UN environment programme

ASCOBANS

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

ASCOBANS/AC30/NR.7
02 June 2026

30th MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Bonn, Germany, 1-3 September 2026
Agenda Item 2

2025 NATIONAL REPORT: THE NETHERLANDS

2025 ASCOBANS National Report

ASCOBANS

Online Reporting System

Party: Netherlands

Submitted Date: 2026-06-01

2025 ASCOBANS National Report

Creation Date: 2026-01

Deadline: 2026-05-31

Language: English

Submitted Date: 2026-06-01

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)

- Several good results from CIBBRiNA, e.g. the stakeholder engagement best practice guidance, the SCOTI and BEAM work with regards to bycatch assessment, the review of mitigation measures and lots of trials being conducted in the case studies.
- Tagging pilot successfully tagged 5 porpoises until 2026.
- SCANS winter survey successfully conducted winter 2024, report published

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)*

- Bycatch monitoring and mitigation remains a challenge, especially because many Dutch vessels are shorter than 12 m and therefore don't have to adhere to many of the legislations.
- Concerning strandings, there has been a change of database, which includes some transfer-hiccups and may lead to a trend break.
- Structural funding for data collection of bycatch

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)

- New study into ETP bycatch in gillnet fisheries.
- SCANS V
- Final results and evaluation of tagging pilot project, potential follow-up

Section I: General Information

A. Country Information

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

The Netherlands

2. Details of the Report Compiler

Details of the report compiler

Name	Verna de Groes
Function	Policy Officer
Organization	Department of Nature and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security & Nature
Postal address	Bezuidenhoutseweg 73, 2594 AC Den Haag, The Netherlands
Telephone	+31(0)629655178
Email	v.degroes@minlnv.nl

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.

Topic(s) contributed to: All
Name: Jip Vrooman
Function: Marine mammal researcher
Organization: Wageningen Marine Research
Postal Address: Haringkade 1, 1976 CP, IJmuiden
Telephone: +31(0)6 39 18 70 43
Email: jip.vrooman@wur.nl
Topic(s) contributed to: all
Name: Steve Geelhoed
Function: Marine mammal and seabird researcher
Organization: Wageningen Marine Research
Postal Address: Ankerpark 27, 1781AG, Den Helder, The Netherlands

Telephone: + 31(0)612394531
Email: steve.geelhoed@wur.nl
Topic(s) contributed to: all
Name: Janneke Ransijn
Function: Marine mammal researcher and quantitative ecologist
Organization: Wageningen Marine Research
Postal Address: Ankerpark 27, 1781AG, Den Helder, The Netherlands
Telephone: +31(0)629934336
Email: janneke.ransijn@wur.nl
Topic(s) contributed to: Strandings, bycatch, resource depletion, marine debris, life history
Name: Lonneke IJsseldijk
Function: Assistant Professor
Organization: Division of Pathology, Department of Biomolecular Health Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University
Postal Address: Yalelaan 1, NL-3584 CL Utrecht
Telephone: T +31 30 253 5312, M +31 6 244 556 98
Email: L.L.IJsseldijk@uu.nl
Topic(s) contributed to:
Name: Linde van Schalkwijk
Function: Researcher
Organization: Division of Pathology, Department of Biomolecular Health Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University
Postal Address: Yalelaan 1, NL-3584 CL Utrecht
Telephone: T +31 30 253 5312
Email: l.vanschalkwijk@uu.nl>
Topic(s) contributed to: Marine Debris
Name: Mardik Leopold
Function: Marine mammal and seabird researcher
Organization: Wageningen Marine Research
Postal Address: Ankerpark 27, 1781AG, Den Helder, The Netherlands
Telephone: 0317-487097
Email: mardik.leopold@wur.nl

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	Yes	
Fisheries observes	Yes	
Remote Electronic Monitoring		
Self-reporting by fishermen	Yes	
Pathological investigation	Yes	
Assessment at stranding site		

Comments:

Commercial fisheries:

Requirements for monitoring and mitigation of the regulations remain of limited relevance for the Dutch fleet, especially for the bottom-set gillnets, as the majority of these fishing vessels are smaller than 12 meters.

