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REPORT OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS JASTARNIA GROUP

0 Opening of the Joint Session North Sea Group and Jastarnia Group

The morning session of the Jastarnia Group Meeting was held in conjunction with the North Sea Group Meeting.

0.0 Welcoming Remarks

The Chair of the North Sea Group, Peter Evans (Sea Watch Foundation/European Cetacean Society) opened the meeting and thanked Rüdiger Stempel, Executive Secretary of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) and Chair of the Jastarnia Group, for kindly hosting the joint session of the North Sea and Jastarnia Groups. No changes were made to the agenda.

Participants introduced themselves during a brief tour de table. Peter Evans highlighted that the purpose of the session was to bring both groups together for joint development and that there were several topics of common interest.

0.1 Presentation by Invited Expert

Jacob Nabe-Nielsen (Aarhus University) presented his recent work: Update on the “Disturbance effects on the Harbour Porpoise Population in the North Sea” (DEPONS) project. The presentation is available [here](#).

Following several questions, Jacob Nabe-Nielsen pointed out that the response of fish to noise and how this in turn affected the harbour porpoises preying on the fish had not been incorporated into the model. Further data was needed.

0.2 Presentation by Chair Rüdiger Stempel, Common Wadden Sea Secretariat

Rüdiger Stempel gave a presentation available [here](#) on the work of the CWSS and the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation which was first agreed in 1978, with particular focus on those aspects relevant to the North Sea and Jastarnia Working Groups.

Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) highlighted that Harbour Porpoises were increasingly seen in deep tidal creeks and rivers and thus it was surprising that this Wadden Sea species was not specifically addressed by the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation. The group discussed the matter and agreed that it would be beneficial if the Advisory Committee made a recommendation for the Harbour Porpoise to be specifically addressed by the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and further suggested that collaboration with ASCOBANS should be strengthened. To this effect the ASCOBANS Secretariat would draft a letter with assistance from the group to be passed by the 23rd Meeting of the Advisory Committee (5-7 2017). This could then be forwarded through CWSS to the next meeting of the Wadden Sea Board later in the year, which was preparing a Ministerial conference in 2018 where such a decision could be taken.

0.3 Discussion on bycatch monitoring and mitigation

The chair highlighted that this was the first time ever that the North Sea Group and the Jastarnia Group (which also covered the Belt Sea population) had met back-to-back and

suggested to spend the last session of the joint meeting discussing how participants felt the groups should meet in future.

In the past, the North Sea Group was always held back-to-back with the Advisory Committee, which meant that it was easy for AC participants to also attend the North Sea Group's meetings, which in turn led to a higher number of participants compared to the current meeting. Peter Evans pointed out that an additional reason for the relatively low number of participants this year might be the relative remoteness of Wilhelmshaven. Rüdiger Stempel argued that the advantage of having the meeting of a Working Group well-in-advance of an AC was that it was possible to prepare documents and other matters, which could not be produced overnight.

Aline Kühl-Stenzel (Secretariat) pointed out that following the adoption of [Resolution 8.1](#) in 2016 the national reporting format had been adjusted to a four-year cycle whereby each annual report focussed on a selected number of sub-items. For 2016, for example, Parties were reporting on underwater noise, ocean energy, unexploded ordnance and marine spatial planning and the AC23 later this year would therefore also focus on these. She highlighted that in future the Working Groups of the three Harbour Porpoise Action Plans (i.e. North Sea, Jastarnia, Belt Sea) may also want to align with and contribute to this process and focus more strongly on bycatch and marine debris in 2018, for example, which would be subjects of focus for the AC24 next year.

Signe Sveegard (Denmark) agreed that focussed WG meetings would make sense and that there was no need for updates across all areas of the Action Plans each year. Meike Scheidat was in favour of a North Sea Group meeting only every two years, not least given the stable population status of harbour porpoises in the North Sea, which had become apparent during the SCANS-III survey (see [presentation](#)). The Belt Sea population also had a stable population and so in this sense this Action Plan fitted nicely with the North Sea one, said Signe Sveegard. The harbour porpoises in the Baltic proper however clearly had an unfavourable conservation status and thus annual meetings should take place for the Jastarnia Plan.

Sara Königson (Sweden) added that it would be sufficient for future Jastarnia Group Meetings to last two days.

Penina Blankett (Finland) stated that if the topics of both Working Groups were similar it would be a good idea to have back-to-back meetings in the future. However, if the agenda items were too different she was not in favour of joint meetings of both groups. Rüdiger Stempel noted that a joint meeting of both groups might be of value prior to a Meeting of Parties (MOP). Meike Scheidat suggested that in future one might want meetings focussing on a particular subject (e.g. bycatch) with participation across all groups, instead of meetings that focussed on a particular Action Plan. These meetings might even evolve into a similar format to a Scientific Council, which would take place prior to the AC.

Returning to the subject of bycatch, the Chair and Secretariat explained that the European Parliament and the Council were due to vote on the proposed "Regulation on the conservation of fishery resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures (2016/0074(COD)). There were many concerns about the recent draft put forward by MEP Mato, Member of the European Parliament from Spain, not least a proposed amendment which would no longer ban driftnets in the Baltic. An open letter from scientists was currently in preparation by Whale and Dolphin Conservation, WWF and other NGOs. The meeting agreed that it would be beneficial if participants and other relevant scientists signed the letter.

0.4 Discussion on education and outreach

The meeting did not have sufficient time to discuss this item.

1 Opening of the 13th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

1.1 Welcoming Remarks

The Chair, Rüdiger Stempel, Executive Secretary of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

1.2 Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair presented the draft Agenda and asked for any comments or suggestions for amending it. He noted that this was a trial run of a joint meeting simultaneously covering both the [Belt Sea Action Plan](#) and the [Jastarnia Action Plan](#) in an integrated fashion. The Agenda was adopted without amendments.

3. Implementation of the Jastarnia Plan (JP2016) and the Western Baltic, Belt Sea and Kattegat Plan (WBBKP 2012)

Participants noted with concern that there were a large number of Action Points (APs), 72 in total, which had come out of the 12th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group and which the 13th Meeting was asked to report on and review. It was hard for policy makers to elevate such a large number of actions to a higher political level, more focus was needed. Looking at the list of 72 APs it was also hard to determine when these had first been proposed; participants were concerned that many of these APs had been around for many years, but implementation was lagging behind.

It was noted that there were some APs which were simply a reminder for the Secretariat and participants, but would not require formal approval from the AC. It was agreed that these Action Points would be kept in an “internal list” from now on, which would only be published as an Annex to the Jastarnia Group’s meeting report (see Annex 4). It was agreed that the politically important points and those with cost implications, not least for the Secretariat, would be collected in the standard list of Action Points, which would be published as a separate Annex (see Annex 3). The latter would be submitted to the AC, as usual.

3.1. Involvement of Stakeholders

3.1.1. a. JP Action COOP-001: Involve stakeholders in the work of reducing bycatch of harbour porpoises.

b. WBBK Rec.1: Actively seek to involve fishermen in the implementation of the plan and mitigation measures to ensure reducing bycatch.

Related Action Point (AP) recommended by the 12th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group:

(JG12/AP8) *A targeted approach to involving stakeholders such as fishermen and fisheries organizations should be adopted. Jastarnia Group Members and the Secretariat should make efforts to encourage fisheries organizations to participate in the Jastarnia Group Meetings.*

Members were invited to provide updates on the implementation of the Action Points. Kataryzna Kamińska (Poland) said that Poland tried to involve fishermen in the meetings of international groups but the lack of English language skills of the fishermen was a considerable obstacle. Penina Blankett (Finland) pointed out that a similar problem existed in Finland, but that younger fishermen did often understand and speak English well. However, she pointed

out that the bigger issue was that fishermen did not see the benefit of coming to the meeting and that it may indeed not be the most effective forum for facilitating change at the fisheries level. Sarah. Königson and Signe Sveegard agreed with the latter. Instead of the Jastarnia Group, the Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC) might be the appropriate forum for fishermen. Patricia Brtnik (Germany) pointed out that it depended on the agenda topic and envisaged outputs whether participation by fishermen was appropriate.

Ida Carlén (Coalition Clean Baltic) said that involving individual fishermen may be difficult due to the language barrier and the fact that funding was not available to support participation at Jastarnia meetings. Inviting fisheries organizations such as the [LIFE group](#) might be more successful. It was noted that in the past ASCOBANS had funded the participation of a fisherman at a Jastarnia meeting. Penina Blankett and Katarzyna Kamińska noted that when it came to the regional implementation of the new Data Collection Framework (DCF) fishermen would be closely involved in the Regional Coordination Meetings.

Signe Sveegard suggested to move **JG12/AP8** to the “internal list” of APs and to only note the matter within the minutes of the report. Instead the meeting should focus on higher priorities for action. The meeting agreed.

(JG12/AP9) *Parties should involve stakeholders, including fishermen and fisheries organizations, and urge them to accept responsibility for eliminating the potential risk of bycatch in gillnets and to take the necessary actions to obtain this goal. One way of making this into a positive market force is to develop a green policy for the fisheries, promoting a “porpoise free fish” label. In such a process it is recommended to seek advice from similar label initiatives on the market and to integrate this green policy into the public relations and awareness campaigns discussed below.*

No action had taken place in Denmark and Finland. Patricia Brtnik updated the group on action in Germany: Firstly, management plans for the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of the North and Baltic Seas were currently being developed. Secondly, in the German Baltic waters, in the months of July – August (until 2019) the fishermen voluntarily agreed to reduce gillnet use in order to reduce cetacean and seabird bycatch („Freiwillige Vereinbarung zum Schutz von Schweinswalen und tauchenden Meeressäugern”). This voluntary agreement had been made between Landesfischereiverband, Fischereischutzverband, Ostsee Info-Center (OIC) in order for the fishermen to voluntarily reduce gillnet usage in the months of July and August in order to ultimately reduce cetacean bycatch.

Sara Königson reported that Sweden had started to work on the issue. Katarzyna Kamińska said that in Poland harbour porpoise-friendly fishing practises were being promoted and that the introduction of a certification/labelling scheme was being discussed. Monika Lesz (Poland) confirmed that Poland was looking into the application of the Marine Stewardship Council’s label. To date the Polish gillnet cod fishery had applied for an MSC certificate, but had not received it. The Action Point (**JG13/AP1/JP/WBBK**) was amended.

