

REPORT OF THE 21ST MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Gothenburg, Sweden

29 September - 1 October 2014



**Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans
of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas**

Table of Contents

List of Action Points and Decisions	1
1. Opening of the Meeting	5
1.1 Welcoming Remarks	5
1.2 Adoption of the Agenda	5
1.3 Opening of the Scientific Session	5
2. Implementation of the Harbour Porpoise Action Plans.....	6
2.1 Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan)	6
2.1.1 Report and Action Points of the 10 th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group.....	6
2.2 Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea	7
2.2.1 Report and Action Points of the 4 th Meeting of the North Sea Group	7
2.3 Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat.....	8
2.3.1 Report and Action Points of the 10 th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group.....	8
3. Review of New Information on Threats to Small Cetaceans	8
3.1 Bycatch	8
3.1.1 Report and Recommendations of the Working Group	10
3.1.2 Reports from Parties	11
3.2 Underwater Noise.....	11
3.2.1 Report and Recommendations of the Working Group	12
3.2.2 Reports from Parties	12
3.2.3 Report and Recommendations of the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Workshop on Noise EIAs	13
3.3 Negative Effects of Vessels and Other Forms of Disturbance.....	13
3.3.1 Reports from Parties	14
3.4 Pollution and its Effects	14
3.4.1 Report of the Pollution Working Group	14
3.4.2 Report and Recommendations of the Marine Debris Working Group.....	15
3.4.3 CMS Reviews: Marine Debris and Migratory Species.....	15
3.4.4 Reports from Parties	16
3.5 Underwater Unexploded Ordnance	17
3.6 Responses to Hazards	17
3.7 Emerging Issues.....	18
3.7.1 Climate Change.....	18
3.7.2 Renewable Energy and Migratory Species	19
3.7.3 Conservation Implications of Cetacean Culture	20
3.7.4 Boat-based Wildlife Watching.....	21
3.7.5 Live Captures of Cetaceans	21

4.	Review of New Information on other Matters Relevant for Small Cetacean Conservation	22
4.1	Population Size, Distribution, Structure and Causes of Any Changes.....	22
4.2	Management of Marine Protected Areas	25
4.3	New Agreement Area	25
4.3.1	Report and Recommendations of the Extension Area Working Group.....	25
4.4	Large Cetaceans.....	26
4.4.1	Report and Recommendations of the Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans	26
5.	Publicity and Outreach	26
5.1	Reports of Parties, Range States and Partners	27
5.2	Report of the Secretariat	27
6.	Project Funding through ASCOBANS.....	29
6.1	Progress of Supported Projects.....	29
6.2	Prioritization of Project Proposals and Other Activities	29
7.	Any other Business	30
8.	Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Scientific Session.....	31
9.	Close of the Session	31
10.	Opening of the Institutional Session	32
11.	Accession and Agreement Amendment.....	32
11.1	Report of the Secretariat	32
11.2	Reports from Parties	32
12.	National Reporting.....	32
12.1	Reports from Parties	32
12.2	Revision to National Reporting Format	33
13.	Relations with other Bodies	34
13.1	Reports by the Secretariat, Parties and Partners.....	34
13.2	Cooperation and Joint Initiatives with CMS.....	34
13.3	Cooperation with European Union Institutions	35
13.3.1.	Report and Recommendations of the MSFD Working Group.....	35
13.4	Cooperation with Other Stakeholders	35
13.5	Dates of Interest 2014/2015	36
14.	Report of the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues	36
14.1	Administrative Issues	36
14.2	Accounts for 2013	37
14.3	2014 Budget.....	37
15.	Project Funding	37
16.	Any other Institutional Issues.....	38
17.	Date and Venue of the 22 nd Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2015.....	38

18.	Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Institutional Session	39
19.	Close of Meeting	39
Annex 1:	List of Participants	40
Annex 2:	Agenda.....	45
Annex 3:	List of Documents.....	48
Annex 4:	Rules of Procedure for the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.....	52
Annex 5:	Action Points of the 10 th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group	58
Annex 6:	Action Points of the 4 th Meeting of the North Sea Group.....	62
Annex 7:	Terms of Reference for an ASCOBANS Workshop on the Requirements of Legislation to Address Monitoring and Mitigation of Small Cetacean Bycatch. 64	
Annex 8:	Terms of Reference for an ASCOBANS Workshop on Remote Electronic Monitoring with Regards to Bycatch of Small Cetaceans	66
Annex 9:	Terms of Reference for the ASCOBANS Working Group on Bycatch	68
Annex 10:	Terms of Reference for an ASCOBANS Workshop on Further Development of Management Procedures for Defining the Threshold of 'Unacceptable Interactions' / Removals of Concern	69
Annex 11:	ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Priorities for the Work Programme of the Joint Noise Working Group.....	70
Annex 12:	Pollution Working Group – Literature Review 2014.....	71
Annex 13:	ASCOBANS Statement Regarding MREDS	76
Annex 14:	List of Dates of Interest to ASCOBANS in 2014/2015.....	77

LIST OF ACTION POINTS AND DECISIONS
of the 21st Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee

Scientific Session

1. All Action Points agreed at the tenth meeting of the Jastarnia Group were endorsed by the Advisory Committee (Annex 5).
2. The revised Terms of Reference of the Jastarnia Group as presented were endorsed by the Advisory Committee.
3. Jastarnia Group members will discuss intersessionally through correspondence their positions regarding the proposed ban on drift nets in EU waters.
4. The Secretariat will seek nominations of experts for the necropsy coordination group by the 15 October deadline (see JG10/AP36).
5. All Action Points agreed at the fourth meeting of the North Sea Group were endorsed by the Advisory Committee (Annex 6).
6. The Secretariat will extend the contract of Geneviève Desportes so that she can represent ASCOBANS at the STECF meeting in October.
7. The proposal to hold an expert workshop to consider how EU bycatch legislation should be revised was endorsed and Geneviève Desportes' extended contract should include her assisting with the preparation of the workshop.
8. The Terms of Reference for a workshop on the requirements of EU legislation to address monitoring and mitigation of small cetacean bycatch were agreed (Annex 7).
9. Terms of Reference for a workshop on Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM), possibly to be held back to back with the next meeting of the Advisory Committee, were agreed (Annex 8).
10. The Terms of Reference of the Bycatch Working Group were amended (Annex 9).
11. Interim arrangements for Peter Evans to chair the Bycatch Working Group were agreed.
12. Defra (UK) will host a meeting in January 2015 in London to progress ASCOBANS' work on the issue of 'Further Development of Management Procedures for Defining the Thresholds of Unacceptable Interactions', to be coordinated by Jamie Rendell and Mark Simmonds.
13. ASCOBANS will try to organize a technical workshop on 'Further Development of Management Procedures for Defining the Thresholds of Unacceptable Interactions' (by invitation only) in the margins of the ECS Conference in March 2015 and terms of reference for the workshop were agreed. A Steering Committee comprising Kelly Macleod, Eunice Pinn, Jan Haelters, Mark Simmonds and Sinéad Murphy was established (Annex 10).
14. The Advisory Committee identified its priorities for the Work Programme of the Joint Noise Working Group (Annex 11).
15. The Advisory Committee agreed to consider co-funding with ACCOBAMS on a case by case basis occasional expert meetings of the Joint Noise Working Group.

16. The Advisory Committee will consider holding further workshops on EIAs relating to underwater noise as this was a rapidly evolving, dynamic field.
17. Peter Evans was encouraged to publish full proceedings of the EIA Underwater Noise Workshop.
18. The Joint Noise Working Group was requested to consider the recommendations from the EIA Workshop and how they could be disseminated to a wider audience.
19. With regard to ship strikes the Advisory Committee decided that ASCOBANS should seek to collaborate with the dedicated work streams at IWC.
20. Parties should continue to support research on the effects of PCBs on small cetaceans in the Agreement Area.
21. Through the Secretariat, ASCOBANS should establish links with other fora such as the IWC, OSPAR, HELCOM, ACCOBAMS and CMS with regards work underway to address marine debris. At its 22nd meeting, the Advisory Committee should consider how ASCOBANS could best contribute to the body of work already under way on this issue, in particular through collaborative activities for addressing specific knowledge gaps and educational opportunities.
22. At its 22nd Meeting the Advisory Committee should examine what Parties are undertaking with regard to campaigns related to raising awareness of marine debris.
23. The Secretariat will liaise with HELCOM and OSPAR to ascertain how ASCOBANS can best support their processes regarding underwater ordnance.
24. The Secretariat should collate the information that Parties submit to the appropriate fora in HELCOM and OSPAR relating to underwater ordnance (location, quantity and plans, methods and technologies for its safe removal) to enable the Advisory Committee to make progress with Work Plan Activity 5.
25. The Secretariat will ask Parties to provide details of those responsible for cetacean rescue, and what laws require, allow and prohibit in each country.
26. The Secretariat will gather information from ACCOBAMS, ECS, IWC and others on work relating to responses to cetaceans facing hazards.
27. The Secretariat will request ASCOBANS Parties nominate an expert on cetaceans and climate change to the CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Climate Change. If possible, this person should be able to represent ACCOBAMS as well.
28. The Advisory Committee will maintain a watching brief on emerging marine renewable energy technologies. A standing agenda item will be introduced to the Advisory Committee allowing Parties to bring in new information and developments, in particular information on wave and tidal energy.
29. The Secretariat should arrange for a presentation on emerging marine renewable energy technologies and mitigation measures to be made to the Advisory Committee.
30. The Secretariat will contact the Faroese Authorities with a request to provide information on recent hunts, in particular details regarding the species affected by the hunt, how sustainability is assessed, what regulations and management are in place, and how the catches are utilized.

31. Parties should ask the EU Presidency to write along similar lines to the Faroese Authorities, raising concerns that some of the populations affected extend into European waters.
32. The Advisory Committee shall have regular sessions dedicated to particular species starting with the Common Dolphin at the 22nd Meeting.
33. The Advisory Committee would welcome the submission of a draft conservation plan for the common dolphin and agrees to give it due consideration. This should include consideration of the area of overlap between ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS.
34. Parties were urged to let St Andrews University have formal confirmation of any financial support for commitments for the SCANS III project by the end of the week beginning 6 October 2014.
35. The Secretariat will seek to facilitate attendance from Ireland of appropriate experts in meetings of the Advisory Committee.
36. Parties and partners should send suggestions for educational websites that can be linked to the ASCOBANS Kids Website.
37. The Secretariat should look into ways of evaluating the effectiveness of its outreach media and material.
38. In order to expand its social network presence and improve outreach Parties could nominate a national Facebook content manager, or provide relevant information to the Secretariat, as appropriate.
39. The Acting Executive Secretary is encouraged to seek out new opportunities through social media to raise the profile of ASCOBANS.
40. Everyone was encouraged to take part in the website user satisfaction survey before 19 October 2014.
41. ASCOBANS work should include an educational element to raise awareness among recreational boat users on how to reduce the risk of harming and disturbing cetaceans.
42. The Jastarnia Group was asked to hold an election for its Chair at its 11th meeting.
43. Peter Evans was re-elected as Chair of the Working Group on the Extension Area and of the Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans.

Institutional Session

44. The Acting Executive Secretary was asked to approach non-Party Range States with a view to encourage them strongly to accede to the Agreement.
45. Parties were urged to assist with the recruitment of non-Party Range States.
46. The Secretariat will produce the compilation of National Reports by the end of the year.
47. An Inter-sessional correspondence process was established to be assisted by the Secretariat to identify the Agreement's reporting needs and all Parties are encouraged to send the Secretariat the name of the person participating in the process by 15 November. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee and the Chairs of the Working Groups together with the North Sea Coordinator will also take part.

48. Parties are urged to make financial pledges before the 22nd Advisory Committee to enable a professional survey designer to be recruited to produce the new reporting format and the ASCOBANS Secretariat will liaise with the IWC Secretariat, which is undertaking a similar exercise to see if synergies are feasible.
49. In addition to the thresholds workshop agreed (see AP13) the Necropsy Workshop proposed by the North Sea Group should be held at the 2015 ECS Conference.
50. A decision was deferred on whether to develop sub-targets under the proposed Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 expected to be adopted at CMS COP11.
51. The Secretariat will seek and facilitate where appropriate stronger stakeholder engagement through meetings and other fora, in order to further the conservation objectives of ASCOBANS.
52. National representatives should seek opportunities to participate in local stakeholder meetings.
53. The representation of ASCOBANS in meetings of other relevant organizations was decided as reflected in Annex 14.
54. Parties accepted all the Secretariat's reports on administrative and budgetary matters for 2013 and 2014.
55. The Secretariat will bring the concerns of the Parties on actual as against funded staff-time percentages to the Acting Executive Secretary and will consider ways to provide greater transparency to Parties.
56. Parties agreed to fund the external project allocated the highest priority in the ballot (Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise Foraging Habitats - BALHAB).
57. Parties decided that any remaining funds would be made available for the workshops identified as priorities by the Advisory Committee.
58. The Secretariat will approach all Parties to ascertain their willingness to contribute towards the costs of contracting coordinators for the North Sea and Baltic Sea regions; Parties should respond by 15 November. The Netherlands (under condition that other North Sea Parties contributed their share) and Sweden indicated that they would provide some funds.
59. The United Kingdom pledged a voluntary contribution of GB£5,000 towards the cost of the North Sea Coordinator.
60. Parties will consider ways of ensuring longer-term funding for the coordinator consultancies.
61. Parties decided to suspend the annual call for external projects for one year.
62. The Netherlands offered to host the 22nd Meeting of the Advisory Committee and associated meetings, probably in the week beginning 28 September 2015.

