



9th Meeting of the Parties
Online, 7 - 11 September 2020

ASCOBANS/MOP9/Doc.6.1.4
Dist. 10 June 2020

Agenda Item 6.1.4

Further Implementation of the Agreement

Species Action Plans

Species Action Plan for the North-East
Atlantic Common Dolphin

Document 6.1.4

Proposed Amendments to Resolution 8.4:
Conservation of Common Dolphins

Action Requested

- Review the proposed amendments
- Introduce changes if needed
- Adopt the resolution

Submitted by

Common Dolphin Group





Resolution No. 4: Conservation of Common Dolphins

The Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS

1. *Encourages* Parties to undertake the following actions required for the conservation of common dolphins in the eastern North Atlantic:
 - (a) continue work towards establishing a management framework procedure for bycatch in order to enable specified conservation objectives to be met;
 - (b) coordinate their monitoring programmes on other direct and indirect pressures, including chemical pollution and anthropogenic noise, to allow assessment of the effects on the population;
 - (c) support the research necessary, using both genetic and ecological markers, for a thorough assessment of the range boundary and any subdivisions of the eastern North Atlantic population(s) in order to re-assess the management unit;
 - (d) coordinate their bycatch monitoring programmes to allow assessment of the population bycatch rate;
 - (e) apply appropriate bycatch mitigation strategies for all high- and medium-risk fisheries;
 - (f) monitor population status through large- and small-scale surveys at appropriate intervals in order to estimate trends in abundance and detect changes in distribution;
 - (g) monitor health and nutritional status, reproductive parameters, pollutant burdens, and causes of mortality using samples and data collected from stranding and bycatch monitoring programmes;
 - (h) continue to review of the effects of anthropogenic noise and other threats and pressures on common dolphins, including an evaluation of the population level consequences of disturbance;
 - (i) assess the independent, in-combination and cumulative effects of multiple stressors;
 - (j) continue requesting overarching legislation for cetaceans in European waters that ensures the effective protection of cetaceans from all threats;
 - (k) establish a coordinated and regionalized approach;



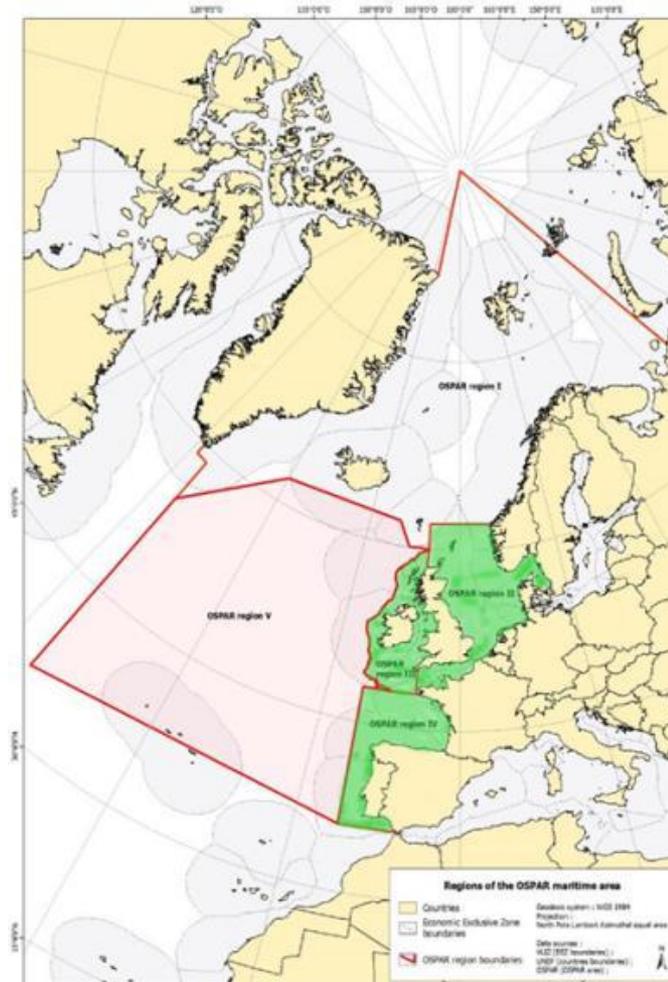
ASCOBANS
Species Action Plan (SAP)

for
North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin
(Delphinus delphis)