The dedicated observer schemes are not designed to provide bycatch estimates for small cetaceans in Dutch waters, but they are designed to record bycatch events for a sample of the Dutch fishery. Fisheries observers that are on board will also register any bycatch of cetaceans if noted. Self-reporting by fishermen is occurring, however it is difficult to know to what degree.

Number of NLD dedicated observer trips executed under the EU Data Collection Framework (DCF) in 2025:

- 14 observer trips onboard NLD flagged active demersal trawlers
- 10 observer trips onboard NLD flagged passive demersal vessels

- 13 observer trips onboard NLD flagged pelagic freezer trawlers

Total effort is currently not quantified for 2025. However, to put fisheries observer trips into perspective we present the 2024 numbers as reported to ICES WGBYC, including fleet and sampling effort (expressed in Days At Sea (D.A.S.) and total number of trips). See attached table. It must be noted that due to the structure of the WGBYC data call, the “Nr of trips” are counted twice when covering multiple ICES areas. Therefore the “Nr of trips sampling” for pelagic in 2024 seem higher than in 2025, but in reality this is not the case.

Recreational fisheries:

For the recreational gillnet fisheries, a biennial logbook survey (15–30 voluntary participants) requests full catch records, including bycatch of marine mammals and birds. The last round was 2022-2023. Bycatch of cetaceans has never been reported in these surveys, though the small sample size and voluntary participation makes it uncertain whether harbour porpoise bycatch truly never occurs. An attempt will be made to increase the number of survey participants by offering compensation. Additionally, a communication strategy will be developed together with Wageningen Marine Research to re-emphasize to fishermen the necessity of reporting bycatch.

Strandings records:

Pathological examinations are conducted annually on approximately 50 stranded harbour porpoises, and at times other small cetaceans. (Probable/likely) bycatch is among the causes of death recorded, see Section IV, “Use of Strandings Records.” (These strandings records should, however, not be considered fully representative of the entire harbour porpoise population, as only a fraction of dead animals wash ashore and are recovered, introducing potential biases in spatial distribution, detection rates, and demographic composition).

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
- [x] 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
- [ ] 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
- [x] 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

Please provide details:

(Mass bycatch incidents, unusual species bycatch etc.)

One harbour porpoise was bycaught during a harbour porpoise tagging field trial. More information on this incident can be found here: https://research.wur.nl/en/publications/evaluation-report-harbour-porpoise-bycatch-incident-march-12th-20/

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

997/Sec-II_E_16.2_0_NL(1).xlsx

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

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

New project (starting in 2026) to improve the monitoring of ETP bycatch, including the further use of remote electronic monitoring.

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	Monitoring effort is low.

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:

Despite further signs of recovery in some fish stocks, the latest OSPAR assessment indicates that None of the fish species groups (coastal, demersal or pelagic fish) in the Greater North Sea was found to be in good environmental status (GES) (GES is considered achieved for a species group if at least 80% of species/stocks within this group reached a certain threshold). Therefore, the overall population status of marine fish in the Greater North Sea has not reached good environmental status, with a medium level of confidence. The highest proportion of failed thresholds was for coastal fish species, of which none of the commercially exploited stocks achieved the indicator threshold in the Greater North Sea.

Information on individual prey species stock assessments that are potentially directly relevant as targeted prey by harbour porpoises are listed below, updated to reflect the most recent ICES advice (2024/2025):

- **Whiting** For the North Sea and eastern English Channel stock (whg.27.47d), fishing pressure is below the MSY threshold and spawning stock biomass remains above critical reference levels, indicating the stock is in good status (achieved). Status for whg.27.7b-ce-k (failed) and whg.27.3a (unknown) remain unchanged from previous assessments.
- **Atlantic cod** North Sea cod (cod.27.47d20) is now in such a poor condition that ICES has recommended zero commercial catch, with stocks assessed as critically depleted (failed).
- **Sandeel** The picture remains mixed. For SA3r and SA4, ICES advice is for zero catch in 2025, reflecting continued low stock status (failed). Sandeel Area 5r (san.sa.5r) has seen consistent zero-catch advice since 2011 due to critically low stock densities and no evidence of recovery

(failed/unknown). SA1r status should be checked against the latest ICES 2025 advice, as Area 1r remains a more productive component of the stock structure relative to Areas 3r and 4. San.sa.6 and san.sa.7r remain of unknown or data-limited status.

