

REPORT OF THE 18TH MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

UN Campus, Bonn, Germany

4-6 May 2011



**Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans
of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas**

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LIST OF ACTION POINTS AND DECISIONS
of the 18th ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Meeting

SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION SESSION

1. Parties would notify the Secretariat by 20 June 2011 of any reservations regarding the recommendations of the 7th Meeting of Jastarnia Group. (Agenda Item 4.1)
2. The terms of reference for the Baltic Sea Coordinator were endorsed as amended. (Agenda Item 4.1)
3. New terms of reference for the Bycatch Working Group were adopted. Russell Leaper would act as interim chair until a permanent successor was elected. (Agenda Item 4.3)
4. Revised terms of reference for the Noise Working Group were adopted. (Agenda Item 4.4)
5. The Secretariat would circulate a proposal for a publication to mark the occasion of the 20th anniversary of ASCOBANS as soon as possible to receive the Parties comments and endorsement. (Agenda Item 4.5)
6. Parties would provide their comments on the new website by 20 June 2011. As soon as necessary amendments were made, the old one would be taken off-line and the new site would be migrated to the URL www.ascobans.org. (Agenda Item 4.5)
7. The Secretariat would organize a joint workshop with ECS and ACCOBAMS on the implementation of the cetacean components of the Habitats Directive in EU member states (2012 Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, Galway, Ireland). (Agenda Item 5)
8. An item on management of marine protected areas would be included on the agenda of AC19. WDCCS and the Sea Watch Foundation were requested to table a related paper. (Agenda Item 5)
9. The Secretariat was requested to write to the Faroe Islands Authorities again to seek a response to the outstanding items, and to pursue the issue of the cetacean hunts with NAMMCO. (Agenda Item 5.1)
10. A joint workshop with ACCOBAMS on population structure would be convened at the 2012 Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society. (Agenda Item 5.1)
11. WDCCS would present a background document summarizing the state of knowledge of the impact on cetaceans of marine debris (including ingested plastics) to AC19. (Agenda Item 5.2)
12. The Advisory Committee agreed with the recommendation of the IWC/ACCOBAMS Workshop that organizations such as IWC, ACCOBAMS, IMO, ASCOBANS or UNEP should support approaches to holders of shipping data for access for research use. ASCOBANS would assist in facilitating requests for shipping data to assist in identifying high risk areas to cetaceans within the ASCOBANS area. (Agenda Item 5.3)

13. Peter Evans was asked to convey the Advisory Committee's support for WWL's efforts to reduce ship strikes. (Agenda Item 5.3)
14. An Intersessional WG led by Peter Evans would prepare a paper for AC19 on research and conservation actions undertaken in the extended Agreement Area. Inputs from all Range States and ACCOBAMS were to be sought. (Agenda Item 5.4)
15. A process for ranking project proposals was adopted. The Secretariat would circulate proposals, and Parties and Partners would communicate their priorities in advance of the AC meeting. The outcome would be announced at the meeting. (Agenda Item 6.2)
16. A joint Working Group with ACCOBAMS on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive would be established. The Secretariats would liaise with Parties and Partners over its terms of reference and composition. (Agenda Item 7)
17. The Secretariat was requested to give high priority to participation of ASCOBANS representatives in RAC meetings. (Agenda Item 7)

ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION

18. The Secretariat was requested to prepare a paper for AC19 setting out the advantages and disadvantages of a budget prepared in US dollar as opposed to a Euro budget. (Agenda Item 13.2)
19. The Secretariat would convey the views of the Advisory Committee to UNEP and UNON regarding the treatment of the devaluation of the Euro in the ASCOBANS accounts. (Agenda Item 13.2)
20. Parties decided that savings from the 2010 budget should be used 1) to extend the contract of the North Sea Coordinator until the end of 2012; 2) to hire a consultant for the development of a draft paper containing background information and proposed objectives for the "gap area" between the coverage of the North Sea and Jastarnia Plans; and 3) if more resources became available to apply them to projects in accordance with the priority list agreed by the AC. (Agenda Item 14)
21. In liaison with the Jastarnia Group and Baltic Sea National Coordinators, the Secretariat would develop terms of reference for the "gap area" consultancy. (Agenda Item 14)
22. The Evaluation Report of the Secretariat arrangements would be adopted subject to amendment through a written procedure and the final version would be forwarded to the CMS COP10 as an information document that could be taken into account for the Future Shape process. (Agenda Item 15)
23. The key recommendation was for the Secretariat to facilitate 1) collaboration with fisheries organizations and 2) a closer alignment with EU processes. (Agenda Item 15)
24. Offers to host AC19 and/or MOP7 should be sent to the Secretariat by 1 September 2011. (Agenda Item 17)
25. AC19 would preferably take place before Easter 2012 (second half of March) and the Secretariat would investigate the possibility of holding it back-to-back with the Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society in Galway, Ireland. (Agenda Item 17)

REPORT OF THE 18TH MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. Opening of the Meeting

1. The Chair, Sami Hassani (France) called upon Bert Lenten (Secretariat/ASCOBANS Officer in Charge) to open the meeting.

2. Mr Lenten explained that he was deputizing for the ASCOBANS Acting Executive Secretary, Elizabeth Mrema, until the end of July while she was on extended leave following a recent bereavement. He invited participants to sign a condolence card. He welcomed the two new officers of the Advisory Committee, Mr Hassani and Vice-Chair Penina Blankett (Finland), who were presiding for the first time. He went on to outline the main tasks facing the Committee, namely progress on the Agreement's top priorities (bycatch, noise and outreach). Seven new project proposals had been received and some further funds were available for such initiatives. With regard to governance, the Netherlands had led a working group on the evaluation of the Secretariat arrangements and ASCOBANS Parties were being consulted on the CMS Future Shape process. He concluded his remarks by pointing out that Germany had made funds available for the appointment of a coordinator for the North Sea Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise for one year and that it would be advantageous to secure support to maintain the post for a longer period.

1.1 Adoption of the Agenda of the Science and Conservation Session

3. The agenda of the science session contained in Document 1-02 was adopted as presented.

4. In-session working groups were established to discuss the evaluation report of the Secretariat arrangements and the results of intersessional work on large cetaceans. The North Sea Group would meet in the margins of the meeting and report back on the second day.

5. As no amendments had been proposed, the rules of procedure adopted at the 17th Advisory Committee Meeting stayed in force. There was no call for any of the sessions to be closed; accordingly all documents were released to observers.

2. Annual National Reports 2010

6. The Chair referred to Documents 2-01 to 2-10, the national reports of the ten Parties and invited representatives to highlight key points and provide any additional information.

7. James Gray (United Kingdom) reported on the use of acoustic deterrents in bass fisheries in the western English Channel. The devices seemed to be effective for harbour porpoises, but the results were less clear for dolphin species. In 2010 funding had been provided for an analysis of the effects of chemical contamination in harbour porpoises. A report had been published on the state of the UK's seas and this was available on the DEFRA website. The UK strandings team had also conducted a workshop in Northern Ireland on necropsies.

8. Sara Königson (Sweden) reported on pilot projects using flat fish pots and herring traps as an alternative to gill nets. Christina Rappe (Sweden) reported that the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) was working on noise guidelines which were expected to be published shortly. New *Natura 2000* sites were being considered for harbour porpoises. The species appeared to be abundant in the potential sites.

9. Monika Lesz (Poland) said that initiatives were being conducted regarding bycatch and harbour porpoises and the use of acoustic deterrents. The project on “Active Protection of Harbour Porpoises against Bycatch” was continuing. Poland was also involved in the SAMBAH project. 500 pingers were being distributed to fishermen. The Hel Marine Station was working with WWF Poland on the project “Support for Restoration and Protection of Baltic Mammals in Poland”. WWF Poland and the Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdansk, had been patrolling the whole Polish coast and were gathering the reports.

10. Folchert van Dijken (Netherlands) said that a pilot project was being conducted using CCTV to monitor bycatch. Two instances of bycatch had been reported. Some work to investigate the effects of noise such as pile driving was being conducted on captive harbour porpoises. Studies on two wind farms showed that harbour porpoises again frequented the immediate area when the turbines had begun operation. Post mortem teams were investigating cuts found on stranded animals to determine whether they occurred before or after death. The North Sea Foundation was also investigating the possible links to bycatch.

11. Miglė Simanavičienė (Lithuania) informed the meeting that a monitoring project had been carried out from 2007-2009 in Lithuanian waters. No harbour porpoises were detected and the last one to be located had been seen in 2003; it was hoped that SAMBAH would find some. Actions planned for the period 2012-14 included closer collaboration with local communities and fishermen.

12. Gerhard Adams (Germany) introduced himself explaining that he had resumed responsibility for CMS and ASCOBANS, having previously covered the Agreement between 1994 and 2002. Germany had been lobbying the Russian Federation with regard to joining the Convention and relevant Agreements and had also established contact with the authorities in the Kaliningrad *oblast*. Stefan Bräger (Germany) added that a workshop on anthropogenic noise had been held in March 2011. The German navy was reporting sightings of marine mammals and bubble curtains were being used to screen the noise of explosions when munitions were disposed of, and noise limits were being investigated for pile driving during the construction of wind farms. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) added that work continued with regard to the implementation of EC Regulation 812/2004.

13. Martine Bigan (France) described an on-board observer programme required under the EC regulation conducted by the fishing industry on set nets examining interactions with fisheries through which it was hoped to ascertain the level of bycatch. The French Marine Institute had adopted international guidelines on noise and experimental bans were being trialled. The military was developing a series of studies to reduce sonar disturbance. The University of La Rochelle was coordinating responses to strandings and necropsies. No necropsies had been possible following fatal ship strikes. Of the 96 marine *Natura 2000* sites designated, thirty had been selected for both harbour porpoises and bottlenose dolphins. New legislation would soon strengthen the protection of cetaceans and marine mammal habitat and the notion of disturbance would be more firmly embedded in the regulations.

14. Heikki Lehtinen (Finland) explained that Finland was participating in the SAMBAH project. The two-year observer programme required under EC Reg. 812/2004 conducted five years earlier had resulted in no sightings and no incidents of bycatch, but reports were still occasionally received of harbour porpoises in Finnish waters. Kai Mattsson (Finland) said that 47 C-PODs had been deployed in Finnish waters (Gulf of Finland and Archipelago Sea) as part of the SAMBAH project. Also the sighting campaign would continue.

15. Maj Munk (Denmark) said that the two main issues were video surveillance on smaller vessels from which no data were yet available and the elaboration of management plans in the designated *Natura 2000* sites. Denmark was also participating in SAMBAH.

16. Jan Haelters (Belgium) pointed out the most important issues in the national report, including monitoring of offshore wind farms, the appearance of a sociable bottlenose dolphin during summer 2010, a project on stomach content analysis, and the assistance given to France in the transportation of two live harbour porpoises to a rehabilitation facility in the Netherlands; these were later released, equipped with an internal chip. He added that there had been a project on the use of fish traps. Also, during spring 2011 the highest density of porpoises ever recorded had occurred in Belgian waters. They were even observed in the river Scheldt, where a lactating female had died, probably due to a ship strike. Offshore wind farm construction activities, with pile driving, had started in April 2011. A first trial with mooring PODs on cardinal buoys had been successful, and could limit mooring costs in future.

17. Mark Simmonds (WDCS) thanked the Parties for their comprehensive reporting and noted the great opportunities provided by ASCOBANS for information transfer between Parties on critical issues including bycatch and noise. He also noted some concern about the UK's Charting Progress report and sought clarification on the background information used to underpin the assessment made in it. Mr Gray agreed to respond to Mr Simmonds after the meeting.

3. Accession and Agreement Amendments

18. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that membership of the Agreement remained at ten, but one further ratification of the 2003 Amendment (from Sweden) had been received.

19. Details of the Secretariat's efforts to recruit new Parties were contained in Document 4-09. All non-Party Range States were regularly invited to attend ASCOBANS meetings, with particular focus on the Russian Federation, but so far to no avail. A new contact in the Russian Fisheries Ministry was being pursued.

20. Sophie Mirgaux (Belgium) explained that, as Belgium at present had an interim government, it had been impossible to proceed further with ratification of the Amendment. James Gray (UK) apologized for the lack of progress in the United Kingdom. Miglė Simanavičienė (Lithuania) said that the required documentation had been prepared but the Lithuanian ministry had undergone several changes recently. It was hoped that progress would be made in the next few months.

4. Priorities in the Implementation of the Triennium Work Plan (2010-2012)

21. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) explained that the Annotated Agenda (Doc.1-03) contained references to relevant activities of the Agreement's Triennium Work Plan for each agenda item. She introduced Document 4-01 which contained a table of the Triennial Work Plan and suggested that delegates kept this document to hand to update the action column during the meeting. The updated table would be annexed to the meeting report (Annex 5).

4.1 ASCOBANS Baltic Recovery Plan (Jastarnia Plan)

4.1.1 Implementation

22. The Chair invited Baltic Sea Parties to add supplementary information to their written reports. No further information was provided. Mark Simmonds (WDCS) asked what action was being taken regarding the gap area and the increasing problem of bycatch in the waters not covered by either the North Sea or Jastarnia Plan.

4.1.2 Recommendations of the 7th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

23. Rüdiger Stempel (Coalition Clean Baltic and Chair of the Jastarnia Group) gave an account of the 7th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group which had been held in Copenhagen, 14-16 February 2011. Two invited experts had addressed the meeting: Anders Galatius, whose report on historic and present Harbour Porpoise populations in the Baltic region (geometric morphometrics analysis) was contained in Document 6-03, and Roustam Sagitov of the Baltic Fund for Nature, a Russian NGO, who had explained the role of his organization and the project being conducted with support from ASCOBANS.

24. Twenty-three recommendations had been adopted and the subjects covered included cooperation with other bodies, especially those whose work focused on the Baltic, and the European Commission, both as a potential source of funding and as the body responsible for the EU Baltic Strategy. The Jastarnia Group had been requested to suggest conservation measures for harbour porpoises in the western Baltic and Belt Sea, the gap area between the two harbour porpoise action plans, and suggested funding a consultancy to draft a paper. Randall Reeves was a possible candidate. The Group itself was not able to undertake the work as it had a shifting membership and only met once a year. The Jastarnia Group had also suggested appointing a Baltic Sea coordinator along the lines of the similar post for the North Sea and had drafted terms of reference.

25. The Jastarnia Group had also seen a promising project proposal drafted by Andrew Foote and recommended that it be considered for funding by ASCOBANS (see also Agenda item 6.2).

26. Several Parties expressed doubts whether a Baltic Sea Coordinator was really necessary, given that the region had a well-functioning working group, which could fulfil many of the functions. Mr Stempel agreed that circumstances in the North Sea and Baltic Sea differed, but not to the extent that one area needed a coordinator and the other not.

27. Christina Rappe and Sara Königson (Sweden) both pointed out that their organizations were undergoing restructuring and it would not be possible for them to make any additional financial commitments. The Chair said that the financial question fell to the Administrative Session and could be deferred, but the Scientific Session could at least agree to the terms of reference in principle.