(JG12/AP10) *Parties are encouraged to make funding available for a consultant to advise on a) whether a “porpoise free fish” label would best be managed nationally, regionally, ASCOBANS-wide or in another manner, and b) how best to devise an operating system for such a label assuring the appropriate reception by markets, transparency and clarity of the labelling process.*

Despite the AP no funding had been made available by countries. The meeting noted that most APs required funding and felt that this particular one was superfluous given other APs (e.g. JG13/AP2/JP/WBBK). This discussion should also be had under the Bycatch Working Group and at the AC. AP10 was deleted.

JG12/AP12) *The Jastarnia Group recommends that the Secretariat approach the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and other similar certification organizations to urge them to prioritize bycatch of cetaceans in the evaluation criteria applied for certifying fisheries and to*

promote porpoise-friendly fishing gear and other mitigation measures as described in the Jastarnia Plan.

Aline Kühl-Stenzel briefed the group that a teleconference had been arranged with the executive management of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) together with the chair of the Bycatch Working Group (Peter Evans). Guidance from the group as to the desirable outcome would be welcomed. It was agreed that, based on the outcome of this dialogue, the Jastarnia, North Sea and Bycatch Working Groups would advise on potential next steps for developing a porpoise-friendly label. **JG13/AP2/JP/WBBK** was drafted and agreed.

(JG12/AP56) The Secretariat, making use of a simple questionnaire, should request Parties to 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.

Due to other priorities and due to the medium priority level this AP had not been implemented to date. Participants agreed that it would be more effective to include this activity in the 2018 national reporting cycle (reporting for 2017), which would cover bycatch (see Resolution 8.1), instead of circulating a stand-alone questionnaire. The AP was amended accordingly and included in the “internal list” of Action Points.

(JG12/AP57) 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.

Sweden had developed two dialogue forums and more forums were planned. Germany used to conduct such dialogue forums. In Poland the Maritime office had organized a forum, however there were no forums specifically for Natura 2000. For management plans stakeholder participation played a key role and such forums had been organized. Denmark would like to alert other Parties to the potential benefits of proceeding in this way, thus the AP was kept (**JG13/AP3/JP/WBBK**).

The remaining three APs had been covered in the previous discussions and amended APs and were thus removed

(JG12/AP59) The Secretariat should relay the Jastarnia Group’s request for advice as to whether the revised MSC assessment standards meet ASCOBANS’ requirements to the Bycatch Working Group.

(JG12/AP60) 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.

(JG12/AP61) The Secretariat should invite an MSC representative to the next Jastarnia Group meeting.

Action Points

- 1) **JG13/AP1/JP/WBBK:** Parties should involve stakeholders, including fishermen and fisheries organizations, and urge them to accept responsibility for eliminating the potential risk of bycatch in gillnets and to take the necessary actions to obtain this goal. The Secretariat and Parties should continually contact fisheries organizations to make them aware of the importance of recovering carcasses of bycaught animals. (previously **JG12/AP9**)
- 2) **JG13/AP2/JP/WBBK:** Based on the outcome of the dialogue between the ASCOBANS Secretariat and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), the Jastarnia Group recommends that options for and implications of developing a porpoise-friendly label be examined jointly

by the Jastarnia Group, North Sea Group and Bycatch Working Group of the Advisory Committee. **(new)**

- 3) **JG13/AP3/JP/WBBK:** Noting the successful Natura 2000 dialogue forums conducted in Denmark, Parties are encouraged to consider establishing a similar format for the stakeholder working group. **(JG12/AP57)**

3.1.2 JP Action PACB-01: Improve communication and education for increased public awareness and collection of live observations and dead specimens of the Baltic harbour porpoise

***(JG12/AP35)** Each country is encouraged to designate one website for reporting of sightings and strandings by the public. The Secretariat should place the URLs on the ASCOBANS website.*

Finland had two websites set up and would send the links to the Secretariat. Germany also had several websites. Sweden had three and was currently looking into integrating and harmonizing these. Poland had been waiting for further instructions. Participants encouraged Poland to look at those websites that had already been developed in other countries, recognizing that it might however be difficult to fully understand them because they were always in national languages. The AP remained **(JG13/AP4/JP/WBBK)**.

***(JG12/AP36)** There should be an exchange of information between the sighting and stranding databases as appropriate. GIS referenced data should be submitted to HELCOM regularly*

Finland, Germany and Sweden reported regular submissions and exchange of information with HELCOM. Poland was currently not reporting to HELCOM. Sweden pointed out that this was an issue for HELCOM rather than ASCOBANS and that it should be the HELCOM Seal expert group and the HELCOM State and Conservation working group that should call upon Parties to submit this information. Therefore it was agreed to remove the AP.

***(JG12/AP37)** 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.*

Peter Evans highlighted how effective the National Whale and Dolphin Watch of the Seawatch Foundation had been in raising awareness of cetacean conservation. He would be happy to make the webpage content, App and model available as a template for any Parties keen to develop a website on sightings and strandings. Signe Sveegard reminded participants of the Joint Cetacean Protocol, which was directly relevant to ASCOBANS. Denmark and Sweden proposed to make the AP more general by removing the second sentence. It was adopted as such **(JG13/AP5/JP/WBBK)**.

***(JG12/AP38)** Information on the impacts of anthropogenic pressures (bycatch, noise, pollution, disturbance etc.) on cetaceans should be made available on the ASCOBANS website. The Jastarnia Group is invited to provide comments and suggestions for improvement of the existing pages.*

Participants felt that the sections on the new webpage were well-written and accurate. The AP was therefore deleted.

Action Points

- 4) **JG13/AP4/JP/WBBK:** Each country is encouraged to designate one website for reporting sightings and strandings by the public. The Secretariat should place the URLs on the ASCOBANS website. **(JG12/AP35)**

- 5) **JG13/AP5/JP/WBBK:** Parties should establish programmes for recording opportunistic sightings and strandings, preferably in a coordinated way for all Baltic Sea States, and deliver the information gained through these programmes to the HELCOM database on a regular basis. **(JG12/AP37)**

3.1.3 a. JP Action COOP-02: Strive for close cooperation between ASCOBANS and other international bodies

b. WBBKP Rec.2: Cooperate with and inform other relevant bodies about the Conservation Plan

(JG12/AP6) A small drafting group should develop briefing notes on ASCOBANS positions regarding bycatch, insofar as possible in consultation with the North Sea Group. These should be used by anyone representing ASCOBANS at Baltic ACs and other meetings of relevant EU and Baltic Sea bodies in order to maintain a consistent and appropriate approach.

The Bycatch Working Group and the North Sea Group had in the past produced such briefing notes and had reached out to the European Commission accordingly. Finland, Germany, Sweden and Poland would welcome further briefing notes of this kind in future while Denmark felt this was not necessary. Peter Evans volunteered to put together an updated brief and the meeting agreed to move the AP to the “internal list”.

(JG12/AP39) The recommendations of the Jastarnia Group should be forwarded to all relevant organisations active in the Baltic. –

Participants agreed to forward relevant outcomes to HELCOM, ICES, EU, the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Baltic Sea Fisheries Forum (Baltfish). The proposal by Iwona Pawliczka (Poland) to contact NATO has to be endorsed by the AC.

(JG12/AP40) 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.

The meeting felt that the intention of this AP had been adequately covered by JG13/AP1/JP/WBBK and removed AP40.

(JG12/AP41) Parties are strongly encouraged to fulfil their obligations under the current Regulation 812/2004 and the Habitats Directive.

Participants felt that the same argumentation as under **(JG12/AP36)** applied, i.e. that it was not ASCOBANS’ role to call for the implementation of EU policy. Therefore the AP was removed.

(JG12/AP42) Parties should convey positions agreed within ASCOBANS, such as those available at

http://www.ascobans.org/sites/default/files/basic_page_documents/ASCOBANS_Recommendations_EUBycatchLegislation_Final.pdf to the appropriate fora at the European level.

This matter had been dealt with earlier and therefore the AP was removed.

(JG12/AP43) Parties are urged to provide all relevant data to the HELCOM harbour porpoise database.

This matter had been dealt with earlier and therefore the AP was removed.

(JG12/AP44) Parties should designate contact persons dealing with the Baltic Harbour Porpoise Database operated by HELCOM. The Secretariat should remind Parties that have not yet done so (Lithuania, Poland and Sweden) to provide the details of these contact persons to the Secretariats of ASCOBANS and HELCOM.

Sweden and Poland had provided details, as requested. Lithuania had not taken any action and the meeting agreed that the Secretariat would remind Lithuania (see internal list).

(JG12/AP45) The Secretariat should collaborate with HELCOM SEAL to obtain data on harbour porpoise strandings in the Russian territories of the Baltic Sea.

Given that the Russian Federation was not an ASCOBANS Party, it was unclear what added value the Secretariat could offer. The AP was removed in light of other priorities.

(JG12/AP46) The Jastarnia Group acknowledges the progress regarding the cooperation between the Jastarnia Group and relevant meetings of HELCOM. The Jastarnia Group promotes further cooperation with HELCOM SEAL and will strive to cooperate with the HELCOM Fish Group. Further, HELCOM should continue to be invited to take part in the Jastarnia Group meetings.

The AP remained important and was kept in the list (**JG13/AP7/JP/WBBK**).

(JG12/AP47) The Jastarnia Group should step up cooperation with the Baltic Advisory Committee.

Participants felt that the Jastarnia group should step up cooperation with the Working Group on Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management under the Baltic Sea Advisory Council. The AP was amended and moved to the “internal list”.

(JG12/AP48) The Secretariat and Parties should continually contact fisheries organizations to make them aware of the importance of recovering bycaught animals.

Following the suggestion by Denmark, it was agreed to remove this AP since it was covered by **JG13/AP1/JP/WBBK**.

Action Points

- 6) **JG13/AP6/JP/WBBK:** The recommendations of the Jastarnia and WBBK Plans should be forwarded by the Secretariat to all relevant organisations active in the Baltic. (**JG12/AP39**)
- 7) **JG13/AP7/JP/WBBK:** The Jastarnia Group acknowledges the progress regarding the cooperation between the Jastarnia Group and relevant meetings of HELCOM. The Jastarnia Group promotes further cooperation with HELCOM SEAL and will strive to cooperate with the HELCOM Fish Group. Further, HELCOM should continue to be invited to take part in the Jastarnia Group meetings. (**JG12/AP46**)

3.2 Abundance and Distribution

JP “Monitor and estimate abundance and distribution”

WBBKP Objective d.: “Monitoring the status of the population”

3.2.1 JP Action RES-01: Improve knowledge on harbour porpoise population structure in the Baltic region

(JG12/AP16) Parties are urged to continue to submit, as they become available, all results on genetic, morphological and other biological research dealing with the stock identity of Baltic porpoises, including results from ongoing relevant studies.

