



SAMBAH II

Spatio-temporal Monitoring of the Baltic Proper Harbour Porpoise



Aims of the project

- Evaluation of the Conservation Status of the critically endangered Baltic Proper harbour porpoise population
 - Determine abundance
 - Produce seasonal density maps
- Collection of a second harmonised set of acoustic monitoring data throughout project area
 - Available for further projects/analysis on impact of threats and marine spatial planning





Current Status

- MOU is being reviewed by Consortium members
 - At least one Ministry (securing financing) and one scientific organisation (completing the work) in each country
 - Some countries have additional partners
- The money available currently only covers data collection with CPODs for 12 months
 - In Sweden and Denmark money also covers some costs associated with the detection function array
- Germany (BfN) has applied for money nationally to cover the costs of analysis





Current Status (cont.)

- Project coordination was transferred from the Federal Ministry for Nature Conservation Germany (BfN) to the Swedish Museum of Natural History (NRM)
- Currently have confirmation from Denmark, Estonia (pending equipment loaning), Finland, Germany, Poland, and Sweden (pending permission from military),
 - Positive signs from Lithuania - pending funding decision
 - No response from Latvia yet- we are still trying – tips welcome!





Timeline

- 2023/09 MOU signed
- 2023/10 Start the process of procurement/hiring/ordering equipment
- 2024/04 Some countries begin deployment of CPODs
- 2024/07 All CPODs must be in the water recording by the start of the month
- 2025/07 Start taking up CPODs after the 12 months monitoring
- 2025/10 Analysis could start (pending funding)



Side project- Baltic-wide mapping of prey availability



- Funding secured from WWF to complete eDNA sampling at all SAMBAH II stations while servicing CPODs
- Still need funding for analysis
- Potential uses and outcomes of the eDNA data collected (when additional funding is obtained):
 - Provide a Baltic Proper wide indication of relative prey availability
 - Examine the relationship between porpoises and their prey for the first time in the Baltic Sea
 - Examine the detection of harbour porpoises and seal species using eDNA, and how this relates to the distribution maps obtained using satellite tags or passive acoustic monitoring
 - Modelling of habitat quality for a range of predators
 - Development of habitat quality indicators for a range of predators within HELCOM



Take Home Message

- Funding to collect data has largely been secured
- Still lacking funding for data analysis
- Coordinated effort is ongoing, with strong support from all partners working towards beginning to collect data in July 2024
- Support is needed to involve all countries throughout the Baltic Sea, so that:
 - the whole distribution range can be covered, and
 - the results are as accurate as possible for all countries
- Once data are collected a whole range of analyses should be possible to inform conservation of the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise



Future needs

- Getting SAMBAH II to this point has taken 4.5 years and a lot of time and money!
- Need to develop a regionally agreed plan to not repeat this issue for SAMBAH III, IV...
- National monitoring in the Baltic Sea needs to be harmonised
 - Need an analysis to determine how/when national monitoring should be completed for the best result/best use of resources
- Question to all Contracting Parties for consideration prior to EG MAMA 2024:
 - Would they be willing to modify/begin national monitoring programs in the future to facilitate more coordinated data analyses/assessments in the future?
 - Can this topic be put on the agenda for EG MAMA 2024?