REPORT OF THE 21ST MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. Opening of the Meeting

1.1 Welcoming Remarks

1. Penina Blankett (Finland), Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee, opened proceedings by welcoming participants to Gothenburg. She explained that Sami Hassani, the Chair from France, would not be able to attend the meeting and so she read out a message received from him. Apologies had also been received from Denmark and Lithuania. Important items on the agenda included reports on implementation of the three Harbour Porpoise Action Plans and developments regarding EU regulations on bycatch.

2. Fredrick Nordwall (Sweden) representing the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) also welcomed participants to Gothenburg and hoped that the meeting would be a success in taking forward the important work regarding the conservation of small cetaceans.

3. Melanie Virtue (Secretariat) explained that following some reorganization at the CMS Secretariat she, as head of the new Aquatic Species Team, had replaced Borja Heredia as the officer supervising ASCOBANS. The new arrangement would help the CMS Family address cross-cutting issues such as bycatch and marine debris in a more cohesive manner. It was a busy year for CMS, with the Scientific Council having taken place in July and the COP due in November, where issues such as marine debris, boat-based tourism, climate change, renewable energy, cetacean culture and the live capture of cetaceans were on the agenda. The COP would also consider the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species as well as adding the Mediterranean population of Cuvier's beaked whale to Appendix I.

1.2 Adoption of the Agenda

4. The Chair explained that the Rules of Procedure remained in force until such time as they were amended and no changes were being proposed.

5. The Chair asked for comments on the agenda and schedule and for additional items to be considered under "Any Other Business". Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) asked that the item concerning the meeting of the North Sea Group which had taken place on the eve of the Advisory Committee be postponed to allow more time for the report to be prepared. This change to the schedule was agreed. No items were proposed for discussion under any other business.

6. The only Working Group that could be foreseen at the opening of the meeting was the one concerning EU bycatch legislation. Other Working and Drafting groups would be created as the need arose.

1.3 Opening of the Scientific Session

7. The Chair opened the Scientific Session, inviting Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) to introduce the first document, the ASCOBANS Work Programme (Doc.1.3). The document was familiar to regular attendees, but had undergone some minor design changes. It was based on the work plan adopted by the Meeting of the Parties, and now also indicated the related action points and decisions of the previous Advisory Committee Meeting, as well as progress in implementation and references to the related documents.

2. Implementation of the Harbour Porpoise Action Plans

2.1 Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan)

2.1.1 Report and Action Points of the 10th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

8. In the absence of the chair, Rüdiger Stempel, Patricia Brtnik (Germany) reported on the 10th meeting of the Jastarnia Group (Doc.2.1.1.a), which had taken place in Bonn and which had agreed a list of 25 Action Points relevant for the Jastarnia Plan, 12 of them identified as high priority.

9. Mark Simmonds (HSI) asked whether the Jastarnia Group had given consideration to the forthcoming EU review of drift nets and its implications for the Baltic. Given its urgency, he wondered whether a correspondence process could be initiated to sound out Baltic Parties' views. Sara Königson (Sweden) said that the Baltic Parties could meet informally during the meeting and Monika Lesz (Poland) felt that it would take some time to reach an agreed position. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that all ASCOBANS Parties needed to understand the implications of the proposals, fearing that a total ban might be imposed when such a drastic measure might not be necessary.

10. Referring to Action Point 36 of the 10th meeting of the Jastarnia Group, Ms Königson asked that a reminder be issued to Parties seeking nomination of experts for the necropsy coordination group.

11. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) introduced the draft Terms of Reference of the Jastarnia Group (Doc.2.1.1.b). A version with several alternative options for the provisions relating to the participation of NGOs had been discussed at the 20th Meeting of the Advisory Committee and returned to the Jastarnia Group with a request for a firm proposal, which was now before the meeting. The proposed revision of the rules would allow two NGOs from each of the fisheries and conservation communities. Arrangements would have to be agreed to determine how and when the organizations would be chosen.

12. Mr Simmonds said he did not understand why the Jastarnia Group was so restrictive, as it was not in its interests to exclude NGOs. He also pointed out the provision which meant that one of the places reserved for conservation organizations was taken by Coalition Clean Baltic while it provided the Group's chair.

13. Fabian Ritter (WDC) also regretted the decision to restrict NGO membership and requested that the Secretariat issue a notice for the next meeting of the Jastarnia Group as soon as possible so that the process of selecting representatives could start.

14. Ms Lesz said that the Group had given the question due consideration and had found a formula with which the members were satisfied. Mr Rendell speaking as a Party not involved in the Jastarnia Group said that in principle he supported being as inclusive as possible but understood that there might be practical reasons for restricting membership. It was also pointed out that NGO representatives could be appointed to national delegations as advisers or participate in the meeting as invited experts.

Action Points and Decisions

- 1) All Action Points agreed at the tenth meeting of the Jastarnia Group were endorsed by the Advisory Committee (Annex 5).
- 2) The revised Terms of Reference of the Jastarnia Group as presented were endorsed by the Advisory Committee.
- 3) Jastarnia Group members will discuss intersessionally through correspondence their positions regarding the proposed ban on drift nets in EU waters.
- 4) The Secretariat will seek nominations of experts for the necropsy coordination group by the 15 October deadline (see JG10/AP36).

2.2 Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea

2.2.1 Report and Action Points of the 4th Meeting of the North Sea Group

15. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) gave an overview of the progress in the implementation of the North Sea Plan, Actions 2 (Implementing existing regulation among others, the Habitats Directive and Council Regulation (EC) No. 812/2004), 3 and 4 (regular evaluation of all fisheries, including vessels under 15 metres and recreational fisheries). As noted in Doc.2.2.1.b Rev.1, implementation across the North Sea was inconsistent, both in terms of applying existing regulations and in terms of monitoring bycatch in fisheries. Some countries were using acoustic deterrent devices and had developed an enforcement strategy while others were not. Bycatch monitoring, required both under Regulation 812 and the Habitats Directive, was done in net fisheries at such a low level across the North Sea, that it was impossible to assess the risk to porpoises properly. In 2012, less than 0.7% of the total *reported* static and drift net effort in the North Sea had been monitored, with less than 0.5% monitored by dedicated observers or remote electronic monitoring (REM). Dedicated monitoring of bycatch was conducted at a level of 0.55% in the Channel, 0.22% in the North Sea proper and 0.28% in ICES area IIIa with well over 99% of net fishing in the North Sea conducted without any marine mammal bycatch monitoring. Furthermore, these figures were overestimated because they referred to the reported effort, but an unknown, but likely significant, part of the fishing effort remained unreported (e.g., effort by vessels under 10 metres in most countries and recreational fisheries). Bycatch rates in some fisheries might be above any proposed reference limits, but the uncertainty was large.

16. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation), the Chair of the North Sea Group, reported on a productive meeting which had taken place on 28 September 2014. The meeting had found that the monitoring of harbour porpoise bycatch was inadequate, and a better analysis of fishing effort by haul time and days at sea and taking account of ICES fisheries areas, type of fishery and type of gear was needed. DCF (data collection framework) was insufficient and remote electronic monitoring (REM) and direct observation (DO) should supplement it.

Action Points and Decisions

- 5) All Action Points agreed at the fourth meeting of the North Sea Group were endorsed by the Advisory Committee (Annex 6).

2.3 Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat

2.3.1 Report and Action Points of the 10th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

17. Patricia Brtnik (Germany) reported on the part of the 10th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group (Doc.2.1.1.a) relating to the Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat. The main items discussed had been stakeholder involvement, bycatch mitigation and assessment of levels of bycatch, the status of the population, habitat quality and reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. The Group had agreed a list of 15 Action Points relevant for the “Gap Area” Plan, 10 of them identified as high priority

Action Points and Decisions

- 1) All Action Points agreed at the tenth meeting of the Jastarnia Group were endorsed by the Advisory Committee (Annex 5).

3. Review of New Information on Threats to Small Cetaceans

3.1 Bycatch

18. Referring to the proposal contained in Doc.3.1, Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that the voluntary contribution received from Germany would allow a consultant to be engaged, enabling ASCOBANS to be more proactive in the review of Regulation 812/2004 by developing a position paper. Draft Terms of Reference for engaging a consultant with a legal background had been circulated but it was evident from the ensuing discussion that while Parties agreed ASCOBANS should do something, there was no consensus on how it should proceed.

19. Yvon Morizur (France) agreed that holding a workshop would be a good idea but warned that time was short. He suggested that ASCOBANS should send the North Sea Coordinator as an observer to the October meeting of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF). Observers were admitted but had to register 20 days in advance. Oliver Schall (Germany) agreed that the issue was urgent and proposed that the European Commission be invited to participate in the workshop. He added that after the Commission had prepared its draft, Council Committees would undertake a review. This would provide another opportunity for ASCOBANS to raise its concerns.

20. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) thanked Germany for providing the voluntary contribution. He too agreed that time was pressing and was concerned however that there was a risk of duplicating effort as there were parallel processes under way, such as ICES, led by fisheries departments for which environment ministries had been invited to provide input. He also questioned whether the consultant necessarily had to have a legal background, as this was likely to increase the cost of the consultancy; Ministries in any case had legal advisers. Monika Lesz (Poland) agreed, stressing that it was important to gather good scientific evidence to feed into the process.

21. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) pointed out that one innovation was that the bycatch provisions were likely to be spread across a number of regulations and not all placed in a single instrument. She warned that the process was being driven forward by fisheries departments, for which protected species were a secondary issue. It was also important to engage fishermen. Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that this reinforced the need for greater national coordination, with fisheries departments having to be made aware of the obligations under the Habitats Directive.

22. Mr Morizur suggested that ASCOBANS collaborate with ICES and ACCOBAMS to share expertise and the burden of costs. Florence Descroix-Comanducci (ACCOBAMS) could not commit ACCOBAMS as there was no provision in the current budget.

23. Regarding timing, it had been suggested at the North Sea Group meeting that the workshop be held back-to-back with the ICES meeting in February 2015 in Copenhagen to save travel costs. The disadvantage was that ICES meetings tended to be quite intense and a second meeting might overload participants. Sinéad Murphy (ZSL) suggested contacting the Chair of ICES to sound him/her out, which Ms Desportes agreed to do.

24. An in-session Working Group comprising Sara Königson (Sweden), Kelly Macleod (United Kingdom), Yvon Morizur (France) and Oliver Schall (Germany) was established to assist Ms Desportes develop the terms of reference for the workshop.

25. Ms Descroix-Comanducci mentioned a two-year project being undertaken in the Mediterranean concerning bycatch. Focusing on the Western Mediterranean, the project was examining bird and cetacean bycatch in small-scale fisheries. An important part of the project dealt with capacity-building, awareness-raising and technology-transfer.

26. Ms Frisch said that she would continue to compile a list of all previous Advisory Committee recommendations on bycatch and this would be available for the workshop.

27. Ms Macleod referred to the report of the ICES Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC) (Inf.3.1.a). The reports submitted for 2013 (with data relevant to 2012) under Regulation 812/2004 had been reviewed. An assessment of the impact of bycatch on harbour porpoise in the North Sea had been made, utilizing the 1.7% threshold and other reference levels, using the working group's Risk Assessment approach. Attempts had been made to calculate a general bycatch rate for the North Sea, but no reliable method had been found, with each posing problems. Calculating fisheries effort had also not been easy, with the days at sea measure proving to be imperfect. In conclusion, the exercise suggested that bycatch was probably at or close to the level where it was unsustainable, but more data were needed.

28. Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) said that as well as the number and size of vessels, the amount of nets being deployed was a key factor and he asked whether the fishermen's log books provided any details. Ms Macleod said that the number of boats was usually known, but not the quantity of nets. Ms Desportes referred to Inf.3.1.b, the ICES advice of April 2014, with preliminary estimates for the North Sea. Better abundance data were needed to assess how bad a problem bycatch was, a risk system appropriate for each fishery was required and better monitoring was needed for protected species. The two processes of collecting better data (on bycatch and abundance) and implementing conservation policies could proceed simultaneously.

29. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) referring to Inf.3.1.c raised the issue of drift nets and the range of options for future policy from a total ban to maintaining the status quo. He commented that of the responses to the consultation, 25 per cent had originated from Italy and a majority had advocated total prohibition. There were 250 vessels, mainly small, using drift nets in the UK, many operating in the south-east of the country. Some were full-time and others seasonal, and averaged £40,000 profit per annum. Social and economic factors also had to be taken into account, and the Commission was not addressing the main issue which was illegal use of drift nets in the Mediterranean. He was concerned that if a blanket ban on drift nets were imposed, the fishermen affected would use more damaging gear. A Union-wide ban would also run contrary to the general direction of CFP reform of adopting a more regional approach. Mark Simmonds (HSI) recalled that drift nets had been a controversial issue before and asked what evidence the UK had that its drift nets were not a threat. Jamie Rendell (UK) responded that the current available evidence from the UK bycatch monitoring programme, which included observations of drift net fisheries, did not indicate bycatch was at a level where a total ban would be appropriate. He also recognized that there was a need to collect more data in these fisheries which was currently happening

in the UK. The situation was different across the Agreement Area, with no drift nets used in Finnish waters. In France some driftnets were used but in recording their fishing efforts fishermen were thought to be using the wrong codes. Drift nets in France were normally used by smaller vessels.

