UN environment programme

ASCOBANS

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

ASCOBANS/AC30/NR.5

02 June 2026

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

2025 NATIONAL REPORT: DENMARK

2025 ASCOBANS National Report

1 January – 31 December 2025

As outlined in ASCOBANS Resolution 10.1 *National Reporting 2025-2028*, this form will cover the year 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 A: Biological Information, B: Monitoring Programmes, C: Other Research)
- 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, tbc).

- 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:

1. **The most successful aspects of implementation of the Agreement?**

   Bycatch: The video monitoring program of gillnet fishery is still ongoing with up to 10 vessels being monitored every year – mainly in the Belt Sea population management unit.

   Surveys and research: Extensive monitoring is being carried out to monitor the Belt Sea population and SAMBAH-II was successfully completed and CUMBIAH funded and started. Furthermore, the SAMBAH-II partners are already talking about preparing and funding for SAMBAH-III.

2. **The greatest challenges in implementing the Agreement?**

   Bycatch: There is still no overall bycatch estimate for the Belt Sea management unit including both the Danish, German and Swedish fleet.

   Resource depletion: Although the fishery has been minimised or even closed, the recruitment of both herring and cod remain low. Restoring the habitat in e.g. the Belt Sea area is a long process.

   Use of stranding records: Too few stranded/bycaught porpoises are collected and necropsied annually in Denmark. Funding exists for DK to perform necropsies n 25 porpoise per year, but this has never been done due to lack of collected fresh animals.

3. **The main priorities for future 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 stranding records)

- Ensure and support that the result of SAMBAH-II/CUMBIAH and SCANS-V (2027) will actually result in appropriate management measures.

Section I: General Information

A. Country Information

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

2. **Details of the Report Compiler**

Name: Signe Sveegaard
Function: Senior advisor, PhD
Organization: Department of Bioscience, Aarhus University
Postal Address: Frederiksborgvej 399, 4000 Roskilde
Telephone: +45 28951664
Email: ssv@ecos.au.dk
Does the Report Compiler act as ASCOBANS National Coordinator (i.e. focal point)?
☐ **No** ☒ **Yes**

3. **Details of contributor(s)**

Topic(s) contributed to:
Name: Lotte Kindt-Larsen

Function: Senior Researcher
Organization: National Institute of Aquatic Resources (DTU Aqua)
Postal Address: Kemitorvet, Building 202, 2800 Kgs. Lyngby
Telephone: +45 35 88 33 94
Email: lol@aqua.dtu.dk
Copy box if needed.

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.

Questions:

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

Method	Used	Percentage (% by monitoring method, of total bycaught animals, by gear type if applicable)
Dedicated observer schemes	☐	
Fisheries observes	☒	
Remote Electronic Monitoring	☒	9 % of the total number of fishing days.
Self-reporting by fishermen	☐	
Pathological investigation	☐	
Assessment at stranding site	☐	

Comments:

Under percentage it is unclear what the unit is, as effort can be measures in many ways, e.g. number of vessels, days at sea, or net-lenght and soak-time.

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

Overview of bycaught small cetaceans per region. Provide information where available.

Species	Number of bycaught animals observed	Year (incl. season if available)	Gear type	Area	Overall sampling effort	Monitoring method used

HP Harbour porpoise	**34**	**2025**	**GNS**	**27.3**	**430 fishing days, 8 vessels**	**EM**
HP Harbour porpoise	**NA**	**2025**	**GNS**	**27.4**	**74 fishing days, 1 vessel**	**EM**

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

Overview of bycaught small cetaceans per region. Provide information where available.

This is not reported.

Species	Number of bycaught animals observed	Year (incl. season if available)	Gear type	Area	Overall sampling effort	Monitoring method used
Choose an item.				Choose an item.		
Choose an item.				Choose an item.		

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

☒ **No.**

☐ **Yes.** Please provide details:

(Mass bycatch incidents, unusual species bycatch etc.)

1.5. Are there any mitigation measures in place?

☐ **No.**

☒ **Yes.** Please provide details: What mitigation measures (including alternative gear) are being used and where? (Acoustic deterrent devices, seasonal closures, gear modifications etc.)

Mitigation approach	Region	Year implemented	Has the mitigation measure been effective?
Pingers	OII Northern North Sea	2005	☐ No ☒ Yes. Comments:
pingers	OII Southern North Sea	2005	☐ No ☒ Yes. Comments:
Pingers	OII Skagerrak	2005	☐ No ☒ Yes. Comments:
Pingers	H Kattegat	2005	☐ No ☒ Yes. Comments:
Low gillnets	H Belt Sea	2024	☐ No ☐ Yes. Comments: still under analysis
Low gillnets	H The Sound	2024	☐ No ☐ Yes. Comments: still under analysis

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

☐ **No.**

☐ **Unknown/not applicable.** Comments:

☒ **Yes.** Please provide details:

Decrease in overall gillnet effort

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

Projects:

CIBBRINA, Homepage - CIBBRiNA
ECOCATCH, Welcome to ECO-CATCH
MITIBYC, Mitigation and bycatch of protected species (113605) - Welcome to DTU Research Database
NET-POT, Development of gillnet fisheries and shore crab pots to build new sustainable fisheries (114523) - Welcome to DTU Research Database

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)
HP Harbour porpoise	☐	☒	☐	☐	**Due to reduction in gillnet effort**
Choose an item.	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Choose an item.	☐	☐	☐	☐	

☐ **Not applicable.** Comments:

A. Fisheries-related Threats

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.

