
30th MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Bonn, Germany, 1–3 September 2026
Agenda Item 6.1

ACTION POINTS FROM THE 22ND MEETING OF THE JASTARNIA GROUP

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

This document was originally published on the [JG22 webpage](#) in May 2026.

ACTION POINTS FROM THE 22nd MEETING OF THE JASTARNIA GROUP

(Adopted by the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee)

Reference	Action Point	Jastarnia Plan mandate	WBBK Plan mandate	Long-/short-term + Deadline if possible	Priority (High / Medium / Low)
JG22/AP1	All Parties and Non-Party Range States shall establish or further improve local and national monitoring programmes for Harbour Porpoise abundance and occurrence and ensure these are aligned in terms of timing and methodology between countries, in order to complement large-scale international monitoring activities. (JG17/AP1*)	MON-01: Implement and harmonize long-term continual acoustic Harbour Porpoise monitoring	Objective d: Monitoring the status of the population	Ongoing. Review annually	High
JG22/AP2	Parties are strongly encouraged to include harbour porpoises in their national monitoring programmes and MSFD reporting; to cooperate and secure national funding to undertake regular (every six years) SAMBAH surveys; and find a mechanism for governance of future surveys. If possible, surveys should be streamlined with MSFD reporting. (JG20/AP3*)	MON-02: Carry out full-scale surveys of harbour porpoise abundance and distribution	Rec.7: Estimate trends in abundance of Harbour Porpoises in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat	Ongoing	High
JG22/AP3	Parties are strongly encouraged to cooperate and secure national funding to undertake regular (every six years) SCANS surveys. (JG18/AP3*)			SCANS-V to preferably happen in 2027	High
JG22/AP4	Parties are strongly encouraged to use the data provided by the most recent abundance and distribution surveys, national monitoring programmes, acoustic research projects and any other available data, in connection with the establishment and evaluation of MPAs for Harbour Porpoises, as well as with regard to management plans and mitigation measures. (JG18/AP4*)		Rec. 11: Restore or maintain habitat quality	Ongoing Establish MPAs by 2030	Medium
JG21/AP5	Parties should investigate possible detrimental effects of various types of sound and disturbance on Harbour Porpoises (including pinger signals, noise from vessels, seismic surveys, underwater explosions, wind parks, USBLs or construction) both on the individual and on the population level. (JG18/AP5*)	MIT-06: Expand the network of protected areas for Harbour Porpoises, improve its connectivity, and develop and implement appropriate management plans including monitoring schemes for these areas	Objective e: Ensuring habitat quality favourable to the conservation of the Harbour Porpoise	Ongoing	High
JG22/AP6	Parties should investigate how underwater noise affects the detection of harbour porpoises by PAM equipment. (JG19/AP6)	RES-07: Improve knowledge on impact of impulsive and continuous anthropogenic underwater noise on Harbour	Other	Short-term	High