Action Points and Decisions

- 6) The Secretariat will extend the contract of Geneviève Desportes so that she can represent ASCOBANS at the STECF meeting in October.
- 7) The proposal to hold an expert workshop to consider how EU bycatch legislation should be revised was endorsed and Geneviève Desportes' extended contract should include her assisting with the preparation of the workshop.
- 8) The Terms of Reference for a workshop on the requirements of EU legislation to address monitoring and mitigation of small cetacean bycatch were agreed (Annex 7).
- 9) Terms of Reference for a workshop on Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM), possibly to be held back to back with the next meeting of the Advisory Committee, were agreed (Annex 8).

3.1.1 Report and Recommendations of the Working Group

30. Jan Haelters (Belgium) gave the report from the Bycatch Working Group (Doc.3.1.1.a), as its Chair, Russell Leaper was not present. The Group had not met in the intersessional period and some of the contributions to the report had been received late. Contact had been maintained with the OSPAR Intersessional Correspondence Group on Biodiversity Monitoring and Assessment (ICG COBAM). It might be time to review the Working Group's terms of reference, to reduce the focus on harbour porpoises and to extend its scope to other species and other sub-regions such as the Channel and the Atlantic.

31. Mr Haelters pointed out that from the report of the Jastarnia Working Group, the North Sea Conservation Plan Working Group and the Bycatch Working Group, it was clear that there was overlap in issues dealt with in relation to bycatch. Due to this, and due to the fact that the bycatch issue was also being dealt with extensively in other fora, such as the EU (e.g. the review of the DCF), OSPAR COBAM and ICES WGBYC, only limited added value could be provided by the Bycatch Working Group. Therefore the meeting decided that new terms of reference were needed to progress work and to avoid further overlap.

32. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) commented that the Bycatch Working Group had long been one of ASCOBANS' more active ones, but had always depended on its chair to drive issues forward and convene meetings. It was important that financial arrangements should be made for the Chair to be able to attend AC meetings. Consideration could also be given to the overlaps between geographic and thematic groups. Monika Lesz (Poland) raised a question relating to the Habitats Directive, suggesting that if bycatch could be predicted, then it was no longer incidental.

33. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) introduced Doc.3.1.1.b. on 'unacceptable interactions' on behalf of the absent chair of the working group formed by the last Advisory Committee meeting in August 2013. Time pressures had meant that little progress had been achieved since then. Again, there were overlaps with the work of other groups inside and outside ASCOBANS, so the terms of reference might be reviewed, with options being that the working groups could be revised, merged or discontinued. Mr Haelters said that OSPAR COBAM had also stalled because of the uncertainties related to data collection within the

EU; there was no point OSPAR devising its own schemes when the EU was working on one which would have more legal backing.

34. Mark Simmonds (HSI) recalled previous discussions on the bycatch thresholds. The concept of acceptable removal rates had been the source of controversy, as he questioned whether ASCOBANS should consider any bycatch acceptable. He regretted that the work foreseen had not been carried out, as this matter clearly needed further discussion.

35. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) felt that a figure was useful in the decision-making process, even if the Agreement should aspire to zero bycatch. He also noted that some of the controversy around establishing acceptable removal rates might stem from how the concept was communicated – a better shared understanding was needed. Patricia Brtnik (Germany) thought that it was important for ASCOBANS to retain a forum where bycatch could be considered, although it could be merged with another Working Group. Sinéad Murphy (ZSL) suggested bringing representatives of the Working Groups from various fora together to agree a common line and thereby enhance their influence with the European Commission.

Action Points and Decisions

- 10) The Terms of Reference of the Bycatch Working Group were amended (Annex 9).
- 11) Interim arrangements for Peter Evans to chair the Bycatch Working Group were agreed.
- 12) Defra (UK) will host a meeting in January 2015 in London to progress ASCOBANS' work on the issue of 'Further Development of Management Procedures for Defining the Thresholds of Unacceptable Interactions', to be coordinated by Jamie Rendell and Mark Simmonds.
- 13) ASCOBANS will try to organize a technical workshop on 'Further Development of Management Procedures for Defining the Thresholds of Unacceptable Interactions' (by invitation only) in the margins of the ECS Conference in March 2015 and terms of reference for the workshop were agreed. A Steering Committee comprising Kelly Macleod, Eunice Pinn, Jan Haelters, Mark Simmonds and Sinéad Murphy was established (Annex 10).

3.1.2 Reports from Parties

36. Yvon Morizur (France) said that observations at sea were continuing in the Channel and the North Sea for vessels not covered by the EU Regulation. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) said that a remote electronic monitoring scheme that had begun in 2012 would continue to 2016. In the Natura 2000 North Sea Coastal Zone site the effectiveness of pingers was being tested and recommendations were being made regarding reduced net lengths and a close season. No further additional information was offered.

3.2 Underwater Noise

37. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) reported that the terms of reference for the Joint ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Working Group on underwater noise had been changed to allow CMS to participate, and the CMS Scientific Council had endorsed their participation. An invitation would be issued to members of the CMS Scientific Council to ascertain which of them wanted to join the Working Group.

3.2.1 Report and Recommendations of the Working Group

38. Yanis Souami (Co-Chair of the Joint Noise Working Group) presented a report on the work of the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Noise Working Group (Doc.3.2.1), which he co-chaired with Sigrid Lüber. Five documents had been presented to the ACCOBAMS MOP in Tangier, Morocco in 2013. Contributions had been made to the CBD workshop in London in February and to the CBD SBSTTA in Montreal, Canada and another would be made at the CBD COP12 in November. He also referred to Inf.3.2.1, IMO guidelines for the reduction of noise from shipping.

Action Points and Decisions

- 14) The Advisory Committee identified its priorities for the Work Programme of the Joint Noise Working Group (Annex 11).
- 15) The Advisory Committee agreed to consider co-funding with ACCOBAMS on a case by case basis occasional expert meetings of the Joint Noise Working Group.
- 18) The Joint Noise Working Group was requested to consider the recommendations from the EIA Workshop and how they could be disseminated to a wider audience.

3.2.2 Reports from Parties

39. Oliver Schall (Germany) presented Inf.3.2.2.a, which contained the German Sound Protection Concept for the North Sea, which had led to a closed season for drilling operations in certain areas and an assessment of mitigation measures such as bubble curtains. As soon as SAMBAH data were available, the programme would be extended to the Baltic. Inf.3.2.2.b contained recommendations for noise mitigation measures for wind farm construction.

40. Ida Carlén (Sweden) said that the BIAS project was currently running in the Baltic, mapping the soundscape of the waters. Harbour porpoise detectors were being deployed together with BIAS sound sensors. Funding had not been raised to allow for the analysis of the data to be carried out.

41. Mats Amundin (Sweden) said that the SAMBAH project had also provided information on ship noise, but there was no funding to allow for these data to be analysed. He also reported that the Swedish armed forces (contact person Gunnar Möller, gunnar.moller@mil.se) maintained a freely available GIS-based biological calendar, including protected areas and information on the geographical and temporal distribution of porpoises that would soon become available from SAMBAH, making it possible for the armed forces and all marine users to plan their activities so that the impact of noise on sensitive species could be minimized. The armed forces were well aware of the effects of exploding ordnance in the vicinity of marine animals.

42. Fabian Ritter (WDC) reported on a seismic survey that had been carried out in Dutch waters from July to September 2014, a sensitive period in the species' breeding season, which had affected an SAC designated for its harbour porpoises and which had been conducted in contravention of the provisions of the Habitats Directive and ASCOBANS. NGOs had approached the Dutch Ministry that had licensed the survey and the Dutch Environment Ministry. A petition had been launched which gathered 100,000 signatures calling for the survey to stop. The German Environment Minister had also approached the Dutch authorities calling for the survey to be suspended. Lessons had to be learned about inter-departmental and international dialogue.

43. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) admitted that mistakes had been made, arising from a new licensing procedure stemming from new legislation that had entered into force at the beginning of the year. The German authorities should have been informed about the tests. Seismic surveys would continue to be carried out, but the noise levels would be monitored closely.

3.2.3 Report and Recommendations of the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Workshop on Noise EIAs

44. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) gave a presentation on the findings of the joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS workshop held in Liege, Belgium in April 2014 about introducing noise into the marine environment. The workshop had been attended by 120 participants from 25 countries including the USA, Canada and Australia. Mr Evans said that he was in the process of compiling the proceedings and was chasing the last contributors for their material. A short report had been made available as Inf.3.2.3.

45. Mark Simmonds (HSI) asked whether in advance of the full proceedings the recommendations of the workshop could be disseminated more widely.

46. Mats Amundin (Sweden) said that a warning signal had proved effective with false killer whales, belugas and bottlenose dolphins as the animals left the area before the main pile driving activities began. Similarly ramping up the level of sound allowed cetaceans time to turn away. Sudden noise tended to be the most harmful. He also reported that a two-channel underwater listening system had been installed at Kullaberg in south-west Sweden; one channel listening for and recording ship noise and the other for cetaceans. Visitors to Kullaberg Nature museum could listen to the underwater sounds (the porpoise sonar clicks made audible by means of a click detector) and view a running sonogram showing their frequency composition. The data collected and stored would be released via internet for research in due course.

Action Points and Decisions

- 16) The Advisory Committee will consider holding further workshops on EIAs relating to underwater noise as this was a rapidly evolving, dynamic field.
- 17) Peter Evans was encouraged to publish full proceedings of the EIA Underwater Noise Workshop.
- 18) The Joint Noise Working Group was requested to consider the recommendations from the EIA Workshop and how they could be disseminated to a wider audience.

3.3 Negative Effects of Vessels and Other Forms of Disturbance

47. Fabian Ritter (WDC) reported on recent activities under the International Whaling Commission relating to ship strikes. A dedicated page on the IWC website summarised the IWC's engagement (<http://iwc.int/ship-strikes>). A workshop had been held in June 2014 in Panama with particular focus on the Caribbean. The report of the workshop was available [online](#). Various information material targeting different sectors (such as cruise operators) had been produced and the report of the IWC Ship Strike Working Group was also available [online](#).

Action Points and Decisions

- 19) With regard to ship strikes the Advisory Committee decided that ASCOBANS should seek to collaborate with the dedicated work streams at IWC.

3.3.1 Reports from Parties

48. Lonneke Ijsseldijk (Netherlands) said that two post mortems on large whales had recently been conducted in the Netherlands. One clearly indicated that the animal had been hit by a ship while alive, whereas the second was less conclusive because the carcass had begun to decay.

49. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) said that in three SACs designated in the UK for bottlenose dolphins, water sports and ecotourism were popular activities but there was evidence that the animals were moving out of Cardigan Bay to areas where there were fewer vessels. Two research studies were being carried out and initial indications were that disturbance from boats was having an adverse effect on the species. The UK strandings scheme had found that approximately 5 per cent of post mortems on small cetaceans indicated traumas associated with ship strikes. Two issues were emerging: the problem of ship strikes causing injury and disturbance caused by ships and boats affecting cetaceans' behaviour such as feeding.

50. Fabian Ritter (WDC) said that research into harbour porpoises frequenting the rivers Elbe and Weser showed that the animals were being hit by vessels.

51. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) was concerned that the Agreement might be taking on too much and suggested that while each Party should continue to collate national data, ASCOBANS should liaise with the IWC.

52. Mark Simmonds (HSI) raised the issue of improving public awareness related to ship strikes and suggested that ASCOBANS could have a valuable role to play in this. A recent incident in the UK had resulted in a bottlenose dolphin calf being struck and killed by at least one small vessel further to a 'frenzy' of activity surrounding a small group of dolphins.

3.4 Pollution and its Effects

53. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) pointed out that despite the fact that the MOP had adopted a resolution on pollution, the previous meeting of the Advisory Committee had not agreed any follow-up action.

3.4.1 Report of the Pollution Working Group

54. As was customary, Mark Simmonds (HSI), the Chair of the Working Group, had prepared a review of recent literature on the subject; the present draft had been included on the meeting website under "other documents". It would be finalized during the course of the meeting. Since the Marine Debris Working Group had not been able to produce a report, the review focused not only on chemical pollution but also included literature on marine debris (Annex 12).

55. Sinéad Murphy (ZSL) reported on her organization's work on PCBs and their effects on cetaceans. It had been found that PCB levels in several populations exceeded safety thresholds possibly leading to reproductive failure. Cause and effect had however not been proved but there was a clear association. There were also indications of a connection between PCBs and disease with PCBs possibly impairing cetaceans' immune systems.

56. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) recalled Ms Murphy's presentation to the North Sea Group on the low estimated pregnancy for harbour porpoises in UK waters and evidence of reproductive failure in these porpoises. He thought that research into this and similar subjects could provide useful information.

Action Points and Decisions

- 20) Parties should continue to support research on the effects of PCBs on small cetaceans in the Agreement Area.