Questions:

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

☐ **No.**
☒ **Yes.**

Please provide details.

There are two herring stocks relevant to Danish waters: The North Sea autumn spawning herring and the Western Baltic spring-spawning herring. The first is a large population and of relatively little concern according to ICES while the latter were assessed in 2025 to be depleted and at risk. Furthermore, recruitment has been very low since 2006 and even though fishing pressure has been very low in recent years, even lower than recommended levels, but despite this, the stock has

continued to decline. Scientists expect that even if fishing stopped completely, the population is unlikely to recover to safe levels anytime soon, because so few young fish are being produced (ICES 2026).
ICES (2026). Report of the Herring Assessment Working Group for the Area South of 62ºN (HAWG). ICES Scientific Reports. Report. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.31424315.v2
The spring spawning herring stock was assessed for ICES sub-divisions 20-24 were assessed visually here: https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=21294

2.2. Where are these depletions in national waters occurring?
Sub-areas/regions as defined by ICES/OSPAR & HELCOM.

Area	Region
The stocks are NOT nationally assessed so please refer to the ICES refs above instead.	

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
TAC regulation	Annual	Fishing mortality

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)?

☐ **No.**
☒ **Yes.**

Please provide details.

Only indirectly since the Belt Sea porpoises population is declining and prey depletion is assumed to be one of the major drivers.

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

☐ **No.**
☒ **Yes.**

Please provide details.

Yes, Aarhus University are conducting a pilot study on drone measurements of porpoises at se.
Contact person: Frederik Christiansen: f.christiansen@ecos.au.dk

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

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
HP Harbour porpoise	☒	☐	☐	☐	The relevant prey stocks are still declining, and the marine environment is in a poor status (expert opinion)
Choose an item.	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Choose an item.	☐	☐	☐	☐	

☐ **Not applicable.** Comments:

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.

Questions:

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

☐ **No.** Go to **Question 9.3.**

☒ **Yes.** Provide information in the table below:

We are monitoring the content of waste in dead fulmars.
We are also monitoring waste on beaches.

9.2. Are these data publicly available?

☐ **No.**

☒ **Yes.** Please provide web link:

Monitoring of waste in general: Contact person: Jakob Strand, Aarhus University, jak@ecos.au.dk

9.3. What species of small cetaceans were found to have been impacted by marine debris?

Denmark did not make any recent studies of this.

Species	# of impacted individuals	Year	Region	Description of the impact
Choose an item.		dd/mm/yy	Choose an item.	
Choose an item.		dd/mm/yy	Choose an item.	
Choose an item.		dd/mm/yy	Choose an item.	

9.4. Are there any mitigation measures in place?

☐ **No.**

☒ **Yes.** Provide information in the table below.

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.

Measure:	General waste management incl. no open landfills etc. And so called ghost nets are being collated in certain areas.	
Date of implementation:	1990s	**Region:** Choose an item.
Has the measure been effective?	☐ **No.** ☒ **Yes.** Comments: But unknown with regard to impact on harbour porpoises	
Other information:		

Copy table if needed.

Measure:	No special fee system in harbours	
Date of implementation:	2015	**Region:** Choose an item.
Has the measure been effective?	☐ **No.** ☒ **Yes.** Comments:	
Other information:	All waste from ships can be delivered at harbours without any additional costs	

9.5. How is marine debris managed? (incl. relevant regulations / guidelines and the year of implementation, current and planned)

Further, The Danish Fisheries Agency received a report from the National Institute of Aquatic Resources in March 2022 (Ghost Nets in Danish Waters, https://fiskeristyrelsen.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Fiskeristyrelsen/Tilskud/Hav-_og_fiskeriudviklingsprogrammet/Eksempler_paa_Miljoe_og_Innovationsprojekter_medfinansieret_fra_Den_Europaeiske_Hav_og_Fiskerifond/Ghost_nets_in_Danish_waters_final_report_DTU_Aqua_Report_no._394-2021.pdf)

Finally, new measures are planned for recreational fishermen, where they will be required to report lost fishing gear.

