

# **REPORT OF THE 10<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS JASTARNIA GROUP**

**Bonn, Germany**

**1-3 April 2014**



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

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## REPORT OF THE 10<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS JASTARNIA GROUP

### 1. Opening of the Meeting

The Chair, Rüdiger Stempel (Coalition Clean Baltic), welcomed participants to the meeting. He conveyed the good wishes of two former members of the Group, Petra Deimer who had now retired and Stefan Bräger, who was now working in Jamaica. Ms Deimer's retirement meant that the Group needed to find a replacement expert in outreach activities. The Chair and the Jastarnia Group expressed their thanks and appreciation to Ms Deimer and Dr. Bräger for their long-standing involvement in the work of ASCOBANS and the Group itself, noting that their expertise and commitment would be greatly missed. The Chair and the Jastarnia Group wished them all the very best and every success in their future endeavours.

Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) hoped that everyone would be comfortable in the facilities available at the Secretariat's premises in Bonn and offered her and her intern Chantal Pagel's assistance throughout the meeting.

### 2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair invited comments from the floor regarding the agenda; there were none and the Agenda was accordingly adopted as presented. The Chair drew attention to agenda item 5 (the review of terms of reference for the Jastarnia Group) for which members needed to have a clear mandate so that a decision could be made on the recommendation to be put to the Advisory Committee.

### 3. Presentations by Invited Experts

#### Ida Carlén (AquaBiota Water Research): SAMBAH

Ida Carlén described the final stages of the SAMBAH project (Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise) as it neared its conclusion. Preliminary data on distribution had been released, and it was now confirmed that porpoises were still present in the entire Baltic Proper. Further analysis would now focus on abundance estimates and habitat modelling.

The associated project RUMBAH (Russian Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise) operating ten CPODs off the coast of Kaliningrad in the Russian Federation had been running for one year and the data from the pods were about to be retrieved.

The slides accompanying Ms Carlén's presentation can be found at Annex 4.

In the discussion, the Group confirmed the importance of the data collected through this project, which for the first time gave an overview of the abundance and distribution of porpoises throughout the entire sea basin. This information was crucial for sound management decisions. Ms Carlén mentioned that it was hoped that a follow-up study at similar scale could be conducted in about ten years' time in order to monitor the population.

#### 4. Jastarnia Plan

*Implementation of the Plan and Action Points (AP) recommended by the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Jastarnia Group, as endorsed by AC 20*

##### 4.1 Bycatch Reduction

##### 4.1.1 Reduce Fishing Effort in Certain Fisheries (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 1)

The Chair said that the last meeting had asked for a letter to be sent to ICES requesting statistics on IUU fisheries in the Baltic Sea, broken down by ICES areas. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) informed the meeting that regrettably this had not yet taken place, but she and the Chair were planning to send this shortly. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) expressed his disappointment at the lack of progress achieved on the issue of bycatch since the establishment of the Jastarnia Group.

Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) commented that longlines had been adopted for salmon fisheries in Poland but their use was declining again. Fewer boats using gillnets were operating but more nets were being deployed in coastal waters.

The Chair drew to the attention of the meeting a letter sent by GRD and NABU to the authorities in Schleswig-Holstein regarding the initiative being undertaken there to secure voluntary agreements with fishermen. The NGOs had expressed their disappointment at the compromises accepted by the Minister. A copy of the NGOs' letter had been made available to the meeting as an information document. Patricia Brtnik (Germany) said that the voluntary agreements in Schleswig-Holstein would concern only the months of July and August. The original proposal had been to eliminate gillnet fishing, but the plan as agreed would only entail a reduction. Mr Kock said that July and August were when traditionally fishermen suspended operations in the Western Baltic as the warmer conditions were not favourable so they tended to undertake repairs to their vessels. The Chair thought that the policy, while well intentioned, would be more effective if it concerned the spawning season. Oliver Schall (Germany) said that although the policy might not meet all the expectations of conservationists, the initiative was a ground-breaking one and the Land of Schleswig-Holstein should be commended for its pioneering work.

The Chair asked the Secretariat to project on screen a table cataloguing all recommendations and Action Points. The table had been prepared as part of a consolidation exercise and recommendations covering similar issues had been grouped together (e.g. Action Point 1 from JG5, Action Point 13 from JG4 and Action Point 1 from JG3, all of which dealt with limiting part-time and recreational set-net fisheries). The Action Points were listed chronologically for each topic with the most recent uppermost.

Regarding the reduction of fishing effort, the following action points were retained, some in amended form.

##### Action Points

- 1) ASCOBANS should urge relevant authorities to investigate ways of limiting part-time and recreational set-net fisheries. – Priority: High to medium, depending on area
- 2) Parties should step up actions to reduce fishing effort involving gear known to cause high porpoise bycatch rates as required under the Jastarnia Plan, and to provide information documenting the magnitude and location of such effort. – Priority: High
- 3) In order to achieve favourable conservation status for Baltic harbour porpoises as required under the Habitats Directive, Parties should make concerted efforts to eliminate bycatch especially in current and future Natura 2000 sites (SACs) where harbour porpoises form part of the selection criteria. In these areas, this could be

achieved by replacing set nets and introducing alternative gear that is considered less harmful. – Priority: High

- 4) The Chair of the Jastarnia Group and the Secretariat should write to ICES requesting statistics on IUU fisheries in the Baltic Sea, broken down by ICES areas, to be presented to the next Jastarnia Group Meeting. – Priority: Medium

#### **4.1.2 Involve stakeholders in the work of reducing bycatch of harbour porpoises** (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 2)

The Chair recalled JG9 Action Point 10 which envisaged the creation of a small Working Group to produce briefing notes. The Working Group had not met and one of its members (Sofia Brockmark, Sweden) had now moved on to other duties and would have to be replaced, possibly by the person succeeding her in her old post. The Action Point was reiterated.

#### **Action Point**

- 5) A small drafting group should develop briefing notes on ASCOBANS positions regarding bycatch, insofar as possible based on any drafts that the North Sea Coordinator may prepare for fora in that area. These should be used by anyone representing ASCOBANS at Baltic RACs and other meetings of relevant EU and Baltic Sea bodies in order to maintain a consistent and appropriate approach. – Priority: Medium

The Chair opened the discussion on JG9 Action Point 11 regarding the use of stranded and bycaught carcasses for research and associated incentive schemes for specimens to be handed to the authorities. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that the Group had agreed similar Action Points in the past, and while some background research had been undertaken by interns, the Secretariat did not have the capacity to deal with the issue. Her recommendation would be to engage a consultant. The work was unlikely to cost a great deal and was a suitable object for a voluntary contribution or for support from the project fund. Sara Königson (Sweden) suggested that a Working Group might be established, but other than the Chair there were no volunteers to serve. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) stressed that any consultancy needed to have clear terms of reference and he also expressed his concern that this issue had been raised several times before and no progress had been made.

Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) felt that the Group could do the basic groundwork and the role of the consultant would be to put the finishing touches to the analysis. The Chair said that the terms of reference for the consultant could stipulate that the Group be closely consulted. The terms of reference agreed with the Group are attached as Annex 5.

Oliver Schall (Germany) suggested that the German voluntary contribution to ASCOBANS could be used for a consultancy with a wider remit than compiling a historic overview. He had been in discussions with the Secretariat about supporting the European Commission in drafting new bycatch legislation as part of the EC Reg.812/2004 revision process. This was a chance for ASCOBANS to step in first and make its opinion matter. Finn Larsen (Denmark) added that his understanding was that Regulation 812/2004 would not be fundamentally reviewed; changes would be confined to the annexes.

The Group felt that the two tasks were best kept separate, as they were very different in scope. It was agreed to retain the Action Point and finalize the terms of reference inter-sessionally before the meeting of the Advisory Committee.

### Action Points

- 6) The Secretariat should produce a synopsis of bycatch-related regulations of relevance to individual fishermen, especially with regard to legal sanctions for bycatch and incentives for those delivering carcasses with a view to using the carcasses obtained for porpoise conservation research, irrespective of whether such incentives are laid down in national legislation. Funding should be made available for a consultant to carry out this task on behalf of the Secretariat, based on Terms of Reference to be drafted by the Secretariat and agreed by JG10 (see Annex 5). – Priority: Medium
- 7) The Secretariat should commission a consultant to draft a position paper with ASCOBANS input for the revision process of EC Reg.812/2004, based on Terms of Reference to be drafted by the Secretariat. These Terms of Reference should be approved by National Coordinators, in consultation with the AC Chair. – Priority: High

#### 4.1.3 Replace fishing methods known to be associated with high porpoise bycatch (i.e. set nets) and introduce alternative gear considered less harmful (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 3)

The Chair reminded the meeting of Action Point 12 from the previous meeting concerning the trials of cod pots in Sweden and continuing efforts to test other porpoise-friendly gear.

Ida Carlén (AquaBiota Water Research) said that the MAMBO (Measuring and Monitoring Biodiversity Offshore) project could assist with the development of new gear in collaboration with local fishermen. Sara Königson (Sweden) confirmed that work was continuing in Sweden but pointed out that pots and traps were also being developed for reasons other than reducing porpoise bycatch. Patricia Brtnik (Germany) reported on similar work in Germany. Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that a project was in the pipeline, the main focus of which was preventing seals from taking fish as this affected livelihoods. Monika Łaskawska-Wolszczak (WWF Poland) added that a new project had just started in Poland regarding new fishing gear and that she would report more comprehensively later in the meeting. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) said that research records from the German Democratic Republic might still be accessible. Referring to a meeting some years ago with the former head of research of the East German Fisheries Institute, who had in the meantime died, Mr Kock stated that considerable work had been undertaken. It would be possible to look for the records. He also saw no reason to be pessimistic about the use of long-lines; adaptations in the design had proved effective in reducing losses of catch to Orcas.

The Action Point, with some amendments, was reiterated.

### Action Point

- 8) Noting the trials of cod pots in Sweden, Parties should undertake or continue efforts to test and implement pots, traps and other porpoise-friendly gear. Parties are encouraged to report on related initiatives or research even where the intention is not primarily the conservation of marine mammals. – Priority: High

#### 4.1.4 Implement a pinger programme on a short-term basis (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 4)

There had been no associated Action Point from the previous meeting of the Group.

Mats Amundin (Sweden) had doubts about the viability of interactive pingers as fishermen had little confidence in them. He stressed that pingers were foreseen as an interim solution and posed the question whether it was worthwhile expending effort in trying to perfect the

devices. The Chair pointed out that development of pingers was an issue covered in the Plan but agreed that it was a subject that should be revisited. Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) advocated local solutions to address particular circumstances; the pinger barrier laid across Puck Bay had proved effective there but a similar approach might not work elsewhere in the Baltic. As bycatch of birds was also a problem, he suggested that in addition to cetaceans cooperation with ornithologists should be considered. Penina Blankett (Finland) added that birds and seals were also affected by bycatch and common solutions might be found. Mr Larsen suggested that SAMBAH might help identify the areas in the Baltic where pingers might best be deployed.

Finn Larsen (Denmark) reported that DTU Aqua was continuing research into an effective signal that alerted harbour porpoises to the presence of nets. He also reported that DTU Aqua was assisting Boris Culik and Christian von Dorrien in testing the PAL device developed by Culik. There had been problems in the original design, which had led to malfunctioning of a number of pingers, but these problems had been solved. Trials were continuing on one vessel in Danish waters; the devices seemed to be working well but it remained to be seen if they resulted in reduced bycatch. Similar trials were taking place in small vessels in German waters and Patricia Brtnik (Germany) said that the results were expected later in the year.

The Chair said that avoiding a “silo mentality” was important and that fisheries and conservation interests should work towards finding solutions to shared problems locally, nationally and supra-nationally. Bycatch was a long-standing and wide-ranging concern and it was in the interests of harbour porpoise conservation to learn lessons and take a holistic view. He drew attention to a publication from CCB pointing out some of the shortcomings of existing environmental policies in the Baltic. Ms Blankett said that all EU countries would have to implement the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and HELCOM was playing a regional coordinating role and would benefit from input from the Jastarnia Group.

Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) raised the question of the possible discrepancy between official statistics concerning bycatch and the true levels. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) said that one problem was that some countries were not providing proper data or used an incompatible format. Standardizing data and ensuring that complete reports were sent would be the first step to addressing Mr Kock's point. Mr Skóra (Poland) said that scientists were measuring bycatch from boats but Ms Blankett said that static nets were more difficult to monitor. Data collected in Finland for ICES, HELCOM and ASCOBANS could be better coordinated. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) reminded the meeting of a recommendation passed at the AC calling on Parties to provide data on fishing effort and bycatch rates to the EC and ICES in a format allowing for spatial and temporal stratification.

The Chair said that it seemed that there was a lack of coordination between the various international fora and there was no centralized system for data gathering. Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) said that the national system in Denmark worked well. He added that national reports under Regulation 812/2004 contained useful information such as the number of vessels operating and of which size they were and therefore the number obliged to carry pingers. In the Baltic most vessels were however below the threshold, but in terms of bycatch, vessel size was less important than gear type. Ms Desportes questioned how many pingers were actually working and asked whether defective ones were routinely replaced. In Denmark, nets were inspected and illegal ones removed but few vessels on the Baltic were obliged to fit pingers. In a financial climate where funding was restricted, coast guards did not attach high priority to checking pingers.

*At this juncture it became clear that the many recurring cross-cutting issues meant that the review procedure would be time-consuming and repetitive. The Secretariat was therefore assigned the task of preparing a synopsis of all Recommendations without deleting any material in the editing process. The Chair said that many of the comments being raised from*

*the floor were relevant but could have been raised during the preparatory consultation phase. It was agreed that a Google document would be set up so that comments could be added directly. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) said that the North Sea Group distinguished between two types of Action Point - administrative and policy. It was agreed to follow the North Sea Group's example in future but not to implement it retrospectively for existing Action Points.*

#### Action Point

- 9) The Secretariat is to prepare a table on a shared cloud document with a synopsis of JG recommendations to facilitate the intersessional review process and Jastarnia Group members should provide comments by 21 December 2014.

## 4.2 Research and Monitoring

### 4.2.1 Analyze stock affinities of harbour porpoises in the “transition zone” of the south- western Baltic (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 5)

Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) said that trying to define the boundaries was not easy. Having looked at the satellite tagging data and SAMBAH, 13.5 degrees longitude seemed appropriate. The position of the boundary could have a considerable effect on the numbers within the Baltic population and it was also likely that the boundary changed seasonally.

### 4.2.2 Develop and apply new techniques (e.g. acoustic monitoring) for assessing trends in abundance (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 6)

Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) confirmed that this was being done in the context of some projects being carried out under the EC LIFE+ programme (such as SAMBAH). Animals were also being tracked using acoustic tags.

### 4.2.3 Develop interactive pingers or pingers using frequencies not audible to seals (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 7)

Mats Amundin (Sweden) reiterated his earlier comments about developing interactive pingers (see item 4.1.4 above). Some trials of pingers were being conducted with captive animals, and Boris Culik's project trialling alerting rather than deterring sounds was also ongoing.

### 4.2.4 Investigate possible detrimental effects of various types of sound and disturbance (including pinger signals, noise from vessels, wind parks or construction and seabed exploration for oil and gas) on harbour porpoises (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 8)

Ida Carlén (AquaBiota Water Research) expressed the hope that some related projects would be funded in the future and confirmed that SAMBAH would probably provide some data on the effects of shipping noise. If funding was found, work could start reasonably quickly as plans were well advanced. The BIAS project was designed to produce a soundscape of the Baltic and was compatible with SAMBAH. Patricia Brtnik (Germany) said that some projects were under way in Germany and the results were expected soon.

Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) showed a video with animated graphics and sound files showing animals' reactions to a ship passing and behaviour when feeding. The graphs depicted



diving depth and the frequencies of noises. The observed disruption of the animal's behaviour was significant.

Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) recalled that throughout the development and execution of SAMBAH the Jastarnia Group had expressed its support in view of the project's importance to the work of ASCOBANS. She asked whether the Group wanted to signal similar support for BIAS. Sara Königson (Sweden) asked whether any practical backing was intended as she was wary of the Group expressing support for some conservation projects, which might disadvantage others. She added that the Group lacked fisheries expertise, and this imbalance impaired the objectiveness of the Group's views. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) saw Ms Königson's point and asked who would decide on a project's relevance, but as ASCOBANS was not in a position to provide any funding itself he did not foresee any problems. Mr Teilmann thought that it was useful to be aware of relevant projects and to see the results at the end.

The Chair recognized that the Group lacked representation from the fisheries side despite best efforts to attract more interest and it was therefore inevitable that the projects that came to the Group's attention tended to be more related to conservation. He sought the Group's views on how support should be expressed on behalf of projects. Iwona Pawliczka (Hel Marine Station) felt that any project relevant to the aims of the Group should be encouraged and individual projects had been supported in the past; the Group could support fisheries projects if any were submitted for consideration, but few were specifically aimed at reducing bycatch. Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) said that there were alternative funding streams available from the European Commission Fisheries DG for fisheries projects. Monika Lesz (Poland) suggested that the Group could indicate general support for an area of research or activity rather than formally endorsing individual projects. Ms Frisch said that SAMBAH had received fulsome support as its objectives matched those of the Plan and the Group had continually been informed about it from its inception. Finn Larsen (Denmark) felt that the process should be more transparent and less random and that a proper *modus operandi* should be established, as was the case with the IWC; the Group was being asked to support projects on the basis of short presentations. The Chair pointed out that funding through ASCOBANS was subject to a formal procedure and grants were approved by the Parties at the Advisory Committee.

The Chair said that the discussion was another incentive to urge Parties to seek to correct the imbalance of interests on the Group. He added that the final decision on whether to support a given project rested with the donors and all the Group was doing was encouraging donors to consider support. He did not think that the Group should feel obliged to withhold support from a project of which it was aware, just because there might be another similar project of which it was not, nor should it have to give equal support to conservation and fisheries initiatives. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) proposed a compromise similar to Ms Lesz's intervention that an expression of general support for a project addressing an issue of interest might be issued rather than formal endorsement.

The Chair stressed that the wording of the proposed Action Point was very soft, asking for donors "to explore the possibility of funding" but sought guidance on whether to make support more generic than specific. Mr Larsen reiterated his reluctance to offer support to any specific projects on the basis of the very general information that the Group had available. Penina Blankett (Finland) asked whether both actual and draft projects were to be considered and Monika Łaskawska-Wolszczak (WWF Poland) sought confirmation that the list was open and further projects could be readily added. National coordinators were asked to publicize the fact that the Group was interested in hearing about projects with a view to helping them secure funding. Ms Frisch said that the procedure should not be bureaucratic and that the effort should be proportionate to the likely results. It should be made clear to project organizers seeking endorsement that support from the Group was no guarantee of success. Mr Teilmann said that a list of projects dealing with subjects relevant to the Plan would be useful and the Group should ensure that it was made aware of the results. Ms

Carlén (AquaBiota Water Research) expressed doubts that the support of the Group would be a decisive factor in the awarding of money and pointed out that no project organizers had actually lobbied the Group for support.

Upon request from the Group, Ms Carlén gave a presentation on the Baltic Sea Information on the Acoustic Soundscape (BIAS) project highlighting how it related to SAMBAH, RUMBAH, LAMBADAH (Long-term Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic and Danish Harbour), BAUMM (Baltic Acoustic Umwelt of Marine Mammals) and MAMBO. She also undertook to provide a list of a number of other projects relevant to ASCOBANS. Ms Desportes did not think that the Group could voice support for pipeline projects the details of which were not yet known. Mr Larsen suggested maintaining two lists – one of current projects and another of proposals. It was noted that the list would not be comprehensive and that it would remain open so that further projects could be added to it. Ms Frisch said that a thread would be added to the ASCOBANS workspace so that input could be made by everyone.

Ms Desportes suggested adding the list of projects as an annex to the report and including an indication of the status (see Annex 6).

Ms Desportes also suggested that the meeting identify a single issue that needed immediate attention among the twenty or so subjects that were covered in the Action Points. The Chair feared that the result of such a process might be that the issues not selected would be ignored. Mr Larsen also questioned the current procedure and felt that there might be better ways to focus on the main issues. The Chair said that the current procedure addressed the recommendations of the two Plans and said that reducing the number of Action Points to make compliance easier was not the answer. Ms Königson saw some merit in Ms Desportes' suggestion and Mr Larsen said that most management and action plans had a procedure for identifying priorities. The Group agreed that the action points stemming from this meeting would be prioritized.

#### **Action Points**

- 10) Parties should consider supporting any projects relevant for achieving the aims of the Jastarnia Plan. – Priority: High
- 11) Parties and NGOs are requested to ensure that the results of all relevant projects are made available to ASCOBANS. – Priority: High

#### **4.2.5 Monitor bycatch in fisheries known to be harmful to harbour porpoises to be able to estimate bycatch levels (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 9)**

The Chair invited comments and updates. The Action Point from JG9 concerned the positive experience from the Danish experiment with CCTV on board vessels. Finn Larsen (Denmark) reported that his institute had taken over a project where cameras were being used to monitor fisheries in ICES Areas 24 and 25. The project was due to be completed in May 2015. It was hoped to persuade four or five vessels to participate using the issue of seals taking fish as an incentive. Fishermen around Bornholm were however adopting trawl nets or ceasing operations. All vessels were smaller than 15 metres.

Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) reported that fishing boats based in Frees, east of the island of Rügen, were also using video surveillance equipment in the expectation of proving that they were not responsible for any bycatch.

#### **4.2.6 Further develop sustainable alternative fishing gear with no bycatch of harbour porpoises (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 10)**

Monika Łaskawska-Wolszczak (WWF Poland) circulated a two-page summary of the “Baltic Smart Gear” project. WWF Poland was collaborating with its counterparts in Germany and Denmark. Sara Königson (Sweden) asked why the project had no Swedish partners, given Sweden’s role in developing alternative gear. Ms Łaskawska-Wolszczak saw no reason why there should not be Swedish partners involved. Ms Königson reported that the HELCOM BALTFIMPA (Managing Fisheries in Baltic Marine Protected Areas) project had not been successful in its application for funding under the EU LIFE+ funding scheme.

The Chair welcomed “Baltic Smart Gear” and said that the project organizers should be encouraged to liaise with other similar projects in the region.

#### **Action Point**

- 12) The Jastarnia Group welcomes the project Baltic Smart Gear and recommends that WWF cooperate with other related projects going on around the Baltic Sea.

#### **4.2.7 Compile data on fishing effort (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 11)**

Finn Larsen (Denmark) pointed out that the ICES Bycatch Working Group had available a large tabular dataset containing information provided by a number of countries

Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) said that WWF Poland, the University of Gdańsk and Hel Marine Station had placed a number of CPODs in the south-east of the Gulf of Gdańsk near the border with Kaliningrad in the Russian Federation. These devices had recorded some porpoise presence and shipping noise. Net deployment and seasonal fishing effort were being recorded. The Chair requested that the results of this monitoring be presented at the Advisory Committee. This project was similar to some being conducted in Germany and might complement SAMBAH.

Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) asked whether any bycatch had been recorded, as none had been reported since Regulation 812/2004 had come into effect. The areas concerned were also important wintering grounds for bird species such as scooters (*Melanitta nigra*). Monika Łaskawska-Wolszczak (WWF Poland) added that WWF volunteers had found one stranded harbour porpoise and had released some trapped diving birds. There was now a network of 200 volunteers surveying the coast.

#### **4.2.8 Examine habitat preference for harbour porpoises (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 12)**

The Chair said that there was no Action Point arising from the previous meeting but there had been some developments.

Ida Carlén (AquaBiota Water Research) said that some modelling would be undertaken using the SAMBAH results. In response to a question from Penina Blankett (Finland) she explained that the habitat types described in the Habitats Directive would not be used; SAMBAH focused on water depth, temperature and currents.

Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) said that there were two models; one based on data from CPOD stations and the other on satellite tracking. The two did seem to provide similar results. Habitat preference could be extrapolated from the areas covered. He supported the idea that habitat modelling could work where there were not many data.

#### **4.2.9 Investigate the prevalence of derelict (“ghost”) gear and the feasibility of its removal (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 13)**

There were two Action Points from the previous meeting: the first, AP14, concerned the collection of data by Parties and the second (AP15) concerned the Marine Framework Strategy Directive and discard systems.

Monika Łaskawska -Wolszczak (WWF Poland) said that their project for collecting ghost nets had been completed. It had included the development of an interactive map facility where fishermen could enter the location of underwater hooks, showing where the fishing nets were or could be entangled. The interactive map was trilingual (Polish, Lithuanian and English) and over 300 entries had been posted. Sara Königson (Sweden) undertook to provide details to the Secretariat of a project being undertaken in Sweden.

The two Action Points were reiterated, with the second being amended to include mention of the need to prevent the recurrence of loss of gear.

##### **Action Points**

- 13) Parties should collect data on the extent of ghost nets in their waters, including net types and locations. Regular assessments should then be made of the total quantities of nets lost or discarded, taking account of the distribution of different types of fisheries.  
– Priority: Medium
- 14) Taking into consideration the future requirements under the MSFD, Parties should implement measures to prevent the loss of fishing gear, and mitigation measures for ghost nets, such as regular clean-ups, provision of disposal containers at ports, deposit systems, mandatory reporting of lost gear, marking of nets etc. Wherever possible fishing communities and other relevant stakeholders should be actively involved. A review of progress should be conducted by JG11. – Priority: High

#### **4.3 Marine Protected Areas**

##### **4.3.1 Expand the network of protected areas in the Baltic Sea and improve its connectivity to ensure the development of appropriate harbour porpoise management plans for these areas (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 14)**

The two Action Points from the previous meeting concerned maintaining momentum in developing conservation programmes for the harbour porpoise and use of the expertise of the members of the Jastarnia Group in matters related to Marine Protected Areas.

Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) said that he had been called upon to provide advice by the Danish Government and had recommended that the results of the SAMBAH project be taken into account.

Oliver Schall (Germany) said progress was being made with regard to MPAs and drafting implementation orders. He asked that other countries made their management plans available (even in the original language).

Monika Lesz (Poland) said that work was concentrating on the detail of management plans. Opponents representing fisheries and tourism interests and surfers were vocal and lobbying hard. Inter-ministry consultations were due to start soon. The results of the consultations should be available in time for the Advisory Committee in 2015. Monika Łaskawska-Wolszczak (WWF Poland) commented that progress on the Polish harbour porpoise conservation programme had stalled and had appeared to have slipped down the agency's list of priorities. Ms Lesz said that the situation had been made more complicated by the fact that there were now two draft plans in circulation, one for the species and one for the area

and these needed to be reconciled. Iwona Pawliczka (Hel Marine Station) added that in some sites, harbour porpoises were only one of the factors that had led to designation.

Sara Königson (Sweden) said that the Swedish management plan for harbour porpoises was being reviewed in the course of the year and that it would make sense to take the results of the SAMBAH project into account.

Patricia Brtnik (Germany) reported that work was still being done on a species plan for the Baltic and the North Seas but this should be completed within a few months.

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that the action plan for harbour porpoises in Danish waters dating from 2005 had not been revised in respect of Natura 2000. Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) said that there would possibly be some transfrontier sites where cooperation would be required.

Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) asked to what extent Denmark, Germany and Sweden were collaborating in respect of Natura 2000 areas where they all had fisheries operations. Mr Larsen said that bilateral meetings had been held between Denmark and Sweden, but the national processes were running at different speeds. A meeting had also been convened by the German Environment Ministry (BMU, now BMUB) with the German Agriculture Ministry in charge of fisheries where the plans of BMU for harbour porpoise management outside the 12-nautical mile limit were presented. Mr Schall said that Germany was working closely with the Netherlands and Denmark in the Wadden Sea but no similar arrangement existed in the Baltic. The results of the SAMBAH project would be taken into account. Also in Germany, some activities would be undertaken at the Land level, such as the initiative in Schleswig-Holstein (See agenda item 4.1.1).

#### **Action Points**

- 15) Noting the ongoing process of developing a conservation programme for harbour porpoises in Poland, the Jastarnia Group encourages all stakeholders involved to maintain the momentum of the process and to adopt and implement the programme as soon as possible.
- 16) Parties, Range States and NGOs seeking to develop management plans for SACs and MPAs designated for harbour porpoises are encouraged to make use of the expertise available within the Jastarnia Group, and to consult or cooperate with other Parties that are in the process of developing or have developed management plans. – Priority: Low

#### **4.4 Public Awareness**

There were two Action Points from the previous meeting, one concerning the establishment of sightings and strandings programmes and another on producing a translation of an updated version of the Stralsund Oceanographic Museum's book on marine mammals in the Baltic Sea, possibly in conjunction with HELCOM.

Monika Łaskawska-Wolszczak (WWF Poland) said that WWF Poland had organized an event – "Take a Look at the Baltic" – but no strandings scheme had been set up nationally. WWF Finland had developed an app. Unfortunately, according to Penina Blankett's (Finland) information, most users' reaction time was not fast enough to capture sightings of harbour porpoises but public interest was very high despite the low numbers of the species in Finnish waters.

Patricia Brtnik (Germany) said that the German Oceanographic Museum in Stralsund was continuing the sightings scheme established by Petra Deimer-Schütte and the now defunct Gesellschaft zum Schutz der Meeressäuger (GSM), the Society for the Protection of Marine Mammals.

The Chair confirmed that HELCOM had been approached regarding the book but no response had been received. Ms Blankett said that she would raise the issue again but suspected that HELCOM lacked the requisite funds. Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) said that a slightly amended version of the book was currently being produced in Polish, independently adding that it would be a good idea to add a chapter on SAMBAH.

The Chair thanked Ms Blankett for agreeing to contact HELCOM. He asked whether ASCOBANS should seek to pursue the idea of translating the book alone if HELCOM was unable to join the project. He noted that the book did however deal with all marine mammals and not just those covered by the Agreement, which was consistent with a more holistic approach and opened opportunities for synergies. A well written, professionally produced book would also help raise the Agreement's profile. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) said that the last comprehensive review of Baltic harbour porpoises had been undertaken by Sven Koschinski some time ago, so a new book was overdue.

#### Action Points

- 17) Parties should establish sightings and strandings programmes, preferably in a coordinated fashion for all Baltic Sea States. They should consider initiating sightings days or weeks, comparable to the National Whale and Dolphin Watch in the UK. They should also consider developing a sightings and strandings app for smartphones. – Priority: High
- 18) Parties are encouraged to consider producing an updated and slightly modified English-language version of the German Oceanographic Museum's publication on marine mammals of the Baltic Sea. Depending on the reaction of HELCOM HABITAT, this publication could be produced jointly with HELCOM. – Priority: Low

#### 4.4.1 Develop a comprehensive public awareness campaign (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 15)

Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) made a brief presentation on educational activities in Poland, where a new museum, the "House of the Harbour Porpoise" had opened at Hel on 1 January 2014. The exhibition focused on the coexistence of fisheries and conservation. A TV news item on the SAMBAH project had reached an audience of 4.5 million and a DVD had been produced in English, German and Polish together with a children's year planner. The Chair commended Poland for continuing to produce innovative outreach ideas.

Monika Łaskawska-Wolszczak (WWF Poland) said a conference was being proposed to bring together experts and the media after the completion of SAMBAH. Tentative dates in early 2015 were being discussed. WWF Poland would work with other national WWF Offices on a campaign for harbour porpoise conservation. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) said ASCOBANS should participate at such a conference as it would be an opportunity to promote the Agreement's work in the Baltic.

Penina Blankett (Finland) said that Finland too was planning an event after the completion of SAMBAH, which it was hoped the Finnish Minister of the Environment would attend.

Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) agreed that ASCOBANS should attend such meetings if timing and funding allowed. She would be attending the SAMBAH project conference on 8-9 December.

Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) asked if it would be possible to link a post-SAMBAH event to the next Jastarnia Group meeting. The Chair recalled that the Jastarnia Group and the SAMBAH Steering Committee had held back-to-back meetings in the past, and provided that the timing was convenient he saw no reason not to do so again.



Ms Frisch circulated copies of some new ASCOBANS material including the leaflet “Oceans Full of Plastic” which had been launched at the WhaleFest in Brighton, UK, in March 2014. It was currently only available in English and the Secretariat stood ready to assist with having it translated. It was not specific to Baltic harbour porpoises, as it had been co-produced with CMS to draw attention to the effects of marine debris on all marine species. The Chair offered to translate the leaflet into German. Ms Carlén said that she would explore the possibility of translating it into Swedish. A new website for children, ASCOBANS Kids ([www.kids.ascobans.org](http://www.kids.ascobans.org)) had also been produced; a sticker showing the mascot, a harbour porpoise was being used to promote it. Currently, a competition was under way to choose a name for the harbour porpoise mascot. National Coordinators were asked to publicize the competition.

The Chair drew attention to a campaign by Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC) entitled Homes for Whales (Walheimat in German).

Ms Frisch said that for the 2013 International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise, the three NGOs WDC, NABU and OceanCare had approached the Secretariat to join “the Last 300” campaign concerning Baltic harbour porpoises. The campaign had comprised a competition where entrants had to convey what Germany’s native whale meant to them. One hundred submissions had been made and the winner was a short animation film. WDC was currently in contact with the Stralsund Oceanographic Museum, which was interested in displaying the entries as part of an exhibition highlighting the harbour porpoise. Other venues for the display might be considered.

#### **4.5 ASCOBANS Cooperation with Other Bodies**

##### **4.5.1 Strive for close consultation and cooperation between ASCOBANS and other relevant regional and international bodies (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 16)**

The Jastarnia Plan mentioned Regulation 812/2004 and the Habitats Directive and there were associated Action Points arising from the last Group meeting.

Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) had attended the last meeting of the ICES Bycatch Working Group. ICES produced reports for the EC under contract and the results were made public. In response to the question whether ASCOBANS could ask for a specific focus for upcoming reports, Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) explained that ICES Advice needed to be paid for. Sara Königson (Sweden) suggested that ASCOBANS could contact the European Commission to steer them towards asking ICES to look at particular areas.

Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) said that having served five years on the ICES Bycatch Working Group he had found that its time was limited and its agendas usually full. To raise an issue normally required the presentation of an introductory paper detailing specific questions. Ms Frisch sought guidance regarding what those questions should be, and the Chair suggested that an ad hoc Working Group consisting of Iwona Pawliczka (Hel Marine Station), Penina Blankett (Finland), Ida Carlén (AquaBiota Water Research) and Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) meet to devise them.

The discussion triggered by the draft letter produced by the ad hoc Working Group raised a number of questions. Some of the data were complex and sensitive and it might be more useful to ask ICES what information they were missing in order to assess bycatch level of the Baltic harbour porpoise. It was suggested that the task of drafting the questions be handed to an intersessional working group and Ms Carlén suggested that someone with inside knowledge of ICES serve on it. Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that he would serve if he had a clearer notion of what data were being sought and to what purpose they would be put. He said that SAMBAH might shed some light on bycatch but no comprehensive report had been produced for ten years so the data available were old and possibly no longer a reliable

guide. There were some data from CCTV coverage but these were limited. It was agreed that there was no point in writing to ICES for data that could not be used. Instead the issue of harbour porpoise bycatch would be brought to the attention of ICES and the European Commission.

With regard to developments on Regulation 812/2004 and the Habitats Directive, Ms Königson reported that ICES had done a synopsis of national reports. Ms Blankett said that Finland had submitted its report under the Habitats Directive, but the harbour porpoise was not a reference species for Finland because it was considered only an occasional visitor.

Ms Blankett reported that the sentence discussed at the previous meeting for inclusion in the HELCOM Ministerial statement had been accepted. HELCOM had also posted on its website a series of publications for Red data listings including [species](#) and [habitats](#) (following HELCOM biotope definitions).

The Chair drew attention to a publication by Coalition Clean Baltic on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the shortcomings in its implementation. The European Commission had also just published a document on implementation of the MSFD.

#### **Action Points**

- 19) Parties are strongly encouraged to fulfil their obligations under the current Regulation 812/2004 and the Habitats Directive. – Priority: High
- 20) The Chair of the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat should continue approaching the European Commission and the ICES Bycatch Working Group to draw attention to the need to address the bycatch problem in the Baltic. The ICES Bycatch Working Group should be asked to advise whether enough data for a status assessment for harbour porpoises in the Baltic Proper are available. – Priority: High
- 21) Parties are urged to provide all relevant data to the HELCOM harbour porpoise database. – Priority: Medium

#### **5. Review of Terms of Reference for the Jastarnia Group (24)**

Action Point 24 from the previous meeting had called for an intersessional consultation on the terms of reference for the Group so that a firm recommendation could be agreed for submission to the next Advisory Committee. The Secretariat had made use of the AC Workspace for this consultation. Four different options had been tabled.

Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) expressed the opinion that the Group's membership could be opened to more NGOs provided that they did not outnumber the government representatives. Sara Königson (Sweden) agreed and stated a preference for the fourth option as presented by Finland. Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) felt that the science base of the Group should be maintained and that it should not become a forum open to all-comers, noting that the Advisory Committee had gradually become less scientific over the years. He favoured retention both of a clear division between science and policy and of the status quo. Monika Lesz (Poland) had no particular preference but was wary of the Group becoming too large. The Chair explained that only three to four NGOs had expressed an interest in joining. CCB was already a member and WWF (Poland) was present as adviser to the Chair. The current rules allowed Parties to send one environmental and one fisheries representative supported by as many experts as considered necessary and the Group's role was advisory rather than just scientific. It was also pointed out that the Group operated by consensus among the delegations rather than by votes of participants. Melanie Virtue (Secretariat) thought that adding NGOs might increase the scientific expertise in the Group rather than reduce it. Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) thought that fora such as the Jastarnia



Group were better conduits for scientific input than either the AC or the MOP. Asked to relate how the North Sea Group operated, Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) said that most participants came from governments with a minority from NGOs. One member, Peter Evans, was both a scientist and an NGO representative. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) confirmed that although the terms of reference for the North Sea Group did not restrict the number of NGOs participating, this had not caused any problems or imbalance in the group.

The Chair suggested that for a start the new procedure could be adopted on a trial basis and amended if more applications than expected were received. Parties could veto the participation of an NGO. Ms Frisch said that the wording of the terms of reference should be amended to reflect the fact that ASCOBANS operated on a four-year cycle and if the number was limited, a procedure should be in place for deciding which NGOs could participate. One option was to have a “first come, first served” system but this would be rather arbitrary. Penina Blankett (Finland) said that HELCOM only allowed regional NGOs not national ones to participate. Ms Lesz said that the practice in Poland was for NGOs to agree among themselves which should be represented on such fora; this was the process in operation in Finland too and also how CCB was selected to serve on the Jastarnia Group. Ms Königson asked how NGOs would be informed that they could apply to join the Group. It was suggested that National Coordinators should publicize the fact and an announcement would be posted on the ASCOBANS website. The NGOs selected as members of the Group would be expected to liaise with other organizations. CCB as a coalition already had an internal communications network through which views could be canvassed; the Chair said that he could enquire how views from outside the coalition were sought. It could be specified that the NGOs should be pan-Baltic rather than national.

There was a discussion about the timing of selecting of NGOs. Choosing the NGOs at the start of each quadrennium would be less flexible than immediately before each meeting of the Group. As the rules of the Advisory Committee applied *mutatis mutandis* to the Jastarnia Group, an announcement would be posted 60 days in advance of each meeting. National NGOs could be included in national delegations, or chosen from across the region to represent pan-Baltic interests.

The eligibility criteria set out in some of the draft options were considered. NGOs could be required to show that they could make a tangible contribution to the Group but then “tangible” would have to be defined. It was also agreed that where an NGO provided the Group’s Chair (as was currently the case with CCB), that NGO would not have to be elected.

Iwona Pawliczka (Hel Marine Station) pointed out that the only pan-Baltic fisheries organizations were RACs which were IGOs. Fishermen’s organizations were country-based not regional.

It was confirmed that representatives would not be funded to attend meetings. Only invited experts had their expenses met by the Secretariat.

The revised Terms of Reference to be submitted to the Advisory Committee for its endorsement are attached as Annex 7.

#### Action Point

- 22) Parties are urged to ensure that calls for participation in the Jastarnia Group are relayed to the environmental and fisheries organizations in their respective countries. – Priority: Medium

## 6. Implementation of SAMBAH-related Action Points adopted by JG 9 (AP 1-8)

The Action Point concerning the promotion of SAMBAH and its use in the conservation of harbour porpoises in the Baltic would need to be amended to reflect the fact that the project was nearing completion. The question of additional funding might still be valid given that SAMBAH was still in progress and that there was no funding to analyze the results of RUMBAH.

Ida Carlén (AquaBiota Water Research) said that fisheries data from Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) were still relevant for SAMBAH but Finn Larsen (Denmark) questioned whether Parties could be expected to provide this. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) said that governments held this information but would not release it except in a very aggregated form; he suggested deleting the Action Point. Sara Königson (Sweden) said that SAMBAH could address the national governments directly for the aggregated data and did not need to involve the ASCOBANS Secretariat. Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) said that requests for specific information made more sense than general ones.

The Action Point requesting the German Environmental Protection Agency to fund the Oceanographic Museum to enable it to support SAMBAH was now obsolete. The letter had been written and sent.

Ms Königson questioned why ASCOBANS needed to commission a study on the definition of “fisherman”. Anyone with a net could be described as a fisherman but to require a licence certain thresholds had to be reached. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) said that the information would help assess the level of recreational fisheries; the North Sea Group had undertaken a similar exercise and had discovered that the national schemes differed greatly. Those countries operating licensing systems would be able to provide statistics. Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) said that it was important to know who was entitled to compensation payments – the vessel owner or the captain. Mr Larsen said it might be more useful to have definitions of part-time, full-time, recreational and commercial fisheries rather than fishermen.

Ms Blankett said that a review of fisheries legislation was being undertaken nationally, so the definitions might change depending on the provisions contained in the legislation. The extent of the changes was uncertain as the draft legislation was still subject to review in parliament.

The Secretariat would ask the National Coordinators to approach the appropriate fisheries licensing authorities. The reason why the information was being sought should be explained as this would make a response more likely.

### Action Points

- 23) Parties are encouraged to use SAMBAH results for harbour porpoise conservation in the Baltic Sea. – Priority: High
- 24) ASCOBANS should request HELCOM to make updated and high resolution data on fisheries effort in gillnet and trammel net fisheries available in their web-database. – Priority: Medium
- 25) ASCOBANS Parties are asked to provide information as to the definitions of the term ‘fisheries’, rules and regulations applicable to the various types of fisheries in their national legislation, as well as related statistics. This information should be provided in time for the next JG meeting. – Priority: Low

## **7. Cross-cutting Action Points adopted by JG 9 (AP 22, 23)**

The terms of reference for the consultancy on fisheries legislation in the Baltic Sea Region (see Agenda Item 4.1.2) could draw on the back catalogue of recommendations which was subject to Action Point 23 adopted by the ninth meeting of the Group. Oliver Schall (Germany) said that the consultancy should take account of possible future developments and not just the current legislation.

The consultant would need legal qualifications and experience in international and environmental law. The funds available on the consultancy budget line might need to be supplemented through voluntary contributions and the length of the consultancy would have to be tailored to the resources available. The Chair suggested that a three-month desk study with clear directions from the Secretariat might be feasible. Mr Schall said that he had already discussed possible uses of the German voluntary contribution. On timing he pointed out that the European Commission and European Parliament were discussing amendments to Regulation 812/2004 with a deadline of the end of 2015 to reach agreement.

Mr Schall drew attention to the German sound protection concept on protecting harbour porpoises from underwater noise. The section on the North Sea was ready and the section on the Baltic would be completed as soon as the results of SAMBAH could be taken into account. An English version would also be prepared.

## **8. Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat**

*Implementation of the Plan ("Gap Area Plan", GAP) and action points (AP) recommended by the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Jastarnia Group, as endorsed by AC19*

### **8.1 Objective a. Involvement of All Stakeholders in the Implementation of the Plan and its Evaluation**

#### **8.1.1 Actively seek to involve fishermen in the implementation of the plan and mitigation measures to ensure reducing bycatch (GAP Recommendation 1)**

Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) gave an account of the quarterly dialogue forum convened by the environmental and fisheries authorities, with NGOs and fishermen. The forum covered all Danish waters and not just the "gap" area. The forum had been meeting for two years and provided a channel for communication that had not existed before. As the initiative started with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, it had been accepted by fishermen and had not been seen as an outside imposition. The forum did not have a budget and participants had to cover their own travel costs. Meetings tended to last just half a day and were held in Copenhagen so accessibility was not a problem and expenses were kept to a minimum. Typically thirty representatives attended with each organization limited to one delegate.

Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) added that she attended these meetings in her ASCOBANS capacity.

#### **Action Points**

- 26) National Coordinators should provide an overview of measures currently ongoing in their countries actively to engage fishing communities and other stakeholders in the implementation of the Plan, in order to identify existing gaps and lessons learnt of interest to all Parties. Parties should provide the funding required for measures needed to fill the gaps. Parties should explore the possibility of obtaining EU funding for this purpose. – Priority: Medium
- 27) Noting the successful Natura 2000 dialogue forums conducted in Denmark, Parties are encouraged to consider establishing a similar format for the stakeholder working group required under Objective a. of the Plan. – Priority: High

#### **8.1.2 Cooperate with and inform other relevant bodies about the Conservation Plan (GAP Recommendation 2)**

Questions were raised regarding how and with whom Parties were meant to promote the Plan. Parties were supposed to promote the Plan proactively to other organizations, bodies and people rather than expect them to find out about it. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) said that one effective way to raise awareness of the Plans was to mention them at other forums, as Penina Blankett (Finland) did at HELCOM.

### **8.2 Objective b. Mitigation of Bycatch**

#### **8.2.1 Protect harbour porpoises in their key habitats by minimizing bycatch as far as possible (GAP Recommendation 3)**

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that work was continuing on developing alternative gear. He sought clarification of the term "mutual observance" in Action Point 27a from JG9. He did not think that there should be any problems as any SAC proposed beyond the 12-mile

national limit had to go through an EU consultation process. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) reported that there had been developments since the last meeting of the Group and there was now a system in place through which neighbouring states were required to reach consensus, and where this proved impossible the European Commission arbitrated. One problem was that Member States were progressing at different rates. In Germany the priority was to draft the species management plan.

Ms Königson sought clarification of who was meant by “ASCOBANS” with regard to influencing eco-labelling programmes. It was agreed that this meant the Secretariat and the Parties (and the Parties through the Secretariat). Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) wondered what “seek to influence” meant as many eco-labelling programmes were not suited to the aims of ASCOBANS. The Chair referred to the report of the previous meeting where concerns had been expressed about the stringency of eco-labelling schemes. Iwona Pawliczka (Hel Marine Station) recalled that bycatch was only taken into account if it was considered “unsustainable”. The Secretariat had written to MSC and offered input from CMS and ASCOBANS but had not received a response. Mr Kock said that the New Zealand hoki fishery had been certified by the MSC as it was deemed to have an acceptable level of bycatch, which was questionable. The Chair said that the Action Point recommended by the Group and accepted by the Advisory Committee should be implemented and a letter should be sent to the MSC and the terms of reference of the Bycatch Working Group be amended.

Ms Königson said that the Secretariat should ask to be included on the MSC mailing list and could take pre-emptive action by writing to the MSC regarding harbour porpoise bycatch in the Agreement Area. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that she already received the frequent mailings from the MSC, most of which had no bearing on ASCOBANS. The quantity and length of emails made it a challenge to try to monitor them closely. A few years ago Ms Königson had alerted the Secretariat to a certification application in Sweden and had responded to the MSC which turned down the application; it was not clear how decisive the ASCOBANS intervention had been. Ms Frisch felt that receiving information from the Parties on cases in which an intervention might be called for was a more effective way to ensure ASCOBANS could influence such decisions. The Chair asked Parties to follow Sweden’s example and alert the Secretariat to specific cases. Mr Kock said that he did not expect many applications to be made regarding the ASCOBANS area.

Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) felt that the Action Point regarding the FAO code of conduct for responsible fisheries did not need to be reiterated. It seemed sufficient that the issue had been raised at the previous meeting and no further action was necessary.

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that further research was being undertaken regarding bycatch of harbour porpoises in gillnets and the acoustic signature of gear (see Agenda Item 4.2.4). Investigations were being made concerning the effectiveness of short-range pingers, habituation and exclusion and the effects of deploying pingers on all nets in SACs. The field phase of the project would conclude in two months’ time. Mr Teilmann reported on a separate project in the same area where CPODs and noise loggers would be used and an assessment made on exclusion.

#### Action Points

- 28) Parties are strongly encouraged to take all necessary steps to develop without delay their joint recommendations to the European Commission regarding the management of harbour porpoise SACs to minimize bycatch rates within these areas. – Priority: High
- 29) Parties should continue to provide funding for research on alternative fishing gear and practices as needed. – Priority: High
- 30) ASCOBANS should seek to influence existing eco-labelling programmes to take full account of the need to avoid cetacean bycatch in certifying fisheries. In the case of

MSC, the Secretariat is requested to liaise directly with the organization in order to determine the appropriate means of influencing their eco-labelling programmes. – Priority: Medium

- 31) Parties are strongly encouraged to take all necessary steps to develop as soon as possible agreements to implement immediately the use of pingers in gillnet fishery associated with bycatch irrespective of vessel size or type, as provided for in the Plan, and to enforce the use of pingers. – Priority: High

#### **8.2.2 Implement pinger use in fisheries causing bycatch (Recommendation 4)**

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that trials on pinger use were being undertaken in SACs in the Natura 2000 network and stressed again that the size of vessels as prescribed in Regulation 812/2004 had no bearing on bycatch, for which the gear type was the key factor.

#### **8.2.3 Where possible replace gillnet fisheries known to be associated with high porpoise bycatch with alternative fishing gear known to be less harmful (GAP Recommendation 5)**

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that he was working on fishing pots and Sara Königson (Sweden) said that related work continued in Sweden.

### **8.3 Objective c. Assessment of the Bycatch Level**

#### **8.3.1 Estimate total annual bycatch (GAP Recommendation 6)**

There were two Action Points related to bycatch estimates. One concerned projects related to bycatch estimates being reported to the Group and the second encourage Parties to carry out related research.

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that a project had been in progress in ICES Areas 22 and 23 since 2011. Initially recruitment of vessels had been a problem, with only two taking part in the first year. The number had increased to ten the following year, however. Thousands of hauls had been observed; some vessels did two a day, others four or five. He had also been working with Anchorlab (DK) on the development of a new CCTV system which was both simpler and cheaper than the one produced by Canadian Archipelago as there was no recurrent annual licence fee of Can\$5,000. There was no need to replace hard disks and downloading data to the server could be effected through cell phones, and captains could clean or adjust dirty or misaligned equipment.

In response to a question from Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) concerning the use of video cameras, Sara Königson (Sweden) said that the equipment had been put in storage because of the lack of funds. Fishermen also refused to cooperate and lessons needed to be learned from Denmark to overcome this problem. Mr Larsen said that the fishermen had been brought on board through a concerted effort to persuade them and incentives had been offered, such as relaxation of quotas and permission to spend more days at sea, including in April. Even so, only ten fishermen signed up rather than the 16 that had been hoped for. The Chair observed that in some cases Denmark used the fisheries authorities to help overcome fishermen's resistance, which probably contributed to the relative success of these initiatives. Sweden had offered incentives, but not through the fisheries authorities, and the one camera that had been fitted was sabotaged. In Denmark, fishermen's initial scepticism and suspicions had gradually diminished.



### Action Point

- 32) Parties are encouraged to undertake or promote research regarding bycatch estimation.  
– Priority: High

## 8.4 Objective d. Monitoring the Status of the Population

### 8.4.1 Estimate trends in abundance of harbour porpoises in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat (GAP Recommendation 7)

Relating to Action Point 33 arising from the previous meeting concerning cooperation among Denmark, Germany and Sweden on surveys on the Western Baltic, Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) said that the latest data had been assessed and the report published. Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) said that the paper could now be circulated. To identify trends, a great deal of survey work was needed and the operations being undertaken between the SCANS surveys in this area were important.

Mr Teilmann pointed out that all three countries were undertaking surveys but usually using different methodologies and that the national projects were much smaller in scope than SCANS. Some form of coordination would be advantageous, but not necessarily as formal as a steering group. Mr Kock said that the Jastarnia Group could be used as a catalyst and the Chair agreed that a face-to-face meeting could be arranged. The Secretariat would need to be informed of the contact details of the scientists to be invited.

Regarding SCANS III, Denmark had allocated the funding and the deadline for making the application to LIFE was the autumn of 2014. Work had been carried out in Danish, German and Swedish waters, with Sweden funding some acoustic surveys. Sweden had also agreed to fund SCANS III; Germany had made a provisional budget allocation of €200,000. Oliver Schall (Germany) cautioned that changes to the LIFE regulation might make securing funding from that source more difficult. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) reported that the last Advisory Committee had selected the preparation of the SCANS III EU funding application as the activity to be supported by ASCOBANS.

### Action Points

- 33) Parties are strongly encouraged to continue to undertake and cooperate on inter-SCANS surveys of the Western Baltic (gap area) harbour porpoise population and evaluate trends in population density and abundance. – Priority: High
- 34) Parties are strongly encouraged to lend their support to the projected SCANS III survey.  
– Priority: High

### 8.4.2 Monitor population health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality (GAP Recommendation 8)

Patricia Brtnik (Germany) said that a strandings programme operated in Germany. The Oceanographic Museum in Stralsund was able to carry out some necropsies but funding was limited. Twenty-three specimens had originated from Schleswig-Holstein and twenty-five from Mecklenburg Western Pomerania, but some were in a poor condition and it had proved impossible to ascertain whether they had been bycaught. Sara Königson (Sweden) said that some funding was channelled to the Museum of Natural History. Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) said that in his country the national veterinary institute was obliged to undertake 25 necropsies per annum and they undertook examinations to determine disease and parasite burdens.

No conclusions could be reached about the incidence of bycatch. Some fresh carcasses provided clear evidence of entanglement with nets but some were recovered when they had already begun to decompose, as many sank and only refloated with the tides some time later. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) said that French scientists were developing a model which factored in wind and tides, so could ascertain where the specimens had been bycaught if a time of death could be established. Ms Brtnik (Germany) said that unless there was a piece of net attached to the carcass, it was impossible to be absolutely sure that the animal died as a result of being bycaught.

Mr Teilmann said that it would be useful to secure fresher carcasses from fisheries as tests for contaminants and examination of stomach content were easier. He pointed out that all three countries were conducting necropsies but often opportunistically except for officially funded programmes. They were also often using different methodologies. Mr Teilmann felt that some form of coordination would be advantageous and suggested setting up a group to facilitate standardization and coordination and to determine the optimum number for necropsies, so that statistics could be compared and aggregated. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany) said that the Jastarnia Group could be used as a catalyst and the Chair agreed that a face-to-face meeting could be arranged. The Secretariat would need to be informed of the contact details of the scientists to be invited.

#### **Action Points**

- 35) The animals collected should be necropsied and examined with regard to health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality. The resultant data should be fed into a common database, such as the future database required under MOP Resolution 7.4. – Priority: Medium
- 36) Parties are strongly encouraged to coordinate and standardize their monitoring efforts and determine the number of stranded or bycaught animals to be collected for necropsies in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat. For this purpose, ASCOBANS is requested to establish a coordination group comprised of the scientists involved, whose names should be notified to the Secretariat by 15 October 2014. The first meeting of this group could take place in conjunction with JG11. – Priority: High

### **8.5 Objective e. Ensuring Habitat Quality Favourable to the Conservation of the Harbour Porpoise**

#### **8.5.1 Ensure a non-detrimental use of pingers by examining habitat exclusion and long-term effects of pingers (GAP Recommendation 9)**

Action Point 37 suggested that SAMBAH data be used to consider the effects of pingers leading to habitat exclusion. Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) doubted that the SAMBAH data lent themselves to this purpose, but other projects were focused on this issue. The results of the other project should be evaluated before new projects were launched.

Patricia Brtnik (Germany) was unaware of any current research in Germany.

Mats Amundin (Sweden) stressed that pingers should be seen as a short-term, interim solution and agreed with Mr Teilmann that SAMBAH was unlikely to provide any insights.

The Chair welcomed the Danish research. The Action Point was not reiterated and the results of the Danish research project would be awaited.



### **8.5.2 Include monitoring and management of important prey species in national harbour porpoise management plans (GAP Recommendation 10)**

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that ICES did surveys for some fish species, producing distribution maps. The species concerned tended to be ones that were exploited commercially rather than those making up the prey of harbour porpoises. The existing Action Point was retained but amended.

#### **Action Point**

- 37) Parties should use existing data or undertake efforts to collect data on relevant prey and prey communities and investigate the consequences of impacts on these prey communities for harbour porpoises. – Priority: Medium

### **8.5.3 Restore or maintain habitat quality (GAP Recommendation 11)**

Following a discussion of an interpretation of “project”, it was agreed that the term was understood to include wind farms, oil platforms and shipping. It was also agreed that “long-term” monitoring would be better replaced by “continual” monitoring of the effects.

#### **Action Point**

- 38) Parties should undertake or promote continual monitoring of the effects of projects with a potential impact on harbour porpoise behaviour and distribution, and baseline studies on this issue. Research is also required on the context in which porpoises are using the habitats. – Priority: High

## **9. Cross-cutting Action Points adopted by JG 9 (AP 40, 41)**

Action Point 40 related to the appointment of a Baltic Sea Coordinator and Action 41 to the attendance of an expert on the Common Fisheries Policy from the country hosting the Group’s meeting.

Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) asked how the roles of chairman of the group and a Baltic Sea Coordinator differed. The Chair said that terms of reference had been prepared for the Coordinator setting out the tasks that he or she would be expected to do. The terms of reference would have to be amended to reflect the fact that the Gap Area Plan was now in place. However, there was no money available to fund the post. Mr Teilmann said that it was an option that the person coordinating the North Sea Action Plan could fulfil the same role for the Baltic. Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) stressed that it would help implementation if a coordinator was appointed, regardless of whether it was the same person as was dealing with the North Sea Plan. Iwona Pawliczka (Hel Marine Station) felt that the issue of appointing a Coordinator should be considered with the countries from the Baltic proper present.

As there had been no host country for this meeting, the recommendation for bringing in a national expert on the CFP had not yet been addressed, but would remain valid for future meetings.

### Action Points

- 39) Pending further discussion with the Jastarnia Group as a whole, with a view to facilitating the implementation of the Plans, the Group reiterates its recommendation, as endorsed by AC17, to appoint as soon as possible a Baltic Sea Coordinator. – Priority: Low
- 40) The Coordinating Authorities of the countries hosting the Group's meetings are asked to ensure the attendance of an expert on the CFP at the respective meetings of the Group. – Priority: High

## 10. Any other Business

### Attracting Representatives of Fisheries Interests

Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) asked how the Group could attract the interest and increase participation by fisheries representatives, other than those coming from ministries and agencies. The Chair confirmed that since the retirement of Jan-Erik Holmberg of the Swedish Fishermen's Association, no fishermen's organization had been represented at the Group's meetings. Sara Königsson (Sweden) said she could think of candidates with suitable knowledge but was not sure that they would want to join the Group. One solution might be to invite individuals as guest experts to specific meetings. Ms Desportes suggested having a highlighted theme at meetings, or even associated workshops on issues such as alternative gear.

The Chair suggested that rather than adding a stand-alone set-piece event, specific issues could be added to the agenda and this might incite Parties to send appropriate additional experts to the meeting. This approach could be tried experimentally and continued if it produced the desired results.

### Rules of Procedure and Election of the Chair

Finn Larsen (Denmark) sought confirmation that the Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Committee applied *mutatis mutandis* to the Jastarnia Group: this was indeed the case. Mr Larsen asked why there had not been an election held for the Chair at the previous year's meeting of the Group, as stipulated in the Rules.

Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that the normal practice was for Chairs of Working Groups to continue in office until they stood down or there was a request for an election. Given the number of working groups operating under the Advisory Committee, a strict application of the AC's rules would create a significant additional workload.

Mr Larsen expressed the view that where rules were in place, they should be followed, or, if theory and practice diverged, the Rules could be changed to reflect what actually happened. The administrative burden in notifying Parties or Working Group members of election should not be too heavy. Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) said that an item could be added to the beginning of the agenda of each meeting to elect a Chair. He expected that in most cases the incumbent would simply be confirmed in post, but renewing the mandate was part of the democratic process especially where the membership of a Group changed over the years. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) said that the North Sea Group found it best to hold regular elections in the interests of transparency.

Ms Frisch sought clarity on the question whether the AC should be requested to amend or clarify the applicable rules, or whether the Group preferred the current ones, which required election at the end of the first meeting after each Meeting of the Parties, should be applied in future; the latter option was favoured, and no change to the AC Rules of Procedure therefore necessary.

The Chair said that the guidance of the AC should be sought on the appropriate way to address the oversight of not having held an election at the previous meeting.

### **11. Date and Venue of the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Jastarnia Group**

The Chair asked the meeting when would be most convenient time for the next meeting of the Group to be held. He had received notice from Penina Blankett (Finland) that she would not be available in the first half of April 2015. Easter Sunday fell on 5 April, so it seemed that holding JG11 in the third week of that month would be feasible, provided that there was no clash with the ECS Annual Meeting. The Secretariat would circulate a proposal in due course.

The default option was for the next meeting to be held in Bonn, but there was still time for one of the Parties to notify the Secretariat.

The Chair asked if any Party would be willing to host the next meeting. Jonas Teilmann (Denmark) said that Denmark had offered to host the current meeting but had been unable to meet the travel costs of the report writer. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) explained that the proposal to enhance the budget line to support the Jastarnia Group had been rejected by the Parties at the MOP, where it had been decided that the hosts of the meeting should be responsible for providing or paying for the report writer.

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that other similar Working Groups produced their own reports with each member responsible for drafting a section. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) described the system operated by the North Sea Group, where the Chair wrote the report drawing on notes provided by a volunteer from among the members. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) noted that the North Sea Group's reports were quite different in nature, since detailed information was provided in advance of the meeting in the Coordinator's report. Hence, the report could be very brief and focus only on conclusions reached. In the case of the Jastarnia Group, most information was provided in the discussions rather than in writing, necessitating a much more detailed report.

### **12. Close of Meeting**

After the customary expression of thanks to all those that had contributed to the organization and success of the meeting, the Chair declared proceedings closed.

