UN environment programme

ASCOBANS

AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF SMALL CETACEANS OF THE BALTIC, NORTH EAST ATLANTIC, IRISH AND NORTH SEAS

ASCOBANS/AC30/NR.2

02 June 2026

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

2025 NATIONAL REPORT: LITHUANIA

2025 ASCOBANS National Report

ASCOBANS

Online Reporting System

Party: Lithuania

Submitted Date: 2026-05-22

2025 ASCOBANS National Report

Creation Date: 2026-01

Deadline: 2026-05-31

Language: English

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Introduction

Year 2 (2025) ASCOBANS National Report

1 January to 31 December 2025.

As outlined in ASCOBANS Resolution 10.1 *National Reporting 2025-2028*, this form will cover information from 2025 (Year 2), and the following topics included in the Annex to the Resolution:

- High-level Summary of Key Messages
- General Information (Section I)
- Bycatch (Section II A1)
- Resource Depletion (Section II A2)
- Marine Debris (Section II C9)
- Surveys and Research (Section III)
- Use of Strandings Records (Section IV)
- Other Matters (e.g. burning issues) (Section VII)

The National Reports submitted will inform discussions at the 30th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, 1-3 September 2026.

- All questions apply to the **reporting period from 1 January to 31 December 2025**.
- Region in the tables refers to the sub-regions as defined by the HELCOM and OSPAR, and Areas refers to the sub-areas as defined by ICES. An overview and maps of these can be found in Annex A. Species can be chosen from the drop-down list provided, based on ASCOBANS species list, see Annex B.
- Throughout the form, please include relevant web links and add rows where applicable.
- The deadline for the submission of National Reports is **31 May 2026**.

Where possible, National Coordinators should consult with, or delegate to, experts for particular topics so as to ease the reporting burden. The Secretariat has provided a list of potential country contacts as a starting point. Once the baseline information is in place, it should become easier to update in the future.

For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat.

High-level Summary of Key Messages

In your country, for 2025 (Year 2), what does this report reveal about the most successful aspects of implementation of the Agreement?

(List up to five items related to the topics of Year 2: bycatch, resource depletion, marine debris, surveys and research, use of strandings records)

1. Participation and completion of the coordinated project (SAMBAH-II) aimed at estimating the abundance of harbour porpoises in the Baltic sea.
2. Planned participation in CUMBIAH project where further data analysis of noise origin in SAMBAH II project will be conducted.
3. Cooperation with University of Klaipeda for monitoring Harbour porpoises.
4. Outreach activities (two science conferences held in Lithuania in 2025).
5. New measures

In your country, for 2025 (Year 2), what does this report reveal about the greatest challenges in implementing the Agreement?

(List up to five items related to the topics of Year 2: bycatch, resource depletion, marine debris, surveys and research, use of strandings records - kindly note that challenges with regards to other topics can be reported on under Section VII.B *Difficulties in implementing the Agreement)*

1. Lack of human resources and data availability (research mostly).
2. Lack of finances for monitoring and research on Harbour porpoise state.

In your country, for 2025 (Year 2), what does this report reveal about the main priorities for future implementation of the Agreement?

(List up to five items, ideally related to the topics of Year 2: bycatch, resource depletion, marine debris, surveys and research, use of strandings records)

1.

1. Participate actively in the CUMBIAH project and strengthen regional cooperation on harbour porpoise conservation.
2. Develop and implement fisheries management and bycatch mitigation measures to reduce impacts on harbour porpoises.
3. Expand research and monitoring on harbour porpoises and fisheries impacts, while increasing scientific involvement and data collection efforts.

Section I: General Information

A. Country Information

1. Name of Party / Non-Party Range State:

Lithuania

2. Details of the Report Compiler

Details of the report compiler

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Does the Report Compiler act as ASCOBANS National Coordinator (i.e. focal point)?

Please select only one option

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

3. Details of contributor(s)

Please provide the following details per contributor: Name, Function, Organization, Postal Address, Telephone, Email, and Topic(s) contributed to.

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Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

A. Fisheries-related Threats

1. Bycatch

AIM: to illustrate progress on understanding, monitoring and mitigating bycatch of small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.4, 9.2 (Rev.MOP10), **8.5 (Rev.MOP9)**, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.8, 5.7, **5.5**, **3.3**

Bycatch, the entanglement of an animal in fishing gear, is identified as a major cause of mortality in small cetaceans. Every effort should be made to reduce bycatch towards zero as quickly as possible. Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed on a number of resolutions that highlight the importance of mitigating bycatch of small cetaceans in the Agreement Area, as available data indicates that levels of bycatch pose a considerable threat to their conservation status. Parties have agreed that modifications of fishing gear and relevant practices shall be applied in order to reduce negative impacts where data indicates unacceptable interaction. The Agreement Area requires improved monitoring, collation of data, and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures, while also taking into account similar work in other areas.

To better understand the extent of the impact of bycatch on small cetaceans, monitoring and mitigation measures in place, and ongoing work in the Agreement Area, countries are requested to provide relevant information.

Note: This section includes bycatch in recreational fisheries.