28. Several Parties felt that the coordinator should not be hired immediately and lessons could be learned from the experience of having a coordinator for the North Sea Plan.

29. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) felt that there were risks in delaying the decision given the urgency of some of the problems in the Baltic. Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) noted that work in the Baltic Sea lacked momentum and a coordinator might help create some, and having both North Sea and Baltic Sea plans operating might help bridge the gap of the area not covered by either.

30. Sara Königson (Sweden) asked that knowledge of fisheries issues be added to the requisite experience of the Coordinator and provided alternative wording for the relevant bullet point. It was agreed to endorse the draft terms of reference for the Baltic Coordinator as amended, on the understanding that the financial question would be addressed separately and that Parties had made no commitment to fund the post.

31. Parties were given opportunity to complete their national coordination regarding the recommendations of the Jastarnia Group and submit any reservations within six weeks of the current meeting of the Advisory Committee, which would then be reflected in the final report of this meeting.

32. Germany accordingly notified the Secretariat of a reservation concerning recommendation 5 of the 7th Jastarnia Group meeting. The EU had already regulated issues concerning bycatch of harbour porpoises within the so called "Bycatch Regulation" (812/2004/EC) and this regulation did not yet foresee obligations as expressed in

recommendation 5, such as general reporting duties of bycatch in logbooks or the duty to deliver carcasses to the competent authority. Germany was of the opinion that such obligations could only be imposed by a change of the regulation requiring a new proposal of the Commission and a successful coordination within the EU.

33. Returning to the consultancy requested for drafting a conservation plan for harbour porpoises in the gap area between the Jastarnia and North Sea Plans, Mr Stempel explained that the Jastarnia Group had been deliberately silent on the issue of the relationship of the gap area to the current Jastarnia Plan. It was not part of the Jastarnia Group's mandate to decide whether the gap area should be incorporated into the Jastarnia Plan or whether a separate plan be adopted. It was for the Meeting of the Parties to make this decision.

34. Ms Munk (Denmark) stressed that actions were being taken in the gap area. A survey comparable to SCANS would be carried out, as the decline indicated in the most recent data did not seem to be statistically significant and Ministers required more information. Many protected areas had been designated in Inner Danish Waters and video surveillance was providing information on bycatch.

35. Elizabeth Guttenstein (European Commission) was pleased to see that the Jastarnia Group was establishing contacts with the Baltic Sea RAC, BALTFISH and relevant Working Groups established under ICES. She was also interested to learn of proposals to submit projects under EC funding schemes for priority areas in the Baltic and was encouraged by the progress being achieved under SAMBAH.

Actions and Decisions

Parties would notify the Secretariat by 20 June 2011 of any reservations regarding the recommendations of the 7th Meeting of Jastarnia Group.

The terms of reference for the Baltic Sea Coordinator were endorsed as amended (Annex 6).

4.2 ASCOBANS Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea

4.2.1 Implementation

36. The Chair invited Parties to provide additional information. Oliver Schall (Germany) said that the German National Report contained all relevant information. Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that the future focus of work would be on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Yvon Morizur (France) said work was being done to determine the bycatch rate in commercial nets not fitted with acoustic deterrents and a synthesis was being prepared of observations for days at sea.

4.2.2 Report of the Coordinators and Working Group

37. Russell Leaper (ASCOBANS Consultant) presented the final coordination report under the interim arrangements. Bycatch had been identified as the main issue but in future more also needed to be done regarding noise. A number of studies into the effects of noise emanating from wind farm construction had been undertaken but not in a coordinated way; there was a role for ASCOBANS there.

38. Regarding the bycatch of harbour porpoises by smaller vessels and semi-professional fisheries, no reliable figures were available but the higher estimates were well in excess of 1.7 per cent. One option would be to introduce strict mitigation measures across the board. The use of acoustic deterrents on the nets of smaller vessels seemed to be effective.

39. Mr Leaper had attended a meeting of the North Sea RAC. Regarding bycatch, the RAC wanted clear questions from ASCOBANS and would be willing to receive a formal presentation. The RAC however believed that smaller inshore vessels were the main cause of bycatch rather than the larger offshore vessels with which the RAC was primarily concerned. Sara Königson (Sweden) said that the RAC should also suggest what it could do to help address ASCOBANS' concerns. It was also noted that changes agreed in the Treaty of Lisbon added animal welfare issues.

40. Marije Siemensma (Coastal and Marine Union) substituting for the chair of the North Sea Working Group (Martine van den Heuvel-Greve) said that 11 participants had taken part in the Group's meeting in the margins of the AC meeting.

41. Reporting on the in-session meeting of the Group, Ms Siemensma said that the Group would benefit from the participation of fisheries experts and enquiries would be made of the European Commission and the North Sea RAC to obtain contact details of relevant organizations. Ms van der Heuvel-Greve was available to continue to chair the Group. Four priority actions had been identified for the Working Group:

- Each country should compile and submit an inventory of the activities in regard to harbour porpoise conservation in the North Sea and identify the key people involved. The 12 action points identified in the North Sea Action Plan would serve as guidelines.
- The chair of the Working Group would initiate contact with the North Sea RAC to secure a speaking slot for a 15-minute presentation at a future RAC meeting. The new coordinator would be asked to attend the North Sea RAC meeting in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, 10-11 October 2011.
- The coordinator would also be asked to prepare with the guidance of the Working Group, a paper that highlights the aspects of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) relevant for the North Sea Working Group.
- The Working Group would assist the new coordinator to reach relevant organizations, particularly those involved in fisheries, including those operating small boats and inshore.

42. The Working Group agreed to have a meeting (preferably ½ day in conjunction with the Advisory Committee), in addition to communicating through intersessional correspondence. This – or holding a meeting at an appropriate coastal venue – might entice fisheries representatives to attend the Advisory Committee.

43. With regard to the applications for the Coordinator post, Jan Haelters (Belgium) dealt with the request of the Secretariat for a joint recommendation. The recommendation would be taken into account when the Secretariat selected the successful candidate in accordance with UNEP procedure.

4.3 Review of New Information on Bycatch

44. Luke Warwick (UK) and Yvon Morizur (France) provided updates on developments in their respective countries. The new acoustic devices being employed in the UK seemed to be safe for fishermen as well as being effective.

4.3.1 Report of the Working Group

45. Russell Leaper (Chair of the Bycatch Working Group) explained that the Working Group's terms of reference identified two main tasks: a framework for bringing together stakeholders and drafting guidance notes in conjunction with the appointed CMS Scientific Councillor for Bycatch (Barry Baker) for those representing ASCOBANS at other fora. The Working Group had concentrated on the first of these tasks, drawing on the outcomes of the

ASCOBANS-ECS workshop in 2010 which had examined what had worked well. In general, it was thought that “bottom up” approaches were more effective, although it was noted that one successful example concerning the East Pacific tuna fishery had been more “top down”. Several case studies from within the EU and take reduction teams in the USA had been examined. There had been many successful small-scale pilot projects, but few instances of successful follow-up in larger-scale initiatives. The take reduction teams in the USA had worked, but were expensive and were backed through legislation. Fishermen in the USA were given extensive training in the use of acoustic deterrents. In Portugal, mitigation measures were being introduced through a voluntary partnership.

46. The Chair asked whether the Working Group should be reinstated as an Inter-sessional Working Group. Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) said that such an arrangement had worked well in the past and had helped maintain momentum. He also suggested drawing up a table of the different regions and their fisheries to help identify key areas where interactions with cetaceans were most likely. Jan Haelters (Belgium) pointed to the overlap of interests with the Jastarnia and North Sea Conservation Plans and the importance of liaising with RACs. He added that the terms of reference for the Working Group should be updated. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) said that the Working Group should also liaise with ICES who might appreciate the specific input from ASCOBANS on cetaceans.

47. It was agreed to maintain the Working Group inter-sessionally and a drafting group with a membership including Jan Haelters, Marije Siemensma, Karl-Hermann Kock, Peter Evans and Yvon Morizur was established to prepare draft terms of reference. Mr Kock (Germany) suggested that the Chair formally approach ICES and the ICES bycatch working group to establish contact.

Actions and Decisions

New terms of reference for the Bycatch Working Group were adopted (Annex 7). Russell Leaper would act as interim chair until a permanent successor was elected.

4.4 Review of New Information on the Extent of Negative Effects of Sound

48. The Chair introduced Document 4-10 containing information on seismic activities carried out by the United Kingdom in 2010 and invited James Gray (UK) to take the floor. The Document was self-explanatory and Mr Gray said that he would take questions.

49. Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) congratulated the UK on a useful piece of research and added how information on seismic survey effort from the 1960s to the present had proved invaluable in an assessment of possible effects upon cetacean distribution patterns, as part of a project for OGP’s Joint Industry Programme on Sound and Marine Life.

50. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) reported that ASCOBANS was now represented on the ACCOBAMS noise group through the Secretariat and Karsten Brensing, the chair of the ASCOBANS Noise Working Group. Mr Brensing was liaising with his counterpart on the ACCOBAMS Noise Working Group (see Agenda item 4.4.1). The Secretariat was also part of the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) correspondence group on noise from commercial shipping. The 61st meeting of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) had identified propeller noise as the most important noise source and had referred the matter to the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment. The 62nd meeting of the MEPC in July 2011 would discuss the issue further. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) was developing standards for the measurement of underwater sound and the draft guidelines would be considered at the next meeting of the ISO technical sub-committee taking place at the end of May 2011.

51. Thomas Folegot (Invited Speaker, Quiet Oceans) gave a presentation on the system of predicting oceanic noise that he had developed, emphasizing the possible role his methodologies could have in enhancing cetacean conservation. Ocean noise was difficult to estimate for the following reasons: (1) there was a diversity of man-made sound sources, such as underwater explosions, ships, seismic exploration, offshore construction (e.g. offshore wind farms and hydrocarbon production), industrial activities, sonar of various types and acoustic devices; (2) underwater noise propagated well in the ocean as a function of local bathymetry, temperature and salinity. Depending on location, season and local climate conditions, sound in the ocean could propagate over very long distances and concentrate at various depths ranging from tens to hundreds of kilometres from the sound source. However, Quiet-Oceans had developed a global acoustic prediction tool which combined real-time environmental data with human generated noise sources, including ship noise. This was needed to synthesize the acoustic data that represented the three-dimensional noise levels and distribution. This tool had been optimized for real-time calculations using innovative parallelization technologies. Similar to a weather forecast system, this technology brought new capabilities to assess the evolution of underwater sound levels and distribution in the world oceans. Its application supported scientific studies, which quantified and prioritized direct and indirect anthropogenic pressures on aquatic life. As shown by the example of the Gibraltar area, deterministic spatial ocean noise prediction could be produced “continuously” over large areas, providing a rich and fine description. This contributed to the ability to understand the mechanisms of noise impacts on cetaceans and to assess and possibly demonstrate disturbance and masking effects. Cetacean habitat models usually focused on environmental parameters. Quiet-Oceans provided a man-made noise layer for use in those habitat models and correlated aquatic life behaviour and maritime human activities. Future developments of the technology would assimilate continuous in-situ measurements and improve the quality of the assessment of absolute noise levels in real-time.

52. Peter Evans (Sea Watch Foundation / ECS) noted that there was to be an open international meeting for a Quiet Ocean Experiment organized by the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR) and Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans (POGO). This would be held at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 30 August to 1 September (see www.iqoe-2011.org for more details).

53. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) presented the findings of research on inner ears of harbour porpoises undertaken by Seibel and Siebert of the Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel. The project had been funded by the German Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Consumer Protection. As harbour porpoises relied heavily on their hearing, shipping, sonar, seismic surveys, explosions, wind turbines and other noise producers could disorient them and in extreme cases cause trauma. The stress of exposure to excessive noise affected the animals' health and immune system, impeded communication and led to both short- and long-term behavioural changes. An examination of 42 inner ears of 21 specimens (17 of them by-caught) showed severe bleeding in 14 cases, the most probable cause of which was noise.

4.4.1 Report of the Working Group

54. The Chair invited Karsten Brensing (WDCS, Chair of the Working Group) to introduce the report tabled as Document 4-08. Mr Brensing listed the main tasks of the Working Group, namely: activities in other forums; new literature; joint work with ACCOBAMS and OSPAR; and finally the evaluation of the implementation of MOP6 Resolution No. 2 on underwater noise from offshore construction.

55. Activities in other forums were comprehensively dealt with in the document. Of the new literature, Tyack's examination of renewable energy sources for ICES, Tougaard's study of harbour porpoises' reaction to simulated pile driving noise and Cañadas' report to the

ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee were of particular interest. Given the similarities of the mandates, it made sense for the noise working groups of ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS and OSPAR to collaborate closely. The ACCOBAMS guidelines had been drafted by the Scientific Committee and were now being reviewed in the light of comments from Parties. All ASCOBANS Parties had responded to the questionnaire issued to follow up MOP6 Resolution No.2 and the results had been summarized in the tables in Section V of Doc.4-08.

56. Eunice Pinn (UK) said that the UK recognized the usefulness of the report of the Intersessional Noise Working Group but had serious concerns regarding the regulations and mitigation measures associated with construction of offshore installations for renewable energy. The UK did not approve of the assessments and disagreed with the “traffic light” system employed in Section V of Doc.4-08 which was based on personal interpretation by the chair of what would be ‘positive in the light of conservation’ or ‘problematic or even dangerous in light of conservation’. This system was misleading and did not allow for qualification of answers. The UK’s views had been expressed through membership of the working group and the UK offered to help with drafting a report so that it was constructive and included recommendations on how to move forward, highlighting potential gaps in implementation, areas for further research and opportunities for sharing best practice.

57. Mr Brensing found the traffic light system helpful but agreed to make changes in the second version of the report to address the UK’s concerns. This revised version would also include the information provided by Parties after the first summary had been prepared.

58. Martine Bigan (France) explained that France had not built any offshore renewable energy plants but there were some proposals in the offing and they would like to learn from the experience of others.

59. Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS) explained that ACCOBAMS had established its Noise Working Group in 2007 and the guidelines had been adopted in 2010. The Working Group was clarifying certain elements of the guidelines. She welcomed the close cooperation with Mr Brensing and the ASCOBANS Working Group.

60. Elsa Nickel (Germany), recalling the strategic paper tabled by the Netherlands previously, felt that the Working Group should be maintained with a fresh mandate, given the importance of the noise issue, and that collaboration with ACCOBAMS and OSPAR on noise guidelines should be continued. Mr Brensing undertook to revise the terms of reference to make the mandate regarding cooperation with ACCOBAMS and OSPAR more explicit.

Actions and Decisions

Revised terms of reference for the Noise Working Group were adopted (Annex 8).

4.5 Publicity and Outreach

4.5.1 Report of the Secretariat

61. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) highlighted some of the main points of the Secretariat’s report tabled as Document 4-09. Thanks to the annual voluntary contribution from Germany, it had been possible to reprint the post cards, the Coalition Clean Baltic brochure and other material. The Hel Marine Station had asked for the ASCOBANS files so that further material could be printed locally, an initiative to be commended.

62. At the previous Advisory Committee meeting, the revised website had been previewed. The new design and content was now online and almost ready for the official launch, when the old site would be removed. Parties were invited to make further suggestions for improvements.