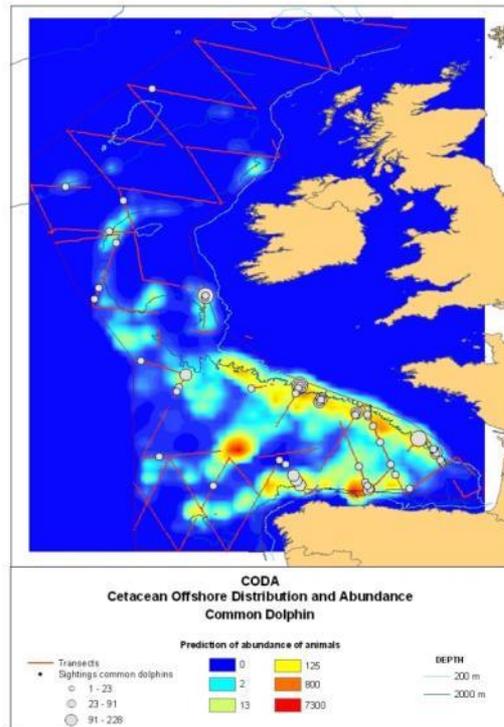
August 2019

One NE Atlantic Management /MSFD Assessment Unit - ICES WGMME (2014)



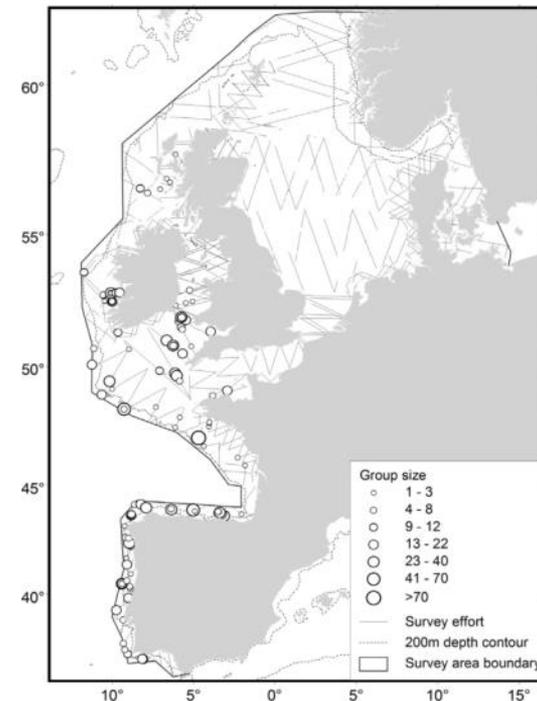
MU Abundance – c173,000 *D. delphis*

Common dolphin
(Coda 2009 -
Coda survey July 2007)



116,709 (CV=0.34)

Common dolphin
(Hammond et al. 2013 –
SCANS II survey July 2005)

