



Protection of harbour porpoise in Danish waters

ASCOBANS workshop I on
bycatch – 10 July 2015

Protection of the harbour porpoise in Denmark

Habitats Directive

Harbour porpoise is listed as an appendix IV species in the Habitats Directive, which means strong **protection of the species in all of its abundance area** (Article 12 (1) and appendix IV).

Bycatch of harbour porpoise is regulated through Article 12 (4) of the Habitats Directive. Member States are **required to monitor bycatch and to implement protection actions to ensure that bycatch incidences do not have a negative effect on the harbour porpoise population.**

EU council regulation no 812/2004

812/2004 contains **actions to limit incidence of bycatch – “most” vessels larger than 12 meters are obliged to use acoustic pingers in some fisheries.** These obligations are, however, not applicable in the inner Danish Waters.



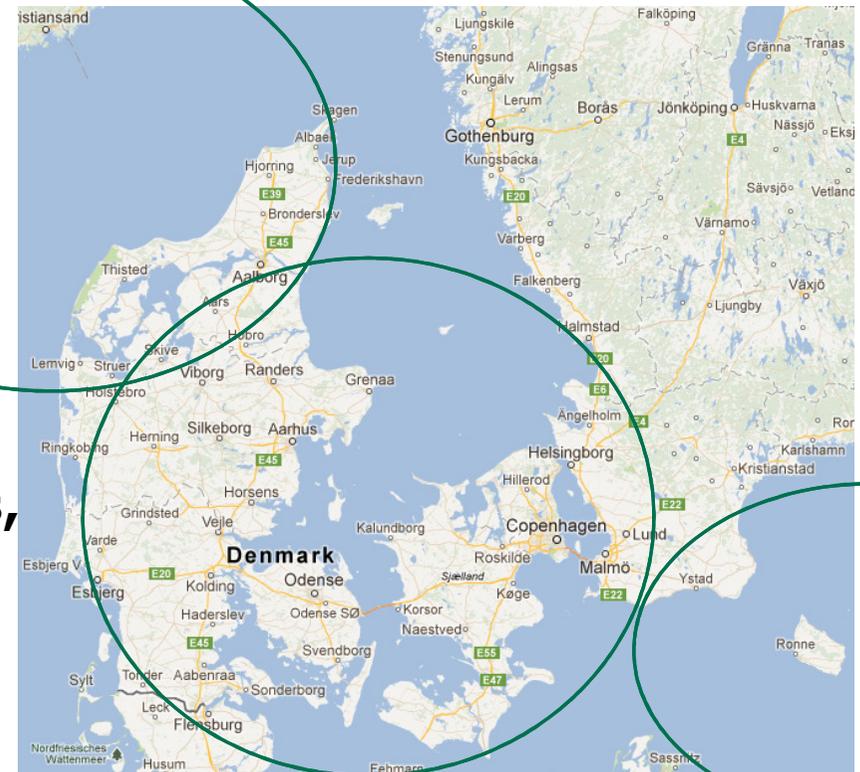
Harbour porpoise in Denmark

The Danish AgriFish Agency (Ministry of Environment and Food) is responsible for protection of harbour porpoise in relation to fishery activities.

Three different populations:

- North Sea
- Western Baltic/inner Danish waters
- Eastern Baltic/ Baltic proper

Population status, fishery activities, and bycatch rates determine the required actions to be taken.