63. The Secretariat would be conducting a tour of the German Baltic coast visiting the universities of Greifswald, Rostock and Kiel to mark the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise. Krzysztof Skóra of Hel Marine Station had won the first ECS conservation award presented at the ECS Annual Meeting in Cadiz, Spain.

Actions and Decisions

The Secretariat would circulate a proposal for a publication to mark the occasion of the 20th anniversary of ASCOBANS as soon as possible to receive the Parties comments and endorsement.

Parties would provide their comments on the new website by 20 June 2011. As soon as necessary amendments were made, the old one would be taken off-line and the new site would be migrated to the URL www.ascobans.org.

4.5.2 Reports of Parties, Range States and Partners

64. Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) explained that a recent opinion survey by WWF Poland and Millward Brown SMG/KRC had revealed that less than 50 per cent of Polish people were aware of the existence of the harbour porpoise, and only one third of these realized that it was a mammal. A public awareness campaign was using billboards and one electronic display to impart information, along with leaflets, films and articles in the press. One target audience had been holiday-makers on their way from Warsaw to the Baltic coast by train, who were given a brochure about Baltic Sea mammals.

65. In 2011, the Hel Marine Station would again participate in the European Maritime Day in Gdansk, the Baltic Festival of Science in Gdynia, the POLFISH fisheries fair in Gdansk, as well as celebrate the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise in Gdynia. These events would give opportunities to disseminate further information about the harbour porpoise and the threats it faced. Funding for these activities had been received from different sources such as the National and Regional Funds for Environment Protection, the SAMBAH project (LIFE+) and commercial companies.

66. The presentation concluded with the premiere of a film promoting SAMBAH featuring guinea pigs and harbour porpoises which have the same common name in Polish.

67. Kai Mattsson (Finland) gave details of the Finnish elements of the SAMBAH project. Forty-seven C-PODs had been deployed. He also described the activities undertaken by the Särkänniemi dolphinarium in Tampere which attracted 270,000 visitors per annum. Much of the public awareness work concentrated on children (competitions, puzzles and an orienteering challenge). Local media interest was high with reports on local TV and in the newspapers.

68. Mark Simmonds (WDCS) referred to the education pages of the WDCS website and in particular <http://www.wdcs.org/connect/education/index.php> and the “kidzone” aimed at children <http://www.wdcs.org/wdcskids/en/index.php>. The equivalent German pages were accessible at: http://www.wdcs.org/wdcskids/de/story_details.php?select=734. He also commended Ran Levy-Yanamouri’s ‘The Mermaid and the Dolphins’ as a good example of a modern multi-media approach to outreach based on a children’s book which was also a phone application and a short film: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OjLyFAeWl> in a number of languages.

69. Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) spoke about a schools project involving the production by students of two 20-minute films on environmental topics, one on marine pollution and the other on by-catch. The films were premiered in March, launched by the Environment Minister, and will be entered into an international film festival.

5. Implementation of the Triennium Work Plan (2010-2012) – Other Issues

70. Borja Heredia (Secretariat) introducing Document 5-05 said that there had been a long tradition of collaboration with ECS in convening workshops. The proposed topic for a workshop to be held during the ECS Annual Meeting in Galway in March 2012 was the implementation of the cetacean component of the EC Habitats Directive. All cetaceans were listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive and for two species (*Phocoena phocoena* and *Tursiops truncatus*) member states were required to designate Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation – SACs). The ECS Annual Meeting in 2012 presented an opportune occasion for such a workshop given that the six-yearly review of the Directive was due.

71. The meeting approved the proposal and Marie Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS) confirmed the willingness of her Secretariat to collaborate.

72. Mr Heredia further introduced Document 5-07, a paper produced by UNEP entitled “Governing Marine Protected Areas” which highlighted the complexity of the issue using twenty illustrative examples. Approach III was particularly interesting with its emphasis on working with local communities and engaging the help of fishermen.

73. Mark Simmonds (WDCS) pointed out that a revised version of Erich Hoyt’s book on Marine Protected Areas for Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises had just been published. He urged that every effort be made to ensure that marine protected areas were made as effective as possible for the conservation of cetaceans. Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) hoped that the forthcoming workshop in Galway might address this. The Habitats Directive laid down clear terms of reference for marine SACs without specifying how to accommodate the needs of other interests. The problem of how to manage sites for highly mobile species had not been resolved.

74. Maj Munk (Denmark) stressed the delicacy of the issue. Denmark had already designated some SACs for the Harbour Porpoise and was developing management plans through local consultation with fishermen. Her fear was that the ECS workshop was being held too late to influence the management plans in Denmark, which would be completed by the time the workshop had taken place. It would not be desirable to reopen discussions if ASCOBANS produced new guidelines.

75. As Parties might benefit from a closer examination of this issue Gerhard Adams (Germany) and Heikki Lehtinen (Finland) proposed that the management of marine protected areas should be discussed at the next meeting of the Advisory Committee and WDCS and the Sea Watch Foundation agreed to produce a background paper. The Chair drew attention to the forthcoming second international conference on marine mammal protected areas in Martinique from 7-11 November 2011.

Actions and Decisions

The Secretariat would organize a joint Workshop with ECS and ACCOBAMS on the implementation of the cetacean components of the Habitats Directive in EU member states (2012 ECS Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, Galway, Ireland).

An item on management of marine protected areas would be included on the agenda of AC19. WDCS and the Sea Watch Foundation were requested to table a related paper.

5.1 Review of New Information on Population Size, Distribution, Structure and Causes of Any Changes

76. Florence Caurant (France) made a presentation on the use of ecological tracers for discriminating common dolphin population structure, as described in Document 5-02.

77. Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) gave a presentation related to Doc 6-05, a project report on the review of trend analyses in the ASCOBANS Area. The aim of the project was to produce a user-friendly means of identifying trends for policy makers. The ASCOBANS Area had 35 species of cetaceans (26 of which were small cetaceans). Of these, 17 were regularly occurring including 12 small cetacean species. For most, the knowledge of population size and trends remained woefully inadequate, although there was some idea of the relative importance of different anthropogenic activities on particular species.

78. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) presented some preliminary findings of a project being conducted through tripartite cooperation in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. During March 2011 dedicated aerial surveys following line transect distance sampling methodology had been conducted in Belgium (led by Jan Haelters), the Netherlands (Meike Scheidat) and Germany (Anita Gilles). Although these surveys had been conducted under three different projects, using three different aerial survey teams, it had been possible to survey the complete area within several weeks. Survey effort had been about 7400km for all surveys combined, covering all Belgian and Dutch waters as well as part of the German waters and a small area of French waters. In total, 981 sightings of harbour porpoises were made (1081 animals). The resulting distribution showed that highest densities were in the Belgian / French waters as well as around the Dutch / German border. Preliminary analysis for the different study areas resulted in density estimates between 1 and almost 3 animals/km², with the highest densities ever recorded for Belgian waters. This ad hoc cooperation had been possible thanks to existing professional contacts and provided a promising approach to future transnational surveys. It was important to make sure that existing survey or research projects could be coordinated and analyzed on a larger scale. Ms Scheidat proposed that ASCOBANS could serve as a forum to facilitate the exchange of information of existing research programmes (e.g. aerial surveys as well as passive acoustic monitoring).

79. Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS) drew the meeting's attention to a proposal of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee to organize a joint workshop on population structure at the 2012 Annual Conference of the ECS.

80. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) updated the meeting on the exchange of correspondence with the authorities of the Faroe Islands with regard to dolphin hunts, which was contained in Document 5-06. The response of the Faroe Islands indicated that the hunts of Risso's dolphins that had occurred in recent years were not set to continue. Key points on which information had been requested had however been left unanswered. The 2010 Annual Report of NAMMCO indicated that there was insufficient information on the status of populations of Pilot Whales and other species for setting hunting quotas.

81. Maj Munk (Denmark) reiterated that the issue was not one over which Denmark had any influence given the extent of home rule accorded to the Faroe Islands.

Actions and Decisions

The Secretariat was requested to write to the Faroe Islands' Authorities again to seek a response to the outstanding items, and to pursue the issue of the cetacean hunts with NAMMCO.

A joint workshop with ACCOBAMS on population structure would be convened at the 2012 Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society.

5.2 Review of New Information on Pollution and its Effects

82. Mark Simmonds (WDCS) referred to the draft "ASCOBANS Chemical Pollution Annual Review Results 2011" and invited participants to propose additions and amendments. The final version would be attached to the report of the meeting (Annex 9).

83. From the first publication referred to (Meith, N 2009 Marine Litter: A Global Challenge, UNEP Regional Sea Report) it seemed that there was no clear understanding of the threat posed by the ingestion of plastic by cetaceans, although small particles of plastic could block the animals' gut. Borja Heredia (Secretariat) pointed out that UNEP and the US NOAA had convened a conference on marine debris in Hawaii in March 2011 and that Australia was preparing a resolution on marine debris for the CMS COP in November. Mr Simmonds proposed a recommendation from the meeting calling for more attention to be paid to the issue. Maj Munk (Denmark) recalling that a resolution had been adopted on pollution suggested revisiting the issue at the next Meeting of Parties. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) asked whether more information on pollution could be sought through the national reports. James Gray (UK) said that findings from the UK's strandings scheme did not indicate that marine debris was a major problem but agreed that the issue should be investigated further. Christina Rappe (Sweden) said that ghost nets were also a problem, and Karsten Brensing (WDCS) pointed out that litter was an issue covered by the draft Marine Strategy Framework Directive, so European Union member states would be obliged to respond.

84. Oliver Schall (Germany) enquired how HELCOM and OSPAR with their mandates covering water purity were dealing with pollution. Jan Haelters (Belgium) referred to the OSPAR beached litter and ecological quality objectives and studies into the ingestion of plastic by fulmars. Penina Blankett (HELCOM) said this issue had been taken up in the HELCOM Ministerial Declaration 2010 (accessible online at <http://www.helcom.fi/stc/files/Moscow2010/HELCOM%20Moscow%20Ministerial%20Declaration%20FINAL.pdf>). Florence Caurant (France) felt that direct ingestion of plastic was more of a problem with turtles than cetaceans. However, degraded plastic entering the food chain could lead to chemical poisoning of higher predators.

85. Penina Blankett (HELCOM) drew attention to a publication issued by HELCOM on hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea (accessible at <http://www.helcom.fi/stc/files/Publications/Proceedings/bsep120B.pdf>). Details of indicator fact sheets on species (grey seal and ringed seal) could also be downloaded (http://www.helcom.fi/BSAP_assessment/ifs/ifs2010/en_GB/ring_seal_health/, http://www.helcom.fi/BSAP_assessment/ifs/ifs2010/en_GB/BalticGreySeal/).

Actions and Decisions

WDCS would present a background document summarizing the state of knowledge of the impact on cetaceans of marine debris (including ingested plastics) to AC19.

5.2.1 Report on the Joint ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop on Pollution (20 March 2011)

86. Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) gave a presentation relating to Document 5-03, a report of the ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS workshop on chemical pollution and marine mammals held on 20 March 2011 in Cadiz, Spain. The workshop had been attended by 50 people from 12 countries, although some key participants had not been able to take part due to illness. One key finding was that levels of PCB in blubber, which had been falling for some time, now appeared to have stabilized possibly as a result of the use of sealants having continued after the banning of PCB production elsewhere. Mark Simmonds (WDCS) commented that this level was still hazardous to some species and populations.

87. In addition to the brief report and recommendations tabled for this meeting, more extensive proceedings including conservation recommendations would be produced.

88. Christina Rappe (Sweden) referred to a current study being conducted by the Natural History Museum in Stockholm which had found high levels of mercury in harbour porpoises.

5.3 Review of New Information on the Extent of Negative Effects of Vessels and Other Forms of Disturbance

89. Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) gave an update on the presentation made at the previous Advisory Committee on ship strikes. The presentation illustrated how busy the sea lanes were in the Agreement Area, particularly in the Channel and southern North Sea but also in parts of the Baltic Sea. However, the “hotspot” for collisions was indicated to be off the north-west coast of Spain and in the Bay of Biscay. Data had been collected on the number of stranded animals showing signs of injuries resulting from collisions (although the sample size for larger species inevitably was low). The threshold speed for causing fatal injuries had been found to be 10 knots, whilst large cetaceans (sperm whales and baleen whales) seemed to be at four times greater risk than small ones. Pleasure boats could also cause serious injury, but fatalities were most often caused by larger vessels. Mr Evans was visiting the shipping company Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics (WWL) immediately after the Advisory Committee to discuss the introduction of mitigation measures; these would likely include speed restrictions and the inclusion of dedicated observers. James Gray (UK) welcomed the contacts with WWL and hoped other shipping companies would follow their lead.

90. Mr Evans proceeded to report on the Joint IWC-ACCOBAMS workshop on ship strikes which had taken place in France in September 2010, focusing on the Mediterranean Sea and the Canary Islands. The priority species were fin and sperm whales and the key areas in the Mediterranean included the Pelagos Sanctuary and the Straits of Gibraltar.

91. It had been proposed to hold a workshop in Monaco in 2012 to inform maritime operators about the REPCET (real time plotting of cetaceans) programme. ASCOBANS would be invited to participate. Russell Leaper (Consultant) suggested that ASCOBANS lend its voice to the call made by ACCOBAMS and the IWC to encourage data on both ship tracking and ship strikes to be made available for analysis.

Actions and Decisions

The Advisory Committee agreed with the recommendation of the IWC/ACCOBAMS Workshop that organizations such as IWC, ACCOBAMS, IMO, ASCOBANS or UNEP should support approaches to holders of shipping data for access for research use. ASCOBANS would assist in facilitating requests for shipping data to assist in identifying high risk areas to cetaceans within the ASCOBANS area.

Peter Evans was asked to convey the Advisory Committee’s support for WWL’s efforts to reduce ship strikes.

5.4 Extension of the Work of the Agreement into the new Agreement Area, incl. Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction

92. Martine Bigan (France) noted that activities in the extended area were not as focused as those in the North Sea and Baltic Sea with their action plans. The extended area had a wide range of species and she proposed to prepare a report on activities for the next meeting of the Advisory Committee. She hoped that non-Party Range states might contribute to the report. An Inter-sessional working group led by Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) was established with the participation of the UK, France and ACCOBAMS.

Actions and Decisions

An Intersessional Working Group led by Peter Evans would prepare a paper for AC19 on research and conservation actions undertaken in the extended Agreement Area. Inputs from all Range States and ACCOBAMS were to be sought.

5.5 Report of the Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans

93. Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans reported on the in-session meeting of the Group. He had prepared a draft paper (Doc.5-04) which would be elaborated further inter-sessionally for tabling at the next meeting of the Advisory Committee. The paper would cover species' conservation status, ship strikes and bycatch.

6. Project Funding through ASCOBANS

6.1 Progress of Supported Projects

94. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) introduced Document 6-01, a review of projects supported since the last Meeting of the Advisory Committee. Several projects had been successfully completed and final reports had been tabled for this meeting. Five projects were still in progress. All projects selected as high priority at AC17 had been supported.