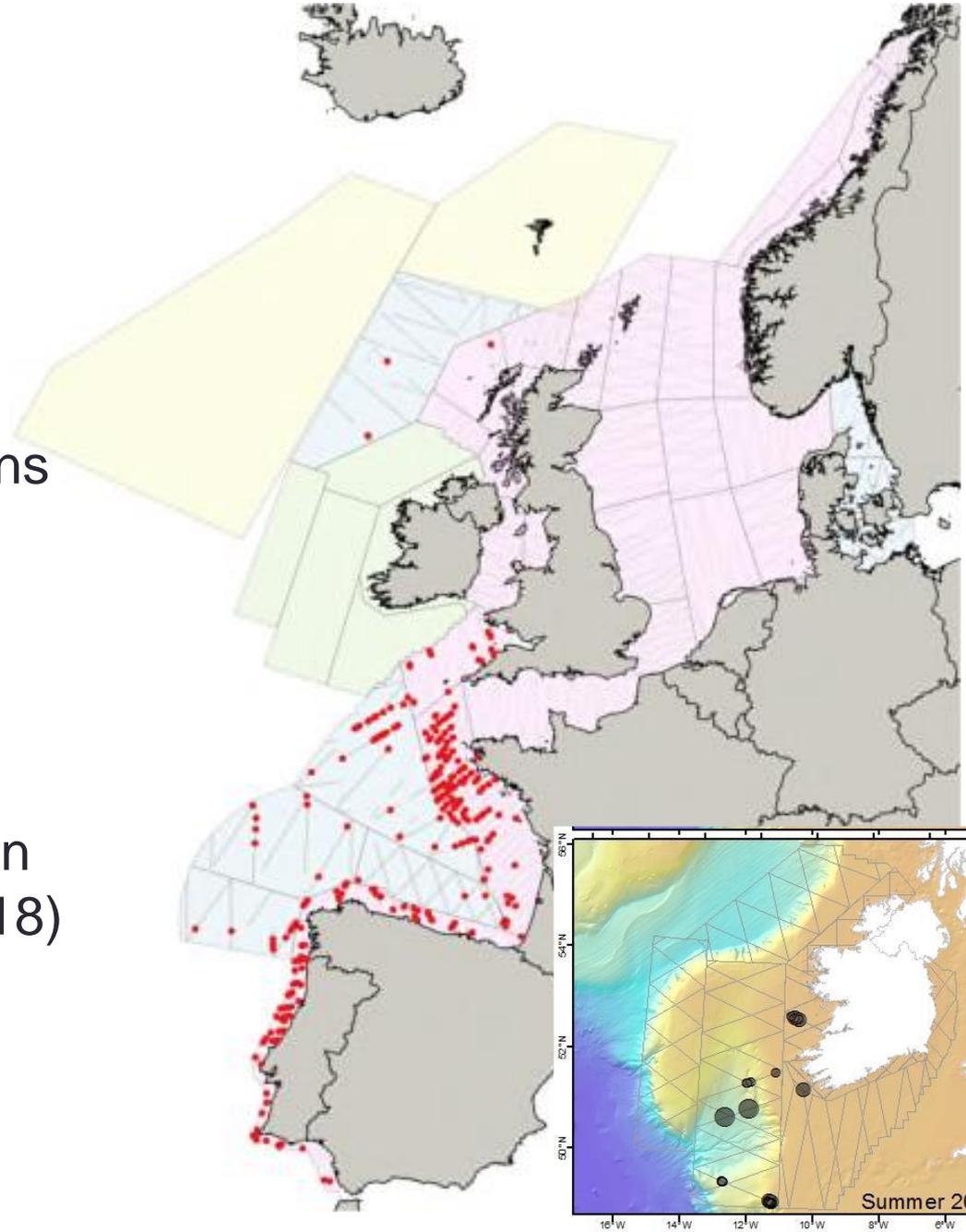


56,221 (CV=0.23)

SCANS III July 2016

>467,673 common dolphins
CV = 0.264
(Hammond et al. 2017)

Irish ObSERVE project
~ 33,215 possible common
dolphins (Rogan et al. 2018)





Summary of actions

Priority	Action	Code
Essential	Identify the priority bycatch issues	RES-01
Essential	Improve estimates of bycatch rates to support development of conservation strategy	RES-02
Essential	Implement and assess gear modifications and mitigation measures to reduce bycatch	MIT-01
High	Implement a wide-scale surveillance programme to monitor trends in distribution and abundance in the NE Atlantic	MON-01
High	Improve understanding of causes of seasonal and annual variation in abundance and distribution, particularly in relation to human activities	RES-03
High	Monitor health and nutritional status, diet, life history parameters, and causes of mortality in the NE Atlantic	MON-02
Medium	Further our understanding on population structure by assessing and developing suitable techniques for these highly mobile small delphinids	RES-04
Medium	Improve understanding of and develop mitigation for the risks of anthropogenic sound	MIT-02
Medium	Ensure screening and assessment of the occurrence and effects of hazardous substances	MON-03
Low	Monitor for potential increases in anthropogenic activities that lead to incidences of death, injury or adverse health effects	MON-04