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

In this paper Monitoring of marine litter performed in Europe within MSFD was reviewed. Marine litter monitoring gaps and critical points were identified and Recommendations for improving future monitoring of marine litter within MSFD:

Galgani, F., Lusher, A. L., Strand, J., Haarr, M. L., Vinci, M., Molina Jack, E., Kagi, R., Aliani, S., Herzke, D., Nikiforov, V., Primpke, S., Schmidt, N., Fabres, J., De Witte, B., Solbakken, V. S., & van Bavel, B. (2024). Revisiting the strategy for marine litter monitoring within the european marine strategy framework directive (MSFD). Ocean and Coastal Management, 255, Artikel 107254. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2024.107254

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

Status relative to previous years. To be done per species where applicable.

Species	Increasing	Decreasing	Staying the same	Unknown	Nature of the evidence
HP Harbour porpoise	☐	☐	☐	☒	
Choose an item.	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Choose an item.	☐	☐	☐	☐	

☐ **Not applicable.** Comments:

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.

Questions:

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

☐ **No.**

☒ **Yes.** Provide information in the table below.

Add rows if necessary. Attach maps separately, clearly marking which survey they apply to. Note: Information relevant to SCANS-IV is to be provided in Question 1.2.

Location	Project	Time period	Method	Species	Animal abundance (including confidence limits or CV)	Link to project/ report/ publication
Southern North Sea	National monitoring	July 2025	Aerial line transect survey	HP Harbour porpoise	Not ready yet	Will be published in the annual report from Aarhus University called "Marine områder 2025".
Skagerrak	National monitoring	July 2025	Aerial line transect survey	HP Harbour porpoise	Not ready yet	Will be published in the annual report from Aarhus University called "Marine områder 2025".
Inner Danish waters	National monitoring	2025	Passive acoustic monitoring	HP Harbour porpoise	Not ready yet	Will be published in the annual report from Aarhus University called "Marine områder 2025".

Relevant information on distribution during the reporting period:

Several windfarm assessment projects in the North sea including aerial surveys of cetaceans has been conducted:

Sveegaard, S., Nabe-Nielsen, J., Cordier, A. J. R., van Beest, F., Galatius, A., Tougaard, J., Griffiths, E. T., Marcolin, C., Tyarks, S. C., Nielsen, M. L. K., Jacobs, E. R., Hansen, R. G., Ladegaard, M., Aarup Mikaelsen, M., Nørholm, S. M., & A. Kyhn, L. (2025). *Marine Mammal surveys – pre-investigations for offshore wind farms in the area North Sea I.* https://dce.au.dk/fileadmin/dce.au.dk/Udgivelser/Eksterne_udgivelser/2025/NSI_WPD_MARINEMAMMALS_TR_Y2_2025_102225-4.pdf

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

Sveegaard, S., & Nabe-Nielsen, J. (2026). *Harbour porpoise distribution in the Western Baltic: A comparison of existing models*. Aarhus University, DCE - Danish Centre for Environment and Energy. Fagligt notat fra DCE – Nationalt Center for Miljø og Energi (2020-...) Bind 2026 Nr. 02 https://dce.au.dk/fileadmin/dce.au.dk/Udgivelser/Notater_2026/N2026_02.pdf

Jakobsen, F., Sveegaard, S., Hubel, M. S., Kaarsted, T., Thybo, M., & Wahlberg, M. (2025). Finescale distribution and seasonality of harbour porpoises (Phocoena phocoena) investigated with citizen science. *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*, *26*, 77-86. https://doi.org/10.47536/jcrm.v26i1.959

van Beest, F., Carstensen, J., Dietz, R., Nabe-Nielsen, J., Sveegaard, S., & Teilmann, J. (2025). Shifts in habitat suitability for harbour porpoises leads to reduced importance of marine protected areas. *Biological Conservation, 302*, Artikel 111009. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2025.111009

Gilles, A., Pigeault, R., Benoit, V., Ramirez-Martinez, N., & Sveegaard, S. (2025). *Technical brief - Update of Harbour Porpoise Summer distribution in the Belt Sea*. https://dce.au.dk/fileadmin/dce.au.dk/Udgivelser/Eksterne_udgivelser/2025/ITAW_2025_DK_Belt_Sea_Modelling_report_20251202.pdf

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.

Species	Increasing	Decreasing	Staying the same	Unknown	Nature of the evidence
HP Harbour porpoise	☐	☒	☐	☐	**for the Belt Sea population**
HP Harbour porpoise	☐	☐	☒	☐	**For the North Sea population**
Choose an item.	☐	☐	☐	☐	

☐ **Not applicable.** Comments:

A. Biological Information (per species)

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 parameter, please identify the species and provide web links and details where applicable.

Age of sexual and physical maturity	☒ **No** ☐ **Yes** Please describe: Species: HP Harbour porpoise
Inter-birth intervals	☒ **No** ☐ **Yes** Please describe: Species: HP Harbour porpoise
Calf and adult mortality rates	☒ **No** ☐ **Yes** Please describe: Species: HP Harbour porpoise
Potential reproductive span/capacity	☒ **No** ☐ **Yes** Please describe: Species: HP Harbour porpoise
Longevity	☐ **No** ☒ **Yes** Please describe: The oldest known harbour poise, Freja, living at the Fjord and Belt Center in Kerteminde, Denmark turned 31 years in 2026. Species: HP Harbour porpoise
Diet	☒ **No** ☐ **Yes** Please describe: Species: Choose an item.
Age and sex structure	☒ **No** ☐ **Yes** Please describe: Species: Choose an item.
Other relevant factors	☐ **No** ☐ **Yes** Please describe: Species: Choose an item.