95. Ms Frisch noted with satisfaction that many of the projects supported by ASCOBANS had presented results during the ECS Annual Meeting in Cadiz, which had significantly enhanced the Agreement's profile in scientific circles.

96. Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) gave an update on the project *Tursiops SEAS* concerning population structure of the bottlenose dolphin. The original project outline did not meet the eligibility criteria for this cycle of LIFE funding, so the project had been postponed and scaled down. It was intended to resubmit the project through the University of Cork in July 2011 and matching funding was being sought.

6.2 Selection and Prioritisation of Projects for Future Support

97. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) reminded the meeting that a call for project proposals had been made in January 2011. In order to ensure that all applications were properly considered, the Secretariat, Chair and Vice-Chair suggested that the proposals be discussed briefly in plenary with delegations filling in a sheet to allow subsequent ranking of projects in order of priority. Ms Nickel (Germany) felt that rather than spread the limited resources thinly, the Committee should concentrate on main priorities and ensure greater results. The decision on the actual allocation of funding would be made during the Administrative Session.

98. Participants were invited to prioritize the projects on a four step scale from very high to low. The resulting priorities were: (1) Project 5 (Distribution and relative abundance of harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) over Dogger Bank and surrounding waters, Southern North Sea); (2) Project 6 (SAMBAH exhibition); (3) Project 4 (Behavioural responses of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) to playbacks of pile driving sounds recorded during the construction phase of offshore wind farms); (4) Project 1 (Innovative conservation genetic analyses of Baltic Sea harbour porpoise: analysing sub-fossil samples to understand past change; development of genetic monitoring methods); (5) Project 3 (Harbour porpoise alerting device (PAL): detailed field tests using theodolite tracking); (6) Project 2 (Photo identification of harbour porpoise, *Phocoena phocoena*, using a digiscope);

a feasibility study); and (7) Project 7 (Harbour Porpoise Day – Raising awareness in the Netherlands).

99. There were several interventions from the floor expressing concern that if in future years more projects were received the process for sifting them would be very time-consuming and impractical during the Advisory Committee. The Secretariat was requested in future to gather and compile the ratings of Parties and Partners in advance of the Advisory Committee Meetings and present the resulting ranking.

Actions and Decisions

A process for ranking project proposals was adopted. The Secretariat would circulate proposals, and Parties and Partners would communicate their priorities in advance of the Advisory Committee Meeting. The outcome would be announced at the meeting.

7. Relations with other Bodies

100. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) drew attention to Document 7-01, which summarised the representation of ASCOBANS at meetings of other bodies. Besides this formal representation, collaboration was actively sought especially with the European Commission and ACCOBAMS. The Acting Executive Secretary had attended the ACCOBAMS MOP in November 2010, and ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS collaborated on many issues of mutual interest. ASCOBANS also worked closely with CMS and its advisory bodies and was contributing to the Future Shape process. CMS was also funding a project on gillnet fisheries and bycatch of migratory species, the report of which was due in September and would form the basis for a draft resolution to be tabled at CMS COP10. Implementation of Resolution 8.22 on human-induced impacts was also being taken forward and a draft resolution on a CMS programme of work for cetaceans was in preparation for discussion at COP10.

101. Elizabeth Guttenstein (European Commission) gave an account of the reforms planned for the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). It was a substantial exercise including technical issues and external relations. One of the areas being considered was how to better integrate environmental concerns and effectiveness in addressing them under the CFP. It was intended that the CFP would take more account of regional circumstances in future while retaining overall policy objectives. All stakeholders were invited to take as full a part as possible over the next 18 months.

102. The Commission was preparing a Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of regulation EC 812/2004 based on the reports supplied by the Member States. The national reports were improving, providing a better understanding of the situation. ICES had also analysed the national reports, the implementation of the regulation and the effectiveness of mitigation measures. The outcomes of the 2009 Workshop to address the deficiencies of the Regulation, particularly with regard to smaller vessels, would be taken into account.

103. A workshop would be held on 10 May 2011 to assess where Member States stood with regard to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, to improve coherence and identify cross-cutting issues.

104. It was hoped that the proposed meeting between CMS, ASCOBANS and the Commission postponed because of the Acting Executive Secretary's circumstances would be rescheduled.

105. In response to questions, it was confirmed that the Commission was examining ways of banning discards, and that on the DG MARE website a web-streaming of a stakeholder conference on discards held the day before the session was available to those interested.

Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) asked whether more resources would be made available to combat the decline in natural habitats and to help monitor the use of gill nets. Ms Guttenstein confirmed that coastal fisheries would continue to receive support through various instruments, particularly in meeting technical requirements. Member States would however have competence regarding inshore fisheries and the overall CFP was exploring ways to be more regionally responsive in future. Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) mentioned the recommendations of the joint ECS/ASCOBANS workshop on by-catch mitigation to which DG MARE had contributed, and asked whether attention to vessels of 15m length or less would be incorporated into the development of Regulation 812/2004. Ms Guttenstein pointed out that Regulation 812/2004 was still relatively new and that the outcome of the current review and the extent of changes that would be proposed were uncertain.

106. Jan Haelters (Belgium) presented an overview of topics dealt with at the OSPAR Biodiversity Committee meeting held 11-15 April 2011. These topics included threatened and declining species and habitats, and recommendations on actions and measures, marine protected areas, ecological quality objectives which were similar to indicators and targets foreseen in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The implementation of the Directive formed a very important subject throughout the meeting in general.

107. Penina Blankett (HELCOM) gave a demonstration of HELCOM's interactive database, which now also included data on sightings, strandings and bycatch of harbour porpoises. These data had been integrated through a project financed by ASCOBANS. She encouraged participants to interrogate the database themselves (available at <http://maps.helcom.fi/website/mapservice/index.html>) and to report any mistakes and suggest any improvements to the HELCOM Secretariat.

108. She also gave a presentation on the HELCOM "HOLAS" project for the holistic assessment of the Baltic marine environment, including a thematic assessment of hazardous substances. Despite remedial actions being taken, there had been no measurable reduction of the nitrogen and phosphate loads.

109. Mark Simmonds (WDCS) asked what was being done to improve the coherence of the marine protected areas and Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) asked whether there was any prospect of the HELCOM Fisheries / Environment Forum doing more to address bycatch.

110. Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS) introduced Document 7-04 regarding a proposal to establish a joint ASCOBANS-ACCOBAMS Working Group on the implementation of the EC Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and its indicators relevant for cetacean conservation. Martine Bigan (France) welcomed the proposal and sought clarification of the practicalities. Ms Grillo-Compulsione undertook to ensure that the Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee would initiate contact with ASCOBANS. On the basis of the draft presented by France terms of reference would be drawn up in due course through consultation between both Agreements.

111. Sara Königson (Sweden) reminded that the importance of participation in fisheries fora should be emphasized more strongly.

Actions and Decisions

A Joint Working Group with ACCOBAMS on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive would be established. The Secretariats would liaise with Parties and Partners over its terms of reference and composition.

The Secretariat was requested to give high priority to participation of ASCOBANS representatives in RAC meetings.

7.1 Dates of Interest 2011/2012

112. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented Document 7-02 and invited participants to suggest further events for inclusion on the list of dates of interest. She also asked the meeting to identify meetings at which ASCOBANS representation would be desirable. The list was amended as reflected in Annex 10 of this report. ASCOBANS representatives were asked to report back to the Committee on key points of the meetings in which they participated.

7.2 Extension of the ACCOBAMS Agreement Area

113. Bert Lenten (Secretariat) introduced Document 7-03 recalling that at its previous meeting the Advisory Committee had discussed proposals tabled by Spain and Portugal at the ACCOBAMS MOP to extend the area of that Agreement to cover waters included in the ASCOBANS extension. Despite both the misgivings of the ASCOBANS Parties and the Executive Secretary of CMS urging the ACCOBAMS Parties to defer any decision until after the CMS Future Shape process had been completed, the ACCOBAMS MOP had approved the extension. Before coming into effect, the ACCOBAMS extension had to be ratified and so far only Monaco had done so. ASCOBANS had sought legal advice on the implications of having two regimes applying to the same waters and no practical problems were anticipated. Regrettably it was now clear that Spain and Portugal had no intention of joining ASCOBANS in the future. It was also clear that both Agreements should continue to collaborate and the question of whether the two should merge had been raised. The Secretariat's proposal was to focus collaboration on issues of common concern, rather than the common area, in order to invest the scarce resources of ASCOBANS most prudently.

114. The Chair pointed out that Peter Evans (ECS / Sea Watch Foundation) had circulated a statement on the scientific aspects of the ACCOBAMS extension, in which he pointed out that several species of small cetaceans occurring regularly in the Atlantic segment of the ASCOBANS Agreement Area had populations with continuous distributions into Spanish and Portuguese Atlantic waters. By contrast, the Mediterranean and Black Sea had populations of a number of species – harbour porpoise, common dolphin, bottlenose dolphin and fin whale – that appeared to be quite isolated from the Atlantic. A number of human activities also involved these adjacent areas: for example, national fishing fleets ranged over this area as distinct from activities in the Mediterranean, and shipping from North Sea and Channel ports regularly crossed the Bay of Biscay and travelled along the Atlantic coasts of Spain and Portugal where they posed risk of ship strikes. For these reasons, it was important that there was close interaction and coordination of conservation activities between ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS in Atlantic Spain and Portugal. ACCOBAMS had many challenges of its own to address in the Mediterranean region, particularly in supporting countries in the eastern sector and along North African coasts. It would be unfortunate if the decision following the proposal by Spain and Portugal led to less focus upon a range of small cetacean species in the Atlantic region.

115. Martine Bigan (France) representing the only country to be Party to both Agreements said that there were many areas of common interest between ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS. Monika Lesz (Poland) agreed that co-operation with ACCOBAMS was important but ASCOBANS should concentrate on the North Sea and Baltic.

8. Any other Business

116. Documents 8-01 and 8-02 concerned the case of "Morgan", the orca which had stranded on the coast of the Netherlands in June 2010 and which had been rescued, posing the dilemma of what to do with the animal now that it was recuperated. Folchert van Dijken (Netherlands) expounded on the background to the events and the decisions that had to be

made about Morgan's future. It was not clear whether the whale could fend for itself and it was not known where she had come from, why she had separated from her pod and why she had not been feeding, leading to her dangerously poor state of health. The facility where she was being kept was not ideal and alternative arrangements were being sought.

117. Nicolas Entrup (WDCS) cast doubts on the advice received by the Harderwijk Dolphinarium where Morgan was being kept, saying that it was selective and biased towards keeping the animal in captivity when other viable options were available, such as the multi-stage release plan contained in Doc.8-01. Since the issue was being touched on in the Agreement's Conservation and Management Plan, general guidelines on the handling of live strandings might be useful for Parties. He offered to table a related paper to the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.

118. Maj Munk (Denmark) felt that the case was more related to animal welfare than conservation. She felt that the sooner the animal could be released the better and the longer it remained in captivity the more problems were likely to arise. However, it was for the authorities in the Netherlands to decide. Heikki Lehtinen (Finland) was not clear how ASCOBANS could intervene and doubted whether the case was a priority for the Agreement. Mr Entrup pointed out that stranding incidents and reactions to them were an issue of importance to the Agreement and the incident also raised the question of ownership of a wild animal. Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione (ACCOBAMS) stated that the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and Parties had adopted a clinical triage for stranded animals and guidelines for returning animals to the wild. There had been a bad experience in the Pelagos Sanctuary two years earlier. A workshop was being planned and ASCOBANS would be invited to attend. James Gray (UK) agreed with the points raised by Denmark but congratulated the Netherlands on its efforts to save the animal, recalling the ultimately unsuccessful attempts to rescue a Northern Bottlenose Whale which appeared in the Thames in 2006.

119. It was felt that the agenda for the next meeting of the Advisory Committee would be taken up with preparations for the MOP, but WDCS could, if it so desired, table a paper for consideration and if Parties felt it to be helpful the issue of strandings could be considered during the next triennium.

9. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Science and Conservation Session

120. The Secretariat projected the draft list of Action Points and the meeting adopted them subject to a number of amendments. The full list of all Action Points and Decisions adopted appears pre-fixed to this report.

10. Close of the Session

121. With the business of the Scientific Session concluded, the Chair after thanking all those who had contributed to the smooth running of the meeting, declared the session closed.

11. Opening of the Administrative Session

122. Penina Blankett (Finland, Vice-Chair) declared the evening session open and thanked the Secretariat for providing refreshments and Mark Simmonds (WDCS) for drinks in celebration of the publication of his book 'Whales and Dolphins – on Cognition, Culture, Conservation and Human Perceptions'.

12. Adoption of the Agenda of the Administrative Session

123. The Agenda as set out in Document 1-02 was adopted as presented. No items were proposed for Any Other Business (agenda item 16) and there were no calls for any items to be discussed in closed session.

13. Report of the Secretariat on Finance and Administrative Issues

13.1 Administrative Issues

124. Borja Heredia (Secretariat) introduced Document 13-01. The Secretariat had no major changes to report. Mr Heredia paid tribute to the hard work done by a number of interns over the past year.

13.2 Accounts for 2010

125. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented Document 13-02 stressing that as usual the figures were provisional at this stage of the accounting process. She confirmed that as was customary all Parties had paid their assessed contributions in full. Sophie Mirgaux (Belgium) apologized for the late receipt of her country's contribution caused by an administrative problem at the bank. Ms Frisch highlighted that the accounts showed that some budget lines were slightly overspent, but these were more than offset by underspends on other lines.

126. The German voluntary contribution had been fully spent on information material and a conservation project. The Finnish voluntary contribution had covered the travel costs of an expert attending the Jastarnia Group. Both countries were thanked for this additional support.

127. The accounts were accepted by the Meeting.

128. Sergey Kurdjukov (Secretariat) explained to the meeting a difficulty that had arisen from the fact that UNEP maintained two bank accounts (one in US dollars and the other in Euros) while the official end-of-year accounts were expressed in US dollars. In order to produce consolidated accounts all balances in Euro were converted into US dollars based on UN rate of exchange fixed at 31 December. All losses and gains as a result of this conversion should be apportioned among organizations operating in Euros, based on their actual balances in the bank. However, the UN accounting system did not allow this and UNEP/UNON agreed to make this apportionment based on contributions received over all years.

129. Application of this method resulted in the 6 per cent depreciation of the Euro against the US dollar in 2010 in comparison with 31 December 2009 bringing a loss of 48 per cent of the ASCOBANS fund balance when calculated in US dollars. This made the planning of resources very difficult. For instance, the unspent 2010 balance was US\$119,648, but at present only US\$79,398 (representing the end of year balance of the ASCOBANS fund) were available for re-phasing into 2011.

130. The Secretariat had drawn the attention of UNEP/UNON to this inconsistency and UNON agreed to review in the course of 2011 the whole process of Euro revaluation and apportionment of gains and losses.

131. Maj Munk (Denmark) expressed her disappointment at this revelation, saying that ASCOBANS had converted to the Euro from the US dollar some years before to avoid exchange rate difficulties. Other Parties shared her discontent with this unacceptable reduction in fund balance.