- **Atlantic herring** North Sea autumn-spawning herring (her.27.3a47d) has fishing pressure below F~MSY~ and SSB estimated at 1.52 million tonnes, though ICES notes the stock remains in a low productivity phase (achieved).
- **European sprat** An analytical assessment was performed for the combined North Sea and Division 3.a sprat (spr.27.3a4), with fishing pressure below F~MSY~ (achieved). For English Channel sprat (spr.27.7de), the stock size is above MSY B~trigger~ and fishing pressure is below the F~MSY~ proxy (achieved).

References:

- OSPAR, 2023. Fish Thematic Assessment. In: OSPAR, 2023: Quality Status Report 2023. OSPAR Commission, London. Available at: https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/quality-status-reports/qsr-2023/thematic-assessments/fish/
- ICES, 2025. Herring Assessment Working Group for the Area South of 62°N (HAWG). ICES Scientific Reports. Available at: https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Herring_Assessment_Working_Group_for_the_Area_South_of_62_N_HAWG_/28389008
- ICES, 2025. Sandeel (*Ammodytes*) advice. ICES Advisory Committee, 2025.
- ICES, 2025. Working Group on the Assessment of Demersal Stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak (WGNSSK). ICES Scientific Reports.

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
- [x] OII Southern North Sea
- [x] 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
- [x] 27.4 North Sea
- [x] 27.4.a Northern North Sea
- [x] 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
Dutch EEZ seabed protection (no bottom-impacting fisheries) increased from 0.3% to 7,2% - expected to further increase to 13,8% at the end of 2026.	Implemented 2022 - 2026	Habitats Directive/Natura 2000 compliance and MSFD obligations
Dutch Dogger Bank Natura 2000 area: bottom trawling now requires individual permits and environmental assessment; blanket exemption ruled unlawful	Court ruling May 2026; practical implementation pending	EU Habitats Directive / Natura 2000; legal challenge by Doggerland Foundation, ARK Rewilding, ClientEarth and Blue Marine Foundation

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

In 2025, an MSc research project led by Utrecht University was completed on body condition, exemplified as Body Mass Index, of harbour porpoises from the North Sea, with data from 1700 stranded or bycaught harbour porpoises from five countries around the North Sea (UK, FR, BE, NL, DK) between 1990 and 2023. Variation in body condition was examined across regions, seasons, age classes, sexes, and mortality categories. All regions experienced seasonal variation in body condition. Juvenile harbour porpoises had the lowest BMI in summer, especially in the southern regions. Adults showed higher regional variability, with the lowest BMI occurring from late summer to early autumn. BMI also differed across mortality categories: individuals classified as 'acute' had significantly higher BMI than those in the 'non-acute' and 'other' categories. For adults, BMI varied by sex, with females in mortality categories 'non-acute' and 'other' showing lower values than males. These results provide reference values for harbour porpoise body condition in the North Sea, indicating spatiotemporal heterogeneity in body condition. A manuscript is currently in review at a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

In 2025, Utrecht University started a 4-year project (including a PhD which runs from 2025-2029) to investigate the links between body condition, reproduction, and health of harbour porpoises from the southern part of the North Sea. This project is funded by Ecowende, with additional financial contributions from Wozep and MONS. As part of that project, an international workshop was organised in Utrecht in November 2025 with 30 invited experts on marine mammal ecology, strandings and bioenergetics. The aim of the workshop was to discuss and improve how data from post-mortem studied harbour porpoises can be integrated into population models assessing the consequences of disturbance, specifically on body condition and reproduction.

In 2025, Utrecht University contributed to a chapter for OceanCare, lead by Dr Graham Pierce, on how marine mammal welfare can be impacted by prey depletion. In this chapter, the physical, physiological and welfare implications of starvation in marine mammals, in the context of the Five Domains Model, as well as evidence that starvation (and by implication, prey depletion) is or could be an issue for marine mammals, are considered. The report is expected to be released mid-2026.

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.)