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## AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Presentations by Invited Experts
4. **Jastarnia Plan**  
*Implementation of the Plan and Action Points (AP) recommended by the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Jastarnia Group, as endorsed by AC 20*
  - 4.1 Bycatch Reduction
    - 4.1.1 Reduce Fishing Effort in Certain Fisheries (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 1)
      - 4.1.1.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 9)
      - 4.1.1.2 Other related issues
    - 4.1.2 Involve stakeholders in the work of reducing bycatch of harbour porpoises (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 2)
      - 4.1.2.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 10, 11)
      - 4.1.2.2 Other related issues
    - 4.1.3 Replace fishing methods known to be associated with high porpoise bycatch (i.e. set nets) and introduce alternative gear considered less harmful (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 3)
      - 4.1.3.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 12)
      - 4.1.3.2 Other related issues
    - 4.1.4 Implement a pinger programme on a short-term basis (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 4)
  - 4.2 Research and Monitoring
    - 4.2.1 Analyze stock affinities of harbour porpoises in the “transition zone” of the south- western Baltic (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 5)
    - 4.2.2 Develop and apply new techniques (e.g. acoustic monitoring) for assessing trends in abundance (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 6)
    - 4.2.3 Develop interactive pingers or pingers using frequencies not audible to seals (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 7)
    - 4.2.4 Investigate possible detrimental effects of various types of sound and disturbance (including pinger signals, noise from vessels, wind parks or construction and seabed exploration for oil and gas) on harbour porpoises (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 8)
    - 4.2.5 Monitor bycatch in fisheries known to be harmful to harbour porpoises to be able to estimate bycatch levels (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 9)
      - 4.2.5.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 13)
      - 4.2.5.2 Other related issues
    - 4.2.6 Further develop sustainable alternative fishing gear with no bycatch of harbour porpoises (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 10)
    - 4.2.7 Compile data on fishing effort (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 11)

- 4.2.8 Examine habitat preference for harbour porpoises (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 12)
- 4.2.9 Investigate the prevalence of derelict (“ghost”) gear and the feasibility of its removal (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 13)
  - 4.2.9.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 14, 15)
  - 4.2.9.2 Other related issues
- 4.3 Marine Protected Areas
  - 4.3.1 Expand the network of protected areas in the Baltic Sea and improve its connectivity to ensure the development of appropriate harbour porpoise management plans for these areas (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 14)
    - 4.3.1.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 16, 17)
    - 4.3.1.2 Other related issues
- 4.4 Public Awareness
  - 4.4.1 Develop a comprehensive public awareness campaign (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 15)
    - 4.4.1.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 18, 19)
    - 4.4.1.2 Other related issues
- 4.5 ASCOBANS Cooperation with Other Bodies
  - 4.5.1 Strive for close consultation and cooperation between ASCOBANS and other relevant regional and international bodies (Jastarnia Plan Recommendation 16)
    - 4.5.1.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 20, 21)
    - 4.5.1.2 Other related issues
- 5. Review of Terms of Reference for the Jastarnia Group (24)
- 6. Implementation of SAMBAH-related Action Points adopted by JG 9 (AP 1-8)
- 7. Cross-cutting Action Points adopted by JG 9 (AP 22, 23)
- 8. **Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat**  
*Implementation of the Plan (“Gap Area Plan”, GAP) and action points (AP) recommended by the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Jastarnia Group, as endorsed by AC19*
  - 8.1 Objective a. Involvement of All Stakeholders in the Implementation of the Plan and its Evaluation
    - 8.1.1 Actively seek to involve fishermen in the implementation of the plan and mitigation measures to ensure reducing bycatch (GAP Recommendation 1)
      - 8.1.1.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 25, 26)
      - 8.1.1.2 Other related issues
    - 8.1.2 Cooperate with and inform other relevant bodies about the Conservation Plan (GAP Recommendation 2)
  - 8.2 Objective b. Mitigation of Bycatch
    - 8.2.1 Protect harbour porpoises in their key habitats by minimizing bycatch as far as possible (GAP Recommendation 3)

- 8.2.1.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 27a, 28, 29, 30)
    - 8.2.1.2 Other related issues
  - 8.2.2 Implement pinger use in fisheries causing bycatch (Recommendation 4)
    - 8.2.2.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 27b)
    - 8.2.2.2 Other related issues
  - 8.2.3 Where possible replace gillnet fisheries known to be associated with high porpoise bycatch with alternative fishing gear known to be less harmful (GAP Recommendation 5)
- 8.3 Objective c. Assessment of the Bycatch Level
  - 8.3.1 Estimate total annual bycatch (GAP Recommendation 6)
    - 8.3.1.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 31, 32)
    - 8.3.1.2 Other related issues
- 8.4 Objective d. Monitoring the Status of the Population
  - 8.4.1 Estimate trends in abundance of harbour porpoises in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat (GAP Recommendation 7)
    - 8.4.1.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 33, 34)
    - 8.4.1.2 Other related issues
  - 8.4.2 Monitor population health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality (GAP Recommendation 8)
    - 8.4.2.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 35, 36)
    - 8.4.2.2 Other related issues
- 8.5 Objective e. Ensuring Habitat Quality Favourable to the Conservation of the Harbour Porpoise
  - 8.5.1 Ensure a non-detrimental use of pingers by examining habitat exclusion and long-term effects of pingers (GAP Recommendation 9)
    - 8.5.1.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 37)
    - 8.5.1.2 Other related issues
  - 8.5.2 Include monitoring and management of important prey species in national harbour porpoise management plans (GAP Recommendation 10)
    - 8.5.2.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 38)
    - 8.5.2.2 Other related issues
  - 8.5.3 Restore or maintain habitat quality (GAP Recommendation 11)
    - 8.5.3.1 Implementation of relevant JG9 APs (AP 39)
    - 8.5.3.2 Other related issues
- 9. Cross-cutting Action Points adopted by JG 9 (AP 40, 41)
- 10. Any other Business
- 11. Date and Venue of the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Jastarnia Group
- 12. Close of Meeting



## **ACTION POINTS**

### **JASTARNIA PLAN**

#### **Bycatch Reduction**

- 1) ASCOBANS should urge relevant authorities to investigate ways of limiting part-time and recreational set-net fisheries. – Priority: High to medium, depending on area
- 2) Parties should step up actions to reduce fishing effort involving gear known to cause high porpoise bycatch rates as required under the Jastarnia Plan, and to provide information documenting the magnitude and location of such effort. – Priority: High
- 3) In order to achieve favourable conservation status for Baltic harbour porpoises as required under the Habitats Directive, Parties should make concerted efforts to eliminate bycatch especially in current and future Natura 2000 sites (SACs) where harbour porpoises form part of the selection criteria. In these areas, this could be achieved by replacing set nets and introducing alternative gear that is considered less harmful. – Priority: High
- 4) The Chair of the Jastarnia Group and the Secretariat should write to ICES requesting statistics on IUU fisheries in the Baltic Sea, broken down by ICES areas, to be presented to the next Jastarnia Group Meeting. – Priority: Medium
- 5) A small drafting group should develop briefing notes on ASCOBANS positions regarding bycatch, insofar as possible based on any drafts that the North Sea Coordinator may prepare for fora in that area. These should be used by anyone representing ASCOBANS at Baltic RACs and other meetings of relevant EU and Baltic Sea bodies in order to maintain a consistent and appropriate approach. – Priority: Medium
- 6) The Secretariat should produce a synopsis of bycatch-related regulations of relevance to individual fishermen, especially with regard to legal sanctions for bycatch and incentives for those delivering carcasses with a view to using the carcasses obtained for porpoise conservation research, irrespective of whether such incentives are laid down in national legislation. Funding should be made available for a consultant to carry out this task on behalf of the Secretariat, based on Terms of Reference to be drafted by the Secretariat and agreed by JG10 (see Annex 5). – Priority: Medium
- 7) The Secretariat should commission a consultant to draft a position paper with ASCOBANS input for the revision process of EC Reg.812/2004, based on Terms of Reference to be drafted by the Secretariat. These Terms of Reference should be approved by National Coordinators, in consultation with the AC Chair. – Priority: High
- 8) Noting the trials of cod pots in Sweden, Parties should undertake or continue efforts to test and implement pots, traps and other porpoise-friendly gear. Parties are encouraged to report on related initiatives or research even where the intention is not primarily the conservation of marine mammals. – Priority: High
- 9) The Secretariat is to prepare a table on a shared cloud document with a synopsis of JG recommendations to facilitate the intersessional review process and Jastarnia Group members should provide comments by 21 December 2014.

#### **Research and Monitoring**

- 10) Parties should consider supporting any projects relevant for achieving the aims of the Jastarnia Plan. – Priority: High

- 11) Parties and NGOs are requested to ensure that the results of all relevant projects are made available to ASCOBANS. – Priority: High
- 12) The Jastarnia Group welcomes the project Baltic Smart Gear and recommends that WWF cooperate with other related projects going on around the Baltic Sea.
- 13) Parties should collect data on the extent of ghost nets in their waters, including net types and locations. Regular assessments should then be made of the total quantities of nets lost or discarded, taking account of the distribution of different types of fisheries. – Priority: Medium
- 14) Taking into consideration the future requirements under the MSFD, Parties should implement measures to prevent the loss of fishing gear, and mitigation measures for ghost nets, such as regular clean-ups, provision of disposal containers at ports, deposit systems, mandatory reporting of lost gear, marking of nets etc. Wherever possible fishing communities and other relevant stakeholders should be actively involved. A review of progress should be conducted by JG11. – Priority: High

### **Marine Protected Areas**

- 15) Noting the ongoing process of developing a conservation programme for harbour porpoises in Poland, the Jastarnia Group encourages all stakeholders involved to maintain the momentum of the process and to adopt and implement the programme as soon as possible.
- 16) Parties, Range States and NGOs seeking to develop management plans for SACs and MPAs designated for harbour porpoises are encouraged to make use of the expertise available within the Jastarnia Group, and to consult or cooperate with other Parties that are in the process of developing or have developed management plans. – Priority: Low

### **Public Awareness**

- 17) Parties should establish sightings and strandings programmes, preferably in a coordinated fashion for all Baltic Sea States. They should consider initiating sightings days or weeks, comparable to the National Whale and Dolphin Watch in the UK. They should also consider developing a sightings and strandings app for smartphones. – Priority: High
- 18) Parties are encouraged to consider producing an updated and slightly modified English-language version of the German Oceanographic Museum's publication on marine mammals of the Baltic Sea. Depending on the reaction of HELCOM HABITAT, this publication could be produced jointly with HELCOM. – Priority: Low

### **Cooperation with Other Bodies**

- 19) Parties are strongly encouraged to fulfil their obligations under the current Regulation 812/2004 and the Habitats Directive. – Priority: High
- 20) The Chair of the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat should continue approaching the European Commission and the ICES Bycatch Working Group to draw attention to the need to address the bycatch problem in the Baltic. The ICES Bycatch Working Group should be asked to advise whether enough data for a status assessment for harbour porpoises in the Baltic Proper are available. – Priority: High
- 21) Parties are urged to provide all relevant data to the HELCOM harbour porpoise database. – Priority: Medium

## **Terms of Reference**

- 22) Parties are urged to ensure that calls for participation in the Jastarnia Group are relayed to the environmental and fisheries organizations in their respective countries. – Priority: Medium

## **SAMBAH-related Action Points**

- 23) Parties are encouraged to use SAMBAH results for harbour porpoise conservation in the Baltic Sea. – Priority: High
- 24) ASCOBANS should request HELCOM to make updated and high resolution data on fisheries effort in gillnet and trammel net fisheries available in their web-database. – Priority: Medium
- 25) ASCOBANS Parties are asked to provide information as to the definitions of the term 'fisheries', rules and regulations applicable to the various types of fisheries in their national legislation, as well as related statistics. This information should be provided in time for the next JG meeting. – Priority: Low

## **WESTERN BALTIC, BELT SEAS AND KATTEGAT PLAN**

### **Stakeholder Involvement**

- 26) National Coordinators should provide an overview of measures currently ongoing in their countries actively to engage fishing communities and other stakeholders in the implementation of the Plan, in order to identify existing gaps and lessons learnt of interest to all Parties. Parties should provide the funding required for measures needed to fill the gaps. Parties should explore the possibility of obtaining EU funding for this purpose. – Priority: Medium
- 27) Noting the successful Natura 2000 dialogue forums conducted in Denmark, Parties are encouraged to consider establishing a similar format for the stakeholder working group required under Objective a. of the Plan. – Priority: High

### **Bycatch Mitigation**

- 28) Parties are strongly encouraged to take all necessary steps to develop without delay their joint recommendations to the European Commission regarding the management of harbour porpoise SACs to minimize bycatch rates within these areas. – Priority: High
- 29) Parties should continue to provide funding for research on alternative fishing gear and practices as needed. – Priority: High
- 30) ASCOBANS should seek to influence existing eco-labelling programmes to take full account of the need to avoid cetacean bycatch in certifying fisheries. In the case of MSC, the Secretariat is requested to liaise directly with the organization in order to determine the appropriate means of influencing their eco-labelling programmes. – Priority: Medium
- 31) Parties are strongly encouraged to take all necessary steps to develop as soon as possible agreements to implement immediately the use of pingers in gillnet fishery associated with bycatch irrespective of vessel size or type, as provided for in the Plan, and to enforce the use of pingers. – Priority: High

### **Assessment of Bycatch Level**

- 32) Parties are encouraged to undertake or promote research regarding bycatch estimation.  
– Priority: High

### **Population Status**

- 33) Parties are strongly encouraged to continue to undertake and cooperate on inter-SCANS surveys of the Western Baltic (gap area) harbour porpoise population and evaluate trends in population density and abundance. – Priority: High
- 34) Parties are strongly encouraged to lend their support to the projected SCANS III survey.  
– Priority: High
- 35) The animals collected should be necropsied and examined with regard to health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality. The resultant data should be fed into a common database, such as the future database required under MOP Resolution 7.4. – Priority: Medium
- 36) Parties are strongly encouraged to coordinate and standardize their monitoring efforts and determine the number of stranded or bycaught animals to be collected for necropsies in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat. For this purpose, ASCOBANS is requested to establish a coordination group comprised of the scientists involved, whose names should be notified to the Secretariat by 15 October 2014. The first meeting of this group could take place in conjunction with JG11. – Priority: High

### **Habitat Quality**

- 37) Parties should use existing data or undertake efforts to collect data on relevant prey and prey communities and investigate the consequences of impacts on these prey communities for harbour porpoises. – Priority: Medium
- 38) Parties should undertake or promote continual monitoring of the effects of projects with a potential impact on harbour porpoise behaviour and distribution, and baseline studies on this issue. Research is also required on the context in which porpoises are using the habitats. – Priority: High

### **Cross-cutting Action Points**

- 39) Pending further discussion with the Jastarnia Group as a whole, with a view to facilitating the implementation of the Plans, the Group reiterates its recommendation, as endorsed by AC17, to appoint as soon as possible a Baltic Sea Coordinator. – Priority: Low
- 40) The Coordinating Authorities of the countries hosting the Group's meetings are asked to ensure the attendance of an expert on the CFP at the respective meetings of the Group.  
– Priority: High

## **PRESENTATION SAMBAH**

### **Large-scale Static Acoustic Survey of a Low-density Population**

[slides on following pages]

# Large-scale static acoustic survey of a low-density population

## Estimating the abundance of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise



Julia Carlström<sup>1</sup>, Len Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Mats Amundin<sup>3</sup>, Jonas Teilmann<sup>4</sup>, Jens Koblitz<sup>5</sup>, Nick Tregenza<sup>6</sup>, Ida Carlén<sup>1</sup>, Line Kyhn<sup>4</sup>, Signe Svegaard<sup>4</sup>, Daniel Wennerberg<sup>3</sup>, Radek Koza<sup>7</sup>, Monika Kosecka<sup>7</sup>, Iwona Pawliczka<sup>7</sup>, Cinthia Tiberi Ljungqvist<sup>3</sup>, Lonnie Mikkelsen<sup>4</sup>, Jakob Tougaard<sup>4</sup>, Anders Galatius<sup>4</sup>, Olli Loisa<sup>8</sup>, Ivar Jüssi<sup>9</sup>, Harald Benke<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>AquaBiota Water Research, Sweden; <sup>2</sup>CREEM, UK; <sup>3</sup>Kolmården Wildlife Park, Sweden; <sup>4</sup>Aarhus University, Denmark; <sup>5</sup>German Oceanographic Museum, Germany; <sup>6</sup>Chelonia Limited, UK; <sup>7</sup>University of Gdansk, Poland; <sup>8</sup>Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland; <sup>9</sup>ProMare NPO, Estonia



## SAMBAH = Static acoustic monitoring of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise

- All EU countries around the Baltic Sea
- Environmental authorities from several countries
- Funding: 50% EU LIFE+, 50% national + co-financers
- Germany separate funding
- Jan 2010 – Sept 2015
- Russia joined later with RUMBAH data not presented here



