

Agenda Item 4.5

Priorities in the Implementation of the
Triennium Work Plan (2010-2012)
Publicity and Outreach

Document 4-03 Addendum

**Development of a Leaflet for Fishers
in the ASCOBANS Area – Draft Texts**

Action Requested

- Take note of the draft leaflet texts
- Comment

Submitted by

Secretariat



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

Secretariat's Note

1. This revised draft text for a leaflet for fishers in the ASCOBANS Area was prepared based on the comments received in follow-up of the ASCOBANS/ECS Workshop on Cetacean Bycatch on 20 March 2010 in Stralsund, Germany.
2. Passages which might be omitted for simplicity's sake or in some language versions for legal reasons, or where a decision needs to be made which of the suggested options to take, have been put in square brackets and highlighted yellow.

Bycatch of small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS area – working together to find a solution

(Baltic Sea version)

Cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) are a key part of the marine ecosystem in European waters. However, it is estimated that over 300,000 cetaceans are killed globally each year through bycatch – the incidental capture or entanglement of these non-target species in fishing gear. In the Skagerrak, annual bycatch of harbour porpoises is likely to exceed 4% of the total population.

There have been a number of studies which suggest that bycatch of cetaceans in European waters is widespread, and that it is likely to be the main conservation and welfare problem affecting cetaceans around our coasts. The species thought to be most affected by bycatch in the Baltic Sea is the harbour porpoise.

[How and why cetaceans become caught in fishing gear is not fully understood. However, research has indicated that it may be possible to reduce the rate of this capture.] This leaflet provides practical advice on how to reduce cetacean bycatch whilst minimising the effects on fishing operations.

Steps to a solution

Estimates of cetacean bycatch are still largely lacking in most European Union waters. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult to assess the true nature of the problem.

1. By recording sightings and interactions with cetaceans and reporting these to the relevant bodies. Information about habitats and bycatches is crucial to developing measures in co-operation with the fisheries sector. These measures aim to tackle the issue of bycatch, which is a recognised problem for both the cetacean species impacted and the fishermen involved.
 - Please send information on date, location, fishing gear used, species bycaught, body length and how the cetacean was bycaught to the appropriate country contact listed below. This information will be kept confidential.
 - [Contacts by country – national institutions, or ASCOBANS Secretariat]
 - [Include form similar to Swedish leaflet which prompts for information on species, location, weight, sex etc.]
2. [By landing bycaught small cetaceans and making the carcasses available for research. All ASCOBANS countries run necropsy schemes (post mortem examinations) in order to learn more about small cetaceans and small cetacean bycatch. However, access to fresh carcasses for scientific study is often limited.
 - Please land bycaught small cetaceans and hand the carcasses to the port authority/ies so they can pass them to the relevant research institution in order to further knowledge about small cetaceans and small cetacean bycatch. This information will be kept confidential.]
3. By working with researchers to help development of effective bycatch reduction techniques such as acoustic deterrents (pingers). Any proposed reduction measures need to be workable in both inshore and offshore fisheries. Research and development requires input from fishers and at-sea trials to ensure practical and acceptable solutions are found.
 - To find out more about becoming involved in pinger research in the Baltic Sea, please contact

- [Contacts by country – national institutions, or ASCOBANS Secretariat]
4. By participating in independent, on-board observer schemes. These schemes are essential to provide a clear picture of how fisheries and cetaceans interact in European waters.
- For further information about on-board observer schemes in the Baltic Sea, please contact
 - [Contacts by country – national institutions, or ASCOBANS Secretariat]

Static acoustic monitoring (SAM) programmes use 'click detectors' to find out how many harbour porpoises there are and how they are distributed.

Click detectors are anchored on the seabed and suspended in the water column. The use of surface marker buoys and different kinds of anchors will vary depending upon local conditions. Click detectors found attached to moorings and buoys should not be touched, as they are collecting data and will be serviced regularly by project personnel.

5. If you find a detector floating at the surface or stranded on a beach, please recover it and contact the project co-ordinator using the contact information visible on the device. Finder's rewards are often offered for the return of any lost devices.
- Insert photo of stranded C-POD

For further information on the Baltic harbour porpoise please visit: www.ascobans.org

Sweden: www.naturvardsverket.se / www.fiskeriverket.se / www.nrm.se

Finland: www.miljo.fi / www.sarkanniemi.fi / www.ymparisto.fi

Poland: www.morswin.pl

Lithuania: www.juru.muziejus.lt

Germany: www.schweinswale.com / www.gsm-ev.de

Denmark: www.fjord-baelt.dk

Include pictures of the following species within the leaflet to aid species identification:
Harbour porpoise

Why is cetacean bycatch a problem?

Cetacean bycatch is a problem for fishers as it can result in reduced fish catches and destroyed nets.

