implementation of methods to reduce bycatch:

Article 2 and Annex I to the Regulation 812/2004 obliges Poland to use in the ICES 24 area acoustic deterrent devices (pingers) on fishing vessels of the length 12 m or more. Poland undertook efforts to purchase pingers so as to distribute them among fishermen. It was assessed that order to fulfil Poland's commitments concerning the above Regulation 500 pingers should be purchased. Therefore, an open tender was announced, and 500 pingers AQUATEC AQUAAmark 100 (produced by a British company – AQUATEC) were purchased. In January 2009 all pingers were distributed among fishermen by the Marine Fisheries

Inspectorates in Gdynia, Słupsk and Szczecin. Over half of the pingers are possessed by ship owners of ships in the region where the use of deterrent devices is obligatory (Świnoujście - 6%, Dziwnów - 30%, Mrzeżyno - 15%, Kołobrzeg – ca. 4%). The reminder are held by ship owners who fish in the same area but whose home ports are located on the central and east coast. These are Darłowo (4%), Ustka (ok. 28%) i Władysławowo (ok10%).

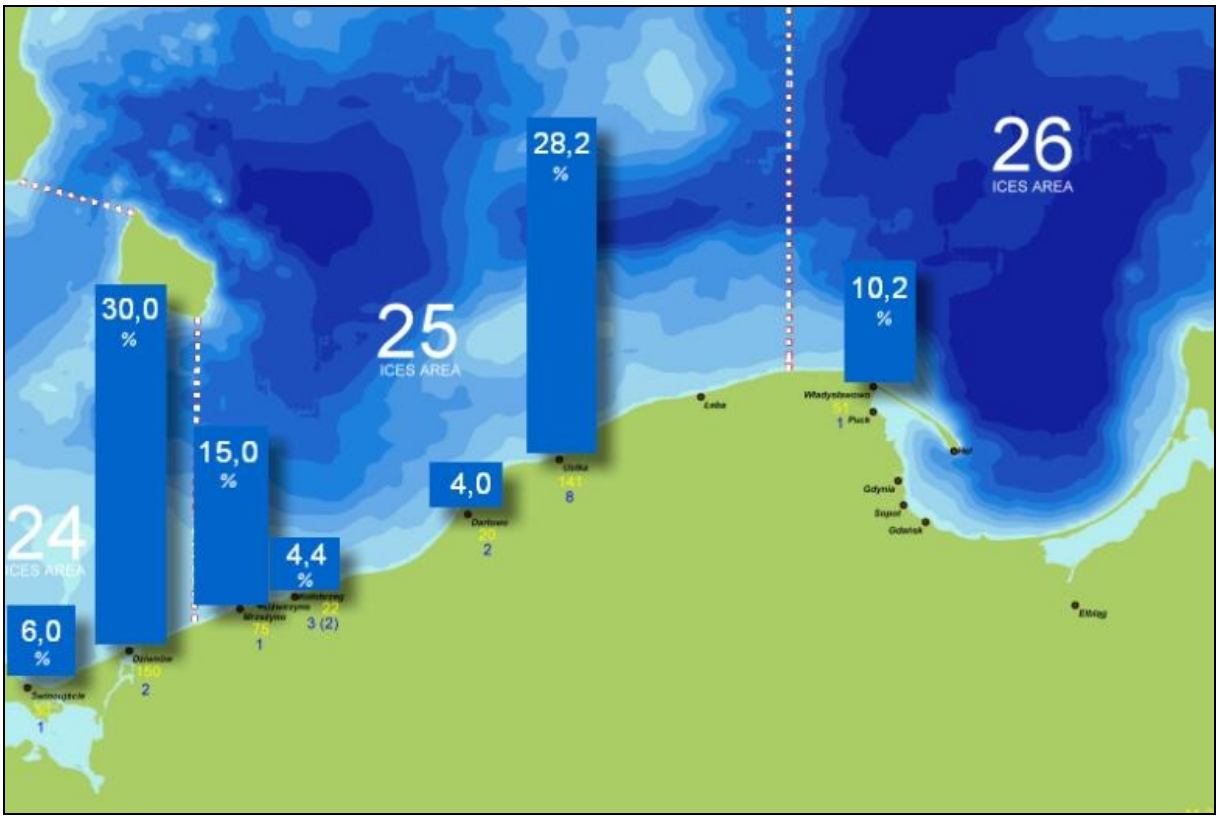


Fig.2. The location and percentage of pingers held by Polish ship-owners who fish using set gear (as of 2009).