Refer- ence	Action Point	Jastarnia Plan mandate	WBBK Plan mandate	Long-/short- term + Dead- line if possible	Priority (High / Me- dium / Low)
		Porpoises, and develop- ment of threshold limits of significant disturbance and GES indicators			
JG22/ AP7	Parties are encouraged to agree on how to implement the EU MSFD indica- tors and thresholds for underwater noise in the Baltic Sea Region, following discussions on LOBE at EU and HELCOM levels and taking into account the critically endangered status of the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise as well as relevant regional sound propagation properties and needs for precaution. (JG18/AP6*).	Other	Rec.11: Restore or maintain habitat quality	Medium-term	High
JG22/ AP8	Parties are encouraged to create national guidelines on underwater noise mitigation based on regionally set thresholds for MSFD indicators taking into account the CMS Family Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessments for Marine Noise-generating Activities. (JG21/AP9)	MIT-05: Implement region- ally harmonized national threshold limits and guide- lines for regulation of un- derwater noise	Rec.11: Restore or maintain habitat quality Rec.6: Estimate total annual bycatch	Medium-term	Medium
JG22/ AP9	In light of the increase in use of recreational crafts, Parties and Non-Party Range States are encouraged to address the impacts upon harbour por- poises of disturbance from recreational vessels, including from underwater noise, in cooperation with HELCOM and with reference to the ASCOBANS Res.10.6 Mitigating the Impacts of Recreational Activities on Small Ceta- ceans . (JP20/AP10*)	MIT-05: Implement region- ally harmonized national threshold limits and guide- lines for regulation of un- derwater noise		Medium-term	Medium
JG22/ AP10	Parties are required to establish systems to effectively monitor bycatch cov- ering all sizes of fishing vessels, in line with the HELCOM Roadmap on fish- eries data in order to assess incidental bycatch and fisheries impact on ben- thic biotopes in the Baltic Sea and the ICES Special Request Advice on emer- gency measures to prevent bycatch of common dolphin and Baltic Proper harbour porpoise in the Northeast Atlantic. (JG17/AP7)	RES-07: Improve the knowledge on impact of im- pulsive and continuous an- thropogenic underwater noise on harbour por- poises, and development of threshold limits of signifi- cant disturbance and GES indicators		Short-term	High
JG22/ AP11	Parties are strongly encouraged to carry out and regularly update spatio-tem- poral risk-assessments of harbour porpoise bycatch using Harbour Porpoise distribution and fishing effort data, urging all countries to provide good-quality and as detailed as possible fishing effort data. Parties are encouraged to in- corporate metrics such as soak time, net length, mesh size in fishing effort reporting. (JG17/AP8*)	MON-03: Monitor and esti- mate Harbour Porpoise by- catch rates and estimate to- tal annual bycatch	Rec.6: Estimate total annual bycatch Objective b: Mitiga- tion of bycatch	Short-term	High
JG22/ AP12	Parties should implement and where needed further develop, in cooperation with stakeholders, any available fishing gear that does not cause, or is shown	RES-04: Carry out a spatio- temporal risk assessment		Ongoing	High

Reference	Action Point	Jastarnia Plan mandate	WBBK Plan mandate	Long-/short-term + Deadline if possible	Priority (High / Medium / Low)
	to significantly reduce, harbour porpoise bycatch, and strive to replace static nets with such alternative gear, especially in MPAs, as soon as possible. (JG17/AP9)	of Harbour Porpoise bycatch			
JG22/AP13	When effective alternative gear is not available, Parties should promote the use and further development of pingers not audible to seals and alerting devices other than pingers, whilst ensuring that all devices are effective in mitigating harbour porpoise bycatch but not having negative effects at the population level. (JG17/AP10*)	RES-05: Further develop and improve fishing gear that is commercially viable with no Harbour Porpoise bycatch MIT-01: Implement the use of fishing gear that is commercially viable with no Harbour Porpoise bycatch	Objective b: Mitigation of bycatch Rec. 9: Ensure a non-detrimental use of pingers by examining habitat exclusion and long-term effects of pingers	Ongoing	High
JG22/AP14	Parties should monitor the use and functioning of dedicated harbour porpoise deterrent and alerting devices, including studies to assess their effect on bycatch reduction and on harbour porpoise behaviour and distribution. (JG18/AP11)	RES-05: Further develop and improve fishing gear that is commercially viable with no Harbour Porpoise bycatch		Ongoing	High
JG22/AP15	Parties should liaise with and provide information to the national military forces in relation to the possible interference of pingers with military underwater acoustic activities and the security concerns that have arisen. (JG19/AP13*)	MIT-03: Continue or implement the use of acoustic deterrent devices (pingers) and acoustic alerting devices proven to be successful when and where deemed appropriate RES-06: Improve the knowledge on potential population-level effects of the use of pingers, and develop acoustic devices for bycatch mitigation further		Short-term	High
JG22/AP16	With respect to recreational fisheries, Parties should work towards banning or limiting the use of those types of gear known to pose a threat to harbour porpoises, or alternatively introduce effective mitigation measures shown to significantly reduce or eliminate bycatch. (JG17/AP12*)	MIT-03: Continue or implement the use of acoustic deterrent devices ("pingers") and acoustic alerting devices proven to be successful when and where deemed appropriate	Rec.3: Protect Harbour Porpoises in their key habitats in minimizing bycatch as far as possible Rec.5: Where possible replace gillnet fisheries known to be	Long-term	High