132. Mr Kurdjukov said that UNEP was insisting that CMS readopt the US dollar because UN rules required budgets to be conducted in dollars. The Bonn-based Secretariats had pointed out that the Parties preferred to budget in Euros and the majority of the Secretariats' transactions were in Euros. The UNEP units based in Geneva were now experiencing difficulties because their budgets were conducted in US dollars rather than Swiss francs. He confirmed that the balance was to a large extent dependent on the exchange rate on 31 December, and exchange rate movements might work in the Agreement's favour. The difficulty for ASCOBANS and the other Bonn-based organizations was that the UN accounting system was unable to determine each individual organization's balances within the currency accounts. The Mediterranean Action Plan Secretariat which had been one of the first to adopt the Euro was now facing a deficit of \$3.5 million as a result of the accounting policy.

133. Mr Kurdjukov reassured the meeting that it could confidently allocate the \$79,398 surplus in from the Trust Fund. It was pointed out, however, that approximately \$36,000 of this had already been spent on projects identified at the 17th Meeting of the Advisory Committee.

134. Parties requested the Secretariat to prepare a paper on the merits and demerits of holding a dollar account as opposed to a Euro one for consideration at AC19.

Actions and Decisions

The Secretariat was requested to prepare a paper for the 19th meeting of the Advisory Committee setting out the advantages and disadvantages of a budget prepared in US dollar as opposed to a Euro budget.

The Secretariat would convey the views of the Advisory Committee to UNEP and UNON regarding the treatment of the devaluation of the Euro in the ASCOBANS accounts.

14. Funding of Internal Activities

135. On the basis of the reassurances received from the Secretariat it was agreed to allocate to projects and consultancies the approximately US\$43,000 that were available after rephasal of the 2010 fund balance and deduction of the money already spent on AC17 projects.

14.1 List of Proposals Presented During the Meeting

136. The Vice-Chair summarized that three main proposals were on the table: the funding of the continuation of the contract for coordination of the North Sea Plan after mid-2012, when the German voluntary contribution would be used up; the hiring of a consultant for drafting a document with conservation measures proposed for the gap area between the Jastarnia and North Sea Plans, as requested by the Jastarnia Group; and the funding of the projects with highest priority as decided under item 6.2.

137. After hearing the views of all Parties, the Secretariat presented a summary of the views expressed and their cost implications. After further consideration of the options and in view

of the sums available, the Committee decided that support should be given to the North Sea Coordinator for an additional 6-months of contract, the gap consultancy and, should more funds become available, the conservation projects in the order agreed at the Scientific Session (see agenda item 6.2).

Actions and Decisions

Parties decided that savings from the 2010 budget should be used 1) to extend the contract of the North Sea Coordinator until the end of 2012; 2) to hire a consultant for the development of a draft paper containing background information and proposed objectives for the “gap area” between the coverage of the North Sea and Jastarnia Plans; and 3) if more resources became available to apply them to projects in accordance with the priority list agreed by the Advisory Committee

In liaison with the Jastarnia Group and Baltic Sea National Coordinators, the Secretariat would develop terms of reference for the “gap area” consultancy.

14.2 Continuation of Funding of the North Sea Plan Coordinator

138. This item was discussed with the previous sub-item.

15. Evaluation of the Secretariat Arrangements

139. Folchert van Dijken (Netherlands) reminded the meeting that the merger of the ASCOBANS Secretariat with that of the parent Convention had taken place in 2007. An evaluation in 2008 had indicated that the results were not as Parties had hoped or expected and a Working Group comprising Belgium, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands had been established to evaluate the situation in 2011. The Working Group had sought the views of Parties again through a questionnaire and the report presented as Document 15-01 was based on the responses received.

140. Mr van Dijken summarized the report by saying that Parties were now content and believed that they were receiving value for money from a hard-working Secretariat, which now felt more secure. The benefits had taken some time to come through. It was felt that the needs of Parties could be met with the current Secretariat arrangements and no changes were being proposed.

141. Maj Munk (Denmark) stressed that the Agreement had had a perfectly satisfactory Secretariat before the merger and only now was the merged Secretariat attaining the same level of performance. The period immediately after the merger was unsatisfactory and the transition had not gone at all smoothly. Mr Simmonds (WDCS) expressed the view that given the reduced manpower and resources, the high level of performance of the Secretariat was a significant achievement.

142. Elsa Nickel (Germany) reminded the meeting that the Agreement was operating in unfavourable economic circumstances as evidenced by the stagnant level of voluntary contributions. It was unlikely that any of the CMS family would have their staff contingents increased for some time and the priority should be to contain overheads and dedicate more resources to conservation.

143. Bert Lenten (Secretariat) expressed his satisfaction at the report's verdict that the Secretariat was back on course and performing well.

Actions and Decisions

The Evaluation Report of the Secretariat arrangements would be adopted subject to amendment through a written procedure and the final version would be forwarded to the CMS COP10 as an information document that could be taken into account for the Future Shape process.

The key recommendation was for the Secretariat to facilitate 1) collaboration with fisheries organizations and 2) a closer alignment with EU processes.

16. Any other Administrative Issues

144. There were none.

17. Date and Venue of the 19th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2012

145. The Secretariat asked whether there was any Party willing to host either the 19th Meeting of the Advisory Committee or the 7th Meeting of the Parties, both due in 2012. There were advantages in holding the Advisory Committee back-to-back with the ECS Annual Meeting, which would be held in late March 2012, especially as the venue was Galway, a fishing centre on the West coast of Ireland.

146. The Meeting's preference was for the Advisory Committee to be held in the second half of March before the Easter break, as the holiday period disrupted preparations and internal coordination. The Jastarnia Group would therefore need to meet in January, bearing in mind that they had to finalize the paper on the gap area before the Advisory Committee Meeting.

147. For MOP7, which was planned for autumn 2012, the Secretariat would need to receive offers one year in advance.

Actions and Decisions

Offers to host the 19th Meeting of the Advisory Committee and/or the 7th Meeting of the Parties should be sent to the Secretariat by 1 September 2011.

AC19 would preferably take place before Easter 2012 (second half of March) and the Secretariat would investigate the possibility of holding it back-to-back with the Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society in Galway, Ireland.

18. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Administrative Session

148. The Secretariat projected the draft list and the meeting adopted them subject to a number of amendments. The full list of all Action Points and Decisions adopted appears pre-fixed to this report.

19. Close of Meeting

149. Following the customary expressions of thanks to all those who had contributed to the successful preparation and running of the Meeting, the Chair declared the meeting closed.

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Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
 - 1.1 Adoption of the Agenda of the **Science and Conservation Session**
2. Annual National Reports 2010
3. Accession and Agreement Amendments
4. Priorities in the Implementation of the Triennium Work Plan (2010-2012)
 - 4.1 ASCOBANS Baltic Recovery Plan (Jastarnia Plan)
 - 4.1.1 Implementation
 - 4.1.2 Report and Recommendations of the 7th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group
 - 4.2 ASCOBANS Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea
 - 4.2.1 Implementation
 - 4.2.2 Report of the Coordinators and Working Group
 - 4.3 Review of New Information on Bycatch
 - 4.3.1 Report of the Working Group
 - 4.4 Review of New Information on the Extent of Negative Effects of Sound
 - 4.4.1 Report of the Working Group
 - 4.5 Publicity and Outreach
 - 4.5.1 Report of the Secretariat
 - 4.5.2 Reports of Parties, Range States and Partners
5. Implementation of the Triennium Work Plan (2010-2012) – Other Issues
 - 5.1 Review of New Information on Population Size, Distribution, Structure and Causes of Any Changes
 - 5.2 Review of New Information on Pollution and its Effects
 - 5.2.1 Report of the Joint ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop on Pollution (20 March 2011)
 - 5.3 Review of New Information on the Extent of Negative Effects of Vessels and Other Forms of Disturbance
 - 5.4 Extension of the Work of the Agreement into the new Agreement Area, incl. Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
 - 5.5 Report of the Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans
6. Project Funding through ASCOBANS
 - 6.1 Progress of Supported Projects
 - 6.2 Selection and Prioritization of Projects for Future Support
7. Relations with other Bodies
 - 7.1 Dates of Interest 2011/2012
 - 7.2 Extension of the ACCOBAMS Agreement Area

8. Any other Business
9. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Science and Conservation Session
10. Close of the Session

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11. Opening of the **Administrative Session**
 12. Adoption of the Agenda of the Administrative Session
 13. Report of the Secretariat on Finance and Administrative Issues
 - 13.1 Administrative Issues
 - 13.2 Accounts for 2010
 14. Funding of Internal Activities
 - 14.1 List of Proposals Presented During the Meeting
 - 14.2 Continuation of Funding of North Sea Plan Coordinator
 15. Evaluation of the Secretariat Arrangements
 16. Any other Administrative Issues
 17. Date and Venue of the 19th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2012
 18. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Administrative Session
 19. Close of Meeting

List of Documents

No.	Agenda Item	Document Title	Submitted by	Distributed
Doc.1-01	1.1	Rules of Procedure for the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee	Secretariat	25/01/11
Doc.1-02	1.2 / 12	Provisional Agenda	Secretariat	01/02/11
Doc.1-03	1.2 / 12	Provisional Annotated Agenda	Secretariat	28/04/11
Doc.1-04 rev.1		List of Documents	Secretariat	05/05/11
Doc.2-01	2	Annual National Report Belgium	Belgium	11/04/11
Doc.2-02	2	Annual National Report Denmark	Denmark	04/04/11
Doc.2-03	2	Annual National Report Finland	Finland	11/04/11
Doc.2-04 rev.1	2	Annual National Report France	France	26/04/11
Doc.2-05	2	Annual National Report Germany	Germany	23/02/11
Doc.2-06	2	Annual National Report Lithuania	Lithuania	30/03/11
Doc.2-07	2	Annual National Report Netherlands	Netherlands	27/04/11
Doc.2-08	2	Annual National Report Poland	Poland	21/04/11
Doc.2-09 rev.1	2	Annual National Report Sweden	Sweden	27/04/11
Doc.2-10	2	Annual National Report United Kingdom	United Kingdom	04/04/11
Doc.4-01	4 / 5	ASCOBANS Triennium Work Plan 2010-2012 – Progress and Further Actions	Secretariat	06/04/11
Doc.4-02	4.1	Report of the 7 th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Jastarnia Group	Jastarnia Group	14/04/11
Doc.4-03	4.1	Draft Terms of Reference for an ASCOBANS Baltic Sea Coordinator	Jastarnia Group	11/04/11
Doc.4-04	4.1	Data Form on Fishing Effort	Jastarnia Group	cancelled
Doc.4-05	4.2	Report of the North Sea Group	North Sea Group	15/04/11
Doc.4-06	4.2	Report of the North Sea Coordinators	Consultants / Secretariat	08/04/11
Doc.4-07	4.3	Report of the Bycatch Working Group	Bycatch Working Group	21/04/11
Doc.4-08 rev.1	4.4	Report of the Noise Working Group	Noise Working Group	05/05/11
Doc.4-09	4.5	Report of the Secretariat on Publicity and Outreach Activities	Secretariat	28/03/11

No.	Agenda Item	Document Title	Submitted by	Distributed
Doc.4-10	4.4	Information on Seismic Activities carried out by the United Kingdom in 2010	United Kingdom	15/04/11
Doc.5-01	5.1	Towards Marine Protected Areas for Cetaceans in Scotland, England and Wales	WDCS	05/04/11
Doc.5-02	5.1	The use of ecological tracers for discriminating dolphin population structure: the case of the short-beaked common dolphin <i>Delphinus delphis</i> in European Atlantic waters	France	11/04/11
Doc.5-03	5.2	Report of the ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop on Chemical Pollution and Marine Mammals	ECS / Secretariat	15/04/11
Doc.5-04 rev.1	5.5	Large Cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Agreement Area	Working Group	20/04/11
Doc.5-05	5	Proposed ECS/ASCOBANS Workshop on Implementation of the cetacean component of the Habitats Directive in EU Member States	ECS / Secretariat	18/04/11
Doc.5-06	5.1	Information Request to the Faroe Islands and Response Received	Secretariat	19/04/11
Doc.5-07	5	Governing Marine Protected Areas: Getting the Balance Right	Secretariat	26/04/11
Doc.5-08	5.3	Report of the Joint IWC-ACCOBAMS Workshop on Reducing Risk of Collisions Between Vessels and Cetaceans	Secretariat	26/04/11
Doc.6-01	6.1	Progress of Projects Supported through ASCOBANS	Secretariat	28/03/11
Doc.6-02	6.2	Project Proposals Received for Future Funding	Secretariat	28/02/11
Doc.6-03	6.1	Project Report: Historic and present harbour porpoise populations in the Baltic region – geometric morphometrics analysis	Secretariat / University of Aarhus	30/03/11
Doc.6-04 rev.1	6.1	Project Report: Risk Assessment of Potential Conflicts between Shipping and Cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Region	Secretariat / Sea Watch Foundation	02/05/11
Doc.6-05 rev.1	6.1	Project Report: Review of Trend Analyses in the ASCOBANS Area	Secretariat / Sea Watch Foundation	20/04/11
Doc.6-06	6.1	Tursiops SEAS Project Proposal Progress	United Kingdom	15/04/11
Doc.7-01	7	Reports of Representation of ASCOBANS at Meetings	Secretariat	28/04/11

No.	Agenda Item	Document Title	Submitted by	Distributed
Doc.7-02 rev.1	7.1	Dates of Interest to ASCOBANS in 2011/2012	Secretariat	08/04/11
Doc.7-03	7.2	Extension of the ACCOBAMS Agreement Area	Secretariat	06/04/11
Doc.7-04	7	Proposal for a Joint ACCOBAMS / ASCOBANS Working Group on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive	Secretariat	21/04/11
Doc.7-05	7	Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)	Vice-Chair	27/04/11
Doc.7-06	7	Commission Decision of 1 September 2010 on criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status of marine waters	Vice-Chair	27/04/11
Doc.7-07	7	Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea – HELCOM Initial Holistic Assessment	Vice-Chair	28/04/11
Doc.8-01	8	Suggestions for returning “ <i>Morgan</i> ” the orca (killer whale) to a natural life in the ocean	WDCS	25/03/11
Doc.8-02	8	Why orca Morgan cannot be set free	Netherlands	25/03/11
Doc.13-01 Restricted	13.1	Report on Administrative Issues 2010/2011	Secretariat	25/03/11
Doc.13-02 Restricted	13.2	Report on Budgetary Issues 2010	Secretariat	25/03/11
Doc.15-01 Restricted	15	Preliminary Evaluation of the ASCOBANS Secretariat Arrangements	Evaluation Working Group	28/04/11

Rules of Procedure for the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee

*As amended at the 17th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee
4-6 October 2010, UN Campus, Bonn, Germany*

PART I

DELEGATES, OBSERVERS, SECRETARIAT

Rule 1: Delegates

- (1) A Party to the Agreement (hereafter referred to as a 'Party')¹ shall be entitled to appoint one member of the Advisory Committee (thereafter referred to as a Committee Member) and alternate, when appropriate, who shall represent the Party, and such advisers as the Party may deem necessary.
- (2) Contracting Parties shall submit the names of the Committee Member and the advisers to the Secretariat through their coordinating authorities by the start of the Meeting.
- (3) The voting rights of the Parties shall be exercised by the Committee Member. In the absence of the Committee Member, an adviser may be appointed by the Committee Member to act as a substitute over the full range of the Committee Member's functions.
- (4) The appointed Committee Member or alternate shall be available for consultation inter-sessionally.