Other activities which may assist the reduction of porpoise bycatch have not been carried out.

Please provide any other relevant information, including bycatch information from opportunistic sources:

The Hel Marine Station of the University of Gdańsk carries up-to –date information on cases of bycatch and the discovery of dead porpoises on the coast of the Polish EEZ on its website: www.morswin.pl

In the framework of “Long-term Programme for Collecting Fisheries Data” conducted by the Sea Fisheries Institute in Gdynia, neither incidental bycatch was recorded nor harbour porpoises were observed in 2009 (similarly to previous years). The programme does not include methodologically standardized observations by tourists, sailors or anglers.

In addition, please attach or provide link to your country’s Report under EC Regulation 812/2004.

Sea Fisheries Institute (MIR) in Gdynia is conducting the "Monitoring Incidental Catch of Cetaceans" Scheme at the commission of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. It does not publish reports of its activities online. They are, however, transmitted to the Ministry and to the ICES Study Group for Bycatch of Protection Species. The last material published by a sitting of this specialist forum was the report on 2008.
On 9 March 2009, in order to fulfill the commitments of EC regulation 812/2004 the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development announced an open tender for preparing and conducting the Monitoring of Incidental Catch of Cetaceans Scheme as well as for preparing a report on achievements of this programme for 2009. The Sea Fisheries Institute was once again chosen to fulfill the above tasks.
The report's conclusion indicate that using the described In EC Regulation 812/2004 methodology it is difficult to obtain representative data. The report states that the data is no more representative using information from the National Programme of Fisheries Data Collection, since only about 100 days of fishing annually meet the appropriate criteria, and these are mostly data from cutters using pelagic trawls. The report emphasises that since the beginning of the Monitoring Incidental Catch of Cetaceans Scheme (in 2006), regardless of the time, location, and type of fishing equipment used, no incidental catch of any porpoise has been confirmed, and drawing conclusions from information coming from a variety of assemblies and discussion fora (European Commission, ICES,HELCOM), in the Sea Fisheries Institute believes that continuing the Monitoring Incidental Catch of Cetaceans Scheme makes sense chiefly with respect to cutters fishing with set gear, as it is they who are considered to be causing the greatest morality among mammals and birds in the Baltic Sea.
Furthermore, referring to results of the 150 days of monitoring performer on fishing using set gear within the Scheme from 2008 and 2009, it states that at depths over 20 m there have been no records of bycatch of any mammals or birds. Report from Monitoring Incidental Catch of Cetaceans Scheme in 2009 I available on Minstry's of Agriculture and Rural Development website:
http://www.minrol.gov.pl/index.php?/eng/content/view/full/1469

Due to lack of full information on quantity of incidental catch of harbor porpoises before launching the Monitoring Incidental Catch of Cetaceans Scheme, that programme was realized in the years 2006-2008 as a pilot programme.

2 Reduction of Disturbance

2.1 Anthropogenic Noise

There has been no research on the occurrence of underwater noise in the Polish zone of the Baltic Sea. Furthermore, no research attempt have been made on the effect of acoustic disturbance on the cetaceans.
On the other hand, as a result of an operation on 19 th February 2009 to destroy Second World War German depth charges on the wreck of a sunken ship in the Hel region, after an application from the Ministry of Environment with substantive support from the Hel Marine Station and within the technical options available, the Navy carried out appropriate measures to secure against dangers to any Baltic cetaceans which could potentially be in the area. Of great importance is the fact that this region is among the network of areas protected by the Nature 2000 system and is , among other things, designed to protect the porpoises.
The disposal concerned weapons on a ship of the Kriegs-Fisch-Kutter class, submarine hunter version. It lay on the floor of the gulf of Gdańsk at the depth of 32 m about 1 km south of the port at Hel. Its deck held DM-11 depth charges with an explosive charge of 100 kg each (500 in total). They carried detonators, which made carrying them to the surface and disposing of them elsewhere impossible. The operation was co-ordinated by the Polish Navy's Maritime Operations Centre (COM Mar.Woj). The acoustic explosive power for the cetaceans was calculated at about 30 km.