Patricia Brtnik briefed participants on first results published by Ralf Tiedemann (who had attended JG12 as invited expert), namely on a paper entitled “Spatially Explicit Analysis of Genome-Wide SNPs detects subtle Population Structure in a mobile Marine Mammal, the Harbour Porpoise”. To advance this work additional samples would be helpful and the group was encouraged to engage their network(s) to provide these. There would be an update at the 14th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group. The AP was amended to be included in the national reporting process and was moved to the “internal list”.

3.2.2 JP Action MON-01: Implement and harmonize long-term continual acoustic harbour porpoise monitoring

(JG12/AP30) Parties should continue to explore the possibility of a joint monitoring effort and to promote the collection of data at the sub-regional and local levels based on the methods adopted by SAMBAH. Progress should be reviewed in 2017.

Finland currently had 25 C-Pods deployed in Finnish waters. In Sweden there were 11 stations out at sea since April/May 2017. Germany continues with its long-term acoustic monitoring programme. A second project was also in place. Denmark did not currently have a project. The AP was updated.

Action Points

- 8) **JG13/AP8/JP:** Parties should continue and step up their joint monitoring efforts and to promote the collection of data at the sub-regional and local levels based on the methods adopted by SAMBAH. Progress should be reviewed annually. **(JG12/AP30)**

3.2.3 JP Action RES-02: Improve methods for estimation of absolute density and abundance of the Baltic harbour porpoise

This matter remained important, but did not require a specific AP.

3.2.4 JP Action MON-02: Carry out full-scale surveys of harbour porpoise abundance and distribution

(JG12/AP17) ASCOBANS and the Parties should explore the possibility of co-funding and/or otherwise supporting dedicated follow-up studies for SAMBAH, among other things with a view to assessing trends.

The Action Point was kept since follow-up from SAMBAH was critically important. Ida Carlén updated the group that discussions in preparation for a follow-up project, known as SAMBAH-II, were underway.

(JG12/AP18) The monitoring of population developments should be considered an ongoing project that should continue for many years to come.

Participants felt that it was clear from the mandates of the two Action Plans that this matter was important and that this AP did not add value; it was therefore removed. The next AP was more specific.

3.2.5 WBBKP Rec.7: Estimate trends in abundance of harbour porpoises in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat

(JG12/AP65) 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.

The meeting noted the results of the SCANS-III survey, which had been discussed the day before within the North Sea group (see [presentation](#) by Meike Scheidat, Netherlands) and which covered the Belt Sea. The Action Point was kept.

Action Points

- 9) **JG13/AP9/JP**: The Jastarnia Group strongly encourages Parties to initiate SAMBAH-II, specifically in terms of fundraising, in order for fieldwork to start in 2021, ten years after SAMBAH. **(JG12/AP17)**
- 10) **JG13/AP9/WBBK**: Parties are strongly encouraged to continue to undertake and cooperate on inter-SCANS surveys of the WBBK harbour porpoise population and evaluate trends in population density and abundance. **(JG12/AP65)**

3.3 Bycatch

JP “Monitor, estimate and reduce bycatch”

WBBKP Objective b.: “Mitigation of bycatch”

WBBKP Objective c.: “Assessment of the bycatch level”

At the start of this session the debate focussed on the draft EU Regulation on the conservation of fishery resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures (2016/0074(COD)), which had already been discussed in the joint morning session. Katarzyna Kamińska mentioned that the draft measures to protect cetaceans proposed were similar to those in Regulation 812/2004. Participants raised considerable concerns regarding the proposed lifting of the driftnet ban in the Baltic. Penina Blankett pointed out that there would be Regional Meetings under Baltfish, which would be tasked with regional implementation of the new EU regulation 2016/0074(COD). The meeting agreed that the various ASCOBANS fora should try to engage with this regional implementation process, not least by engaging with Baltfish. New AP **JG13/AP10/JP/WBBK** was drafted and agreed.

Sara Königson gave a presentation on [“What’s going on in Sweden? Reducing bycatch of marine mammals and birds”](#), which sparked a lively debate on fisheries and seal management in Sweden.

***(JG12/AP29)** Based on a standardised reporting format, the Secretariat should ask Parties to provide information as to the definitions of the term ‘fisheries’, and rules and regulations applicable to the various types of fisheries in their national legislation. This information should be provided in time for the next JG meeting.*

Katarzyna Kamińska had sent an excel template for reporting on the definitions of the term “fisheries” to the Secretariat. The meeting made some minor amendments to the table and it was agreed that by the end of 2017 each country would submit one worksheet. The compilation of all worksheets should be tabled at the 14th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group. This would make it easier to understand, for example, in which countries the management of recreational fisheries was an issue and how exactly this type of fishery was defined.

Penina Blankett pointed out that in Finland recreational fisheries existed and that these were currently not being tightly regulated. Patricia Brtnik stated that the majority of fisheries in the German part of the Baltic were part-time/ recreational. She recalled that Geneviève Desportes had looked into the matter during her time as Coordinator of the ASCOBANS North Sea Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises; Patricia Brtnik would follow up and report. Ida Carlén and Signe Sveegard added that it was important to clarify in the reporting format what area it referred to. Rüdiger Stempel suggested that the Belt Area should be included. It was agreed that where within a country there were different management regimes (e.g. within the different Federal States in Germany) individual worksheets should be filled for each management regime. The AP was moved to the “internal list”.

Action Points

- 11) **JG13/AP10/JP/WBBK**: ASCOBANS should join efforts with HELCOM in seeking to influence Baltfish once the new EU Regulation on the conservation of fishery resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures is adopted. **(new)**

3.3.1 JP Action RES-03: Improve methods for monitoring and estimation of harbour porpoise bycatch

(JG12/AP26) Parties should consider the recommendations of the October 2015 ASCOBANS Workshop on REM and implement this technique for bycatch monitoring as appropriate in the national context.

Finland had not implemented the recommendations, but was submitting relevant data in the 2016 annual national report to ASCOBANS. Bycatch monitoring was regulated by Finnish legislation. In Denmark a number of trials were being conducted. Patricia Brtnik was not aware of any action in Germany, but highlighted the relevant STELLA project. There had been no action in Sweden. In Poland there had not been any action either. Katarzyna Kamińska pointed out that the levels of harbour porpoise bycatch were relatively low and thus the effort and cost implications per bycatch incident was high. Monitoring the bycatch of seabirds was currently a top priority. Iwona Pawliczka pointed out that the low bycatch numbers for harbour porpoises in the Baltic Proper reflected the low population size and unfavourable conservation status. The conservation status itself called for action; the cost per bycatch incident was not a meaningful measure in this regard. Hel Marine Station was running a 3-year project, including testing of Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM). This was a joint project with WWF Poland, who was represented at the present meeting by Maria Jujka-Radziejewicz. One REM system would be installed on a fishing boat, the second system would be installed on boat operated by HMS. Results are expected in late 2019. Sweden had a Data Collection Framework (DCF) pilot project with observers monitoring bycatch, with emphasis on type of fishing gear that should be employed.

A debate ensued regarding the appropriate level of attention on monitoring bycatch compared to bycatch mitigation. It became apparent that it was often not known to what extent the data from bycatch monitoring had the appropriate statistical power to answer questions on causes. Therefore **JG13/AP13/JP/WBBK** was drafted and agreed.

Action Points

- 12) **JG13/AP11/JP/WBBK**: Parties should consider the recommendations of the October 2015 ASCOBANS Workshop on Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and implement this technique for bycatch monitoring as appropriate in the national context. **(JG12/AP26)**
- 13) **JG13/AP13/JP/WBBK**: Parties are encouraged to carry out a power analysis to estimate the required sample size for bycatch monitoring. **(new)**

3.3.2 a. JP Action MON-03: Monitor and estimate harbour porpoise bycatch rates and estimate total annual bycatch

b. WBBKP Rec.6: Estimate total annual bycatch

(JG12/AP7) Parties should establish national processes to develop guidelines and methods for reducing and monitoring bycatch in the relevant fisheries, as called for in Jastarnia Plan Action COOP-01, and to report on progress in achieving this.

The bycatch monitoring programme for harbour porpoises in Poland was small, but in line with what was required under Council Regulation 812/2004. No harbour porpoise bycatch had been reported for 2016 under the observer programme under Regulation 812/2004, only one

seal. Germany had a new project on bycatch monitoring, which also included a part on alternative fishing gear for the replacement of gillnets. In Finland it was mandatory under national law to report on bycatches of harbour porpoises and seals. National institutions had websites for online reporting of sightings, strandings and bycatch. However, the reports were currently not public. The Swedish Action Plan for the harbour porpoise had not yet come into force; it was still undergoing an internal review process, which would at a later stage be followed by public consultations. Denmark was undertaking REM studies and fisheries were working on different projects looking into the causes of bycatch. Such studies were critical to better understand, for example, why in April 2017 a single boat had bycaught 20 porpoises on one fishing day. A new project on movement of porpoises had started in the Skagerrak region. The AP was kept, albeit in a slightly amended form.

(JG12/AP27) Bearing in mind the Parties' commitments under the Habitats Directive and EC Regulation 812/2004, Parties are required to establish a system to monitor bycatch on all vessels regardless of size.

Germany and Finland had no action to report. Poland informed the group that there was a new EU requirement to monitor also the impact of fisheries on the marine environment, including bycatch of marine mammals within a new multi-annual Union programme for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries and agriculture sectors¹, adopted in July 2016. Sweden had a pilot project in place. In Denmark all vessel sizes were included in the monitoring. In accordance with the new EC multi-annual DCF programme (EU-MAP), countries were obliged to propose plans for their monitoring programmes. Katarzyna Kamińska would provide a table by email to group members including information about Baltic countries' proposals. The AP was updated and retained.

(JG12/AP64) Parties are encouraged to undertake or promote research regarding bycatch estimation.

