Tenth Compilation of Annual National Reports

Bonn, 2006

Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas

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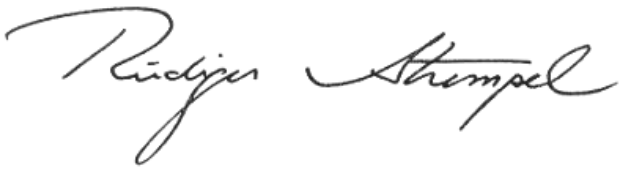
Preface

The 10th Compilation of Annual National Reports covers the year 2005 and comprises reports from nine of the ten ASCOBANS Parties and two non-Party range states, Estonia and Latvia. Once more, the Secretariat would like to stress the increased importance of these annual national reports in light of the decision by MOP 4 (Esbjerg, Denmark, August 2003) to abolish triennial reports as from the current triennium.

As in previous years, the non-Party reports were provided under the harmonized reporting scheme agreed on by ASCOBANS and HELCOM* and the Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to thank the Polish Secretariat of the Helsinki Convention, Gdansk, once again for its continued excellent cooperation.



Rüdiger Strempel
Executive Secretary

Bonn, August 2006

* Cf. Recommendation 17/5, taken at the 5th Meeting of HELCOM HABITAT and the relevant decisions of ASCOBANS bodies

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Summary of Party Details

Party	Period Covered	Report Compiler	Coordinating Authority
Belgium	1 January – 31 December 2005	Jan Haelters (MUMM/RBINS); additional information provided by Thierry Jauniaux (Ulg) and Francis Kerckhof (MUMM/RBINS)	Dr. Thierry Jacques MUMM Ministère de la santé publique et De l'Environnment Gulledulle 110 1200 Bruxelles
Denmark	2005	Genevieve Desportes and Maj F. Munk in cooperation with Age Dynamics, the Danish Institute for Fisheries Research (DIFRES), Esbjerg Fisheries and Maritime Museum, Fjord&Bælt (F&B), GDnatur, the Ministry of Environment – Forest and Nature Agency and the National Environmental Research Institute (NERI).	Maj F. Munk Ministry of Environment The Danish Forest and Nature Agency, Division for Wildlife Management Haraldsgade 53 2100 Copenhagen Ø
Finland	1 January – 31 December 2005	Penina Blankett Ministry of the Environment	Penina Blankett Ministry of the Environment P.O. Box 380 00131 Helsinki
France	2005	Sami Hassani Océanopolis Port de Plaisance du Moulin Blanc	Martine Bigan Chargée de mission espèces marines Direction de la nature et des paysages Ministère de l'écologie et du développement durable 14bd. Du Général Leclerc 92524 Neuilly-sur-Seine
Federal Republic of Germany	1 January – 31 December 2005	Oliver Schall,, Lisa Freudenberger, Achim Schmitz Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety	Oliver Schall Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety Postfach 120629 53048 Bonn
Lithuania	1 January – 31 December 2005	Sigute Alisauskiene Ministry of Environment/Biodiversity Unit	Sigute Alisauskiene Ministry of Environment/Biodiversity Unit A. Jaksto 4/9 2600 Vilnius
Netherlands	1 January – 31 December 2005	Prof. Dr. P.J.H. Reijnders Alterra P.O. Box 167 1790 AD Den Burg	Evelyn Geurtsen Ministry for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Department of Nature P.O. Box 20401 2500 EK The Hague
Sweden	1 January – 31 December 2005	Christina Rappe	Christina Rappe Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

			Blekholmsterrassen 36 10648 Stockholm
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1 January – 31 December 2005	Rachel Harris, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Ms Christine Rumble Dept. for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) Species Conservation Branch 2 The Square Bristol BS1 6EB

B. **Summary of Range State Details**

Range State	**Period Covered**	**Report Compiler**	**Coordinating Authority**
Estonia	1 September-March 2005	Ivar Jüssi	Coordinating authority has changed to State Nature Conservation Centre, appointed member to AC is Ivar Jüssi
Latvia	1 January – 31 December 2005	Valdis Pilats	

2. Institutions and Organisations mentioned in national reports

Country	*Name*	*Pages*
Belgium	Federal North Sea Administration	32
	Institute of Nature Conservation	25
	Management Unit of the North Sea Mathematical Models/Royal Belgium Institute for Natural Sciences (MUMM)	9,19,22,25,26,32
	Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences (RBINS), Brussels	22
Denmark	Danish Fisheries Research Institute	7
	Fisheries and Maritime Museum, Esbjerg	23,32
	Fjord&Bælt, Kerteminde	6, 13,27,,32
	National Environmental Research Institute	13,27
	Nordic Council of Ministers	6
	Zoological Museum, Copenhagen	23
Finland	Finnish Environment Institute	32
	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	9
France	Centre de Recherche sur les Mammifères Marins	14,23,27
	French Research Institute for the Exploitation of the Sea	14
Germany	German Oceanographic Museum, Stralsund	16,23,24,28,33
	GKSS Research Centre, Geesthacht	24
	German Oceanographic Data Centre	28
	Federal Agency for Nature Conservation	28,33
	Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency	14
	Leibniz Institute for Marine Research at the University of Kiel	16
	Maritime Institute	14
	Multimar-Wattforum Tönning	33
	Museum Alexander Koenig, Bonn	33
	National Park Office Schleswig-Holstein	16
	Research and Technology Centre, Büsum	7,16,23,24,28
	Society for the Conservation of Marine Mammals(GSM)	33
	Veterinary Agency of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Rostock)	24
	Veterinary Institute for Fish and Fishery Products, Cuxhaven	23
Lithuania	Lithuanian Sea Museum, Klaipeda	34
Netherlands	National Museum of Natural History	24
Sweden	Havets Hus, Lysekil	34
	Swedish Board of Fisheries	29
	Swedish Fishermens Orgainsation	29
	Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm	24,34
UK	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)	31
	Ceredigion County Council	17
	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)	17,21,26,29,3
	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DE-FRA)	8,17,22,24,25
	Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)	20
	Institute of Zoology (IoZ)	17,25,31
	Marine Awareness North Wales	34
	Natural History Museum, London (NHM)	24,25
	Scottish Agricultural College (SAC)	21,22,25,31
	Scottish Natural Heritage	21, 24,32

	SEAFISH Industry Authority (SEAFISH)	8
	Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU)	7
	Sea Watch Foundation	34
	UK Ministry of Defense (MOD)	17
	Welsh Assembly Government	25
	Wales Cetacean Group (WCG)	22

NEW MEASURES /ACTION TOWARDS MEETING THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

1. Direct Interactions of small cetaceans with fisheries

a. Investigations of methods to reduce bycatch

Belgium

No new information.

Denmark

GDnatur, DIFRES and F&B, together with Kolmården Djurpark (SE) and the Institute of Marine Research (NO) completed the NIPPER project - Nordic Interactive Pinger for Porpoise Entanglement Reduction - funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers (MiFi - Environment and Fisheries), the Kolmården Fundraising Foundation and the participating agencies (Contact: genevieve@gdnatur.dk). The objective of the NIPPER project was to test the interactive pinger (IP, emission of deterrent sounds activated by porpoises sonar) in a set-up simulating a bottom-set gillnet fishery. Accessory goals of the project were collecting data on the sonar source level of wild porpoises and on their acoustic activity in the wild, since knowing these is a prerequisite to optimizing the design of the interactive pinger and its porpoise detection (POD) function. Set of field trials were conducted in August 2004, May and September 205. The porpoise reaction to the array of IP was also compared to the porpoise reaction to an array of beacon-mode pingers. No difference in reaction was observed. The IP emitted 1-7% of the amounts of displacement sounds emitted by traditional, beacon mode pingers. The final report will be available by mid 2006.

DIFRES also conducted research on methods for reducing bycatch of dolphins in pelagic trawls. (Contact: fl@dfu.min.dk).

Finland

No new information

France

EU NECESSITY project to reduce cetacean bycatch in pelagic trawl fisheries , mechanical and acoustic devices (end of project in May 2007)

FR PROCET project (pelagic trawling and commercial pingers)

Federal Republic of Germany

Germany will embark on a pilot study in the Baltic to replace gill nets by fish traps in 2006. If the pilot study proves to be successful a full scale experiment on the replacement of gill nets by traps will be conducted in 2007. According to EC Council Regulation 812/2004 acoustic harassment devices (so-called pingers) became mandatory in the German North Sea as of 1 June 2005 and the phasing-out of drift-nets in the Baltic Sea commenced in 2005. No further or purely national measures for the mitigation of bycatch were implemented. In 2005, the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein changed its Coastal Fishery Ordinance inside the existing whale sanctuary of the island of Sylt (Wadden Sea National Park, North Sea) reducing dimensions of set-nets and prohibiting the destructive industrial fishery for the production of fish meal. The European Commission, however, did not endorse this measure for all EU fishing

fleets, so that it is currently only valid for German vessels (which were not practicing these fishing methods in the sanctuary anyway).

The acoustic signals sent with a high level of audio pressure by pingers could maybe result in injuries of the hearing of whales. Pingers are attached to fishing nets to scare away harbour porpoises. In this context a research project is funded by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV) which is conducted by the Research and Technology Centre (Büsum). Ears of freshly dead harbour porpoises from the North Sea and Baltic Sea are examined for potential impacts of sounds. This is the first broad analysis of pathologies in the ears of North and Baltic Sea harbour porpoises. In order to assess potential impacts, histo-pathological methods for cetacean inner ears (Ketten 1992) and computerized tomography (CT) were applied for the first time on animals from German waters. A report of the results was finished in 2005, but is not yet published. Fishing nets containing sound reflecting material (e.g. barium sulphate) have been tested by the research company "F^3" (Heikendorf/Kiel) in Canadian waters. It could be shown that porpoises detect reflective nets earlier and better than unreflective nets - as long as the porpoises make use of their echolocation system (Culik 2004).

Lithuania

No investigations on methods to reduce bycatches of harbour porpoises have been conducted so far.

Netherlands

The Dutch Authorities (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature & Foodquality) are in the process of carrying out an inventory on which measures (e.g. acoustic deterrent devices, on board observers) in the several Dutch Fisheries shall be applied in accordance with the EU Council Regulation 812/2004.