- **OSPAR Litter Monitoring Programme of beach litter**

Data on the amount of litter on a given stretch of coastline is recorded at item level. Items to be recorded are predefined by the Guideline for Monitoring Marine Litter on the Beaches in the OSPAR Maritime Area (OSPAR Agreement 2010-02). Along the North Sea shore, this research is carried out by the North Sea Foundation (https://www.noordzee.nl/over-ons/publicaties-stichting-de-noordzee/). In the Wadden Sea, it's carried out by Waardenburg Ecology in collaboration with the WaddenUnit (local enforcement authority) (Bravo Rebolledo, E.L., Haringa, J. & Dijkstra A.R. 2026. Zwerfafvalmonitoring Waddenzee 2025. Rapport 26-116. Waardenburg Ecology, Culemborg.)

- **OSPAR Plastic particles in Fulmar stomachs in the North Sea**

Two types of plastic categories are distinguished in the OSPAR Common Indicator. Industrial plastic pellets are separated from consumer debris such as sheets, foams, threadlike materials, and hard fragments. For each of these categories the number of particles and mass (in grams and to the fourth decimal place) is recorded. The final assessment is based only on the total weight of plastics in stomachs, but industrial and consumer waste plastics have different sources and as such provide very useful information for interpreting the monitoring data. https://research.wur.nl/en/publications/fulmar-litter-monitoring-in-the-netherlands-update-2023/

- **Dutch seafloor litter monitoring in the North Sea**

This is a monitoring programme developed to evaluate the state of marine waters (Good Environmental Status) within the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) for the Marine Litter descriptor (D10). The Dutch monitoring program for this descriptor includes the collection of data on the presence, abundance and distribution of macro litter on the seafloor. According to the Dutch program, the data on seafloor litter must be collected during statutory task fish surveys using a standardised GOV (Grand Ouverture Verticale) fishing net as part of the International Bottom Trawl Survey (IBTS), which is carried out yearly in the North Sea. The Dutch seafloor litter monitoring results are uploaded to the ICES DATRAS database, and are used in OSPAR assessments of seafloor litter in the North Sea (Volwater and van Hal, 2025: https://open.rijkswaterstaat.nl/publish/pages/218121/bm_25-23_monitoring_of_seafloor_litter_on_the_dutch_continental_shelf.pdf).

- **Monitoring of macro- or mesoplastic ingestion**

During necropsies, presence or absence of macro- or mesoplastic in stomachs of necropsied cetaceans are visually monitored by Utrecht University. In 2025, in none of the visually inspected stomachs during necropsies (n=?), marine debris was detected. In case the stomachs of necropsied animals contain macro- or mesoplastics, these are sampled and saved at WMR, but not analysed (yet). In 2025, no macro- or mesoplastics where observed in the 54 harbour porpose stomachs that were studied. The stomachs of 4 common dolphins have been inspected, where one showed a "small paraffin-like chunk". In the stomachs of 1 bottle nose dolphins, 2 Sowerby's beaked whales, 1 white-beaked whale and 1 minke whale no macro- or mesoplastics were observerd.

- **Monitoring of causes of death, including marine debris entanglement**

In 2025, none of the necropsied harbour porpoises presented signs of (chronic) debris entanglement.

9.2. Are these data publicly available?

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes (please provide web link): https://www.noordzee.nl/over-ons/publicaties-stichting-de-noordzee/ https://open.rijkswaterstaat.nl/publish/pages/218121/bm_25-23_monitoring_of_seafloor_litter_on_the_dutch_continental_shelf.pdf https://research.wur.nl/en/publications/fulmar-litter-monitoring-in-the-netherlands-update-2023/ https://www.uu.nl/en/research/strandings-investigation https://waddenzee.nl/projecten/plasticvrije-wadden/monitoring/

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.

See above: none of the 54 in 2025 necropsied harbour porpoise showed signs of macro-or mesoplastic ingestion or entanglement. 4 common dolphins have been inspected, where one showed a "small paraffin-like chunk". In the stomachs of 1 bottle nose dolphins, 2 Sowerby's beaked whales, 1 white-beaked whale and 1 minke whale no macro- or mesoplastics were observerd.

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.

The MSFD part III ('Measures', in Dutch) contains existing and additional measures for management of D10, marine debris, for current planning period (2022–2027). https://noordzeeloket.nl/publish/pages/198511/partieel-herziene-ms3-programma-van-maatregelen-bijlage-bij-partieel-herziene-programma-2027-pdf.pdf

To what extent these measures are successfully implemented and have effect is unknown.

