

Third Annual Compilation of National Reports

Bonn
November 1999



ASCOBANS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	5
A. GENERAL INFORMATION	7
1. SUMMARY OF PARTY DETAILS	7
2. INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS MENTIONED IN NATIONAL REPORTS	8
B. NEW MEASURES/ACTION TOWARDS MEETING THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE 2ND MEETING OF PARTIES	9
1. DIRECT INTERACTION OF SMALL CETACEANS WITH FISHERIES	9
a. <i>Investigations of methods to reduce bycatch</i>	9
Belgium.....	9
Denmark	9
Federal Republic of Germany	9
Poland	10
Sweden.....	10
United Kingdom	10
b. <i>Implementation of methods to reduce bycatch</i>	11
Belgium.....	11
Denmark	11
Federal Republic of Germany	11
Poland	11
Sweden.....	11
United Kingdom	11
c. <i>Estimates of bycatch in set net and pelagic trawl fisheries</i>	12
Belgium.....	12
Denmark	12
Federal Republic of Germany	12
Poland	12
Sweden.....	12
United Kingdom	13
2. REDUCTION OF DISTURBANCE TO SMALL CETACEANS	13
a. <i>Information on levels of disturbance (e.g. seismic surveys, new high-speed ferry routes, studies about acoustic impacts on cetaceans, etc.).....</i>	13
Belgium.....	13
Denmark	13
Federal Republic of Germany	14
Poland	15
Sweden.....	15
United Kingdom	15
b. <i>Implementation of guidelines, new legislation, etc. to reduce disturbance</i>	15
Belgium.....	15
Denmark	16
Federal Republic of Germany	16
Poland	16
Sweden.....	16
United Kingdom	16

3. PROTECTED AREAS FOR SMALL CETACEANS	16
<i>a. Measures taken to identify, implement and manage protected areas</i>	<i>16</i>
Belgium.....	16
Denmark.....	17
Federal Republic of Germany	18
Poland	18
Sweden.....	18
United Kingdom.....	19
4. FURTHER RESEARCH ON SMALL CETACEANS	19
<i>a. Implementation of schemes to use and gain information from stranded cetaceans.....</i>	<i>19</i>
Belgium.....	19
Denmark.....	19
Federal Republic of Germany	20
Poland	20
Sweden	20
United Kingdom.....	20
<i>b. Research on abundance, population structure etc.</i>	<i>21</i>
Belgium.....	21
Denmark.....	22
Federal Republic of Germany	22
Poland	22
Sweden	22
United Kingdom.....	22
<i>c. Research on the effects of pollutants on cetacean health</i>	<i>23</i>
Belgium.....	23
Denmark.....	23
Federal Republic of Germany	23
Poland	23
Sweden	23
United Kingdom.....	23
5. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION	24
<i>a. Measures taken in the fields of public awareness and education to implement or promote the Agreement</i>	<i>24</i>
Belgium.....	24
Denmark.....	24
Federal Republic of Germany	24
Poland	25
Sweden	25
United Kingdom.....	25

Preface

The present volume contains the Third Compilation of National Reports pursuant to Article 2.5 of the ASCOBANS Agreement, which stipulates that “*a brief report shall be submitted by each Party to the Secretariat ... each year. The report shall cover progress made and difficulties experienced during the past calendar year in implementing the agreement*”. According to Article 4.1 of the Agreement “*the Secretariat shall ... present to the Coordinating authorities, each year no later than 30 June, a summary of the Party reports submitted in accordance with Article 2.5.*”

Regrettably, for a number of reasons this compilation does not entirely live up to the requirements set out in the articles cited above. Firstly, the deadline of 30 June could not be met since several reports were submitted after that date. Secondly, just as in the previous years, not all National Reports submitted in 1999 concerned exactly the period of 1 January to 31 December of the preceding calendar year. Consequently this compilation covers the period between 6 May 1997 and August 1999, rather than the calendar year 1998. Lastly, one party did not submit a report this year.

The Secretariat feels that despite these shortcomings this compilation presents a useful overview of measures taken to promote the aims of ASCOBANS and hopes that it will serve as a basis for discussion and further activities in the Area of the Agreement.

Rüdiger Strempel
Executive Secretary to ASCOBANS

Bonn, November 1999

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Summary of Party Details

Party	Period Covered	Report Compiler	Coordinating Authority
Belgium	6 May 1997 – 31 March 1999	Dr. T. Jacques / J. Haelters	Dr. Thierry Jacques, MUMM* Ministère de la santé publique et de l'Environnement, Gulledulle 100 1200 Bruxelles
Denmark	1998	Palle Uhd Jepsen in cooperation with the Danish Institute for Fisheries Research	Mr. Palle Uhd Jepsen National Forest and Nature Agency, Nature and Wildlife Section, Ålholtvej 1 6840 Oksbøl
Federal Republic of Germany	1999	Joachim Schmitz Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety	Dr. Tilman Pommeranz** Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety Postfach 120629 53048 Bonn
Poland	1 January – 31 December 1998	Iwona Kuklik Hel Marine Station	Dr. Zygmunt Krzeminski Ministry of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry, Department for Nature Conservation Ul Wawelska 52/54 00-922 Warsaw
Sweden	1998	Peter FunegÅrd, National Board of Fisheries in cooperation with Stockholm University and Gothenburg Natural History Museum	Mr. Lars Thorell Swedish Environmental Protection Agency 106 48 Stockholm
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1 November 1997 – 31 December 1998	Dominic Whitmee Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, Species Conservation Branch	Ms. Christine Tucker*** Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, Species Conservation Branch, Tollgate House, Houlton Street, Bristol BS2 9DJ

