

Agenda Item 5.2

Publicity and Outreach

Report of the Secretariat

Document 5.2

**Report of the Secretariat on Outreach
and Education Activities**

Action Requested

- Take note
- Comment

Submitted by

Secretariat



**NOTE:
DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED TO BRING THEIR OWN COPIES OF DOCUMENTS
TO THE MEETING**

Report of the Secretariat on Outreach and Education Activities

1. In follow up to MOP5 Resolution No. 8 (2006) on Educational and Promotional Activities and MOP7 Resolution No. 2 (2012) detailing the Work Plan for the period 2013-2016, the Secretariat has implemented various publicity and outreach activities since the 19th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.

20th Anniversary

2. Most outreach-related activities in 2012 were directly linked to the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Agreement.
3. Peter Evans has been commissioned to prepare a publication on the Agreement and its species. This book, which is meant to be sold through normal bookshops, aims to be the most authoritative review of northern European cetaceans and the threats they face, whilst also giving insights into how an international Agreement is created, can function and also meet obstacles to progress. Delays were caused by the author's ill health with spells in hospital as well as securing a publisher with an adequate pre-publication timeline. It was therefore decided to postpone publication until 2014 – the anniversary of the Agreement coming into force. The author hopes to have everything completed and submitted to a publisher by October 2013. Three-quarters of the book have been written, all the photographs have been chosen, and most of the other graphics assembled.
4. The Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan of the Agreement (Annex 10 of the AC17 Report, available [here](#)) particularly emphasized events and mobile exhibitions as an effective way of engaging the public. In this respect, the Secretariat was pleased to be able to collaborate with the Whale Workshop and offer to Parties and other interested institutions a tailor-made roadshow featuring life-sized inflatable models of the majority of the species covered by ASCOBANS.
5. A first “anniversary roadshow” featuring also the ASCOBANS exhibition was shown on the weekend between AC19 and the ECS conference in March 2012 in Galway, Ireland. The Whale Workshop then featured the ASCOBANS exhibition on all shows held in Europe.
6. In addition, with endorsement by AC19, ASCOBANS was featured prominently during the WhaleFest 2012, an event organized by Planet Whale which took place in the days following the 7th Meeting of the Parties in Brighton, United Kingdom. The WhaleFest was attended by around 6,000 visitors. The main display was sponsored jointly by CMS and ASCOBANS and additional exhibition banners on threats to marine species were introduced to the public. Throughout the main exhibition hall, ASCOBANS was very visible, and a large information desk attracted many visitors who picked up leaflets, stickers, posters and other material and asked many questions about the Agreement and its implementation. Heidrun Frisch was also invited to give a talk, in which she featured cetacean conservation efforts under CMS, ASCOBANS and the rest of the CMS Family.
7. As part of the “Brighton Whale Week”, and supported financially by means of a voluntary contribution from the United Kingdom, near life-sized, high-resolution illustrations of ASCOBANS species done by artist Lucy Molleson were set up along with parts of the ASCOBANS exhibition and some information material in the children's section of the Jubilee Library in Brighton. Ms Molleson and Rob Deaville (ZSL) representing the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme were there at certain times during the week to answer questions from interested children and parents. The purpose was to familiarize the people of Brighton with the amazing diversity of cetacean species found in

the UK's waters, and efforts for their protection. For the WhaleFest, the banners were then brought to its venue and displayed there.

8. Details on the Secretariat's activities related to the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise in the anniversary year can be found below.