Investigations of methods to reduce bycatch

- The Netherlands takes part in the EU programme NECESSITY. This EU-funded programme (6^{th} PCRD) focuses on the interaction of pelagic trawls and small cetacean populations.
- The Dutch Authorities fund a project involving experiments to investigate the impact of commercially available acoustic deterrent devices on several North Sea fish species. The project is expected to be finished early 2006

Sweden

Research for alternative fishing gear is carried out in Sweden. Fyke nets for cods have been tried in the Baltic Sea as a replacement of cod nets. Unfortunately the fyke nets fishing efficiency was too low, and using them as a replacement for nets is not cost efficient. Another disadvantage was that they were not practical to use. Norwegian cod traps have been tried both on the West coast of Sweden and in the Baltic sea. These traps have not shown to be efficient and the numbers of caught cods were exceptionally low. A problem regarding the traps is that they do bycatch a significant amount of seals. The seals might get attracted to the bait or the fish that are trapped in the cage.

The pike perch fisheries in the Baltic have for a long time suffered from seal damages. We are investigating if it is possible to replace nets with fish traps both to reduce seal damages and to replace the net fishery with alternative fishing gear.
The traps used are so called push-up traps. They have been a success in Sweden in the salmon and white fish fisheries. They are now introduced in the pike perch fisheries and the results

are promising. In the salmon fisheries the traps mostly replace older traps but in the white fish and pike perch fisheries the traps replace nets and therefore reduce net effort.

The push-up trap fishing for pike perch in shallow waters.

Implementation of pingers: Swedish fishermen receive pingers for free. Fishermen have been informed about the regulations and also practical information about were and how they can obtain the pinger. A practical evaluation of how the pingers work in the Swedish net fisheries have been made and the report is included. A study on the sound propagation of pingers in shallow waters also been conducted and the report is expected soon.

United Kingdom The Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU), funded by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), has continued its work on mitigation measures. The following mitigation measures have been trialled:

- A 20cm mesh net panel inserted into the mid section of the trawl (intended to keep dolphins out of the small meshed part of the net where they are vulnerable to getting caught) was unsatisfactory because the extra netting increased drag on the net considerably and fish catches were very low.

- A stainless steel tubular grid with small-meshed sandeel netting as a cover for the escape hatch was trialled with variations in the position of the escape hatch.

- A flexible grid using the same sandeel netting as a cover hatch with variations in the position of the escape hatch.

The present measures are enabling a minimum escape rate of 22% (9 out of 41) of dolphins. It is likely, though not provable at this stage, that a proportion of animals that would have swam farther back into the net and drowned, are now turning around and swimming back out through the trawl mouth or through the large meshes in the front part of the trawl. Further research is being undertaken on escape hatches to improve their effectiveness. There are plans to trial a specially made large mesh net barrier in place of the steel grid and escape hatches that are more transparent and easier to open over the next year.

SEAFISH Industry Authority (SEAFISH) has conducted a study of the efficacy, costs and availability of different pinger prototypes. This indicated there were no pinger prototypes satisfactory for immediate use due to concerns about safety and effectiveness of pingers (problems with battery life). The industry has also raised concerns over the high cost of suitable pingers. Defra is working with the industry and the pinger manufacturers to address the issues and are currently conducting a final trial of the revised devices which is expected to report by the end of March.

b. Implementation of methods to reduce bycatch

Belgium
In 2005, next to the Belgian bottom-set gill net fishermen active in territorial waters, also two Dutch gill net fishermen were very regularly fishing in these waters, predominantly in the second half of the year. They especially targeted bass, with gill nets with a relatively large mesh size (15cm). In 2005 for the first time, a professional gill net fisherman reported bycatch of porpoises (in total 3), and another one stated that a professional fisherman had taken around 6 animals in 2004 (all in Belgian waters). One of the bycaught porpoises was delivered to MUMM for research purposes. In order to continue the established cooperation with fishermen, reports of bycatches are not made available on MUMM's website. Stranded bycaught animals however, are reported as such in the Online database.

Denmark
No information provided.

Finland
The COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 812/2004 of 26.4.2004 Laying down measures concerning incidental catches of cetaceans in fisheries and amending Regulation (EC) No 88/98 has been implemented by a decree from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The Commission Regulation for the observation scheme was enforced by a decree form the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in 30.12.2005.

France
Modification of practices in pelagic trawling (headline at 5 m depth)

Federal Republic of Germany
A fishing industry with ground gill nets for cod, turbot and plaice which are potential dangers for small cetaceans is only conducted by one cutter with a length of 17m in Schleswig-Holstein. The bycatch is documented.

Lithuania
Implementation on the basis of the Council Regulation (EC) No. 812/2004.

Netherlands
No actions so far.

Sweden
No information provided.

United Kingdom
Prior to enforcing the use of pingers under Council Regulation (EC) 812/2004 the UK Government wants to be sure that they are recommended to be used are safe and cost effective for the industry and offer maximum protection to porpoises.

c. Estimates of bycatch in set net and pelagic trawl fisheries

Belgium

Species	Estimated number of by-caught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)
All estimates are provisional			
Phocoena phocoena	3+	IVc	Recreational beach fisheries, probably gill nets; one animal was returned alive
Phocoena phocoena	3+	IVc	Professional gill net fisheries
Phocoena phocoena	1	IVc	Bottom trawl
Phocoena phocoena	11-15+ Total lethal bycatch: 17-22+	IVc	Unknown gear
Lagenorynchus albirostris	1	IVc	Unknown gear

Denmark

Species	Estimated number of by-caught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)
Harbour porpoise	No new estimate for 2004. The most recent estimate is that from 2001-2002 presented by Vinther and Larsen (2004)[1]		
Other species	Few, but the exact number and species involved unknown.		

Finland

No bycatch reported.

France

PETRACET project (pelagic trawling in area VII and VIII)

PROCET project (pelagic trawling in area VII and VIII), preparation of sampling schemes for observers (EC regulation n° 812/2004)

Species	Estimated number of by-caught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)

[1] Vinther and Larsen (2004): Updated estimates of harbour porpoise bycatch in the Danish bottom set gillnet fishery. J.Cetacean Res. Manage. 6(1): 19-24.

Common dolphin	- 10< **11** < 33	VII	FR Bass pelagic trawling
Common dolphin	24< **575** <1125	VIII	FR Bass pelagic trawling
Common dolphin	72 < **674** < 2694	All areas	All pelagic trawling
	Provisional results		

Federal Republic of Germany

Estimates of bycatch in set net and pelagic trawl fisheries

A scientific observer programme is implemented in the gill net fishery in the North Sea, but not in pelagic trawl fisheries on herring, mackerel and horse mackerel. No observer systems are implemented in the Baltic Sea.

Generally there are some porpoises, which get reported as bycatch of the German North Sea fishing industry. All in all the estimated number is between 15 and 30 bycatches of the German fishing industry. (Flores und Kock 2003) (SH)

The following by – catches and strandings should be regarded as absolute minimum numbers

Species	Estimated number of by-caught animals or stranded	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes, type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, (reference)
Phocoena phocoena[2]	3 (minimum estimate)	IVb, c	Gill net fisheries (BMELV)
	2 (minimum estimate)	IIIC (22,24)	Gill net fisheries (BMELV)
Phocoena phocoena	2	Baltic Sea area 22	Set net for cod (DMM[3])
Phocoena phocoena	some stranded	in the ICES quadrants 37F8 and 38F8	(Schleswig-Holstein)
Phocoena phocoena	16 found dead on the coast	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Baltic sea area 24)	from 12 Phocoena phocoena was made an autopsy
Balaenoptera physalus	found dead on a sand bank	island of Rügen	Autopsy made

Lithuania

Species	Estimated number of by-caught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)
Harbor porpoise	Two individuals	Lithuanian coastal zone	One found entangled in set nets in April 2001 A second was by-caught in a pelagic trawl in winter 2003.

Netherlands

Species	Estimated number of by-caught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)

[2] E: Harbour porpoise / D: Schweinswal / F: Marsouin
[3] DMM= Deutsches Meeresmuseum Stralsund

Harbour porpoise	Approx. 100	IV-c	Gillnet

Sweden

No further estimate of bycatch has been made since last year. A system where selected fishermen are paid to keep a special journal on bycatch and damages by marine mammals and birds has been introduced and will improve the quality of bycatch statistics and hopefully provide us with bycatch information. An interview survey was conducted in 2001. Swedish fishermen were interviewed regarding bycatches of seals, harbour porpoises and birds and gave the following estimates.

Species	Estimated number of by-caught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)
Phocena phocena	About 25 per year	III a, in the Swedish part of Skagerrak.	Bottom trawls
Phocena phocena	About 89 per year	IIIa, Swedish Kattegat Sea	Gillnets and trammel nets and pelagic trawls

United Kingdom

Estimates of harbour porpoise bycatch in set and gillnet fisheries have not yet been updated for 2003-4; figures of bycatch estimates for 2002 are presented below.

The estimate of common dolphin bycatch in the pelagic pair fishery for bass is extrapolated from the observed bycatch rates for the 2003-2004 season. Bycatch events in this year differed in a number of ways from those observed in this fishery between 2000-2003. Highest bycatch rates in previous years occurred in March, whereas in 2003-2004 the highest rates were found to be between December and February. Bycatch events were found to occur in areas closer to shore during this season and may suggest a change in the common dolphin distribution in the early months of the year compared to previous years. As yet it is unclear if this redistribution of animals was an anomalous event or is an indication of a more permanent change in distribution.

