

2015 ASCOBANS Annual National Reports

This questionnaire has been pre-filled with answers given in 2014 National Report - **please update!**

This format for the ASCOBANS Annual National Reports was endorsed by the 6th Meeting of the Parties in 2009. Reports are due to be submitted to the Secretariat by 31 March of each year.

Parties are requested to use this report to provide **new** information on measures taken or actions towards meeting the objectives of the Conservation and Management Plan and the Resolutions of the Meeting of the Parties.

General Information

Name of Party

> Poland

Report prepared by

This should indicate the name and affiliation of the lead person for filling in the report.

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Organization	Ministry of the Environment
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Coordinating Authority and National Coordinator

Please confirm the Coordinating Authority responsible for the national implementation of the Agreement, and give the name and contact details of the officially appointed National Coordinator (Focal Point).

> None

List of National Institutions

List of national authorities, organizations, research centres and rescue centres active in the field of study and conservation of cetaceans, including contact details

> Ministry of Environment, Department of Forestry and Nature Conservation,
00-922 Warszawa, Wawelska 52/54

Telephone : (48 22) 57 92 550, Fax: (48 22) 57 92 290

e-mail: departament.lesnictwa.i.ochrony.przyrody@mos.gov.pl

> Hel Marine Station of the IOUG (Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk) 84-150 Hel, Morska 2,

Telephone : +48 58 6750 836, fax +48 58 6750 420,

Contact person: Iwona Pawliczka, e-mail iwona.pvp@ug.edu.pl , tel : +48 58 67 51 316

> National Marine Fisheries Research Institute Kołłątaja 1, 81-332 Gdynia,

Telephone: +48 587-356-232, Fax: +48 587-356-110

e-mail sekretariat@mir.gdynia.pl

> The WWF Poland Foundation, ul. Mahatmy Gandhiego 3, 02-645 Warsaw

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Habitat Conservation and Management

Fisheries Interactions

Direct Interaction with Fisheries

1.1 Investigations of methods to reduce bycatch

> Implementation of methods to reduce bycatch

The "Fishery and Sea" Operational Programme for the years 2014-2020 includes the necessity of spending resources for alternative fishing gear

In 2015 MIR-PIB once again carried out the Monitoring Programme for Incidental Catches of Cetaceans (PMPPW) based on the obligations under the Regulation (EC) 812/2004.

The WWF Poland Foundation carried out the "Baltic Smart Gear. Development and testing of bycatch minimizing fishing gear Technologies" project in cooperation with WWF Germany and WWF Denmark. The objective of the project was to gain information about potential technological solutions aimed at limiting the bycatch of seabirds and sea mammals in the gillnets, while the effectiveness of the net is maintained at the current level. The project also included a list of potential sources of financing for the future actions related to the development of new solutions and testing alternative fishing gear. The Smart Gear project was financed by funds from the Seed Money Facility, within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

194 Polish entities fishing for cod using trawl and hook gear received MSC certificates. 4 producer groups led by the Kolobrzeg Group of Fish Producers supported by the Marine Research Institute participated in the certification process. Entities fishing with gillnets, which are most controversial in the context of porpoise bycatch, did not receive the certificate, although the sole receipt of the certificate should be regarded as a major step in the right direction.

1.4 Report under EC Regulation 812/2004

Please provide the link to your country's report under EC Regulation 812/2004.

> <http://www.minrol.gov.pl/pol/Rybactwo/Rybołówstwomorskie/Raporty,opracowania,publikacje>

The above website presents Polish reports on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 812/2004 in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013,2014. The 2015 report will be uploaded to the website when finished and translated into English.

