

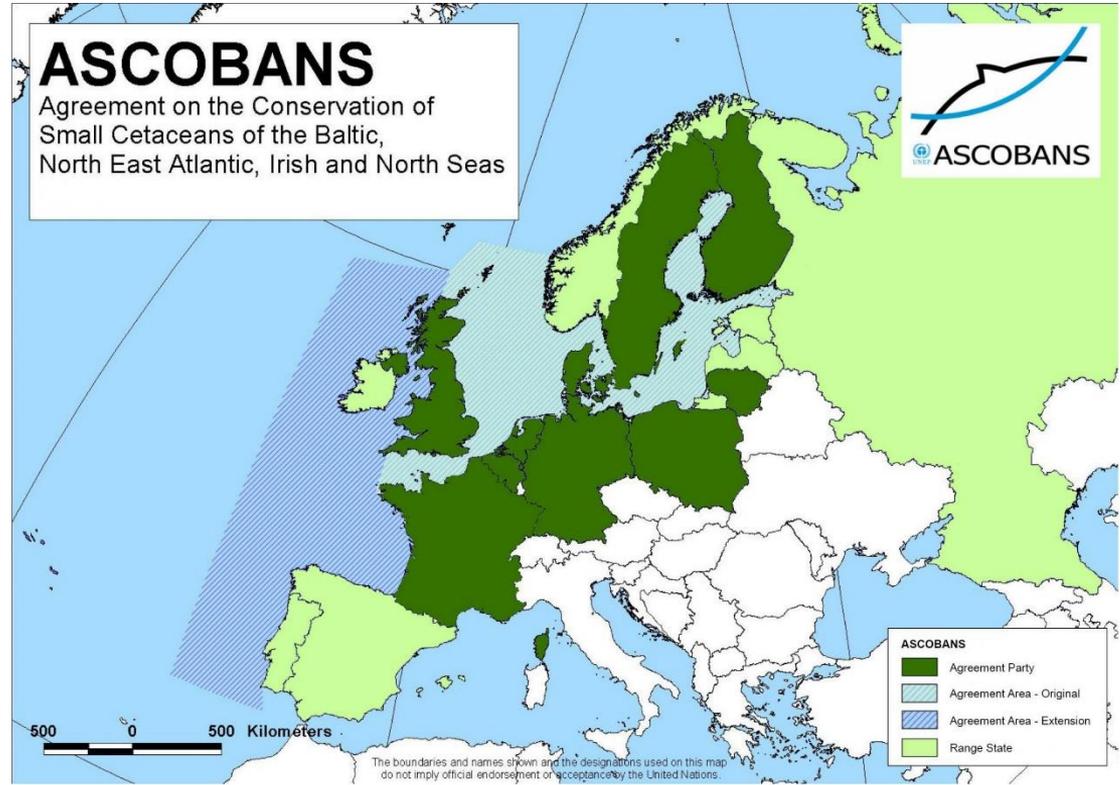
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Rationale and scope for draft ASCOBANS guidelines for cetacean-friendly MSP

ASCOBANS Technical Workshop to develop guidelines for cetacean-friendly MSP, 27th June 2023
Prof. Dr. Aline Kühl-Stenzel, WG Chair

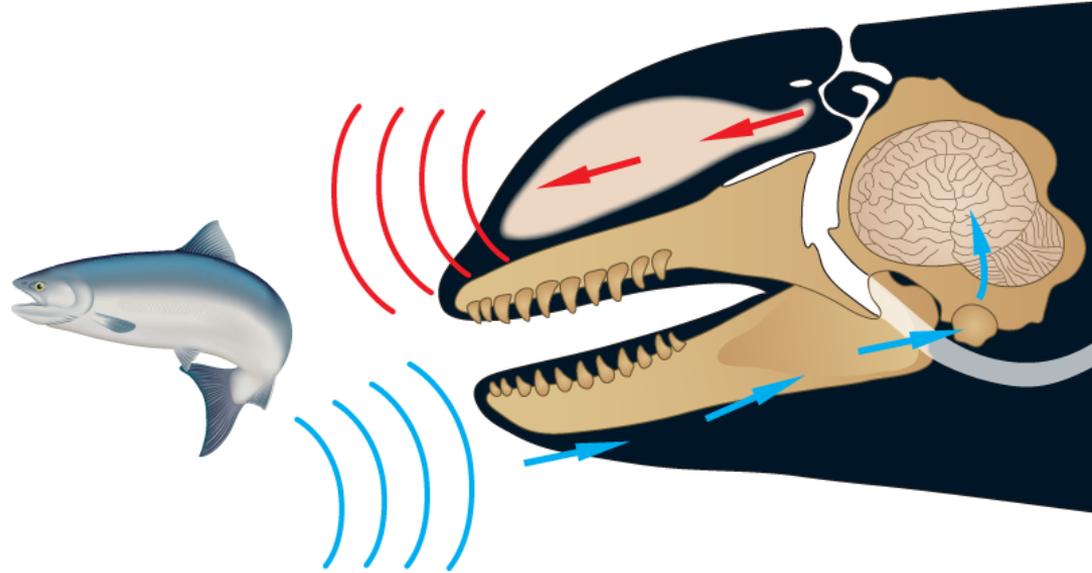
ASCOBANS context

- UN treaty (1992)
- 10 Parties
- 7 Non-Party Range States
- Secretariat in Bonn, Germany