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.

Questions:

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?

☐ **No.**

☒ **Yes.** Please provide an overview in the table below.

Add rows if necessary.

Within MPAs	**Approach:** ☒ Line transect surveys ☐ Photo-ID ☐ Strandings ☒ Passive Acoustic Monitoring ☐ Other, please specify:
	Target Species: (Copy drop-down to add more species) HP Harbour porpoise
	Institution(s): Aarhus University performs the surveys under the national monitoring scheme funded by the Danish Environmental Protection Agency.
Wider Seas	**Approach:** ☒ Line transect surveys ☐ Photo-ID ☐ Strandings ☐ Passive Acoustic Monitoring ☐ Other, please specify:
	Target Species: durin the SCANS surveys HP Harbour porpoise
	Institution(s): Aarhus University performs the surveys under the national monitoring scheme funded by the Danish Environmental Protection Agency.

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

Denmark conducts annual or bi-annual aerial surveys in the Southern North Sea, Skagerrak, Kattegat and the Belt Sea.

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

Denmark monitors 16 SACs in Skagerrak and the Belt Sea using five PAM stations deployed for 1 year every 6th year.

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

☒ **No.**

☐ **Yes.** Provide information below.

Please provide the collaborators and links per programme.

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

Provide web links if available.

Described above.

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

Signe Sveegaard, Kylie Owen, Line Anker Kyhn, Anders Galatius, Poul Boel Jørgensen, Lonnie Mikkelsen, Jonas Teilmann, Floris M. van Beest. In press. Passive acoustic monitoring - optimising the power to detect temporal changes in relative density of a cetacean population under pressure. MEPS-202505034

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.

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.

Questions:

1.1. Is there a national stranding network in place?

☐ **No.** Go to **Question 1.4.**

☒ **Yes.**

Please provide details:

The annual reporting of strandings are reported here https://fimus.dk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Beredskabsrapport-2024-final.pdf
Latest published report is from 2024.

1.2. Does the national stranding network cover the whole, or part of the reporting country's coastline?

☒ **Whole coastline.**

☐ **Part of the coastline.**

Please provide details:

It cover the whole coast line but is limited to incidential reportings by private beach guests.

1.3. Are necropsies carried out to determine cause of death?

☐ **No.**

☒ **Yes.**

Please provide details:

Annually a number of harbour porpoises are necropsied. in 2024 it was 13.

1.4. Is there a database of strandings?

☐ **No.** Go to Question 1.6.

☒ **Yes.** Continue to Question 1.5.

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

☐ **No.**

☒ **Yes.**

Please provide details:

Please contact Museum Vest: Charlotte Bie Thøstersen, cbt@musvest.dk, 2964 1388

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.

Museum Vest: Charlotte Bie Thøstersen, cbt@musvest.dk, 2964 1388

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

☒ **No.**

☒ **Yes.**

Please provide details:

Some where and some were not.

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

☐ **No.**

☒ **Yes.**

How many strandings occurred? (Specify live and dead) in 2024,

_____

Please also provide more details in the table below.

Species	Region	Total animals stranded	Number of dead animals	Number of animals stranding alive	**Response to live stranding** (describe # of successful cases and methods used)
HP Harbour porpoise	Choose an item.	281	280	1	It was euthanized
Choose an item.	Choose an item.				
Choose an item.	Choose an item.				

1.9. Were any necropsies conducted during the reporting period?

☐ **No.**

☒ **Yes.**

Please provide information below:

13 porpoises. see the report above.

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 VII: Other Matters

A. Other information or comments important for the Agreement:

A new project has shown that USBL systems implemented on geophysical survey ships and large trawlers, can deter and exclude porpoises at up to 5.5 km distance. See: https://dce.au.dk/udgivelser/oevrige-dce-udgivelser/eksterne-udgivelser/2025

The extend and impact of this previously unknown threat is unknown and may have a large impact on harbour porpoises. This should be examined.

B. Difficulties in implementing the Agreement:

For the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise: Lack of knowledge on current abundance and distribution. This will hopefully change in a few years when SAMBAH-II and CUMBIAH progresses.

For the Belt Sea harbour porpoise: The population has severely declined since 2005 (2.7% per year, Owen et al. 2024) and several studies point to negative impacts on this population especially lack of food and too high bycatch levels. The low food availability is difficult to “fix” and it is a slow process. It is positive in this regard that the herring and cod fishery have been closed. Bycatch numbers are also declining because of the decrease in gillnet fishery, but so far, there are no other protection against bycatch for porpoises in Danish waters for the Belt Sea population.