1.1. How is bycatch assessed/monitored in your country?

	Used? (Yes/No)	Percentage (% by monitoring method, of total bycaught animals, by gear type if applicable)
Dedicated observer schemes	No	
Fisheries observes	Yes	100%, but represents reported information, not actual bycatch
Remote Electronic Monitoring	No	
Self-reporting by fishermen	Yes	0
Pathological investigation	Yes	100 %
Assessment at stranding site	Yes	100 %

Comments:

This is the overall information, not for 2025 because there were no bycatch registered in 2025

1.2. Which species of small cetaceans were recorded as bycatch by commercial fishing in the reporting period?

Please provide details in this table - download and then attach it using the blue 'clip' button.

Tick all that apply

- [ ] AWSD - Atlantic white-sided dolphin
- [ ] BBW - Blainville's beaked whale
- [ ] BD - Bottlenose dolphin
- [ ] CBW - Cuvier's beaked whale
- [ ] CD - Short-beaked Common Dolphin
- [ ] FKW - False killer whale
- [ ] GBW - Gervais' beaked whale
- [ ] HP - Harbour Porpoise
- [ ] KW - Killer Whale
- [ ] LFPW - Long-finned pilot whale
- [ ] NBW - Northern bottlenose whale
- [ ] PKW - Pygmy killer whale
- [ ] PSW - Pygmy sperm whale
- [ ] RD - Risso's dolphin
- [ ] RTD - Rough-toothed dolphin
- [ ] SBW - Sowerby's beaked whale
- [ ] SD - Striped dolphin
- [ ] SFPW - Short-finned pilot whale
- [ ] TBW - True's beaked whale
- [ ] WBD - White-beaked dolphin
- [ ] Not Applicable
- [ ] Others _____

1.3. Which species of small cetaceans were recorded as bycatch by recreational fishing in the reporting period?

Please provide details in this table - download and then attach it using the blue 'clip' button.

Tick all that apply

- [ ] AWSD - Atlantic white-sided dolphin
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- [ ] PKW - Pygmy killer whale
- [ ] PSW - Pygmy sperm whale
- [ ] RD - Risso's dolphin
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- [ ] SD - Striped dolphin
- [ ] SFPW - Short-finned pilot whale
- [ ] TBW - True's beaked whale
- [ ] WBD - White-beaked dolphin

- [ ] Not Applicable
- [ ] Others _____

1.4 Has there been any notable incidents/issues related to bycatch during the reporting period in your country?

Please select only one option

- (•) No
- ( ) Yes

1.5. Are there any mitigation measures in place?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in this table - download and then attach it using the blue 'clip' button.

Please select only one option

- ( ) No
- (•) Yes

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1.6. Have there been changes in fishing effort (for fisheries known to have an impact) in the reporting period?

Please select only one option

- ( ) No
- (•) Unknown/not applicable
- ( ) Yes

Please provide details:

Scientific advice for 2025 fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea was lower than previous years mainly due to reduced quotas, stock declines but there is still no direct evidence linking this to reduced bycatch.

1.7. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on bycatch in your country.

List initiatives/ projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information

Taking into account the European Commission (COM) initiatives and the intention to strengthen the protection of marine mammals (specifically harbour porpoises), discussions on additional measures (such as the use of acoustic deterrent devices – pingers, restrictions on fishing activities, and other management measures) continued in 2025. However, no significant new binding regulatory changes that would substantially alter the situation in Lithuania were adopted.

At the Baltic Sea regional level, within the BALTFISH framework, further possible measures are being considered. Currently, a third joint recommendation on measures to reduce bycatch of Baltic harbour porpoises is under preparation (Draft Joint Recommendation for mitigation measures to reduce bycatch of the Baltic proper harbour porpoise).

1.8. Is the perceived level of pressure from bycatch in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

Status relative to previous years. Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable.

Species	Increasing/Decreasing/Staying the same/Unknown	Nature of the evidence (e.g. strandings, observer schemes)
Harbour porpoise	Unknown	

2. Resource Depletion

AIM: to determine areas where, and to what extent, depletion of fish stocks have occurred during the reporting period. In addition, identify ongoing mitigation efforts regarding detrimental implications for small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.3, **9.4**, 8.9, 8.3, 7.1, 6.1

Depletion in fish stocks due to overfishing and other factors generates pressure on the favourable conservation status of small cetaceans (through possible food shortage). More integrated management and reductions in fishing effort (also prompted by concern about fish stock depletion or other ecosystem considerations) have been encouraged, especially in areas of known risk. Further research, effective fishery regulations and innovation within certain fishing methods are considered to be helpful steps towards mitigating this pressure.

Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed on a number of resolutions that (1) determine the impact of the depletion of fish stocks on small cetaceans, (2) encourage fishing effort reductions and (3) review new information on these depletions to make recommendations. Resource depletion in the Agreement Area requires improved monitoring, collation of data, and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures, while also taking into account similar work in other areas.

It is of particular interest to ASCOBANS to understand the extent of prey depletions, any related ongoing work, monitoring and mitigation measures in the Agreement Area. Countries are requested to provide relevant information.

2.1 Based on the latest stock assessments, are there any notable depletions of fish species which would be a concern for small cetaceans?