9.5. How is marine debris managed?

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

While there are no specific measures to mitigate marine debris as it relates to small cetaceans, a reduction in plastic pollution is part of the OSPAR Regional Action Plan.
https://www.ospar.org/work-areas/eiha/marine-litter/regional-action-plan

The MSFD part III ('Measures', in Dutch) contains existing and additional measures for management of D10, marine debris, for current planning period (2022–2027). https://noordzeeloket.nl/publish/pages/198511/partieel-herziene-ms3-programma-van-maatregelen-bijlage-bij-partieel-herziene-programma-2027-pdf.pdf

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

On 28 November 2025, the EU Member States established new threshold values for seafloor litter under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). This marks the first time that this type of marine pollution has been assigned a specific quantitative standard.

In 2025, a multidisciplinary team, under the lead of Utrecht University, published a scientific paper on primary cell cultures to study effects of micro- and nanoplastics (MNPs) on gene expression. The aim of this experimental study was to understand how these particles affect cellular function. Harbour porpoise tissues were isolated post mortem and cells were cultured in vitro, and subsequently exposed to fluorescently labelled polystyrene MNPs of 1000, 200, and 50 nm diameter. After exposure the cells were examined by confocal laser scanning microscopy and RNA sequencing. Plastic particles were observed inside the cells after 24 h of exposure and changes in gene expression were noted in pathways of various biological processes including signalling and metabolism. This is the first study to successfully establish cell lines of stranded (deceased) cetaceans and to conduct these risk exposure studies. The approach allows for studying the adverse effects of pollutants (such as MNPs) in a non-invasive way (Roelen et al. 2025: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2025.126805).

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:

Marine debris does not seem directly to be a particular threat to harbour porpoises, based on the post mortem exams conducted. For several indicators (national and OSPAR) decreased values of litter have been demonstrated, but for some no decrease is shown.

The effects of micro- and nanoplastics on health and immune functioning remains unclear.

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.

998/Sec-II_E_16.2_0_NL(1).xlsx

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.

Reports of SCANS-IV and WinterSCANS conducted in winter 2024 have been published:

Ramirez-Martinez, N. C., Hammond, P. S., Blanchard, A., Geelhoed, S. C. V., Laran, S., Taylor, N. L., & Gilles, A. (2025). winterSCANS: Estimates of cetacean abundance in the southern North Sea in winter 2024. https://tinyurl.com/3756prc5

Anita Gilles, Matthieu Authier, Rémi Pigeault, Nadya Ramirez, V Benoit, et al. (2025). Spatial models of cetacean density in European Atlantic waters based on SCANS-IV summer 2022 survey data. Institute for Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Research, University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, Foundation, Buesum, Germany. 2025. ‹hal-05210812›

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:

Based on North Sea Wide results from SCANS IV, there are no new national abundance estimates since last reporting period. Note: There are contrasting trends based on stranding data, coastal seawatching data and Dutch continental shelf-wide MWTL aerial bird surveys until 2022 Bruinvis in de Noordzee, 1991 - 2022 | Compendium voor de Leefomgeving.

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	For individuals collected for post mortem examination, age is not standardly assessed (but teeth are stored), only age class.
Inter-birth intervals	No	pregnancies are assessed as part of post mortem investigations, information in logged in the Utrecht University database.
Calf and adult mortality rates	No	Age class is no longer part of the data collection of all stranded cetaceans (stranding.nl). However, adult : juvenile ratio can be calculated from post mortem investigated individuals, and yearly differences could thus be assessed. Ratio's fluctuate per year, but a drop in the A:J ratio is apparent after 2018 (see attached figure). This indicates that in earlier study years, predominantly juvenile harbour porpoises were investigated, which is

		currently more equal to adults (where the ratio = 1) or more adults compared to juveniles (where the ratio is <1), including 2025 with ratio 1:0.46) (neonates excluded).
Potential reproductive span/capacity	No	pregnancies are assessed as part of post mortem investigations, information in logged in the Utrecht University database.
Longevity	No	For individuals collected for post mortem examination, age is not standardly assessed (but teeth are stored), only age class.
Diet	No	
Age and sex structure	No	Age class and sex are no longer part of the data collection of all stranded cetaceans (stranding.nl). For individuals collected for post mortem examination, age is not standardly assessed (but teeth are stored), only age class. Sex, and pregnancies are assessed as part of post mortem investigations, information in logged in the Utrecht University database.
Other relevant factors	No	Utrecht University jointly published a scientific paper, lead by Dr Anders Galatius, on external proportions, body and organ