* MUMM is now a department of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS)

** Dr. Pommeranz has meanwhile replaced Mr. Gerhard Adams as Germany's Coordinator

*** Ms. Tucker has meanwhile replaced Mr. Salmon as the United Kingdom Coordinator

2. Institutions and Organisations mentioned in national reports

	Name	Country Report	Page
Denmark:			
Danish Institute of Fisheries Research	Denmark, Sweden	22	
Fjord and Belt Center	Denmark	22	
Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fishery	Denmark	11	
University of Odense	Denmark	9	
Federal Republic of Germany:			
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Meeresforschung	Germany	24	
Federal Agency for Sea Traffic and Hydrography	Germany	14	
Federal Ministry of Defence	Germany	14	
Government of Schleswig-Holstein	Germany	18	
National Park Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea	Germany	14	
University of Tübingen, Department of Animal Physiology	Germany	9	
University of Kiel, Oceanographic Institute (Forschungs- und Technologiezentrum Westküste)	Germany	14, 20	
Republic of Ireland:			
Irish South and West Fishermen's Organisation	United Kingdom	10	
National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations	United Kingdom	10	
University College Cork, Ireland	United Kingdom	10	
Poland:			
Hel Marine Station	Poland	25	
Sweden:			
Environmental Protection Board	Sweden	20	
Gothenburg Natural History Museum	Sweden	7	
Institute of Coastal Research	Sweden	15	
National Board of Fisheries	Sweden	7, 12, 15, 20	
Stockholm University, Department of Zoology	Sweden	7, 22, 23	
Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	Sweden	7	
United Kingdom			
Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)	United Kingdom	19, 20, 22	
Countryside Council for Wales	United Kingdom	23	
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)	United Kingdom	15, 16, 20, 21	
Institute of Zoology	United Kingdom	20, 23	
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	United Kingdom	10, 19, 22	
Ministry of Defence	United Kingdom	15	
The Moray Firth Partnership	United Kingdom	19	
National Museums of Scotland	United Kingdom	21	
Natural History Museum	United Kingdom	21	
Scottish Agricultural College, Veterinary Science Division	United Kingdom	10, 21	
Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency	United Kingdom	10	
Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department (SOAEFD)	United Kingdom	10, 24	
Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU)	United Kingdom	10, 11, 13, 19, 22	
University of Aberdeen	United Kingdom	20	
University of St Andrews	United Kingdom	20	

B. NEW MEASURES/ACTION TOWARDS MEETING THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE 2ND METING OF PARTIES

1. Direct interaction of small cetaceans with fisheries

a. Investigations of methods to reduce bycatch

Belgium

An assessment of the extent of recreational beach fisheries using set nets (known to occasionally cause the entanglement and subsequent drowning of marine mammals) has been made. Due to the ever-increasing use of these nets (in recreational fisheries) a regulation will probably be established in the immediate future. Bottom set gill nets deployed from the beach will be banned. Efforts to reduce the illegal recreational use of bottom set nets at sea are being continued.

Denmark

A Joint Task Group has assessed the interaction between fisheries and harbour porpoises. In the autumn of 1998 a report entitled: "Action Plan for Reducing Incidental Bycatches of Harbour Porpoises" was compiled by the Group. The plan was submitted to the Minister of Environment and Energy and the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fishery for approval.

The report will be presented at the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Meeting. As far as the National Forest and Nature Agency is informed, a Danish group of Environmental NGOs (The Green Liaison Committee) will present a complaint against the Action Plan at the AC Meeting.¹

The EU-funded project BYCARE, in which the Danish Institute for Fisheries Research is a partner, and which in part addresses the problem and scale of harbour porpoise bycatches by the Danish fleet in the North Sea, has now been completed (December 1998). The final report is not yet available for public review.

Federal Republic of Germany

The Federal Government granted financial support for the project „Investigation of Echolocation Behaviour of Harbour Porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) as a Basis for Protection Measures“ (University of Tübingen, Germany, Dept. of Animal Physiology, and University of Odense, Denmark)

¹ Date of report: 23.3.1999. Denmark presented the report as planned at the 6th Advisory Committee Meeting in Aberdeen (12 – 14 April 1999). The complaint was presented as Document 9 at that meeting.

Objectives of the project: Understanding the echolocation behaviour of foraging and orientating harbour porpoises confronted with modified and unmodified nets as a basis for the development of porpoise-friendly nets in order to reduce bycatch.