Fig. 3 The detonation location and the marked safety zone

One preventive measure was the scaring of porpoises from the Puck Bay region just prior to the moment of detonation. The operation was conducted by the ship ORP “Mamry” which sailed a changing course from the centre of the bay using acoustic signals from its underwater station to scare off any potential porpoises in the area.

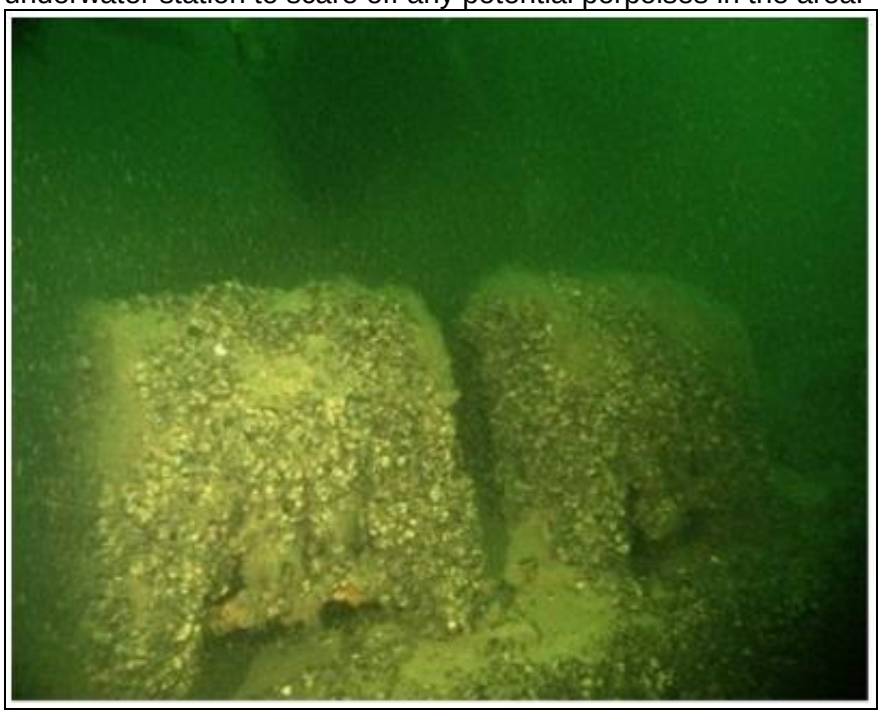


Fig 4. Mines placed on the deck of the sunken warship – the target for destruction
The final phase of the operation began with the confirmation that the region was secure. Scuba diver sappers went under the surface and attached charges to the depth charges which would ensure that they detonated simultaneously. The planned detonation was carried out at 14:30.

Fig. 5 An image of the explosion on the sea's surface (photo: J. Abramowicz)

The scale of the explosion was smaller than originally expected. Specialists hypothesized they some of the TNT which had been underwater for over 60 years could have decomposed and lost its original power. Post-operation reconnaissance showed that natural losses at the explosion's location were not observed.

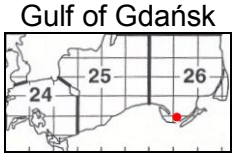
2.2 Ship Strike Incidents

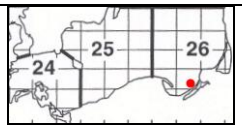
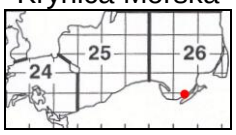
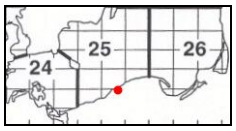
There was no ship strike reported In Polish EEZ In 2009.

Please list all known incidents and for each, provide the following information:

Date	Species	Type of injury	Fatal injury (Yes / No)	Type of vessel (length, tonnage and speed)	Location (coordinates)	More information: (Name / Email)
-	-	-	-	-	-	-

2.3 Major Incidents Affecting Significant Numbers* of Cetaceans
2.4

Date	Location	Type of incident	Further Information
17-20. 02.2009	Gulf of Gdańsk 	Bycatch (GNS)	Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)
25.04. 2009	Gulf of Gdańsk	Bycatch (GNS)	Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)

			
21.07. 2009	Gulf of Gdańsk – Krynica Morska 	Stranded	Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)
05.10. 2009	Middle Coast – Ustka 	Stranded	Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)

**Two or more animals*

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2.5 Pollution and Hazardous Substances

Please report on main types of pollution and hazardous substances (including source, location and observed effects on cetaceans). Please provide information on any new measures taken to reduce pollution likely to have an impact.