Reduction of Disturbance

2.1 Anthropogenic Noise

Please reference and briefly summarise any studies undertaken

> The Institute of Oceanography (including the Sea Station) of the of the University of Gdansk carries out the Polish part of the BIAS: „Baltic Sea Information on Acoustic Soundscape” programme. The main purpose of the project is to implement the 11th descriptor of the GES from Annex 1 to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive at the Baltic Sea region level. The intended timeframe for the project is between September 2012 and August 2016. Five sets of measuring equipment, aimed at recording underwater noise caused by the ships in the Polish part of Baltic Sea, as well as the assessment of the impact of the noise on living organisms, in particular fish (the project s also carried out by The Foundation for the Development of the University of Gdansk), have been situated at the bottom of the sea.

In 2015, pilot monitoring of underwater noise as regards underwater continuous sounds and underwater impulse sounds was carried out, within the scope of the State Environment Monitoring Program. The underwater noise monitoring is run by the Maritime Branch of the Institute of Meteorology and Water Management in Gdynia on behalf of the Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection. The monitoring is financed from the NFOŚiGW (National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management) funds, it includes Polish marine areas, where 5 hydrophones have been installed. The research will address the noise which is perceived by fish and marine mammals. The monitoring is in accordance with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and it fills the data gap for the descriptor 11. In 2015 test have been carried out in the see in order to determine factors, such as the correct location of measuring equipment, correct setting of the measurement parameters, trying out the technological solution of the anchor system and its performance in various marine conditions. The pilot underwater noise monitoring will be a valuable contribution to the development of research methodology for both EC and HELCOM groups.

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2.2 Ship Strike Incidents

Please list all known incidents and provide information separately for each

	Date	Species	Type of Injury	Fatal Injury (Yes/No)	Type of Vessel (length, tonnage, speed)	Location (coordinates)	More Information (name, email)
Incident							
Incident							
Incident							
Incident							
Incident							
Incident							
Incident							
Incident							
Incident							
Incident	no incidents						

2.3 Major Incidents

Major Incidents Affecting Significant Numbers of Cetaceans (two or more animals)

	Date	Location	Type of Incident	Further Information
Incident				
Incident				
Incident				
Incident				
Incident	no incidents			

2.4 Pollution and Hazardous Substances

Please report on main types of pollution and hazardous substances (including source, location and observed effects on cetaceans). Please provide information on any new measures taken to reduce pollution likely to have an impact.

> Monitoring of the depth and seabed sampling will be performed as part of the monitoring described in 2.1.

In 2014 marine water monitoring Programme, which included waste monitoring, was prepared. Pilot monitoring of waste in the marine environment has been carried out since 2015. Monitoring of waste on the beach is conducted by the WWF Blue Patrol on behalf of the Institute of Meteorology and Water Management.

This study is performed once a quarter. 3 actions of waste counting on the beach have been carried out in 2015. In November 2015, during a cruise in Polish exclusive economic zone, as part of seawater monitoring, observations of waste occurrence have been conducted in 4 measuring stations and 2 transects. During the MIR-PIB cruise carried out in November 2015 within the WPZDR (multiannual fishery data collection programme) waste trawled from the seabed along 6 transects have been identified.

2.5 Other Forms of Disturbance

Please provide any other relevant information, e.g. relating to recreational activities affecting cetaceans.

> The action of ghost net removal from the sea, started by the WWF Poland in 2011, develops. The idea of lost net removal is gaining increasing recognition and more and more entities take these measures.

Between June and October 2015 WWF Poland continued its actions within the "Removal of ghost nets from the Baltic Sea" project. As part of these actions 268 tonnes of ghost net have been removed from the sea. In addition to the measures taken on the sea, numerous initiatives aimed at formal inclusion of the issue in the HELCOM regional action plan have been taken. Preliminary tests including testing the usability of radio

technology in marking fishing nets with RFID markers have been carried out.

The project was supported by exhibitions, press and internet publications, as well as the issue of 2 episodes of a film about ghost nets. Screening of the film took place on 20 September 2015 in regional TV station and reached the audience of approximately 100 thousand people

Marine Protected Areas

Marine Protected Areas for Small Cetaceans

3.1 Relevant Information

Please provide any relevant information on measures taken to identify, implement and manage protected areas for cetaceans, including MPAs designated under the Habitats Directive and MPAs planned or established within the framework of OSPAR or HELCOM.

