

Terms of Reference for an ASCOBANS Workshop on Remote Electronic Monitoring with Regards to Bycatch of Small Cetaceans

1) Background

The ASCOBANS North Sea Steering Group, as well as the ICES Working Group on Bycatch (WGBYC), have both highlighted a large gap in knowledge regarding bycatch estimates, and concluded in the 2014 report that current bycatch levels of harbour porpoise in the North Sea may exceed sustainable limits.

Members of the North Sea Steering Group suggested that Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) could be a cost efficient and reliable way to monitor bycatch on fishing vessels, in particular where there are practical barriers to using dedicated observers. This would help address monitoring gaps and thus reduce uncertainty over bycatch estimates.

2) Expected Result

A report providing an overview of: the current status of REM techniques in use; common implementation problems/concerns and solutions to these; the identification of new techniques that can be used to monitor bycatch in the future; the proposal of a best practice protocol on implementing REM for protected species monitoring.

3) Participation

- Small workshop (about 30 participants)
- Anyone currently involved in using REM, in particular those working on cetacean and fisheries monitoring
- Representatives of countries that are interested in starting REM monitoring for cetacean bycatch
- Managers in relevant Parties which already implement REM monitoring
- Companies working with video surveillance

4) Approach

A one-day workshop will be held in 2015 to address three main tasks:

1. Provide an overview of the current status of REM techniques used for cetacean bycatch monitoring
 - Exchange of knowledge and experiences of those that have applied this method
 - Available techniques, future techniques
 - Technical/practical issues of installation – barriers to adoption
 - Involvement of stakeholders
 - Effective sampling design
 - Analyses of data (watching of the films/photos, how to calculate error, low bycatch occurrence, ...)

- Use of software, future software qualifications, training programmes and opportunities for continuing information and knowledge sharing
 - Challenges when including other PET (protected, endangered, threatened) species or as part of a discard fishery
2. Identify new techniques that can be used in future bycatch monitoring undertaken in vessels of less than 10m in length
 - a. Consider EM use on smaller vessels where the current set up is not practical (no space for computer, no dry space)
 - b. Consider whether there are alternative techniques that can be used
 3. Produce an outline on best practice based on the current state of knowledge

5) Workshop Steering Group

The Workshop Steering Group comprises Meike Scheidat and Sara Königson.