Cetaceans cannot reproduce quickly – small cetaceans do not reach sexual maturity until they are between three and six years of age. Usually a single calf is produced and nursed for over a year. Calving intervals vary between one and six years which means that small cetacean populations are slow to reproduce.

Little is known regarding how population sizes of cetacean species in the ASCOBANS area (Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas) have changed over time. The current Baltic harbour porpoise population is alarmingly low with less than 1000 individuals remaining. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise as Critically Endangered and the population trend as 'decreasing'.

Historical accounts on population and bycatch levels indicate that the Baltic harbour porpoise has been more numerous and inhabited northerly Baltic waters in recent times. Reduced populations such as this are more vulnerable to incidental catches than healthy populations.

[Current legal requirements

Regulations require EU Member States to monitor the incidental capture and killing of all cetaceans and to make sure that it does not have a negative impact on the species concerned.

Regulations also require vessels with an overall length of 12m or more to use acoustic deterrent devices (pingers) on set nets, and the development of independent onboard observer schemes for certain fisheries. There have been major problems in implementing these regulations. However, practical solutions to these problems are being developed with the support of the fishing industry.

Various targets and areas for priority action on bycatch have been agreed by the parties to ASCOBANS (the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic, North-East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas). These include aiming to reduce takes of cetacean species to below 1.7% of the population.]

Bycatch of small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS area – working together to find a solution

(North Sea version)

Cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) are an integral part of the marine ecosystem in European waters. However, it is estimated that over 300,000 cetaceans are killed globally each year through bycatch – the incidental capture or entanglement of these non-target species in fishing gear. More than 4400 porpoises are killed annually in fishing operations throughout the North Sea.

There have been a number of studies which suggest that bycatch of cetaceans in European waters is widespread and that it is likely to be the main conservation and welfare problem affecting cetaceans around our coasts. The species thought to be most affected by bycatch in the North Sea are harbour porpoise, common dolphin, white-beaked dolphin, bottlenose dolphin and long-finned pilot whale.

[How and why cetaceans become caught in fishing gear is not fully understood. However, research to date has indicated that it may be possible to reduce the rate of this capture.] This leaflet aims to provide practical advice on how to reduce cetacean bycatch whilst minimising the effects on fishing operations.

Steps to a solution

Estimates of cetacean bycatch are still largely lacking in most European Union waters. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult to assess the true nature of the problem.

1. By participating in independent, on-board observer schemes. These schemes are essential to provide a clear picture of the how fisheries and cetaceans interact in European waters.
 - For further information about on-board observer schemes in the North Sea, please contact
 - [Contacts by country – national institutions, or ASCOBANS Secretariat]
2. By recording sightings and interactions with cetaceans and reporting these to the relevant bodies. Information about habitats and bycatches is crucial to developing measures in co-operation with the fisheries sector. These measures aim to tackle the issue of bycatch, which is a recognised problem for both the cetacean species impacted and the fishermen involved.
 - Please send information on date, location, fishing gear used, species bycaught, body length and how the cetacean was bycaught to the appropriate country contact listed below. This information will be kept confidential.
 - [Contacts by country – national institutions, or ASCOBANS Secretariat]
 - [Include form similar to Swedish leaflet which prompts for information on species, location, weight, sex etc.]
3. [By landing bycaught small cetaceans and making the carcasses available for research. All ASCOBANS countries run necropsy schemes (post mortem examinations) in order to learn more about small cetaceans and small cetacean bycatch. However, access to fresh carcasses for scientific study is often limited.
 - Please land bycaught small cetaceans and hand the carcasses to the port authority/ies so they can pass them to the relevant research institution in order to

further knowledge about small cetaceans and small cetacean bycatch. This information will be kept confidential.]

4. By working with researchers to help development of effective bycatch reduction techniques such as acoustic deterrents (pingers). Any proposed reduction measures need to be workable in both inshore and offshore fisheries. Research and development requires input from fishers and at-sea trials to ensure practical and acceptable solutions are found.
 - To find out more about becoming involved in pinger research in the North Sea, please contact
 - [Contacts by country – national institutions, or ASCOBANS Secretariat]

Static acoustic monitoring (SAM) programmes use ‘click detectors’ to find out how many harbour porpoises there are and how they are distributed.

Click detectors are anchored on the seabed and suspended in the water column. The use of surface marker buoys and different kinds of anchors will vary depending upon local conditions. Click detectors found attached to moorings and buoys should not be touched, as they are collecting data and will be serviced regularly by project personnel.