Species	**Estimated number of by-caught animals**	**Area (ICES area or more detailed)**	**Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)**
Harbour Porpoise	439 (95% CL 371-640)	IV	UK set nets 2002
Harbour Porpoise	48 (96% CL 25-68)	Via	UK set nets 2002
Common Dolphin	439 (95% CL 379-512)	VII ed	UK bass pair trawl 2003-2004

Species	Estimated number of by-caught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)
Common dolphin	139 (95% CLs: 90-207)	VIIe	Bass pair trawl fishery winter season of 2004/2005

d. Implementation of guidelines, new legislation, etc. to reduce bycatch

Denmark

On March 22, 2004, The Council of the European Union has adopted common regulations in order to reduce incidental bycatches of small cetaceans. Acoustic deterrent devices will progressively become mandatory in all European waters for gillnet fisheries carried out with vessels over 12m in length. These regulations also recommend 'research on new mitigation measures'. Denmark has taken these new regulations into account in its revised Action Plan for Reducing Incidental Bycatches of Harbour Porpoises endorsed in March 2005 (cf. below Implementation of guidelines…)

2. Reduction of disturbance to small cetaceans

a. Information on levels of disturbance (e. g. seismic surveys, new high-speed ferry routes, studies about acoustic impacts on cetaceans etc.)

Belgium

No more high-speed ferry routes between Belgium and the United Kingdom are in operation.

Denmark

The National Environmental Research Institute has been investigating the effects on harbour porpoises of wind farm constructions and operations at Nysted Offshore Wind farm and Horns Reef Offshore Wind Farm since 1999. The monitoring programs are based on stationary acoustic recordings (T-PODs) at both farms and in addition ship surveys at Horns Reef. The monitoring programs finished at the end of 2005. The final report on the projects will be available in 2006. Reports on the effect on harbour porpoises of the construction and operation phases are available at the following web pages:
http://uk.nystedhavmoellepark.dk/upload/pdf/marsvin_2004.pdf and
http://www.hornsrev.dk/Engelsk/default_ie.htm
The two most recent reports are the followings:
- Tougaard, J., Carstensen, J., Wisz, M.S., Teilmann, J., Bech, N.I., Skov, H., Henriksen, O.D., 2005. Harbour Porpoises on Horns Reef - Effects of the Horns Reef Wind Farm. Annual Status Report 2004 to Elsam Engineering A/S. 69 pp. Available at:
http://www.hornsrev.dk/Miljoeforhold/miljoerapporter/Porpoises%20Horns%20Reef%202004%20final.pdf
- Tougaard, J., Carstensen, J., Teilmann, J. & Bech, N.I. 2005: Effects of the Nysted Offshore Wind Farm on harbour porpoises. - Annual status report for the T-POD monitoring program. Report request. Commisionned by ENERGI E2 A/S. National Environmental Research Institute. 51 pp.

In September 2005, The Rühr University (Germany) resumed a project investigating the hearing sensitivity of harbour porpoises at the Fjord&Bælt, investigating the effect of man-made noise on harbour porpoise hearing, especially offshore windmill construction works, and to provide guidelines for safe intensity levels for sound emissions during underwater operations.

Finland

No new information.

France

First meeting in November 2005 between French marine biologists and the French Navy at the Admiralty in Paris, organised by the Ministry of the Ecology and Sustainable Development and the Admiralty. The aim of this first contact was to exchange knowledge on effects

and mitigation measures. A workshop on this issue will be organised in Brest in September 2006 during a meeting on Marine Environment Characterisation.

A report on the seismic and acoustic activities of the French oceanographic fleet made by IFREMER should be available.

Experiments on the effect of some commercial pingers and prototypes was carried out on common dolphins by CRMM and IFREMER (video to be exhibited at the 2006 ECS conference); similar project planned in 2006 (IFREMER, Oceanopolis Brest and the Navy)

Other studies on acoustic impact are done through the EU NECESSITY project.

In the Pelagos sanctuary in the Mediterranean Sea, studies are conducted on mitigation measures to avoid or at least limit ship-strike such as training sessions, observers on board, identification of areas at higher risk of collision.

Federal Republic of Germany

<u>High speed vessels, ship collisions with marine mammals</u>

A two-year Research & Development (R&D) project investigating the effects of high speed vessels on the marine environment was launchedat the end of 2005. The project is part of the environmental research plan (UFOPLAN 2005, code FKZ 205 85 128) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU, Division N I 4) and is coordinated by the Federal Environment Agency (UBA, Division I 3.2). The research work is jointly carried out by the Maritime Institute, University of Applied Sciences (Bremen) and GAUSS mbH (Bremen), a private research institution working on issues of environmental protection and safety in maritime shipping. Close cooperation with the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), the ASCOBANS Secretariat and other official bodies such as the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH), the CMS[4] Secretariat and the Wadden Sea National Park Administrations is envisaged in this project. The provision of an intermediate report is scheduled for December 2006 and the final report, including an English executive summary, will become available in December 2007.

The research project is based on the results of an expert workshop organised by UBA and GAUSS in 2004. The workshop identified concerns associated with high speed shipping and future research needs regarding the impact of high speed vessels on the marine environment, in particular on marine mammals and seabirds. The decision to conduct R&D project was further stimulated by two international resolutions: the ASCOBANS resolution “Effects of Noise and of Vessels” (Resolution No. 5, MoP4, Denmark 2003), which invites Parties to conduct further research into the effects of high speed ferries on small cetaceans, and an adopted resolution of the 8th Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Kenya 2005, concerning cetaceans and i.a. underwater noise and ship strikes. Another impetus for the project is the pending need for an investigation of how high speed vessels may affect protected areas in the North and Baltic Sea, i.e. the existing Wadden Sea National Parks and marine Natura 2000 sites under designation.

The project has the objective to investigate all potential effects of high speed vessels on the marine environment, taking into account the natural setting of the affected areas and their protection status. Special consideration, however, is given to the effects of high speed vessels, in particular underwater sound emissions and collision risk, on marine mammals and seabirds. The project covers the following range of aspects:

- Sound emissions to air and water caused by the operation of high speed vessels and

[4] Convention on Migratory Species

their potential impacts on marine mammals and seabirds;

- The collision risk of high speed vessels with marine mammals and seabirds;
- Wave formation and sediment erosion caused by the operation of high speed vessels in shallow coastal waters and their potential impacts on benthic organisms;
- Oxygen levels and turbidity of the water body affected by the operation of high speed vessels and potential impacts on plankton;
- Fuel consumption and air emissions caused by the operation of high speed vessels;
- Potential socio-economic impacts of high speed vessels on residents and tourisms;

Due to their high engine power, high velocity and technical construction, high-speed vessels cause high underwater noise emissions that extend over large areas. The frequency spectrum of these emissions is broad due to the different construction types and engines that are typically used for high speed vessels. The R & D project will therefore investigate different types of high-speed vessels (i.e. catamarans, monohulls, motorboats etc.). Based on technical data available for these ships, the underwater sound characteristics (i.e. sound pressure levels, frequency spectra, spatial range etc.) will be calculated.

The characteristics of the underwater sound emissions will be used to assess potential impacts on native marine mammals (Phocoena phocoena, Phoca vitulina[5], Halichoerus grypus[6]), at the individual and at the community level. On an individual level, effects may range from a permanent or temporary hearing loss, to masking of communication and echo-location sounds to stress and behavioural changes. The magnitude and severity of effects will depend on the characteristics of the sound source, the distance between source and individual and sound propagation under water, as well as the animal's hearing ability. In order to assess effects on a community level, including an evaluation of the collision risk, a spatial analysis will be conducted by interlacing data on abundance and distribution of mammal species with data on routes and traffic of high speed vessels in the North and Baltic Sea. Special emphasis will be given to marine protected areas (Wadden Sea National Parks and Natura 2000 habitats). If significant impacts on marine species by high speed vessels are identified, technical and/or regulatory impact mitigation measures will be elaborated in cooperation with the competent national and international institutions.

Offshore wind farms

The research project MINOSplus (Marine Warm-blooded Animals in the North Sea and Baltic Sea: Foundations for Assessment of Offshore Wind Farms) started 2002 and was continued in summer 2004 and will go on until April with a similar structure as the previous project MINOS. The German Oceanographic Museum (Stralsund), the Research and Technology Centre (Büsum), the Leibniz Institute for Marine Research at the University of Kiel, the Ruhr-University Bochum, the Institute for fishing industry Hamburg and the National Park Office Schleswig-Holstein are involved.
The project has two emphases concerning marine mammals.

1. The reporting of the spatiotemporal appearance of marine mammals in the German bay and in the German part of the Baltic Sea.
2. The determining of the impact of acoustic emissions on marine mammals.

The acoustic impact of wind turbine related sound emissions in harbour porpoises is tested within a study conducted at the Fjord & Baelt in Kerteminde, Denmark. A nine year old male harbour porpoise has been trained to participate in an underwater measurement of its acoustic

[5] E: Common Seal / G: Seehund / F: Phoque veau-marin
[6] E: Grey seal / G: Kegelrobbe / F: Phoque gris

sensitivity. The method applied in this study is the measurement of Auditory Evoked Potentials (AEPs). In 2005 the absolute hearing threshold has been measured at frequencies between 44.8 kHz and 140 kHz as part of a complete audiogram.

A study on the potential impact of the operational sound emissions of wind turbines on the sound detection capabilities of harbour porpoises has been conducted by the Research and Technology Centre (Büsum), University of Kiel, at the Dolfinarium Harderwijk. The study was conducted on an eight year old male harbour porpoise and included measurements of its absolute hearing threshold at frequencies at low and mid-frequencies (up to 16 kHz). The method applied was the measurement of Auditory Evoked Potentials (AEPs). Subsequently the masking effect of the operational wind turbine sounds on the animal's perception of low frequency sounds was tested. At a received level of this noise of 128 dB re 1 µPa a significant masking of the animal's acoustic perception of the test signals occurred whereas at 115 dB re 1 µ Pa the documented effect was not significant. In the context of the project also the dispersal and the migrations of porpoises and seals as well as the hearing of porpoises is researched. The background is to avoid installing Offshore-wind farms in the main areas of marine mammals if possible and to minimise sound emissions for porpoises.
This project could be useful for the reduction of acoustic disturbance. The final report of the first stage of the MINOS project is existent since fall 2004. 2005 there has been an intern progress report of the following project MINOS+ as well as a seminar of status.

Seismic Measures: One survey with a total length of 1400 km was carried out during 18. - 30 Oktober 2005 in the southern part of the German North-Sea area.