> For five years now, in Poland there are 9 marine areas which have the status of protected areas, under the Helsinki Convention HELCOM MPAs – Marine Protected Areas, all located within the borders of Natura 2000 sites. At least three of them, in the Pomeranian Bay, Puck Bay and Ostoja Słowinska, are considered to be important from the point of view of porpoise protection, according to currently available expertise, justified by, among others, the historical occurrence of bycatch, observations of single individuals as well as data regarding cases of dead porpoises washed ashore. At the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016, Maritime Authorities submitted draft plans of protection of these areas to the Ministry of Environment. Currently, formal actions including the adaptation of submitted materials to current forms are ongoing. The social and inter-ministerial arrangements are expected to start in 2016.

3.2 GIS Data

Please indicate where GIS data of the boundaries (and zoning, if applicable) can be obtained (contact email / website).

> The exact boundaries of the Natura 2000 site are in the possession of the General Directorate for Environmental Protection (<http://www.gdos.gov.pl/kontakt-3>).

These data are also available on the websites: <http://natura2000.gdos.gov.pl/datafiles> and <http://geoserwis.gdos.gov.pl/mapy/>

Surveys and Research

4.1 Abundance, Distribution, Population Structure

Overview of Research on Abundance, Distribution and Population Structure

> Year-round monitoring of the coast, with the participation of volunteers trained by the Marine Station in Hel, so-called WWF Blue Patrol, is ongoing. The WWF Blue Patrol includes 200 volunteers – the participants monitor and intervene if any of the observed marine mammals or birds needs help. The cooperation between the network of field volunteers and the research entity such as the Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdansk (SMIOUG) allows the appropriate response to any reports regarding Baltic mammals (including porpoises) present on the beach.

In December 2015 the implementation of “Pilot monitoring of marine species and habitats in 2015-2018” project started. This project also includes the marine mammals. Observations of porpoises from planes will be carried out and 3 sets of POD – devices used for passive detection of porpoises will be placed. Results of the monitoring will be accessible to the public. Proposals of the geographical location of the PODs will be selected based on the results of the SAMBAH project, in places where, during the project, greater number of porpoises has been observed. The objective of the project will be to confirm the occurrence, determine the number and breeding sites of marine mammals.

4.2 Technological Developments

New Technological Developments

> None

4.3 Other Relevant Research

> The University of Gdansk is currently building a ship designed for, among others, the observation of marine mammals and related hydroacoustic tests. At the moment, the ship is equipped with machines handling the measuring and research gear.

Use of Bycatches and Strandings

Post-Mortem Research Schemes

5.1 Contact Details

Contact details of research institutions and focal point

> Hel Marine Station, Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk
Iwona Pawliczka, iwona.pvp@ug.edu.pl

5.2 Methodology

Methodology used (reference, e.g. publication, protocol)

> Post-mortem analyses are being conducted according to procedures described in: Kuiken, T. and Hartmann, M.G. (1993). Dissection techniques and tissue sampling. Proceedings of the ECS Workshop, Leiden.

5.3 Samples

Collection of samples (type, preservation method)

> The Hel Marine Station, Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk collects, as part of its statutory activity, data on dead porpoises and dolphins from either bycatch or stranded onshore.

The dead specimens, upon their arrival at the Station, are being subject to analyses within the scope limited by the status of the remains. The standard scope of sampling covers:

- Species determination;
- Localization of deadly event;
- Establishing factual and supposed cause of death;
- Ascertaining of the body length and mass;
- Sex ascertaining;
- Fat tissue sampling for genetic examination;
- Teeth sampling for age determination;
- A full post-mortem analysis and storage of biological samples according to Kuiken & Hartmann, 1993.

5.4 Database

Database (number of data sets by species, years covered, software used, online access)

> Data have been entered into the standard Access database since 1988. There is no on-line access to this base.