C. Burning Issues:

It is great that both SAMBAH-II and CUMBIAH are now funded and begun. However, a more permanent solution for future funding of abundance estimates of the Baltic Prober population, should be examined. It is not sustainable that scientist from all around the Baltic should spend so much time trying to get funding from EU or other sources. For the SCANS surveys covering the neighbouring populations (Belt Sea and North Sea), the funding is now covered by national funding.

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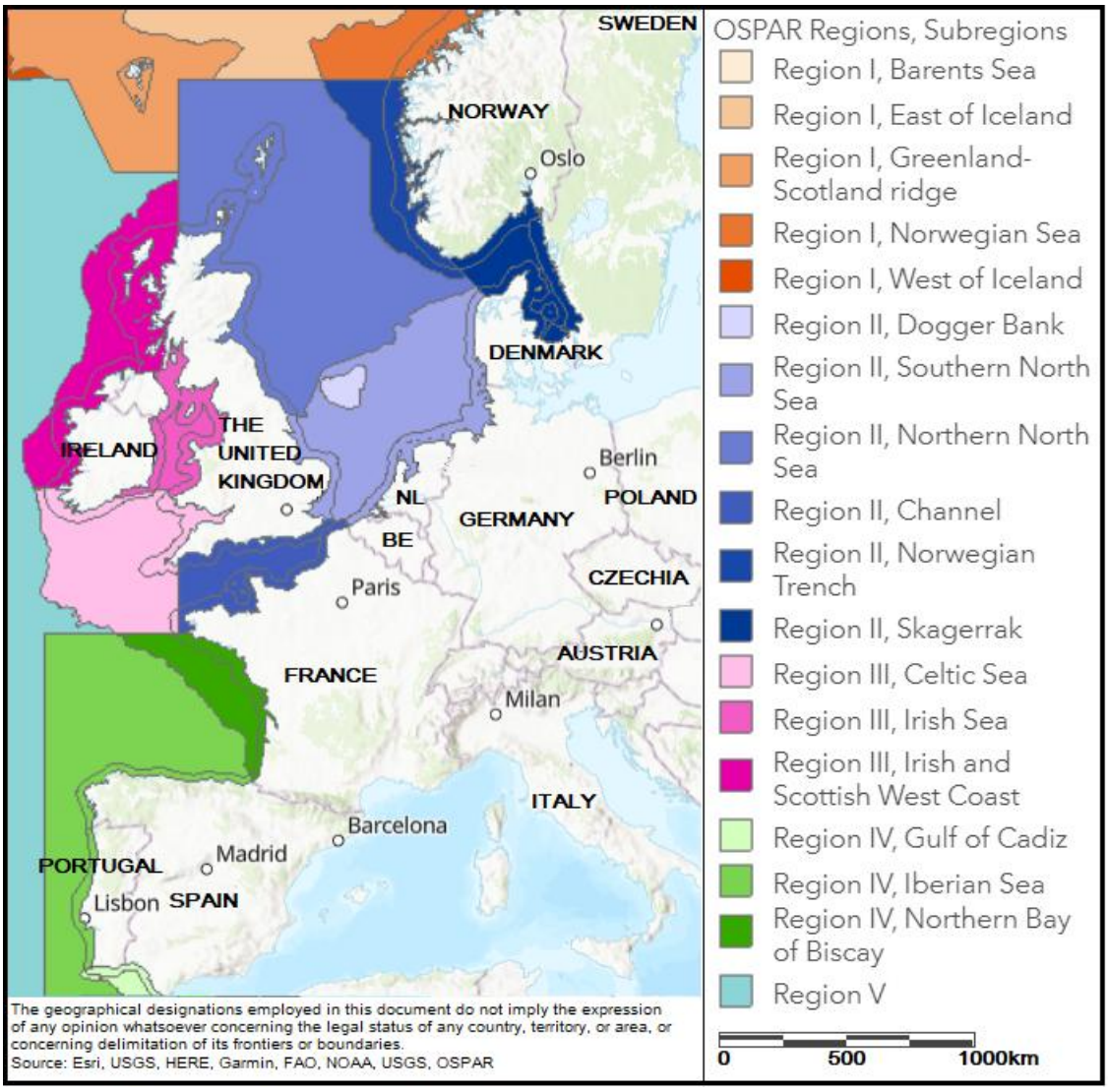
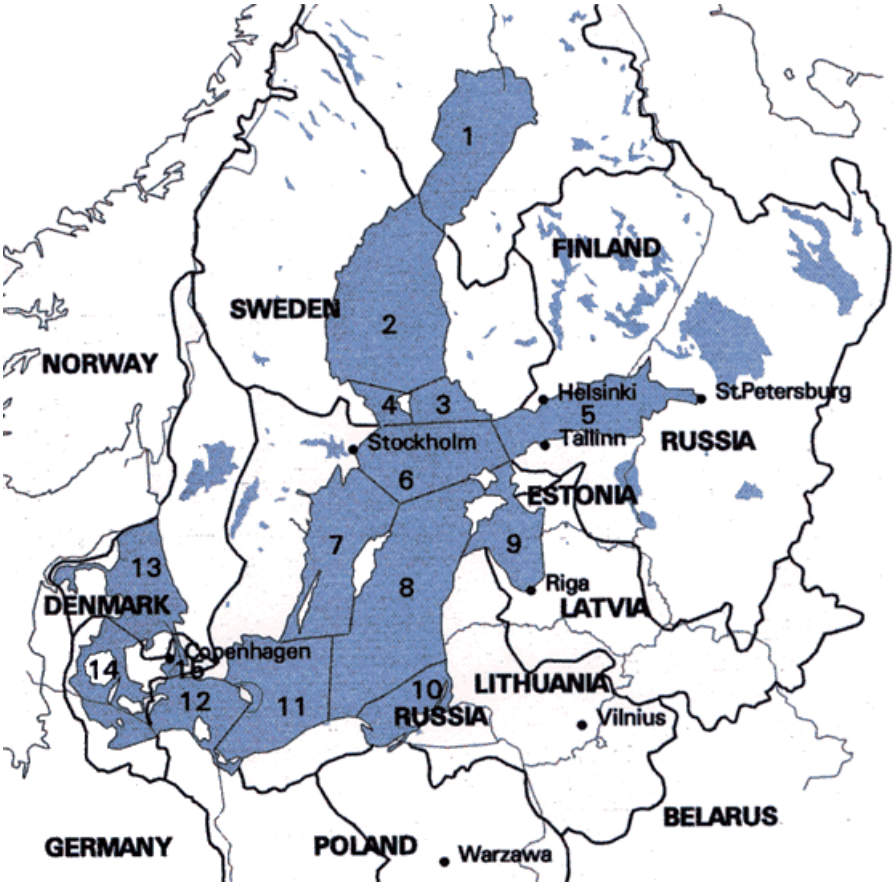
Annex A: Overview of the sub-regions as defined by OSPAR and HELCOM, and areas as defined by ICES.