Fast running ferries: There is only one fast running ferry at the coast of the north sea in the exterior area (Cat. No.1)which achieves a maximum speed of 44kn. It runs between Helgoland, Amrum, Sylt and Büsum but it is only allowed to run 16 kn in the area of the sailing order (= area of the old national-park till 1999) in the fairway. Another fast running ferry runs in the interior zone. For it an exception is essential: it is allowed to run 24 kn as maximum in the fairway and 12kn as maximum in the fairway of the protected zone. With different shipowners (exception: Deutscher Reederverband), Yard-alliances and others proceedings have been completed with the result to keep the maximum speed of 16kn also in the exterior area of the Wadden Sea and in some corridors the speed of 24 kn.

Lithuania

No measures on disturbance reduction have been implemented.

Netherlands

Implementation of guidelines, new legislation, etc. to reduce disturbance.

Sweden

Fast Ferries

Name/type of craft	**Route (return)**
HSS Stena Carisma	Gothenburg-Fredrikshavn
HSC Gotland	Nynäshamn-Visby

United Kingdom

In 2005, the Institute of Zoology (IoZ) continued a Defra funded project to examine the feasibility of using formalin-fixed auditory tissue (ears) collected from UK stranded cetaceans to investigate potential auditory impacts of anthropogenic noise exposure. The research is in collaboration with the Forschungs und Technologiezentrum Westkueste, Buesum (Germany).

Ceredigion County Council, supported by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), continued their study of cetacean site use and boat traffic along the Marine Heritage Coast and Cardigan Bay cSAC. The majority of encounters between bottlenose dolphins were recorded at New Quay, the home port of several dolphin-watching trip-boat operators. The introduction of a code of conduct has had less impact on the users of recreational motor boats than trip-boat operators. Speed boats, in particular, were consistently less likely to stop when close to dolphins and the report highlighted the necessity to further promote adherence of the code of conduct with speed boat operators in order to reduce the risk of propeller or collision injury from encounters with these vessels.

In order to reduce potential disturbance to cetaceans in UK waters, the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) has undertaken a number of measures during 2005 to address the impacts of military sonar and noise in the marine environment. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are undertaken for a wide range of their activities including sonar. Such EIAs cover the marine habitat of the operating area concerned and the species likely to be encountered. The EIAs are used to better tailor the activity and ensure that potentially damaging effects are identified during the planning stage of the exercise and their impact is reduced to an absolute minimum.

The MOD is also undertaking research into the issue of active sonar and its potential impact on the marine environment. The UK approach to addressing the issue of active sonar and the environment is to combine research exploiting environmental protection technology expertise with more fundamental research undertaken by internationally recognised experts and Centres of Excellence. The research programme can be broadly divided into two areas – applied research and research to further fundamental understanding. The applied research has been undertaken by QinetiQ and mainly focuses on developing and applying technologies to help mitigate the risk to the environment by active sonar transmissions. One of these studies is ongoing, while another was completed in early 2005. Brief details of these studies are as follows:

Passive acoustic marine mammal detection, classification and localisation (DCL). QinetiQ have been developing the Marine Mammal Acoustic Detection System (MMADS) under MoD funding. The overall aim is to develop MMADS to be fully integrated with in-service sonar. This has already been demonstrated with a version integrated with the S2031E towed array, and a version integrated with the RN S2050 hull mounted array will be tested shortly. The current version of MMADS has excellent detection capability and can classify down to "class" level (i.e. it can differentiate between baleen whales and odontocetes for example). The next phase of the work is to develop the classification down to species level, and fully develop the localisation capability prior to entering initial service with the RN in 2006/ 07. MMADS has been successfully tested at sea on many occasions, including National Undersea Research Centre (NURC) trial SIRENA 03, and also in support of S2087 trials.

Integrating sensors to form a marine mammal Detection Classification and Localisation (DCL) suite. This study, which was completed in early 2005, looked at how best to integrate the sensors found on a T23 frigate to provide an integrated 24-hour all weather marine mammal DCL capability. There had been two papers previously investigating how effective the individual sensors on the T23 would be at marine mammal DCL and the results of these had been incorporated into the study.

In addition during 2005, MOD has continued to develop an Environmental Risk Management Capability (Sonar) (ERMC(S)) system, which is designed to be used in support of the in-service tactical active sonar capability; it will not be used for echo-sounders or other navigational sonar equipment.

ERMC(S) will provide a robust, repeatable and transparent method of assessing the environmental risk to, and impact on, marine life caused by sonar activity, and to manage this impact by providing advice on mitigation measures. ERMC(S) will complete a full and compliant EIA in a matter of hours. The system (essentially an intelligent database of hydrographic, climatological, legislative and biological data) will calculate the risk of potential adverse effects on marine fauna within an area where sonar is being operated by the Royal Navy. ERMC(S) will provide a number of options for mitigation of the calculated risk, and will recommend the most effective. This assessment will be made in conjunction with sonar operating parameters, operational limitations and other real-time inputs to calculate the level and type of environmental risk involved in using active sonar at any given time and location. ERMC(S) will be used to inform decisions on the use of active sonar in the planning and operational stages of sea trials, exercises and operations for single and multiple platforms. It will cover (up to the limits of available data) all deployable locations world-wide and is intended as a mobile capability, available 24 hours a day and for eventual use on all platforms with an active sonar capability. This facility will enhance the robust EIA methods, which currently inform the decision-making process both during operations and training as well as in the planning process. It will also ensure that MOD continues to be compliant with relevant environmental legislation and policy, and best practice.

During 2005, under the DTI-funded estimating, measuring and controlling the Environmental effects of man made noise on the marine environment project, Subacoustech Limited has carried out tests on fish using the dBht metric that has been developed in order to assess their reaction to noise and measure their hearing sensitivity. Significant differences were identified between laboratory scales and open water tests and therefore the role out phase of the project will entail the provision of 6 dBht (Species) Sound Level Metres to be tested in the field.

b. Implementation of guidelines, new legislation etc. to reduce disturbance

Belgium

In April 2004 the construction and exploitation of an offshore windfarm was licensed. The windfarm of 60 turbines will be located on the Thorntonbank, approximately 27 km offshore. During the construction phase (probably starting in 2007), measures will have to be taken for avoiding disturbance of, or harming marine mammals (ramp up procedures for pile driving operations, deployment of pingers, …). On 22 September 2005 a change in the planning schedule, in the size of the turbines (up to 5MW each) and type of foundation (gravitary instead of monopole) was requested. This request was accompanied by an EIA, which is being dealt with by the authorities in 2006. More information
is available at MUMM's website (http://www.mumm.ac.be).

Denmark

No new guidelines or legislation implemented.

Finland

Nothing to report

France

Nothing to report

Federal Republic of Germany

Schleswig-Holstein tries to sue out a speed limit in front of Dithmarschen reaching out to the 3 nm border and 12 nm border in front of North-Frisia (outer border of the national park).
For that a modification of the sailing arrangement has to be made for North Sea national-parks. A working group with participation of all relevant people came to the following conclusion: the speed limit in the inner zone of the Wadden Sea shall be 12 kn (in fairways 16 kn, in protected areas out of the time of protection 8 kn), in the exterior area 16kn (in some corridors 24kn). This proposal has been aligned between the German Lander and can be handed to the competent minister of traffic.

Sonar tests

Military sonar tests are carried out by applying the NATO URC diver and marine mammal risk mitigation rules. These include the selection of the trial area based on an environmental scoping study, visual and acoustical surveillance of the area 30 minutes before, during and 30 minutes after the operation and a ramp up procedure for at least 30 minutes starting with 160 dB re 1 Pa or the lowest possible setting. Operations are suspended on detecting marine mammals within the safety range and sightings are reported. If transmissions stop for more than 30 minutes the start up procedure is repeated.

Lithuania

No new guidelines or legislation implemented.

Netherlands

Nothing to report.

Sweden

Nothing to report.

United Kingdom

Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) was given the responsibility of producing a Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code, which will help to protect and promote enjoyment and to raise awareness about how best to watch marine wildlife with minimal disturbance. The Code, which was produced in association with a range of marine interest groups, was launched for public consultation on 7 November 2005 for a period of 3 months. The final version of the Code will be published in Autumn 2006.

UKDEAL is a web-based service, which provides guidance information about the UK's offshore oil and gas industry. It is now the definitive source for the navigation data from seismic surveys shot on the United Kingdom Continental Shelf (UKCS). The continued endeavour to fully populate DEAL makes it a valuable tool for current operators, regulators and new entrants to the UK. Through the regulatory efforts of Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the strengthening of Petroleum Operation Notice 9 (PON9) [Record and sample requirements for surveys and wells] and Petroleum Operation Notice 14a (PON14a) [Application for consent and notification of intention to carry out oil and gas surveys and shallow drilling] legislation in 2005, more surveys for 2004/5 have been loaded on to DEAL. In 2006, the further development of the regulations will call for complete datasets to be submitted for the 2000 to 2005 period. New tracking procedures that have been adopted by DTI and DEAL, which will help make sure that submissions of the datasets are completed and submitted within the twelve-week period for survey completion.

Subacoustech Limited has also been working on a feasibility and demonstration study into active and passive detection of marine mammals, which was also funded by DTI. The aim of this project is to provide guidance information and a demonstration system to enable the proper design of active or daylight sonar systems to monitor marine mammals during hazardous offshore activities such as underwater blasting or seismic surveys. A new system of detection has been developed and has been evaluated at sea in February 2006.

3. Protected areas for small cetaceans

a. Measures taken to identify, implement and manage protected areas

Belgium
On 14 October 2005 a Royal Decree was issued (Official Journal of 31 October 2005) establishing three SPA's (European Birds Directive) and one SAC, and further proposing one SAC (European Habitats Directive). None of these areas were proposed specifically for protecting cetaceans.

Denmark
The Danish implementation of the EU Habitat Directive included previously the designation of several sites, which were considered important for harbour porpoises (cf. National Report 1998). However, new findings led to a revision of this list and the Danish implementation of the EU Habitat Directive includes now the designation of only one site (The Wadden Sea), which is considered important for harbour porpoises. It will in the future be considered whether other areas should be included.

Finland
Nothing to report

France
Natura 2000 marine site procedures in progress: 4 sites have been proposed to the E.C.on the Channel and Atlantic coast for Harbour porpoise and 12 for Bottlenose dolphin.