Rule 2: Observers

- (1) All non-Party Range States and Regional Economic Integration Organisations bordering on the waters concerned may send observers to the meeting, who shall have the right to participate but not to vote.²
- (2) Any body or individual qualified in cetacean conservation and management may request admittance to plenary sessions of the Advisory Committee. Appropriate written applications for attendance should be received by the Secretariat at least 60 days before any Committee meeting, and circulated to Parties by the Secretariat forthwith. Parties shall inform the Secretariat of their acceptance or rejection of all applications no less than 30 days before that meeting. An applicant shall be permitted to attend as non-voting observer, if two-thirds of the Parties accept their application. Decisions on whether such bodies or individuals may attend Committee meetings should take into account possible seating limitations. Information on limitations of the venue shall be provided to the Secretariat by the host in time for circulation with any applications received.
- (3) Representatives of the Secretariats or technical advisory bodies of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and its daughter Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding, may attend the sessions of the Advisory Committee as observers without the need for an application as outlined in Rule 2(2).

¹ See Agreement, paragraph 1.2, sub-paragraph (e), and paragraphs 8.4 and 8.5. A Party is a Range State or a Regional Economic Integration Organisation which has deposited with the United Nations Headquarters its consent to be bound by the agreement.

² See Agreement, paragraph 6.2.1.

- (4) The Advisory Committee may, as appropriate, invite any other body or individual qualified in cetacean conservation and management to participate in a meeting. Such persons shall not have the right to vote.
- (5) Seating limitations may require that no more than two observers from any non-Party State or body be present at sessions of the Advisory Committee.

Rule 3: Secretariat

Unless otherwise instructed by the Parties, the Secretariat shall service and act as secretariat for the Advisory Committee at its meetings.

PART II OFFICERS

Rule 4: Chairpersons

- (1) The Advisory Committee shall, at its first session, elect a Chairperson from among the Committee Members, and a Vice-chairperson from the Committee Members or their advisers.
- (2) The Chairperson and Vice-chairperson of the Advisory Committee shall hold office until the end of the first meeting of the Advisory Committee following each Meeting of Parties. The Chairperson and Vice-chairperson may be nominated for re-election at the end of a term of office. In the event of the election of a new Chairperson or Vice-chairperson, the Advisory Committee shall elect these persons from among the Committee Members or their advisers.

Rule 5: Presiding Officer

- (1) The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Advisory Committee.
- (2) If the Chairperson is absent or is unable to discharge the duties of Presiding Officer, the Vice-Chairperson shall deputize.
- (3) In the event that both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are absent or unable to discharge the duties of Presiding Officer, the appointed Committee Member of the Party hosting the Meeting shall assume these duties.
- (4) The Presiding Officer may vote.

PART III RULES OF ORDER AND DEBATE

Rule 6: Powers of Presiding Officer

- (1) In addition to exercising powers conferred elsewhere in these Rules, the Presiding Officer shall at Advisory Committee meetings:
 - (a) open and close the sessions;

- (b) direct the discussions;
 - (c) ensure the observance of these Rules;
 - (d) accord the right to speak;
 - (e) put questions to the vote and announce decisions;
 - (f) rule on points of order; and
 - (g) subject to these Rules, have complete control of the proceedings of the Meeting and the maintenance of order.
- (2) The Presiding Officer may, in the course of discussion at a meeting, propose:
- (a) time limits for speakers;
 - (b) limitation of the number of times the members of a delegation or observers from a State which is not a Party or a Regional Economic Integration Organisation, or from any other body, may speak on any subject matter;
 - (c) the closure of the list of speakers;
 - (d) the adjournment or the closure of the debate on the particular subject ~~or question~~ under discussion;
 - (e) the suspension or adjournment of any session; and
 - (f) the establishment of drafting groups on specific issues.

Rule 7: Right to Speak

- (1) The Presiding Officer shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak, with precedence given to the Committee Members.
- (2) A Committee Member, adviser or observer may speak only if called upon by the Presiding Officer, who may call a speaker to order if the remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
- (3) A speaker shall not be interrupted, except on a point of order. The speaker may, however, with the permission of the Presiding Officer, give way during his speech to allow any participant or observer to request elucidation on a particular point in that speech.

Rule 8: Procedural Motions

- (1) During the discussion of any matter, a Committee Member may raise a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately, where possible, decided by the Presiding Officer in accordance with these Rules. A delegate may appeal against any ruling of the Presiding Officer. The appeal shall immediately be put to the vote, and the Presiding Officer's ruling, shall stand unless a majority of the Parties present and voting decide otherwise. A delegate raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion, but only on the point of order.
- (2) The following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the Meeting:
 - (a) to suspend the session;
 - (b) to adjourn the session;
 - (c) to adjourn the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion;
 - (d) to close the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion.

Rule 9: Arrangements for Debate

- (1) The Meeting may, on a proposal by the Presiding Officer or by a Committee Member, limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times anyone may speak on any subject matter. When the debate is subject to such limits, and a speaker has spoken for the allotted time, the Presiding Officer shall call the speaker to order without delay.
- (2) During the course of a debate the Presiding Officer may announce the list of speakers, and, with the consent of the Committee, declare the list closed. The Presiding Officer may, however, accord the right of reply to any individual if a speech delivered after the list has been declared closed makes this desirable.
- (3) During the discussion of any matter, a Committee Member may move the adjournment of the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, a Committee Member may speak in favour of, and a Committee Member of each of two Parties may speak against the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this Rule.
- (4) A Committee Member may at any time move the closure of the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion, whether or not any other individual has signified the wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion for closure of the debate shall be accorded only to a Committee Member from each of two Parties wishing to speak against the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this Rule.
- (5) During the discussion of any matter a Committee Member may move the suspension or the adjournment of the session. Such motions shall not be debated but shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time allowed to the speaker moving the suspension or adjournment of the session.

PART IV

VOTING

Rule 10: Methods of Voting

- (1) Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 1, Paragraph 2, each Committee Member duly accredited according to Rule 3 shall have one vote.
- (2) The Committee shall normally vote by show of hands at a meeting, but any Committee Member may request a roll-call vote. In the event of a vote during an inter-sessional period, there will be a postal ballot, which may include ballot by email or fax.
- (3) At the election of officers, any Committee Member may request a secret ballot. If seconded, the question of whether a secret ballot should be held shall immediately be voted upon. The motion for a secret ballot may not be conducted by secret ballot.
- (4) Voting by roll-call or by secret ballot shall be expressed by "Yes", "No" or "Abstain". Only affirmative and negative votes shall be counted in calculating, the number of votes cast by Committee Members present and voting.
- (5) If votes are equal, the motion or amendment shall not be carried.

- (6) The Presiding Officer shall be responsible for the counting of the votes and shall announce the result. The Presiding Officer may be assisted by the Secretariat. Inter-sessional voting by postal ballot, email or fax will be co-ordinated by the Secretariat.
- (7) After the Presiding Officer has announced the beginning of the vote, it shall not be interrupted except by a Committee Member on point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. The Presiding, Officer may permit Committee Members to explain their votes either before or after the voting, and may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations.

Rule 11: Majority and voting procedures on motions and amendments

- (1) All votes on procedural matters relating to the forwarding of the business of the meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of Parties.
- (2) Financial decisions within the limit of the power available to the Advisory Committee shall be decided by three-quarter majority among those Parties present and voting.
- (3) Amendments to the Rules of Procedure require a three-quarter majority among those present and voting.
- (4) All other decisions shall be taken by simple majority among Parties present and voting.
- (5) When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. If the amendment is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.

PART V LANGUAGES AND RECORDS

Rule 12: Working Language

English shall normally be the working language of any Advisory Committee meeting and working groups.

Rule 13: Other Languages

- (1) An individual may speak in a language other than English at meetings, provided he/she furnishes interpretation into English.
- (2) Any document submitted to a meeting shall be in English.

Rule 14: Summary Records

Summary records of Committee meetings shall be kept by the Secretariat and shall be circulated to all Parties in English.

PART VI OPENNESS OF DEBATES

Rule 15: Committee meetings

All sessions of meetings shall be closed to the public.

Rule 16: Sessions of the Working Groups

As a general rule, sessions of working groups shall be limited to the Committee Members, their advisers and to observers invited by the Chairs of working groups.

PART VII WORKING GROUPS

Rule 17: Establishment of Working Groups

- (1) The Advisory Committee may establish working groups as may be necessary to enable it to carry out its functions. It shall define their terms of reference. The Advisory Committee as well as the working groups may nominate members of each working group, the size of which may be limited according to the number of places available in assembly rooms.
- (2) The working group can appoint committee members, advisers as well as observers as its Chair and Vice-Chair.

Rule 18: Procedure

Insofar as they are applicable, these Rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of working groups.

PART VIII FINAL PROVISIONS

Rule 19: Omissions

In matters not covered by the present Rules, the Rules of Procedure as adopted by the last regular Meeting of the Parties shall be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

Rule 20: Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

- (1) The Committee shall, by three-quarter majority, establish its own Rules of Procedure.
- (2) These Rules shall come into force on adoption by the Committee by three-quarter majority, and may be amended by the Committee as required. They will remain in force until and unless an amendment is called for and adopted.

ASCOBANS Triennium Work Plan 2010-2012 – Progress and Further Actions

ACTIVITY TRIENNium WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
Conservation Issues					
1. Review annually and as far as possible in conjunction with EU, ICES and IWC, new information on bycatch and make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action. This should include information provided by Parties and Range States on the implementation, efficacy and impacts of measures introduced to <u>reduce</u> bycatch, and on effort in relevant fisheries	AC (supported by Secretariat)	Annually	Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper	Global CMS study on effects of bycatch in gillnets on migratory species and mitigation measures under way; final report due in September 2011 Bycatch Working Group reported to AC18 (Doc.4-07) New Terms of Reference for the Bycatch Working Group adopted (Annex 7 of AC18 Report)	Working Group to report to AC19
2. Continue to review annually new information on pollution and its effects on small cetaceans that occur in the ASCOBANS area and, on the basis of this review, provide recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities	AC	Annually		Pollution Review 2011 Annex 9 of AC18 Report Joint ECS/ ASCOBANS/ ACCOBAMS Workshop on Pollution and Marine Mammals held on 20 March 2011	Pollution Review 2012 will be presented to AC19 WDCS to present background document on impact of marine debris on cetaceans to AC19

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
<p>3. Continue to review the extent of negative effects of sound, vessels and other forms of disturbance on small cetaceans and to review relevant technological developments and best practices with a view to developing guidelines which Parties may use to reduce disturbance by noise</p>	<p>AC (supported by Secretariat)</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper</p>	<p>Meeting between the chairs of the ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS noise working groups and the Secretariat in March 2011; possible joint actions of the working groups agreed Noise Working Group reported to AC18 (Doc.4-08) AC18 endorsed joint activities of ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS noise working groups Revised Terms of Reference for Noise Working Group adopted at AC18 (Annex 8 of AC18 Report) Map showing areas of high risk of ship strikes prepared by Peter Evans (AC18/Doc.6-04)</p>	<p>Noise Working Group to report on progress to AC19 ASCOBANS to assist in facilitating requests for shipping data as needed</p>

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
<p>4. Review new information, as far as possible in co-operation with EU, ICES and IWC, on cetacean population size, distribution, structure, and causes of any changes in the ASCOBANS area and based on implications for conservation to make appropriate recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities</p>	AC	Annually		<p>Secretariat wrote to the authorities of the Faroe Islands regarding the whale hunt (see AC18/Doc.5-06)</p> <p>Tabular summary of the results of various trend analyses in strandings, sightings and bycatch prepared by Peter Evans (AC18/Doc.6-05)</p>	<p>AC to investigate actual and potential effects of climate change distribution shifts</p> <p>Secretariat to write to Faroe Islands again to seek response to outstanding items and contact NAMMCO</p> <p>Joint workshop on population structure to be held with ACCOBAMS at the 2012 ECS Conference</p> <p>AC19 to include item on management of MPAs; WDCCS and Sea Watch to table related paper</p>

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
5. Continue to evaluate progress in the implementation of the Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan), establish further implementation priorities, carry out the periodic review of the Plan and promote the implementation of the Plan	Jastarnia Group (supported by the Secretariat)	Annually	Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper	7 th Jastarnia Group meeting held in February 2011 (AC18/Doc.4-02) SAMBAH (Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise) project (2010-2014) with support from Baltic Sea Parties and EU Terms of Reference for Baltic Coordinator endorsed (Annex 6 of AC18 Report)	
6. Review the effectiveness of the ASCOBANS Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises in 2011. Jastarnia Group to draft revision of plan if necessary for AC preceding the MoP7 *	Independent reviewer (e.g. R. Reeves) / Jastarnia Group	2011		Commissioning of external consultant to develop draft paper containing background information and proposed objectives for the “gap area” endorsed by AC18	Jastarnia Group to identify measures geared to the situation of harbour porpoises in the area west of the Darss-Limhamn Ridge by AC19 Secretariat to develop ToR for consultant in liaison with Jastarnia Group and Baltic Sea National Coordinators and hire consultant

ACTIVITY TRIENNium WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
<p>7. Incorporate the implications arising from the conclusions of the ASCOBANS/HELCOM Small Cetacean Population Structure Workshops in the development of the Jastarnia and North Sea harbour porpoise action plans and potentially other actions (to be elaborated by the Advisory Committee), taking particular note of the fact that the western Baltic, Inner Danish Waters and Kattegat areas are at present not covered by either plan</p>	AC	AC17		<p>6th Jastarnia Group meeting made recommendation (AC17/Doc.4-01 and AC17/Doc.5-07) 7th Jastarnia Group meeting considered matter further (AC18/Doc.4-02) Commissioning of external consultant to develop draft paper containing background information and proposed objectives for the “gap area” endorsed by AC18</p>	<p>Jastarnia Group to identify measures geared to the situation of harbour porpoises in the area west of the Darss-Limhamn Ridge by AC19 Secretariat to develop ToR for consultant in liaison with Jastarnia Group and Baltic Sea National Coordinators and hire consultant</p>

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
<p>8. Promote and coordinate the implementation of the Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea, gather information on its implementation and the results obtained, inform the public and evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan every three years to update it*</p>	<p>Coordinator/Steering Group (supported by the Secretariat)</p>	<p>Throughout the triennium</p>	<p>Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper</p>	<p>Interim Coordinators contracted in October 2009. Final report contained in AC18/Doc.4-06 North Sea Group established at AC17 (ToR in Annex 8 of AC17 Report); progress report contained in AC18/Doc.4-05 North Sea Plan Coordinator consultancy advertised in March 2011; deadline for applications 15 April; North Sea Group provided advice for selection</p>	<p>Coordinators and North Sea Group to report to AC18 Secretariat to conclude 18-months contract with consultant (mid-2011 until end 2012)</p>