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes

Please provide details:

Research (according to The multiannual plan for the Baltic Sea results) in 2025 confirmed that: several Baltic stocks (especially **cod and some herring stocks**) remain **critically depleted;** some stocks are in **low productivity states**, meaning recovery is difficult even with reduced fishing.

Baltic cod stocks (both eastern and western) remain collapsed or near-collapse with zero-catch scientific advice continuing into 2025–2026; herring stocks show mixed but still weak status, with central Baltic herring slightly fluctuating but remaining below fully healthy levels and some sub-stocks declining; sprat remains one of the more stable species but is still considered vulnerable due to poor recruitment in recent years and ecosystem pressures; and overall biomass of key commercial stocks remains below historical sustainable levels, with many stocks either at or below precautionary biological limits, meaning fishing pressure must stay strictly limited or in some cases fully closed to allow recovery, with HELCOM noting that only a minority of fish stocks in the Baltic Sea meet good environmental status and that improvement since the baseline period has been limited or absent.

2.2. Where are these depletions in national waters occurring?

Please choose the sub-Regions from Annex A as defined by OSPAR & HELCOM.

Tick all that apply

- ☐ OI Norwegian Sea
- ☐ OII Dogger Bank
- ☐ OII Southern North Sea
- ☐ OII Northern North Sea
- ☐ OII Channel
- ☐ OII Norwegian Trench
- ☐ OII Skagerrak
- ☐ OIII Celtic Sea
- ☐ OIII Irish Sea
- ☐ OIII Irish & Scottish W. Coast
- ☐ OIV N. Bay of Biscay
- ☐ OIV Iberian Sea
- ☐ OIV Gulf of Cadiz
- ☐ OV Wider Atlantic

- [ ] H Bothnian Bay
- [ ] H Bothnian Sea
- [ ] H Archipelago Sea
- [ ] H Aland Sea
- [ ] H Gulf of Finland
- [ ] H Northern Baltic Proper
- [ ] H Western Gotland Basin
- [x] H Eastern Gotland Basin
- [ ] H Gulf of Riga
- [x] H Gdansk Basin
- [ ] H Bornholm Basin
- [ ] H Arkona Basin
- [ ] H Kattegat
- [ ] H Belt Sea
- [ ] H The Sound
- [ ] Not Applicable

Please choose the sub-Areas from Annex A as defined by ICES.

Tick all that apply

- [ ] 27.3 Skagerrak, Kattegat, Sound, Belt and Baltic Seas
- [ ] 27.3.a Skagerrak and Kattegat
- [ ] 27.3.a.20 Skagerrak
- [ ] 27.3.a.21 Kattegat
- [ ] 27.3.b,c Sound and Belt Sea
- [ ] 27.3.b.23 Sound
- [ ] 27.3.c.22 Belt Sea
- [x] 27.3.d Baltic Sea
- [ ] 27.3.d.24 Baltic West of Bornholm
- [ ] 27.3.d.25 Southern Central Baltic – West
- [x] 27.3.d.26 Southern Central Baltic – East
- [ ] 27.3.d.27 West of Gotland
- [ ] 27.3.d.28.1 Gulf of Riga
- [ ] 27.3.d.28.2 East of Gotland
- [ ] 27.3.d.29 Archipelago Sea
- [ ] 27.3.d.30 Bothnian Sea
- [ ] 27.3.d.31 Bothnian Bay
- [ ] 27.3.d.32 Bay of Finland
- [ ] 27.4 North Sea
- [ ] 27.4.a Northern North Sea
- [ ] 27.4.b Central North Sea
- [ ] 27.4.c Southern North Sea
- [ ] 27.6 Rockall, NW Coast of Scotland and N. Ireland
- [ ] 27.6.a NW Coast of Scotland and N. Ireland
- [ ] 27.6.b Rockall
- [ ] 27.6.b.1 Rockall / NEAFC Reg. Area I
- [ ] 27.6.b.2 Rockall / Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
- [ ] 27.7 Irish Sea, West of Ireland, Porcupine Bank, Eastern and Western English Channel, Bristol Channel, Celtic Sea North and South, and Southwest of Ireland – East and West

- [ ] 27.7.a Irish Sea
- [ ] 27.7.b West of Ireland
- [ ] 27.7.c Porcupine Bank
- [ ] 27.7.c.1 Porcupine Bank / NEAFC Reg. Area
- [ ] 27.7.c.2 Porcupine Bank / Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
- [ ] 27.7.d Eastern English Channel
- [ ] 27.7.e Western English Channel
- [ ] 27.7.f Bristol Channel
- [ ] 27.7.g Celtic North Sea
- [ ] 27.7.h Celtic Sea South
- [ ] 27.7.j SW of Ireland – East
- [ ] 27.7.j.1 SW of Ireland – East – Parts of the NEAFC Reg. Area
- [ ] 27.7.j.2 SW of Ireland – East – Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
- [ ] 27.7.k SW of Ireland - West
- [ ] 27.7.k.1 SW of Ireland – West – Part of the NEAFC Reg. Area
- [ ] 27.7.k.2 SW of Ireland – West – Part of the Non-NEAFC Area I
- [ ] 27.8 Bay of Biscay
- [ ] 27.8.a Bay of Biscay North
- [ ] 27.8.b Bay of Biscay Central
- [ ] 27.8.c Bay of Biscay South
- [ ] 27.8.d Bay of Biscay Offshore
- [ ] 27.8.d.1 Bay of Biscay Offshore – Part of the NEAFC Reg. Area
- [ ] 27.8.d.2 Bay of Biscay Offshore – Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
- [ ] 27.8.e Wet of Bay of Biscay
- [ ] 27.9 Portuguese Waters
- [ ] 27.9.a Portuguese Waters – East
- [ ] 27.9.b Portuguese Water - West
- [ ] 27.9.b.1 Portuguese waters – West Part of the NEAFC Reg. Area
- [ ] 27.9.b.2 Portuguese waters – Non-NEAFC Reg. Area

