

# Conservation of Harbour Porpoises in the Wadden Sea World Heritage

ASCOBANS -  
10th Meeting of the North Sea Group,  
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# Developments in the Wadden Sea

**2017 ASCOBANS letter to the TWSC**

**2018 Leeuwarden Declaration – Paragraph 16**

**2019 Bright Future? Harbour Porpoises in the Wadden Sea**

**2020 Integration of Harbour Porpoises into the ToRs of the trilateral Expert Group Seals**

**→ Expert Group Marine Mammals**

# What has happend since then?

## Bi-annual meetings of the EG Marine Mammals

→ How to trilaterally proceed with harbour porpoises?

**Existing monitoring programmes in the Wadden Sea:** telemetry, aerial survey, stranding networks, passive acoustic monitoring and ad libitum observations (also through Apps: Beach Explorer, observation.org).

QSR Marine Mammals, 2022  
Scheidat et al. in preparation



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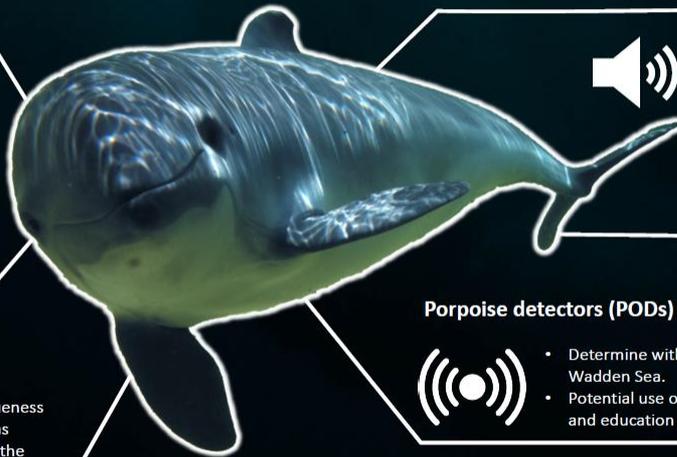


# What has happend since then?

## 15th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium

effort). Sourced from *ICES Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME) (2020)*.

### POSSIBLE FUTURE DIRECTIONS



- Trilateral stranding network**
  - Establish a cross-border stranding network by combining existing networks in DK, DE, and NL.
  - Harmonise data collection and sampling methods.
- Post-mortem examinations**
  - Standardise post-mortem examinations.
  - Collect biological baseline data and data on mortality causes, chemical and acoustic pollution, and infectious diseases.
- Outreach and education**
  - Educate the public about the uniqueness of the Wadden Sea, about its role as habitat for harbour porpoises, and the threats they are facing.
- Bycatch monitoring**
  - Improve efforts to monitor and analyse bycatch data at a regional scale.
- Acoustic pollution**
  - Study the impact of noise on harbour porpoise distribution.
  - Study the use of passive acoustic monitoring technology.
- Porpoise detectors (PODs)**
  - Determine with monitoring efforts on the Wadden Sea.
  - Potential use of resulting data for outreach and education purposes.

**EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION REQUIRES ACTION**

**References and further reading**

- Grans, P.G.H. 2020. European Whales, Dolphins, and Porpoises. Marine Mammal Conservation in Practice. Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/C2018-0-02742-5>
- ICES. 2020. Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME). ICES Scientific Reports. 2:39. 85 pp. <http://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.5975>



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# What has happened since then?

## 15th ISWSS - Recommendations

### For research:

Evidence from telemetry data suggests that individual harbour porpoises are resident in the Wadden Sea. Further information on the genetic structure, distribution and habitat use is needed to understand the connectivity between the Wadden Sea and the North Sea as well as their specific resource needs and the role as top predator in the Wadden Sea ecosystem.

### For management:

Create and enforce protected areas for marine mammals, free of any anthropogenic disturbance, based on the scientific evidence for the location of key habitats.

# The way forward

Define which parameters need to be monitored to assess changes in the status of the harbour porpoise population in the Wadden Sea (e.g. population structure, abundance, distribution, health).

Discuss which monitoring methods are most suited to measure these parameters and how the monitoring in the different regions needs to be adjusted.



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# The way forward

		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Telemetry	DK	0	0	0	0	0	X/0	0	X/0	X/0	0	0
	SH	0	0	0	0	0	X/0	0	X/0	X/0	0	0
	HH/LS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	NL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
aerial survey	DK	0	0	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	SH	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	HH/LS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	NL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
stranding	DK	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	SH	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	HH/LS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	NL	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
PAM	DK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	SH	X/0										
	HH/LS	X/0										
	NL	X/0	X/0	X/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



THERE IS A PLACE – WHERE HEAVEN  
AND EARTH SHARE THE SAME STAGE

Photo: Jeff Wevers/amy



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