Presentation by Dr Kelly Macleod, JNCC, UK

On behalf of the SCANS-II Project Steering Group
Project Coordinator: Prof Phil Hammond, SMRU, UK

http://synergy.st-andrews.ac.uk/scans3/
Funders:

- Miljø- og Fødevareministeriet, Denmark;
- Agence des Aires Marines Protégées, France;
- Bundesamt für Naturschutz, Germany;
- Rijkswaterstaat, Netherlands;
- Havforskningsinstituttet, Norway;
- Sociedade Portuguesa de Vida Selvagem, Portugal;
- Instituto Español de Oceanografía, Spain;
- Havs- och vattenmyndigheteten, Sweden;
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK.
Context

- Early 90’s, concern regarding harbour porpoise bycatch
- No population size estimates
- ASCOBANS entered into force in 1994
Decadal series of surveys designed to generate robust estimates of cetacean population abundance & long term-trends.

- SCANS (1994): 3 ships & 2 aircraft
- SCANS-II (2005): 7 ships & 3 aircraft
- CODA (2007): 5 ships
ASCOBANS
Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas

SCANS III (2016)
3 ships & 7 aircraft
Methods enable absolute abundance to be estimated:

- Line transect distance sampling
- Perception/Availability bias (missed animals)
- Corrected for responsive movement
➢ Harbour porpoise shifts in distribution
➢ Long term trends in abundance? North Sea for harbour porpoise, no change

➢ Entire area: 2005 - 519,864 (CV=0.21); 2016 - 466,569 (CV=0.15)
ICES Assessment Units for harbour porpoise

2016: 2,898 (0.32)
2005: 3,777 (0.72)
Long term trends in abundance? North Sea for white-beaked dolphin, no change

Entire area: 2005 – 37,689 (CV=0.36); 2016 - 36,287 (CV=0.29)
Long term trends in abundance? Only 2 estimates for common dolphin in comparable areas

- 2005/2007: 174,000 (CV = 0.27)
- 2016: 468,000 (CV = 0.26)
- Significant increase
Courtesy of Waggit, J. & Evans, P.G.H. Marine Ecosystem Research Programme (MERP)
Implications for ASCOBANS

- Robust estimates of populations but....
- Lacking trends in the Agreement area as a whole
  - Offshore waters west of Portugal not surveyed
- Harbour porpoise conservation plans:
  - North Sea – population stable
  - Inner Danish Waters – population stable
  - Iberian peninsula?
  - Norway?
Implications for ASCOBANS

➢ White beaked dolphin – no evidence of change

➢ Common dolphin?
  ➢ Bycatch rates high in some fisheries/areas
  ➢ Increases also driven by abundance
  ➢ Conservation plan in progress

➢ Parties continue to advocate large-scale surveys
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- Helder Araújo, Sociedade Portuguesa de Vida Selvagem & Aveiro University, Portugal
- Ghislain Dorémus & Olivier van Canneyt, Observatoire PELAGIS, France
- Steve Geelhoed & Hans Verdaat, Wageningen Marine Research, Netherlands

**Ship cruise (co)leaders**
- Signe Sveegaard, Department of Bioscience, Aarhus University, Denmark
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