Under 3.3.1. it had been agreed that this AP (JG13/AP12/JP/WBBK) should remain.

Action Points

- 14) **JG13/AP14/JP**: Parties should develop guidelines, and continue to develop and implement methods, for reducing and monitoring bycatch in the relevant fisheries, as called for in Jastarnia Plan Action COOP-01. **(JG12/AP7)**
- 15) **JG13/AP15/JP/WBBK**: Bearing in mind the Parties' commitments under the Habitats Directive and other relevant EC regulation, Parties are required to establish a system to monitor bycatch on all vessels regardless of size. **(JG12/AP27)**
- 16) **JG13/AP12/JP/WBBK**: Parties are encouraged to undertake or promote research regarding bycatch. **(JG12/AP64)**

3.3.3 JP Action RES-04: Carry out a spatio-temporal risk assessment of harbour porpoise bycatch

Sweden had produced a bycatch risk map for the Baltic Sea and also for the west coast of Sweden within the Belt Sea (only for Swedish waters). Sara Königson suggested that SAMBAH data might be used for producing further maps of this kind. Again the power analysis

¹ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1251 of 12 July 2016 adopting a multiannual Union programme for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for the period 2017–2019 (notified under document C(2016) 4329)

mentioned under **JG13/AP13/JP/WBBK** would be relevant here. A new AP for the Baltic proper only was drafted and agreed.

Action Points

17) **JG13/AP16/JP**: Parties are strongly encouraged to carry out spatio-temporal risk-assessments of harbour porpoise bycatch using harbour porpoise distribution and fishing effort data. **(new)**

3.3.4 JP Action RES-05: Further develop and improve fishing gear that is commercially viable with no harbour porpoise bycatch

(JG12/AP11) Parties should undertake or continue efforts to test and implement pots, traps and other porpoise-friendly gear. Parties are encouraged to report to the Jastarnia Group on related initiatives or research even where the intention is not primarily the conservation of marine mammals.

(JG12/AP13) Parties should promote research on the development of new porpoise-safe fishing gear. Included in the responsibility of the stakeholders for mitigating bycatch is the active participation in this research and development. The implementation of resulting new fishing gear can be considerably facilitated by including the new gear in a green label, e.g. as outlined above, since it will increase acceptance of a higher value of the catch, which in turn would serve as an incitement for the fishermen to adopt the new gear.

JG12/AP11 and JG12/AP13 were merged and edited by the group. This action point is included in Action Point 11.

(JG12/AP19) Parties should promote studies on alternative fishing gear, the development of pingers not audible to seals, and alerting devices other than pingers.

Following earlier discussions, the AP was amended.

(JG12/AP28) Parties should promote studies on alternative fishing gear.

This AP was deleted.

(JG12/AP63) Parties should continue to provide funding for research on alternative fishing gear and practices as needed.

This AP remained without updates or amendments.

Action Points

18) **JG13/AP17/JP/WBBK**: Parties should undertake or continue efforts to test and implement pots, traps and other porpoise-friendly gear, taking account of the responsibility of the stakeholders for mitigating bycatch and actively participating in this research and development. Parties are encouraged to report to the Jastarnia Group on related initiatives or research even where the intention is not primarily the conservation of marine mammals. **(JG12/AP11).**

19) **JG13/AP18/JP/WBBK**: Parties should promote the development of pingers not audible to seals and alerting devices other than pingers. **(JG12/AP19)**

20) **JG13/AP19/JP/WBBK**: Parties should continue to provide funding for research on alternative fishing gear and practices as needed. **(JG12/AP63)**

3.3.5 JP Action MIT-01: Implement the use of fishing gear that is commercially viable with no harbour porpoise bycatch

(JG12/AP5) In order to achieve a 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.

Patricia Brtnik reported on two projects in Germany. The first one on alternative fishing gear implemented by NABU (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union) and commissioned by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) had concluded in 2016. The project aimed to run test fisheries with automatic longlines and jigging machines in order to investigate their application and cost-effectiveness in German waters. The gears tested were not as effective as set nets. This result might be biased due to the rather small scale at which the project was conducted.

The second project on alternative fishing gear was launched in November 2016, entitled “Development of alternative management approaches and fishing gear and techniques towards minimizing conflicts in gill net fisheries and conservation objectives and subjects of protection in the EEZ of the Baltic Sea (STELLA)”. It would run until December 2019 and was conducted by the Thünen Institut of Baltic Sea Fisheries (TI) funded by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN). The project consisted of five parts, including research on gillnet modification, alternative fishing gear and incentives for fisheries to apply the alternative gear.

AP5 remained in place.

Action Points

21) **JG13/AP20/JP/WBBK:** In order to achieve a 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. **(JG12/AP5)**

3.3.6 a. JP Action MIT-02: Reduce or eliminate fishing effort with gillnets or other gear known to cause porpoise bycatch in areas with higher harbour porpoise density or occurrence, and/ or in areas with higher risk of harbour porpoise bycatch, according to spatio-temporal risk assessments

b. WBBKP Rec.3: Protect harbour porpoises in their key habitats by minimizing bycatch as far as possible

c. WBBKP Rec.5: Where possible replace gillnet fisheries known to be associated with high porpoise bycatch with alternative fishing gear known to be less harmful.

(JG12/AP1) ASCOBANS should urge relevant authorities to investigate ways of limiting part-time and recreational set-net fisheries.

(JG12/AP2) With respect to recreational fisheries, Parties should work towards banning those types of gear known to pose a threat to harbour porpoises.

The group discussed JG12/AP1 and JG12/AP2 jointly. Iwona Pawliczka stated that it was critical to define part-time fishing. Denmark pointed out that banning part time fisheries was a problem. Ida Carlén mentioned that JP12/AP1 had been passed by the AC and that it was not

the role of the Jastarnia Group to water this down, but instead to focus on the scientific and technical aspects. The group edited and merged both old APs into **JG13/AP21/JP/WBBK**.

(JG12/AP3) Parties should step up action 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 to ICES.

Poland had no new action to report, but noted that as a result of the decline in cod stocks the fishing effort had also been reduced. Sara Königson (Sweden) had already reported on the matter during her [presentation](#). Denmark also noted a decline in gillnet fishing. Fewer large boats had replaced a larger number of smaller vessels. Signe Sveegard felt that targeting mitigation measures was a more effective way forward than aiming to reduce fishing. Penina Blankett reported that in Finland fishing effort had also declined. Germany did not have enough information but informed the group that a voluntary agreement to reduce fishing effort in gillnet fishing was in place. Signe Sveegard observed that in the last 25 years fishing effort had declined due to a lack of fish. The AP remained as before.

(JG12/AP4) Finn Larsen and Sara Königson will present to the Jastarnia Group information on development of gillnet fishing effort in the Baltic Sea.

Sarah Königson had [presented](#) earlier during the meeting, thus the AP was removed.

(JG12/AP58) The Secretariat will enquire with Parties regarding steps taken to develop their joint recommendations to the European Commission regarding the management of harbour porpoise SACs to minimize bycatch rates within these areas.

This AP had originated at the 10th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group and was moved to the “internal list” given previous AC approval and given that further updates were required.

Action Points

- 22) **JG13/AP21/JP/WBBK**: Parties are strongly encouraged to investigate ways of limiting part-time set-net fisheries. **(JG12/AP1)**
- 23) **JG13/AP22/JP/WBBK**: With respect to recreational fisheries, Parties should work towards banning those types of gear known to pose a threat to harbour porpoises. **(JG12/AP2)**
- 24) **JG13/AP23/JP/WBBK**: Parties should step up action 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 to ICES. **(JG12/AP3)**.

3.3.7 a. JP Action RES-06: Improve the knowledge on potential population-level effects of the use of pingers, and develop acoustic devices for bycatch mitigation further

b. WBBKP Rec.9: Ensure a non-detrimental use of pingers by examining habitat exclusion and long-term effects of pingers

(JG12/AP21) Parties are invited to commission research on whether pingers or other alerting or harassment devices cause undue habitat exclusion and habituation.

(JG12/AP25) More research should be conducted on the behaviour of harbour porpoises near pingers.

(JG12/AP69) Parties should continue to provide funding for research on non-detrimental use of acoustic devices and possible habitat exclusion through pingers.

Participants looked at all the APs in this section together, agreeing that the old JG12/AP21 referred to the Baltic proper whereas the old JG12/AP69 referred to the Belt Sea (WBBK). Old JG12/AP25 was deemed superfluous.

Action Points

- 25) **JG13/AP24/JP**: Parties are invited to commission research on whether pingers or other alerting or harassment devices cause undue habitat exclusion and habituation. **(JG12/AP21)**
- 26) **JG13/AP25/WBBK**: Parties should continue to provide funding for research on non-detrimental use of acoustic devices and possible habitat exclusion through pingers. **(JG12/AP69)**

3.3.8 a. JP Action MIT-03: Continue or implement the use of acoustic deterrent devices (“pingers”) and acoustic alerting devices proven to be successful when and where deemed appropriate

b. WBBKP Rec.4: Implement pinger use in fisheries causing bycatch

(JG12/AP14) Parties are reminded to implement urgently the pinger use recommended in the Jastarnia Plan, [which calls for pingers to be made mandatory in probable high-risk areas and fisheries associated with bycatch of harbour porpoises on a short-term basis irrespective of vessel size]. In the meantime, Parties must develop long-term measures to mitigate bycatch, such as alternative fishing gear.

(JG12/AP15) Parties should ensure more monitoring and enforcement of pinger use.

(JG12/AP62) Parties are strongly encouraged to take all necessary steps to achieve as soon as possible agreement 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.

The group considered the above Action Points jointly. Iwona Pawliczka pointed out that in light of the dramatically low number of harbour porpoises in the Baltic proper and the zero bycatch objective of ASCOBANS even low numbers of bycatches must be avoided and highlighted the importance of pingers. Sara Königson (Sweden) pointed out that the high-density fisheries of the Belt Sea could not easily be compared with the Baltic proper. Old JG12/AP14 and JG12/AP15 were merged and would apply to the Jastarnia Plan only, whereas the old JG12/AP62 applied to the Belt Sea (WBBK).