		masses, and foetal growth of white-beaked dolphins stranded or bycaught in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. The study showed subtly different growth patterns between the sexes. Males showed stronger positive allometry, having relatively lower mass than females as juveniles and greater mass as adults. Distribution of mass among organs was largely similar to other delphinids, except that white-beaked dolphins have proportionally larger hearts. This may be an adaptation to prolonged bouts of swimming. Male white-beaked dolphins had substantially greater proportional muscle mass than females, indicative of potential competition among males for mating opportunities. Females had significantly larger lungs and kidneys than males, smaller lungs being recognized as associated with deep diving in other odontocetes. A model of foetal growth indicated a later birth period, starting in mid-August, compared to the May to August

		period that has been suggested based on observations of calves (Galatius et al. 2025: https://doi.org/10.1007/s42991-025-00545-4). Species: WBD White-beaked dolphin Utrecht University in collaboration with SOS Dolfijn have a shared PhD(project) entitled: Learning from Harbour Porpoises, Dead or Alive: Insights for Conservation. Key subjects within the project are on age determination, diet studies, magneto- and electroreception, and rehabilitation of stranded harbour porpoises. Species: HP Harbour porpoise

999/AJ ratio post-mortem.png

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.

1000/Sec-III_B_3.1_NL.xlsx

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.

MWTL-surveys are conducted bi-monthly and target seabirds on the entire Dutch Continental Shelf. Harbour porpoises and other cetaceans are recorded as well.

Following the implementation of a new aerial survey scheme (spring and summer survey every 3 years), the first spring survey of the Dutch Continental Shelf was conducted in March 2025. Results are due in 2026, together with summer 2024 survey results. Surveys are dedicated to obtain abundance estimates of harbour porpoise and other cetaceans on the DCS.

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.

PAM is used in several offshore wind farms, during different phases of OWF cycle, ' older' projects use CPODs, but the ones that started more recently use FPODs. The longest PAM monitoring to date is the Borssele OWF in the southwestern part of the Dutch Continental Shelf, running from 2019 to Oct 2026

In 2025, the project 'Waddenzeegeluiden'(Wadden Sea Sounds) started. During the foreseen 4 years it aims to monitor harbour porpoises in the Dutch Wadden Sea using full spectrum sound recorders at 12 PAM stations. One of the project goals is developing a monitoring method that can be implemented after completion of the Waddenzeegeluiden-project.

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.

(WMR) aerial surveys are coordinated with Germany

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

Provide web links if available.

As part of the new survey scheme NL has SCANS-funding allocated. Pending contributions of a few countries, SCANS-V is foreseen summer 2027.

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

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

MWTL-surveys:

Van Bemmelen, R.S.A., de Jong, J.W., Arts, F.A., Beuker, D., Collier, M., Dolman, D. Jenniskens, G., Kuiper, K., Pattikawa, M., Sluijter, M., Wolf, P.A. & Fijn, R.C. 2025. Verspreiding, abundantie en trends van zeevogels en zeezoogdieren op het Nederlands Continentaal Plat in 2024-2025. RWS-

Centrale Informatievoorziening BM 25.29. Waardenburg rapport 25-337. Waardenburg Ecology & Deltamilieu Projecten, Culemborg.

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.

Harbour porpoise tagging pilot project managed to tag 5 harbour porpoises in Dutch waters so far. More information can be found on https://www.wur.nl/en/news/tagging-harbour-porpoises-gain-insight-their-habitat-use-and-behaviour

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

Please provide details:

The strandings network consists of volunteers (citizen science). Naturalis Biodiversity Centre maintained the database until the end of 2023 https://www.walvisstrandingen.nl/, after which it was moved to www.stranding.nl (by Observado.org). Still some issues with database transition, amongst which double records. Additionally, not all strandings appear to be recorded in the database, introducing uncertainty into the reported total.