5. If you find a detector floating at the surface or stranded on a beach, please recover it and contact the project co-ordinator using the contact information visible on the device. Finder’s rewards are often offered for the return of any lost devices.
 - Insert photo of stranded C-POD

For further information on cetaceans of the North Sea please visit: www.ascobans.org

Germany: www.wwf.de / www.schweinswale.com / www.ifaw.org/ifaw_germany / www.gsm-ev.de

Netherlands: www.imares.wur.nl / www.nordzee.nl / www.walvisstrandingen.nl

Belgium: www.mumm.ac.be / www.zeezoogdieren.org

France: www.ifremer.fr / www.cofrepeche.fr

United Kingdom: www.smru.st-andrews.ac.uk / www.jncc.gov.uk / www.defra.gov.uk

Include pictures of the following species within the leaflet to aid species identification: Harbour porpoise / Common dolphin / White-beaked dolphin / Bottlenose dolphin / Long-finned pilot whale

Why is cetacean bycatch a problem?

Cetacean bycatch is a problem for fishers as it can result in reduced fish catches and destroyed nets.

Cetaceans cannot reproduce quickly – small cetaceans typically do not reach sexual maturity until they are between three and six years of age. Usually a single calf is produced and nursed for over a year. Calving intervals vary between one and six years which means that small cetacean populations are slow to reproduce.

Little is known regarding how population sizes of cetacean species in the ASCOBANS area (Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas) have changed over time. A recent survey

of cetaceans in the North Sea was only able to generate abundance estimates for harbour porpoise, white-beaked dolphin, bottlenose dolphin and minke whale. Without a clearer understanding of the sizes and dynamics of these cetacean populations, there is concern that incidental takes may have long-term detrimental effects.

[Current legal requirements

Regulations require EU Member States to monitor the incidental capture and killing of all cetaceans and to make sure that it does not have a negative impact on the species concerned.

Regulations also require vessels with an overall length of 12m or more to use acoustic deterrent devices (pingers) on set nets, and the development of independent onboard observer schemes for certain fisheries. There have been major problems in implementing these regulations. However, practical solutions to these problems are being developed with the support of the fishing industry.

Various targets and areas for priority action on bycatch have been agreed by the parties to ASCOBANS (the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic, North-East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas). These include aiming to reduce takes of harbour porpoises in the North Sea to below 1.7% of the population.]

Bycatch of small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS area – working together to find a solution

(North East Atlantic version)

Cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) are an integral part of the marine ecosystem in European waters. However, it is estimated that over 300,000 cetaceans are killed globally each year through bycatch – the incidental capture or entanglement of these non-target species in fishing gear. More than 2200 porpoises are killed annually in fishing operations throughout the Celtic Sea.

There have been a number of studies which suggest that bycatch of cetaceans in European waters is widespread and that it is likely to be the main conservation and welfare problem affecting cetaceans around our coasts. The species thought to be most affected by bycatch in the north-east Atlantic are harbour porpoise, common dolphin, striped dolphin, Atlantic white-sided dolphin, bottlenose dolphin and long-finned pilot whale.

[How and why cetaceans become caught in fishing gear is not fully understood. However, research to date has indicated that it may be possible to reduce the rate of this capture.] This leaflet aims to provide practical advice on how to reduce cetacean bycatch whilst minimising the effects on fishing operations.

Steps to a solution

Quantitative estimates of cetacean bycatch are still largely lacking in most European Union waters. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult to assess the true nature of the problem.

1. By participating in independent, on-board observer schemes. These schemes are essential to provide a clear picture of the how fisheries and cetaceans interact in European waters.
 - For further information about on-board observer schemes in the north-east Atlantic, please contact
 - [Contacts by country – national institutions, or ASCOBANS Secretariat]
2. By recording sightings and interactions with cetaceans and reporting these to the relevant bodies. Information about habitats and bycatches is crucial to developing measures in co-operation with the fisheries sector. These measures aim to tackle the issue of bycatch, which is a recognised problem for both the cetacean species impacted and the fishermen involved.
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 - Insert photo of stranded C-POD

For further information on cetaceans of the north-east Atlantic please visit: www.ascobans.org

United Kingdom: www.smru.st-andrews.ac.uk / www.incc.gov.uk / www.defra.gov.uk

France: www.ifremer.fr / www.cofrepeche.fr

Ireland: www.marine.ie / www.bim.ie / www.npws.ie / www.iwdg.ie

Spain: www.mapya.es / www.reservasmrinas.net / www.cetaceos.com

Portugal: www.icnb.pt

Include pictures of the following species within the leaflet to aid species identification: Harbour porpoise, Common dolphin, Striped dolphin, Atlantic white-sided dolphin, Bottlenose dolphin, Long-finned pilot whale

Why is cetacean bycatch a problem?

Cetacean bycatch is a problem for fishers as it can result in reduced fish catches and destroyed nets.

Cetaceans have a low reproductive capacity – small cetaceans typically do not reach sexual maturity until they are between three and six years of age. Usually a single calf is produced and nursed for over a year. Calving intervals vary between one and six years which means that small cetacean populations are slow to reproduce.

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