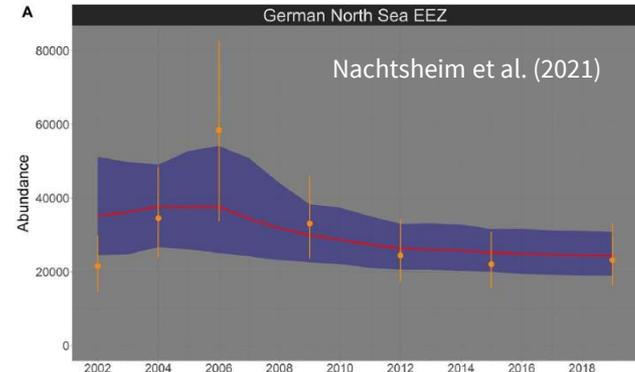
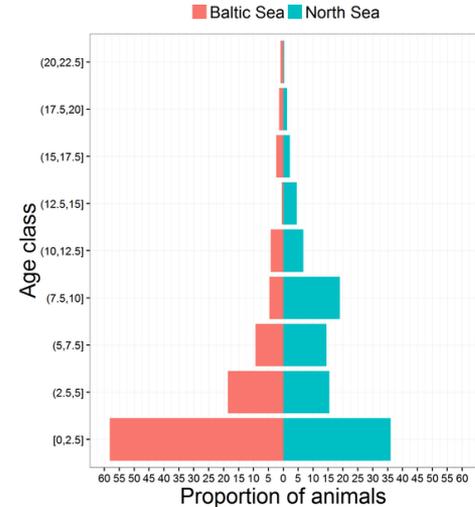
Cetacean context: whales, dolphins and porpoises

- ASCOBANS covers small cetaceans
- Relatively long-lived species, slow reproductive rate
- Include toothed whales: use echolocation for communication, prey detection, reproduction etc
- Highly mobile/migratory and transboundary

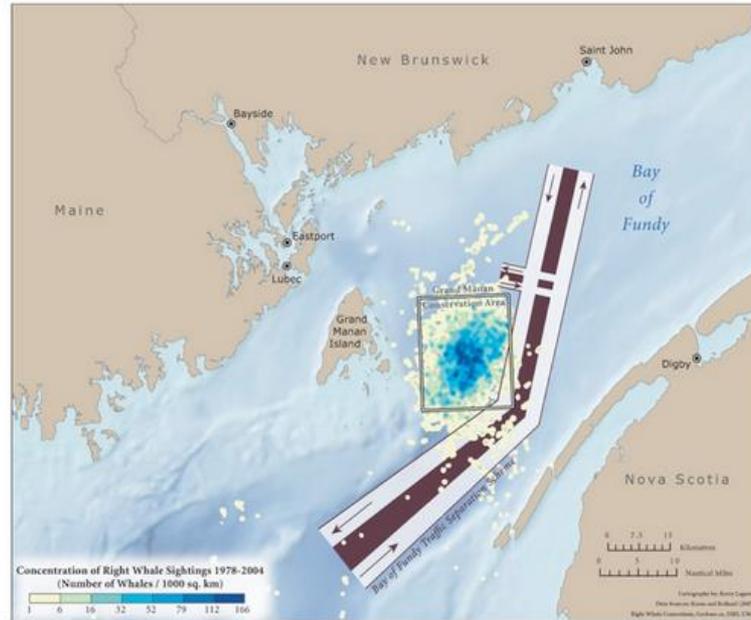
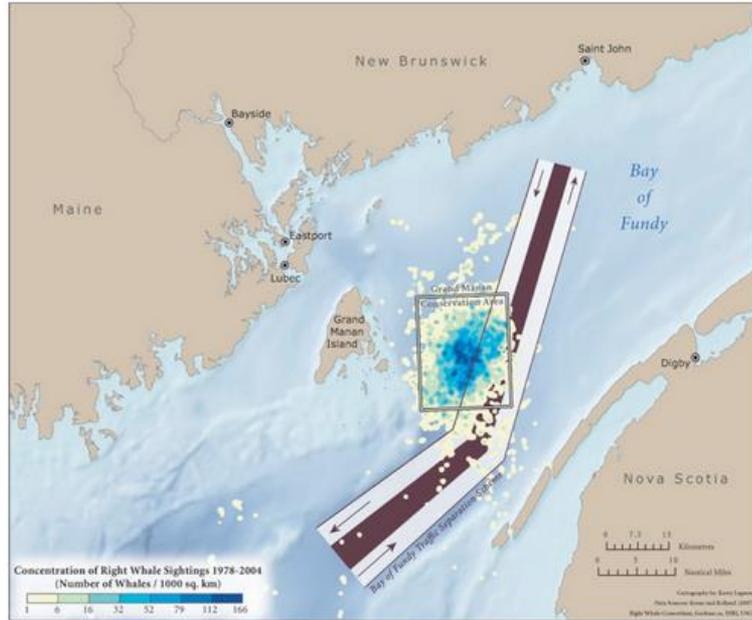


Conservation status: far from favourable...

