

Statement by the International Whaling Commission

Due to technical problems, this statement was received after the close of the meeting and could not therefore be distributed

Submitted by: IWC



ASCOBANS

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

Opening statement to the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee

Greg Donovan, International Whaling Commission

First of all, I am sorry that circumstances have meant that I am unable to attend the meeting. This is not a reflection on the importance that the IWC attaches to co-operation with ASCOBANS. This has proved to have been very fruitful in the past and I trust it will continue.

Your Agenda is full and important. There has been some criticism in a variety of fora (for example, the European Cetacean Society) that ASCOBANS is not fulfilling its potential. I trust that the outcome of this meeting will go some way to addressing those fears.

Clearly, the most immediate problem facing ASCOBANS is the issue of bycatches of harbour porpoises. Addressing this issue effectively requires progress to be made on a number of fronts. The work of the joint IWC/ASCOBANS group has made progress with respect to modelling work to provide the necessary framework to establish when and what management action is required where there is doubt and to provide a basis for assessing whether measures taken to reduce bycatch are effective. However, there is already evidence for several areas that action needs to be taken and I welcome the initiative of contracting the report by Andy Read in this regard. The importance of developing appropriate methods to monitor the effectiveness of measures taken over a long time period cannot be overemphasised.

I have participated in the Baltic Discussion Group and I commend the recommendations made within that report. Similarly, I support the formation of a Working Group on monitoring and proposals for SCANS II. I will be happy to participate in any Working Groups where ASCOBANS feels my participation may be of value. I wish you every success in your meeting.