

Agenda Item 2.1

Review of New Information on Threats and  
Other Issues Relevant to Small Cetaceans

Noise

**Information Document 2.1b**

**Work Plan (version: November 2020) for  
the Joint Noise Working Group of CMS,  
ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS**

**Action Requested**

Take note

Submitted by

Secretariat

## **Work Plan (version: November 2020) for the Joint Noise Working Group of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS**

The members of the JNWWG serve in a volunteer capacity. It is understood that the limited time available to members might make it necessary for the JNWWG to prioritise tasks, and that not all requests might be fulfilled in each intersessional period.

### **Regular Tasks**

The JNWWG will:

1. Review new information on underwater noise, its impacts on species covered by CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS and their prey species, mitigation measures, technological developments, best practices and guidelines. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.
2. Prepare a report on progress and new information to each meeting of the CMS Scientific Council, ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, in particular including:
  - a) Updated information on:
    - New available information on underwater noise, its effects on marine species (including migratory species and their prey), as well as the effective assessment and management of this threat
    - Relevant activities and developments in other international bodies (both regional and global) and under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive
    - Relevant developments and new literature especially with respect to technologies aimed at mitigating the propagation of marine noise and noise sources that may present a threat to marine life and how cetaceans are affected
    - Parties' progress in implementation of the resolutions mentioned above, as appropriate
  - b) Advice on Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP) in efforts to reduce or mitigate marine noise pollution, e.g. by
    - Improvement of existing guidelines based on new scientific findings
    - Detailing available mitigation measures, alternative technologies and standards required for achieving the conservation goals of the treaties
    - Recommending appropriate biological indicators and thresholds
  - c) Provision of advice on:
    - Collaboration with other international bodies, such as Barcelona Convention, Black Sea Commission, OSPAR, HELCOM, CBD, IMO, IWC and ICES
    - Requirements of the relevant other bodies that countries have elected to adhere to with respect to underwater noise, such as European Directives (i.e. the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive)
    - Opportunities for influencing decisions of other relevant bodies in order to achieve more effective protection of marine life from impacts of underwater noise
3. Design, and help implement as appropriate, pilot projects to test and improve the existing noise guidelines (ACCOBAMS Res. 7.13 and ASCOBANS AC17/Doc.4-08) and mitigation measures for their application in the field
4. Respond to additional requests for support by CMS, ACCOBAMS or ASCOBANS, transmitted through the Secretariats, as required.

### Specific CMS Mandates

1. Decisions 13.58-13.60
  - Review of the report on Best Available Technology (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP) for Three Noise Sources: Shipping, Seismic Airgun Surveys, and Pile Driving published as CMS UNEP/CMS/COP13/Inf.9, which after consideration by the Scientific Council will be published as CMS Technical Series
  - Provide advice to the Scientific Council on the need of developing noise mitigation guidelines on shipping, seismic airgun surveys, and pile driving
  - Review the need for additional guidance on mitigation technologies and management measures for additional noise-generating activities
  - Advice on the need for updating the CMS Family Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment for Marine Noise-generating Activities and/or its Technical Support Information prior to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties of CMS
2. Resolution 12.14
  - Upon request, support Parties that have not yet done so in establishing national noise registries to collect and display data on noise-generating activities in the marine area to help assess exposure levels and the likely impacts on the marine environment, and that data standards are made compatible with regional noise registries, such as the ones developed by ICES and ACCOBAMS

### Specific ACCOBAMS Mandates

1. Resolution 7.6
  - Advising on the need for updating the ACCOBAMS Guidelines to address the impacts of anthropogenic noise on cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area
2. Resolution 5.13
  - Developing, in collaboration with Parties, non-Parties, as well as NATO and other stakeholders as necessary, implementable measures to reduce impacts of intense noise activities within areas identified as of special concern for Cuvier's beaked whales for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties of ACCOBAMS
3. Resolution 5.15
  - Supporting the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee over the study on the extent and temporal variability of the habitat of species that are known to be particularly vulnerable to man-made noise (e.g., *Ziphius cavirostris*), in order to ensure that more data are made available, to increase the model's robustness and to compare different algorithms for best results
4. Resolution 7.13
  - Further developing the concept of "quiet zones" as outlined in Recommendation 10.5 of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee with a focus on a quantitative elaboration and evaluation of the scientific evidence for establishing such areas both in space and time

### Specific ASCOBANS Mandates

1. Resolution 9.1
  - Support the Advisory Committee in reviewing new information on underwater noise, its impacts on small cetaceans and their prey species, mitigation measures, technological developments, best practices and guidelines. Make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action by

AC26 (document deadline 9 Oct 2021), also noting national reports submitted by Parties (ASCOBANS Work Plan, Activity 7)

- Support the Advisory Committee in assessing whether national navies' mitigation protocols for use of military sonar are effective. This requires Parties to request the mitigation protocols from the navies. Depending on delivery of the protocols, the Secretariat will request input from JNWG in advance of AC26, scheduled for 8-12 Nov 2021 (ASCOBANS Work Plan, Activity 8)

2. Resolution 8.3

- Contribute to improving knowledge on impact of impulsive and continuous anthropogenic underwater noise on harbour porpoises, and development of threshold limits of significant disturbance and GES indicators (Jastarnia Plan, Action RES-07)
- Contribute to evaluation of implementing regionally harmonized national threshold limits and guidelines for regulation of underwater noise (Jastarnia Plan, Action MIT-05)