Priority	Action	Code	Constraints
Essential	Identify the priority bycatch issues	RES-01	Political will influenced by societal desire to support
Essential	Improve estimates of bycatch rates to support development of conservation strategy	RES-02	Metrics used to record fishing effort; ambiguous definitions for some gear types; insufficient funding to support the extent of monitoring needed for robust estimates
Essential	Implement and assess gear modifications and mitigation measures to reduce bycatch	MIT-01	Cooperation from fishing industry; enforcement measures
High	Implement a wide-scale surveillance programme to monitor trends in distribution and abundance in the NE Atlantic	MON-01	Commitment of funding
High	Improve understanding of causes of seasonal and annual variation in abundance and distribution, particularly in relation to human activities	RES-03	Inadequate spatio-temporal survey coverage; difficulties in mapping some human activities
High	Monitor health and nutritional status, diet, life history parameters, and causes of mortality in the NE Atlantic	MON-02	Commitment of funding; access to samples; development of suitable methods
Medium	Further our understanding on population structure by assessing and developing suitable techniques for these highly mobile small delphinids	RES-04	Development of non-invasive sampling methods; discrimination ability of different techniques.



Priority	Action	Code	Constraints
Medium	Improve understanding of and develop mitigation for the risks of anthropogenic sound	MIT-02	Challenges of attributing sound to impacts
Medium	Ensure screening and assessment of the occurrence and effects of hazardous substances	MON-03	Effective identification of emerging hazards; addressing impacts on common dolphin specifically
Low	Monitor for potential increases in anthropogenic activities that lead to incidences of death, injury or adverse health effects	MON-04	Availability and accessibility of information



Terms of Reference

The Common Dolphin Group has the following tasks:

- Coordinate and drive the implementation of the Species Action Plan for the North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin, including assessing funding options where appropriate;
- Collate reports on the progress of implementation, effectiveness, issues encountered and the results obtained;
- Evaluate progress in implementation, specifically with regards to each of the ten actions as defined in the SAP;
- Establish further implementation priorities and make appropriate recommendations;
- Report to each Advisory Committee meeting on the progress;
- Encourage countries to harmonise their national efforts, including allocation of funding;
- Encourage cooperation between ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS (in particular taking into consideration the ongoing initiative of ACCOBAMS/IWC Conservation and Management Plan for Mediterranean Common Dolphins) and other Range States;
- Promote the SAP to relevant stakeholders; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the SAP every six years to make recommendations for updating it.



Common Dolphin Group Members

France

- Florence Caurant – University of La Rochelle (Co-Chair)
- Vincent Ridoux – University of La Rochelle
- Sami Hassani - Oceanopolis
- Helene Peltier – University of La Rochelle
- Jerome Spitz – University of La Rochelle

Ireland

- Sinéad Murphy – Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (Co-chair)

Portugal

- Marine Sequeira - Instituto da Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas

Spain

- Graham Pierce - Instituto de Investigaciones Mariñas
- Begoña Santos - Instituto Español de Oceanografía

UK

- Farah Chaudry – Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Kelly MacLeod – Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Nikki Taylor – Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Cat Bell - Defra
- Allen Kingston – University of St Andrews

IGOs

- Greg Donovan – International Whaling Commission

NGOs

- Peter Evans - Sea Watch Foundation/Bangor University
- Mark Simmonds – Humane Society International
- Fiona Read – Whale and Dolphin Conservation
- Sarah Dolman – Whale and Dolphin Conservation
- Simon Berrow – Irish Whale and Dolphin Group