The conduct of activities to reduce pollution are the consequence of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment In the Baltic Sea Area (1992) signed by Poland and are regularly reported to the appropriate groups of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM).

2.6 Other Forms of Disturbance

Please provide any other relevant information, e.g. relating to recreational activities affecting cetaceans.

The use of speedboats and jet skis s increasing in the Polish zone of the coast. The growth of recreational services in the form of fast hard hull dinghy cruises which offer dozens of cruises daily at several locations along the Polish coast is particularly evident. Research on the development of scale of this phenomenon has not yet been carried out, nor have any cases of direct collision with cetaceans been reported.

Fig.6. An example of the recreational use of hard hull dinghies In the Hel region (Puck Bay).

There have been reports of infringements of legal regulations (Regulation No.55/06 of the Voivode of the Pomerania Province of 15 th May 2006 on the Coastal Landscape Park) which limit the use of speedboats on the protected bodies of water, i.e. the Coastal Landscape Park in the internal section of the Bay of Puck, which are part of the Nature 2000system and BSPA HELCOM set up to protect the porpoises, among other things.

3 Marine Protected Areas for Small Cetaceans

Please provide any relevant information on measures taken to identify, implement and manage protected areas for cetaceans, including MPAs designated under the Habitats Directive and MPAs planned or established within the framework of OSPAR or HELCOM.

On 23-25 November a Nature 2000 biogeographical seminar took place In Sopot, Poland. As a result of the seminar, the representatives of the European Commission decided that he expansion of areas incl. PLH 220032 of the Puck Bay and the Hel Peninsula to protect the porpoises was essential in the Polish zone of the Baltic. Furthermore, it was decided to supplement and correct the evaluation of homes and species in the standard data forms in order to discover the presence of porpoises, among other species, in selected sections of Polish Baltic waters.

On 31 December 2009, the Minister of the Environment selected five areas protected for the needs of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Protected Area. There area areas dedicated to porpoise protection, among other things, in the Pomerania and the Puck Bays.

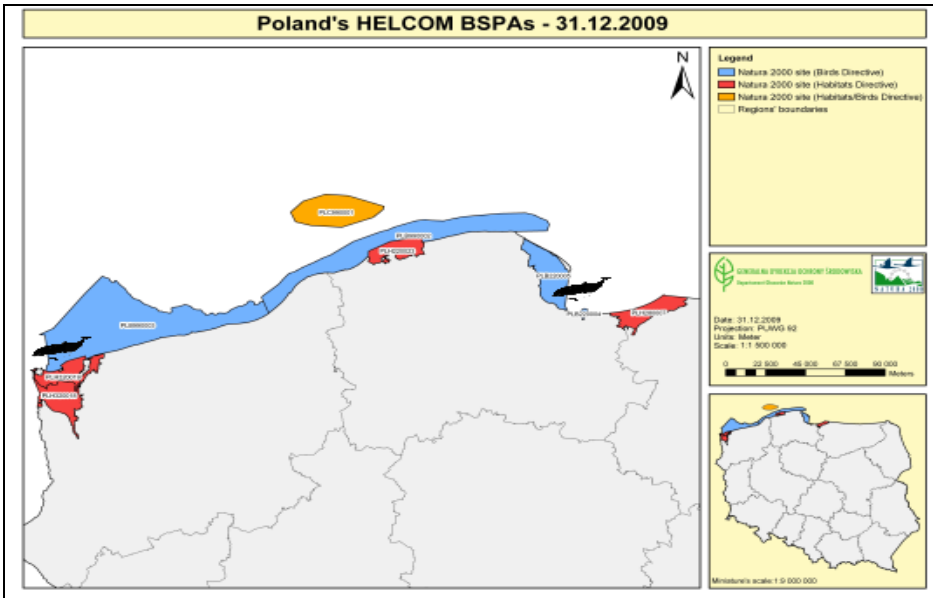


Fig. 7 Map of the Polish protected areas nominated by the Minister of the Environment to the HELCOM Baltic Sea Protected Areas.

Please indicate where GIS data of the boundaries (and zoning, if applicable) can be obtained (contact email / website).

Precise data on the borders of these areas is held by the General Directorate for Environmental Protection in Warsaw (www.gdos.gov.pl/en/kontakty). They are also represented in the website:http://natura2000.gdos.gov.pl/natura2000/en/jednostki.php

B. SURVEYS AND RESEARCH

4.1 Overview of Research on Abundance, Distribution and Population Structure

Please provide an brief summary of (and reference to) any national work.

