



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

ASCOBANS/AC30/NR.3

02 June 2026

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

2025 NATIONAL REPORT: FINLAND

2025 ASCOBANS National Report

ASCOBANS

Online Reporting System

Party: Finland

Submitted Date: 2026-05-27



2025 ASCOBANS National Report

Creation Date: 2026-01

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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)

Attending the SAMBAH II surveys project and the new reporting system in Finland under [Information on harbour porpoise sightings in Finland](#)

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*)

Permanent funding for monitoring is still lacking.

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)

Permanent funding for monitoring, gillnet fisheries ban in the area of regular presence of harbour porpoise and the first MPA where the harbour porpoise is identified as one of the key justification for designation.

Section I: General Information

A. Country Information

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

Finland

2. Details of the Report Compiler

Details of the report compiler

Name	Penina Blankett
Function	Senior Ministerial Adviser
Organization	Ministry of the Environment
Postal address	PO Box 35, FI-00023 Government, Finland
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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.

Olli Loisa, Senior advisor, Turku University of Applied Sciences, Joukahaisenkatu 7 20520 Turku Finland, +358505985743, olli.loisa@turkuamk.fi, whole report

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	No	
Remote Electronic Monitoring	No	
Self-reporting by fishermen	Yes	Mandatory in legislation
Pathological investigation	Yes	All known bycaught cetaceans will be investigated
Assessment at stranding site	Yes	All known cetaceans will be investigated

Comments:

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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- ☐ CBW - Cuvier’s beaked whale
- ☐ CD - Short-beaked Common Dolphin
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- ☐ HP - Harbour Porpoise
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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

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:

Gillnet fishing effort in commercial fisheries has decreased substantially in the marine area, with reductions exceeding 50% in certain locations over the past two decades.

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

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:

There are four Baltic herring mangament stocks in the Baltic sea (Bothnian, Central Baltic, Gulf of Riga and Western Baltic). At the moment herring stocks in the Baltic Sea are facing serious challenges, with three out of the four in significant decline. In the central Baltic Sea, herring numbers have dropped by over 80% since the 1970s, with a 40% decrease occurring in just the past four years—bringing the stock to a critical level.

In contrast, the herring stock in the Gulf of Riga remains stable and has even shown growth over the past two decades, making it the only Baltic herring stock not currently under severe pressure.

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
- ☐ H Eastern Gotland Basin
- ☐ H Gulf of Riga
- ☐ 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
- ☒ 27.3.d Baltic Sea
- ☐ 27.3.d.24 Baltic West of Bornholm
- ☐ 27.3.d.25 Southern Central Baltic – West
- ☐ 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
ICES advice and EU TAC	2025	

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

Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) conducts **annual research surveys** to monitor Baltic herring and sprat stocks. These datasets form a core component of ICES stock assessments. A major research focus in recent years has been **herring condition and energetic status**, particularly in the Bothnian Sea.

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	

B. Disturbance (incl. potential physical impacts)

3. Noise (impulsive i.e. piling and continuous/ambient i.e. shipping)

AIM: to illustrate progress on understanding, monitoring and mitigating negative effects on small cetaceans from underwater noise during the reporting period.

Relevant Resolutions: [10.3](#), [9.2 \(Rev.MOP10\)](#), [8.11 \(Rev.MOP9\)](#), [8.9](#), [8.6 \(Rev.MOP10\)](#), [8.4 \(Rev.MOP9\)](#), [8.3](#), [7.1](#), [6.2 \(Rev.MOP10\)](#), [6.1](#)

Small cetaceans are especially susceptible to underwater noise due to their high responsiveness to sound and wide hearing range. Good environmental status, as defined by the European Union, suggests that the introduction of energy, including underwater noise, is at levels that do not adversely affect the marine environment. Anthropogenic noise pollution has generally increased in recent times and generates a broad range of frequencies due to a wide variety of human activities. Impulsive and continuous noise present different impacts on small cetaceans, which include communicative masking, behavioural response and physiological injury. Noise in marine environments potentially impedes communication, affects distribution and hence feeding and reproduction of small cetaceans. Studies show that not only cetaceans but also fish and other marine life may be negatively impacted by anthropogenic noise.

Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed on implementation of measures through a number of resolutions that (1) highlight the potential impact that noise pollution may have on small cetaceans in the Agreement Area and (2) commit to reduce the pressure presented by underwater noise. The Agreement Area requires improved monitoring, collation of data, and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures.

To better understand the extent to which noise negatively impacts the health of small cetaceans, and to learn about new work relevant to the topic, countries are requested to provide related information.