Some of the SAMBAH team,  
Seili island, Finland, Oct 2013

## SAMBAH aims

- **Density and abundance**  
whole study area and per country
- **Distribution maps**  
hotspots, conflicts, habitat preferences
- **Increase awareness**
- **Demonstrate best practice**

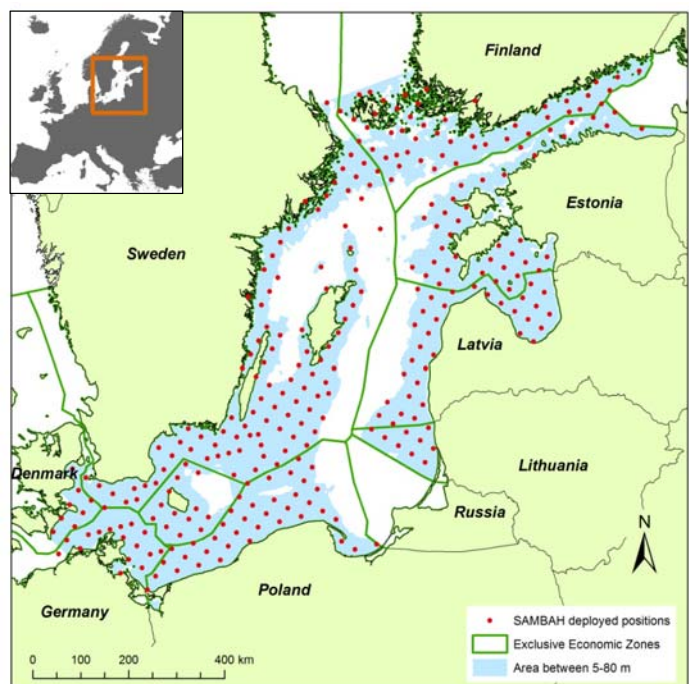


Photo: Signe Sveegaard

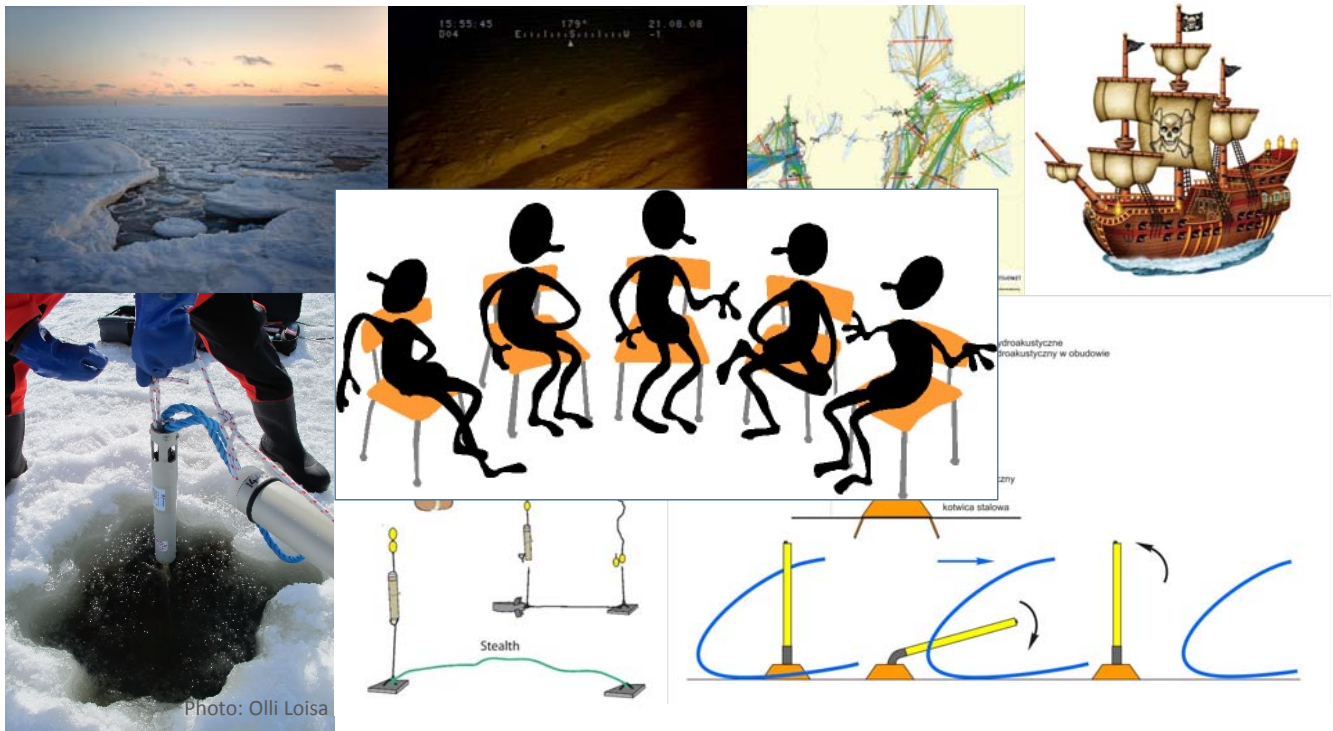
## Main data collection



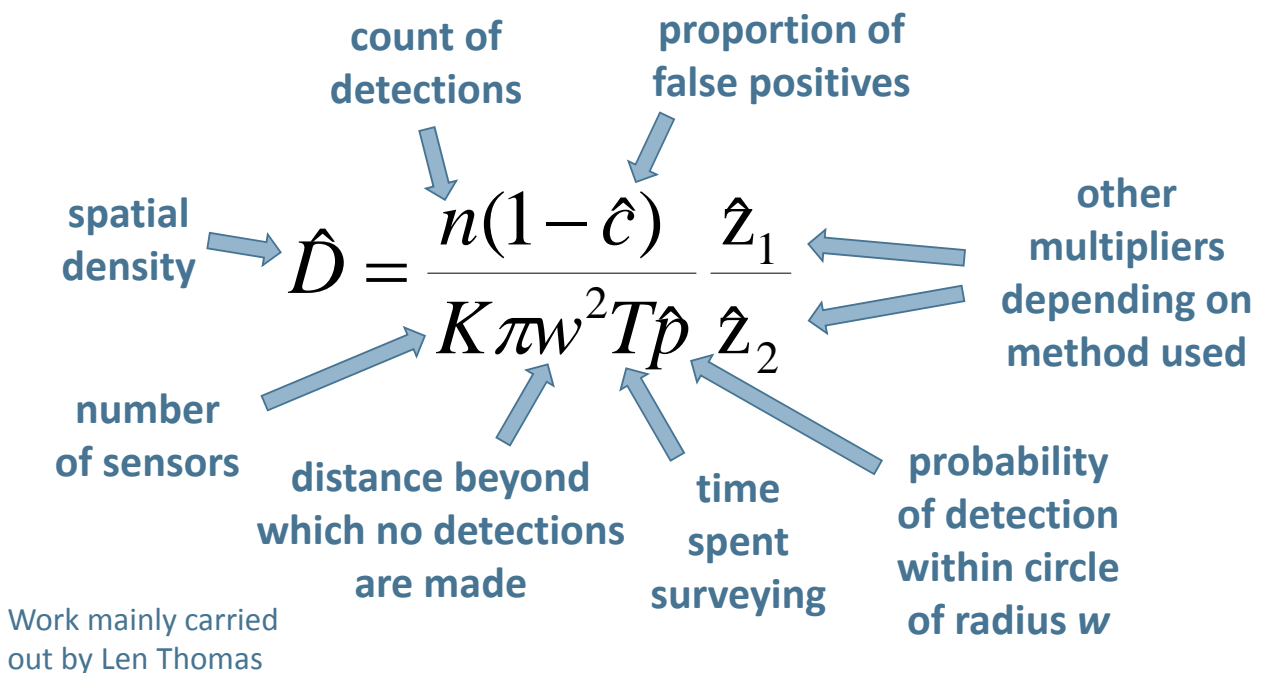
- **304 locations:**  
Chelonia C-PODs
- **May 2011-April 2013,**  
serviced every 3-6 months
- **5-80 m depth, C-**  
**PODs 2 m off bottom**
- **Systematic grid with**  
**primary and**  
**secondary positions**



# Anchoring challenges and solutions



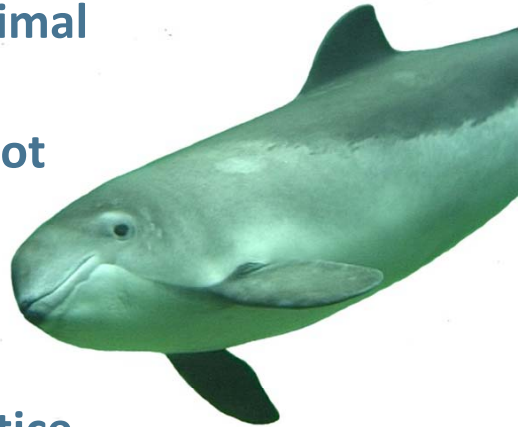
## Density estimation





# Multiple approaches

- Cues: click, train, encounter, animal presence, group presence...
- Methods: cue-counting, snapshot windows, time present...
- No method is perfect
- Want to demonstrate best practice



⇒ Use the same basic equation applied on different methods and cues

$$\hat{D} = \frac{n(1-\hat{c})}{K\pi w^2 T \hat{p}} \frac{\hat{z}_1}{\hat{z}_2}$$

Photo: Florian Graner

## Step by step

1. Determine cues and false positive rate

2. Determine detection function

$$\hat{D} = \frac{n(1-\hat{c})}{K\pi w^2 T \hat{p}} \frac{\hat{z}_1}{\hat{z}_2}$$

3. Determine necessary multipliers for different methods and cues

Cue and method:

a. Click-based cue counting



Multiplier:

Individual click rate

b. Group-based snapshot



Group size

# 1. Cues and false positive rate

$$\hat{D} = \frac{n(1-\hat{c})}{K\pi w^2 T \hat{p}} \frac{\hat{z}_1}{\hat{z}_2}$$

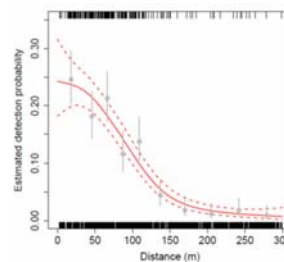
- Use Baltic Sea detection algorithm (“Hel1”) to identify harbour porpoise clicks vs other sources
- ⇒ False detection rate close to zero (~0.04%)
- Manual removal of false positives in files with < 60 detection positive minutes (DPM) / year



# 2. Detection function

$$\hat{D} = \frac{n(1-\hat{c})}{K\pi w^2 T \hat{p}} \frac{\hat{z}_1}{\hat{z}_2}$$

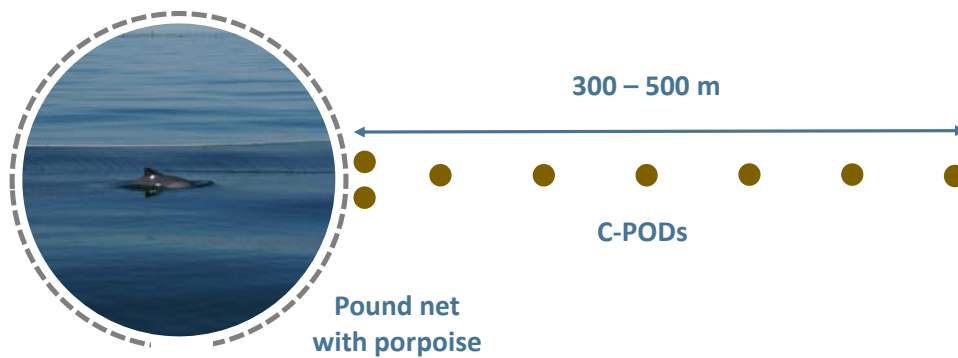
- Pound net experiments
- Playbacks
- Array experiment



T-POD detection function  
(Kyhne et al. 2012)



# Pound net experiments

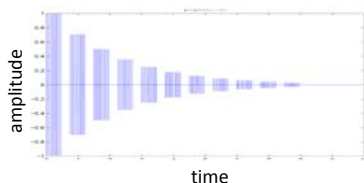


- Problems with animals outside the pound net
- Real porpoises, but representative behaviour?
- Detection function – *estimated*

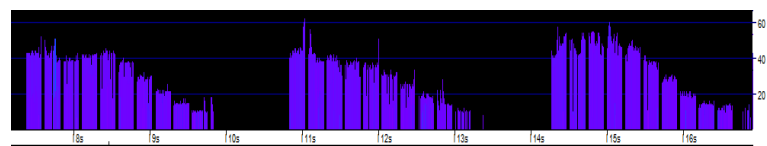
Photo: Signe Sveegaard

## Playbacks

Programmed signal



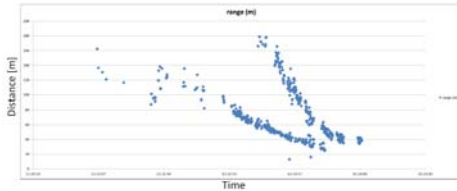
Recorded signal in CPOD.exe



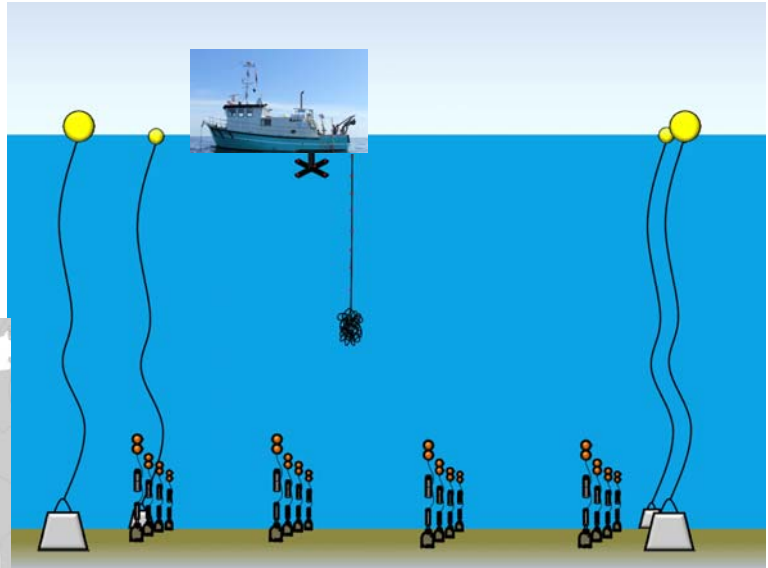
- Sequence of artificial clicks played twice at all positions and counted – *less data obtained, all counted*
- Estimate and spatially model detection function – *ongoing*
- Year round model for the entire SAMBAH area, but must be correlated to detection function of wild harbour porpoises

# Array experiment

- Wild free-ranging harbour porpoises + playbacks
- ~30 single porpoise tracks – *successfully analysed*



Work mainly carried out by Jens Koblitz et al. (German SAMBAH team), Jamie MacAulay, Danish SAMBAH team, Cinthia Tiberi Ljunqvist



## 3. Multipliers – Individual click rate

- Click rate from acoustic tags
- 5 animals; 24 days of data – *obtained*

$$\hat{D} = \frac{n(1-\hat{c})}{K\pi w^2 T \hat{p}} \left( \frac{\hat{z}_1}{\hat{z}_2} \right)$$