Regional research activity which provides information on the occurrence of harbour porpoises in the Polish Baltic zone included a project on the active protection of porpoises in the Puck Bay. It was however, limited exclusively to that area. Data from POD detectors located at the entrance to the bay confirmed the presence of porpoises here. This research will be continued for the next year. The report of its achievements will be presented In 2011.

Additional data are expected from a project carried out by the WWF-Poland and SMIOUG- „Support Restoration of Baltic Mammals".

Indirectly, information abort porpoise occurrence can be concluded from voluntary fishing reports on bycatch. In 2009 there were two reports which covered the southern part of the Gulf of Gdańsk.

A new project which has been designer to provide data on the distribution of porpoises in Polish maritime areas is the SAMBAH Project ("Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea

Harbour Porpoise") subsidized by EU LIFE+. Two Polish research institutes – SMIOUG and IMGW became its co-beneficiaries in 2009. It is planed to finish this project in 2014.

A map of the distribution of reports of bycaught, stranded, and observed porpoises In the Polish zone of the Baltic for the years 1990-2009 can be fund in: Pawliczka I. 2009. Czynna ochrona fok i morświnów w Polsce (*Active Protectionof Seals and Porpoises In Poland*). Pages: 241-260 in: B.Bobek, J.Mikoś i R.Wasilewski (eds) Gospodarka Łowiecka i Ochrona Dzikich Zwierząt na Pomorzu Gdańskim (*The Fishing Economy and Protection of Wild Animals on the Baltic Coast).*. Polskie Towarzystwo Leśne, Regionalna Dyrekcja Lasów Państwowych w Gdańsku, Gdańsk 2009

4.2 New Technological Developments

Please provide a brief summary of any relevant information

None introduced.

4.3 Other Relevant Research

Please provide a brief summary of any relevant information

None.

C. USE OF BY-CATCHES AND STRANDINGS

5 Post-Mortem Research Schemes

Contact details of research institutions / focal point	Hel Marine Station, Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk Iwona Pawliczka, iwona.pvp@ug.edu.pl
Methodology used (reference, e.g. publication, protocol)	Post-mortem analyses are performer according to the procedure described in: Kuiken, T and Hartmann, M.G. (1993). Dissection techniques and tissue sampling. Proceedings of the ECS Workshop, Leiden.
Collection of samples (type, preservation method)	Hel Marine Station, Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk as a consequence of research carried out as part of its statutory activities, collects data on dead porpoises and dolphins from either bycatch or stranded on the coast. Dead specimens, if they come to the Station, are anlysed to the extend that the state of remains allow. The standard range of samples taking includes : - ascertaining the species - the location of the event - the specific or supposed cause of death - ascertainment of length and body mass

	- ascertainment of sex - taking fatty tissue for genetic investigation - taking teeth to ascertain the animal's age - a full post-mortem analysis and storage of biological samples following Kuiken &Hartmann 1993
Database (Number of data sets by species, years covered, software used, online access)	Data have been entered into a standard Access database since 1998.There is no online access to his database. The database contains 113 reports on bycatch or stranding of porpoises and 16 reports on other species of small cetaceans. *Stenella coeruleoalba, Lagenorhynchus albirostris, Lagenorhynchus acutus, Physeter catodon*)
Additional Information (e.g. website addresses, intellectual property rights, possibility of a central database)	Contact:Marine Station IOUG (Iwona Pawliczka iwona.pvp@ug.edu.pl)

5.1 Number of Necropsies Carried out in Reporting Period:

Species	Recorded cause of death
None	-
-	-

Please provide any other relevant information on post-mortem / stranding schemes.

-

D. LEGISLATION

6.1 Relevant New Legislation, Regulations and Guidelines

Please provide any relevant information.

No new regulations referring to the protection of cetaceans hale been enacted in national law.

However, it should be noted that under the supervision of the Minister of the Environment the ratification procedure for the „International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling" was completed in 2009. On 13 th March, the President of the Republic of Poland , Lech Kaczyński, signed the appropriate ratification document. After becoming a formal member of the International Whaling Commission on 17 th April.

E. INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

7.1 Public Awareness and Education

Please report on any public awareness and education activities to implement or promote the Agreement to the general public and to fishermen.