Poland

No new methods.

Sweden

As part of the EU-funded project BYCARE bycatch of harbour porpoises has been investigated in the Swedish part of the Skagerrak and Kattegat. The BYCARE project was completed in December 1998. The final report is not yet available for public review.

United Kingdom

In July 1997 the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU) began a four year MAFF-funded research project to investigate the impact on cetacean populations of the UK gill net fishery in the North Sea and the large-mesh gill and tangle net fisheries off the Scottish West coast. The results of this research will provide new information on the extent of any cetacean bycatches in these fisheries and in the light of this information, MAFF will decide what, if any, additional fisheries management measures are required. This project will also monitor bycatch rates in the pelagic trawl fisheries (see below).

SMRU, in collaboration with University College Cork, the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations and the Irish South and West Fishermen's Organisation, have been attempting to demonstrate the efficacy of pingers in reducing porpoise bycatch in set gill nets on the Celtic Shelf. Although obtained outside the ASCOBANS area, the results would be useful in other areas. So far, the trial has been plagued by technical problems, as the pingers selected have not performed as expected. Nevertheless much has been learned about the practical implications of attempting to use this technology to reduce porpoise bycatch which will be pertinent throughout the ASCOBANS area.

The Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) Veterinary Science Division carried out necropsies on porpoise carcasses that were recovered from the BYCARE project operated by SMRU in Scotland. In addition, a number of bycaught animals were examined as part of the Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department (SOAEFD) voluntary reporting scheme. Bycatch was identified as the cause of death in a number of other animals during necropsy studies on stranded animals.

The Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency continued to complete quayside questionnaires at Scottish ports where there is gill or tangle net activity on behalf of SOAEFD during 1997 and 1998. The results of these surveys are still being analysed.

b. Implementation of methods to reduce bycatch

Belgium

No information provided.

Denmark

The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fishery is the implementing authority. The ministry is prepared to take the necessary measures to reduce the incidental bycatches of harbour porpoises. The following measures are considered by the Task Group: 1) development and use of acoustic alarms; 2) modifications to fishing equipment; and 3) regulation of certain types of fishery.

Federal Republic of Germany

No information provided.

Poland

No new methods.

Sweden

The National Board of Fisheries has initiated the development of acoustic alarms in co-operation with fishermen fishing in the Skagerrak. The National Board of Fisheries is ready to enforce necessary national legislation in order to reduce incidental bycatches of harbour porpoises to acceptable levels as soon as bycatch estimates are available for various fishing methods.

United Kingdom

Previous research undertaken by SMRU has provided evidence that high seas drift net fishing for tuna and other similar species produces an unacceptable bycatch of cetaceans, particularly dolphins. At the European Union Fisheries Council on 8 June 1998 the UK secured agreement to the ending of the use of these nets throughout the EU from 1 January 2002. The intervening phase-out period will allow the fishermen concerned time to develop alternative fishing opportunities.

The experimental work being undertaken by SMRU (described above) was an implementation trial, and is currently suspended. SMRU is lead partner in the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan for the harbour porpoise, under which there is a current initiative to develop an institutional framework for addressing bycatch.

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

Belgium

Species	Estimated number of bycaught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)
White-beaked dolphin	1	a couple of nautical miles offshore (ICES area IVc)	otter trawl
Harbour porpoise	1	inshore (ICES area IVc)	bottom set gill net, set off the beach (indirect evidence)

Denmark

Species	Estimated number of bycaught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)
Harbour porpoises	7,000 per year (1995 estimate)	IV b (mainly in coastal and offshore waters along the West Coast of Jutland)	Set-net fishery for cod and turbot mainly in late summer and fall. Turbot fishery has declined within the last years
Other species	Few, but the exact number and species involved unknown		

Federal Republic of Germany

Only set net and bottom trawl fisheries were investigated in 1998. No bycatches were reported from the North Sea. Six harbour porpoises were recorded as bycatch from the western Baltic (Kiel Bight to Mecklenburg Bight) which corresponds to the figures recorded in previous years.

Poland

Species	Estimated number of bycaught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)
Phocoena phocoena	3	Gulf of Gdansk sk	cod set net
Lagenorhynchus albirostris	1	central coast	pelagic trawl net
Stenella coeruleoalba	1	Gulf of Gdansk sk	set net

Sweden

The National Board of Fisheries has initiated the development of acoustic alarms in co-operation with fishermen fishing in Skagerrak. The National Board of Fisheries is ready to enforce necessary national legislation in order to reduce incidental bycatches of harbour porpoises to acceptable levels as soon as bycatch estimates are available for various fishing methods.