The International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise

9. On and around Sunday, **20 May 2012**, the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP) was celebrated around the shores of the Baltic Sea for the tenth time. As each year, the Secretariat was pleased to assist the organizers by shipping out information and exhibition material. Events announced to the Secretariat in advance were advertised in the news section on the website, along with the Secretariat's own series of events.
10. Special events on this day took place in Denmark: at the Fjord & Baelt Centre; in Finland: in the Särkänniemi Dolphinarium; in Germany: at Duisburg Zoo, as well as in the Alexander Koenig Zoological Research Museum and in the Oceanographic Museum of Stralsund; in Poland: at the Kościuszki Square in the city of Gdynia; and in Sweden at the Stockholm Aquaria and in the Gothenburg Natural History Museum. A short illustrated report can be accessed [here](#).
11. The ASCOBANS Secretariat celebrated the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise in collaboration with The Whale Workshop by holding an exhibition of the life-sized inflatable whales, dolphins and porpoises from 18-22 May 2012 at [Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum Alexander Koenig](#) in Bonn. School groups and other visitors to the museum had the opportunity to experience the true size of "small" cetaceans, listen to short interactive presentations on the animals, the threats they face and how everyone can contribute to their conservation.
12. A new edition of the "[IDBHP Handbook](#)" was made available on the ASCOBANS website in order to help all institutions wishing to stage an event during the 2013 celebrations. It contains suggestions for outreach events on that occasion, as well as information on the materials the Secretariat can make available to organizers.
13. The 11th celebration of the IDBHP was held on and around **19 May 2013**. As every year, the Secretariat invited potentially interested institutions around the Baltic Sea to participate, offering to make available information and display materials to support the events. Only three events were announced to the Secretariat beforehand, which took place in Denmark, Finland, Germany and Lithuania. Short reports have since been received, and one also from Poland. An overview will be made available in the news section of the ASCOBANS website shortly.
14. The ASCOBANS Secretariat has partnered with NGOs Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), NABU and OceanCare for a competition targeting German-speaking areas. With the theme "The Last 300", creative minds are being given the opportunity to explore through their art and design work the importance they personally give to having these unique animals in the Baltic Sea. More information, in the German language, can be found online on the dedicated website www.schweinswal.eu. The competition is currently foreseen to run until 19 October 2013. It is being advertised through general and specialized media, social media, posters and flyers in universities, and the partners' distribution lists and websites. WDC will give a short presentation on the competition to AC20. *The Secretariat is seeking voluntary contributions for the completion of this initiative (see [AC20/Doc.6.2.b](#) for details).*
15. The Secretariat is currently looking into ways to improve and modernize the running of the annual International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise campaign. The idea is to move it to its own section on the website, which would be set up so that event organizers

themselves register their events for the IDBHP and upload their reports and pictures. Similar approaches, albeit on a much larger scale, have been very successful in relation to the World Migratory Bird Day, an annual campaign run by CMS and AEWA. We hope to have the new system installed in time for the celebration of the IDBHP in 2014, when it will take place on Sunday, 18 May.

Website

16. The further development of the ASCOBANS website is another activity identified in the Work Plan. The main development was the work towards a common web portal for the CMS Family and the associated move towards a content management system-based, modern website. The general concept and progress at that point were reported on in [MOP7/Doc.7-05](#), and Parties endorsed the full involvement of ASCOBANS in the project. The new website portal will respect the wish expressed by ASCOBANS Parties to maintain the Agreement's own visibility and recognition and at the same time to show that ASCOBANS is part of the CMS Family.
17. A new set of web-based databases which store data on species, countries, projects, contacts, reports, publications, meetings, documents and threats has been developed and implemented in 2012 and 2013 by the Secretariats of CMS, AEWA, EUROBATS and ASCOBANS. The CMS Secretariat has contracted a software company for web development to implement these databases, allowing the storage, structuring and retrieval of different types of information which the Secretariat handles and provides to Parties and partners.
18. The development of this harmonized structure constitutes a major improvement in the way the participating Secretariats manage their information. It allows simple searches through the datasets from anywhere with internet access. Different data entries can easily be linked to each other in order to establish meaningful connections between the information.
19. Links to other entities that manage species information have already been established or are planned for the next phase of the project. This includes the IUCN Red List data as well as the Species+ database which CITES is developing with UNEP-WCMC. Data from the CMS Family are automatically fed into InforMEA through a link which has already been established.
20. The same software company has been contracted to implement the new CMS Family websites which will replace the current ones of CMS, AEWA, ASCOBANS, EUROBATS and of the Sharks MOU. While each Secretariat maintains ownership of its own website, the sites are interlinked and connected through a joint CMS Family platform which combines information from all Secretariats.
21. Besides the participation in the CMS Family website project, the Secretariat also ensured the regular maintenance of the current website, which includes the updating and correcting of texts and links, posting of documents and publications and checking of functionality. Since AC19, a total of 17 news articles and announcements have been published, and 29 relevant communications were received by means of the contact form, covering a wide range of issues to which the Secretariat endeavours to respond promptly.
22. At past meetings, the AC had endorsed the Secretariat's proposals for further enhancement of the website, including the development of a section for children, making use of existing material (e.g. from the Year of the Dolphin campaign) and introducing interactive features. Thanks to the excellent support of two interns, Milena Canzler and Kathrin Schiffer, the support of the consultant Ana Berta Garcia and the excellent collaboration and support of the WDC Education Coordinator Jess Feghali-Brown, the

content of the website as well as the general structure and design are now finalized. The Secretariat is discussing the technical options for the children's section with BirdFish, the company responsible for the maintenance of the ASCOBANS website, and the new section is expected to be online before the end of the year. The children's website includes information on the biology of cetaceans, threats they face, a species guide focused on ASCOBANS species, and a variety of games and resources for teachers. More features will be added in the future funds allowing.