Reference	Action Point	Jastarnia Plan mandate	WBBK Plan mandate	Long-/short-term + Dead-line if possible	Priority (High / Medium / Low)
			associated with high porpoise bycatch with alternative fishing gear known to be less harmful		
JG22/AP17	Parties should disseminate information on harbour porpoises and the risk of harbour porpoise bycatch to recreational fishers. (JG20/AP18)	MIT-02: Reduce or eliminate fishing effort with gill-nets or other gear known to cause porpoise bycatch in areas with higher Harbour Porpoise density or occurrence, and/or in areas with higher risk of Harbour Porpoise bycatch, according to spatio-temporal risk assessments	Rec. 1: Actively seek to involve fishermen in the implementation of the plan and mitigation measures to ensure reducing bycatch	Ongoing	Medium
JG22/AP18	Parties are encouraged to collect data on effort (mesh size, net length and height and soak time), location and date using static nets in recreational fisheries. (JG21/AP9*)	COOP-01: Involve stakeholders in the work of reducing bycatch of harbour porpoises	Rec. 6: Estimate total annual bycatch	Long-term	Medium
JG22/AP19	Parties are encouraged to coordinate and standardize monitoring of stranded and bycaught animals, ensuring that health, contaminant load, life-history parameters, cause of death and population assignment is examined in a coherent manner, and that tissue samples are collected from all carcasses from the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise distribution range and a minimum of 30 (or all) carcasses from the WBBK population each year. All necropsies and sampling should be carried out in accordance with the ASCOBANS-ACCOBAMS <i>Best practice on cetacean post-mortem investigation and tissue sampling</i> and the <i>Genetic sampling guidelines</i> . (JG17/AP13*)	MON-03: Monitor and estimate harbour porpoise bycatch rates and estimate total annual bycatch	Rec.8: Monitor population health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality	Long-term	Medium
JG22/AP20	All Parties and Range States should establish programmes for recording bycatch, strandings and opportunistic sightings for inclusion in a national database, and report annually to the ASCOBANS/HELCOM harbour porpoise database. (JG18/CP14*)	MON-04: Collect dead specimens and assess health status, contaminant levels, cause of mortality and life-history parameters of Harbour Porpoises	Objective d: Monitoring the status of the population	Ongoing	Medium
JG22/AP21	Parties should ensure that Belt Sea and Baltic Proper populations of harbour porpoises are assessed and managed as separate populations, e.g. in management plans and national and regional redlists. (JG18/AP16*)	PACB-01: Improve communication and education for increased public awareness and collection of live	Other	Ongoing	Medium