Species	Estimated number of bycaught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)
Harbour porpoise	About 100 per year	IIIa, in the Swedish part of Skagerrak	Cod and pollock bottom set gillnets
Harbour porpoise	About 50 per year	IIIa, in the Swedish part of Kattegat	Cod and pollock bottom set gillnets

United Kingdom

SMRU has been operating an observer scheme to monitor porpoise bycatches in UK North Sea gill net fisheries, and off the West coast of Scotland (outside the ASCOBANS area). SMRU has also recently initiated a pelagic trawl monitoring scheme, though so far only three trips have been observed. In the North Sea, 3470 net hauls had been observed between March 1996 and November 1998, covering 7 major metiers.

Species	Estimated number of by-caught animals	Area (ICES area or more detailed)	Notes (type of fishery, effort, seasonal variations, etc.)
Harbour porpoise	600-800 (Annual rate varies according to effort)	IV a - c	Mainly cod nets, with minor effort in turbot, skate, sole etc.

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

An assessment of the routes followed by high-speed ferries was made.

Denmark

Very limited information is available on disturbance from various sources. One of the main objectives of the EU-funded EPIC (Elimination of Porpoise Incidental Catch) project, carried out by the Danish Institute for Fisheries Research in cooperation with partner institutions, is to investigate the behaviour of harbour porpoises in terms of reactions to acoustic stimuli and potential deterrent devices.

The impacts on harbour porpoises and other small cetaceans from high-speed ferries are not known. However, the operations with that type of vessel are strictly regulated as new routes cannot be established without a proper EIA procedure including considerations on the disturbance to waterbirds and marine mammals.

Federal Republic of Germany

The level of disturbances in the German part of the North Sea is probably low. No seismic operations are currently being carried out. Investigations of the seabed need prior authorisation by the Federal Agency for Sea Traffic and Hydrography and in some cases by the competent agencies of the coastal Federal States. Air gun operations are inadmissible.

As regards disturbances from sea traffic, the regulation governing the Wadden Sea area is of interest: In the Wadden Sea area (i.e. from 3 nautical miles (sm) from the baseline), the *Verordnung über das Befahren der Bundeswasserstraßen im Nationalpark im Bereich der Nordsee* (Ordinance on the use of Federal Waterways in National Parks within the North Sea Area) is applicable, which stipulates three speed zones (8, 12 and 16 kn). Maximum speeds of 24 kn are admissible for specific watercraft only. Any further boats of this type are not admitted in this Wadden Sea area.

The same three speed zones are applicable to the Baltic in the coastal areas of Mecklenburg/Western Pomerania pursuant to the *Befahrensvorschrift für das Befahren der Bundeswasserstraßen in Nationalparken und Naturschutzgebieten* (Regulation Governing Navigation on Federal Waterways in National Parks and Nature Reserves).

As regards disturbance from blasting trials for military purposes in the restricted area off Schönhagen (Baltic) the Federal Ministry of Defence has stopped its previous activities for the time being. The units concerned of the Ministry of Defence have since been intensively working towards the improved protection of harbour porpoises and the development of relevant new methods for underwater blasting trials with the aim of maintaining and using its important testing capacity in the restricted area off Schönhagen without posing any serious threat to harbour porpoises.

Participation in two current American studies² was agreed with the United States with the aim of obtaining conclusive scientific evidence on thresholds to be complied with in underwater blasting operations in order to prevent any threat to harbour porpoises.

The *Büsum Forschungs- und Technologiezentrum (FTZ)* of the *Institut für Meereskunde* (Oceanographic Institute) of Kiel University has been commissioned by contract to do scientific work in the context of the American study and to ensure that the specific conditions of the restricted area off Schönhagen, such as depth of operation, shot and resulting sound and pressure waves, distance from shore, etc. are adequately taken into account under the aspect of marine biology. The contract will cover the period until the end of 1999 and may be prolonged.

The synthesizer trials of the Ridgeway study in San Diego have almost been completed. It was the aim of these investigations to simulate the effects of submarine detonations on *Phocoena phocoena*, taking account of the conditions in the restricted Schönhagen zone. The results of this study are being analysed and documented.

² Explosive Source Temporary Threshold Shift (TTS) Study, Dr. Ridgeway
Blast & Acoustic Trauma (B&AT) Study, Dr. Ketten

The Ketten study has met with public criticism in the United States which is not quite plausible from the German point of view because in this study investigations have been carried out exclusively on dead animals found stranded. Moreover, due to financial problems on the American side, the start of the trials was delayed until April 1999 according to information from NavSea. Since these studies are very time-consuming because it is necessary to store the animals for a prolonged period in order to obtain reliable results, the final results are likely to be available only by mid-2003.

Investigations are underway as to whether and to what extent click detectors and pingers may be used to permit monitoring of the above mentioned restricted area, the size of which will depend on the results of the US studies (preliminary size 800 x 800 m). In view of the highly directional sonar system of the harbour porpoise, it is intended to simultaneously operate 12 click detectors which, in combination with the so-called pingers, are to chase away cetaceans that may be present in the area.

Poland

No measures taken.

Sweden

The National Board of Fisheries has started discussions regarding possible disturbance from high-speed ferries with a Swedish company producing these vessels, but no specific studies of the acoustic impacts have yet been started. The results from the ongoing Danish EU-funded EPIC project are being closely followed by the Institute of Coastal Research and any necessary follow-up studies will be initiated by the National Board of Fisheries.