23. [AC20/Doc.6.2.b](#) on *Activities Requiring Funding* lists the website-related activities that require voluntary contributions for their completion or implementation. Besides the children's website, these include the development of fisheries pages on the ASCOBANS website, also endorsed by past AC meetings.

Information Material

24. As in the past, and in line with Parties' instructions through the Work Plan, the Secretariat has continued to produce and re-produce outreach and information material, which is being used throughout the Agreement Area during our own events and by other institutions. Making use mainly of the annual voluntary contribution by Germany, the following was produced or reprinted:

- 10,000 species postcards (four versions)
- 5,000 leaflets (English and German)
- 500 cotton bags
- 2,500 stickers "20th Anniversary"
- 500 wooden pens
- 2,500 pencils
- 500 A4 note pads
- 1,000 memo blocks

25. The majority of material was distributed during the many outreach events in the Anniversary year, and at our own meetings.

26. **ASCOBANS Leaflets:** The Secretariat reprints leaflets as needed and as resources allow. It continues to offer providing a print-quality PDF of the language versions of the ASCOBANS leaflet free of charge to governments or institutions that want to reproduce leaflets locally for their own use.

27. **ASCOBANS Exhibition:** The exhibition, available in three sets in English and two sets in German and consisting of ten pull-up banners, has again been used widely. It can be borrowed from the Secretariat free of charge and is shipped out and returned at the expense of the requesting institution.

28. **Threat Banners:** For use at the WhaleFest in Brighton, UK, in October 2012, as well as at all opportunities since, five banners on threats to marine species were co-produced by CMS and ASCOBANS. They cover the topics climate change, fisheries, pollution, underwater noise and vessel traffic and for each of these, outline the problem and how it affects marine species, as well as solutions involving governments and the general public. The pull-up banners have been designed to harmonize with the general ASCOBANS exhibition and can be used in conjunction with it, where desired.

29. **Newsletter:** Three editions of the "ASCOBANS NewsFlash" have been published since AC19, with the next one foreseen shortly. In total, the mailing list for the electronic newsletter contains over 470 addresses. Seven people have used the online subscription option since AC19.

30. **All About Dolphins:** This brochure, which had been produced for the Year of the Dolphin campaign in 2007/2008 and is designed for children, is available for download on the ASCOBANS website in nine languages. In addition to these electronic versions, the Secretariat had some copies of the Portuguese-language print version left over. Following contacts made at the 2013 ECS Conference in Setubal, Portugal, these were made available to the Sado Estuary Nature Reserve administration, which is using them for its educational programmes.
31. **Inflatable Bottlenose Dolphins:** Another “leftover” of the Year of the Dolphin campaign are inflatable dolphins, which had been stored in the premises of Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC) Germany. Three of these were sent to the ASCOBANS Secretariat for use in outreach and education activities.

Other Outreach Opportunities

32. ASCOBANS continues to have pages on Wikipedia in five languages: [English](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Russian](#) and [Spanish](#). Other language versions may follow as the opportunity arises. With the help of interns, in the English-language version cross-links were made to pages dealing with species covered by the Agreement.
33. CMS joined Facebook (www.facebook.com/bonnconvention) in November 2011 in order to make full use of social media, and provide a platform to exchange views and experiences on migratory species. As of mid-July 2013 there are almost 2,000 followers. ASCOBANS has the opportunity to post its own information there, too, and thus benefit from the greater capacity of the CMS Secretariat to maintain such a page.
34. In March 2013, the CMS Secretariat set up a [Twitter](#) account to reach out to a wide audience through this network. As of mid-July 2013 there are almost 600 followers. This account, too, can be used by ASCOBANS and is linked to the Facebook page.
35. In 2012, the UN Day celebration on the market square in the centre of Bonn took place while the ASCOBANS team was in Brighton for MOP7. CMS colleagues kindly stepped in and manned the ASCOBANS table in our shared tent with the 18 UN agencies in Bonn.
36. As usual, material was also displayed at the Annual Conferences of the European Cetacean Society, which continue to be an important forum for engaging scientists and non-governmental organizations in the work of the Agreement. ASCOBANS was directly involved in hosting three workshops, the Secretariat was invited to speak at a fourth one and was present throughout the conference to network and build contacts with the scientific community.
37. The SAMBAH project team invited for a Stakeholder Workshop back-to-back with the 9th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group in Gothenburg, Sweden. ASCOBANS co-hosted the event, which attracted 39 participants representing the SAMBAH project, marine management and other national authorities, international Baltic Sea agreements, NGOs, the offshore construction industry, fisheries interests and the European Commission (DG Mare). The theme was “How can the fishing, shipping and offshore construction industries and politics help to protect the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise?” ASCOBANS was represented and information material was made available in the Gothenburg City Museum, as well as in the Natural History Museum, the venue of the Jastarnia Group Meeting.