New law on Marine Protected Area voted (march 2006). Marine Protected Area in Iroise Sea in project (public inquiry in autumn 2006).

Federal Republic of Germany
The protected area for whales off the islands of Sylt and Amrum established in 1999 is a preferred area of habitation for porpoises with regular appearance of calves. Fishes with a high risk of bycatch, such as

1) Fishery working with ground anchored gill nets racked higher than 2.00m
2) Industrial fishery
3) Drift net fishery

is not allowed in the protected zone for whales at the beginning of 2005 a new amended regulation for inshore fishery has become effective, which tightens regulations dealing with point one according to new findings: It is not allowed to fish with ground anchored gill nets racked higher than 1.30m and with an aperture size higher than 150mm. Additional a compulsory registration of caught whales as bycatch has been introduced.

The implementation in the EC- fishing legislation still has to be done. The notification of the new more strict regulation has already been requested by BMELV in Brussels, but Denmark has already signalised its refusal. This is why the banes are still relevant for Germany only.

In the protected zone for whales speed limits shall be introduced (already mentioned). The plan is to set a speed limit of 16 kn and two relatively small corridors with a speed limit of 24kn. Measures have been taken to identify, implement and manage protected areas. On 26 May 2004, Germany nominated three "Proposed Sites of Community Importance" (pSCIs) in its North Sea EEZ[7] and five pSCI in its Baltic Sea EEZ, some of them especially to protect the harbour porpoise as a species of Annex II of the Habitats-Directive (92/43/EC).

Lithuania
No protected areas for cetaceans are identified in Lithuania.

Netherlands

No specific areas for small cetaceans have been designated. In the framework of the Habitats Directive, initially 5 areas in the Dutch sector of the North Sea have been proposed as marine protected areas. They will provide for some protection of small cetaceans.

Sweden
No area has been identified as a protected area for harbour porpoises in the Baltic. In the Skagerrak three Natura 2000 sites have been identified for harbour porpoises. Management plans are being produced by the County council of Västra Götaland.
The sites are:
Vrångöskärgården (SE0520001)
Koster(SE0520133)
Väderöarna (SE0520143)

United Kingdom
SNH (statutory nature conservation advisers to Government in Scotland) has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the University of Aberdeen for monitoring the bottlenose dolphins within the Moray Firth SAC between 2004 and 2012. The results will include information on the number of dolphins in the SAC, trends in abundance and usage of the site and will be used by SNH to report on the condition of the bottlenose dolphins as a feature of the SAC.

Work continued on the development of agreed protocols for the monitoring of cetaceans (bottlenose and common dolphins/harbour porpoise) in Wales by CCW and included conditions for licensing photo-identification. The Wales Cetacean Group (WCG) contributed to the cetacean sightings newsletter that included updated species distribution maps and summaries of ongoing work.

The Cardigan Bay SAC and PenLLyn SAC Relevant Authority Groups are developing their management plans for the sites.

4. Further research on small cetaceans

a. Implementation of schemes to use and gain information from stranded cetaceans

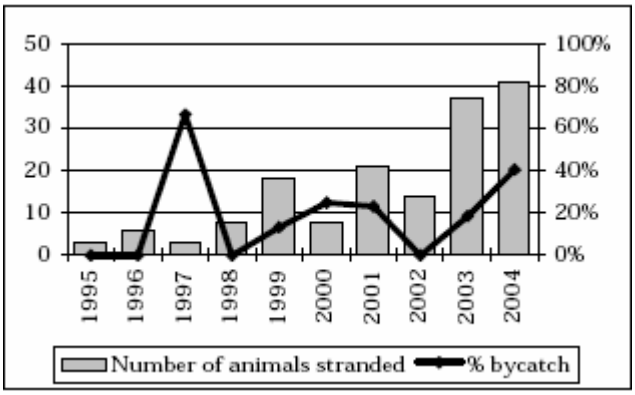
Belgium
In 2005 a record number of (dead, stranded and bycaught) harbour porpoises was counted in Belgium:
- 79 washed ashore dead;

[7] EEZ= Exclusive Economic Zone

- 3 were found dead at sea;
- 2 washed ashore alive, and were transported by MUMM to the rehabilitation centre at Harderwijk, The Netherlands, where they died;
- 1 washed ashore alive, and was returned alive to sea;
- 1 got stuck (alive) in a fishing net (recreational beach fisheries); it was returned to sea alive;
- 1 was bycaught by a bottom trawler;
- 3 were bycaught by one of the professional gill net fisherman; 1 was delivered to MUMM.

In 2005 one dead juvenile white-beaked dolphin washed ashore; this animal had been bycaught in (unknown) fishing gear.

Most of the carcasses were available for research, and were investigated according to the state of decomposition. The percentage of stranded porpoises that was bycaught between 1995 and 2004 is given in the figure below (MUMM/RBINS, unpublished). The percentage is calculated using the total number of porpoises washed ashore for which a cause of death could be determined (117 animals out of 159). In total, bycatch was the cause of death of at least 27 animals, or on average 23% of all stranded animals between 1995 and 2004 for which a cause of death could be determined. The highest absolute number of bycaught animals up to 2004 was observed in 2004: 13 (or 41% of the animals for which a cause of death could be determined).



A report on the results of the autopsies performed on cetaceans in 2005 is in preparation. A preliminary assessment of bycatches in 2005 (data MUMM/RBINS and Ulg, unpublished) is the following:
- Certain (lethal) bycatch: 17+ porpoises, of which 1 bottom trawl, 3+ professional gillnet, 2+ recreational beach fisheries (indirect information); additionally 1 animal bycaught in recreational beach fisheries, put back to sea alive. As in the years before, gutted animals were found (3). Fishermen sometimes cut bycaught animals open hoping they will sink out of sight.
- Probable bycatch: 4+ porpoises
- Certain bycatch: 1 white-beaked dolphin (unknown gear)

The total number of dead porpoises for which a cause of death could be determined was 59 (including the two animals that stranded alive, and died at Harderwijk), the percentage 'bycatch' as the cause of death was 36% (preliminary figure).

Denmark

A Danish contingency plan concerning marine mammals includes guidelines for handling stranded cetaceans.

All other stranded cetaceans than porpoises are systematically collected and tissue samples and skeletons kept in the collections of the two responsible museums, Fisheries and Maritime museum, Esbjerg and Zoological Museum, Copenhagen. Samples from stranded harbour porpoises are opportunistically collected.

The following observations of stranded *cetaceans* were recorded in 2005:

- Harbour porpoise: 143 (some are probably discarded by-caught animals)
- White-beaked dolphin: 10
- White sided dolphin: 2
- Common dolphin: (supposedly) 1
- Fin whale: (supposedly) 1

Finland

Please cf. 5 below

France

National strandings network since 1970. National annual report, sample and tissue bank, data base, national coordination CRMM/Université de La Rochelle.

Federal Republic of Germany

Strandings of dead harbor porpoises along the coast of Lower Saxony have increased significantly since 1999/2000. The trend lasts until now. The reason why is still unknown but increasing population or changes of food resources are discussed. Most of the dead animals were found in the first half of the year.

A strandings network for cetaceans is in force since the 1950's for the coast of the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in the Baltic Sea and since 1990 for the coast of Schleswig-Holstein in the Baltic Sea and North Sea. The coast of Lower Saxony in the North Sea is covered too. Necropsies of all stranded and by-caught cetaceans (2004: 147 small cetaceans) were carried out by the Research and Technology Centre (FTZ Büsum), the Veterinary Institute for Fish and Fishery Products (Cuxhaven) and the German Oceanographic Museum (Stralsund).
For 2005, no results were reported until now. The 2005-report is expected in spring 2006. According to personal communication with the scientists from FTZ, no unusual illnesses or particular epidemics were found.

The stranding network (see previous annual national report for 2003) operated routinely to its full extent. Necropsies of all stranded and by-caught cetaceans were carried out as usual by the Research and Technology Centre (Büsum), the Veterinary Institute for Fish and Fishery Products (Cuxhaven) and the German Oceanographic Museum (Stralsund). The latter cooperated newly with the Veterinary Agency of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Rostock). In 2005 so far 151 stranded and 3 by-caught harbour porpoises were studied in Schleswig-Holstein (110 from the North Sea, 37 from the Baltic, 4 of unknown origin). Projects of the Research and Technology Centre (Büsum) and the GKSS Research Centre (Geesthacht) to investigate the genetic structure of parasites from the respiratory tract of harbour porpoises (see previous annual national report for 2003) were continued.
A research project aimed at investigating the feeding ecology of harbour porpoises in the North Sea and Baltic Sea started in 2005 funded by the Federal Agency of Nature Conservation. Analyses of the stomach contents and fatty acids in the blubber are performed.

Lithuania

There are no such schemes implemented.

Netherlands

- Autopsies are carried out on a number of stranded animals. Stomach content and other samples were collected
- A project has been started to investigate the impact of windfarms, close to the Dutch North Sea coast, on cetacean distribution and abundance. The so-called t_0 study has been completed. This study involves the deployment of T-PODs and simultaneous ship-surveys in both the study area as well as reference areas.

Implementation of schemes to use and gain information from stranded cetaceans

The hitherto operational cetacean stranding network scheme in The Netherlands was operated by the National Museum of Natural History. After retirement of the project leader, the continuation of the stranding network is discussed**.**

Sweden

Post mortem investigations are carried out on all small cetaceans by-caught or found stranded in the Baltic. The animals should be brought fresh to the Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm where the investigations are conducted. From harbour porpoises by-caught or stranded on the Swedish west coast, in most cases only a piece of tissues from the dorsal fin is sampled. In some cases whole specimens from the Swedish west coast are sampled. For further details prior information sent to ASCOBANS. During 2005-2006 blubber samples from 44 harbour porpoises from the Baltic Sea (Swedish, Polish and German waters) and from the Swedish west coast (the Skagerak and Kattegat) are analyzed for organochlorines such as PCB and DDTs.

United Kingdom

During 2005, under the Defra funded UK Cetacean Strandings Project, a total of 699 cetacean strandings comprising 14 species were reported to the Natural History Museum (NHM) from England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Bailiwick of Jersey (see Annex 1). All UK cetacean strandings (together with by-caught cetaceans and those seen floating dead at sea) continue to be recorded on the NHM's National Cetacean Strandings database.