3.4.2 Report and Recommendations of the Marine Debris Working Group

57. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that this Working Group currently had no Chair as Marchien de Ruiter of the North Sea Foundation had had to step down. The Secretariat had sought nominations for replacing Ms de Ruiter but none had been received. The terms of reference of the Working Group were projected on screen, Ms Frisch said that if the Working Group were to be retained, it would need someone to chair it and drive it forward.

58. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) reported on activities in Wales concerning surveys on marine debris, which had resulted in improved communications with stakeholders and persuading fishermen to help remove old lines, discarded nets and plastic.

59. Mark Simmonds (HSI) noted that the IWC had a Working Group dealing with much the same topic (although it might not deal with beach clearances). He suggested that ASCOBANS monitor what the IWC Working Group was doing to ascertain whether there was a niche for the Agreement to make a contribution. He volunteered to undertake the liaison work. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that OSPAR also had a Working Group with a similar remit and noted the importance of avoiding duplication of effort. He suggested that education might be an area where ASCOBANS could add value. The Chair added that HELCOM had also recently begun working on the subject. The work under the Regional Seas Agreements, however, did not address specific concerns relating to cetaceans.

60. The Chair announced that there would be a related workshop under the auspices of CBD in December 2014.

Action Points and Decisions

- 21) Through the Secretariat, ASCOBANS should establish links with other fora such as the IWC, OSPAR, HELCOM, ACCOBAMS and CMS with regards work underway to address marine debris. At its 22nd meeting, the Advisory Committee should consider how ASCOBANS could best contribute to the body of work already under way on this issue, in particular through collaborative activities for addressing specific knowledge gaps and educational opportunities.

3.4.3 CMS Reviews: Marine Debris and Migratory Species

61. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) introduced Inf.3.4.3.a, b, c and d, explaining that CMS COP10 in 2011 had adopted Resolution 10.4 which covered the effects of marine debris on migratory species, not just cetaceans. The Scientific Council had been asked to examine the issue and three separate reports had been prepared, addressing effects on migratory

species and management options, waste management on commercial vessels, and public awareness and education campaigns. A draft resolution had been prepared for consideration at COP11, and as all ASCOBANS Parties were also Parties to CMS, ASCOBANS coordinators were invited to ensure that their comments were conveyed to their national delegations attending the COP.

62. Mark Simmonds (HSI) welcomed the report but had one criticism concerning the relatively light coverage of the literature concerning the effects on cetaceans. He asked whether this weakness could be rectified. Ms Frisch said that the contracts for producing the reports had finished, so the reports could not be changed, but the issue of marine debris was likely to remain on the agendas of the Convention and Agreement, so the matter was not closed.

63. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that discussions on marine debris were still under way within the EU and the reviews contained valuable information. He also noted that the MSFD contained obligations relating to “avoiding harm from litter” and that OSPAR had recently agreed a regional action plan.

64. Florence Descroix-Comanducci (ACCOBAMS) said that marine debris was also being dealt with under ACCOBAMS and the two Agreements should liaise to avoid duplication.

65. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) suggested that the next meeting of the Advisory Committee should examine what surveys and campaigns were being undertaken on marine debris and an assessment made of any gaps. Mr Rendell said that this was an area where information provided in national reports could be more extensive.

Action Points and Decisions

- 22) At its 22nd Meeting the Advisory Committee should examine what Parties are undertaking with regard to campaigns related to raising awareness of marine debris.

3.4.4 Reports from Parties

66. Monika Lesz (Poland) said that the campaign led by WWF Poland to remove ghost nets from the Baltic was continuing. There was another project concerning the leakage of chemicals from dumped munitions.

67. Sara Königson (Sweden) said that two projects had been undertaken in Sweden involving fishermen removing ghost nets and an awareness-raising campaign was being conducted for fishermen.

68. Jan Haelters (Belgium) reported that the last two large cetaceans had washed ashore in Belgium had plastic in their stomachs. A minke whale was emaciated and its stomach was totally blocked by plastic. In the other case, a live-stranded sperm whale had septicaemia possibly as a result of a stomach perforation by a large piece of hard plastic in its stomach.

69. Patricia Brtnik (Germany) said that the German Oceanographic Museum in Stralsund had an exhibition on marine debris and Fabian Ritter (WDC) said that the museum was also documenting ghost nets.

70. Lonneke Ijsseldijk (Netherlands) said that the results of a study currently being carried out on marine debris should be available in time for the next Advisory Committee.

71. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that initial research being carried out by Plymouth University in conjunction with the UK strandings programme indicated that micro-

plastics were not present in the stomach and intestinal contents and tissue in animals examined post-mortem.

72. The Chair said that Finland also had a related project.

3.5 Underwater Unexploded Ordnance

73. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) introduced the item saying that the issue of underwater unexploded ordnance had been added to the ASCOBANS work programme at MOP7. The Action Points arising from the previous meeting of the Advisory Committee were to monitor what other fora were doing. The Secretariat had yet to approach HELCOM or OSPAR and it seemed appropriate to reaffirm the Action Points.

74. The Chair said that HELCOM had formed an Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects, which covered munitions and would be holding its first meeting in October; details could be found on the [HELCOM website](#).

75. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that a conference in Amsterdam had considered the effects on cetaceans of exploding ordnance. An OSPAR Working Group bringing together Ministries of Defence and the Environment was also working on the subject. On average there were three explosions in Dutch waters every week and there were large quantities of ordnance in the sea.

Action Points and Decisions

- 23) The Secretariat will liaise with HELCOM and OSPAR to ascertain how ASCOBANS can best support their processes regarding underwater ordnance.
- 24) The Secretariat should collate the information that Parties submit to the appropriate fora in HELCOM and OSPAR relating to underwater ordnance (location, quantity and plans, methods and technologies for its safe removal) to enable the Advisory Committee to make progress with Work Plan Activity 5.

3.6 Responses to Hazards

76. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) explained that the subject of responses to hazardous situations for small cetaceans had also been added to the work programme at the last MOP. No reports had been received from Parties, and the action points agreed by AC20 were yet to be addressed.

77. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that a report on strandings protocols had been made to the previous meeting of the Advisory Committee. These dealt mainly with animal welfare issues and the interests of the individual creature stranded.

78. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that the IWC had also discussed welfare issues and had adopted an ambitious programme. A workshop had been held recently on euthanasia and further workshops were being planned for dealing with mass strandings.

79. Florence Descroix-Comanducci (ACCOBAMS) said that a joint workshop was being organized with the Pelagos Sanctuary on the management of live stranded cetaceans in transboundary areas.

80. Ms Frisch commented that most actions being described were reactions after a stranding event had happened. The intention of the item in the ASCOBANS work programme related to developing strategies for responses before strandings occurred.

Sinéad Murphy (ZSL) said that the IWC workshop had addressed this aspect and Ms Descroix-Comanducci confirmed that the ACCOBAMS workshop would do so too.

81. Mark Simmonds (HSI) who coordinated the UK voluntary strandings operation said that the IWC euthanasia workshop had focused on large, usually solitary, animals. Mass strandings were more complex because of the social bonding among animals. There were instances where species normally associated with deep waters were found swimming in rivers; while this might be unusual, it did not necessarily mean that the animals were in distress.

82. Jan Haelters (Belgium) mentioned that in 2013 a record number of porpoises had swum up the River Scheldt, where at least 16 had died. This might have been caused by a long winter, and porpoises pursuing migrating fish up the river.

Action Points and Decisions

- 25) The Secretariat will ask Parties to provide details of those responsible for cetacean rescue, and what laws require, allow and prohibit in each country.
- 26). The Secretariat will gather information from ACCOBAMS, ECS, IWC and others on work relating to responses to cetaceans facing hazards.

3.7 Emerging Issues

83. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) explained that this item had been added to the ASCOBANS work programme as a “place holder”. A number of issues qualifying under this heading relevant to the Agreement were on the agenda of the forthcoming CMS COP and were being brought to the attention of the Advisory Committee.

3.7.1 Climate Change

84. Melanie Virtue (Secretariat) referring to Inf.3.7.1.a provided some background to treatment of issues relating to climate change by CMS. In 1997 a Working Group of the CMS Scientific Council had been established, now chaired by Professor Colin Galbraith, and a series of resolutions had been adopted by the COP. Two technical workshops had been held (in Tour du Valat, France and in Limón, Costa Rica) where a programme of work for CMS on climate change had been developed. The draft programme of work was now being submitted to CMS COP11 for adoption. The CMS Working Group could act as advisers to the entire CMS Family, including ASCOBANS.

85. Florence Descroix-Comanducci (ACCOBAMS) pointed out that the draft resolution made reference to the workshop organized by ACCOBAMS and chaired by Mark Simmonds. The report of the workshop had been made available as Inf.3.7.1.b. Climate change was clearly a threat to cetaceans and cetaceans were good indicators of the effects that climate change was having.

86. The meeting nominated Mark Simmonds (HSI) as marine and cetacean expert for the CMS Climate Change Working Group, noting that he was excellently placed to report back to both ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS.

Action Points and Decisions

- 27) The Secretariat will request ASCOBANS Parties nominate an expert on cetaceans and climate change to the CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Climate Change. If possible, this person should be able to represent ACCOBAMS as well.

3.7.2 Renewable Energy and Migratory Species

87. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) gave a presentation on marine renewable energy developments (MREDs) which included tidal, wave and wind installations. She showed a map of the world with areas with the greatest potential highlighted, many of them within the ASCOBANS Agreement Area. Renewable energy sources were welcome because they did not produce CO₂ and thus helped with climate change. They were however a source of noise pollution both in construction and operational stages and animals could collide with them or become entangled. They could also have effects on habitats as some covered large areas of sea and could affect the behaviour of prey.

88. Alison Wood (WDC) said that WDC had recently published a global review of marine renewable energy and its implications, which was contained in Inf.3.7.2.b. There had been a huge expansion of this sector and installations now covered thousands of square kilometres. The review considered short- and longer-term impacts. It was important to gather baseline data so that impacts could be assessed and to consider how these installations would be decommissioned in due course. ASCOBANS could have a role in developing guidelines and the effects on cetacean habitat particularly in transboundary sites.

89. The Chair said that marine spatial planning was a tool how to use our oceans in a more coordinated and sustainable way.

90. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that the UK had a huge potential for developing wind, wave and tidal energy which would contribute greatly to decarbonizing the British economy. There could be “trickle down” benefits from the growth of this sector as a growing economy usually spent more on conservation. It was also acknowledged that renewable energy was not without disadvantages.

91. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that the Netherlands was working on a marine spatial planning document. There were fossil fuel platforms and wind farms in Dutch waters and it had been found that windfarms provided artificial habitats for some species. Wave energy - rather than tidal energy - had potential in the Netherlands. Baseline data were being sought so that sound decisions could be made on how best to develop renewables.

92. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) said that mitigation measures were the key and many were available, with insulation sleeves becoming less expensive. Germany and Denmark had made significant progress in mitigating the effects of renewable energy installations.

93. Kai Mattsson (Finland) said wave and tidal energy were not as viable in the Baltic as in the North Sea. Learning from the lessons of poor fishing gear design, ASCOBANS could play a role in advocating the deployment of renewable energy equipment with fewer adverse impacts.

94. Mark Simmonds (HSI) said that there were many unknowns surrounding the development of new technologies. Attempts could be made to predict the impacts but it was important to observe the actual effects and react to those observations. The IWC had held a workshop on interactions between cetaceans and marine renewable installations in 2012 and had made recommendations which could be accessed as [IWC/SC/64/Rep.6 Rev.1](#).

95. Ms Scheidat advocated ASCOBANS making a few focused recommendations rather than a long list and that ASCOBANS should act soon before major construction started. She, Sara Königson (Sweden), Mr Simmonds, Mr Rendell and Patricia Brtnik (Germany) formed an in-session drafting group to produce a statement (attached as Annex 13).

96. Melanie Virtue (Secretariat) drew attention to Inf.3.7.2.a, which contained a draft CMS resolution on the subject. It had emerged out of a joint project being run by CMS, the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), BirdLife International and IRENA, the International Renewable Energy Agency. The resolution called for the establishment of a multidisciplinary task force on energy, which would initially focus on the Africa-Eurasian region and birds but would eventually be expanded to global coverage and the other species groups of concern.

97. Kelly Macleod (United Kingdom) reported on a new ICES working group, the Working Group on Marine Renewable Energy (ICES WGMRE). The first interim report of the WG was contained in information document 3.7.2.c.

Action Points and Decisions

- 28) The Advisory Committee will maintain a watching brief on emerging marine renewable energy technologies. A standing agenda item will be introduced to the Advisory Committee allowing Parties to bring in new information and developments, in particular information on wave and tidal energy.
- 29) The Secretariat should arrange for a presentation on emerging marine renewable energy technologies and mitigation measures to be made to the Advisory Committee.

3.7.3 Conservation Implications of Cetacean Culture

98. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that resulting from the Global Programme of Work for Cetaceans adopted by CMS at COP10, an expert workshop had been convened in London in April 2014 to examine the emerging science of cetacean culture and its implications for conservation. There were parallels with primates and elephants. The concise report examining the conservation implications of cetacean culture was contained in Inf.3.7.3.b. The related draft resolution that had been prepared for presentation to CMS COP11 was found in Inf.3.7.3.a and any comments could be channelled through CMS National Focal Points.