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

Please select only one option

- ◉ Whole coastline
- ○ Part of the coastline

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

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes

Please provide details:

A sample of approximately 50 fresh stranded harbour porpoises is necropsied annually, by Utrecht University. Other species are also necropsied, if possible (but strandings of other species are limited, see below). Reports can be downloaded here: https://www.uu.nl/onderzoek/strandingsonderzoek/het-onderzoek/onderzoeksverslagen

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:

www.stranding.nl which includes the data on date, location and species, and any additional notes a reporter may provide, including photographs.

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.

The former strandings database (https://www.walvisstrandingen.nl/) maintained by Naturalis Biodiversity Centre has been moved to www.stranding.nl from Observado.org. Citizen science initative. There is not a dedicated strandingscoördinator as with walvisstrandingen.nl, but moderators at Stranding.nl oversee and manage data input.

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

Please provide details:

Volunteers **occasionally** provide pictures and measurements of stranded animals, and can enter these into the database at www.stranding.nl. However, training or guidance could be useful to improve data collection by volunteers.

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

1001/Sec-IV_A_1.8_0_NL.xlsx

How many strandings occurred during the reporting period?

(Specify live and dead)

406 reported strandings, 395 dead, 11 live.

1.9. Were any necropsies conducted during the reporting period?

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes

Please provide information below:

Per necropsy, please provide: the protocol used or dissection / methodologies / collection of samples etc., number of carcasses necropsied, what causes of death sere identified (add percentage if available), and any additional comments.

For protocol used please see IJsseldijk, L.L., Brownlow, A.C., & Mazzariol, S. (eds.). (2019). Best practice on cetacean post-mortem investigation and tissue sampling. Joint ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS document: osf.io/zh4ra.

52 porpoises were necropsied in 2025. 26 adults, 12 juveniles, and 14 neonates. The sex distribution was 38 males and 14 females. In addition, one male fetus was examined and sampled.

Most examined animals likely died as a result of infectious diseases (n = 13, 25%). Bycatch was the most probable cause of death for nine harbour porpoises (17.3%). Eight neonates may have died due to complications around birth (15.4%). The death of four harbour porpoises was likely caused by acute blunt trauma (7.7%). Three harbour porpoises likely died as a result of starvation/emaciation (5.8%). Three harbour porpoises may have died due to a grey seal attack (5.8%). Four harbour porpoises were classified in the “other” category (7.7%), and for eight additional individuals the cause of death remained undetermined (15.4%).

Additionally, three common dolphins, two Sowerby’s beaked whale and one white-beaked dolphin were necropsied. Likely causes of death:

CD1: In summary, this animal had chronic hepatitis of unknown origin, which likely had a negative impact on its health and nutritional condition, but does not appear severe enough to explain death. Additionally, the animal had chronic bronchitis, which also does not seem severe enough to explain death. The cause of death therefore remains unclear.

CD2: Most likely died as a result of blunt trauma (entered as potential ship strike in this national report). The pneumonia did not contribute positively to the health of this animal. Bycatch cannot be ruled out.

CD3: Possibly died as a result of bycatch (entered as potential bycatch case in this national report). The animal had severe parasitic pneumonia. It is possible that the underlying pneumonia weakened the animal and made it more susceptible to being bycaught.

SBW1: Necropsy indicated that animal likely died as a result of live stranding. The cause of the live stranding may have been a brain infection of unclear origin.

SBW2: Necropsy indicated that the cause of the stranding may have been a prior infection in the brain and meninges. The cause remains unclear.

WBD1: Necropsy indicated that the animal most likely stranded alive and subsequently died. This animal showed evidence of a chronic disease process with multiple underlying factors that ultimately led to stranding and death. The animal was dehydrated and severely emaciated, likely partly due to the combination of a high burden of gastric parasites and chronic heart failure. The changes observed in the brain were significant enough to have affected health, navigation, coordination, and/or the ability to forage. The cause remains unclear.

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)

Several Dutch institutes and volunteers affiliated to the stranding network have contributed to a scientific publication at the ICES journal of Marine Science, entitled: European stranding networks as a tool for monitoring marine mammal populations (Part I): towards optimising the functioning of networks (Petitguyot et al. 2025: https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsaf194). The aim of the study was to characterize the activities and capacities of the stranding networks surveyed, identify differences within and between countries, highlight strengths and weaknesses, and provide recommendations to enhance the value and credibility of the information collected.