Drop-down menu sub-regions OSPAR and HELCOM

Choose an item.

OSPAR Region I Arctic Waters ☐ Norwegian Sea **OSPAR Region II Greater North Sea** ☐ Dogger Bank ☐ Southern North Sea ☐ Northern North Sea ☐ Channel ☐ Norwegian Trench ☐ Skagerrak **OSPAR Region III Celtic Sea** ☐ Celtic Sea ☐ Irish Sea ☐ Irish & Scottish W. Coast	**OSPAR Region IV Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast** ☐ N. Bay of Biscay ☐ Iberian Sea ☐ Gulf of Cadiz **OSPAR Region V Wider Atlantic** ☐ **HELCOM** ☐ Bothnian Bay ☐ Bothnian Sea ☐ Archipelago Sea ☐ Åland Sea	**HELCOM cont.** ☐ Gulf of Finland ☐ Northern Baltic Proper ☐ Western Gotland Basin ☐ Eastern Gotland Basin ☐ Gulf of Riga ☐ Gdansk Basin ☐ Bornholm Basin ☐ Arkona Basin ☐ Kattegat ☐ Belt Sea ☐ The Sound



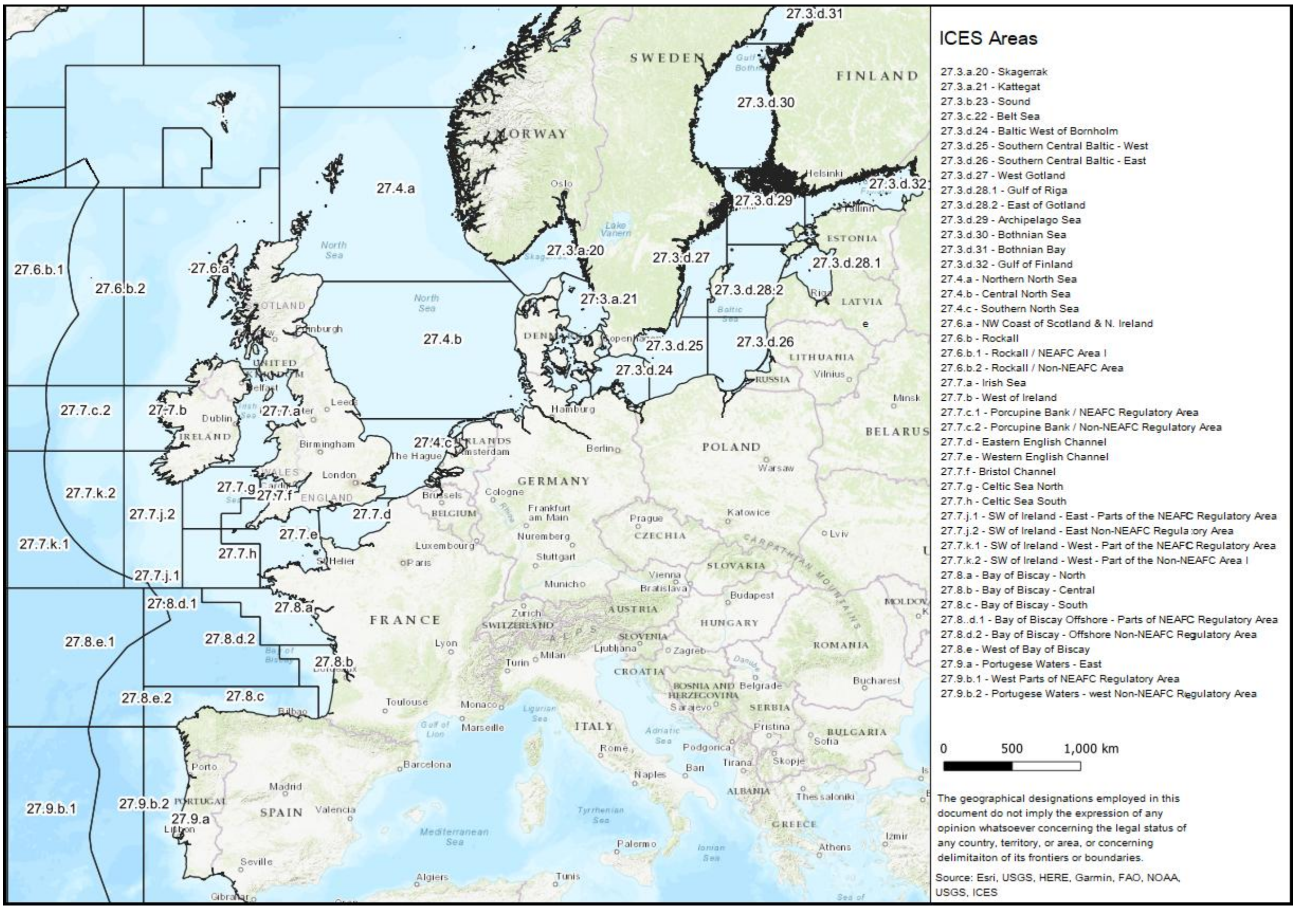


A map of the Baltic Sea drainage basins (catchment area), and marine subdivisions, including basins.
1. Bothnian Bay
2. Bothnian Sea
3. Archipelago Sea
4. Åland Sea
5. Gulf of Finland
6. Northern Baltic Proper
7. Western Gotland Basin
8. Eastern Gotland Basin
9. Gulf of Riga
10. Gdansk Basin
11. Bornholm Basin
12. Arkona Basin
13. Kattegat
14. Belt Sea
15. The Sound

Drop-down menu of ICES Areas

Choose an item.

Area	Area Description	Area	Area Description
27.3	Skagerrak, Kattegat, Sound, Belt and Baltic Seas	27.7.b	West of Ireland
27.3.a	Skagerrak and Kattegat	27.7.c	Porcupine Bank
27.3.a.20	Skagerrak	27.7.c.1	Porcupine Bank / NEAFC Reg. Area
27.3.a.21	Kattegat	27.7.c.2	Porcupine Bank / Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
27.3.b,c	Sound and Belt Sea	27.7.d	Eastern English Channel