Action Points

27) **JG13/AP26/JP:** Parties should ensure more monitoring and enforcement of pinger use irrespective of vessel size. In the meantime, Parties must develop long-term measures to mitigate bycatch, such as alternative fishing gear. **(JG12/AP15)**

28) **JG13/AP27/WBBK:** Parties are strongly encouraged to achieve as soon as possible agreement to implement immediately the use of pingers in gillnet fisheries associated with bycatch, irrespective of vessel size or type, as provided for in the Plan, and to enforce the use of pingers. **(JG12/AP62)**

3.3.9 JP Action MIT-04: Prevent, retrieve and recycle derelict (“ghost”) fishing gear, with focus on high-density areas of harbour porpoises

(JG12/AP31) Parties should continue to 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.

Penina Blankett mentioned that these measures were covered by the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. Ida Carlén pointed out that such activities were also provided for in the MARELITT pilot project on the removal of marine litter from Europe’s four regional seas, and the current [MARELITT Baltic project](#). As part of the Baltic project a map of key sites with derelict fishing gear will be developed for the Baltic. Results are expected for early 2018. Penina Blankett stated that it was important to know where action needed to be taken before agreeing further mandates.

(JG12/AP32) Taking into consideration the future requirements under the MSFD, Parties should continue to 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. Periodic reviews of progress should be conducted by the JG.

Old JG12/AP32 was still very relevant and was being kept.

Action Points

- 29) **JG13/AP28/JP/WBBK**: Parties should continue to 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. **(JG12/AP31)**
- 30) **JG13/AP29/JP/WBBK**: Taking into consideration the future requirements under the MSFD, Parties should continue to 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. Periodic reviews of progress should be conducted by the Jastarnia Group. **(JG12/AP32)**

3.4 Underwater Noise

JP “Monitor and mitigate impact of underwater noise”

WBBKP Objective e.: “Ensuring habitat quality favourable to the conservation of the harbour porpoise”

3.4.1 JP Action RES-07: Improve knowledge on impact of impulsive and continuous anthropogenic underwater noise on harbour porpoises, and development of threshold limits of significant disturbance and GES indicators

(JG12/AP22) Parties and the Joint CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Noise Working Group are asked to give special consideration to the particular requirements such as the sound propagation conditions in the Baltic and the conservation status of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise with regard to mitigating the impact of anthropogenic noise on porpoises, such as the destruction through explosion of old ammunition or during the construction of sea bed pipelines, seismic surveys, as well as pile-driving for wind turbines.

Penina Blankett mentioned that this Action Point was directly linked to current work under the MSFD. Patricia Brtnik added that these concerns should be raised under the MFSD umbrella. Aline Kühl-Stenzel updated the group on the recent workshop entitled “Best practice workshop: fostering inter-regional cooperation in underwater noise monitoring and impact assessment in waters around Europe, within the context of the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)” which had taken place during the annual meeting of the European Cetacean Society in spring in Denmark. The Co-Chair of the Joint CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Noise Working Group (WG) had participated and it would be good to receive further guidance from the Jastarnia Group as to what assistance they would require from the Noise WG.

Penina Blankett stated that HELCOM also had a noise working group. After some discussion the group agreed to remove the AP and to liaise closely with the relevant Noise WGs.

(JG12/AP23) Parties are asked to undertake baseline studies of underwater noise in their respective waters as a reference point for future impact assessments.

The Secretariat briefed the group on the [CMS Family Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment for Marine Noise-generating Activities](#), which were due to be discussed at CMS COP12 (23-28 October 2017, Manila, Philippines). If they were adopted they would apply to ASCOBANS Parties, since they overlapped completely with CMS Parties. The AP remained.

(JG12/AP24) Parties should investigate possible detrimental effects of various types of sound and disturbance on harbour porpoises (including pinger signals, noise from vessels, seismic surveys, wind parks or construction). Parties should initiate and support studies on the effect of anthropogenic noise on the harbour porpoise both on the individual and on a population level.

HELCOM also worked on the equivalent of JG12/AP24 according to Penina Blankett. She suggested that HELCOM and ASCOBANS should cooperate on this point. Ida Carlén believed this was a research activity and therefore the group should call for more support to facilitate such urgently needed research. Finland pointed out that again under HELCOM there was a possibility for such support, specifically noise and fish were high on the agenda.

Action Points

- 31) **JG13/AP30/JP/WBBK:** Parties are asked to undertake baseline studies of underwater noise in their respective waters as a reference point for future impact assessments. **(JG12/AP23)**
- 32) **JG13/AP31/JP/WBBK:** Parties should investigate possible detrimental effects of various types of sound and disturbance on harbour porpoises (including pinger signals, noise from vessels, seismic surveys, wind parks or construction). Parties should initiate and support studies on the effect of anthropogenic noise on the harbour porpoise both on the individual and on a population level. **(JG12/AP24)**

3.4.2 JP Action MIT-05: Implement regionally harmonized national threshold limits and guidelines for regulation of underwater noise.

(JG12/AP20) Germany issued recommendations on the reduction of sound emissions associated with construction of offshore wind farms and set an upper limit for pile driving operations. This good example and the results of current studies should be reflected both in the national legislation of Parties and in the relevant indicators for Good Environmental Status to be developed for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Sweden called for the Action Point to be reworded, as it was oddly formulated with a statement at the start more like a preambular note. Instead, a call for action was needed, i.e. Parties should be encouraged to include existing best practise into current legislation. Ida Carlén briefed the group that in Sweden a very sizable new Natura 2000 area had been designated in the Baltic Proper for the harbour porpoise. Guidelines for noise reduction and management were needed for the new site. Denmark had national guidelines on noise reductions in place which covered the construction of windfarms, for example. Patricia Brtnik pointed out that Germany's guidelines were based on noise thresholds and thus applied to all sources of noise, not only windfarms. The AP was amended and passed.

Action Points

- 33) **JG13/AP32/JP/WBBK:** Parties are encouraged to adopt regulations on the reduction of sound emissions associated with construction of offshore wind farms and to set an upper limit for pile driving operations. The results of current studies should be reflected both in

the national legislation of Parties and in the relevant Indicators for Good Environmental Status to be developed for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. **(JG12/AP20)**

3.5 Population Status

JP “Monitor and assess population status”

WBBKP Objective d.: “Monitoring the status of the population”

3.5.1 a. JP Action MON-04: Collect dead specimens and assess health status, contaminant levels, cause of mortality and life-history parameters of harbour porpoises

b. WBBKP Rec.8: Monitor population health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality

(JG12/AP66) 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 by means of the coordination group established in 2016.

Signe Sveegard (Denmark) reported that earlier in the year a large project on necropsies had been submitted. Unfortunately it had not been successful. The AP remained (WBBK only).

(JG12/AP67) The Secretariat will contact the members of the necropsy coordination group to discuss their mode of operation and the facilitation of the group.

At the 11th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group it had been agreed to establish a “Necropsy Coordination Group” for the WBBK area. The Secretariat confirmed that nominations had been received from Denmark (Finn Larsen, Jonas Teilmann), from Germany (Ursula Siebert, Patricia Brtnik) and from Sweden (Anna Roos). It was agreed that the Secretariat should liaise with the Group to follow-up on the implementation of new JG13/AP33/WBBK. Old JG12/AP67 was moved to the “internal list” accordingly (done, 11 July 2017). The group agreed that the AC23 should discuss a potential workshop on establishing the web-accessed database for marine mammal stranding and necropsy data.

Aline Kühl-Stenzel also updated the group that the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) had been subcontracted to develop a fully costed proposal for a Web-Accessed Database for Marine Mammal Stranding and Necropsy Data, following discussion and liaison with European stranding networks in the ASCOBANS region. It was agreed that the Necropsy Coordination Group should review the ZSL’s project output and advise on setting up the web-accessed database (see new AP **JG13/AP35/WBBK**).

(JG12/AP68) 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.

Iwona Pawliczka pointed out how important it was to conduct necropsies on each and every carcass that was available, either from strandings or as bycatch. The group agreed and passed the new AP for the Baltic proper **JG13/AP36/JP**.

Action Points

34) **JG13/AP33/WBBK**: 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 through the coordination group established in 2016. **(JG12/AP66)**

35) **JG13/AP34/JP/WBBK**: 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. **(JG12/AP68)**

36) **JG13/AP35/WBBK**: The necropsy coordination group shall assist with the establishment of the foreseen database on “Web-accessed database for marine mammal stranding and necropsy data”, and Parties shall support the process through providing funding for a workshop. **(new)**

37) **JG13/AP36/JP**: Parties are strongly encouraged to collect any stranded or bycaught animals for necropsies. **(new)**

3.6 Habitat

JP “Investigate habitat use and protect important areas”

WBBKP Objective e.: “Ensuring habitat quality favourable to the conservation of the harbour porpoise”

3.6.1 JP Action RES-09: Develop and improve methods for and investigate spatio-temporal patterns of habitat use by harbour porpoises

Signe Sveegard stated that habitat use could be examined through further analysis of the SAMBAH project data (i.e. presence/absence data of harbour porpoises through monitoring clicks). Ida Carlén mentioned that there was an ongoing project called Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise Foraging Habitats (BALHAB), analysing the spatio-temporal distribution of feeding buzzes in the SAMBAH data. The report was expected by the end of the year. Results of the SAMBAH project were also ready for distribution and further analysis. As mentioned earlier during the meeting a SAMBAH II follow-up project was foreseen, which would allow the examination of spatio-temporal patterns in further depth.

3.6.2 JP Action MIT-06: Expand the network of protected areas for harbour porpoises, improve its connectivity, and develop and implement appropriate management plans including monitoring schemes for these areas

(JG12/AP33) 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.

(JG12/AP34) Parties are strongly encouraged to use the data provided by SAMBAH, in particular in connection with the establishment of management plans for SACs and MPAs for harbour porpoises, as well as with regard to mitigation measures.

The above-mentioned Action Points were discussed jointly. According to Ida Carlén, who was closely involved in the SAMBAH project, Sweden had made good progress in designating protected areas. The intention was for the project data to be accessible online by anybody interested. There were some technical issues which still needed fixing however, not least because the raw data extracted from the C-pods was extremely large (Mats Amundin was managing this raw data). Some of the SAMBAH data were to be added to the HELCOM database. The group felt the AP33 did not add sufficient value and deleted it.

Action Points

38) **JG13/AP37/JP**: Parties are strongly encouraged to use the data provided by SAMBAH, in particular in connection with the establishment of management plans for SACs and MPAs for harbour porpoises, as well as with regard to mitigation measures. **(JG12/AP34)**

3.6.3 WBBKP Rec.10: Include monitoring and management of important prey species in national harbour porpoise management plans

(JG12/AP70) Parties should promote research on the consequences of impacts on prey communities for harbour porpoises.