United Kingdom

In March 1998 the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) published a revised version of "Guidelines for minimising acoustic disturbance to marine mammals, including small cetaceans". These guidelines are aimed at reducing the impacts of seismic surveys on marine mammals. The guidelines have been circulated to oil and gas companies and to other relevant organisations.

DETR has collected information on ferry routes and time-tables from ferry companies operating in UK waters. This information has been provided to the ASCOBANS Secretariat.

DETR and the Ministry of Defence are gathering information on the use of explosives in UK waters. Once collated, this information will be provided to the ASCOBANS Secretariat.

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

Belgium

No information provided.

Denmark

Within some nature and wildlife reserves, e.g. the Wadden Sea, general measures (speed limits) are taken to reduce disturbance to marine mammals. Special guidelines and legislation are not implemented.

Federal Republic of Germany

Given the low-noise traffic operated in the area, there are no plans at the present stage for any guidelines or new legislation to reduce disturbance.

The establishment of a protected area for small cetaceans in Schleswig-Holstein is being considered in the context of the revised version of the National Park Act (*Nationalparkgesetz*) is underway. An extension of the relevant zone of the Schleswig-Holstein National Park is being discussed to enhance the protection of small cetaceans, also providing for the above-mentioned speed limits in this zone.

Poland

No implementation.

Sweden

None.

United Kingdom

The DETR, with the assistance of the JNCC, is in the process of producing two sets of guidelines aimed at minimising disturbance to cetaceans from whale watching operations and from recreational activities. The whale watching guidelines are aimed primarily at whale watching tour operators. The recreational guidelines are aimed primarily at members of the public who may encounter cetaceans whilst involved in recreational activities in coastal waters. Both guidelines will set out the basic principles which should be followed to minimise disturbance to cetaceans when in their vicinity. DETR intend to publish and circulate the guidelines on 31 March 1999.

3. Protected areas for small cetaceans

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

Belgium

No areas aimed specifically at the protection of small cetaceans are being established. A new framework-law on the protection of the North Sea has been in force since March 1999. In (future) implementing orders this new law can provide for (i.a.) the creation of protected areas

of different types, the creation of ship traffic schemes to preserve protected areas, contingency planning for accidental pollution a procedure of environmental impact statements, the effective protection of a number of species (i.a. marine mammals), and the confirmation in legislation of an *existing* intervention network for stranded / bycaught protected species.

Denmark

The Danish implementation of the EU Habitat Directive includes the designation of several sites which are considered important for harbour porpoises.

- no:** EU-habitat site number
- sitecode:** Natura 2000 code
- region:** biogeographical region
- o-area:** the size of the area in hectares
- kode:** the habitat or species code in the Natura 2000 database

no	sitecode	region	name	o-area	kode	designation
9	DK00FX010	K	Salt meadows on Læsø and adjacent waters south of the island	66238	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
14	DK00FX122	K	Ålborg Bugt, Randers Fjord and Mariager Fjord	68490	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
51	DK00DX155	K	Stavns Fjord, Samsø Øster-flak and Nordby Hede	15663	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
52	DK00DY156	K	Horsens Fjord, adjacent waters to the east and Endelave	42549	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
78	DK00AY176	A	The Wadden Sea	134721	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
91	DK008X183	K	Fyns Hoved, Lillegrund and Lillestrand	2182	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
92	DK008X184	K	Æbelø, adjacent waters and Nærå	11275	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
93	DK008X185	K	The sea between Romsø and Hindsholm including Romsø	4215	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
96	DK008X047	K	Lillebælt	35043	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
100	DK008X190	K	Vresen	3754	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
111	DK008X201	K	Sydfynske Øhav	44978	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
135	DK005X221	K	Sejerø Bugt and Saltbæk Vig	43912	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena

no	sitecode	region	name	o-area	kode	designation
143	DK005Y229	K	Skælskør Fjord and the sea and coastal zone between Agersø and Glænø	17357	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
148	DK006X234	K	The sea and coastal zone between Karrebæk Fjord and Knudshoved Spit	16906	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
152	DK006X238	K	Smålandsfarvandet north of Lolland, Guldborg Sund, Bøtø Nor and Hyllekrog-Rødsand	77837	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
158	DK006X242	K	Nakskov Fjord	8221	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena
195	DK005X276	K	Røsnæs and the reef west of the peninsula	360	1351	Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena

Natura 2000 Sites designated under the EU Habitat Directive as important for i.a. harbour porpoises (National Forest and Nature Agency, 1999).

Federal Republic of Germany

The waters off the islands of Sylt and Amrum are being considered as specially protected areas for harbour porpoises. The Government of the Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein has started the procedure to amend the law concerning the protection of the national park with the intention to include the waters off Sylt and Amrum and to set up the necessary legal framework for such a specially protected area to the extent allowed for within the competence of the Federal State.³

Poland

Mapping of the location of fishing gear *in situ* in areas of the highest risk of bycatch for porpoises and dolphins.