27.3.b.23	Sound	27.7.e	Western English Channel
27.3.c.22	Belt Sea	27.7.f	Bristol Channel
27.3.d	Baltic Sea	27.7.g	Celtic North Sea
27.3.d.24	Baltic West of Bornholm	27.7.h	Celtic Sea South
27.3.d.25	Southern Central Baltic – West	27.7.j	SW of Ireland – East
27.3.d.26	Southern Central Baltic – East	27.7.j.1	SW of Ireland – East – Parts of the NEAFC Reg. Area
27.3.d.27	West of Gotland	27.7.j.2	SW of Ireland – East – Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
27.3.d.28.1	Gulf of Riga	27.7.k	SW of Ireland - West
27.3.d.28.2	East of Gotland	27.7.k.1	SW of Ireland – West – Part of the NEAFC Reg. Area
27.3.d.29	Archipelago Sea	27.7.k.2	SW of Ireland – West – Part of the Non-NEAFC Area I
27.3.d.30	Bothnian Sea	27.8	Bay of Biscay
27.3.d.31	Bothnian Bay	27.8.a	Bay of Biscay North
27.3.d.32	Bay of Finland	27.8.b	Bay of Biscay Central
27.4	North Sea	27.8.c	Bay of Biscay South
27.4.a	Northern North Sea	27.8.d	Bay of Biscay Offshore
27.4.b	Central North Sea	27.8.d.1	Bay of Biscay Offshore – Part of the NEAFC Reg. Area
27.4.c	Southern North Sea	27.8.d.2	Bay of Biscay Offshore – Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
27.6	Rockall, NW Coast of Scotland and N. Ireland	27.8.e	Wet of Bay of Biscay
27.6.a	NW Coast of Scotland and N. Ireland	27.9	Portuguese Waters
27.6.b	Rockall	27.9.a	Portuguese Waters – East
27.6.b.1	Rockall / NEAFC Reg. Area I	27.9.b	Portuguese Water - West
27.6.b.2	Rockall / Non-NEAFC Reg. Area	27.9.b.1	Portuguese waters – West Part of the 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	27.9.b.2	Portuguese waters – Non-NEAFC Reg. Area
27.7.a	Irish Sea		