Signe Sveegard noted that Action Point 70, which applied to the Belt Sea only, should be kept as not much research had been conducted on the matter. The meeting agreed.

Action Points

39) JG13/AP38/WBBK: Parties should promote research on the consequences of impacts on prey communities for harbour porpoises. **(JG12/AP70)**

3.6.4 WBBKP Rec.11: Restore or maintain habitat quality

(JG12/AP71) The Secretariat should ask Jacob Nabe-Nielsen of Aarhus University, the leader of the project “Disturbance Effects on the Harbour Porpoise Population in the North Sea” (DE-PONS), to attend the next meeting of the Jastarnia Group as an invited expert.

Action Point 71 was deleted as Jacob Nabe-Nielsen had held a presentation on DEPONS at the beginning of the meeting.

(JG12/AP72) Parties should ensure baseline studies and continual monitoring with regard to potential effects of activities with an impact on harbour porpoise behaviour and distribution. Research is also required on the context in which porpoises are using the habitats.

There was a lively debate on the AP which applied to the Belt Sea only. Germany felt that good progress had been made and noted that this was closely tied to the ongoing work on underwater noise management. Finland mentioned that further work was needed to thoroughly monitor the threats affecting harbour porpoises and their habitat, not least the impacts on the food web should be closely monitored with the aim to better understand these.

Sweden and Denmark, however, wanted to delete the AP, given that in the Belt Sea there was a good understanding of baselines. Ultimately the group agreed to delete the AP.

4. Cross-cutting Issues

4.1 Baltic Sea Coordinator

(JG12/AP49) In light of the positive experience with the North Sea Coordinator, the Jastarnia Group recommends that the Parties ensure that a Baltic Sea Coordinator, or a joint coordinator for both regions, possibly attached to the Secretariat, be appointed.

Aline Kühl-Stenzel noted that especially prior to larger meetings, such as a meeting of the Advisory Committee or the Parties, it would be very helpful to have such a coordinator supporting the countries and Secretariat. Genevieve Desportes had, for example, always produced a detailed update on the status of implementation of the North Sea Plan, including a useful overview table, which was something that also for other CMS instruments was often subcontracted to a consultant. It would be helpful if in future a coordinator would focus on preparing updates on the status of implementation of individual ASCOBANS Action Plans.

Aline Kühl-Stenzel informed the group that in the past the UK and the Netherlands had provided ASCOBANS with voluntary contributions (€ 5000 each) for a Coordinator of the ASCOBANS North Sea Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises. Terms of Reference for a Coordinator had been discussed in the past, for example at the 5th Meeting of the North Sea Group, but there had not been agreement on how to spend the voluntary contributions. Given the current economic climate it was unlikely that the required minimum € 25,000 would be available per year for a regular coordinator. Instead it would make sense to update the past draft Terms of Reference focussing on the coordination of smaller tasks, such as status updates.

Rüdiger Stempel suggested that detailed TOR should be produced accordingly. The meeting agreed on the following Action Point for the “internal list”:

- The Secretariat shall intersessionally draft and circulate for review Terms of Reference on the Coordinator, including the following high priority issues to be flagged up by the Parties intersessionally:
 - Represent ASCOBANS at meetings of the Regional Coordination Group which will develop the regional implementation of the Data Collection Framework (DCF), assuming this is practically feasible;
 - Review progress under the Jastarnia and WBBK Action Plans and make proposals for amending the Action Points in advance of the meetings of the Group;

Once these TOR were agreed by the group intersessionally, a suitable person should be found with coordination expertise and knowledge of the various regions in order to effectively identify gaps and propose action.

4.2 CFP Expert

(JG12/AP50) 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. The Secretariat should recall this recommendation to the Coordinating Authority of the host country in good time before the meeting.

Rüdiger Stempel noted that no expert on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was attending the 13th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group, not least because this year it was not a Coordinating Authority hosting the meeting but the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat and as such there was no such obligation. The meeting agreed however that at the 14th meeting there should be a CFP expert, if possible.

Action Points

40) JG13/AP39/JP/WBBK: Coordinating Authorities of the countries hosting the Group’s meetings are asked to ensure the attendance of an expert on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) at the respective meetings of the Group. The Secretariat should recall this recommendation to the Coordinating Authority of the host country in good time before the meeting. **(JG12/AP50)**

4.3 Projects

(JG12/AP51) Parties should consider supporting any projects relevant for achieving the aims of the Jastarnia Plan.

(JG12/AP52) Parties and NGOs are requested to ensure that the results of all relevant projects are made available to ASCOBANS.

(JG12/AP53) Parties are encouraged to use SAMBAH results for harbour porpoise conservation in the Baltic Sea.

(JG12/AP54) In view of the SAMBAH results and the requirement for regular reviews and updates of both the Jastarnia Plan and the WBBK Plan, a timely revision of the WBBK Plan is required. Parties are urged to provide the necessary funding.

The group discussed the Action Points regarding projects together. Participants agreed that it went without saying that projects, as well as funding, were needed to implement the Jastarnia and WBBK Plans and thus deleted old JG12/AP51. JG12/AP52 was kept in the “internal list” since the Secretariat pointed out that it was indeed helpful for the network to send updates and results of ongoing and completed projects. Old JG12/AP53 was covered above and therefore deleted here.

Rüdiger Stempel recalled that the Jastarnia Plan had just been updated in 2016 (taking into account the SAMBAH results), but that the WBBK Plan had not been updated since its adoption in 2012. Participants however felt that implementation of the WBBK was more urgently needed than an update. Ida Carlén pointed out that at some stage the Plan should of course be reviewed and implementation evaluated. It was agreed that there should be an intersessional review to report back to the 14th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group as to whether an update of the WBBK was need.

5. Election of Chair

Rüdiger Stempel, the Chair of the Jastarnia Group, recalled that in line with Rule 4 of the Rules of Procedure a Chairperson should be elected given this meeting of the Jastarnia Group was the first after MOP8 in 2016. He would unfortunately have to step down due to an increase in other commitments, primarily related to his current function as Executive Secretary of CWSS. Aline Kühl-Stenzel warmly thanked Rüdiger for all he had done not only for the Jastarnia Group, but also for ASCOBANS after so many years of outstanding engagement. The participants handed over a large box of presents, which everyone had brought from their home countries to say thank you to the parting chair, who would be sorely missed. Rüdiger thanked the Group and the Secretariat for many years of excellent cooperation, which he had also greatly enjoyed and noted that he hoped to stay or once again become involved in Baltic Sea issues in the future.

Ida Carlén (Coalition Clean Baltic) was elected unanimously as the new chair of the Jastarnia Group.

6. Any Other Business

Penina Blankett informed the group about a forthcoming workshop on the identification of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) in the Baltic Sea which would take place in Helsinki from 19-24 February 2018. The workshop would benefit from the presence of GIS experts from Duke University. Invitations concerning nomination of experts and information about ecological values relevant for the Baltic Sea would shortly be sent out by the CBD Secretariat. ASCOBANS was one of the Stakeholders invited to nominate experts for this workshop.

Aline Kühl-Stenzel briefed the group on the forthcoming [12th Meeting of the CMS Conference of Parties](#) (23-28 October 2017, Manila, Philippines) and encouraged everyone to take a look at the meeting documents, the majority of which had now been posted.

Throughout the meeting there had been references made to the changed national reporting format under ASCOBANS, as mandated by [Resolution 8.1](#) in 2016. Participants felt that just like the meetings of the Advisory Committee would from now on focus on specific subjects (e.g. in 2017 on underwater noise, ocean energy, unexploded ordnance and marine spatial

planning) it would be excellent if future meetings of the Jastarnia Group would also focus on the same subjects to a) contribute to the focus and add the regional and species-specific information and b) to be able to spend more time to discuss particular threats or issues in depth, rather than attempt to cover the implementation of the entire Plan in one meeting. This would mean that in 2018 the meeting would focus on bycatch amongst other matters. The group agreed and drafted **JG13/AP40/JP/WBBK** accordingly.

Action Points

41) JG13/AP40/JP/WBBK: The Jastarnia Group recommend to the ASCOBANS Parties to adapt the focus of its future meetings to correspond to the updated national reporting structure and cycle (see Resolution 8.1). Those issues which the AC would focus on, the Jastarnia Group would also focus on, unless there are other pressing matters. **(new)**

7. Date and Venue of the 14th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

(JG12/AP55) Parties are encouraged to take turns hosting the meetings of the Jastarnia Group and to ensure that the necessary funding for this purpose is made available. The Secretariat should prepare a general overview of related costs to be expected.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate a list of requirements for potential host countries of the 14th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group to all members. Denmark indicated that they were looking into possibilities of hosting the next meeting.

The meeting identified the week of 12-16 March 2018 as a good time for the 14th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group. It would be helpful for travel logistics if the meeting started at midday on a Monday and ended at midday also on the last day of the meeting, allowing participants to travel home on the same day. All participants agreed that future meetings should continue to cover the WBBK Action Plan in the same integrated fashion as this year. Joint meetings with the North Sea Group, like this year, were welcomed, but if there were cost or other constraints then a joint meeting every two years was acceptable.

Other relevant upcoming meetings included two HELCOM/State and Conservation meetings (23-27 October 2017, 14-18 May 2018), a HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in Finland (6.3.2018) and the annual meeting of the European Cetacean Society (9-11 April 2018; unconfirmed).

The new Chair Ida Carlén thanked all participants for the fruitful meeting, thanked the report writer Bettina Reinartz and closed the meeting at 7pm on Wednesday, 21 June 2017.