Sweden

Measures taken to identify, implement and manage protected areas: The implementation of the EU Habitat Directive include NATURA 2000 Sites around Kosteröarna (East 11°2' North 58°53') and Väderöarna (East 11°3' North 58°34') proposed by the county administration in Västra Götalands län. One of the objectives for these proposed marine protected areas is to improve the protection of harbour porpoises.

³ Date of report: 4 August 1999. The protected area in the waters off the islands of Sylt and Amrum has since been established. The requisite law amending the Law Concerning the National Park was adopted by the Parliament of the State of Schleswig-Holstein on 13 October 1999

United Kingdom

SMRU, together with the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) and the JNCC, have been contracted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) to examine platform of opportunity sightings data to determine whether spatial and temporal trends can be discerned in a statistically sound manner from such data. It is clear from the analysis that platform of opportunity sightings data can contain enough information to be confident about differences in the relative density of cetaceans at some spatial scales. The statistical tools that have been developed may therefore be useful in determining potential protected areas based on a sound assessment of cetacean relative density. A report will be finalised during March 1999.

The Moray Firth Partnership, a voluntary forum of relevant authorities and interested groups in Scotland, is taking forward the development of a management scheme for the bottlenose dolphin Special Area of Conservation in that area, based on a population model produced by the Universities of Aberdeen and St Andrews.

4. Further research on small cetaceans

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

Belgium

In total the 'intervention network' handled 21 cetaceans stranded on Belgian beaches and bycaught in Belgian waters between 1 January 1997 and 31 March 1999. Out of these 21, three animals stranded alive, and were subsequently transported to Harderwijk (NL). Additionally, some small cetaceans stranded or bycaught in the North of France were necropsied by Belgian scientists in agreement with the French local authorities (cooperation with France).

Denmark

A Danish contingency plan concerning marine mammals includes guidelines for handling stranded cetaceans. As many stranded harbour porpoises as possible are collected for analyses in order to improve the knowledge on population structure, age and sex ratio, nutritional status, general health and the levels of contaminants in tissues and organs.

The plan also deals with the handling of other specimens of stranded marine mammals including the two recent incidents in 1996 and 1997 where 19 and 13 sperm whales respectively stranded on sand banks in the outer Wadden Sea.

The following observations of stranded *cetaceans* were recorded in 1998:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| • White-beaked Dolphin: | 4 |
| • White-sided Dolphin: | 1 |

- Minke Whale: 3
- Harbour Porpoise: about 75 (possibly discard of bycaught animals)

Federal Republic of Germany

The Büsum ‘Forschungs- und Technologiezentrum Westküste’ of the Christian Albrechts University of Kiel intends to accompany the establishment of such a protected area off the islands of Sylt and Amrum by research projects and intends to continually monitor the status of harbour porpoises in the area.

Stranded specimens are routinely investigated from a variety of scientific aspects at the Büsum ‘Forschungs- und Technologiezentrum Westküste’ of the Christian Albrechts University Kiel.

Poland

No implementation.

Sweden

A public information pamphlet regarding the obligation to report dead or wounded harbour porpoises has been distributed by the Environmental Protection Board and the National Board of Fisheries. The information delivered is collected by Stockholm and Gothenburg museum. Between May 1997 and March 1998 14 harbour porpoises and two white-beaked dolphins were reported and between May 1998 and March 1999 four harbour porpoises and three white-beaked dolphins were reported stranded in the Skagerrak and Kattegatt areas.

United Kingdom

The Institute of Zoology (IOZ) continues to investigate diseases, causes of death and potential links between health status and chronic exposure to environmentally persistent contaminants (particularly organochlorines and heavy metals) in cetaceans (mainly harbour porpoises) stranded in England and Wales. Contaminant analyses are conducted in collaboration with CEFAS. Samples collected and archived from necropsied animals facilitate ongoing parallel research projects including genetic and morphometric studies investigating population structure, dietary analyses, and exposure to other contaminants (e.g. TBTs). Pathological and other data from strandings investigations conducted in England and Wales, together with strandings data from parallel DETR-funded research in Scotland, continue to be archived centrally in the Poseidon database held at the Institute of Zoology. Some of the output from the strandings project in Scotland is listed below:

1. Baker, J.R., Jepson, P.D., Simpson, V.R. & Kuiken, T. (1998) Pathology of grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) found dead on the coasts of the UK veterinary record 142, 595-601
2. Gibson, D., Harris, E.A., Bray, R.A., Jepson, P.D., Kuiken, T., Baker, J.R. and Simpson, V.R. (1998) A survey of the helminth parasites of cetaceans stranded on the coast of England and Wales during the period 1990-1994. Journal of the Zoological Society of London, 244, 563-574.
3. Jepson, P.D. & Baker, J.R. (1998) Bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) as a possible cause of acute traumatic injuries in porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*). veterinary Record 143, 614-615.

