

Agenda Item 5.5.1

Implementation of the ASCOBANS Triennial
Work Plan (2007-2009)

Review of New Information on Pollution,
Underwater Sound and Disturbance

Anthropogenic Noise

Document 57

**Report on the activities of the
Intersessional Working Group on the
Assessment of Acoustic Disturbance**

Action Requested

- Take note of the information submitted
- Comment

Submitted by

Working Group Convener



NOTE:

**IN THE INTERESTS OF ECONOMY, DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED TO BRING THEIR OWN
COPIES OF DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING**

**Report on the activities of the Intersessional Working Group on the
Assessment of Acoustic Disturbance: April 2009.**

Mark Simmonds, Working Group Convener

The group was tasked with focusing on three main human activities:

- use of naval sonar;
- seismic surveys;
- pile-driving; and also
- giving consideration to ship-based noise, as far as is appropriate recognising that this issue is under consideration at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

For each of these activities, the working group was requested to:

1. Examine the existing management (e.g. impact mitigation) of the activities with regard to noise;
2. Summarise the assessments that have been made, and indicate the main concerns relevant to the ASCOBANS objectives; and,
3. Identify or prepare guidance and recommendations for best practice.

The working group has been busy addressing this large mandate and developing a comprehensive document by correspondence (as was envisaged) and identified the ACCOBAMS *“Guidelines to address the issue of the impact of anthropogenic noise on marine mammals in the ACCOBAMS area”* as being a good and comprehensive baseline to start its work.

The working group report is currently some 58 sides long but unfortunately remains unfinished and the text has not been signed off by its authors. Hence, I have requested that it is not yet made publicly available in any form (e.g, on the ASCOBANS public website) but made available to Advisory Committee members in its draft form to illustrate the work to date.

Apart from the fact that the authors have not yet agreed the text, I note that some substantive points are still being discussed and these include what recommendations to make at times of low or no visibility and the degree to which recommendations should be precautionary.

My recommendation to the Advisory Committee is that the working group is allowed to finalise the text in the weeks following the Advisory Committee meeting. This would then be circulated to the parties and Advisory Committee members and stand as advice offered by the working group to the Convention authored by those that took part.

In the interim, the working group would be pleased to receive any comments and advice that the Committee wishes to give.