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
9. Continue to consider how the work of ASCOBANS should be extended to take account of the new Agreement Area, which includes areas beyond national jurisdiction	AC (supported by Secretariat)	Throughout the triennium			Joint workshop with ECS and ACCOBAMS on implementation of the cetacean components of the Habitats Directive to be held at 2012 ECS Conference (see AC18/Doc.5-05) Intersessional Working Group under leadership of Peter Evans to prepare paper on research and conservation actions in extension area for AC19
10. Promote an informal Working Group of the Advisory Committee which shall summarise information on large cetaceans in the Agreement area and address aspects of their conservation (in accordance with the Terms of Reference proposed by MOP6 for this group)	AC	Throughout the triennium		Informal Working Group established at AC17 First report of Working Group AC18/Doc.5-04	WG to report to AC19

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
11. Review progress of bottlenose dolphin project (TURSIOPS SEAs) and guide as required	AC, led by UK			Progress report contained in AC17/Doc.6-04	Update to be given to AC19
ASCOBANS Meetings and Workshops					
12. Ensure the annual cycle of Advisory Committee Meetings, with papers circulated one month in advance of the meetings	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.2	All Secretariat documents available in time for AC18	Parties to consider hosting AC19 – deadline for offers 1 September 2011
13. Seek to secure a host for the 7 th Meeting of Parties at least a year in advance of the meeting; otherwise arrange for it to be held in Bonn	Secretariat	2011	Article 4.2		Secretariat to make official call for hosts in mid-2011 Parties to consider hosting – deadline for offers 1 September 2011
14. Organize meetings of regional working groups (Jastarnia Group, North Sea Group) at intervals defined in each group's ToR *	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2	7 th Jastarnia Group meeting held in February 2011	8 th Jastarnia Group meeting to be held in January 2012

* Activities marked with an asterisk may require additional funding

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
15. If required by AC, organize a workshop, e.g. at an annual conference of the ECS, on a topic of priority interest to ASCOBANS *	Secretariat	During triennium	1. Habitat Conservation and Management	Joint ECS/ ASCOBANS/ ACCOBAMS Workshop on Pollution and Marine Mammals held on 20 March 2011 (AC18/Doc.5-01)	Joint workshop with ECS and ACCOBAMS on implementation of the cetacean components of the Habitats Directive to be held at 2012 ECS Conference (see AC18/Doc.5-05) Joint workshop on population structure to be held with ACCOBAMS at the 2012 ECS Conference

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
<p>16. In conjunction with the European Cetacean Society and North Sea Foundation, organize one or more meetings to develop a constructive dialogue with the fisheries sector in the ASCOBANS area, in order to aid the Parties to progress bycatch mitigation measures in an effective manner. The first meeting is proposed to take place at the Annual Conference of the ECS in Stralsund in March 2010. To initiate the process, an intersessional Steering Group under the Advisory Committee Chair shall be established between MOP6 and AC17</p>	<p>AC (supported by Secretariat)</p>	<p>Throughout the triennium</p>	<p>Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper</p>	<p>Intersessional Steering Group established Bycatch Workshop held on 20 March 2010 Bycatch Working Group reported to AC18 (Doc.4-07) New Terms of Reference for the Bycatch Working Group adopted (Annex 7 of AC18 Report) Chair of Bycatch Working Group attended North Sea RAC Meeting in October 2010 (see AC18/Doc.7-01)</p>	<p>ASCOBANS representatives to be sent to RACs and similar fisheries meetings; Parties to provide funding Working Group to report to AC19</p>
<p>17. Propose priorities for the coming triennium (2013-2015)</p>	<p>AC</p>	<p>2012</p>			

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
Budgetary and Administrative Issues					
18. Report on budgetary and administrative issues to each meeting of the Advisory Committee	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.2	AC18/Doc.13-01 AC18/Doc.13-02 AC17 decided to discontinue budget outlines of the running year	Continue mid-year report to Parties Secretariat to prepare a paper on advantages and disadvantages of a Euro vs. a Dollar budget for AC19
19. Present a draft budget for the next triennium for consideration at an Advisory Committee meeting at least six months prior to the next Meeting of Parties	Secretariat / AC	2012	Article 4.1, 4.2		
20. Prepare draft resolutions on budgetary and administrative issues for consideration at the last meeting of the Advisory Committee prior to MoP7	Secretariat / AC	2012	Article 4.1, 4.2		

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
21. Encourage Parties and partner organizations to provide voluntary contributions for projects prioritised by the AC or outreach initiatives	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1	Facilitated co-funding of pinger project (Annex 2 to AC17/6-02 rev.1) through Friends of CMS Project proposals prioritised at AC18	Parties to make voluntary contributions, e.g. for the continuation of the North Sea Coordinator consultancy after 2012
22. Assist in developing funding arrangements for projects covering themes prioritised by the Advisory Committee (see task 15) and Meeting of Parties	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1	Funding agreements for 6 projects concluded since AC17 (see AC18/Doc.6-01) Process for ranking project proposals adopted at AC18	
Communication, Education and Public Awareness					
23. Develop a co-ordinated outreach programme, focussing particularly on activities that can help achieve the aims of ASCOBANS*	Secretariat/AC	2010	Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper	CEPA Plan adopted (Annex 11 of AC17 Report)	Parties to develop national material for outreach to fishermen Secretariat to use material from draft fisheries leaflet for further development of website (AC17/Doc.4-03)

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
24. Report on outreach and communication issues to each meeting of the Advisory Committee	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.2	AC18/Doc.4-09	
25. Develop and implement CEPA to raise awareness of issues related to cetacean conservation in the Agreement Area*	Secretariat / Parties and observers	Throughout the triennium	5. Information and education	CEPA Plan adopted (Annex 11 of AC17 Report) Financial provision for planning of publication and/or events marking the 20 th anniversary of ASCOBANS in 2012 made through German voluntary contribution 2011	Secretariat to circulate proposal for anniversary publication Parties to give guidance on desired commemoration of the 20 th anniversary Parties to support related activities with voluntary contributions

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
26. Continue to update and translate ASCOBANS information material into the languages of both Party and non-Party Range States*	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	5. Information and education	Revised ASCOBANS leaflet available in all languages of the Agreement Area; reprints in selected languages underway German language exhibition produced in 2 sets New website contains basic information in all languages of the Agreement Area	Development/ finalization of further language versions of the exhibition; Parties to support with voluntary contributions
27. Continue to develop the ASCOBANS website, aiming to meet the needs of a wide range of target audiences and including educational material*	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	5. Information and education	New website online at www.ascobans.info to gather comments from Parties and partners; includes extended and new sections Plans for further enhancement outlined in AC18/Doc.4-09	Parties to provide comments by 20 June 2011 Secretariat to incorporate comments and finalize new website; relocate to www.ascobans.org Develop section with information for fishermen

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
28. Collaborate with partner organizations to develop joint actions in educational and promotional activities, and create synergy to provide added value while avoiding duplication of effort	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	5. Information and education	Joint ASCOBANS/SAMBAH leaflet has been produced in all project languages funded through German voluntary contribution 2010	
29. Assess the need for targeted information material on conservation issues facing small cetaceans in the region in consultation with Parties and appropriate other bodies, and develop material as necessary in close cooperation with these partners *	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	5. Information and education	Related recommendations made in AC17/Doc.4-03	

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
Cooperation with other Organizations					
30. Identify priorities and improve co-operation between ASCOBANS and the European Union institutions	AC / Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2, Proposed strategic priority in the Strategy paper	ASCOBANS representation at the ongoing DG-ENV process to determine “good environmental status” as goal of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive	Mission of Acting Executive Secretary to Brussels in 2011 Joint workshop with ECS and ACCOBAMS on implementation of the cetacean components of the Habitats Directive to be held at 2012 ECS Conference (see AC18/Doc.5-05)
31. Ensure close collaboration with the Secretariats of CMS and other CMS Regional Agreements on all issues of mutual interest, and contribute to the process of defining the future shape of CMS	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2	Ongoing The Parties’ position regarding the proposed extension of the ACCOBAMS Area presented at ACCOBAMS MOP4 Secretariat represented at ACCOBAMS SC7 (see AC18/Doc.7-01) Secretariat represented at Meetings of the ISWGoFS	Examine the feasibility of a joint CMS Family workshop on a subject of common interest such as bycatch ASCOBANS to join in ACCOBAMS working group on Marine Strategy Framework Directive (see AC18/Doc.7-04)

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
32. Seek to cooperate with the HELCOM Secretariat in the creation and maintenance of a joint Baltic harbour porpoise database as part of HELCOM's online information system *	Jastarnia Group / Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2	Project concluded; system online (final report contained in AC17/Doc.6-01 rev.1)	Parties to ensure relevant data is reported to HELCOM
33. Continue to invite intergovernmental bodies such as IWC, ICES, CMS, HELCOM, NAMMCO, OSPAR, ACCOBAMS, the European Commission and other relevant international organizations to send representatives to Advisory Committee meetings	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.1, 4.2	Invitations and reminders sent for AC18	ASCOBANS representatives to be sent to RACs and similar fisheries meetings; Parties to provide funding
34. Ensure that the chairs of the Advisory Committee receive invitations to meetings of CMS and other CMS Regional Agreements	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2	Contact details included in CMS database	

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
35. Explore the possibilities of further developing positive relationships with other stakeholders, especially the fishing industry and Regional Advisory Councils	AC / Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2	Bycatch Workshop held on 20 March 2010 Chair of Bycatch Working Group attended North Sea RAC Meeting in October 2010 (see AC18/Doc.7-01)	ASCOBANS representatives to be sent to RACs and similar fisheries meetings; Parties to provide funding
36. Compile for each meeting of the Advisory Committee a list of Dates of Interest	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.1, 4.2	AC18/Doc.7-02	Representatives to report back to AC19
37. Insofar as budgetary provisions and guidance by the Advisory Committee allow for it, ensure proper representation at an appropriate level at meetings of other relevant organizations *	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1	Reports of representatives of ASCOBANS at meetings contained in AC18/Doc.7-01	
38. Continue and improve effective communication with non-governmental and international organizations, such as OSPAR, HELCOM, ICES, ACCOBAMS, CBD and IWC	Secretariat / AC	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1, 4.2	Ongoing Secretariat represented at MOP4 and SC7 of ACCOBAMS; areas for joint work identified and endorsed by AC18	ASCOBANS representatives to be sent to RACs and similar fisheries meetings; Parties to provide funding

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
Institutional Issues					
39. Promote the Agreement and its aims in Parties, Range States and with other relevant players *	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1	Ongoing	ASCOBANS representatives to be sent to RACs and similar fisheries meetings; Parties to provide funding
40. Promote accession of non-Party Range States and the European Commission to the Agreement	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1	Facilitated participation of ASCOBANS in 2010 Treaty Event of the UN Secretary General	Mission of Acting Executive Secretary to Brussels in 2011
41. Present to Parties, each year no later than 30 June, provided all reports have been received by that date, a compilation of Annual National Reports	Secretariat	Annually	Article 4.2	Compilation published as soon as possible after receipt of last report	
42. Present to the Meeting of Parties a summary of, <i>inter alia</i> , progress made and difficulties encountered since the last Meeting of Parties	Secretariat	2012	Article 4.3		

ACTIVITY TRIENNIUM WORK PLAN 2010-2012	ACTION BY	TIMING	LINKS TO AGREEMENT, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY PAPER	PROGRESS MADE	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
43. Support Parties, Range States and Agreement bodies in implementing this Work Plan, in so far as primary responsibility does not lie with the Secretariat	Secretariat	Throughout the triennium	Article 4.1	Ongoing	

Terms of Reference for an ASCOBANS Baltic Sea Coordinator

1. Background

As outlined in the ASCOBANS Recovery Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea, "Experience has shown that in order to be effective, Conservation Plans must have a recognised, full-time co-ordinator. This is particularly true where effective conservation requires action (including legislative action) by a number of stakeholders including: intergovernmental and national authorities, scientists from several disciplines, representatives from industry, local communities, and interested NGOs. The scale of work required by this Plan exceeds the resources available within the (part-time) ASCOBANS Secretariat."

This is equally true with respect to the Baltic Sea area and its highly demanding Jastarnia Plan. An ASCOBANS Baltic Sea Coordinator should therefore be appointed.

2. Terms of Reference

a) Qualifications

The coordinator should have a background in marine nature conservation as well as experience and a proven understanding of the political and legal context. Knowledge of fisheries and of scientific issues concerning harbour porpoise conservation in the Baltic Sea is also required. He or she should be an effective communicator, able to establish and maintain relations with and to represent ASCOBANS positions vis-à-vis the various stakeholders.

The coordinator could either be a staff member of an appropriate institution based in a Baltic Sea Party to ASCOBANS or an experienced individual.

b) Tasks

Reporting to the Jastarnia Group, the ASCOBANS Baltic Sea Coordinator would, in particular, have to perform the following tasks:

- Promote and explain the Jastarnia Plan to relevant stakeholders, including:
 - International and supranational bodies
 - Range states
 - Appropriate local authorities in cooperation with the ASCOBANS National Coordinators
 - NGOs
 - Appropriate industries

Where needed and appropriate, this would include participation in the meetings of relevant bodies and other events.

- Provide advice on appropriate funding mechanisms and support fundraising efforts.
- Document and collate in cooperation with the ASCOBANS National Coordinators existing international and national regulations and guidelines that are relevant to the conservation and management of harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea and to provide this collation to all stakeholders.

It is expected that the Coordinator would require an initial one month phase of full time work and the work would then average 2.5 days per week.

Terms of Reference for the ASCOBANS Bycatch Working Group

The group will work intersessionally with the provisional tasks listed below; these can be fine-tuned by the group itself where deemed necessary. A report will be submitted to the next AC meeting. For bycatch problems related to the harbour porpoise, the group should coordinate its activities closely with other working groups within ASCOBANS.

Tasks:

- To report on, and assist in, projects related to bycatch in which fishermen, gear technologists and cetacean scientists cooperate.
- To assess the best approaches to address the bycatch problem within fisheries fora.
- To identify relevant fisheries fora meetings where an ASCOBANS representation would be useful, and promote input as appropriate.
- To develop active ASCOBANS involvement at relevant RAC and other meetings, and report back from such meetings.
- To report on national initiatives concerning bycatch mitigation, alternative gear experiments, improvement of bycatch monitoring, etc.
- To report results of scientific studies on bycatch.
- To summarize the results of initiatives at, or meetings of other fora such as OSPAR, EC, ICES and HELCOM.
- To prepare an overview of problem areas (geographical and fishery type) and the status of knowledge of the problem, monitoring and mitigation in place to identify gaps.

Terms of Reference for the ASCOBANS Noise Working Group

This will be an intersessional correspondence group that will work using email unless other opportunities arise.