As part of this research the IOZ and the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) are continuing to investigate diseases and causes of death in UK stranded cetaceans. Pathological, other data and tissue samples from these investigations continue to be archived centrally in the Poseidon database and tissue archives held jointly at the IOZ, SAC and NHM.

In 2005, 168 necropsies of stranded cetaceans (of 9 species) were conducted in the UK, and a further two necropsies were conducted of by-caught harbour porpoises retrieved from fishing vessels. Harbour porpoises (n=122) and common dolphins (n=25) were the most commonly stranded species to be examined. Bycatch was identified as the cause of death of 14/25 common dolphins, 24/122 harbour porpoises, and 1/5 striped dolphins. As in previous years, the harbour porpoise and common dolphins diagnosed as bycatches predominantly originated from the southwest of England (mainly Cornwall and Devon) during the winter (December-March). In addition, 15/122 harbour porpoises were diagnosed as fatally attacked by bottlenose dolphins in Scotland (mainly within the Moray Firth-Firth of Forth area), west Wales and the south-west of England.

Another 21 harbour porpoises died due to heavy parasitic infections and/or pneumonias caused by combinations of parasitic, bacterial and mycotic infections and 7 porpoises had fatal generalized bacterial or fungal infections. 3 common dolphins and 1 striped dolphin died as a result of meningo-encephalitis, 1 common dolphin and 1 Atlantic white-sided dolphin had fatal generalized bacterial infections and 1 common dolphin died as a result of a heavy gastric parasite burden. Starvation caused the death of 23 harbour porpoises, 2 common dolphins, 1 striped dolphin, 1 Atlantic white-sided dolphin, 1 white-beaked dolphin and 1 Risso's dolphin. Physical trauma (often of unidentified origin) caused the death of a further 10 harbour porpoises. A single necropsy was conducted on a minke whale (the only mink whale examined during the period of this report) that was found entangled in a creel rope. Finally, 10 harbour porpoises, 4 white-beaked dolphins, 3 common dolphins, 3 Atlantic white-sided dolphins, 1 striped dolphin, 1 Risso's dolphin and 1 pilot whale that were apparently healthy died after stranding alive.

In addition to the strandings co-coordinators funded by Defra, the Welsh Assembly Government continues its funding of the Welsh strandings Co-ordinator in conjunction with CCW. The cetacean most commonly found stranded on the Welsh coast is the harbour porpoise and the most common cause of death for this species has changed from bycatch to attack from bottlenose dolphins over the duration of the project.

IOZ in collaboration with Forschungs und Technologiezentrum Westkueste, Buesum (Germany) have continued work in 2005 on a project funded by Defra to examine the feasibility of using formalin-fixed auditory tissue (ears) collected from UK-stranded cetaceans to investigate potential auditory impact of anthropogenic.

b. Research on abundance, population structure etc.

Belgium

SCANS II

In 2005 part of the oceanographic vessel BELGICA ship time was dedicated to SCANSII (30 May to 9 June 2005).

Sightings

Numerous sightings of harbour porpoises were reported to MUMM in 2005, most of these between January and April, but also some in summer months. Eric Stienen, Mark Vandewalle and other researchers at the Institute of Nature Conservation (now INBO: Research Institute for Nature and Forest) reported, besides a large number of sightings of harbour porpoises, a sighting of two long-finned pilot whales and two sightings (resp. 2 and 3 animals) of bottlenose dolphins during their seabirds at sea surveys in 2005. INBO and others reported a few sightings of white-beaked dolphins to MUMM.

Number of porpoises present in Belgian waters

Researchers at INBO estimated (roughly) that between 2.000 and 5.000 porpoises were present in Belgian waters in late winter-spring 2005 (Eric Stienen, personal communication). From sightings during two aerial observation flights (modified pollution control flights) performed by MUMM it was (roughly) estimated that the average density of porpoises in Belgian waters in March and April 2004 was between 0.2 to 0.6 per square km, or 650 to 2100 animals (HAELTERS & JACQUES, 2006). Numbers of porpoises in Belgian waters in summer and autumn are much lower.

EC infringement procedure

In 2003 the European commission opened a case against Belgium (a.o.) with the aim of obtaining more information about the implementation by Member States of article 11 and 12 of the European Habitats Directive, regarding cetaceans (case 2003/2081). In a letter dated 18 February 2004 Belgium responded to the request, but in analyzing the information the EC

concluded that not all measures had been taken to implement article 11. To indicate that Belgium has implemented articles 11 and 12 for cetaceans, additional information was sent tot the EC by 19 February 2006. A basis for this additional information is presented in HAELTERS & JACQUES, 2006.

Publications, communications

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FONTAINE, M., BAIRD, S., TOLLEY, K., DUKE, S., OIEN, N., VIKINGSSON, G., BLOCH, D., SIEBERT, U., ADDINK, M., SMEENK, C., JAUNIAUX, T., ROGAN, E., RIDOUX, V., LLAVONA, A., SEQUEIRA, M., FERREIRA, M., BIRKUN, A., ÖZTÜRK, B., ÖZTÜRK, A., DEFFONTAINE, V., DAS, K. & MICHAUX, J., 2005. Phylogeography of harbour porpoise (Phocoena phocoena) in the easthern North Atlantic and in the Black Sea explored by the analyses of nuclear and mitochondrial DNA. Biennal conference on the biology of marine mamals. San Diego, California, USA, December 11-16, 2005.

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HAELTERS, J. & KERCKHOF, F., 2005. A remarkable increase in the number of stranded harbour porpoises *Phocoena phocoena* at the Belgian coast, in: MEES, J. & SEYS, J. (Ed.), 2005. VLIZ Young Scientists' Day, Brugge, Belgium 25 February 2005: book of abstracts. VLIZ Special Publication, 20: pp. 39

HAELTERS, J., MACLEOD, K. & VAN MOL, B., 2005. Belgica cruise 2005-13 report: SCANS II &
BELCOLOUR (30 May to 8 June 2005). 16p.

HAELTERS, J. & NOIROT, I., 2005. The influence of active SONARs on marine mammals : a new concern for the Belgian Defence. Advisory Committee of ASCOBANS , Brest, France, 12-14 April 2005, 3p.

HAELTERS, J. & JACQUES, T.G., 2006. De bescherming van walvisachtigen in Belgische wateren: bijkomende informatie gericht aan DG Leefmilieu van de federale Overheidsdienst volksgezondheid, veiligheid van de voedselketen en leefmilieu, m.b.t. de uitvoering door België van de HabitatrichtlijnArt. 11 en 12 voor wat betreft walvisachtigen. Koninklijk Belgisch Instituut voor Natuurwetenschappen, Beheerseenheid Mathematisch Model Noordzee (BMM), Brussel. 14p.

JAUNIAUX, T., DAS, K., BRENEZ, C., HAELTERS, J. & COIGNOUL, F., 2005. The Belgian stranding network. European Cetacean Society workshop on national Stranding Networks, La Rochelle 2005.

Denmark

NERI conducts regular ship surveys for harbour porpoises at Horns Reef as part of the monitoring program for Horns Reef Offshore Wind Farm. Annual status reports are available and the final report will be ready in 2006.

Tougaard, J., Carstensen, J., Wisz, M.S., Teilmann, J., Bech, N.I., Skov, H., Henriksen, O.D., 2005. Harbour Porpoises on Horns Reef - Effects of the Horns Reef Wind Farm. Annual Status Report 2004 to Elsam Engineering A/S 69 pp. Available at:

http://www.hornsrev.dk/Miljoeforhold/miljoerapporter/Porpoises%20Horns%20Reef%202004%20final.pdf

In 2005 Denmark supported the SCANS II (Small Cetaceans in the Europeans Atlantic and North Sea II) dedicated to estimate the abundance of small cetaceans in European Atlantic waters. Extensive ship and aerial surveys were conducted in Juky 2005, to which NERI, F&B and DHI participated to. Data on abundance for Danish and other EU waters will be available in 2006. Project information and preliminary results can be found at: http://biology.st-andrews.ac.uk/scans2/

Finland
Please cf. 5 below.

France
Aerial surveys in Brittany (Oceanopolis), and in the Bay of Biscay (CRMM and CRELA/Université de La Rochelle)

Monitoring of the coastal group of bottlenose dolphins (Oceanopolis Brest in Iroise Sea), photo-identification, home range, population structure...

Photo identification of bottlenose dolphins of the Bay of Mont Saint Michel and Cotentin (GECC)

Boat surveys on cetaceans in the southern Bay of Biscay (GEFMA); relationship between cetacean populations and climate change (MNHN in the framework of a regional programme on the marine environment)

SCANS II (French contractant: CRMM/ULR).

Data collection of opportunistic sightings (CRMM/ULR, GECC, GEFMA, Oceanopolis Brest).

Systematic boat survey of cetaceans in relation to oceanographic, planktonic and pelagic fish patterns in the Bay of Biscay (programme PELGAS, Ifremer, CRMM/ULR)

Ferry observer surveys between Roscoff and Cork will start in April 2006 to September 2006 (Oceanopolis Brest/Orca).

Federal Republic of Germany

Aerial surveys were conducted in the German North Sea and Baltic Sea by the Research and Technology Centre (Büsum) throughout the year 2005 similar to the three previous years (see previous annual national report for e.g. 2003, 2004). Using the circle-back method from Hiby the strip width as well as the g(0) factor for different environmental conditions were calculated for the survey team and applied to the flown tracks. The study area included the EEZ and the 12-nm-zone. Along the German North Sea coast a density gradient from the northern to the southern part was discovered: Highest densities were observed around the area of Sylt Outer Reef, which includes the area west off the island of Sylt and Amrum close to the Danish border. This sharp density gradient was most pronounced in summer (June-August). In spring (March-May) local hotspots were discovered in the area Sylt Outer Reef but also north of the East Frisian islands, in the area around Borkum Reef Ground. Surveys on the Doggerbank, a submerged sandbank located near the westernmost boundary of the EEZ, revealed high densities in spring and summer as well. In summer low densities were found off the East

Frisian islands. In autumn (Sept.-Nov.) harbour porpoise density is lowest and the general distribution in the German Bight appeared to be less clumped. Thus, the north-south gradient appeared to be virtually absent in autumn. In the Baltic Sea study area nearly all sightings in 2005 were limited to the area west of the island of Rügen. Just three single sightings were made east of Rügen. A west-east density gradient was detected in the summer months, characterised by high local densities in the Kiel Bight and around the island of Fehmarn. Within the scope of MINOS and MINOSplus (see above) the Research and Technology Centre (Büsum) continued research in the Whale Protection Area off the islands of Sylt and Amrum by means of visual surveys from boats and porpoise detectors (POD).