4. Van Bressem, M..F., Jepson, P.D. & Barrett, T. (1998) Further insight on the epidemiology of cetacean morbillivirus in the north-eastern Atlantic. *Marine Mammal Science* 14(3): 605-613
5. Jepson, P.D. Kuiken, T., Simpson, V.R. and Bennett, P.M. Reproductive system pathology of cetaceans stranded in England and Wales. *Proceedings of the reproductive Workshop Report of the World Marine Mammal Science Conference*, Monaco, 17-18 January 1998.
6. Jepson, P.D., Bennett, P.M., Allchin, C.R., Baker, J.R., Kuiken, T., Rogan, E., Lockyer, C., Law, R.J., Walton, M.J. and Kirkwood, J.K. (1998) Chronic PCB exposure is associated with infectious disease mortality in harbour porpoises stranded in England and Wales 1990-1996. *Proceedings of the first the World Marine Mammal Science Conference*, Monaco, 20-24 January 1998.

Strandings in Scotland are coordinated by the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) under contract to the DETR. The Strandings Coordinator is based in the SAC Veterinary Science Division in Inverness and receives reports of stranded marine mammals from members of the public and many organisations. All records are kept in a database in Inverness and also added to the UK records at the Natural History Museum in London, and to the Poseidon database managed by IOZ. Suitable carcasses are examined to establish cause of death and to provide material for research into the biology and ecology of marine mammals. Skeletal material is supplied to National Museums of Scotland who hold a research and reference collection. Some of the output from the strandings project in Scotland is listed below:

1. G. Foster, H.M. Ross, I.A.P. Patterson, R.A. Hutson, R.J. Reid and M. D. Collins (1998), *Actinobacillus scotiae* sp. nov., a new member of the Family *Pasteurellaceae* Pohl (1979) 1981 isolated from porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*). *International Journal of Systemic Bacteriology*. 48: 929 - 933
2. Bones, B. Neill & B. Reid, 1998. Fraser's Dolphin *Lagenodelphis hosei* stranded in South Uist: first record in U.K. waters. *J. Zool., Lond.* (1998) 246, 460-461
3. Thompson, H.M. Corpe & R.J. Reid, Prevalence and intensity of the ectoparasite *Echinophthirius horridus* on harbour seals (*Phoca vitulina*); effects of host age and inter-annual variability in host food availability. 1998 *Parasitology* 117, 393-403
4. Patterson, I.A.P., Reid, R.J., Wilson, B., ROSS, H.M., Grellier, K., Thompson, P.M., Infanticide in Bottlenose Dolphins 1998. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*, vol. 265, pp1167-70
5. Foster, H.M. Ross, I.A.P. Patterson, R.J. Reid & D.S. Munro, 1998. *Salmonella typhimurium* DT104 in a grey seal. *Veterinary Record* (1998) 142 615
6. Patterson, F.E. Howie, R. J. Reid & G. Foster, 1998. Marine Mammal Brucellae. European Wildlife Diseases Association Conference, Edinburgh.
7. Foster, A. McMillan, F. E. Howie, R.J. Reid, H.M. Ross, K.L. Jahans, S. Brew, I.A.P Patterson, 1998, Brucella infection of sea mammals, 51st Annual meeting of the Brucellosis Research Conference, Chicago, USA.

b. Research on abundance, population structure etc.

Belgium

An unusually high number of sightings of harbour porpoises was reported during spring 1997. In 1998 an unusually high number of harbour porpoises compared to the previous years stranded (8). Also in the first months of 1999 an unusually high number of harbour porpoises (6) was found on Belgian beaches.

Denmark

A project on satellite tracking of tagged harbour porpoises is under implementation by the Danish Institute of Fisheries Research in cooperation with the Fjord and Belt Center and Odense University.

Genetic research using DNA micro-satellites, and tooth ultrastructure studies, undertaken by the Danish Institute for Fisheries Research as part of the EU-funded BYCARE project, have been used to differentiate population structure of harbour porpoises in the North and Baltic seas.

A historical and current data review of harbour porpoise biology, life history parameters and distribution has been undertaken by the Danish Institute for Fisheries Research under the EU-funded BYCARE project.

Federal Republic of Germany

Research on various aspects of the life cycle of harbour porpoises, such as abundance, population structure, age etc. is currently being carried out as part of a Ph.D. thesis in a Norwegian fjord.

Poland

Monitoring the number of bycaught animals and sightings of cetaceans. Age estimation of bycaught animals.

Sweden

A research programme covering most aspects of harbour porpoise biology, ecology and conservation is currently being carried out by the Department of Zoology, Stockholm University.

Genetic research on population structure of harbour porpoises in the North and Baltic Seas. Stockholm University collaborated with the Danish Institute of Fisheries Research as part of the BYCARE project.

United Kingdom

In collaboration with JNCC and CEFAS, SMRU undertook in July 1997 a year-long MAFF-funded investigation into the utility of observational data on cetaceans collected from platforms of opportunity, such as ferries and research vessels. The intention was to determine, by means of newly developed statistical tools, the extent to which such data can provide meaningful quantitative information on spatial and temporal trends in relative density.