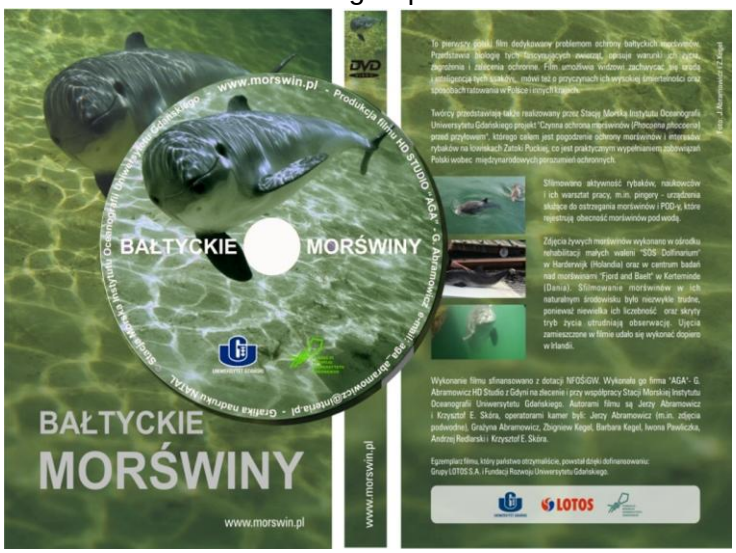
In 2009, the efforts t increase the public awareness abort the harbour porpoises as a species which requires special protection In the Baltic Sea was continued.

Funds for the activities carried out in 2009 came mainly from the budget of the Hel Marine Station of the University of Gdańsk and the Foundation for the Development of the University of Gdańsk, the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, the Regional Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Gdańsk, the EU's Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme, the Polish Post Office and the LOTOS Group.

The greatest coverage was achieved by the Polish Post Office's campaign issuing a series of stamps titled „Mammals of the Baltic" which presented image of three protected species of seal as well as that of the harbour porpoise. The print run for each stamp was 540 000. Special envelopes and postcards were also issued.

The first day of issue (31.07.2009) was marked by a ceremony which took place a the sealarium of Hel Marine Station IOUG.

The second most important event was the publication of a film DVD entitled „Balic Harbour Porpoises", which was created by IOUG Hel Marine Station group. It was distributed to all coastal environmental and marine environment protection institutions, fisheries and pro-ecology organizations, schools, and biology teacher training courses. The donors for the first edition were the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management and the University of Gdańsk, and further editions were funded by the Regional fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Gdańsk, the LOTOS Group and the Marine station together with the foundation for the Development of the university of Gdańsk.



This film (from the ASCOBANS International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise) was screened daily at the IOUG Hal Marine Station and during the summer season also at the outdoor cinema which enjoyed great success at the "Planet Ocean" photographic exhibition which the authors (from the "European Earth Centre" Foundation) enriched with educational information covering the rare and endangered species an the Baltic Sea.






Engaging public awareness about the necessity of supporting the protection of the Baltic harbour porpoises was also aided by articles in the local and national Polish press, information in radio and television programs, and the news service on the website- www.morsiwn.pl.the . The cycle of monthly full-page articles in the coastal "Dziennik Bałtycki" newspaper were particularly valuable because they reached readers in the fishing community. The printing of this cycle was financed by the LOTOS GROUP.


Co Ty możesz zrobić dla ochrony ssaków bałtyckich?


