



SAMBAH II LIFE

Spatio-temporal Monitoring of the Baltic Proper Harbour Porpoise and its Habitat Quality



General aim and overview

- Evaluation of the Conservation Status of the critically endangered Baltic Proper harbour porpoise population
- Builds on the results of SAMBAH (LIFE08 NAT/S/000261)
- Collection of a second set of acoustic monitoring data throughout project area
 - Bycatch
 - Underwater noise
 - Prey quality and quantity
- 6-year project, incl. 2 years static passive monitoring
- All Information is still subject to change



Consortium



- Full application for an EU LIFE Traditional Project, sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity, submitted in Feb 2020,
 - Under the lead of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN, Coordinating beneficiary), the German Oceanographic Museum (DMM), and the Swedish Museum of Natural History (NRM)
- 17 partners, across 7 countries (DE, DK, EE, FI, LI, PL, SE)
- Latvia and Russia were asked for cooperation, however were unable to acquire the necessary national co-funding.





Objectives (1/3)

- Provide a **holistic assessment** of the status of the Baltic Proper population, listing the key conservation actions to secure its survival.
- Provide estimates of population-specific and national **GES** (Good Environmental Status) **thresholds and FRVs** (Favourable Reference Values).
- Test and evaluate four different approaches to estimate fishing intensity, to produce **indicative seasonal bycatch risk maps** across the project area.
- Provide knowledge on the **spatio-temporal impact of prey quantity and quality on porpoise density and echolocation behaviour**.





Objectives (2/3)

- Provide an initial assessment of the **impact of vessel and seismic survey noise on porpoises in the Baltic Sea**, together with noise impact maps.
- Investigate whether the detection rate of the Baltic Proper population has changed during the last decade, indicating a **change in abundance**.
- Provide **updated and more precise abundance estimates of porpoises**, by country and population, and by season, including waters >80 m.
- Provide **monthly maps of porpoise density** across the project area.





Objectives (3/3)

- **Test a novel method for acoustic identification of calves, and if successful, identify when calving takes place in the Baltic Proper population.**
- **Provide a harmonised acoustic monitoring standard and scheme for porpoises in the Baltic marine region.**
- **Increase the awareness of porpoises in the Baltic Sea among authorities, the general public and other stakeholders. Create awareness of the species' existence. Regional extinction is imminent and is impacted by daily life decisions of the general public and political decisions.**



Project Actions (1/2)



Preparatory Actions (A)

- Optimal design of the survey grid
- Detection Function
- Cue Rate
- Database and data standards



Conservation Actions (C)

- Acoustic Monitoring
- Density and Abundance estimation
- Calf detection
- Fisheries monitoring
- Prey monitoring
- Noise measurements and modelling
- Modelling of porpoise distribution and habitat
- GES and FRV
- Comprehensive status assessment and ranked key conservation actions



Project Impact Monitoring Actions (D)

- Key project level indicators
- Socio-economic study for the whole Baltic Sea
- Method success and recommendations
- Survey of Government Authorities

Project Actions (2/2)



Dissemination Actions 1 (E1)

- Notice Boards, Website, Laymens report
- Networking, Workshops
- End of Project workshop
- Dissemination on social media/press releases
- Exhibits at museums



Regional harmonisation Actions 2 (E2)

- Regionally harmonised acoustic monitoring program
- Regionally harmonised platform (app) for collection of citizen science data on harbour porpoise sightings



Replication/Transfer Actions 3 (E3)

- Bycatch mitigation workshop
- Stakeholder letters on impact and mitigation
- Workshops on methods transfer
- Draft international management recommendations



Project Management (F)

- Project management by partners including audit
- Advisory committee
- After-Life plan



Current status

- Concept note submitted spring 2020, approved autumn 2020
- Full application submitted February 2021
- Application rejected
- Redress submitted, same outcome
- Project does not fit LIFE programme 2021-2024 – will not apply, but are looking for other options
- Keep fingers crossed!