3.1. To which noise registers/databases has your country contributed to date?

[ICES Impulsive Noise Register](#) (for HELCOM and OSPAR Parties)

Please select only one option

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Applicable

National registry

Please select only one option

- ☐ Yes, please specify (e.g. JNCC noise registry)
-

- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Applicable

3.2. Any instances/issues in the reporting period including information on planned or completed significant developments/activities, including the details of monitoring in place before, during and after the project:

If you selected 'Yes', please provide details in [this table](#) - download and then attach it using the blue 'clip' button.

Please select only one option

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

3.3. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on underwater noise 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)

3.4. Report on noise management for [cumulative impacts](#), including relevant regulations and guidelines, seismic shot point densities and level of impact deemed acceptable.

3.5. Is the perceived level of pressure from underwater noise in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

Status relative to previous years. To be done per species basis ([Annex B](#)) where applicable.

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

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.)

[https://itameri.fi/tutkimus-ja-menetelmat/itameren-tilan-seuranta/meriroskien-seuranta-kehitty/\(.in%20Finnish\).](https://itameri.fi/tutkimus-ja-menetelmat/itameren-tilan-seuranta/meriroskien-seuranta-kehitty/(.in%20Finnish).)

<https://indicators.helcom.fi/indicator/beach-litter/>

9.2. Are these data publicly available?

Please select only one option

- ☐ No
- ☒ Yes (please provide web link)

https://rosgis.syke.fi/#info

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 information.

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.

Ghost nets: <https://itameri.fi/en/from-experts-pen/ghost-nets-are-harmful-to-the-environment/>

Litter: <https://rosgis.syke.fi/#>

9.5. How is marine debris managed?

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

Finland and other Baltic Sea coastal states work together through the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM). These countries are committed to implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan and especially the [Helcom Revised Marine Litter Action Plan](#).

Related topics:

<https://ym.fi/en/plastics-roadmap-for-finland>

- [Publication: Reduce and refuse, recycle and replace. A Plastics Roadmap for Finland 2.0](#)[File opens in a new tab](#)

<https://itameri.fi/itameren-tila/meriroska/roskaantumisen-hillitseminen/>
<https://itameri.fi/en/controlling-marine-litter/>
[Plastics, the environment and the circular economy](#)(siirryt toiseen palveluun).
[The final report of MikroKeinot project \(in Finnish\)](#)(siirryt toiseen palveluun).
[European Coastline Macro Litter Trends 2015 – 2021](#)(siirryt toiseen palveluun).
[HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan](#)(siirryt toiseen palveluun).

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

<https://centralbaltic.eu/project/refish/>
<https://www.metsa.fi/tiedotteet/muovipulloja-hehkulamppuja-vasemman-jalan-kenkia-ja-kaksi-jaakaappia-vapaaehtoiset-kerasivat-itaisen-suomenlahden-saaristosta-yli-1300-kiloa-roskaa/>

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.

 [918/Sec-III A 1.1.xlsx](#)

Relevant information on distribution during the reporting period:

Include species, method, time period, weblinks, and other relevant information.

Harbour porpoise: ongoing methods passive acoustic monitoring and opportunistic sightings collection, regular in low numbers in Northern Baltic Proper and Åland Sea, elsewhere occasional.

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.

Finland participated in SAMBAH II data collection and participates in CUMBIH, in which abundance estimates will be provided (estimated schedule 2029).

In national passive acoustic monitoring programme, no abundance estimates can be produced due to very low density (in average approximately 0.5 harbour porpoise encounters per monitoring station year).

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.

There are no aerial surveys conducted in Finland for harbour porpoise monitoring due to very low density of animals.

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.

13 monitoring stations in the Northern Baltic Proper and Åland Sea, 2016-ongoing, harbour porpoise, C-POD and F-POD.

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 data collection and CUMBIAH analysis for distribution and abundance, large consortium of partners from Finland, Sweden, Denmark, UK, Germany, Poland, Lithuania and Estonia.

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

Provide web links if available.

National PAM and opportunistic sightings collection is planned to continue, depending on the long-term funding.

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

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

Harbour porpoise: Very low density, regular in offshore areas of Northern Baltic Proper and Åland Sea, elsewhere in Finland occasional records.

C. Other Research

Please provide relevant information in regard to other research (not mentioned elsewhere in Sections II, III, IV).

Per project, please provide the institution, duration, aim(s) / objective(s), and the method.

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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

1.5. Is the data available online or downloadable on request?

Please select only one option

- ☐ No
☒ Yes

Please provide details:

All harbour porpoise sightings will be included in the new Laji.fi portal.

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.

No new institutions.

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)

No.

Section VII: Other Matters

A. Other information or comments important for the Agreement:

Opportunity to include other information missing from the form.

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.

The lack of permanent funding e.g. for monitoring.

C. Burning Issues:

Opportunity to highlight urgent or emerging issues.