ICES Areas
27.3.a.20 - Skagerrak
27.3.a.21 - Kattegat
27.3.b.23 - Sound
27.3.c.22 - Belt 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 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 - Gulf of Finland
27.4.a - Northern North Sea
27.4.b - Central North Sea
27.4.c - Southern North Sea
27.6.a - NW Coast of Scotland & N. Ireland
27.6.b - Rockall
27.6.b.1 - Rockall / NEAFC Area I
27.6.b.2 - Rockall / Non-NEAFC Area
27.7.a - Irish Sea
27.7.b - West of Ireland
27.7.c.1 - Porcupine Bank / NEAFC Regulatory Area
27.7.c.2 - Porcupine Bank / Non-NEAFC Regulatory Area
27.7.d - Eastern English Channel
27.7.e - Western English Channel
27.7.f - Bristol Channel
27.7.g - Celtic Sea North
27.7.h - Celtic Sea South
27.7.j.1 - SW of Ireland - East - Parts of the NEAFC Regulatory Area
27.7.j.2 - SW of Ireland - East Non-NEAFC Regulatory Area
27.7.k.1 - SW of Ireland - West - Part of the NEAFC Regulatory Area
27.7.k.2 - SW of Ireland - West - Part of the Non-NEAFC Area I
27.8.a - Bay of Biscay - North
27.8.b - Bay of Biscay - Central
27.8.c - Bay of Biscay - South
27.8..d.1 - Bay of Biscay Offshore - Parts of NEAFC Regulatory Area
27.8.d.2 - Bay of Biscay - Offshore Non-NEAFC Regulatory Area
27.8.e - West of Bay of Biscay
27.9.a - Portugese Waters - East
27.9.b.1 - West Parts of NEAFC Regulatory Area
27.9.b.2 - Portugese Waters - west Non-NEAFC Regulatory Area
0 500 1,000 km
The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning delimitaiton of its frontiers or boundaries.
Source: Esri, USGS, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, ICES
SWEDEN
FINLAND
NORWAY
POLAND
GERMANY
FRANCE
IRELAND
SPAIN
ITALY
BELARUS
27.3.d.31
27.3.d.30
27.3.d.32
27.3.d.29
27.3.d.28.1
27.3.d.28.2
27.3.d.27
27.3.a.20
27.3.a.21
27.3.d.25
27.3.d.26
27.3.d.24
27.4.a
27.4.b
27.4.c
27.6.b.1
27.6.b.2
27.6.a
27.7.c.2
27.7.b
27.7.a
27.7.k.2
27.7.g
27.7.f
27.7.j.2
27.7.d
27.7.k.1
27.7.e
27.7.h
27.7.j.1
27.8.d.1
27.8.a
27.8.e.1
27.8.d.2
27.8.b
27.8.e.2
27.8.c
27.9.b.1
27.9.b.2
27.9.a

Annex B: Species covered by ASCOBANS

Code	Common name	Scientific name
AWSD	**Atlantic white-sided dolphin**	*Leucopleurus acutus*
BBW	**Blainville's beaked whale**	*Mesoplodon densirostris*
BD	**Bottlenose dolphin**	*Tursiops truncatus*
CBW	**Cuvier's beaked whale**	*Ziphius cavirostris*
CD	**Short-beaked Common Dolphin**	*Delphinus delphis*
FKW	**False killer whale**	*Pseudorca crassidens*
GBW	**Gervais' beaked whale**	*Mesoplodon europaeus*
HP	**Harbour Porpoise**	*Phocoena*
KW	**Killer Whale**	*Orcinus orca*
LFPW	**Long-finned pilot whale**	*Globicephala melas*
NBW	**Northern bottlenose whale**	*Hyperoodon ampullatus*
PKW	**Pygmy killer whale**	*Feresa attenuata*
PSW	**Pygmy sperm whale**	*Kogia breviceps*
RD	**Risso's dolphin**	*Grampus griseus*
RTD	**Rough-toothed dolphin**	*Steno bredanensis*
SBW	**Sowerby's beaked whale**	*Mesoplodon bidens*
SD	**Striped dolphin**	*Stenella coeruleoalba*
SFPW	**Short-finned pilot whale**	*Globicephala macrorhynchus*
TBW	**True's beaked whale**	*Mesoplodon mirus*
WBD	**White-beaked dolphin**	*Lagenorhyncus albirostris*

Drop down menu small cetacean species:

Choose an item.