- Globally: more than half of today's cetacean species have a concerning conservation status (IUCN; n=90)
- 29 subspecies or populations are Endangered /Critically Endangered
- Data deficiency is relatively wide-spread
- Example: Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*):
 - European population, 2007: Vulnerable, decreasing
 - Baltic proper population: Critically Endangered (491 individuals, 95% CI 71-1105)

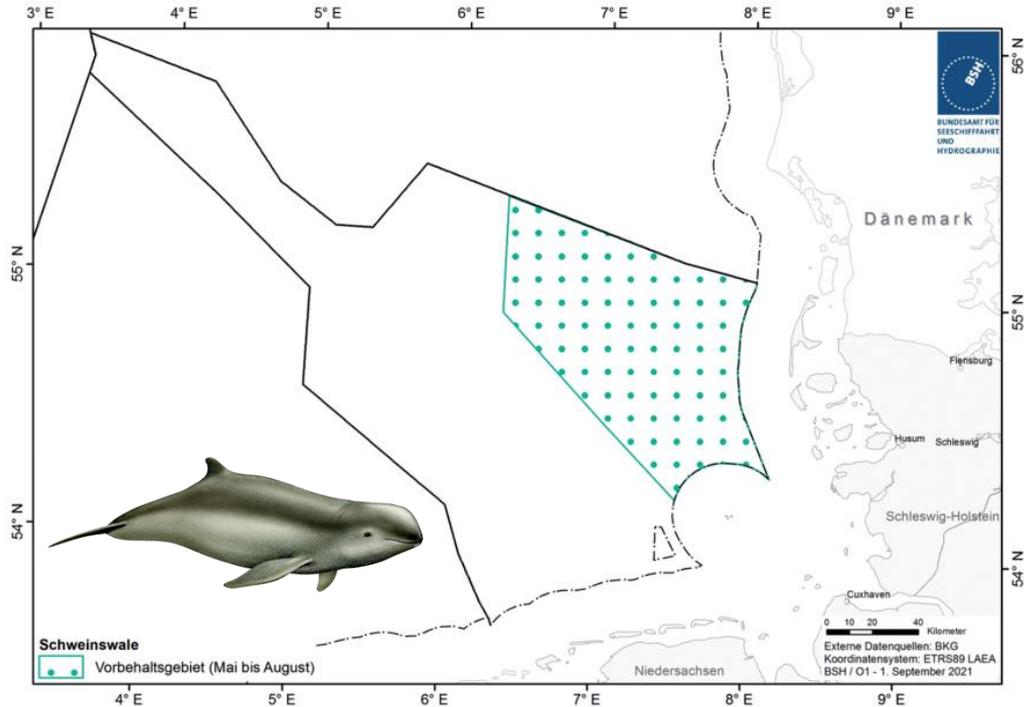


Early example of zonation with cetaceans in mind (2003)



Vanderlaan ASM, Taggart CT, Serdynska AR, Kenney RD, Brown MW. Reducing the risk of lethal encounters: vessels and right whales in the Bay of Fundy and on the Scotian Shelf. *Endangered Species Res* 2008;4(3) 283-283.

Recent MSP example: harbour porpoise layer (Germany)



Area-based & temporal management is an effective conservation tool

Examples of what can be achieved:

- Safeguarding existing **Marine Protected Areas** and other sensitive zones/times (e.g. reproductive period)
- Reduction in **disturbance**
- Improvement of **prey availability**
- Avoidance of **collisions** with vessels
- Improved **noise mitigation** (e.g. unexploded ordnance, pile driving, seismic exploration, naval exercises, shipping)

➔ Vital: **large-scale adaptive** management



What role can MSP play for cetacean conservation?

Address anthropogenic pressure, for example:

- Shipping
 - Renewable energy
 - Oil/gas exploration
 - Recreation (e.g. leisure boats)
 - Fisheries
 - Naval/military activities
- Improve environmental status of entire marine ecosystem, including connectivity
 - Advantage: large-scale management, potentially international and transboundary – particularly relevant to highly mobile/transboundary cetaceans
- ➡ International regulation (e.g. OSPAR, ASCOBANS)



Evolution of cetacean-friendly MSP Guidelines

- ASCOBANS AC26 (2021) discussed noise, ocean energy, unexploded ordnance and marine spatial planning
- AC26 requested the Secretariat to establish an Intersessional Working Group: how to best develop guidelines for cetacean-friendly MSP
 - Members: Finland, Germany, Sweden; CCB, NABU, OceanCare, SWF, WDC, WWF + HELCOM
- Volycon (GER) received in August 2022 to commission work
- Tender to produce draft guidelines (lead: Dr. Cormac Walsh)
- Peer-review process & technical workshop
- Next steps: AC 28 (26-29 September 2023, Bonn, Germany) & MOP10 in 2024



Integration of strong sustainability and MSP