The R+D project (of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation; see annual report for 2004) for the implementation of the 'Jastarnia recovery plan for the Baltic harbour porpoise' was continued by the German Oceanographic Museum (DMM), the University of Potsdam (UP), and the Research and Technology Center West coast (FTZ). The three-year research project commenced in late 2004 and entails acoustic recordings with click detectors in the easternmost German EEZ (by DMM), genetic analysis of population structure (by UP), the creation of a web-based data base and necropsies of by-caught and stranded individuals (both by FTZ). First results indicated a strong decline in vocal registrations from west to east and a distinct genetic population differentiation between the central Baltic proper and the Sounds area with possibly a wide zone of overlap though (for more detail see also the report of the Jastarnia Group).

In 2005, The German Oceanographic Museum studied the abundance and the habitat use of harbor porpoises in the German part of the Baltic Sea. In three ongoing research projects the focus was set on designated marine protected areas, the possible influences of offshore wind power plants and the implementation of the ASCOBANS Recovery Plan for the harbor porpoise in the Baltic (Jastarnia Plan). Up to 39 measuring sites with click-detectors (T-PODs) were operated throughout the area. The project revealed significant geographical differences in harbor porpoise registrations with a prominent decrease from west to east. The number of registrations was much lower in wintertime compared to the summer of 2005 for the German Baltic in the area from the westernmost part up to the Darss Sill. Both findings matched previous results strongly supporting geographical differences and seasonal changes in the relative porpoise density in the German Baltic.

Collecting data of harbour porpoise sightings continues. Most of the sightings have been recorded during springtime. A scientific review of the data is still on the task list. A project was outlined to investigate the annual distribution of harbour porpoises at selected sites by T-PODs. It will be started when funding becomes available.

For possible military sonar test areas, e.g. the Skagerrak, Sogne-Fjord and Celtic Sea, studies concerning the abundance, distribution and migration of cetaceans were or will be carried out. Another investigation deals with the possibility to detect cetaceans with military sonar systems used in a passive mode. Therefore a database containing signals and parameters of various cetacean vocalizations is in progress. A data base including species characteristics and their abundance is under way as a risk mitigation tool for the German Navy. National and international obtained marine mammal sighting data shall be included as well as predictions for potential trial areas.

Lithuania

No research on abundance and population structure.

Netherlands

The Netherlands participated actively in the preparation and execution of SCANS II, and they are involved in processing the acquired data.

Sweden

The Swedish Fishermens Organisation and the Swedish Board of Fisheries are estimating the presence of harbour porpoises in the south Baltic Sea, the areas covered by the 812 regulation. Porpoise click detectors (PCL:s) will be placed on or close by fishing gear during an extensive time period.

United Kingdom

No new information

c. Research on the effects of pollutants on cetacean health

Belgium

Viability of the Northeast Atlantic harbour porpoise and seal population (Pollution and biomarker study, contract EV/XX/806): coordinated by Jean-Marie Bouquegneau, contact person: K.Das (krishna.das@ulg.ac.be)

The goals of this project are to study (1) the ecological status of harbour porpoises in the northeastern Atlantic Ocean and (2) to evaluate the impact of the environment using biomarkers. To attain these objectives, 3 approaches are established: (1): determination of biological parameters (age, sex, length, weight,…), (2): health status and cause of death and (3): analyses of contaminants in tissues and identification of possible biomarkers.

Viability of the Northeast Atlantic harbour porpoise and seal population (Genetic and Ecologicalstudies, Contract number: EV/12/46): coordinated by Jean-Marie Bouquegneau, contact K.Das (krishna.das@ulg.ac.be)

The goals of this project are (1) to characterise the genetic diversity of porpoises (thesis subject of M.Fontaine in collaboration with J.Michaux, Zoogéographie, Université de Liège) and (2) a better comprehension of the food ecology of porpoises and seals through the determination of isotope levels (C and N) in muscles and blood (theses subject of O.Drouget, laboratoire d'Océanologie, Université de Liège).

Evaluation of the immunotoxicity of mercury, zinc, polychlorobiphenyls and methyl sulfonyl polychlorinated biphenyls on cytokine secretion by marine mammals: coordinated by K.Das

The goal of this research project is to study the risk on the immune system of porpoises and seals caused by exposure to methylmercury, to zinc and to polychlorobiphenyls. This project is executed in cooperation between the University of Liège (Belgium), The Westkueste, Kiel University, Germany (Dr.U.Siebert) and the GKSS Forschungzentrum, Germany (Dr.S.Fonfara).

Development of a method to identify specific biomarkers related to the effects of dioxins-like
compounds on the immune system: coordinated by E.Depauw, thesis project of C.Brenez

The goals of this study are to identify (1) the immunotoxicological effects of dioxines et furanes on mammalian (human and marine mammal) lymphocytes through exposition of cell

cultures to contaminants, (2) an alternative method to identify the effects by protein analysis of the exposed cells, and (3) biomarkers that can be used on mammal tissues.

Publications, communications

DAS, K., FONFARA, S., JAUNIAUX, T., BEINEKE, A. & SIEBERT, U., 2005. Cytokine mRNA expression in the blood of harbour porpoises: indicator of inflammatory diseases? 19th Annual conference of the European Cetacean Society, La Rochelle (France), 2-7 April 2005.

DROUGUET, O., SIEBERT, U., JAUNIAUX, T., REIJNDERS, P., HOLSBEEK, L., LEPOINT, G. & DAS, K., 2005. Ecological and pathological factors related to trace metal concentrations in harbour seal *Phoca vitulina* in the North Sea. 19th Annual conference of the European Cetacean Society, La Rochelle (France), 2- 7 April 2005.

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JAUNIAUX, T., BRENEZ, C. COLMAGRO, E., DAS, K., HAELTERS, J. & COIGNOUL, F., 2005. Lesions observed on by-caught harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) along the Belgian and northern French coastline, from 1995 to 2005. 16th biennal conference on the biology of marine mammals. San Diego, California, USA, December 11-16, 2005.

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Denmark

No new project but a publication of previously obtained results:
Strand, J., Larsen, M.M. and C. Lockyer. 2005. Accumulation of organotin compounds and mercury in harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) from the Danish waters and West Greenland. *Science of the Total Environment* 350 (2005):59-71.

Finland

None

France

Transfer and bioaccumulation of heavy metals (mainly mercury, lead and cadmium) in cetaceans (CRELA/ULR)

Federal Republic of Germany

No new findings known

Lithuania

None.

Netherlands

The co-ordination of the IWC POLLUTION 2000+ project has been continued, with focus on the harbour porpoise post mortem calibration part.

Sweden

See Above

United Kingdom

In 2005, tissue samples collected by the IOZ and SAC from over 70 UK-stranded cetaceans were analysed at the Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) Burnham Laboratory, Essex for a range of contaminants including 5 organochlorine pesticides, 25 individual chlorobiphenyl congeners (Σ25CBs), 12 trace elements, 3 butyltins and 11 brominated diphenyl ether congeners (polybrominated flame retardants). These included a retrospective analysis of samples from ten bottlenose dolphins that had stranded in Scotland between 1994 and 2001. A long-term dataset developed jointly by IoZ, SAC and CEFAS since 1989 now contains pathology and toxicology data for over 600 UK-stranded cetaceans (mainly harbour porpoises). A case-control study involving 257 UK-stranded harbour porpoises was published in 2005 (Jepson et al. 2005). It demonstrated statistically significant associations between elevated Σ25CBs levels and infectious disease mortality (using physical trauma cases as controls), suggesting that PCB exposure is influencing individual and possibly population-level mortality effects.

Reference

Jepson, P.D., Bennett, P.M., Deaville, R., Allchin, C.R., Baker J.R. & Law, R.J. (2005) Relationships between PCBs and health status in UK-stranded harbour porpoises (Phocoena phocoena). Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry 24, 238–248

5. Public awareness and education

a. Measures taken in the fields of public awareness and education to implement or promote the Agreement

Belgium

Information on stranded animals and on sightings, is given on the website of MUMM (in Dutch, English and French): http://www.mumm.ac.be/EN/Management/Nature/search_strandings.php. For reporting sightings, an email account can be used: dolphin@mumm.ac.be (this email account is mentioned in the 'Belgian' ASCOBANS folder.

For notifying unusual matters in the marine environment (including strandings), the federal North Sea administration (Fod Leefmilieu) created a free telephone number (the 'Bruinvislijn'), which can be reached 24h/24h at 0800/92.595 (notifying by the public).
A website (http://www.zeezoogdieren.be) provides the public with useful information on marine mammals in the southern North Sea (Belgium and the Netherlands), and includes a discussion forum.

Denmark

The Fjord&Bælt houses 3 harbour porpoises for research purposes and public education and awareness. Through exhibition and talks, the center provides information to the general public and special groups on harbour porpoises in general, the bycatch problem and the effort undertaken to mitigate it in Denmark. The Fjord&Bælt web page (www.gounderwater.com) also contains information on harbour porpoise conservation and has a direct link to the ASCOBANS web page.

The Fishery and Maritime Museum is a public museum, which offers lessons on cetaceans as well as exhibitions on whales and whale strandings. Its homepage; www.hvaler.dk reports on whales and whale sightings in Danish waters.

Finland

Finland has continued the harbour porpoise sighting campaign and received information of only one sighting of one single animal. A working group has been preparing an action plan for harbour porpoise. The work will be finalized at the latest by spring of 2006. Old and new harbour porpoise sighting data has been put together by a biology student. This information has been transferred to Finnish species data base in the Finnish Environment Institute. From there the data will be transferred to the Baltic harbour porpoise database

France

Permanent exhibition, two panels on the agreement added in 2005- (Oceanopolis).