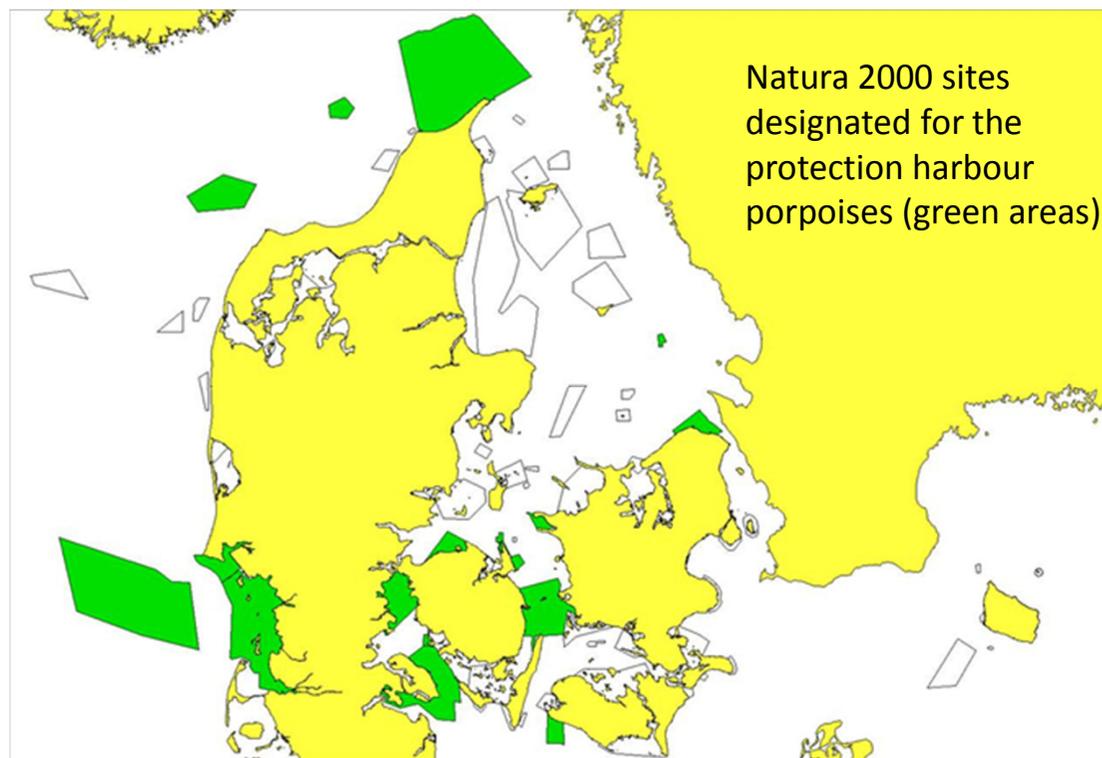
The Danish Natura 2000 network

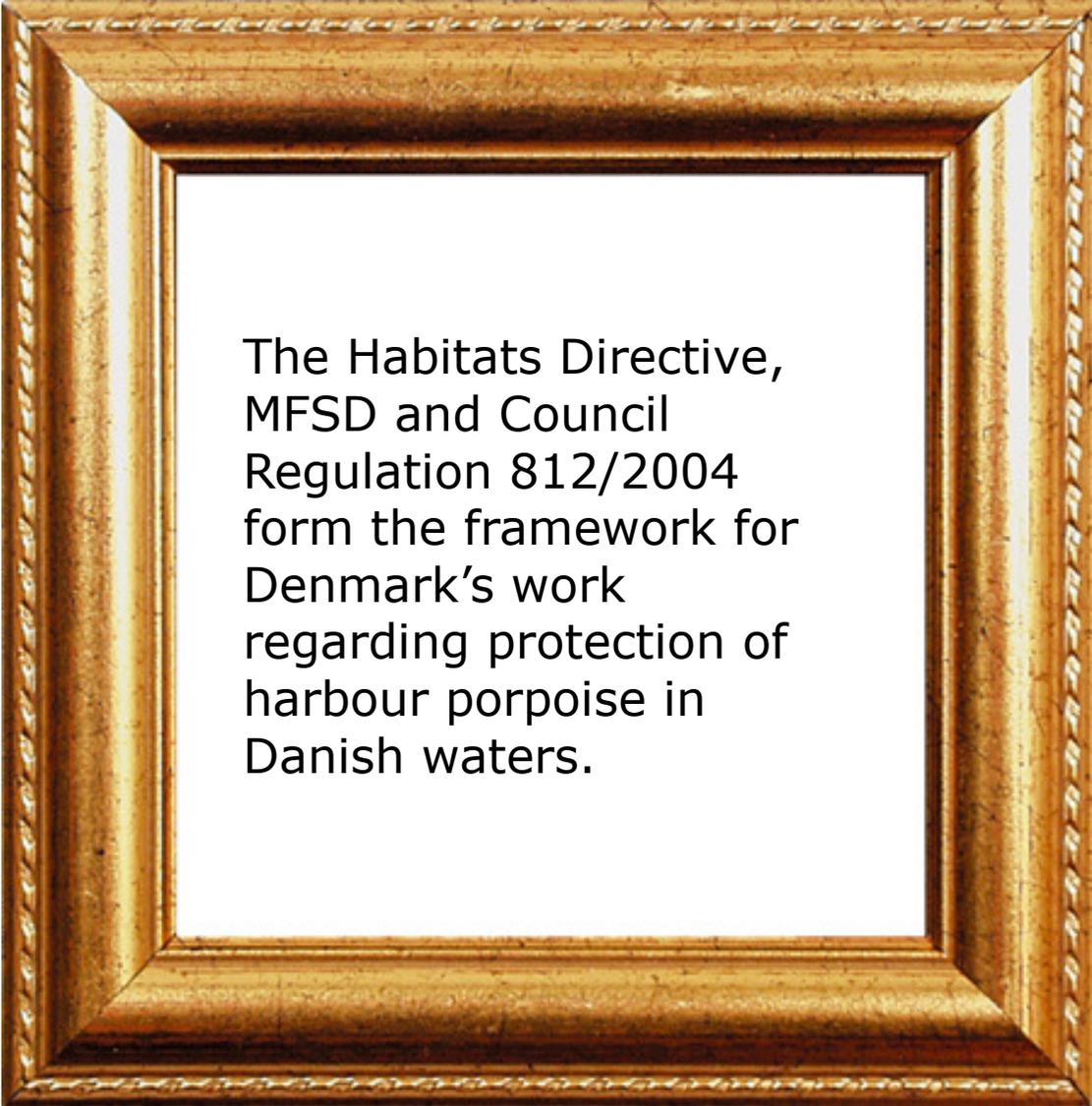
Habitats Directive: Member States are obliged to designate Natura 2000 areas.
Goal: To ensure favourable conservation status.