Morświn – klejnot bałtyckiej fauny


Co możemy zrobić, aby w Morzu Bałtyckim żyło się lepiej

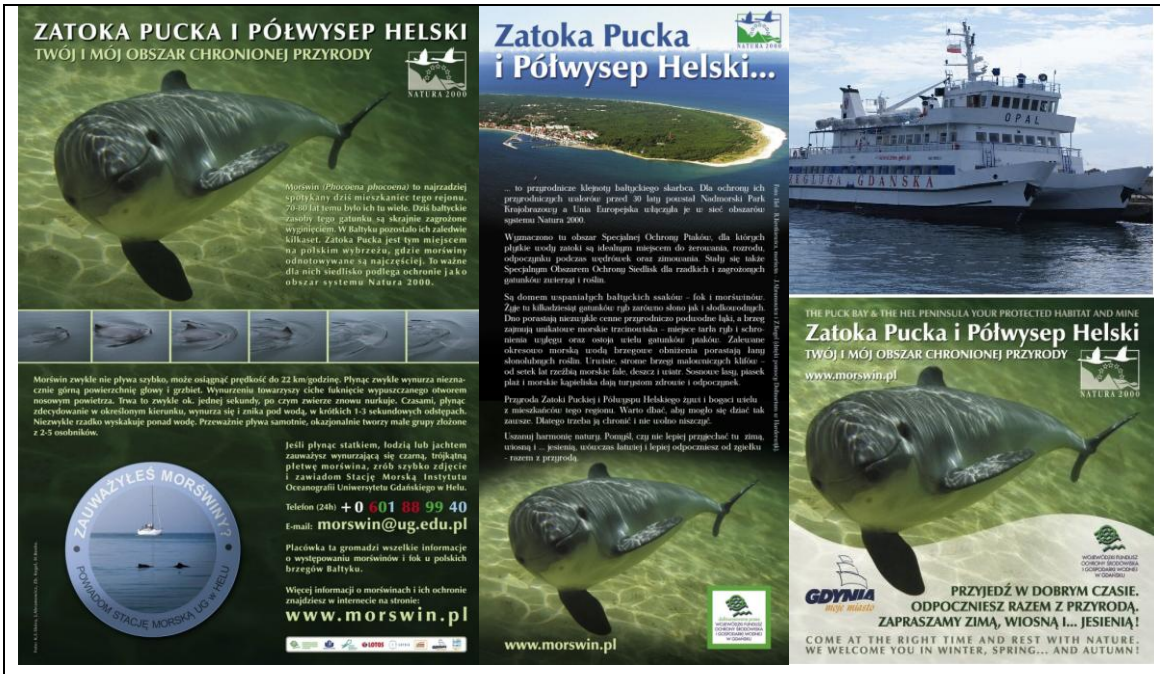

Co możemy zrobić, aby w Morzu Bałtyckim żyło się lepiej

The complement this, there was a course for biology teachers from schools at various levels in the province of Pomerania. The syllabus focused on broadening knowledge of the biodiversity of the Baltic Sea with prominence given to the endangered resources of Baltic harbour porpoises and methods of protecting them. The course was intended to assist the introduction of the topic to biology syllabi in primary, middle, and secondary schools.

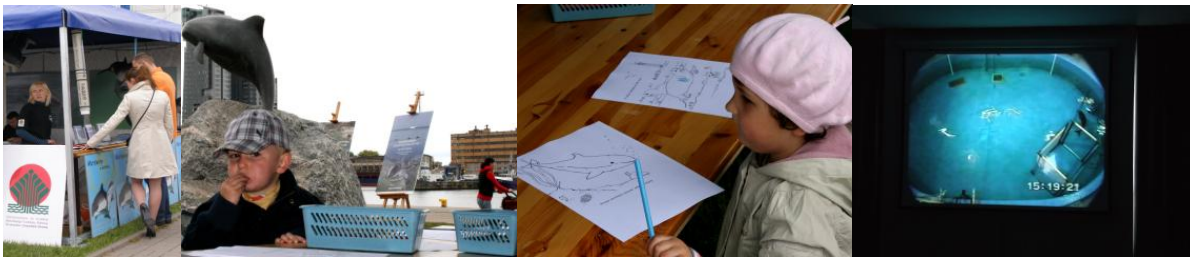
In the centre for marine nature education, run on the Polish coast by the Hel Marine Station the shop is now stocking new souvenirs with images of the porpoises. As the same time, thanks to the efforts of both this institution and the Foundation of the Development of the University of Gdańsk, a special tinned fish product – "Porpoise's Delight"- labeled as a foodstuff produced using fishing techniques which are safe for the Baltic porpoises – was brought onto the market. This is probably the first "Harbour porpoise friendly product" on the commercial market (most likely not

only in Poland). Sales of the product were strengthened by a special outdoor advertising campaign.

A large outdoor campaign with an image of the porpoise was also conducted in conjunction with project- „Billboard in Nature" and „Nature on the Waves" – run by the local „Friends of Hel" association, the IOUG Marine Station and the Foundation for the Development of the University of Gdańsk. Both campaigns served to emphasise environmental protection In the Nature 2000 area – the Puck Bay and the Hel Peninsula, which is dedicated to protection on the porpoise, among other things. The billboards were located on main streets, and posters and leaflets on ferries sailing on the Gulf of Gdańsk and the Puck Bay. The main funds for this activity were provided by Regional Fund for Environmental Protection an Water Management in Gdańsk.