99. Fabian Ritter (WDC) welcomed the fact that the issue of cetacean culture was being addressed at an international forum.

100. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that this was an interesting issue and might lead to the adoption of new approaches to conservation. He asked what the financial implications would be of establishing the expert working group foreseen and wondered whether future steps should be planned more methodically. Mark Simmonds (HSI) said that the report did set out the next steps quite clearly.

101. Kai Mattsson (Finland) said that the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums had not participated in the workshop but had great expertise that it could share.

102. The Secretariat clarified that while face-to-face meetings were invaluable, none were foreseen at present for the expert group. Should one become necessary, this would be financed through voluntary contributions, rather than the core budget of the Convention, which only included minimal amounts for implementation of resolutions in any of the options

forwarded to the COP. The main way for the group to operate would be through the CMS Scientific Council Workspace

3.7.4 Boat-based Wildlife Watching

103. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) explained that a further subject under discussion at COP11 would be boat-based wildlife watching. Many species, not just cetaceans, were affected. This activity had great potential to bring benefits, but if poorly managed could do great harm. Some countries had related legislation while others had voluntary guidelines or no regulations at all. The draft resolution before COP did not contain specific guidelines but rather the skeleton of what such guidelines might cover, depending on the target species and specific situation.

104. Mats Amundin (Sweden) asked whether the guidelines covered types of vessels. Ms Frisch said that boat size was covered as a consideration to be taken into account. Mr Amundin also referred to the wide-spread use of depth sounders which significantly increased underwater noise from vessels. Ms Frisch suggested that Mr Amundin raise his concerns over the excessive and pointless use of sonar with the Swedish COP delegation with a view to suggesting an addition to the text.

105. Florence Descroix-Comanducci (ACCOBAMS) said that ACCOBAMS had passed a resolution on commercial whale watching and had launched a certification scheme, details of which could be found on the ACCOBAMS website. Certificates could be issued by government authorities or through the professional umbrella organization. While "swim with" schemes were covered, spotter planes were also used by several operators and the aircraft could also disturb the animals.

106. Fabian Ritter (WDC) welcomed the draft resolution and the fact that the issue would be discussed at COP. Whale watching was a growing sector and concerns regarding the quality of some of the operations had been raised at the IWC, the guidelines of which were also referenced in the draft resolution.

107. Mark Simmonds (HSI) said that NGOs had been accused of blindly advocating whale watching as a green form of ecotourism with no regard for the welfare and conservation of the animals. This accusation he rejected; the well-being of the animals was always of paramount concern. NGOs were aware that whales needed respite from boats as it was not the case that they could simply swim away. There should be limits to the amount of time boats were in the vicinity of whales, with periods and areas designated when and where whales would not be approached. He therefore welcomed the interest of CMS in the subject.

108. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) repeated his concerns over other boat-based leisure activities such as water sports which were growing in popularity but could also cause considerable disturbance to cetaceans. Ms Frisch pointed out that the draft resolution encouraged application of any guidelines developed at national level also to other users of the marine environment, where feasible.

3.7.5 Live Captures of Cetaceans

109. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented the final item on the COP agenda of interest to ASCOBANS, live capture of cetaceans for commercial purposes, although this was not a practice in any ASCOBANS Party. The draft resolution had a very concise operative section calling for a prohibition of captures in the national waters of CMS Parties, as well as of imports and transit of animals. It also covered cooperation with CITES and the IWC. It dealt only with wild-bred specimens and not animals already in human care.

110. Mats Amundin (Sweden) stressed that European zoos and aquaria no longer acquired their bottlenose dolphins from the wild but relied on reproduction from their existing

stocks through cooperative breeding programmes that ensured the long-term conservation of genetic variation and maintained demographic stability in the stock under human care. The zoo community opposed the Japanese Taiji drive hunts for dolphins and was exerting pressure on Japanese zoos to do the same.

111. Jan Haelters (Belgium) reported the case of eighteen belugas captured in the Russian Federation that were going to be transported to the USA through Belgium. As the animals would have been in transit and were not being imported into Belgium, there was nothing the authorities could have done. In the event, the deal broke down. Belgium would be proposing some changes to the draft resolution which needed to be agreed through EU consultation. The changes would concern discouraging tourism operators from promoting exhibits with specimens caught in the wild and increasing transparency and reporting of live captures.

112. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) expressed disappointment that the USA was allowing the import of wild-caught specimens and also mentioned that the long-term effects of animals released from the Taiji drive hunts were unknown.

113. Melanie Virtue (Secretariat) explained that the draft resolution had been discussed at the CMS Scientific Council in July 2014 where CITES had been represented. There had been some discussion whether additional references to CITES were required, as such hunts could be in compliance with the Convention. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that the draft resolution might need further amendment to ensure that it did not cut across the competencies of other fora, in particular CITES.

114. Sara Königson (Sweden) asked about the rehabilitation of stranded animals that could not be released back into the wild. Ms Frisch clarified that the resolution dealt exclusively with removals for commercial purposes and did not touch on cases where the intention was rehabilitation.

115. Mark Simmonds (HSI) pointed out that the removal of any animals from small populations could have a drastic effect, and this applied for example to Russian populations of belugas and orcas. The IWC Scientific Committee had repeatedly advised against taking of animals where the consequences of such take had not been properly assessed.

4. Review of New Information on other Matters Relevant for Small Cetacean Conservation

4.1 Population Size, Distribution, Structure and Causes of Any Changes

116. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that the main issues discussed at last year's Advisory Committee Meeting were the proposed SCANS III survey, the definition of management units, especially in the area where ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS overlapped, and a request to the Secretariat regarding contacts with the Faroese authorities concerning the taking of cetaceans. She requested further guidance as to the content of this communication with the Faroe Islands.

117. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that the UK Ambassador to Denmark had recently visited the Faroe Islands and had asked for information about the sustainability of the hunt. The UK Commissioner to the IWC had also recently written to ask the same question.

118. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that his Government opposed the hunts as they were currently being conducted and consideration was being given to broadening the remit of the IWC to cover small cetaceans. The Netherlands would also be contacting Denmark and the Faroes expressing its view that the killing of small cetaceans was not acceptable.

119. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) questioned the need to involve Denmark as the Faroes were autonomous. She also suggested approaching NAMMCO. Ms

Frisch clarified that the Secretariat was in direct contact with the Faroese authorities, and that NAMMCO had been approached for relevant questions, too.

120. Mark Simmonds (HSI) suggested that ASCOBANS should maintain contact with the Faroese authorities to seek information about the hunts. He did not know to what use all the meat was put and pointed out that dolphins as well as pilot whales were taken.

121. Oliver Schall (Germany) recalled that data had been presented to the Advisory Committee in a prior meeting showing that the Faroese cetacean populations were at least partly shared with ASCOBANS and also raised the question of the application of the Habitats Directive and its provisions for Annex IV species.

122. Kelly Macleod (United Kingdom) reported on the meeting of the ICES Marine Mammal Ecology Working Group held in the USA in March 2014. The working group annually reviewed new information on marine mammal abundance and distribution (Inf. 4.1.a), and in recent years, its work had been connected to the development of targets under the MSFD. In this context, it was also reviewing and defining management units for marine mammals and reviewing renewable energy installations. Sinéad Murphy (ZSL) added that some existing management units for marine mammals were also being reviewed. The Working Group also responded to specific requests from OSPAR and the European Commission, and had recently examined the impacts of aquaculture.

123. Justyna Szumlicz (Poland) said that in Poland there was a programme for fisheries to record marine mammals and seabird bycatch.

124. Ms Murphy described the species review of the short-beaked common dolphin in the north east Atlantic contained in Inf.4.1.b. Interactions with fisheries and reasons for its low reproductive rate had been examined. The assessment on fisheries interactions included operational effects, a summary table on annual estimates of total bycatch rates for the species, and a discussion on fisheries selectivity of age-sex maturity classes. Problem areas (geographical and fishery type) and the status of knowledge of the problem were discussed in the paper. She stated that it was crucial that current legal requirements and obligations were met and existing management measures were fully implemented and enforced. This could be aided through the development of an international conservation plan for North-east Atlantic common dolphins, which would enable EU Member States to focus on conservation priorities in their waters. Such a plan could be developed through the auspices of ASCOBANS. This plan would continue the identification and evaluation of present and potential threats. Potential impacts of these threats would be addressed through the development of threat reduction measures. This conservation plan would accompany other initiatives, such as the development of MSFD indicators based on population size, mortality, and population condition.

125. Mark Simmonds (HSI) said that this was one of many species found in the west of the Agreement Area and provided another good reason to have input from Ireland. Recognizing that ASCOBANS already had a full programme, he nonetheless said it would be interesting if draft conservation plans for species other than the harbour porpoise were developed. At the very least, the Advisory Committee should have the opportunity to consider the conservation status of other species covered by the Agreement.

126. Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that there was an overlap with the work being done on indicators for the MSFD, and an assessment of the status of the common dolphin should be available by 2016. Ms Murphy questioned whether the MSFD would contribute as much to cetacean conservation as dedicated conservation plans, and ASCOBANS was the best forum for providing Governments with the requisite advice.

127. Susanne Viker (Sweden) added that collaboration with the IWC should be possible, with the IWC dealing with the large cetaceans not covered by ASCOBANS. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) said that for common dolphins it would make sense for ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS to work together especially for the common area.

128. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) made a presentation on the aerial surveys conducted over the Dogger Bank in 2011 and 2013 by an international team from Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The British, Dutch and German sectors of the Dogger Bank adjoined and formed a Site of Community Interest hosting harbour porpoises and common and grey seals. The methodology used was similar to SCANS II.

129. The weather was worse in 2013 when no surveying was done in the German sector. The 2013 estimate of 43,000 compared with 116,000 in 2011, with similar distribution but less density. The timing of the two surveys was different (the 2013 one being done three weeks later in the year) and the animals' migration might account for the different numbers. Another pertinent factor might have been the sea temperature (2013 was warmer). Other species encountered in 2013 included white-beaked dolphins, minke whales and basking sharks.

130. Ida Carlén (Sweden) reported that the end-of-project conference for SAMBAH would take place on 8 and 9 December 2014 at Kolmården Djurpark in Sweden.

131. Jan Haelters (Belgium) referred to the Belgian national report which had indicated that 2013 had been an exceptional year for strandings. Additionally, in April 2014, the highest ever estimates of the density of harbour porpoises in Belgian waters had been made, with on average four harbour porpoises per square kilometre.

132. Ms Scheidat said that some smaller scale surveys along the Dutch shelf had produced lower population estimates than the previous year. Details were contained in the Dutch national report.

133. Patricia Brtnik (Germany) said with regard to the monitoring of German Natura 2000 sites, a significant increase in harbour porpoise density had been reported in the southern part of the German North Sea (for the years 2002-2012).

134. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that SCANS III would do crucial work in support of the implementation of the Habitats Directive. The deadline for the LIFE project proposal to be submitted to the European Commission was 16 October 2014 and a grant of 60 per cent was being sought. The UK had made a commitment to provide its share of matching funding. Other parties willing to support the project should contact the University of St Andrews as soon as possible.

135. Yvon Morizur (France) said he recognized how important SCANS II had been and France was looking into ways to support SCANS III. Oliver Schall (Germany) said that he hoped to be able to arrange for a letter of support to be issued before the deadline and Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said he was also trying to find the required funds.

136. Sara Königson (Sweden) asked whether SCANS III would cover any area included in SAMBAH. Ms Macleod said that while SCANS had extended to the Baltic, SCANS II had not because of the very low density of animals and consequently high costs to survey effectively. The large-scale survey approach of SCANS was probably not the best approach to survey the Baltic population. Therefore, it was not envisaged that SCANS III would cover the Baltic Sea either. Sweden had confirmed that it would provide some matching funds for SCANS III.

Action Points and Decisions

- 30) The Secretariat will contact the Faroese Authorities with a request to provide information on recent hunts, in particular, details regarding the species affected by the hunt, how sustainability is assessed, what regulations and management are in place, and how the catches are utilized.
- 31) Parties should ask the EU Presidency to write along similar lines to the Faroese Authorities, raising concerns that some of the populations affected extend into European waters.
- 32) The Advisory Committee shall have regular sessions dedicated to particular species starting with the Common Dolphin at the 22nd Meeting.
- 33) The Advisory Committee would welcome the submission of a draft conservation plan for the common dolphin and agrees to give it due consideration. This should include consideration of the area of overlap between ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS.
- 34) Parties were urged to let St Andrews University have formal confirmation of any financial support for commitments for the SCANS III project by the end of the week beginning 6 October 2014.

4.2 Management of Marine Protected Areas

137. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that there was no Action Point from the previous meeting and no new documents for the present one. ASCOBANS' main concern was the management rather than the identification of suitable marine protected areas.

138. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) relayed a message from Denmark that the production of management plans for sites designated for harbour porpoises was in the final stages.

139. Florence Descroix-Comanducci (ACCOBAMS) said that a joint workshop was being organized in June 2015 with RAC/SPA on the effectiveness of MPAs for cetaceans, with the expected outcome being best practice guidelines.

4.3 New Agreement Area

4.3.1 Report and Recommendations of the Extension Area Working Group

140. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation), the Chair of the Working Group, read out its terms of reference and then gave an overview of what each country within the extended area was doing, as contained in Doc.4.3.1.