Refer- ence	Action Point	Jastarnia Plan mandate	WBBK Plan mandate	Long-/short- term + Dead- line if possible	Priority (High / Me- dium / Low)
		observations and dead specimens of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise			
JG22/ AP22	Parties and Non-Party Range States are urged, without delay (i.e. not waiting for the outcome of SAMBAH II/CUMBIAH), to finalise a BALTFISH Joint Recommendation that includes effective bycatch mitigation measures outside MPAs, in areas of high and medium importance for harbour porpoises according to the map prepared by experts for HELCOM HOLAS 3 , noting that coastal habitats are also of high importance for harbour porpoises. In the absence of pinger use, the only immediate mitigation measure possible to protect harbour porpoises is further closures of static net fisheries in areas of importance to harbour porpoises and/or areas with high bycatch risk as described in the 2024 ICES special request advice on harbour porpoise. In these areas, gear types known to not cause bycatch of harbour porpoises (such as pots, traps, and long lines) can be used. (JG18/AP19*)	Other		Short-term	High
JG22/ AP23	Parties and Non-Party Range State are also urged to prepare a BALTFISH Joint Recommendation that includes effective bycatch mitigation measures outside MPAs, in areas of low harbour porpoise occurrence. (JG18/AP19*)	Objective: Monitor, estimate and reduce bycatch		Short-term	High
JG22/ AP24	The delimitation between the North Sea and WBBK harbour porpoise plans should be the management unit border identified by Sveegaard et al 2015 in Kattegat at 56.95°N. The area for the WBBK should have its eastern delimitation at the management unit border identified by Sveegaard et al 2015 at 13.5°E, while the Jastarnia plan area should be east of 13.0°E, according to the ICES scientific advice of May 2020. The overlap of the WBBK and Jastarnia plans areas will be considered in the Jastarnia Group's discussions of the plans. (JG17/AP22*)	Objective: Monitor, estimate and reduce bycatch	Other	By the next review of the plans	Medium
JG22/ AP25	Parties and Non-Party Range States in the Baltic Sea Region are urged to take immediate bycatch mitigation action for the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise population, within waters out to 12 nm (without waiting for the results of SAMBAH II/CUMBIAH). (JG20/AP30*)	Other		Immediate	High
JG22/ AP26	In light of the decline of the WBBK population and the excessive bycatch in the area, Parties are urged to take immediate action to minimize and where possible eliminate harbour porpoise bycatch in the area. A joint recommendation should be agreed in Baltfish. (JG20/AP32*)	Objective: Monitor, estimate and reduce bycatch	Objective b: Mitigation of bycatch	Immediate; Report back to JG23	High
JG22/ AP27	Parties and Non-Party Range States are urged to ensure that environmental impact assessments consider the cumulative impacts upon harbour		Other	Ongoing	High

Reference	Action Point	Jastarnia Plan mandate	WBBK Plan mandate	Long-/short-term + Dead-line if possible	Priority (High / Medium / Low)
	porpoises of all relevant human activities, aiming for coherence between impact assessments across the region. (JG20/AP33*)				
JG22/AP28	Parties and Non-Party Range States are urged to apply the ASCOBANS guidelines for cetacean-sensitive MSP in national maritime spatial plans and regional and transboundary collaboration efforts.	Other		Long-term	Medium
JG22/AP29	Parties and Non-Party Range States to encourage research investigating the impacts of chemical contaminants from discarded munition material and unexploded ordnance on harbour porpoises and their prey. (JG20/AP34)		Other	Ongoing	Medium
JG22/AP30	Parties to consider options for more long-term funding for the harbour porpoise plan coordinators. (JG20/AP36)	Other	Other	By AC30	High
JG22/AP31	Parties are encouraged to create a drift model of harbour porpoise carcasses in the Baltic Sea in order to better understand the origins of stranded harbour porpoises. (JG20/AP37)	Other	Rec. 8: Monitor population health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality	Short-term	Medium
JG22/AP32	Parties are urged to survey the extent and mitigate the impact on harbour porpoises of underwater noise from Ultra-short Baseline acoustic positioning systems (USBLs) produced by e.g. geophysical surveys and trawlers. (JG21/AP35)	Objective: Monitor and assess population status	Rec. 11: Restore or maintain habitat quality	Medium-term	Medium
JG22/AP33	When considering carbon capture and storage (CCS), Parties and non-party range states are urged to take into account the impacts on harbour porpoises and their habitat from all pressures and stages of CCS, including from seismic surveys and potential CO2 leakage.	Objective: Monitor and mitigate impact of underwater noise	Rec. 11: Restore or maintain habitat quality	Short-term	Medium
JG22/AP34	Countries are encouraged to ensure cross-border collaboration on subjects relating to for example offshore wind developments or CCS, and ensure that Natura 2000 sites and other marine protected areas in neighbouring countries are not affected negatively by such projects, taking into account the discussions ongoing in HELCOM-VASAB MSP working group.	Objective: Monitor and mitigate impact of underwater noise		Immediate	Medium
JG22/AP35	The Government of Åland is encouraged to designate the area of Bogskär as a protected area, including the harbour porpoise on the species list.			Immediate	Medium

* Wording added/edited.