Thanks to Andrew Wright and Jonas Teilmann

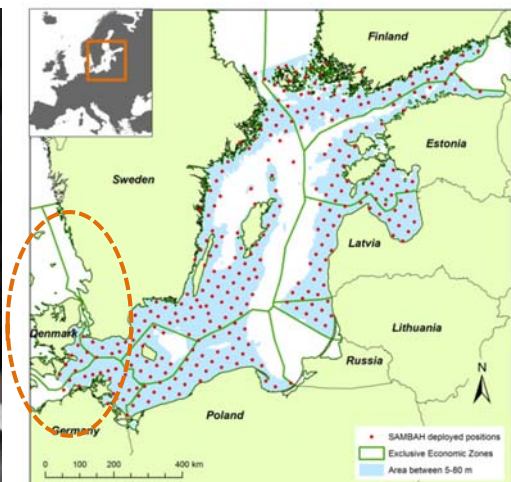


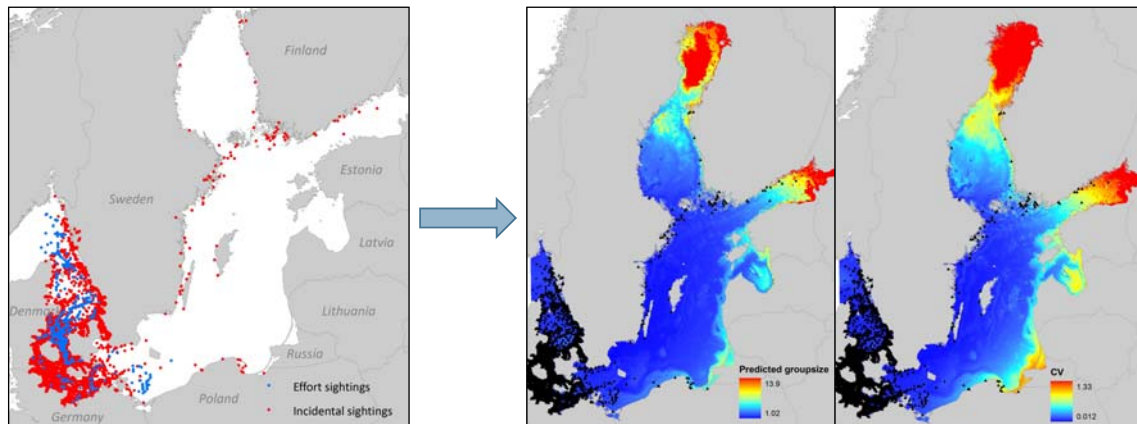
Photo: Thomas Edrén

### 3. Multipliers – Group size

$$\hat{D} = \frac{n(1-\hat{c})}{K\pi w^2 T \hat{p}} \left( \frac{\hat{z}_1}{\hat{z}_2} \right)$$

- Based on available visual observations + spatially referenced environmental layers
- Generalized Additive Modelling – *almost completed*

Work mainly carried out by Ida Carlén



### Summary of current status

- Main field data collected
- Data processed (which took way longer than expected)
- Detection function soon to be determined
- Multipliers soon to be available

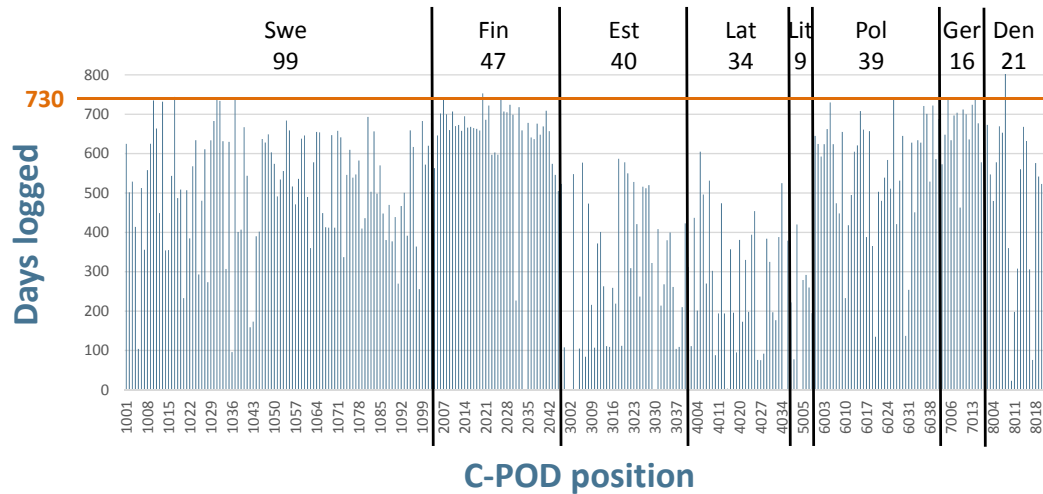


- Abundance estimates not yet available
- Obtained effort and echolocation rate is known



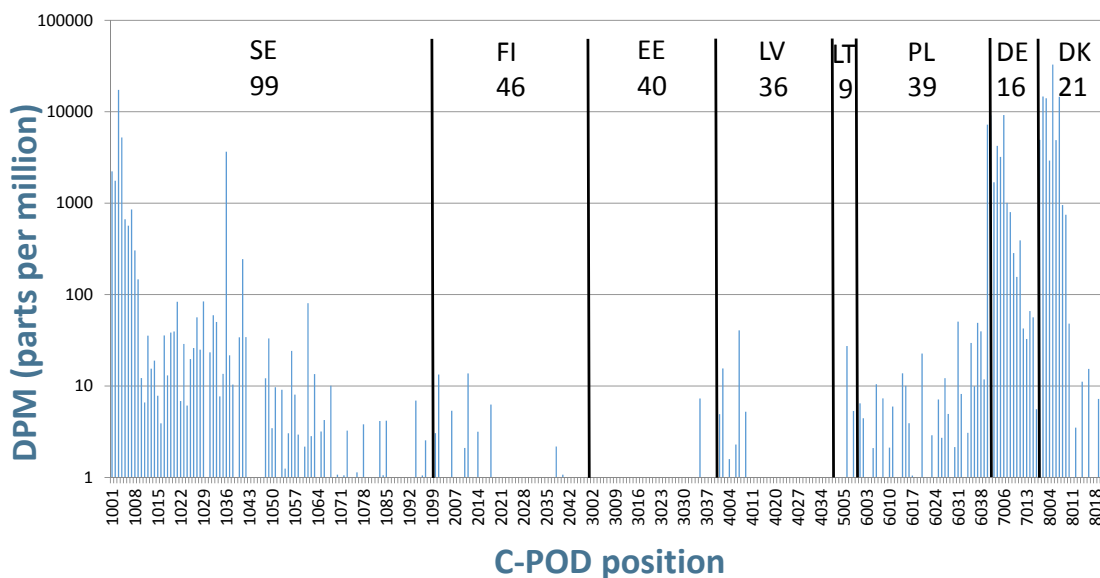
## Obtained effort C-POD data

- 413 yrs before cropping = 68% 😊
- 398 yrs after cropping (playbacks and servicings removed)



## Recorded echolocation rate

- ~133,000 detection positive minutes (Hel1) in cropped data = 0.064%, range 0 – 3.3%

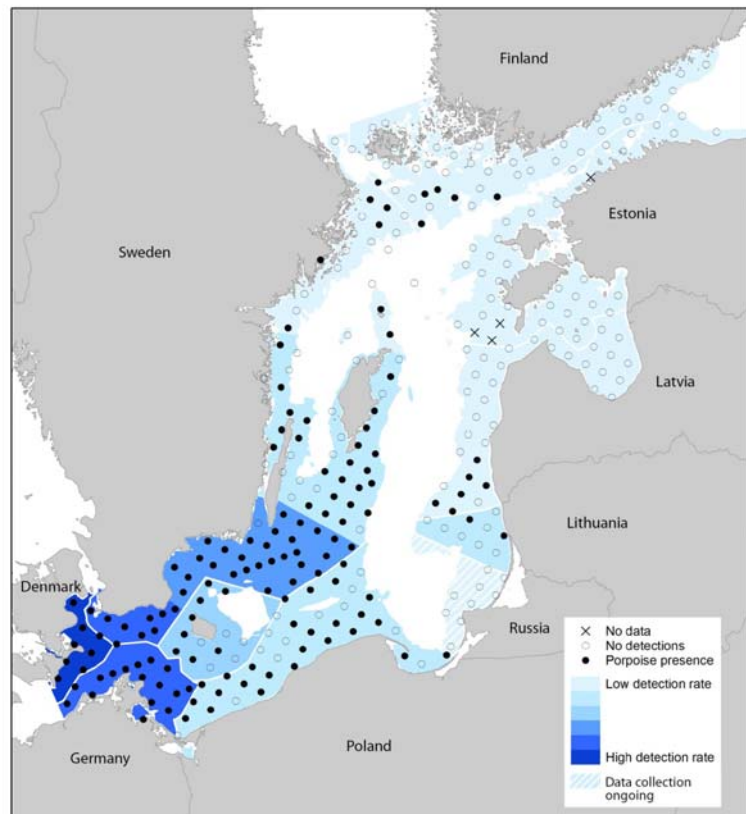


# Porpoise detection rate

- Hel1 detections after visual validation
- Mean % DPM per country (Sweden divided into 4 areas)

Of 304 positions:

- × No data: 4 (1.3%)
- Porpoise presence: 140 (46.1%)
- No detections: 160 (52.6%)



## Next steps 2014

- April: Abundance estimates, for the whole SAMBAH area and per country
- September: Spatially modelled density maps
- December: End of project conference



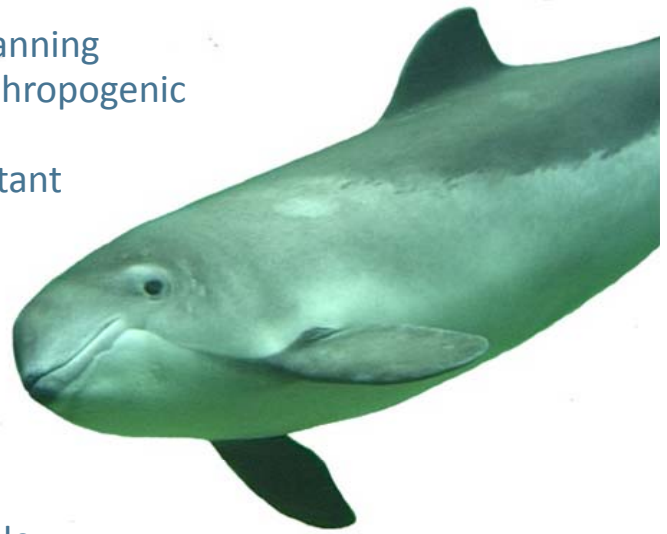
Photo: Florian Graner



# How can SAMBAH results be used in management?

## Spatially explicit results

- Useful for marine spatial planning
- Investigate overlap with anthropogenic activities
- What areas are most important to protect, and when?
- Specific and spatially and temporally restricted mitigation measures
- Develop indicators for the MSFD
- Sweden is identifying suitable areas for protection of porpoises based on SAMBAH results



## After SAMBAH

- BAUMM – Baltic Acoustic Umwelt of Marine Mammals
- MAMBO – MAnagement and conservation Measures for the rare Baltic sea Odontocete
- SAMBAH II

# BAUMM short version

## Assessing the effects of Baltic Sea marine mammals of noise from shipping.

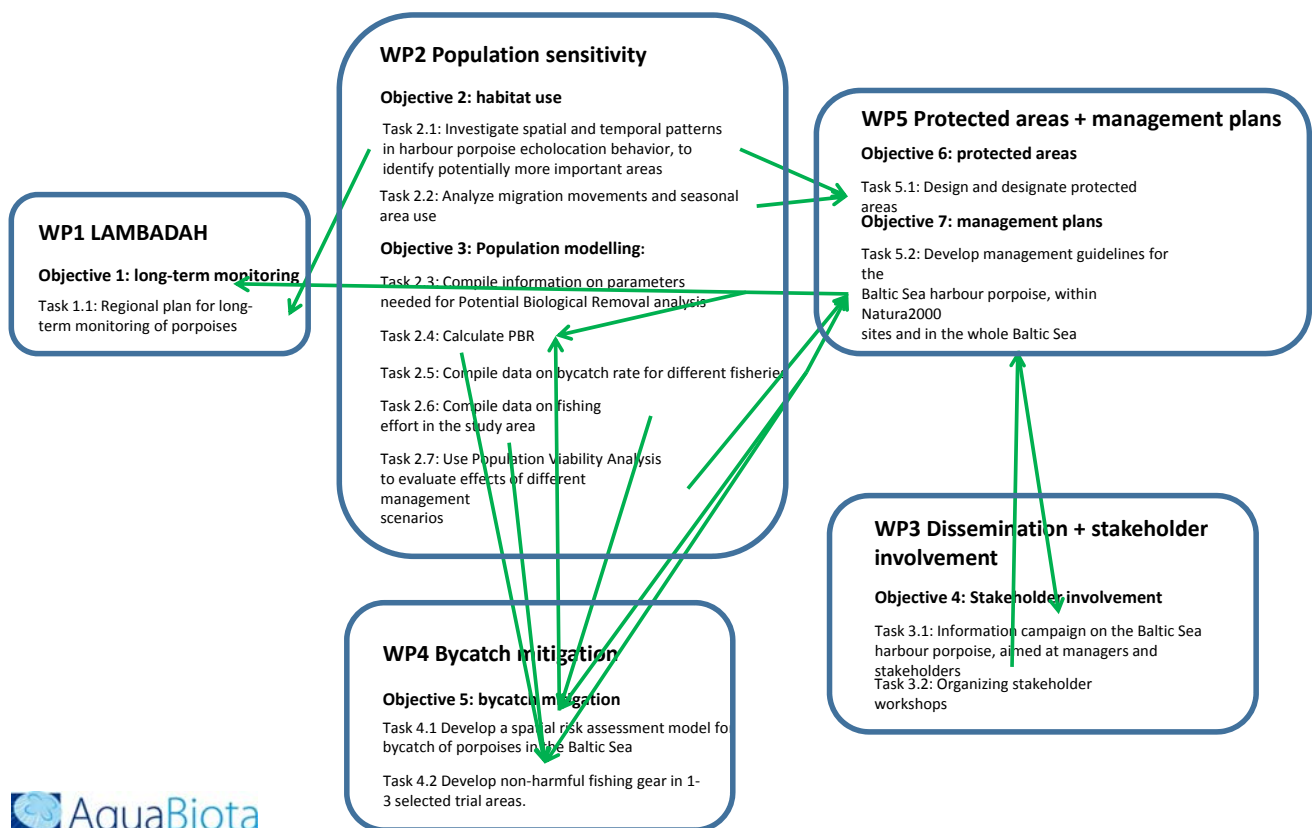
### Expected outcomes

- Estimate the effect of shipping noise on the hearing abilities and behavior of Baltic marine mammals
  - Comparing harbor porpoise distribution and acoustic activity in areas with little shipping and areas with considerable shipping (study areas: Lillebælt, Kullaberg).
  - Measure harbor porpoise foraging efficiency under ship noise conditions (prey capture trials Fjord&Bælt)
- Investigate fine-scale impact of underwater noise on harbour porpoise echolocation activity and/or behaviour in the Kattegat and Baltic Seas
- Investigate large-scale impact of underwater noise on harbour porpoise spatial distribution in the Baltic Sea
- Attempt to develop an indicator of the risk of impact of underwater noise on harbour porpoise habitat in the Kattegat and Baltic Seas.

### Methods:

- Broad approach consisting of studies both on captive and wild animals
- Making use of the excellent shipping and acoustic data from the Baltic Sea (from BIAS) and porpoise data (SAMBAH and LAMBDAH)

## MAMBO overview



# SAMBAH II

## Objectives:

- Abundance estimate to compare to SAMBAH
- Smaller confidence interval - fine-tuning methodology from SAMBAH

## When?

- Fieldwork approximately 10 years after SAMBAH fieldwork



**Thank you  
for  
listening!**

**[www.sambah.org](http://www.sambah.org)**

## PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A CONSULTANCY: FISHERIES LEGISLATION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

### **Background**

The ASCOBANS Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan) was concluded in 2002 and an updated version adopted by Parties to the Agreement in 2009. It outlines necessary measures for enabling the critically endangered subpopulation of harbour porpoises in the Baltic Proper, which now amounts to not more than a few hundred individuals, to recover both in numbers and range. The aim of the Jastarnia Plan is to restore the population of harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea to at least 80% of the carrying capacity. To do this, Parties aim to reduce bycatch, support research, establish a network of marine protected areas, educate and engage the public and cooperate with relevant stakeholders.