5.5 Additional Information

Additional information (e.g. website addresses, intellectual property rights, possibility of a central database)

> An electronic atlas of mammals distribution in Poland has been prepared and updated, under the title "Atlas of Mammals in Poland" (Polish: Atlas ssaków Polski) (developed by the Institute of Nature Conservation of the Polish Academy of Sciences)

Link: <http://www.iop.krakow.pl/ssaki/Katalog.aspx>

The atlas also includes data on the discoveries of dead or bycaught cetaceans and their distribution (the data are introduced by SMIOUG based on its database). An example concerning the porpoise: link:

<http://www.iop.krakow.pl/ssaki/Gatunek.aspx?spID=183>

Activities and Results

5.6 Necropsies

Number of necropsies carried out in the reporting period

	Number	Recorded cause of death
Phocoena phocoena	4	unrecorded

Tursiops truncatus		
Delphinus delphis		
Stenella coeruleoalba		
Grampus griseus		
Globicephala melas		
Globicephala macrorhynchus		
Lagenorhynchus albirostris		
Lagenorhynchus acutus		
Orcinus orca		
Hyperoodon ampullatus		
Mesoplodon bidens		
Kogia breviceps		
Other (please specify under number)	1	
Other (please specify under number)		
Other (please specify under number)		
Other (please specify under number)		
Other (please specify under number)		
Other (please specify under number)		

5.7 Other Relevant Information

Please provide any other relevant information on post-mortem / stranding schemes

> On 22 August 2015 at the south coast of the Gulf of Gdansk a fin whale carcass was found. It was a male, length 17.3 m, weight 27 tonnes.

On 12 August 2015 dolphins were observed in the Gulf of Gdansk.

Relevant New Legislation, Regulations and Guidelines

6.1 New Legislation, Regulations and Guidelines

Please provide any relevant information

> 6 November 2015, the national “Porpoise protection programme” was adopted. The programme includes information on the species, its legal status, recognized risks, socioeconomic conditions of the porpoise protection, as well as objectives and proposed protective actions.

Over 100 thousand citizens signed the WWF Poland petition regarding the adoption of the above programme. On 3 June 2015, the Council of Ministers adopted by circulation the seawater monitoring Programme, drawn up on the basis of article 155c of the Water Law, according to article 11 of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. On 27 June 2015 the programme receive consent of the Council of Ministers to be submitted to the European Commission.

The above-mentioned “Fishery and Sea 2014-2020” Operational Programme includes proposals regarding testing and implementing alternative fishing gear aimed at the reduction of bycatch and removal of nets lost in the Baltic Sea. Realisation of the RYBY Operational Programme is intended to contribute to the accomplishment of the objective of decreasing the impact of fishery on the marine environment, including prevention and reduction of unwanted catches to the greatest possible extent.

Public Awareness and Education

7.1 Public Awareness and Education

Please report on any public awareness and education activities to implement or promote the Agreement to the general public and to fishermen.

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On 28 March 2015 the final of the "Earth Hour" organized by WWF Poland took place. This year the motto of the action was "Porpoise Hour". The objective of the action was, among others, to express the support for the porpoise protection programme.

On 2 May 2015 The Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdansk was honoured with the "Flag of the Republic of Poland" award for the entire professional achievement by the President of the Republic of Poland.

In accordance with the ongoing, thirteen years old tradition, in May 2015, SMIOUG organized the celebration of the Porpoise Day. The celebration was co-financed by the Ministry of Environment.

In the place where the carcass of the northern bottlenose whale was found, as well as in front of the Porpoise House in Hel, the SMIOUG installed Information boards commemorating this event. The exhibitions were financed by the Ministry of Environment.

As every year, SMIOUG issued a calendar dedicated to marine ecology. The calendar for the year 2016 includes information about all fin whales which have been found and observed at Polish coasts. 5 such events occurred: in 1874,1899,1954,2007 and 2015.

Possible difficulties encountered in implementing the Agreement

Difficulties in Implementing the Agreement

Please provide any relevant information

> None