



REPORT OF THE 6TH MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS NORTH SEA GROUP



**Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, Wilhelmshaven, Germany
19-20 June 2017**



Action Points from 6th Meeting of the North Sea Group

- 1) Draft and agree Terms of Reference for a consultant on priority task(s) which would contribute to the implementation of the Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise in the North Sea; (Chair of WG)
- 2) Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to assess the difference in cost between Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and observer schemes, including identification of limiting factors; (general, Bycatch WG)
- 3) Review and provide an evaluation of the OSPAR bycatch indicator for harbour porpoises in the North Sea; (to discuss at AC23, Bycatch WG)
- 4) Prepare an overview table of strandings data for inclusion in the meeting report; (Meike Scheidat, North Sea Group)



- 5) Comment on the proposed Regulation on the Conservation of Fishery Resources and the Protection of Marine Ecosystems through Technical Measures to National Coordinators, when the final report becomes available (UK to circulate to Secretariat, and Secretariat to share with National Coordinators and relevant WGs);
- 6) Strengthen engagement with the North Sea Advisory Council, including representation by an ASCOBANS expert at a forthcoming relevant NSAC meeting, in order for the NSAC to take into account more fully the needs of cetaceans and the ASCOBANS mandate (e.g. improved monitoring, data recording); (Chair of WG)
- 7) Circulate draft language for review by the WG stating in essence that there is no “safe season” for offshore renewable development (e.g. wind farm construction), since all year there is likely to be an impact on harbour porpoises. This statement is intended to be passed by AC23; (Chair of the WG)
- 8) Follow-up on collaboration of the North Sea WG with the Marine Stewardship Council; (Chair of the WG and ASCOBANS Secretariat)

Qualitative Assessment of Progress in the implementation of the ASCOBANS North Sea Conservation Plan (CP) for HP

(update June 2017)

Except for Action 2, ref. pinger use: na = non applicable; **-1**, situation is less good than at the adoption of the plan in 2009, **0** = no progress, **1** = small progress or at experimental level; **2**, steady progress; **3**, fully implemented.

Actions from the North Sea Conservation Plan for HP		Priority		SE	DK	DE	NL	BE	FR	UK
1	Implementation of the CP: co-ordinator and Steering Committee	High		No Coordinator at present!						
2	Implementation of existing regulations on bycatch of cetaceans - e.g. EC 812/2004 & Habitat Directive (HD) (* Table 1ab, ICES WGBYC 2012)	High	Vessels requiring pingers	0	14	yes?	0?	0	90	6-8
			No. of vessels using pingers	?	?	>3	0	0	>9	6-8
			Enforcement policy	0	?	?	na	na	na	3
			Dedicated observer prog	0	0	0	0	0	(yes)	3
			Monitoring under HD	0	0	0	0	yes	yes	yes
3	Establishment of BYC observation programmes on vessel smaller than 12m long, professional and recreational fisheries	High	Professional	1	1	0	2	0	2	2
			Recreational	0	1	na	0	0	1?	na
	Regular evaluation of relevant fisheries, extent of HP BYC:			0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Actions form the North Sea Conservation Plan for HP		Priority		SE	DK	DE	NL	BE	FR	UK
4	Gillnet fisheries =>15m vessels, dedicated, % DAS observed	High		0	0	0	0	0	14%	18%
	Gillnet fisheries <15m vessels, dedicated, % DAS observed			0	0.2	0	REM	0	0.7	0.33
	Cetacean scheme appended to DCF / DCR schemes			no	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
	DCF observations in 2014 in NS, % DAS observed			0	0.76	0	0	0	na	9.4
5	Review of current pingers, dev. of altern.pingers and gear modif.	High		2	2	2	1	na	1	2
6	Finalise a management procedure approach for determining maximum allowable byctch limits	High		General progress ICES WGMME, WGBYC, OSPAR (MSFD)						
				1	0	0	2	0	0	1
7	Monitoring trends in distribution and abundance of HP in NS	High	Large scale	SCANS III undertaken in 2016						
			Reg/survey	1	SACs	3	3	3	1	0
			Reg/modelling	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
8	Review of the stock structure of HP in NS	High		0	1	0	0	0	0	0
9	Collection of incidental HP data through stranding networks	Medium		2	1	3	2	3	1	3
10	Investigation of the health, nutritional status and diet of HP in NS	Medium		2	1	2	2	2	1	3
11	Investigation of the effects of anthropogenic sounds on HP	Medium		0	2	2	2	2	1	2
12	Collection and archiving of data on anthropogenic activities and development of a GIS	Medium		1	1	1	1	1	0	2