2.3 What measures are being taken to manage pressures on depleted fish stocks, including relevant regulations/guidelines (current / planned / year of implementation)?

Measure	Timeframe information	Relevant driver
To increase fishing opportunities for salmon in the Gulf of Finland (+1%), and to maintain catches of central Baltic herring and sprat unchanged. To decrease fishing of Bothnian herring (-62%), herring in the Gulf of Riga (-17%), plaice (-3%) and salmon in the main basin	2025 decision on the year 2026	Commission's proposal for the 2026 fishing opportunities for the Baltic Sea.

(-27%), as well as allocations for unavoidable by-catches of western Baltic cod (-84%), eastern Baltic cod (-63%) and western Baltic herring (-50%).		
Implementation of fishing opportunities (national quotas under EU TACs)	Updated annualy; ongoing (reduced quotas since ~2019, continuing through 2025)	Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union
Application of spatial and temporal fishing restrictions (e.g. closures)	Ongoing; major restrictions introduced ~2019; maintained in 2025	Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union
Fleet capacity reduction (small-scale fleet adjustment, vessel scrapping)	Ongoing	Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union + national implementation by Ministry of Agriculture
Implementation of technical conservation measures (gear rules)	Ongoing	Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union
Participation in regional joint recommendations (Baltic Sea)	Ongoing; 2025: draft recommendation on bycatch mitigation under preparation	recommendation on bycatch mitigation under preparation BALTFISH regional fisheries cooperation
Fisheries control and enforcement	Ongoing; standard EU control system applied	EU Fisheries Control Regulation
Regional coordination of fisheries management (Baltic Sea level decision-making)	Ongoing; continuous cooperation with other Member States	BALTFISH regional fisheries cooperation
Restore commercial fish stocks to sustainable levels, allowing exploitation at maximum sustainable yield (MSY), while acknowledging	Declared on 30 September 2025	Ministerial Declaration to the Baltic conference of 30 September 2025 Declaration of the Ministers of Environment, Maritime Economy,

that the 2020 deadline was not achieved and urgent action is needed; Ensure full and effective implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy, including improvements based on its ongoing evaluation; Prevent overfishing by eliminating misreporting, underreporting, and unreported fishing activities; Guarantee that all fish catches are accurately recorded and reported in accordance with EU rules, and that fishing opportunities set at EU level are respected; Improve integration between fisheries policy and environmental legislation, particularly the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and related biodiversity laws; Expand marine protected areas to cover at least 30% of the Baltic Sea by 2030, with one third under strict protection, and ensure their effective management and monitoring		Agriculture and Fisheries of Baltic Sea Member States and of the EU Commissioners for 'Fisheries and Oceans' and for 'Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy'

2.4 Is there any evidence within your country's national waters that resource depletion may be impacting small cetaceans (e.g. evidence of starvation)?

Please select only one option

- (●) No
- ( ) Yes

2.5 Are there any national efforts to evaluate cetacean body condition at sea (e.g. surveys)?

Please select only one option

- (●) No
- ( ) Yes

2.6 Relevant new research/work/collaboration on resource depletion in your country.

List initiatives/ projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information

Lesutiene J, Šiaulys A, Razinkovas-Baziukas A (2025) Analysis of the causes and consequences of the major concern on biodiversity change in the Curonian Lagoon and Baltic Sea Lithuanian coast. ARPHA Preprints. https://doi.org/10.3897/arphapreprints.e167290

Ivanauskas, E., Razinkovas-Baziukas, A. and Baziukė, D. (2025), Does the Fishery or Climate Change Drive Commercial Catches in a Shallow Eutrophic Lagoon?. Fish Manag Ecol, 32: 159-173. https://doi.org/10.1111/fme.12792

2.7. Is the perceived level of pressure from resource depletion in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

Status relative to previous years. Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable.