MAFF has also approved funding for SMRU to undertake a year-long project beginning in April 1999 to model fishery impacts on harbour porpoise populations. The results will give an indication of the likelihood of populations decreasing under existing or proposed gill net fishery practices.

The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) are coordinating a number of projects examining population abundance and structure:

1. Cetaceans in Wales - passive acoustic detection of harbour porpoises, Nekton (Mick Baines)
2. Cetacean sightings database for Wales, Nekton (Mick Baines)
3. Contribution to Risso's dolphin survey, Friends of Cardigan Bay
4. Cardigan Bay cSAC: collation and analysis of bottlenose dolphin survey data (part of LIFE project), Holly Arnold
5. Cardigan Bay cSAC: work-up, collation and preliminary analysis of bottlenose dolphin photographic survey data (part of Life project), Emily Lewis

c. Research on the effects of pollutants on cetacean health

Belgium

The research project on 'North Sea seabirds and marine mammals: pathology and ecotoxicology' is continuing.

Denmark

No specific research programme is accomplished or under implementation.

Federal Republic of Germany

Research on the effects of pollutants on harbour porpoises is part of the routine monitoring programme of the Büsum 'Forschungs- und Technologiezentrum Westküste' on harbour porpoises off the coast of Schleswig-Holstein.

Poland

Heavy metals intoxication. Parasitological analysis.

Sweden

An investigation of PCBs, DDTs and methyl sulfone metabolites in various tissues of harbour porpoises from Swedish Waters was completed and submitted for publication by Stockholm University.

United Kingdom

In 1998 the Institute of Zoology conducted analyses of potential relationships between health status (based on cause of death) and chronic exposure to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and heavy metals in harbour porpoises stranded in England and Wales. Statistical associations were identified linking elevated tissue concentrations of PCBs and mercury to individuals dying of infectious disease mortality. The results of these analyses have been submitted for publication in the scientific literature. Research projects investigating potential links between

lung parasite burdens in harbour porpoises and exposure to organochlorines and heavy metals were also initiated in 1998.

Chemists at the SOAEFD Marine Laboratory in Aberdeen have been analysing tissue samples from cetaceans stranded in Scotland for organochlorine compounds and heavy metals so that these contaminants may be related to levels of disease.

Publications on the effects of pollutants on cetacean health include:

1. McKenzie, C., Reid, R.J. and Wells, D.E. (1998) Chlorinated biphenyls and organochlorine pesticides in marine mammals stranded on the coasts of Scotland and Ireland. Fisheries Research Services Report No. 2/98, FRS Marine Laboratory, Aberdeen.
2. McKenzie, C., Godley, B.J., Furness, R.J. and Wells, D.E. (1999) Concentrations and Patterns of Organochlorine Contaminants in Marine turtles from Mediterranean and Atlantic Waters. Mar. Environ. Res. 47, 117-135.

5. Public awareness and education

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

Belgium

A brochure has been published and distributed among locals and fishermen. Besides some information on the scientific research on cetaceans, pinnipeds and seabirds, in this brochure people are asked to report strandings, sightings and bycatches to the responsible authority.

Denmark

No programme implemented or planned.

Federal Republic of Germany

The Federal Government considers the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Bonn Convention an excellent opportunity to draw public attention to the aims of the Regional Agreements to which Germany is a Contracting Party, and intends to use all events organized in this context to highlight the aims inter alia of ASCOBANS.

Raising public awareness and education for ASCOBANS is part of the public relations work of the competent Federal States in the coastal area. Information brochures and videos on harbour porpoise have been produced by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Meeresforschung* (GSM) and have been widely distributed. Public awareness has been considerably improved both by private initiatives and activities of animal welfare groups on the islands of Sylt and Amrum, two main centres of tourist activities at the coast of Schleswig-Holstein, in summer.

Poland

Education of people visiting Hel Marine Station.

Giving lectures on cetacean status in Polish waters and the need of their active protection.

Sweden

When stranded cetaceans were found on the Swedish west coast necessary protective measurements were usually discussed and promoted in Swedish mass media.

United Kingdom

SAC has taken a number of steps to increase public awareness of the Agreement including:

- Lecture on Scottish Strandings Project, Annual General Meeting of Scottish Wildlife Trust, University of Glasgow
- Lecture on Scottish Strandings Project, Assynt Field Club, Lochinver Community Rooms
- Marine Mammal Pathology demonstration to Veterinary aquaculture MSc students Stirling University
- Marine Mammal Strandings Lecture to Marine Biology Department, Heriot Watt University
- Interviews on infanticide in bottlenose dolphins - BBC, ITV, Discovery Channel. BBC local & World Service radio, radio stations in Australia & USA, newspapers in UK & USA.

The Environment and Heritage Service in Northern Ireland and the Ulster Museum collaborate with the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (IWDG) in raising public awareness through public talks, broadcasts and the IWDG All Ireland Strandings and Sightings Scheme.



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