As part of the promotional campaign for ASCOBANS and efforts to protect the porpoise two annual outdoor events were organized. The first was an information and educational stand and exhibition organised at the porpoise monument in Gdynia on 17th May during the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise. The event's message was mainly directed towards the promotion of the protective activities of the ASCOBANS agreement and international cooperation on saving these animals in the Baltic. In the evening, in the conference hall of Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk in Gdynia, there was a public presentation of films about the methods used to save the small cetaceans.



In the same place but two weeks later as part of the Baltic Festival of Science a second, similar stand was organised. This time, as well as promoting protection of the Baltic harbour porpoise, the audience was told about the research methods used for these animals by Polish scientists.

As a part of the information camping aimed at the fisheries sector, on the 16 th – 18 th June 2009 the Hel Marine Station IOUG organised a special exhibition at the POLFISH 2009 International Fair of Fish Processing and Fish Products

The outdoor stand organised on 25 th July on the Hel Peninsula In the Hel Marine Station as part of the annual “Day of Fish” event was similar in both character and message.

Different message was presented by a stand promoting Hel Marine Station’s project on active protection of the porpoises in the Bay of Puck, which was organized between 24th and 27th November 2009 in the heart of the country, in Poznań, at the POEKO International Trade Fair for Environmental Protection. Here, the information was mainly directed to representatives of the environmental protection sector and showed the need to protect the marine environment as part of international obligations – the Bonn Convention (ASCOBANS Agreement) and the Helsinki Convention (HELCOM Recommendation 17/2). The audience for the content and materials presented also included people from outside the sector visiting the fair, in particular teenagers from Poznań schools.

As a conclusion to the Yaer of the Baltic Sea in Pomerania Province, on 16 th December at the City museum in Gdynia the 5 th International Biennial of Painting and Unique Fabrics – EKO BALT Gdynia 2009 – was opened. The Biennial is patroned by the Mayor of Gdynia and its honorary patrons are the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, the Marshal of Pomerania Province, and the Mayors of Gdańsk an Sopot. One of the exhibits dealt with the endangered Baltic harbour porpoises and the necessity to protect them.

In 2009, the Hel Marine Station organised further informational meetings with fishermen. This time, discussions were held with owners of traditional small boats using anchored gillnets in the Puck Bay. Discussions covered the need to co-operate and respect the equipment and sea areas used for research and fishing, methods of marking fishing equipment, and the need for mutual information exchange, among other topics.

In 2009, there was also an educational and information campaign started up on the protection of porpoises conducted as part of the joint WWF-Poland and Hel. Marine Station “Support Restoration of Baltic Mammals in Poland” project.

A Project website was set up [www.ssakibaltyckie.pl] and a pocket guide on Baltic mammals was published [www.ssakibaltyckie.wwf.pl/poradnik.pdf]

The information website dedicated to issues concerning the conservation of the Baltic harbour porpoise - www.morswin.pl.

POSSIBLE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT

Please provide any relevant information.

One of the recommendations of the Agreement is to gather reliable knowledge on a scale of threats to small cetaceans. This can be obtained by means engaging both small and large financial resources (e.g. a programme for bycatch observers, specialized hydroacoustic research, etc). It seems that the simplest and least expensive activities include bycatch reporting by fishermen and transport of dead animals to research centres. The number of reports on bycatch has dropped rapidly during last 5-7 years. After discussions with fishermen it became clear that the observed drop of reporting activity has been a result of the EU Regulation no. 812/2004 which came into force.

Another issue is the co-operation of sea users in research on distribution of porpoises by using passive hydroacoustic detectors (e.g. POD). There is a growing conflict over the use of sea space which is causing a great deal of difficulty in maintaining underwater research locations untouched.

In this situation, in 2009 the Ministry of Environment undertook a range of initiatives on strengthening contacts with the Department of Fisheries in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in order to prevent failure of planned conservation activities on critically endangered (according to IUCN 2008) resources of the Baltic harbour porpoise.

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Please return this form, preferably by e-mail, to:

UNEP/CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat
UN Campus
Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10
53113 Bonn
Germany

Tel: +49 228 815 2416
Fax: +49 228 815 2440
Email: ascobans@ascobans.org