Species	Increasing/Decreasing/Staying the same/Unknown	Nature of the evidence
Harbour porpoise	Unknown	

C. Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts)

9. Marine Debris (ingestion and entanglement)

AIM: to illustrate progress, during the reporting period, on understanding, monitoring and mitigating impacts of marine debris on small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.3, 10.4, **9.3**, 8.8, 8.3, 7.1, 6.1

Marine debris, such as macroplastics and discarded fishing gear, poses a threat to small cetaceans due to the potential for these materials to be ingested or to cause entanglement. Commercial fishing operations, recreational fishing and cargo shipping are notable sources of this material, of which the majority is plastic and ghost nets. However, it is assumed that most of the marine litter worldwide comes from land, although this differs per region. Even small amounts of macroplastics that have been ingested may present serious effects on small cetaceans, such as detrimental influence on the gastrointestinal tract or leaching pollutants into the body, potentially leading to mortality or reduced body condition. Entanglement is well-established as a threat to small cetaceans as plastic debris continues to accumulate in aquatic environments, and may cause physical injuries, reduced survival or drowning.

To better understand the impact of marine debris on small cetaceans and measures in place to mitigate these effects, countries are requested to provide relevant information.

Note: Includes macroplastics and discarded fishing gear. Microplastics are covered under Section C10 Pollution and Hazardous Substances.

9.1. Does your country have monitoring in place to assess levels of marine debris?

Please select only one option

- ( ) No (Go to Question 9.3)
- (●) Yes

Provide information below:

Include parameters provided through monitoring (e.g. type of litter (size, shape, material), amount, impacts on species, geographical location, etc.)

In Lithuania national marine monitoring is carried out by competent authorities, including the Ministry of Environment and its agencies, and forms a key component of Baltic Sea environmental assessment. This monitoring includes water quality, biodiversity (such as fish, marine mammals, and habitats), and different types of pollution, including nutrients and hazardous substances. The collected data provides the scientific basis for evaluating environmental status and are systematically used for reporting and assessment under EU and regional frameworks, particularly the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), as well as within the HELCOM framework and other European Union reporting obligations.

More detailed:

Under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Lithuania assesses the environmental status of the Baltic Sea using a comprehensive set of 11 descriptors that together define Good Environmental Status (GES): these include biodiversity (covering the condition, abundance and distribution of species such as fish, birds and marine mammals), non-indigenous species (monitoring the introduction and impacts of invasive species), commercially exploited fish and shellfish (evaluating stock status in relation to maximum sustainable yield), marine food webs (assessing ecosystem balance), eutrophication (measuring nutrient inputs, algal blooms and oxygen depletion), and seafloor integrity (examining the condition of benthic habitats and impacts from activities such as trawling); in addition, Lithuania evaluates hydrographical conditions (changes in salinity, currents and physical processes), contaminants (levels of hazardous substances in water and sediments), contaminants in seafood (ensuring fish are safe for human consumption), marine litter (including plastic and microplastic pollution), and underwater noise (assessing impacts from shipping and other human activities).

In Lithuania's National Water Sector Development Plan 2022–2027, the quality of the Baltic Sea and marine environment is assessed through an integrated set of indicators aligned with achieving and maintaining Good Environmental Status, focusing on key pressures and ecosystem responses: these include the reduction of nutrient loads (nitrogen and phosphorus) contributing to eutrophication, the decrease of pollution inputs from land-based sources such as agriculture, wastewater and urban runoff, and the control of hazardous substances and micro-pollutants entering the Baltic Sea; the plan also evaluates hydromorphological changes, marine litter, and the overall ecological and chemical status of coastal and marine waters.

9.2. Are these data publicly available?

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes (please provide web link) https://aaa.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/vanduo/kursiu-marios-ir-baltijos-jura/valstybinis-baltijos-juros-ir-kursiu-mariu-monitoringas/kursiu-mariu-ir-baltijos-juros-monitoringo-rezultatai/

9.3. What species of small cetaceans were found to have been impacted by marine debris? Please provide details in the table.

Please provide details: download this table and then attach it using the blue 'link' button.

No data for 2025 yet.

9.4. Are there any mitigation measures in place?

Mitigation measures might include changes in gear to prevent loss, entanglement response, adoption of measures to reduce land-based/boat-based sources of marine debris, etc.

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes

Per measure, please provide: date of implementation, Region (Annex A), identify whether the measure has been effective and provide comments, and other relevant information.

Gdansk Basin:

During the implementation of the State Environmental Monitoring Programme for 2024–2029 and the EU-funded project "Assessment of the status of water bodies, data analysis, upgrading of monitoring equipment, and public information" Lithuania is conducting monitoring of micro-litter levels in the water column, seabed sediments, and molluscs. The goals is to ensure that economic activities at sea do not cause significant adverse impacts on seabed habitats, and that the loss and deterioration of their condition is prevented. It improves monitoring coverage, data quality, and ecosystem assessment capacity, but have limited direct impact on reducing marine litter, since they primarily support assessment and reporting rather than direct removal or prevention actions.

Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Water Sector Plan for 2022–2027: Considering the distribution of dominant seabed habitat types in the Lithuanian marine area, it is planned to expand macrozoobenthos research under the State Environmental Monitoring Programme, as outlined in the State Baltic Sea monitoring plans. It improves ecological understanding of benthic habitats and supporting MSFD-related assessments, but its impact is mainly indirect, as it enhances knowledge rather than directly reducing pressures on the marine environment

Lithuania is par of the Protect Baltic project (implemented in the 2020s, ongoing) which focuses on marine debris mitigation through harmonised monitoring of litter (beach, water, seabed), microplastic sampling in sediments and biota, identification of pollution sources, and awareness-raising activities. The project supports implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) and HELCOM

objectives. Its effectiveness is considered moderate, as it significantly improves data quality and policy support, but has limited direct impact on reducing marine litter, since it is mainly research- and monitoring-based rather than an operational removal programme.