One obstacle to assessing the situation and gleaning important information on the causes of mortality and health status of porpoises in the Baltic Sea are the low levels of reporting of bycatch and recovery of fresh carcasses. In order to gain an overview of the relevant practices and regulations in the Baltic Sea region, the Secretariat, through the assistance of a consultant, was requested *“to produce a synopsis of bycatch-related regulations of relevance to individual fishermen, especially with regard to legal sanctions for bycatch and incentives for those delivering carcasses with a view to using the carcasses obtained for porpoise conservation research, irrespective of whether such incentives are laid down in national legislation”* (Action Point 6 of the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Jastarnia Group).

### **Responsibilities**

Under the general supervision of the Head of the Aquatic Species Team of UNEP/CMS and the day-to-day supervision of the ASCOBANS Coordinator, the consultant carries out the following functions:

In consultation with the ASCOBANS Coordinators and Members of the Jastarnia Group,

1. For each country of the Baltic Sea region, establish
  - a) which bycatch-related regulations apply to individual fishermen
  - b) whether legal sanctions exist for bycatch of harbour porpoises
  - c) whether incentives are offered for those delivering carcasses with a view to using the carcasses obtained for porpoise conservation research, irrespective of whether such incentives are laid down in national legislation
2. Analyse the implications of European legislation (existing and forthcoming)
3. Produce a synopsis of findings in time for the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Jastarnia Group (spring 2015)

### **Qualifications**

Applicants should demonstrate their relevant experience. In particular, the consultant is expected to have:

- University degree in law, preferably specialised in international or environmental law
- Excellent organizational skills and the ability to work independently
- Excellent communication skills in written and spoken English; further languages spoken in the Baltic Sea Area are an asset

### **Remuneration and Duration of Contract**

This output-based contract is for a period of three months. The offer should detail availability and proposed timelines.

Applicants are requested to make an offer specifying the total fee expected.

## LIST OF PROJECTS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF THE JASTARNIA GROUP

### **Finished projects:**

#### **Collecting ghost nets in the Baltic Sea**

WWF Poland, Lithuanian Fund for Nature; status: finished; 2011-2012

The pilot project titled “Collecting ghost nets in the Baltic Sea” implemented in Poland in 2011 demonstrated the need to continue the undertaking and to extend its spatial scope to include the waters of other Baltic region countries. In 2012 Lithuania joined the efforts to remove ghost nets from the Baltic Sea. During the years 2011-2012 there were five fishing vessels engaged in retrieving actions. There were 82 days of actions at sea in Poland and Lithuania and 10 shipwrecks were cleaned up by divers. As a result 27.3 tonnes of ghost nets were retrieved. The other outcome of the project was creating interactive map of hooks in Polish and Lithuanian waters.

Contact person: Piotr Prędko, WWF Poland, [ppredki@wwf.pl](mailto:ppredki@wwf.pl)

### **Projects already running:**

#### **Monitoring Bycatch with CCTV**

From January 2014-May 2015 DTU-Aqua is running a project with up to ten Danish gillnet vessels monitoring harbour porpoise and other bycatch in ICES areas 22-25 by use of CCTV cameras. Estimated bycatch from this project will be available after May 2015.

Contact persons: Finn Larsen & Lotte Kindt-Larsen, DTU-Aqua, [fl@aqu.dtu.dk](mailto:fl@aqu.dtu.dk)

#### **Bycatch mitigation**

A project on different aspects of mitigating bycatch of harbour porpoises is conducted during 2013-14. The project includes assessing the acoustical properties of gillnets in the wild, trials of Banana-pingers, tests of pingers with short range, research on habituation and habitat exclusion caused by pingers, and assessing the effects of pinger deployment in the Natura 2000 area Storebælt. Results will become available after June 2014.

Contact persons: Finn Larsen & Lotte Kindt-Larsen, DTU-Aqua, [fl@aqu.dtu.dk](mailto:fl@aqu.dtu.dk), and Magnus Wahlberg, SDU, [magnus@biology.sdu.dk](mailto:magnus@biology.sdu.dk)

#### **Effects of pinger deployment in Natura2000 areas**

A project assessing the effects of pinger deployment in ten selected Natura 2000 areas was begun in 2013 and will end in May 2015. Results will become available after August 2015.

Contact persons: Finn Larsen, [fl@aqu.dtu.dk](mailto:fl@aqu.dtu.dk), Lotte Kindt-Larsen & Thomas Kirk Sørensen, DTU-Aqua.

#### **Development and testing of alternative fishing gear**

A project aimed at further developing and testing fishing gear that can be viable alternatives to gillnets will be carried out during 2014-16 in collaboration with the Swedish Agricultural University.

Contact persons: Finn Larsen, [fl@aqu.dtu.dk](mailto:fl@aqu.dtu.dk), & Lotte Kindt-Larsen, DTU-Aqua, and Sara Königson, SLU, [sara.konigson@slu.se](mailto:sara.konigson@slu.se).

### **SAMBAH – Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise**

[www.sambah.org](http://www.sambah.org)

Running 2010-2015

Contact person: Mats Amundin, Kolmården Wildlife Park, [mats.amundin@kolmarden.com](mailto:mats.amundin@kolmarden.com)

### **RUMBAH – Russian Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise**

Running 2013-2014

Russian SAMBAH, C-POD deployed at ten positions for one year. Analysis will be minimal due to lack of funding.

Contact person: Irina Trukhanova, BfN, [irina\\_trukhanova@yahoo.com](mailto:irina_trukhanova@yahoo.com)

### **BIAS – Baltic Sea Information on the Acoustic Soundscape**

[www.biasproject.eu](http://www.biasproject.eu)

Running 2012-2016.

Objectives and expected results:

1. Awareness of draft Baltic Sea standards and tools for management of underwater noise  
A thorough basis for standardized and appropriate management of underwater noise in the Baltic Sea
2. Demonstration of national and regional advantages of a transnational approach for management of underwater noise  
A plan for cost-efficient and regionally coordinated management of underwater noise in the Baltic Sea
3. Initial assessment of underwater noise in the Baltic Sea  
GIS layers serving as a thorough basis for future management decisions on human activities generating underwater noise, and for future evaluation of indicators on the environmental status of the Baltic Sea
4. Implementation of a planning tool for straightforward management of intermittent underwater noise sources  
Experience and knowledge of the user-friendly BIAS tool by a national responsible authority  
Example of the above demonstrated for all other EU Member States bordering the Baltic Sea
5. Establishment of draft Baltic Sea standards and tools for management of underwater noise  
Draft Baltic Sea standards for recording, handling and processing data on underwater noise  
Data-sharing platform containing standardized and quality assured data on underwater noise in the Baltic Sea

Contact person: Peter Sigraý, FOI, [peter.sigraý@foi.se](mailto:peter.sigraý@foi.se)



### **Baltic Smart Gear**

WWF Poland, WWF Germany and WWF Denmark; status: ongoing; began in February 2014

The project "Baltic Smart Gear" aims at closing the gap between the importance of reducing negative impact of human activities on marine species and habitats and the interest of having a productive fisheries sector in the Baltic Sea.

Within this project a new alternative to the conventional gill nets fishing gear will be developed in order to reduce bycatch of endangered marine mammals (e.g. harbour porpoises) and protected sea birds. A successful development of a new net will help to fulfil the obligation of all EU member states to develop management plans for their designated Natura 2000 sites. A team-work and collaboration between fisheries research institutes, gear technologists, active fishermen and nature conservation NGOs will ensure synergies, and field testing will be conducted in a joint approach in waters of Germany, Denmark and Poland. The exchange of knowledge and know-how will be conducted in regular meetings with the different project partners.

This project is thought to increase the sustainability of economically important fisheries and at the same time work towards the protection and improved management of the most endangered marine species of the Baltic Sea. It aims at providing concrete steps to how implement a new gear in selected areas and should serve as hands-on role model to be copied by neighbouring fisheries organisations and nature conservation management authorities. If the project is successful, the new fishing gear, alternative to conventional gill nets, could revolutionise fishing and would mean a substantial increase in sustainability due to a significant reduction of bycatch of many endangered species and simultaneously without harm to the fishing sector viability. If the gear is proven to be successful in other regions, such a development would be of global interest.

WWF Germany

WWF Poland

WWF Denmark

Karoline Schacht

Piotr Predki

Mette Blaesbjerg

[schacht@wwf.de](mailto:schacht@wwf.de)

[ppredki@wwf.pl](mailto:ppredki@wwf.pl)

[m.blaesbjerg@wwf.dk](mailto:m.blaesbjerg@wwf.dk)

### **Protecting the habitats of marine mammals and birds**

WWF Poland and the University of Gdansk; status: ongoing; November 2012 - December 2014

The project aims to protect Baltic mammals (grey seal and harbour porpoise) and coastal breeding birds (ringed plover, common tern, sandwich tern, little tern and oystercatcher) from anthropogenic factors as well as to make the recommendations of appropriate management measures in the area of the Vistula river mouth and the Vistula Spit. Project partner (Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk) conducts research on harbour porpoises' occurrence (using C-PODs) and fishing effort in the area of the Vistula river mouth and the Vistula Spit. Other project activities are i.a. maintaining the network of 200 'Blue Patrol' volunteers all over the Polish coast working for the monitoring and protection of marine habitats and species; maintaining a database on marine mammals and birds, based on the results of observations of the Polish coast as well as rising public awareness by publishing educational "Blue Guide" and putting informational boards near 80 entrances to the beach on the whole Polish coast.

Contact person: Monika Łaskawska-Wolszczak, WWF Poland, [mlaskawska@wwf.pl](mailto:mlaskawska@wwf.pl)

### **LAMBDAH – Long-term Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic and Danish harbour porpoises**

Not funded, except through C-PODs from SAMBAH, working time in BIAS and data handling by AquaBiota. Fieldwork ongoing in cooperation with BIAS. Dealing with data from C-PODs deployed together with BIAS noise sensors. Analyses now split and added into BAUMM\* and MAMBO\*:

Contact person: Julia Carlström, AquaBiota Water Research, [Julia.carlstrom@aquabiota.se](mailto:Julia.carlstrom@aquabiota.se)

### **Upcoming projects:**

#### **BAUMM – Baltic Acoustic Umwelt for Marine Mammals**

Proposal ready, seeking financing.

Expected outcomes

- Estimate the effect of shipping noise on the hearing abilities and behavior of Baltic marine mammals
  - Comparing harbor porpoise distribution and acoustic activity in areas with little shipping and areas with considerable shipping (study areas: Lillebælt, Kullaberg).
  - Measure harbor porpoise foraging efficiency under ship noise conditions (prey capture trials Fjord&Bælt)
- Investigate fine-scale impact of underwater noise on harbour porpoise echolocation activity and/or behaviour in the Kattegat and Baltic Seas
- Investigate large-scale impact of underwater noise on harbour porpoise spatial distribution in the Baltic Sea
- Attempt to develop an indicator of the risk of impact of underwater noise on harbour porpoise habitat in the Kattegat and Baltic Seas.

Methods:

- Broad approach consisting of studies both on captive and wild animals
- Making use of the excellent shipping and acoustic data from the Baltic Sea (from BIAS) and porpoise data (SAMBAH and LAMBDAH)

Contact person: Magnus Wahlberg, SDU, [Magnus@biology.sdu.dk](mailto:Magnus@biology.sdu.dk)

#### **MAMBO – Management and Conservation Measures for the rare Baltic Sea Odontocete**

Proposal to be written for LIFE 2015.

Project objectives:

The overall objective of the project is to ensure a sound management of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise population. To achieve this we will

- 1) \*Develop and evaluate a method and a plan for long-term, cost-effective monitoring of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise population abundance and distribution
- 2) Use SAMBAH data to gain new knowledge about porpoise migration and important areas for foraging and reproduction, which may be of high importance as protected areas
- 3) Identify potential removal and chances of population survival and determine the effects of different management scenarios through Population Viability Analysis and Potential Biological Removal for the population.

- 4) Start a process towards a sound management of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise through close cooperation with responsible authorities and building a strong stakeholder involvement.
- 5) Gathering information needed for bycatch mitigation, through the development of a spatial risk assessment model for bycatch of porpoises in the Baltic Sea, based on density of porpoises and fishing effort, and the development of non-harmful fishing gear in close cooperation with local fishermen in 1-3 selected trial areas.
- 6) Create protected areas (i.e. Natura2000 areas) for harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea.
- 7) Developing management guidelines for harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea, both for SACs and for the entire Baltic.

Contact person: Ida Carlén and Julia Carlström, AquaBiota Water Research, [ida.carlen@aquabiota.se](mailto:ida.carlen@aquabiota.se) and [Julia.carlstrom@aquabiota.se](mailto:Julia.carlstrom@aquabiota.se)

### **SAMBAH II – Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise II**

Proposal to be written within the next few years

Objectives:

- Abundance estimate and density maps to compare to SAMBAH
- Smaller confidence interval - fine-tuning methodology from SAMBAH

When?

- Fieldwork approximately 10 years after SAMBAH fieldwork

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### **SCANS III**

Proposal being written and submitted during 2014?

## **PROPOSED REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE JASTARNIA GROUP**

### **1. Introduction**

The need for a Baltic harbour porpoise recovery plan was recognised for a considerable time not only by ASCOBANS, but also by other international bodies. In 2002, a recovery plan was elaborated under the auspices of ASCOBANS in a collaborative effort involving scientists, managers and stakeholders. This recovery plan is the culmination of a series of scientific initiatives and meetings. The Recovery Plan, now known as the Jastarnia Plan, was welcomed by the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the parties to ASCOBANS in Esbjerg, Denmark, in 2003. It calls for periodic reviews of the plan. The present revised plan is the result of the first such review.

Since 2005, annual meetings of the so-called Jastarnia Group have been held. This expert working group, composed of representatives from the environment and fisheries sectors of the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea, discusses progress made and further implementation priorities for the Jastarnia Plan and makes recommendations to the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.

In the process of reviewing the Jastarnia Plan, it was agreed that the Jastarnia Group should continue its work and act as a Steering Group for the Jastarnia Process, in accordance with the Terms of Reference below.

### **2. Terms of Reference**

The Jastarnia Group is a working group of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee within the meaning of Article 5.4 of the ASCOBANS Agreement. It is the Steering Group for the ASCOBANS Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises.

#### **a) Tasks**

The Jastarnia Group has the following tasks:

- Evaluate progress in the implementation of the Plan,
- Establish further implementation priorities;
- Promote the implementation of the Recovery Plan;
- Carry out the periodic reviews of the Plan.

#### **b) Composition**

The Group consists of representatives of all states bordering the Baltic Sea ("Baltic Sea States"), irrespective of their status as ASCOBANS Parties or Non-Party Range States, of the North Sea Coordinator, respectively the Chair of the North Sea Group, as well as Baltic Sea environmental non-governmental organisations and Baltic Sea fisheries organisations (hereinafter referred to as "Jastarnia Group Members"). Each Baltic Sea State shall be entitled to appoint two Jastarnia Group Members, one of whom shall represent the environmental sector, the other the fisheries sector and such Advisers as the Party may deem necessary.

Two Baltic Sea environmental non-governmental organizations and two Baltic Sea fisheries organizations designated by and representing the Baltic Sea environmental, respectively fisheries communities, shall be entitled to appoint one Jastarnia Group Member each and such Advisers as they may deem necessary. The participation of environmental NGOs and

Baltic Sea fisheries organizations is subject to approval by the Baltic Sea Parties prior to each meeting of the Jastarnia Group. In the event that the Chairperson of the Group is a representative of an NGO or a fisheries organization, this organization shall be granted a permanent seat in the group for the duration of that representative's term as chairperson.

The Jastarnia Group may, as appropriate, invite representatives of any other body or any individual qualified in cetacean conservation and management to participate in a meeting in the capacity of "Invited Experts".

### **c) Meetings**

The Jastarnia Group meets at least once annually.

### **d) Rules of Procedure**

Pursuant to Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, those Rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of the Jastarnia Group insofar as they are applicable.