French Press releases during the 2005 ASCOBANS advisory committee in Brest.

Federal Republic of Germany

During one of the regular so called BLANO[8] workshops, an information exchange of federal and state governmental institutions regarding the North Sea and Baltic Sea, the German Oceanographic Museum (S. Bräger) introduced ASCOBANS, the Jastarnia Plan, and its research project for the implementation of the Jastarnia recovery plan (see above) at the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) on the island of Vilm (30 May 2005).

During the annual BSH symposium in Hamburg, the German Oceanographic Museum (S. Bräger) gave a presentation on "conservation measures for cetaceans in North Sea and Baltic Sea under ASCOBANS" (8 June 2005).

To promote the „International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise" (every 3rd Sunday in May), a press conference was held and a press release distributed by the organisers, the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), Vilm, the German Oceanographic Museum (DMM), Stralsund, and the GSM - Gesellschaft zum Schutz der Meeressäugetiere (Society for the Conservation of Marine Mammals). A representative from the German Press Agency, dpa, was present and, as a result, several articles appeared in the media. Subsequently, Petra Deimer gave a lecture at the Alexander König Museum in Bonn on behalf of ASCOBANS.

Following the annual tradition since 2002, the GSM has again written to some 165 sailing clubs and marinas as well as several yachting magazines to raise awareness of its project "Sailors on the lookout for harbour porpoises". As usual, the results of the project will appear in the official German document at AC/ASCOBANS. The media feedback is still very good, and the dissemination of the request for sightings is widespread. There have been two interesting follow-ups to the project – a report on TV (NDR[9]-Baltic Report), and as a result of an idea from the GSM for the series "Küstenwache" (Coastguard) which was broadcasted by ZDF[10] (= 2nd German TV chain) at prime time, a storyline was built around the subjects of harbour porpoises and bycatch.

[8] BLANO= Bund- Länder- Ausschuss Nord- und Ostsee
[9] NDR= Norddeutscher Rundfunk – the regional TV chain of Northern Germany
[10] ZDF = Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen – an important nation-wide TV chain in Germany

A press conference was held and a joined press release of the DMM Stralsund and the German NGO "Gesellschaft zum Schutz der Meeressäugetiere" for the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise was delivered on the 10th of May.
A special event focussing on harbour porpoises in the North and the Baltic Sea was held in October.
Several public talks were held on different locations (University Greifswald with NGO NABU, at the information centre of the national park "Vorpommersche Boddenlandschaft) and a number of occasional and regular events namely for children and young took place at the museum and its branches.
The museum provides information and samples on marine mammals inhabiting the Baltic Sea and research projects in its exhibition and offers brochures and literature to its visitors (581.406 in 2005)

Three different brochures were produced by the alliance for conservation and the national-park service:
1. Porpoises
2. Whales and Seals
3. Whales and Seals in the Wadden Sea

The Multimar Wadden sea forum in Tönnig is highly visited as house for exhibitions. The skeleton of a Sperm Whale (Physeter catodon) is there and the visitors get a lot of information about porpoises.

The nature protection society „Schutzstation Wattenmeer" has recruited an assistant, who is making inquiries working on public relations in 2004 and 2005 about porpoises. In cooperation with the WWF there is also a report dealing with protected areas in the southern and central North Sea and marine mammals in preparation.

Public awareness is raised during lectures in various for a Particular emphasis is given on ASCOBANS and its goals (BMELV)
The National Park Administration started to inform the public about the local distribution of harbour porpoises on the Internet (see http://www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.niedersachsen.de/master/C12535070_N6905445_L20_D0_I5912119.html)

Lithuania
- Lectures for schoolchildren and students on protection of marine ecosystems including cetaceans as well as local harbor porpoises are permanently organized in the Lithuanian Sea Museum display.
- ASCOBANS posters have been exhibited at the booking office and aquarium hall of the Lithuanian Sea Museum.
- ASCOBANS posters and leaflets have been circulated throughout secondary schools of Klaipeda.
- Publication in daily press of Klaipeda on the International Harbor Porpoise Day.
- Harbor porpoise postcards have been distributed among Lithuanian Sea Museum visitors on the International Harbor Porpoise Day.

Netherlands

A Dutch translation of the ASCOBANS folder has been produced in co-operation with Dr. J. Haelters, from Belgium. The folder is and will further be distributed to all relevant institutions, organizations and private persons involved and/or interested in cetaceans.

Sweden

The International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoises, in May 2006, was celebrated at "Havets Hus" (an aquarium in Lysekil, on the Swedish West Coast). The Swedish Museum of Natural History in Stockholm has a web site where sightings of live porpoises are collected. The web page is now under reconstruction, and is almost done.

United Kingdom

Centre for Marine Awareness for North Wales, 2002-2005 (Marine Awareness North Wales) - support for an information centre and education officer in Bangor, North Wales. This includes an education outreach scheme involving visits to schools, press releases and events implementing community involvement in marine biodiversity action plans.

Marine Environmental Education for Cardigan Bay and Environs, 2002-2005 (Sea Watch Foundation) - support for an education officer, managing volunteers and providing educative and interpretive material. The educational resource will be in line with the National Curriculum in Wales.

Cetacean surveys in Wales – training and use of volunteer observers, 2002-2005 (Sea Watch Foundation). Work includes the promotion of a national sightings scheme, the training of volunteer participants in this network and the provision of sightings data on cetaceans encountered during training. In 2004, 80 people, including local volunteers, attended the courses.

In 2005, the NHM hosted three one-day sessions for staff and volunteers from the Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Devon Wildlife Trust and Durlston Marine Project (Dorset). The sessions were designed to provide training in skeletal identification of cetaceans commonly found stranded in UK waters, in order to maximize the quality and quantity of data recovered from around the south west of England. More courses are planned.

6. Other relevant news

None

B. NEW ACTIONS/MEASURES BY NON-PARTY RANGE STATES

Estonia*

1. Direct Interactions of small cetaceans with fisheries

a. Investigations of methods to reduce bycatch

No investigations carried out.

b. Implementation of methods to reduce bycatch

No methods implemented.

c. Estimates of bycatch in set net and pelagic trawl fisheries

No bycatch estimated.

2. Reduction of disturbance to small cetaceans

a. Information on levels of disturbance (e.g. seismic surveys, new high-speed ferry routes, studies about acoustic impacts on cetaceans, etc.)

No new information.

b. Implementation of guidelines, new legislation, etc. to reduce disturbance

No changes in legislation since the last reporting period, no guidelines implemented.

3. Protected areas for small cetaceans

a. Measures taken to identify, implement and manage protected areas

No new activities since last reporting period. Works with trilatelar (EST/LAT/LIT) LIFE-Nature project "Marine Protected Areas in the Eastern Baltic Sea" (Baltic MPAs)" launched in august 2005 is going on. Identification of areas important for Harbour porpoises in Eastern Baltic Sea is part of project

.

4. Further research on small cetaceans

a. Implementation of schemes to use and gain information from stranded cetaceans

Small scale public awareness campaign is going on. Part of this campaign is the collection of data about any record of present and historical abundance of harbour porpoises, information about strandings included.

b. Research on abundance, population structure etc.

Acoustic survey with porpoise detectors started in September 2004 is going on.

c. Research on the effects of pollutants on cetacean health

Not planned in nearest future.

5. Public awareness and education

a. Measures taken in the fields of public awareness and education to implement or promote the Agreement

Newspaper articles about harbour porpoises and 15 min. story in national TV nature programme.

Latvia

1. Direct Interactions of small cetaceans with fisheries

a. Investigations of methods to reduce bycatch

No

b. Implementation of methods to reduce bycatch

No

c. Estimates of bycatch in set net and pelagic trawl fisheries

Species	Estimated number of by-caught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)
Phocoena phocoena	0	Coastal waters of Latvia	

2. Reduction of disturbance to small cetaceans

a. Information on levels of disturbance (e.g. seismic surveys, new high-speed ferry routes, studies about acoustic impacts on cetaceans, etc.)

No

b. Implementation of guidelines, new legislation, etc. to reduce disturbance

No

3. Protected areas for small cetaceans

a. Measures taken to identify, implement and manage protected areas

No

4. Further research on small cetaceans

a. Implementation of schemes to use and gain information from stranded cetaceans

No

b. Research on abundance, population structure etc.

No

c. Research on the effects of pollutants on cetacean health

No

5. Public awareness and education

a. Measures taken in the fields of public awareness and education to implement or promote the Agreement

Celebration of International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise 2005.

ANNEX 1

Table 1: Cetacean strandings in United Kingdom & Bailiwick of Jersey during 2005

	ENGLAND, WALES, ISLE OF MAN & BAILIWICK OF JERSEY	**SCOTLAND**	**NORTHERN IRELAND**	*TOTAL*
FAMILY BALAENOPTERI-DAE				
Minke whale	1	13	-	14
Fin whale	1	-	-	1
Unidentified rorqual	2	-	-	2
FAMILY DELPHINIDAE				
Short-beaked common dolphin	84	10		94
Common/striped dolphin indet.	-	2	-	2
Long-finned pilot whale	6	13	-	19
Risso's dolphin	-	13	-	13
White-sided dolphin	1	8	-	9
White-beaked dolphin	1	7	-	8
White-sided/white-beaked in-det.	1	-	-	1
Killer whale	-	2	-	2
Striped dolphin	5	2	-	7
Bottlenose dolphin	4	3	-	7
Unidentified dolphins	24	13	1	38
FAMILY PHOCOENIDAE				
Harbour porpoise	318	121	3	442
FAMILY PHYSETERIDAE				
Great sperm whale	-	5	-	5
FAMILY ZIPHIIDAE				
Sowerby's beaked whale	-	1	-	1
Cuvier's beaked whale	-	3	-	3
Beaked whale sp. indet.	-	1	-	1
Unidentified toothed whales	9	4	-	13
Unidentified cetaceans (other)	11	5	1	17
TOTALS	468	226	5	699