Action Points

42) JG13/AP41/JP/WBBK: Parties are encouraged to take turns hosting the meetings of the Jastarnia Group and to ensure that the necessary funding for this purpose is made available. **(JG12/AP55)**

8. Close of Meeting

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AGENDA

- 0 Opening of the Joint Session North Sea Group and Jastarnia Group
 - 0.0 Welcoming Remarks
 - 0.1 Presentation by Invited Expert
 - 0.2 Presentation by Chair Rüdiger Stempel, Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
 - 0.3 Discussion on bycatch monitoring and mitigation
 - 0.4 Discussion on education and outreach
1. Opening of the 13th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group
 - 1.1 Welcoming Remarks
 - 1.2 Adoption of the Agenda
3. Implementation of the Jastarnia Plan (JP2016) and the Western Baltic, Belt Sea and Kattegat Plan (WBBKP 2012)
 - 3.1. Involvement of Stakeholders
 - 3.1.1. a. JP Action COOP-001: Involve stakeholders in the work of reducing bycatch of harbour porpoises.
 - 3.1.2 JP Action PACB-01: Improve communication and education for increased public awareness and collection of live observations and dead specimens of the Baltic harbour porpoise
 - 3.1.3 a. JP Action COOP-02: Strive for close cooperation between ASCOBANS and other international bodies
b. WBBKP Rec.2: Cooperate with and inform other relevant bodies about the Conservation Plan
 - 3.2 Abundance and Distribution
 - 3.2.1 JP Action RES-01: Improve knowledge on harbour porpoise population structure in the Baltic region
 - 3.2.2 JP Action MON-01: Implement and harmonize long-term continual acoustic harbour porpoise monitoring
 - 3.2.3 JP Action RES-02: Improve methods for estimation of absolute density and abundance of the Baltic harbour porpoise
 - 3.2.4 JP Action MON-02: Carry out full-scale surveys of harbour porpoise abundance and distribution
 - 3.2.5 WBBKP Rec.7: Estimate trends in abundance of harbour porpoises in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat
 - 3.3 Bycatch
 - 3.3.1 JP Action RES-03: Improve methods for monitoring and estimation of harbour porpoise bycatch
 - 3.3.2 a. JP Action MON-03: Monitor and estimate harbour porpoise bycatch rates and estimate total annual bycatch
b. WBBKP Rec.6: Estimate total annual bycatch

- 3.3.3 JP Action RES-04: Carry out a spatio-temporal risk assessment of harbour porpoise bycatch
- 3.3.4 JP Action RES-05: Further develop and improve fishing gear that is commercially viable with no harbour porpoise bycatch
- 3.3.5 JP Action MIT-01: Implement the use of fishing gear that is commercially viable with no harbour porpoise bycatch
- 3.3.6
 - a. JP Action MIT-02: Reduce or eliminate fishing effort with gillnets or other gear known to cause porpoise bycatch in areas with higher harbour porpoise density or occurrence, and/ or in areas with higher risk of harbour porpoise bycatch, according to spatio-temporal risk assessments
 - b. WBBKP Rec.3: Protect harbour porpoises in their key habitats by minimizing bycatch as far as possible
 - c. WBBKP Rec.5: Where possible replace gillnet fisheries known to be associated with high porpoise bycatch with alternative fishing gear known to be less harmful.
- 3.3.7
 - a. JP Action RES-06: Improve the knowledge on potential population-level effects of the use of pingers, and develop acoustic devices for bycatch mitigation further
 - b. WBBKP Rec.9: Ensure a non-detrimental use of pingers by examining habitat exclusion and long-term effects of pingers
- 3.3.8
 - a. JP Action MIT-03: Continue or implement the use of acoustic deterrent devices (“pingers”) and acoustic alerting devices proven to be successful when and where deemed appropriate
 - b. WBBKP Rec.4: Implement pinger use in fisheries causing bycatch
- 3.3.9 JP Action MIT-04: Prevent, retrieve and recycle derelict (“ghost”) fishing gear, with focus on high-density areas of harbour porpoises
- 3.4 Underwater Noise
 - 3.4.1 JP Action RES-07: Improve knowledge on impact of impulsive and continuous anthropogenic underwater noise on harbour porpoises, and development of threshold limits of significant disturbance and GES indicators
 - 3.4.2 JP Action MIT-05: Implement regionally harmonized national threshold limits and guidelines for regulation of underwater noise.
- 3.5 Population Status
 - 3.5.1
 - a. JP Action MON-04: Collect dead specimens and assess health status, contaminant levels, cause of mortality and life-history parameters of harbour porpoises
 - b. WBBKP Rec.8: Monitor population health status, contaminant load and causes of mortalit
- 3.6 Habitat
 - 3.6.1 JP Action RES-09: Develop and improve methods for and investigate spatio-temporal patterns of habitat use by harbour porpoises
 - 3.6.2 JP Action MIT-06: Expand the network of protected areas for harbour porpoises, improve its connectivity, and develop and implement appropriate management plans including monitoring schemes for these areas

- 3.6.3 WBBKP Rec.10: Include monitoring and management of important prey species in national harbour porpoise management plans
 - 3.6.4 WBBKP Rec.11: Restore or maintain habitat quality
- 4. Cross-cutting Issues
 - 4.1 Baltic Sea Coordinator
 - 4.2 CFP Expert
 - 4.3 Projects
- 5. Election of Chair
- 6. Any Other Business
- 7. Any other Business
- 8. Date and Venue of the 13th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group
- 9. Close of Meeting

Action Points

Reference	Action Point (old reference)	Jastarnia Plan		WBBK Plan		Priority level
		Applies	Mandate	Applies	Mandate	
JG13/AP1/JP/W BBK	Parties should involve stakeholders, including fishermen and fisheries organizations, and urge them to accept responsibility for eliminating the potential risk of bycatch in gillnets and to take the necessary actions to obtain this goal. The Secretariat and Parties should continually contact fisheries organizations to make them aware of the importance of recovering carcasses of bycaught animals. (JG12/AP9)	X	COOP-01: Involve stakeholders in the work of reducing bycatch of harbour porpoises	X	Rec.1: Actively seek to involve fishermen in the implementation of the plan and mitigation measures to ensure reducing bycatch	High
JG13/AP2/JP/W BBK	Based on the outcome of the dialogue between the ASCOBANS Secretariat and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), the Jastarnia Group recommends that options for and implications of developing a porpoise-friendly label be examined jointly by the Jastarnia Group, North Sea Group and Bycatch Working Group of the Advisory Committee. (new)	X		X		Medium
JG13/AP3/JP/W BBK	Noting the successful Natura 2000 dialogue forums conducted in Denmark, Parties are encouraged to consider establishing a similar format for the stakeholder working group. (JG12/AP57)	X		X		Medium

JG13/AP4/JP/W BBK	Each country is encouraged to designate one website for reporting sightings and strandings by the public. The Secretariat should place the URLs on the ASCOBANS website. (JG12/AP35)	X	PACB-01: Improve communication and education for increased public awareness and collection of live observations and dead specimens of the Baltic harbour porpoise	X	Objective d: Monitoring the status of the population	High
JG13/AP5/JP/W BBK	Parties should establish programmes for recording opportunistic sightings and strandings, preferably in a coordinated way for all Baltic Sea States, and deliver the information gained through these programmes to the HELCOM database on a regular basis. (JG12/AP37)	X		X		High
JG13/AP6/JP/W BBK	The recommendations of the Jastarnia and WBBK Plans should be forwarded by the Secretariat to all relevant organisations active in the Baltic. (JG12/AP39)	X	COOP-02: Strive for close cooperation between ASCOBANS and other international bodies	x	Rec.2: Cooperate with and inform other relevant bodies about the Conservation Plan	High
JG13/AP7/JP/W BBK	The Jastarnia Group acknowledges the progress regarding the cooperation between the Jastarnia Group and relevant meetings of HELCOM. The Jastarnia Group promotes further cooperation with HELCOM SEAL and will strive to cooperate with the HELCOM Fish Group. Further, HELCOM should continue to be invited to take part in the Jastarnia Group meetings. (JG12/AP46)	x		x		High

JG13/AP8/JP	Parties should continue and step up their joint monitoring efforts and to promote the collection of data at the sub-regional and local levels based on the methods adopted by SAMBAH. Progress should be reviewed annually. (JG12/AP30)	x	MON-01: Implement and harmonize long-term continual acoustic harbour porpoise monitoring			High
JG13/AP9/JP	The Jastarnia Group strongly encourages Parties to initiate SAMBAH-II, specifically in terms of fundraising, in order for fieldwork to start in 2021, ten years after SAMBAH. (JG12/AP17)	x	MON-02: Carry out full-scale surveys of harbour porpoise abundance and distribution			High
JG13/AP9/WBK	Parties are strongly encouraged to continue to undertake and cooperate on inter-SCANS surveys of the WBK harbour porpoise population and evaluate trends in population density and abundance. (JG12/AP65)			x	Rec.7: Estimate trends in abundance of harbour porpoises in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat	High
JG13/AP10/JP/WBK	ASCOBANS should join efforts with HELCOM in seeking to influence Baltfish once the new EU Regulation on the conservation of fishery resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures is adopted. (new)	x	Monitor, estimate and reduce bycatch	x	Objective b: Mitigation of bycatch; Objective c: Assessment of bycatch level	High
JG13/AP11/JP/WBK	Parties should consider the recommendations of the October 2015 ASCOBANS Workshop on Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and implement this technique for bycatch monitoring as appropriate in the national context. (JG12/AP26)	x	RES-03: Improve methods for monitoring and estimation of harbour porpoise bycatch	x	Rec.6: Estimate total annual bycatch	High