ACCOBAMS

- JoAn Gonzalvo - Tethys Research Institute, Italy

Fishing industry

- Eunice Pinn – SeaFish



1st Meeting of the Common Dolphin Group

Stralsund, Germany, September, 2019

- Activities contributing to implementation of the Species Action Plan for the North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin
 - French National Working Group on Bycatch
- Update on activities of other WGs, and legislation
- Current status of the ACCOBAMS Conservation and Management Plan for Mediterranean Common Dolphins
- Bycatch as a threat to Common Dolphins
 - Current activities on bycatch monitoring and mitigation in the UK
 - Common dolphins and fisheries interactions in Galicia
 - Nature of fleets in the Bay of Biscay

EU request on emergency measures to prevent bycatch of common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) and Baltic Proper harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) in the Northeast Atlantic

Advice summary

ICES concluded that the proposed measures by NGOs for both the common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) in the Bay of Biscay and the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) are appropriate to reduce the bycatch. However, several spatio-temporal and technical amendments are recommended.

ICES advises, for the common dolphin in the Bay of Biscay, a combination of temporal closures of all métiers of concern and application of pingers on pair trawlers to mitigate bycatch outside of the period of closure. For the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise, ICES advises a combination of spatial-temporal closures and application of pingers in static nets (i.e.

ICES notes ongoing issues with data availability and quality, contributing to high levels of uncertainty in the estimation of population abundance, distribution, bycatch, and other major threats for small cetaceans. Notably, observer coverage is well below 1% of the total effort in most fisheries. ICES recommends enhanced monitoring to assess the effectiveness of management measures and to augment precision in population abundance and bycatch mortality estimates of common dolphin in the Bay of Biscay and of the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise.

ICES further advises that protection measures, considering the life history of small cetaceans, can only be effective when applied for a longer period of time. ICES advice addresses not only the emergency measures, but also considers long-term measures.

ICES notes that conservation objectives set out under relevant EU legislation need to be defined more quantitatively. Furthermore, many EU Member States have not yet established baselines or reference levels for population abundance or pressures, such as bycatch, against which the status of the species can be assessed under the EU Habitats Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). ICES therefore reiterates its previous advice that it is willing to assist competent authorities to establish limits for anthropogenic mortality, against which human impacts can be assessed.

Table 7 Summary of the bycatch rate and mortality of common dolphins for métiers of concern from monitoring (subareas 8 and 9; data pooled 2016–2018) and strandings (French coast, Subarea 8), raised using the annual mean of the available fishing effort data (RDB) for 2016–2018.

Métier 4 [#]	Métier 5 [^]	RDB fishing effort (DaS ^{^^})	Bycatch rate (animals/DaS fished)	At-sea monitoring estimate (95% CI)	Stranding estimate	% coverage of RDB fishing effort (DaS)
PTM	DEF	682	0.71	481 (408–555)	802	8.2
PTB	MPD	5195	0.149	775 (388–1163)	1292	0.43
GTR	DEF	58365	0.035	2061 (1203–3092)	3435	0.194
OTM	DEF	243	1.22 ^{##}	297 (0–890)	495	0.112
PS	SPF	35564	0.0060	213 (0–532)	355	0.31
GNS	DEF	36836	0.0037	137 (0–343)	228	0.49
PTM	LPF	510	0.0153	8 (0–23)	13	4.3
TOTAL (95% Confidence Interval)				3973* (1998–6598)	6620 (4411-10827)	

* CIs too wide; not possible to calculate variance in bycatch rates and consequently CIs are summed métier mortality.

[#] See <https://vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1498> for the description of gears.

^{##} Based on ca. one day of monitoring effort.

[^] See <https://vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1499> for the description of targeted species.

^{^^} Days-at-sea (DaS).

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EU Member States Conservation Status Assessments for the Common Dolphin, for Article 17 reporting of the Habitats Directive

Country	2007	2013	2019
UK	Unknown	Favourable	Unknown
Ireland	Favourable	Favourable	Favourable
France	Unknown	Unfavourable-Bad	Unfavourable-Inadequate
Spain	Unknown	Unfavourable-Bad	Unknown
Portugal	Favourable	Unfavourable-Inadequate	Unfavourable-Inadequate
Marine Atlantic	“Unknown”	“Unfavourable-Inadequate”	Provisional assessment “Unknown”