The Danish marine Natura 2000 network comprises of 97 Natura 2000 sites.

16 Natura 2000 sites have been designated for harbour porpoise.

The 16 sites were designated based on satellite data on harbour porpoise density in the years 2008-2010 (advice from Aarhus University).





The Habitats Directive,
MFSD and Council
Regulation 812/2004
form the framework for
Denmark's work
regarding protection of
harbour porpoise in
Danish waters.



Working group: dialogue between – scientists and managers

In order to ensure national coordination of various projects in relation to harbour porpoise and discuss cross-cutting issues, a harbour porpoise working group was formed in January 2012.

Members: The Danish Nature Agency and The Danish AgriFish Agency (chair) and relevant research institutes: Department of bioscience, Aarhus University, National Institute of Aquatic Resources, Technical University of Denmark, and the Fjord & Bælt Centre in Kerteminde).

Main objective:

Coordinate and strengthen the work being undertaken in relation to the protection of harbour porpoises in Danish waters.



Working group – State of Play

Actions taken so far in DK:

- Identified ongoing activities, scientific results and planned activities and projects,
- Review existing knowledge and projects and assess the need for further action in relation to the protection of harbour porpoise.

Late 2013, a harbour porpoise action plan was published along side an overview of harbour porpoise projects in Danish waters (updated yearly).

Several activities have been launched in relation to development an estimation of bycatch levels, for example:

- Fishery inspectors report now contain information on bycatch numbers
- Pinger effect studies
- Camera project (x2)– test of model and estimation of bycatch rates
- Population estimates/ counts (mini scan in 2012)
- SAMBAH
- Etc.



Natura 2000 Dialogue Forum

Focus on dialogue with stakeholders

Natura 2000 Dialogue Forum was formed in Spring 2010 with the aim of having a forum where fisheries and Natura 2000 is discussed with ALL stakeholders.

Members represent a wide range of stakeholders from fisheries organizations to green NGOs.

Issues regarding harbour porpoise are also discussed in this forum.



Bycatch – where should focus be?

Assessment on whether there is a problem or not

- Focus on population and bycatch estimates: more studies and surveys needed
- Focus on 'site specific' measures vs. more regional approach
- How to use Natura 2000/ MPA's in HP protection?
- Gillnets vs. Trawling – pros and cons! – in the context of sustainability
- Formulation of realistic actions to be taken: solid data imperative
 - zero bycatch is unrealistic – do we need a level besides 1,7 pct.?
 - Closure of gillnet fishery might cause an increase in trawling activity
- GAP Area Plan for Inner Danish Waters serves as a good example of how HP protection can be handled

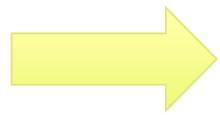


Way forward – summing up

A great range of parameters needs to be taken into account

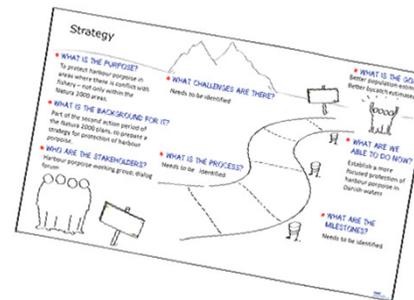
- Population estimates (SCANS etc.) - critical
- Bycatch monitoring (several data sources) - critical
- N2000 areas/ MPAs vs. Baltic sea, North Sea etc.
- Fishery interests: change of fishing practice/ dialogue
- Collaboration with neighbouring countries - critical
- Regional coordination – role of ASCOBANS, HELCOM, OSPAR etc.

Knowledge about population status, fishery activities, bycatch rates etc. all determine the required actions to be taken.



Summing up continued

- Dialogue with stakeholders through the various forums, research projects and working groups.
- Support research projects so that we can obtain more information on population status and bycatch rates etc.
- Focus on cost effective measures based on best available knowledge
- Address protection of harbour porpoises through a more strategic approach - with special focus on conflict areas/ hotspot areas.



Thank you for your attention