JG13/AP12/JP/WBBK	Parties are encouraged to undertake or promote research regarding bycatch. (JG12/AP64)	x		x		High
JG13/AP13/JP/WBBK	Parties are encouraged to carry out a power analysis to estimate the required sample size for bycatch monitoring. (new)	x	RES-03: Improve methods for monitoring and estimation of harbour porpoise bycatch	x	Rec.6: Estimate total annual bycatch	High
JG13/AP14/JP	Parties should develop guidelines, and continue to develop and implement methods, for reducing and monitoring bycatch in the relevant fisheries, as called for in Jastarnia Plan Action COOP-01. (JG12/AP7)	x	MON-03: Monitor and estimate harbour porpoise bycatch rates and estimate total annual bycatch			High
JG13/AP15/JP/WBBK	Bearing in mind the Parties' commitments under the Habitats Directive and other relevant EC regulation, Parties are required to establish a system to monitor bycatch on all vessels regardless of size. (JG12/AP27)	x		x	Rec.6: Estimate total annual bycatch	High
JG13/AP16/JP	Parties are strongly encouraged to carry out spatio-temporal risk-assessments of harbour porpoise bycatch using harbour porpoise distribution and fishing effort data. (new)	x	RES-04: Carry out a spatio-temporal risk assessment of harbour porpoise bycatch			High
JG13/AP17/JP/WBBK	Parties should undertake or continue efforts to test and implement pots, traps and other porpoise-friendly gear, taking account of the responsibility of the stakeholders for mitigating bycatch and	x	RES-05: Further develop and improve fishing gear that is commercially viable	x	Objective b: Mitigation of bycatch	High

	actively participating in this research and development. Parties are encouraged to report to the Jastarnia Group on related initiatives or research even where the intention is not primarily the conservation of marine mammals. (JG12/AP11) .		with no harbour porpoise bycatch			
JG13/AP18/JP/WBBK	Parties should promote the development of pingers not audible to seals and alerting devices other than pingers. (JG12/AP19)	x		x		High
JG13/AP19/JP/WBBK	Parties should continue to provide funding for research on alternative fishing gear and practices as needed. (JG12/AP63)	x		x		High
JG13/AP20/JP/WBBK	In order to achieve a 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. (JG12/AP5)	x	MIT-01: Implement the use of fishing gear that is commercially viable with no harbour porpoise bycatch	x	Rec.3: Protect harbour porpoises in their key habitats in minimizing bycatch as far as possible Rec.5: Where possible replace gillnet fisheries known to be associated with high porpoise bycatch with alternative fishing gear known to be less harmful	High
JG13/AP21/JP/WBBK	Parties are strongly encouraged to investigate ways of limiting part-time set-net fisheries. (JG12/AP1)	x	MIT-02: Reduce or eliminate fishing effort with gillnets or other gear known to cause porpoise bycatch in areas with	x		Medium-High, depending on area

JG13/AP22/JP/WBBK	With respect to recreational fisheries, Parties should work towards banning or limiting the use of those types of gear known to pose a threat to harbour porpoises. (JG12/AP2)	x	higher harbour porpoise density or occurrence, and/or in areas with higher risk of harbour porpoise bycatch, according to spatio-temporal risk assessments	x		High
JG13/AP23/JP/WBBK	Parties should step up action 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 to ICES. (JG12/AP3) .	x		x		High
JG13/AP24/JP	Parties are invited to commission research on whether pingers or other alerting or harassment devices cause undue habitat exclusion and habituation. (JG12/AP21)	x	RES-06: Improve the knowledge on potential population-level effects of the use of pingers, and develop acoustic devices for bycatch mitigation further			Medium
JG13/AP25/WB BK	Parties should continue to provide funding for research on non-detrimental use of acoustic devices and possible habitat exclusion through pingers. (JG12/AP69)			x	Rec.9: Ensure a non-detrimental use of pingers by examining habitat exclusion and long-term effects of pingers	High
JG13/AP26/JP	Parties should ensure more monitoring and enforcement of pinger use irrespective of vessel size. In the meantime, Parties must develop long-term measures to mitigate bycatch, such as alternative fishing gear. (JG12/AP15)	x				High

JG13/AP27/WB BK	Parties are strongly encouraged to take all necessary steps to achieve as soon as possible agreement to implement immediately the use of pingers in gillnet fisheries associated with bycatch irrespective of vessel size or type, as provided for in the Plan, and to enforce the use of pingers. (JG12/AP62)			x	Rec.4: Implement pinger use in fisheries causing bycatch	High
JG13/AP28/JP/ WBBK	Parties should continue to 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. (JG12/AP31)	x	MIT-04: Prevent, retrieve and recycle derelict (“ghost”) fishing gear, with focus on high-density areas of harbour porpoises	x	Rec.3: Protect harbour porpoises in their key habitats by minimizing bycatch as far as possible	High
JG13/AP29/JP/ WBBK	Taking into consideration the future requirements under the MSFD, Parties should continue to 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. Periodic reviews of progress should be conducted by the Jastarnia Group. (JG12/AP32)	x		x		High
JG13/AP30/JP/ WBBK	Parties are asked to undertake baseline studies of underwater noise in their respective waters as a reference point	x	RES-07: Improve knowledge on impact of impulsive	x	Objective e: Ensuring habitat quality favourable	High

	for future impact assessments. (JG12/AP23)		and continuous anthropogenic underwater noise on harbour porpoises, and development of threshold limits of significant disturbance and GES indicators		to the conservation of the harbour porpoise	
JG13/AP31/JP/WBBK	Parties should investigate possible detrimental effects of various types of sound and disturbance on harbour porpoises (including pinger signals, noise from vessels, seismic surveys, wind parks or construction). Parties should initiate and support studies on the effect of anthropogenic noise on the harbour porpoise both on the individual and on a population level. (JG12/AP24)	x		x		High
JG13/AP32/JP/WBBK	Parties are encouraged to adopt regulations on the reduction of sound emissions associated with construction of offshore wind farms and to set an upper limit for pile driving operations. The results of current studies should be reflected both in the national legislation of Parties and in the relevant Indicators for Good Environmental Status to be developed for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. (JG12/AP20)	x	MIT-05: Implement regionally harmonized national threshold limits and guidelines for regulation of underwater noise	x		High
JG13/AP33/WB BK	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 through the coordination group established in 2016. (JG12/AP66)			x	Rec.8: Monitor population health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality	High
JG13/AP34/JP/WBBK	The animals collected should be necropsied and examined with regard to	x	MON-04: Collect dead specimens and	x		High

	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. (JG12/AP68)		assess health status, contaminant levels, cause of mortality and life-history parameters of harbour porpoises			
JG13/AP35/WB BK	The necropsy coordination group shall assist with the establishment of the foreseen database on “Web-accessed database for marine mammal stranding and necropsy data”, and Parties shall support the process through providing funding for a workshop. (new)			x		High
JG13/AP36/JP	Parties are strongly encouraged to collect any stranded or bycaught animals for necropsies. (new)	x				High
JG13/AP37/JP	Parties are strongly encouraged to use the data provided by SAMBAH, in particular in connection with the establishment of management plans for SACs and MPAs for harbour porpoises, as well as with regard to mitigation measures. (JG12/AP34)	x	MIT-06: Expand the network of protected areas for harbour porpoises, improve its connectivity, and develop and implement appropriate management plans including monitoring schemes for these areas			High
JG13/AP38/WB BK	Parties should promote research on the consequences of impacts on prey communities for harbour porpoises. (JG12/AP70)			x	Rec.10: Include monitoring and management of important prey	Medium

					species in national harbour porpoise management plans	
JG13/AP39/JP/ WBBK	Coordinating Authorities of the countries hosting the Group's meetings are asked to ensure the attendance of an expert on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) at the respective meetings of the Group. The Secretariat should recall this recommendation to the Coordinating Authority of the host country in good time before the meeting. (JG12/AP50)	x	Other	x	Other	High
JG13/AP40/JP/ WBBK	The Jastarnia Group recommend to the ASCOBANS Parties to adapt the focus of its future meetings to correspond to the updated national reporting structure and cycle (see Resolution 8.1). Those issues which the AC would focus on, the Jastarnia Group would also focus on, unless there are other pressing matters. (new)	x	Other	x	Other	High
JG13/AP41/JP/ WBBK	Parties are encouraged to take turns hosting the meetings of the Jastarnia Group and to ensure that the necessary funding for this purpose is made available. (JG12/AP55)	x	Other	x	Other	High

Internal List of Action Points of the 13th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

- 1) **(JG12/AP8)** Jastarnia Group members should adopt a targeted approach to involving stakeholders such as fishermen and fisheries organizations. Jastarnia Group Members and the Secretariat should make efforts to encourage fisheries organizations to participate in the Jastarnia Group Meetings; on a case by case basis stakeholders such as fishermen are to be invited as experts. (internal)
- 2) **(JG12/AP56)** The Secretariat should alert those experts engaged in drafting the relevant section of the new national reporting format to include a question for Parties to “List relevant fisheries stakeholder bodies within your country” (internal)
- 3) **(JG12/AP6)** A small drafting group should develop briefing notes on ASCOBANS positions regarding bycatch, insofar as possible in consultation with the North Sea Group. These should be used by anyone representing ASCOBANS at Baltic Sea Advisory Council and other meetings of relevant EU and Baltic Sea bodies in order to maintain a consistent and appropriate approach. (internal)
- 4) **(JG12/AP44)** The Secretariat should remind Lithuania to designate a contact persons for the Baltic Harbour Porpoise Database operated by HELCOM (Lithuania). (internal)
- 5) **(JG12/AP47)** The Jastarnia Group should step up cooperation with the Working Group on Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management under the Baltic Sea Advisory Council. (internal)
- 6) **(JG12/AP16)** The Secretariat should alert those experts engaged in drafting the relevant section of the new national reporting format to include a question for Parties to submit, as they become available, all results on genetic, morphological and other biological research dealing with the stock identity of Baltic porpoises, including results from ongoing relevant studies. (internal)
- 7) **(JG12/AP29)** Based on a standardised reporting format, the Secretariat should ask Parties to provide information as to the definitions of the term ‘fisheries’, and rules and regulations applicable to the various types of fisheries in their national legislation. This information should be provided in time for the next JG meeting. (internal)
- 8) **(JG12/AP58)** The Secretariat will enquire with Parties regarding steps taken to develop their joint recommendations to the European Commission regarding the management of harbour porpoise SACs to minimize bycatch rates within these areas. (internal)
- 9) **NEW:** The Secretariat shall intersessionally draft and circulate for review Terms of Reference on the Coordinator, including the following high priority issues to be flagged up by the Parties intersessionally:
 - a. Represent ASCOBANS at meetings of the Regional Coordination Group which will develop the regional implementation of the Data Collection Framework (DCF), assuming this is practically feasible;
 - b. Review progress under the Jastarnia and WBBK Action Plans and make proposals for amending the Action Points in advance of the meetings of the Group;(internal)
- 10) **(JG12/AP52)** Parties, scientists and NGOs are requested to make the results of all relevant projects available to the ASCOBANS Secretariat. (internal)
- 11) **(JG12/AP54)** The Jastarnia Group shall intersessionally review the WBBK Plan in time for the 14th meeting of the Group to assess whether a formal revision is needed. (internal)
- 12) **NEW** Prioritize individual Action Points by Urgency and Importance from the 14th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group onwards, and consider applying this system to the other ASCOBANS Action Points. (internal)

- 13) **NEW** The Secretariat will update the Jastarnia Group at its future meetings on the negotiations and adoption of the Action Points at the most recent meeting of the Advisory Committee, highlighting why individual Action Points were amended or deleted. (internal)