The Noise Working Group will report back to each meeting of the Advisory Committee on:

- i. Relevant activities and developments including in other international bodies (e.g. ACCOBAMS, HELCOM, OSPAR and IMO) and under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive;
- ii. Relevant developments and new literature especially with respect to
 - a) Technologies aimed at mitigating the propagation of marine noise;
 - b) Noise sources that may present a threat to small cetaceans;
- iii. Joint initiatives on noise and disturbance with ACCOBAMS:
 - a) Focal points of ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS will be asked to provide information about mitigation measures on seismic surveys and shipping as well as military sonar operation.
 - b) Drafting of summaries of the ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS noise guidelines for specific stakeholders, which should be applicable for the stakeholders (i.e. avoid unrealistic demands) and science-based; to be done by “task managers” of each topic (renewable energy, military, seismic surveys, shipping) in consultation with stakeholders, then to be sent to joint working group for comments
 - c) Development of pilot projects for testing the implementation of the noise guidelines and when necessary refinement
- iv. Initiating joint initiatives on noise and disturbance with OSPAR
- v. Potential terms of reference for a report (or reports) that might
 - d) Examine ways in which ASCOBANS can assist Parties in meeting the requirements of the relevant European Directives (i.e. the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive) and other bodies that countries have elected to adhere to which are concerned with marine noise; and
 - e) Provide Parties with information about mitigating technologies and management measures, and their effectiveness and cost.
- vi. Update the assessment of the implementation by Parties of the different aspects of the Resolution No. 2 on adverse effects of underwater noise on marine mammals during offshore construction activities for renewable energy production, as adopted at the 6th Meeting of the Parties of ASCOBANS.

ASCOBANS Chemical Pollution Annual Review Results 2011

HELCOM, 2010. Hazardous Substances in the Baltic Sea – An Integrated thematic assessment of hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea. Sea Environ. Proc. No. 1208. 116 Pages

Available at: <http://www.helcom.fi/stc/files/Publications/Proceedings/bsep120B.pdf>

The natural marine environment of the Baltic Sea is susceptible to pollution by hazardous substances because natural features such as water residence times of around 30 years, shallowness, and the large catchment area predispose the Baltic Sea to the accumulation and effects of hazardous substances. The number of species inhabiting the Baltic Sea is low and the brackish water increases the natural physiological stress that many of these species, with a marine or freshwater origin, experience even in the absence of hazardous substances.

Marine Litter: A Global Challenge. UNEP Regional Seas Report. 232 pages

Meith, N. 2009 (editor).

Available at: http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/marinelitter/publications/docs/Marine_Litter_A_Global_Challenge.pdf

Marine litter is an environmental, economic, human health and aesthetic problem. It poses a complex and multi-dimensional challenge with significant implications for the marine and coastal environment and human activities all over the world. These impacts are both cultural and multi-sectoral, rooted primarily in poor practices of solid waste management, a lack of infrastructure, various human activities, an inadequate understanding on the part of the public of the potential consequences of their actions, the lack of adequate legal and enforcement systems and a lack of financial resources. Marine litter is found in all the oceans of the world, not only in densely populated regions, but also in remote areas far from obvious sources and human contact. Every year marine litter takes an enormous social and economic toll on people and communities around the world. The persistence of marine litter is the result of a lack of coordinated global and regional strategies and of deficiencies in the implementation and enforcement of existing programmes, regulations and standards at all levels – international, regional and national. A review from different regions is presented.

An Experimental Oil Spill at Sea

C. P. D. Brussaard, L. Peperzak, Y. Witte and J. Huisman

Handbook of Hydrocarbon and Lipid Microbiology 2010, Part 31, 3491-3502

Netherlands response authorities were allowed to execute an experimental oil spill for study and training purposes. In collaboration with the EU research project Fast Advanced Cellular and Ecosystems Information Technologies (FACEiT), which main goal is to better predict the biological effects of oil pollution disasters, an experimental oil spill was planned and executed in May 2008 in the Netherlands Exclusive Economic Zone. FACEiT studied the impact of the toxic oil components in the water accommodated fraction (WAF) on the unicellular algal (phytoplankton) and bacterial community, as well as tested and validated newly developed bioassays and measurements tools. The present chapter presents a strategy protocol for a fruitful and effective collaboration of scientist with responders performing an experimental oil spill in the field.

Organic Pollutants in Coastal Waters, Sediments, and Biota: A Relevant Driver for Ecosystems During the Anthropocene?

Jordi Dachs and Laurence Méjanelle

Estuaries and Coasts (2010) 33: 1–14

Influence of chemical weapons and warfare agents on the metal contents in sediments in the Bornholm Basin, the Baltic Sea

Emelyan Emelyanov, Victor Kravtsov, Yuri Savin, Vadim Paka, Ildus Khalikov

BALTICA (December 2010) 23(2): 77-90

Large quantities of German trophy chemical weapons (CW)¹ were dumped after World War II in

the Bornholm Deep of the Baltic Sea. The data obtained indicate that an increased concentration of arsenic (111-277 mg/kg) in the mud of the dumpsite area is related to the chemical warfare agents, where the corrosion processes of chemical munitions and leakage of arsenic-containing agents are happening. The arsenic contamination is of local character and is not regarded hazardous for the environment. In most of the sediment samples outside the chemical weapons dumping area the contents of all the studied elements are in levels of background concentrations. The prognosis for further degradation from chemical weapons should exclude catastrophic scenarios.

Framing Environmental Risks in the Baltic Sea: A News Media Analysis

Anna Maria Jönsson

AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment (2011) 40(2): 121-132

Scientific complexity and uncertainty is a key challenge for environmental risk governance and to understand how risks are framed and communicated is of utmost importance. The Baltic Sea ecosystem is stressed and exposed to different risks like eutrophication, overfishing, and hazardous chemicals. Based on an analysis of the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter, this study discusses media representations of these risks. The results show that the reporting on the Baltic Sea has been fairly stable since the beginning of the 1990s. Many articles acknowledge several risks, but eutrophication receives the most attention and is also considered the biggest threat. Authorities, experts, organizations, and politicians are the dominating actors, while citizens and industry representatives are more or less invisible. Eutrophication is not framed in terms of uncertainty concerning the risk and consequences, but rather in terms of main causes.

First health and pollution study on harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) living in the German Elbe estuary

Antje Kakuschke, Elizabeth Valentine-Thon, Simone Griesel, Juergen Gandrass, Octavio Perez Luzardo, Luis Dominguez Boada, Manuel Zumbado Peña, Maira Almeida González, Mechthild Grebe, Daniel Pröfrock, Hans-Burkhard Erbsloeh, Katharina Kramer, Sonja Fonfara and Andreas Prange

Marine Pollution Bulletin (November 2010) 60(11): 2079-2086

Therefore, a first-ever seal catch was organized next to the islands of Neuwerk and Scharhörn in the region of the Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park. The investigations included a broad set of health parameters and the analysis of metals and organic pollutants in blood samples. Compared to animals of other Wadden Sea areas, the seals showed higher γ -globulin levels, suggesting higher concentrations of pathogens in this near-urban

area, elevated concentrations for several metals in particular for V, Sn, Pb, and Sr, and comparable ranges for chlorinated organic contaminants, except for elevated levels of hexachlorobenzene, which indicates characteristic inputs from the Elbe.

Governance of Complex Socio-Environmental Risks: The Case of Hazardous Chemicals in the Baltic Sea

Mikael Karlsson, Michael Gilek and Oksana Udovyk

AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment (2011) 40(2): 144-157

Occurrence of perfluorinated organic acids in the North and Baltic seas. Part 1: distribution in sea water

Norbert Theobald, Christina Caliebe, Wolfgang Gerwinski, Heinrich Hühnerfuss and Peter Lepom

Environmental Science and Pollution Research, Article in Press

The observed concentration distribution and gradients were explained by oceanographic mixing processes and currents. The big rivers were identified as major input sources. At the mouth of the river Elbe, concentrations of 9 ng/L were observed for perfluorooctanoate (PFOA), and 8 ng/L for perfluorooctylsulfonate (PFOS); all other PFC concentrations ranged from 0.6 to 1.7 ng/L. At coastal stations, concentrations decreased to 3.8 ng/L (PFOA) and 1.8 ng/L (PFOS), dropping to 0.13 and 0.09 ng/L, respectively, towards the open sea. Along the Dutch coast, high perfluorobutylsulfonate concentrations (3.9 ng/L) were observed as regional characteristics. In the Baltic Sea, fairly even PFC distributions with low gradients were observed. Again, PFOA and PFOS were the major compounds (up to 1.1 and 0.9 ng/L).

The results underline the necessity to include PFCs in marine monitoring programs. Water was found to be a good matrix for monitoring environmental levels, sources, and transport pathways of PFCs.

Political parties and marine pollution policy: Exploring the case of Germany

Jale Tosun

Marine Policy (July 2011) 35(4): 536-541

Persistent organic pollutants and methoxylated PBDEs in harbour porpoises from the North Sea from 1990 until 2008: Young wildlife at risk?

Liesbeth Weijs, Cornelis van Elk, Krishna Das, Ronny Blust and Adrian Covaci

Science of The Total Environment (01 December 2010) 409(1): 228-237

In the European North Sea, harbour porpoises are top predators with relatively long life spans and a limited capacity for metabolic biotransformation of contaminants compared to some other marine mammal species. As such, they are exposed to a mixture of persistent pollutants, such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), DDT and metabolites (DDXs), hexachlorobenzene (HCB) and chlordanes (CHLs) that bioaccumulate in their tissues. We report here on the levels of persistent organic pollutants and of the naturally-produced methoxylated PBDEs (MeO-PBDEs) in blubber, liver and kidney of harbour porpoise neonates (n = 3), calves (n = 15), juveniles (n = 6) and adults (n = 4) of the southern North Sea. Concentrations of almost all contaminant classes decrease slightly in all age groups over the period 1990–2008. For some classes (e.g. PCBs

and DDXs) however, levels seem to increase little in harbour porpoise calves. In all animals, blubber had the highest concentrations, followed by liver and kidney, whereas liver and kidney were the preferred tissues for several compounds, such as octa- and deca-PCBs.

Our data suggest that harbour porpoises calves are exposed to higher or comparable concentrations of POPs and of MeO-PBDEs and somewhat different patterns of selected POPs than adults, potentially placing them, and the entire population, at a disproportionate risk for exposure-related health effects.

Early microbial biofilm formation on marine plastic debris

Delphine Lobelle and Michael Cunliffe

Marine Pollution Bulletin 62: (1) 197 – 200

An important aspect of the global problem of plastic debris pollution is plastic buoyancy. There is some evidence that buoyancy is influenced by attached biofilms but as yet this is poorly understood. We submerged polyethylene plastic in seawater and sampled weekly for 3 weeks in order to study early stage processes. Microbial biofilms developed rapidly on the plastic and coincided with significant changes in the physicochemical properties of the plastic. Submerged plastic became less hydrophobic and more neutrally buoyant during the experiment. Bacteria readily colonised the plastic but there was no indication that plastic-degrading microorganisms were present. This study contributes to improved understanding of the fate of plastic debris in the marine environment.

Dates of Interest to ASCOBANS in 2011/2012

Date	Organizer	Title	Venue	Participation/Report
10/05/11	European Commission DG Environment	Fourth meeting of the Marine Strategy Coordination Group (MSCG) (http://circa.europa.eu)	Brussels, Belgium	
14-18/05/11	Society for Conservation Biology & George Mason University	2 nd International Marine Conservation Congress: "Making Marine Science Matter" (http://www.conbio.org/IMCC2011/)	Victoria, British Columbia, Canada	
24-27/05/11	HELCOM	13 th Meeting of the Nature Protection and Biodiversity Group (HELCOM HABITAT 13/2011) (www.helcom.fi)	Copenhagen, Denmark	Penina Blankett
27/05-12/06/11	IWC	Scientific Committee Meeting (www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/scmain.htm) and associated meetings	Tromsø, Norway	Mark Simmonds
08/06/11	HELCOM	Third Meeting of the Project for Completing the HELCOM Red List of Species and Habitats/Biotopes (HELCOM RED LIST 3/2011) (www.helcom.fi)	Helsinki, Finland	
13/06/11	HELCOM	Sixth Baltic Fisheries/Environmental Forum for Implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan Fish/Fisheries related items (HELCOM FISH/ENV FORUM 6/2011)	Stockholm, Sweden	
14/06/11	BALTFISH	BALTFISH Forum Meeting	Stockholm, Sweden	
24-25/06/11	Climate Investment Funds Partnership Forum	Wind Energy Development Workshop (http://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/partnership_forum_2011_home)	Cape Town, South Africa	CMS
03-15/07/11	IWC	63 rd Annual Commission Meeting (www.iwcoffice.org) and sub-groups	St. Helier, Jersey, UK	

Date	Organizer	Title	Venue	Participation/Report
30/08-01/09/11	International Council for Science	Open Science Meeting for an International Quiet Ocean Experiment	Paris, France	Peter Evans
19- 23/09/11	ICES	Annual Science Conference (www.ices.dk)	Gdansk, Poland	
20-21/09/11	HELCOM	Fifth Meeting of <i>Ad hoc</i> HELCOM Seal Expert Group (HELCOM SEAL 5/2010) (www.helcom.fi)	Tallinn, Estonia	Penina Blankett
26-30/09/11	Universities of Aberdeen & St Andrews	World Conference on Marine Biodiversity (www.abdn.ac.uk/marine-biodiversity/)	Aberdeen, UK	Mark Tasker
5-6/10/11	North Sea Foundation & WWF Netherlands	International workshop to facilitate the implementation of harbour porpoise protection plans in the North Sea area	Netherlands	
07-11/11/11	Agence des Aires Marines Protégées	Second International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICMMPA 2) (http://second.icmmpa.org/)	Fort-de-France, Martinique	Sami Hassani
10-11/10/11	North Sea RAC	General Committee & Executive Committee	Boulogne-sur-Mer, France	North Sea Coordinator
12-16/11/11	International BioAcoustic Council	XXIII Meeting of the International BioAcoustic Council (IBAC) (www.cb.u-psud.fr/ibac2011/)	La Rochelle, France	
17-18/11/11	CMS	17 th Meeting of the Scientific Council (www.cms.int/bodies/ScC_mainpage.htm)	Bergen, Norway	Secretariat
19/11/11	CMS	38 th Meeting of the Standing Committee (http://www.cms.int/bodies/StC_mainpage.htm)	Bergen, Norway	Secretariat
20-25/11/11	CMS	10 th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10) (http://www.cms.int/bodies/cop_mainpage.htm)	Bergen, Norway	Secretariat
26/11-02/12/11	Society for Marine Mammalogy	19 th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals (http://www.marinemammalscience.org)	Tampa, Florida, US	Meike Scheidat (?)

Date	Organizer	Title	Venue	Participation/ Report
05-09/12/11	Society for Conservation Biology	25 th International Congress for Conservation Biology http://www.conbio.org/Activities/Meetings/2011/about/about.cfm	Auckland, New Zealand	
January 2012	ICES	Committee (ACOM) Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC)	tbd	Mark Tasker & Marije Siemensma
27-29/03/12	Southern Ocean Research Partnership (IWC SC)	Symposium and Workshop: Living whales in the southern ocean – advances in methods for non-lethal cetacean research http://www.marinemammals.gov.au/sorp/living-whales-symposium	Puerto Varas, Chile	