Lithuania, together with its partners, is participating in the international Interreg Baltic Sea Region project "Baltic Sea Munitions Remediation Roadmap" (MUNIMAP) (2024–2027). The MUNIMAP project aims to accelerate and coordinate national processes across countries by developing guidelines for the removal of munitions from the Baltic Sea. The project seeks to develop and evaluate various elements of these guidelines, including policy recommendations, IT solutions for site prioritisation, monitoring strategies, as well as innovative, cost-effective and environmentally friendly removal methods.

9.5. How is marine debris managed?

(incl. relevant regulations / guidelines and the year of implementation, current and planned)

Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC), implemented since around 2010 and ongoing, which requires monitoring of marine litter (Descriptor 10) and measures to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES), and is applied in Lithuania through national monitoring programmes.

Single-Use Plastics Directive (EU), adopted in 2019 and implemented in Lithuania since around 2021, introducing restrictions on common plastic products and extended producer responsibility, contributing to reductions in plastic waste entering the marine environment. Broader EU and national waste management legislation (ongoing) further supports prevention of land-based litter, the main source of marine debris.

At the regional level, Lithuania implements measures under the HELCOM Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission Marine Litter Action Plan (adopted in 2015, updated in 2021), which focuses on waste prevention, reduction of plastics and microplastics, addressing fishing and shipping-related waste, and coordinated regional action, with the objective of significantly reducing marine litter by 2025.

Fisheries-related measures are implemented under the Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union (ongoing), including gear regulations, limited measures to prevent gear loss, and the use of port reception facilities.

The State Environmental Monitoring Programme (ongoing, current cycle 2024–2029) provides systematic monitoring of beach litter, microplastics in water and sediments, and seabed litter to support policy development, while marine spatial planning (since ~2015, ongoing updates) and coastal strip regulation help manage coastal development and reduce land-based inputs.

9.6. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on marine debris in your country.

List initiatives/ projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information e.g. link to OSPAR reports

Abbasi, Sajjad, et al. "Geochemical signatures in plastic debris from the Curonian Lagoon, Lithuania." *PLoS One* 21.2 (2026): e0340582.

9.7. Is the perceived level of pressure from marine debris in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same, or unknown?

Please select only one option

- ○ Increasing
- ○ Decreasing
- ○ Staying the same
- ◉ Unknown
- ○ Not applicable.

Comments:

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

Section III: Surveys and Research

A. Biological Information (per species)

1. Abundance estimates

AIM: to provide new information on abundance and life history parameters of small cetaceans during the reporting period.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.3, 8.5 (Rev.MOP9), 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7, 5.5, **4.7**, **3.5**, 3.3

Abundance estimates and information on life history are of critical importance for the determination of broader species attributes such as populations levels, health and overall status. These parameters can contribute towards determination of GES and provide a reference for mortality events. Abundance and life history parameters are typically assessed from monitoring programmes. Fluctuations in these parameters can provide insight into trends in populations. Information on abundance and life history parameters can inform the need for mitigation measures, and regional assessment of these parameters allows for a more spatially targeted and concentrated response to support national assessments.

In the ASCOBANS Area, small cetacean abundance and life history should be monitored in response to a number of ASCOBANS resolutions. Continued monitoring of these parameters is essential to understanding current status and trends.

1.1. Did your country conduct national dedicated surveys on abundance and distribution during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in this table - download and then attach it using the blue 'clip' button.

Attach maps separately, clearly marking which survey they apply to.

Note: Information relevant to SCANS-IV is to be provided in Question 1.2.

Please select only one option

- (●) No
- ( ) Yes. Please provide details in table.

1.2. Other relevant new research/work/collaboration on abundance estimates in regard to small cetaceans in your country during the reporting period.

List initiatives/ projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study and information relevant to SCANS-IV; web links to other relevant information.

Lithuania finished SAMBAH II harbour porpoise monitoring project in 2025, using passive acoustic monitoring which allows to estimate the presence, distribution and population size of the harbour porpoise. However, SAMBAH II (2023–2025) focuses on spatio-temporal monitoring, not health or condition. Thus, these methods do not assess body condition (no visual or physiological data).

The results of SAMBAH II inLithuania showed that approximately 3,000 high-frequency signals were recorded. The majority of these were detected during two recording events, and the signals fell within the frequency range characteristic of harbour porpoises. However, no high-confidence sequences of harbour porpoise signals were identified. Further data analysis of noise origin will be conducted during Cumbiah project which will take place in the summer of 2026 (up until autumn).

1.3. Is the abundance of species in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same, or unknown?

Status relative to previous years. Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable.

Please select only one option

- ( ) Increasing
- ( ) Decreasing
- ( ) Staying the same
- (●) Unknown
- ( ) Not applicable _____

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

2. New information on life history parameters

2.1. Is there new information on the following life history parameters in the reporting period?

For each life history parameters, please identify the species and provide web links and details where applicable.

