

**Agenda Item 6.7:                    Disturbance by military activities**

**Report by the United Kingdom to ASCOBANS on Military Activities in the Agreement Area during 2000**

**Submitted by:                    United Kingdom**



**ASCOBANS**

***NOTE:***  
**IN THE INTERESTS OF ECONOMY, DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED TO BRING THEIR OWN COPIES OF THESE DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING**

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During the year 2000, the Royal Navy's use of the North Sea was mainly by single ships undertaking short exercises and transits to port. A larger force of approximately 6 major and 4 minor warships conducted exercises for a 2-week period.

The Royal Navy Fleet was issued with procedures which should be followed to ensure minimal disturbance to cetaceans and marine mammals whilst conducting normal naval business. These are adhered to wherever practical, for example:

- a. Bridge personnel to be aware of marine mammals in the area of operation.
- b. Ships to avoid approaching cetaceans.
- c. Maintain a steady forward progress in order to present predictable movement and allow cetaceans to move away.
- d. Extra care should be taken in areas of heavy traffic or enclosed waters.

Whenever operating or exercising, the Royal Navy effect risk-reduction measures to minimise the risk to cetaceans or equivalent species. They also issue the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions' (DETR) guidelines "*Minimising disturbance to cetaceans from recreation at sea*" to all sea-going HM ships and are included in exercise orders for training around the north west of Scotland and north east Atlantic. The Ministry of Defence work closely with DETR and liaise with non-government organisations to ensure that military activities take account of cetaceans and are undertaken with the minimum of disturbance possible.

In July 2000 the Secretary of State for Defence re-issued his Safety and Environment Protection Policy Statement which states that, within the United Kingdom, the Ministry of Defence will:

\* Carry out environmental policy appraisals of all new or revised policies and equipment acquisition programmes and environmental impact assessments of all new projects and training activities.

\* Apply UK standards where reasonably practical whilst overseas and, in addition, comply with the relevant host nations' standards.

To comply with this requirement the Royal Navy are developing procedures to enable planners of Naval Exercises and Commanding Officers of Naval vessels to take into account environmental requirements that may be or are present during the conduct of Naval Exercises and Training.

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