	Yes/No	Describe per species
Age of sexual and physical maturity	No	
Inter-birth intervals	no	
Calf and adult mortality rates	no	
Potential reproductive span/capacity	no	
Longevity	no	
Diet	no	
Age and sex structure	no	
Other relevant factors	no	

B. Monitoring and Survey Schemes

3. Overview of current monitoring and survey schemes

AIM: to provide information on the progress of monitoring programmes, relevant methodologies and aims thereof, and status of small cetaceans during the reporting period.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.3, 8.11 (Rev.MOP9), 8.9, 8.8, 8.5 (Rev.MOP9), 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7

Monitoring programmes provide important data on biological and environmental attributes, such as population status, abundance and spatial-temporal distribution. They create opportunities for new research and development, including potential improvements to methodology for monitoring in terms of accuracy, practicality and cost efficiency.

In the ASCOBANS Area, application of coherent monitoring programmes focused on small cetaceans, which collect and provide objective, robust and comparable data, is a key component in understanding and improving the conservation status of small cetaceans through appropriate management. Parties have agreed to design, implement and support relevant monitoring programmes through a number of resolutions. Such efforts are also supported by legislation from a number of bodies which identify monitoring as a requirement in management systems. Additionally, Parties have been encouraged to coordinate their monitoring programmes, which promotes international cooperation and synergies. Parties have also been encouraged to review such monitoring programmes and propose improvements for the betterment of conservation efforts.

It is the interest of ASCOBANS to understand the current monitoring programmes utilised, their outputs, and future activities in the Agreement Area. Countries are requested to provide information relevant to their activities as well as potential improvements to such programmes and efforts.

3.1. Did your country have national monitoring programmes that enabled assessment of the Conservation Status of small cetaceans in your waters (i.e. provides abundance estimates and/or life history parameters and information on pressures) during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in this table - download and then attach it using the blue 'clip' button.

Please select only one option

◉ No

Yes. Please provide an overview in the table.

3.2. Please provide the relevant information regarding aerial surveying activities.

Provide the number of surveys, area covered, relevant species, and timeframe of the survey.

The SAMBAH II project in monitoring Harbour porpoise specie was conducted in the years of 2024-2025.

Furthermore, Environmental Impact Assesment was conducted with inclusion of monitoring the Harbour porpoise specie in the years of 2022-2025. Passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) of harbour porpoises was carried out as part of the environmental impact assessment in the planned Wind Farm II and Curonian Nord offshore wind farm areas from 1 May 2022 to 6 February 2025.

3.3. Please provide the relevant information regarding Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM).

Provide the location of moored instruments, timeframe of the survey, the relevant species, and the make and model of instruments used.

SAMBAH II project (2024-2025) PAM of Harbour porpoise.

Environmental Impact Assesment (2022-2025) PAM of Harbour porpoise.

In both projects, PAM was conducted using F-POD acoustic recorders.

3.4. Are any of these programmes carried out in collaboration with other countries?

Please select only one option

No

Yes

Provide information below.

Please provide the collaborators and links per programme.

SAMBAH II has 10 partners in Sweden, Finland, Poland and Denmark. As well as working closely with colleagues in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Germany to make SAMBAH cover as much of the Baltic Sea as possible.

3.5. Please provide details on any planned activities relevant to monitoring programmes.

Provide web links if available.

CUMBIAH (Conservation union for the management of the Baltic harbour porpoise populations and their habitat) - during this project, which Lithuania (Klaipeda University) will participate in, the data from PAM of SAMBAH II and harbour porpoise monitoring will be furhter analysed.

3.6. Relevant outputs/findings from monitoring programmes to note.

Per species, please identify the relevant outputs. Provide web links if available.

During the Environmental Impact Assesment (2022-2023) monitoring a total of 16 harbour porpoise encounters were recorded, while the recordings registered 20 Detection Positive Minutes (DPM). Encounters were recorded in 2022 and 2024, with 10 encounters detected in 2022 and 6 in 2024. Encounters were most frequently recorded in December (68.8%), less frequently in March (25%), while only one encounter was recorded in November (6.2%). F-POD recorders were deployed in three different habitat types: gravel and boulder sediments with sparse epibenthic communities; boulder substrates dominated by the epifauna of *Mytilus* sp. and *Balanus improvisus*; and fine- and medium-grained sand habitats dominated by the bivalve mollusc *Macoma balthica* and *Spionidae* polychaete worms. Encounters were most frequently recorded in fine- and medium-grained sand habitats (68.8%), followed by gravel and boulder habitats (25%), and much less frequently in boulder habitats (6.2%).

Section IV: Use of Strandings Records

A. Stranding Networks and Strandings

AIM: to provide information on stranding events and demonstrate progress of stranding networks in understanding, monitoring and mitigating strandings of small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.4, 10.3, **8.10 (Rev.MOP9)**, 8.7, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.4, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7

Stranding of cetaceans is an ever-present occurrence and analysis through necropsy and sampling can provide indications of reason for injury and death. Stranding numbers also provide information on population status, abundance and distribution. Effective response to strandings contributes to the maintenance of favourable conservation status of small cetaceans and also has implications for animal welfare. Comprehensive stranding networks are a critical asset in managing small cetacean strandings and have resulted in large numbers of animals rescued and returned to sea. These networks also have the capacity to guide the public on animal welfare, human health and safety considerations during stranding events.

In the effort to mitigate the anthropogenic causes of these occurrences, Parties have agreed to measures through a number of resolutions. Continued monitoring of stranding causation and further developing guidance for best practices in stranding response and necropsies was identified by Parties as important tasks to pursue, as was setting up stranding response networks. This information is to align with appropriate sampling practices and countries should ensure that the data is available for researchers. Additionally, development and support of international strandings databases and regular reporting is conducted through relevant research institutes and stranding schemes. ASCOBANS Secretariat encourages the ongoing funding and support of engagement with organizations for further development of guidelines, best practices and maintaining dataflow for capacity building across stranding networks.

To better understand the extent to which stranding events occur and how these events are managed, it is the interest of ASCOBANS for countries to provide the relevant information on these occurrences within the Agreement Area, procedures undertaken in response to stranding events, necropsies and information on stranding networks.

1.1. Is there a national stranding network in place?

Please select only one option

- (●) No
- ( ) Yes

1.4. Is there a database of strandings?

Please select only one option

- (●) No
- ( ) Yes

1.6. Provide details for any new institution(s) responsible for a stranding database, responding to live-strandings, collection of carcasses, and for conducting necropsies.

Please identify the new responsible institution(s) and provide their: responsibility (responding to live-strandings, collection of carcasses, necropsies, stranding database), phone number, email, and website.

Lithuanian Sea Museum

Smiltynės str. 3,
LT-93100 Klaipėda, Lithuania

Lithuanian sea museum | muziejus.lt

+370 659 61 497, info@muziejus.lt

1.7. Were cases photographed, measured or sampled even if not collected for necropsy during the reporting period?

Please select only one option

- (●) No
- ( ) Yes

1.8. Were there recorded stranding events in your country during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in this table - download and then attach it using the blue 'clip' button. Provide details relevant for recorded stranding events during the reporting period.

Please select only one option

- (●) No
- ( ) Yes

1.9. Were any necropsies conducted during the reporting period?

Please select only one option

- (●) No
- ( ) Yes

1.10. Other relevant new research/work/collaboration on strandings and stranding networks in your country.

List initiatives/ projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information)

Section VI: Information and Education

A. Education and outreach

AIM: to determine if there are gaps in the outreach and education activities and if additional material should be produced in your country or by the Secretariat (e.g. on certain themes, species, regions, languages, for certain target audiences).

Relevant Resolutions: 10.2, 5.8

The revised ASCOBANS Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan (see ASCOBANS/MOP9/Doc.5.3 Annex 1) was endorsed by the 9th Meeting of the Parties (2020). The purpose of the CEPA Plan is to identify realistic activities relevant to ASCOBANS and mandated by Parties, to be undertaken by the Secretariat, Parties, and relevant partners. It seeks a clearer focus amongst Secretariat, Parties, Partners, and stakeholders regarding objectives. The purpose of this section is to highlight successes and to identify potential gaps in outreach and education activities and related materials.

1.1. List education/outreach activities in the reporting period in your country, which are of relevance to conservation of small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Area.

e.g. activities during the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise in May

Organizer	Name of activity (incl. translation to English, where applicable)	Date(s)	Location	Target audience (general public, scientists, children, fishers; other – please state)	Links (for further information)
Marine Research Institute of Klaipeda University	17th National Conference on Marine Science and Technology MARINE AND COASTAL RESEARCH 2025	14-16 of May, 2025	Juodkrante, Lithuania	The event was intended for Lithuanian researchers, representatives of business and industry, and the public sector who seek to share research results, best practices of science-business cooperation, issues related to regional governance, and other relevant topics.	https://krantai.ku.lt/lt/
Klaipeda University	Annual Science Conference 2025 of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ASC 2025)	15-18 of September, 2025	Klaipeda University, Lithuania	Early-career scientists	https://www.ices.dk/events/asc/2025/Pages/default.aspx

Section VII: Other Matters

A. Other information or comments important for the Agreement:

Opportunity to include other information missing from the form.

During the 17th National Conference on Marine Science and Technology
MARINE AND COASTAL RESEARCH 2025 organised by Marine research institute of Klaipeda University results from passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) of harbour porpoises was carried out as part of the environmental impact assessment in the planned Wind Farm II and Curonian Nord offshore wind farm areas was presented.

B. Difficulties in implementing the Agreement:

Opportunity to describe any other issues that were not covered by the 2025 (Year 2) form - i.e. other topics than bycatch, resource depletion, marine debris, surveys and research, use of strandings records.

Lack of human resources, finances, data-bases.

Unclear fishing impact on harbour porpoises in Lithuania.

Unclear monitoring data on PAM of harbour porpoises and lack of resourses (mostly inventory) and national law for monitoring regularly.

C. Burning Issues:

Opportunity to highlight urgent or emerging issues.