141. The United Kingdom was involved with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and identifying SACs and MPAs for various species. Surveys and monitoring were being undertaken in several areas, a strandings scheme was operating and research done into toxicology, bycatch and sensitivity to noise.

142. Ireland was developing cetacean conservation plans and a protection strategy and two new SACs had been designated for cetaceans.

143. France had been conducting aerial surveys, and were continuing with studies into bycatch and on the diets of harbour porpoises and seals.

144. Spain was undertaking abundance studies and an analysis of post mortems to check the proportion showing signs of bycatch prompted by a decline of the population off Galicia. Toxicology studies were examining the levels of PCBs, PBDEs and trace metals such as

mercury. Dietary studies were being undertaken, and research into the DNA of Iberian harbour porpoises might justify recognition of a new sub-species.

145. Portugal was conducting surveys as part of the LIFE MarPro project. Abundance estimates for various species were being undertaken and genetic studies in parallel with those being done in Spain were confirming indications that the Iberian population of harbour porpoise might be a distinct sub-species. The association between common dolphin bycatch and sardine fisheries was being investigated.

146. In conclusion, Mr Evans expressed his gratitude for the cooperation he had received from Parties and non-Parties alike.

147. Mark Simmonds (HSI) asked if there was any way that the Irish authorities and NGOs could be persuaded to become more involved in the work of ASCOBANS. Mr Evans said that fisheries interests seemed to be the main obstacle but informal contact was continuing.

148. Sinéad Murphy (ZSL) suggested inviting the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (IWDG) to attend ASCOBANS meetings. Mr Evans said that they had in the past been very active promoting ASCOBANS with their government.

149. The Chair suggested that the Acting Executive Secretary be requested to approach the authorities in Ireland and other non-Party Range States to promote accession to the Agreement.

Action Points and Decisions

- 35) The Secretariat will seek to facilitate attendance from Ireland of appropriate experts in meetings of the Advisory Committee.

4.4 Large Cetaceans

4.4.1 Report and Recommendations of the Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans

150. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) again referred to Doc.4.3.1, which covered large cetaceans, too. He said that major issues included ship strikes affecting mainly fin, humpback and sperm whales. Bycatch and entanglement in ghost nets affected mainly minke, humpback and fin whales. Pollutants seemed to be present in lower levels than was the case with small cetaceans, while noise was potentially also a major factor. Mr Evans welcomed the collaboration among Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain and the UK.

151. Mark Simmonds (HSI) commended the strandings work of the ZSL under Paul Jepson.

152. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) said that two pilot whales from the same pod, which had been satellite tagged at the Faroes and released together with their whole pod, had been recorded as far away as the latitude of Northern Spain. Mr Evans suggested that offshore populations of several species probably followed the edge of the continental shelf and were therefore covering large distances.

5. Publicity and Outreach

153. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that a wide range of activities had been undertaken by Parties and the Secretariat alike. As already stressed at the last Advisory Committee Meeting, there was an ongoing need for additional funding in order to implement the Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan.

5.1 Reports of Parties, Range States and Partners

154. Krzysztof Skóra (Poland) said that toy harbour porpoises had been distributed at a children's hospital at Christmas and a small museum "the House of the Harbour Porpoise" had opened as a new wing of the Hel Marine Station. A campaign had been launched to promote the coexistence of fisheries and conservation and a TV item concerning SAMBAH had reached an audience of 4.5 million. A DVD had been produced in English, German and Polish. Events had been held to mark the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise and Fish Day, stressing that fish were important for people, seals and harbour porpoises. Some interest was evoked when a northern bottlenose whale was found stranded (the first such occurrence for 150 years). Five thousand calendars with a harbour porpoise theme had been printed and distributed to schools.

155. Katarzyna Pietrasik (WWF Poland) said that the network of volunteers for the strandings scheme had grown to 200 and most of the Polish coastline was now covered.

156. Kai Mattsson (Finland) said that the Finnish sightings campaign continued with between five and ten sightings reported per year. There was some interest in the confirmation from the SAMBAH project that harbour porpoises were present in Finnish waters and the Ministry had established a new working group to revise the Action Plan for harbour porpoise in Finland. There was also some media coverage of activities related to the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise.

157. Mats Amundin (Sweden) said that the SAMBAH exhibition was being displayed at Kolmården which had 500,000 visitors a year. A harbour porpoise "safari" on a replica sailing ship during summer 2014 had encountered a harbour porpoise mother and calf, observed visually as well as detected on the hydrophone, close to Kullaberg in south-western Sweden. A live acoustic internet link was being set up to a two-channel hydrophone system that had been installed at Kullaberg, with one listening for cetaceans and the other for ship noise.

158. Fabian Ritter (WDC) gave a presentation on the campaign *Die letzten 300* (the last 300) which had been organized with the NGOs OceanCare and NABU in collaboration with ASCOBANS. The three winning entries, including the overall winner an animated film, had been shown to the German Environment Minister. Other entries included paintings and sculptures. He also showed the video *the Last Memory* (available [online](#)). It stemmed from a cooperation of WDC with a design college. Exhibits covering both initiatives would be shown in an exhibition focusing on the harbour porpoise in the Baltic to be shown in the German Oceanographic Museum in the first months of 2015.

159. Alison Wood (WDC) gave a presentation on an outreach campaign organized by WDC in conjunction with the ARCHIE Foundation and Wild in Art, which had run for ten weeks over the summer in Aberdeen and involved decorating life-sized models of dolphins. At the end of the campaign the models were auctioned with one fetching £55,000, and despite heavy rain, 18,000 people attended the final day's events.

5.2 Report of the Secretariat

160. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) highlighted key points from Doc.5.2. She reported that the dedicated children's website, ASCOBANS Kids, was now online and its porpoise mascot had been named *Bubbles* after a public naming competition. The site was entirely new and its content had been produced by a series of interns and a consultant funded through Germany's voluntary contribution. Further interactive features would be added when funds were available.

161. A new publication, the *Oceans full of plastic* leaflet, had been produced in collaboration with CMS.

162. The Secretariat had been present at the Brighton WhaleFest which had been attended by 10,000 visitors. The children's site and the *Oceans full of plastic* leaflet had both been launched. The annual celebration of the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise continued as an important activity and a Facebook event page had been set up for it. Short reports of the activities relating to the 2014 event were available in the News section of the website.

163. The ASCOBANS website had been completely revised and was now based on a content management system, as part of a CMS Family-wide project. A user survey was currently open asking visitors for their views of the new design. Members of the Advisory Committee were urged to participate, as the feedback would be used to further improve the site and its features. When time and funds allowed, more information would also be added to the website, such as information on fisheries as agreed by prior Advisory Committee Meetings.

164. ASCOBANS was also present in social media and had its own Facebook page. The number of followers (294) was not particularly high at the moment and she encouraged all to invite their networks (the next day Ms Frisch reported that the number of followers had risen by 22 overnight).

165. Kai Mattsson (Finland) liked the new children's site and suggested adding more links to educational sites from the Parties.

166. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) noted that more funding was being requested to develop the websites and wondered how the Secretariat was measuring the success in reaching target audiences and spreading the Agreement's message and of other outreach campaigns.

167. Mark Simmonds (HSI) noted that NGOs also had to prove their outreach work was effective. Measures included counting the visitors at information stands, "hits" on websites and the number of "likes" on Facebook. This type of assessment of outreach might be appropriate for ASCOBANS, too, which might try sounding out a small focus group with its materials. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) said that Google analytics provided data for individual websites and pages. The use of key words helped attract visitors and new words might be needed if ASCOBANS were to widen its appeal and engage the interest of fishermen.

168. Sara Königson (Sweden) asked how long the ASCOBANS Facebook page had been online. It would be possible to ask partner organizations to promote it and the ASCOBANS website to increase traffic and followers. It was also important for the Facebook page to have fresh material and a range of contributors. Mr Mattsson suggested identifying one person in each Party to act as a page manager.

169. Ms Frisch confirmed that ASCOBANS had placed notifications of the new Facebook page on relevant other pages, and was liaising with CMS which had reached 3,000 followers for its Facebook presence. She pointed out that CMS had a dedicated communications team and the Executive Secretary was a keen user of Twitter.

Action Points and Decisions

- 36) Parties and partners should send suggestions for educational websites that can be linked to the ASCOBANS Kids Website.
- 37) The Secretariat should look into ways of evaluating the effectiveness of its outreach media and material.
- 38) In order to expand its social network presence and improve outreach Parties could nominate a national Facebook content manager, or provide relevant information to the Secretariat, as appropriate.
- 39) The Acting Executive Secretary is encouraged to seek out new opportunities through social media to raise the profile of ASCOBANS.
- 40) Everyone was encouraged to take part in the website user satisfaction survey before 19 October 2014.
- 41) ASCOBANS work should include an educational element to raise awareness among recreational boat users on how to reduce the risk of harming and disturbing cetaceans.

6. Project Funding through ASCOBANS

6.1 Progress of Supported Projects

170. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that the TURSIOPS SEAS project was the only related item in the work plan. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) said that the project was being part-funded by the UK and the foreseen proposal was being prepared for submission to the European Commission. The original project proponent had now passed the reins to Mr Evans, who hoped to be able to complete the proposal by the summer of 2015. The project concerned bottlenose dolphin population structure and movements in British, Irish, French, Portuguese and Spanish waters.

171. Ms Frisch referred to Doc.6.1, which gave an overview of other ASCOBANS co-funded projects that had been completed since the last meeting or were still in progress. The reports received had been made available as Inf.6.1.a, b and c.

6.2 Prioritization of Project Proposals and Other Activities

172. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that the regular call for projects had been made in May with a deadline for receipt of applications in July. All responses received were contained in Doc.6.2.a. As in previous years, a ballot procedure had been carried out among the Advisory Committee, and eleven responses had been received (eight from Parties and three from observers). The funds for projects came from reallocating end of year underspends in the budget and occasionally from voluntary contributions.

173. There was €28,500 available for projects and other activities. The three scoring best in the ballot were: BALHAB (score 2.3), the testing of pingers inaudible to seals (2.2) and North Sea Harbour Porpoises (2.1) and had all bid for approximately €15,000. Funding two of them would leave nothing to support the other activities in need of funds for implementation, as outlined in Doc.6.2.b, such as the continuation of the North Sea Coordinator's consultancy, the redesign of the national report form, outreach work or for grants to the various workshops that had been proposed in the course of this meeting.

174. Yvon Morizur (France) asked whether the Secretariat could redesign the national report form in-house. Ms Frisch said that while this had been the plan for the first stage of

the project, capacity had been insufficient for addressing this. For the second stage, there was no one with the requisite expertise in-house and time was pressing as the form needed to be ready well in advance of the next MOP. This project was further discussed under agenda item 12.2.

175. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) said she recognized that the North Sea Coordinator consultancy was a priority but she was uncomfortable that a call for projects had been made with the possibility that no grant would be awarded. She asked whether it would be feasible to adjust the North Sea Coordinator's time commitment to free more funds for projects.

176. Monika Lesz (Poland) agreed that the situation was frustrating, adding that the Baltic region had long been waiting to appoint its own coordinator. She added that the review of legislation was also important for the work of the Agreement.

177. Ms Frisch reminded the meeting that the North Sea Coordinator had in the past been funded through voluntary contributions. The Secretariat had however not received notice that any further such payments were forthcoming.

178. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) agreed that for the sake of the Agreement's credibility, at least one outside project should be funded since a call for bids had been made. He also committed the UK to make a voluntary contribution of GB£5,000 towards the cost of the North Sea Coordinator given the importance of the post. He asked whether it would be possible to provide grants of less than the amounts sought by the project proponents in order to fund more than one. Ida Carlén (Sweden) said that the BALHAB project did not have any other possible sources lined up, so a reduced grant would mean reducing the scope of the project.

179. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) asked if there were any ways of avoiding the UN 13 per cent Programme Support Costs. The Secretariat explained that this could only be done if a Party undertook to fund a project or consultancy itself.

180. Ms Frisch said that the consensus of the Science Session seemed to be to fund the top-ranked project and the North Sea Coordinator. In case of unexpected voluntary contributions, it might be useful to have a project or priority activity in reserve. However, most voluntary contributions were made for specific purposes rather than for general funds. She explained that these recommendations would be revisited in the Institutional Session, when a final decision on the allocation of funds to external projects, internal activities as outlined in Doc.6.2.b, and proposals for activities made during this meeting would be made.

181. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said it should be for the Parties within the sub-regions to fund their coordinators leaving the Agreement's funds to finance ASCOBANS-wide priorities. He undertook to ask whether the Netherlands too could provide some funds for the North Sea Coordinator and encouraged the other Parties to consult their capitals, too.

7. Any other Business

182. Heidrun Frisch reported that at the 10th meeting of the Jastarnia Group the question of re-electing Working Group Chairs had been raised. It had been pointed out that according to the Rules of Procedure for the AC, unless their own terms of reference contained other provisions, following the Meeting of Parties all Working Groups should hold elections, but this had not happened. The Advisory Committee was asked for guidance whether these elections should now be carried out belatedly, or whether the rules should only be followed from the next intersessional period onwards. As the North Sea Group had had to elect a new Chair recently and the Working Groups on Bycatch and Marine Debris had no Chair at present, those affected were the Jastarnia Group, the Extension Area Working Group and the Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans.

183. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) advocated regularizing the situation by holding elections. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) pointed out that two Parties were not present,

but Ms Frisch said that the Rules of Procedure referred to “Parties present and voting”. In the case of the Jastarnia Group, it rather than the Advisory Committee elected the Chair.

184. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) indicated that he was willing to continue serving as Chair of the Extension Area and Large Cetacean Working Groups if no one else wanted to take over. He was formally nominated and re-elected unanimously. Ms Frisch said that Rüdiger Stempel, the Chair of the Jastarnia Group, hoped that he would be able to serve further and would be able to confirm this before the next meeting of the Group, when elections would be held. The vacancies for Chairs of the Bycatch and Marine Debris Working Groups were not filled, but Mr Evans agreed to serve in an interim capacity to move forward the Agreement’s work on bycatch.

Action Points and Decisions

- 42) The Jastarnia Group was asked to hold an election for its Chair at its 11th meeting.
- 43) Peter Evans was re-elected as Chair of the Working Group on the Extension Area and of the Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans.

8. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Scientific Session

185. A printed version of the draft action points arising from the Scientific Session was circulated and the text projected on screen. Subject to the amendments requested by the meeting they were adopted. The full List of Action Points and Decisions for the meeting is pre-fixed to this report.

9. Close of the Session

186. With all of its business concluded, the Scientific Session was declared closed by the Chair.

10. Opening of the Institutional Session

187. The Chair opened the session seeking approval to adopt the agenda and inviting suggestions for items to be considered under “Any Other Business” (agenda item 16). The Meeting approved the agenda and no items were proposed for “Any Other Business”.

11. Accession and Agreement Amendment

11.1 Report of the Secretariat

188. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) reported that there had been no changes in membership since the last meeting. The number of Parties still stood at ten, seven of which had ratified the amendment. She added that among the tasks of the Acting Executive Secretary was the recruitment of non-Party Range States, but she also urged Parties to promote the Agreement with the governments of non-Parties.

Action Points and Decisions

- 44) The Acting Executive Secretary was asked to approach non-Party Range States with a view to encourage them strongly to accede to the Agreement.
- 45) Parties were urged to assist with the recruitment of non-Party Range States.

11.2 Reports from Parties

189. The Chair invited the representatives of the Parties that had not yet accepted the Agreement’s 2003 amendment to report on progress.

190. Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that there was no progress to report regarding Belgium’s ratification of the amendment. The appropriate administration would be informed.

191. Emma Rundall (United Kingdom) confirmed that the United Kingdom’s ratification of the amendment would be deposited with the United Nations in the course of the week. It would initially cover Great Britain and Northern Ireland, but the authorities of the Isle of Man had also expressed their willingness to be covered by the Agreement.

192. Regarding recruitment of new Parties, the Chair said that Finland had been in touch with Estonia unofficially. She understood that Estonia was still considering accession, but she had no indication of when Estonia might join.

12. National Reporting

12.1 Reports from Parties

193. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that the Secretariat was obliged to produce a composite report drawing on the reports submitted by the Parties; the official deadline for this was 30 June. This however could only be done if the national reports were received far enough in advance of that date. All national reports had now been received and the Secretariat would produce the composite report by the end of the year.

194. No Party expressed the desire to take the floor to make an oral addition to its national report.

Action Points and Decisions

- 46) The Secretariat will produce the compilation of National Reports by the end of the year.

12.2 Revision to National Reporting Format

195. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) drew attention to Doc.12. Reporting could be onerous but was an important way of measuring the effectiveness of the agreement. The 7th Meeting of the Parties had asked the Advisory Committee to consider a revision of the format and there had been good discussions at the previous meeting and at the North Sea Group. ASCOBANS had operated an online reporting system since 2012 and it was intended to align the report from with those of other fora such as CMS and the EU. A two-step approach had been agreed at the last meeting: a consultation followed by engaging professionals to design a form. As time had not been sufficient for addressing the first step in-house, the Secretariat was suggesting hiring a consultant, as outlined also in Doc.6.2.b.

196. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that the Parties should agree among themselves what activities they needed to report on and ASCOBANS should liaise with other organizations such as the IWC which was undertaking a similar exercise.

197. Monika Lesz (Poland) said that her understanding was that the Secretariat was meant to have conducted a survey but she had not been approached. Ms Frisch explained that time constraints had prevented the Secretariat from addressing this time consuming task. Ms Lesz and Sara Königson (Sweden) asked that this task be accorded higher priority next year when the Secretariat was not dealing with the CMS COP.

198. Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) said that he frequently referred to national reports for various fora for information. None was perfect and there were many gaps that could be filled to make them more useful to him as chair of several Working Groups.

199. The Chair said that in HELCOM the Secretariat and Parties worked together on such issues and she suggested forming an intersessional correspondence group with one member per Party. Ms Frisch said that a dedicated area in the ASCOBANS workspace could be created and Mr Rendell offered to set the ball rolling by preparing a paper.

200. In order for the form to be ready for the reporting cycle ending at the next MOP, the Advisory Committee would need to approve a draft at its next meeting. Parties needed to inform the Secretariat of their member of the correspondence group by 15 November.

201. Parties acknowledged that for the survey design itself a professional needed to be hired. This would require voluntary contributions in time to allow the work to commence shortly after the next Advisory Committee Meeting had approved the content to be queried through the new format.

Action Points and Decisions

- 47) An Inter-sessional correspondence process was established to be assisted by the Secretariat to identify the Agreement's reporting needs and all Parties are encouraged to send the Secretariat the name of the person participating in the process by 15 November. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee and the Chairs of the Working Groups together with the North Sea Coordinator will also take part.
- 48) Parties are urged to make financial pledges before the 22nd Advisory Committee to enable a professional survey designer to be recruited to produce the new reporting format and the ASCOBANS Secretariat will liaise with the IWC Secretariat, which is undertaking a similar exercise to see if synergies are feasible.

13. Relations with other Bodies

13.1 Reports by the Secretariat, Parties and Partners

202. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) referred to Inf.13.1, a compilation bringing together reports submitted by people attending various meetings on behalf of ASCOBANS. She also reported on the series of joint workshops with the ECS and ACCOBAMS and requested guidance as to the workshop to organize in 2015

Action Points and Decisions

- 49) In addition to the thresholds workshop agreed (see AP13) the Necropsy Workshop proposed by the North Sea Group should be held at the 2015 ECS Conference.

13.2 Cooperation and Joint Initiatives with CMS

203. Melanie Virtue (Secretariat) said that the Secretariat liaised closely with other CMS bodies, notably the Secretariat and other bodies of the parent Convention and regional instruments within the CMS Family, such as ACCOBAMS. Current areas for cooperation were the development of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species, which was being submitted to the CMS COP for adoption, and the CMS Champions programme.

204. Ms Virtue explained that the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 shadowed the CBD Aichi Targets. It was being drafted by an ad-hoc Working Group under CMS and it was being designed to be relevant for the entire CMS Family. It would be complemented by a companion volume setting out in greater detail how the Plan should be implemented. The regional instruments under CMS would be invited to develop detailed sub-targets.

205. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that the number of fora in which the implementation of conservation policies was discussed was high and distinguishing the role each played was difficult. He asked what the benefit to ASCOBANS was supposed to be, should it provide the sub-targets requested. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) shared the concern that ASCOBANS would face too many targets but recognized that the Strategic Plan would be a living document that could be amended as circumstances allowed or demanded.

206. Regarding the Champions Programme, Ms Virtue said that at its 20th meeting the Advisory Committee had approved ASCOBANS' involvement in the scheme. Accordingly the Secretariat was working on some initiatives relevant to ASCOBANS, covering

underwater noise, bycatch and marine debris. ACCOBAMS was collaborating too. The Champions Programme would be formally launched at CMS COP11.

Action Points and Decisions

- 50) A decision was deferred on whether to develop sub-targets under the proposed Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 expected to be adopted at CMS COP11.

13.3 Cooperation with European Union Institutions

207. Geneviève Desportes (North Sea Coordinator) drew attention to Inf.13.3.a and b, containing ICES Advice to the EU on data collection issues. She reiterated that data clearly showed that bycatch monitoring through non-dedicated observers did not provide reliable information.

13.3.1. Report and Recommendations of the MSFD Working Group

208. Jan Haelters (Belgium) gave a presentation summarizing the process within OSPAR for developing indicators for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). Several of these were relevant for ASCOBANS and he briefed the meeting on the status of the process and the next steps. Currently new summaries were being prepared for each indicator and there might be opportunity for the MSFD Working Group to provide comments.

209. Sinéad Murphy (ZSL) gave a presentation on the report of the MSFD Working Group which she was co-chairing. The written report had been made available as Doc.13.3.1. Related to it, Inf.13.3.1 contained ICES Advice given in response to a request from OSPAR relating to the implementation of the MSFD with respect to OSPAR's common marine mammal indicators. This document also compiled information on marine mammal indicators proposed or used by Member States.

13.4 Cooperation with Other Stakeholders

210. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) reported on progress in developing contacts with other organizations. The Secretariat was cooperating with OSPAR and Ms Frisch on behalf of both CMS and ASCOBANS was a member of the ICG/POSH dealing with the protection of species and habitats. OSPAR had sent out an information request and Parties were encouraged to make available to the OSPAR Secretariat any relevant information they had. More details could be found in Doc.13.4

211. The Chair speaking as the liaison point with HELCOM reported that some of the working groups of that organization were being merged, the former HELCOM HABITAT (nature conservation and biodiversity protection) working group combining with HELCOM MONAS working group (monitoring and assessment). Full details were available on the HELCOM website. HELCOM had also listed the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise as critically endangered in the Baltic Sea in its Red List Assessment in 2013.

Action Points and Decisions

- 51) The Secretariat will seek and facilitate where appropriate stronger stakeholder engagement through meetings and other fora, in order to further the conservation objectives of ASCOBANS.
- 52) National representatives should seek opportunities to participate in local stakeholder meetings.

13.5 Dates of Interest 2014/2015

212. Presenting Doc.13.5, Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) explained that maintaining a list of dates of interest served a dual purpose; first, it ensured that ASCOBANS Parties were aware of relevant meetings and secondly it provided an opportunity to ensure that ASCOBANS was represented in important fora and the Parties could be apprised of developments. The Advisory Committee considered the list of meetings and added the dates of several further events. The decisions about whether ASCOBANS should be represented and whether anyone should be mandated to provide a report back were recorded in the document, an updated version of which appears at Annex 14.

Action Points and Decisions

- 53) The representation of ASCOBANS in meetings of other relevant organizations was decided as reflected in Annex 14.

14. Report of the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues

Action Points and Decisions

- 54) Parties accepted all the Secretariat's reports on administrative and budgetary matters for 2013 and 2014.

14.1 Administrative Issues

213. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented Doc.14.1, the Secretariat's report on administrative issues. As mentioned earlier, the new structure within the CMS Secretariat had resulted in ASCOBANS now being overseen by the head of the Aquatic Species Team (Melanie Virtue). The consultant funded through the German voluntary contribution had left and a series of interns had served in the Secretariat making valuable contributions to the work of the Agreement. Recruitment of interns was now run centrally by UNEP HQ and it was intended to take one on after the CMS COP.

214. Yvon Morizur (France) asked whether a time recording system was in operation given that three staff members were shared with CMS. Melanie Virtue (Secretariat) said that there was not, but staff members were all conscious of the need to assign both CMS and ASCOBANS appropriate time, but this tended to fluctuate with pressures of work, with CMS receiving more attention in the run-up to the COP. Some tasks were relevant to both CMS and ASCOBANS and could not readily be assigned to one rather than the other. Jeroen Vis

(Netherlands) noted that implementation of the Work Programme was progressing better in some areas than others, indicating possible conflicts and asked whether the system could be made more transparent.

215. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that he would like to see more transparency but not at the cost of staff spending a disproportionate amount of effort assessing how much time was allocated to the Convention and the Agreement. Reporting on the work being done also presented the Secretariat with an opportunity to demonstrate that it was over-performing. Monika Lesz (Poland) asked that the Parties' concerns be raised with management. Sara Königson (Sweden) said that time sheets were used in many organizations to assess the amount of time allocated to different projects; she agreed to send an example to the Secretariat.

Action Points and Decisions

- 55) The Secretariat will bring the concerns of the Parties on actual as against funded staff-time percentages to the Acting Executive Secretary and will consider ways to provide greater transparency to Parties.

14.2 Accounts for 2013

216. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented Doc.14.2, explaining that some rounding discrepancies might occur since the ASCOBANS budget was in Euros while the UNEP accounts were conducted in US dollars. She expressed her gratitude to the Parties, all of which had again paid their contributions in full and on time. The three tables contained in the document showed the core income from assessed contributions, expenditure and voluntary contributions.

14.3 2014 Budget

217. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) presented Doc.14.3 showing the accounts for the half year in June 2014. Again, all ten parties had paid their contributions in full. The expenditure on some budget lines was artificially low, because adjustments for staff costs to compensate CMS for the percentage of the time of shared staff would be made at the end of the year.

218. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) asked whether there was any projection of how the budget would stand at the end of the year or an indication that expenditure was on course. Sara Königson (Sweden) agreed, saying that if savings could be identified early, resources could be reallocated to important tasks, such as redesigning the National Report.

219. The Secretariat said that the requirement to present the accounts as they stood had been met; the major component of expenditure was staff costs and these were predictable. Expenditure on projects was dependent on voluntary contributions or identified surpluses. Any budget line that was overspent had to be compensated by savings elsewhere. The Secretariat managed the budget within UNEP guidelines, maintaining a reserve.

15. Project Funding

220. Following on from the discussions in the Scientific Session (see agenda item 6 above), the meeting considered the question of allocating the approximately €28,000 that was available for internal and external projects. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) thought that having issued a call for projects the Advisory Committee should fund at least one, adding that the two sub-regions should look for the resources to fund their coordinator. He also

confirmed that the Netherlands would make a contribution towards the costs of the North Sea Coordinator provided other Parties did the same. In view of the lack of resources, he also suggested that no call for projects be made for 2015.

221. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that as the BALHAB project had scored best in the ballot, then it should receive funding. The workshops agreed at this meeting should also be supported, with the redesign of the National Report being the next priority. Before commitments were made to engage coordinators, some longer term stability should be assured. He also supported the suggestion to suspend the call for projects for one year to allow sufficient reserves to be built up for the following year, or allow the implementation of under-resourced internal activities. Yvon Morizur (France) agreed that at least one external project should be funded and thought that redesigning the National Report form could be postponed. Monika Lesz (Poland) agreed with the priorities suggested by the others.

222. Sara Königson (Sweden) asked whether the Baltic Sea Coordinator post was meant to be full-time. She also asked how and when the recruitment procedure would be conducted. The Secretariat said that the terms of reference had been developed by the Jastarnia Group and foresaw 2.5 days per week. However, these could be revised depending on the funding that was made available. The recruitment would follow UN procedures with the Parties consulted.

223. The Chair set a deadline of 15 November for Parties to confirm whether or not they could contribute to the costs of the North Sea and Baltic Coordinators.

Action Points and Decisions

- 56) Parties agreed to fund the external project allocated the highest priority in the ballot (Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise Foraging Habitats - BALHAB).
- 57) Parties decided that any remaining funds would be made available for the workshops identified as priorities by the Advisory Committee.
- 58) The Secretariat will approach all Parties to ascertain their willingness to contribute towards the costs of contracting coordinators for the North Sea and Baltic Sea regions; Parties should respond by 15 November. The Netherlands (under condition that other North Sea Parties contributed their share) and Sweden indicated that they would provide some funds.
- 59) The United Kingdom pledged a voluntary contribution of GB£5,000 towards the cost of the North Sea Coordinator.
- 60) Parties will consider ways of ensuring longer-term funding for the coordinator consultancies.
- 61) Parties decided to suspend the annual call for external projects for one year.

16. Any other Institutional Issues

224. There was none.

17. Date and Venue of the 22nd Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2015

225. Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) conveyed the willingness of his government to host the next meeting of the Advisory Committee, a meeting of the North Sea Group and an associated workshop (see Action Point 9). Precise dates and a venue would be agreed in due course.

Action Points and Decisions

- 62) The Netherlands offered to host the 22nd Meeting of the Advisory Committee and associated meetings, probably in the week beginning 28 September 2015.

18. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Institutional Session

226. The draft action points arising from the Institutional Session were projected on screen and subject to the amendments requested by the meeting were adopted. The full List of Action Points for the meeting is pre-fixed to this report.

19. Close of Meeting

227. After the customary expression of thanks to all those that had contributed to the success of the meeting, especially the Swedish hosts, the Chair declared the session closed.

List of Participants

PARTIES

Belgium

Jan HAELTERS
Royal Belgian Institute of Natural
Sciences
3de en 23ste Linieregimentsplein
8400 Oostende
Belgium
j.haelters@mumm.ac.be
Tel.: +32 59 24 20 55
Fax: +32 59 70 49 35

Finland

Penina BLANKETT
Ministry of the Environment
P.O. Box 35
Kasarmikatu 25
00023 Government
Finland
penina.blankett@ymparisto.fi
Tel.: +358 50 463 8196
Fax: +358 91 603 9318

Kai MATTSSON
Särkänniemi Dolphinarium
Tampereen Särkänniemi Oy
Fin-33200 Tampere
Finland
kai.mattsson@sarkanniemi.fi
kai@meritime.net
Tel.: +358 40 7654077

France

Yvon MORIZUR
IFREMER
Technopole de Brest-Iroise
CS100070
PLOUZANE 29280
France
yvon.morizur@ifremer.fr
Tel.: +33 2 98224481

Germany

Patricia BRTNIK
Deutsches Meeresmuseum Stralsund
Katharinenberg 14-20
18439 Stralsund
Germany
Patricia.Brtnik@meeresmuseum.de
Tel.: +49 3801 86158

Oliver SCHALL
BMUB
Robert-Schuman-Platz 3
53175 Bonn
Germany
oliver.schall@bmub.bund.de
Tel.: +49 228 3052632
Fax: +49 228 3052684

Netherlands

Lonneke IJSSELDIJK
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
Utrecht University
Yalelaan 1
3584 CL Utrecht
The Netherlands
l.i.jsseldijk@uu.nl
Tel.: +31 30 2535312
Fax: +31 6 24455698

Meike SCHEIDAT
IMARES Wageningen
Postbus 68
1970 AB IJmuiden
The Netherlands
meike.scheidat@wur.nl
Tel.: +31 317 487108

Jeroen VIS
Ministerie van Economische Zaken
directive Natuur & Biodiversiteit
Postbus 20401
3315MR Dordrecht
The Netherlands
g.a.j.vis@minez.nl
Tel.: + 31703784759

Poland

Monika LESZ
Ministry of the Environment
Dep. of Forestry and Nature
Wawelska 52/54
00-922 Warsaw
Poland
monika.lesz@mos.gov.pl
Tel.: +48 22 5792667
Fax: +48 22 5792730

Krzysztof SKÓRA
University of Gdansk
Hel Marine Station
Morska 2,
84-150 Hel
Poland
skora@ug.edu.pl
Tel.: +48 58 6750836
Fax: +48 58 6750420

Justyna SZUMLICZ
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural
Development,
Wspolna 30 Street,
Warsaw, 00-930
Poland
justyna.szumlicz@minrol.gov.pl
Tel: +48 (22) 623 25 23
Fax: +48 (22) 623 22 04

Sweden

Mats AMUNDIN
SWaM
Klumpstugevägen 19
Kolmården
Sweden
Mats.Amundin@kolmarden.com
Tel.: + 46 107087547

Ida CARLÉN
AquaBiota Water Research
Löjtnantsgatan 25
115 50 Stockholm
ida.carlen@aquabiota.se
Tel.: +46 8 52230243

Jacob HAGBERG
Ministry of Environment
10333 Stockholm
Sweden
jacob.hagberg@regeringskansliet.se
Tel.: +46 8 4051545

Sara KÖNIGSON
Swedish University of Agricultural Science
Havsfiskelaboratoriet
Turistg. 5
45330 Lysekil
Sweden
sara.konigson@slu.se
Tel.: +46 10 4784134

Lena TINGSTRÖM
SWaM
Gullbergs strandgata 15
411 04 Göteborg
Sweden
lena.tingstrom@havochvatten.se
Tel.: +46 10 6986091

Susanne VIKER
SWaM
Gullbergs strandgata 15
411 04 Göteborg
Sweden
susanne.viker@havochvatten.se
Tel.: +46 10 6986076

United Kingdom

Kelly MACLEOD
Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Inverdee House, Baxter Street Aberdeen
AB11 9QA Scotland
United Kingdom
Kelly.Macleod@jncc.gov.uk
Tel.: +44 1224 266584

Jamie RENDELL
Defra
9 Millbank
c/o 17 Smith Square
England
London SW1P 3JR
United Kingdom
jamie.rendell@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Tel.: +2072386879

Emma RUNDALL
Defra
Area 8A/B 9 Millbank,
c/o 17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
United Kingdom
emma.rundall@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Tel.: +44 207 238 3351

OBSERVERS

Inter-Governmental Organizations

ACCOBAMS

Florence DESCROIX-COMANDUCCI
ACCOBAMS
Executive Secretary
Jardin de l'UNESCO
Terrasses de Fontvieille
98000 Monaco
Monaco
fcdescroix@accobams.net
Tel.: +377 98988010
Fax: +377 98984208

Maylis SALIVAS
ACCOBAMS
Jardin de l'UNESCO
Terrasses de Fontvieille
98000 Monaco
Monaco
msalivas@accobams.net
Tel.: +377 98984275
Fax: +377 98984208

International Whaling Commission

Meike SCHEIDAT
IMARES Wageningen
Postbus 68
1970 AB IJmuiden
The Netherlands
meike.scheidat@wur.nl
Tel.: +31 317487108

HELCOM

Penina BLANKETT
Ministry of the Environment
P.O. Box 35
Kasarmikatu 25
00023 Government
Finland
penina.blankett@ymparisto.fi
Tel. +358 50 4638196
Fax. +358 91 6039318

Non-Governmental Organizations

European Cetacean Society / Sea Watch Foundation

Peter G.H. EVANS
Ewyn y Don, Bull Bay
Amlwch, Isle of Anglesey
Wales LL68 9SD
United Kingdom
peter.evans@bangor.ac.uk
Tel. +44 1407 832892

Humane Society International

Mark Peter SIMMONDS
c/o 5 Underwood Street
N1 7LY London
United Kingdom
mark.simmonds@sciencegyre.co.uk
Tel. +44 7809 643000

Whale and Dolphin Conservation

Fabian RITTER
WDC
Implerstrasse 55
81371 Munich
Germany
fabian.ritter@whales.org
Tel.: +49 30 64318104

Alison WOOD
WDC
Brookfield House
St. Paul Street
Chippenham
Wiltshire
United Kingdom
alison.wood@whales.org
Tel.: + 44 1249449524

WWF – Poland

Katarzyna PIETRASIK
WWF Poland
Wiśniowa
02-520 Warsaw
Poland
kpietrasik@wwf.pl
Tel.: +48 785 881435
Fax: +48 22 6463672

Iwona PAWLICZKA
Hel Marine Station
WWF Poland
Morska 2
Hel 84-150
Poland
Iwona.pvp@ug.edu.pl
Tel.: +48 58 6751316
Fax: +48 58 6750420

Zoological Society of London

Sinead MURPHY
Institute of Zoology
Zoological Society of London
The Wellcome Building
Regent's Park
London, NW1 4RY
United Kingdom
sinead.noirin.murphy@gmail.com
Tel.: +44 20 74496332
Fax: +44 20 74832237

CONSULTANTS/EXPERTS

North Sea Plan Coordinator

Geneviève DESPORTES
GDnatur
Steijlestraede 9 Bregnor
DK-5300 Kerteminde
Denmark
genevieve@gdnatur.dk
Tel.: +45 65321767
Fax: +45 20250267

Joint Noise Working Group

Yanis SOUAMI
SINAY - 117 Cours Caffarelli
14000 - CAEN
France
contact@sinay.fr
Tel.: +33 6 48391721

SECRETARIAT

Heidrun FRISCH
UNEP/CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat
UN Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany
h.frisch@ascobans.org
Tel.: +49 228 8152418

Robert VAGG (Report Writer)
UNEP/CMS Secretariat
UN Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany
rvagg@cms.int
Tel.: +49 228 8152476

Bettina REINARTZ
UNEP/CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat
UN Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany
breinartz@ascobans.org
Tel.: +49 228 8152416
Fax: +49 228 8152440

Melanie VIRTUE
UNEP/CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat
UN Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany
mvirtue@cms.int
Tel.: +49 228 8152462

Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
 - 1.1 Welcoming Remarks
 - 1.2 Adoption of the Agenda
 - 1.3 Opening of the **Scientific Session**
2. Implementation of the Harbour Porpoise Action Plans
 - 2.1 Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan)
 - 2.1.1 Report and Action Points of the 10th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group
 - 2.1.2 Reports from Parties
 - 2.2 Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea
 - 2.2.1 Report and Action Points of the 4th Meeting of the North Sea Group
 - 2.2.2 Reports from Parties
 - 2.3 Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat
 - 2.3.1 Report and Action Points of the 10th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group
 - 2.3.2 Reports from Parties
3. Review of New Information on Threats to Small Cetaceans
 - 3.1 Bycatch
 - 3.1.1 Report and Recommendations of the Working Group
 - 3.1.2 Reports from Parties
 - 3.2 Underwater Noise
 - 3.2.1 Report and Recommendations of the Working Group
 - 3.2.2 Reports from Parties
 - 3.2.3 Report and Recommendations of the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Workshop on Noise EIAs
 - 3.3 Negative Effects of Vessels and Other Forms of Disturbance
 - 3.3.1 Reports from Parties
 - 3.4 Pollution and its Effects
 - 3.4.1 Report of the Pollution Working Group
 - 3.4.2 Report and Recommendations of the Marine Debris Working Group
 - 3.4.3 CMS Reviews: Marine Debris and Migratory Species
 - 3.4.4 Reports from Parties
 - 3.5 Underwater Unexploded Ordnance
 - 3.6 Responses to Hazards
 - 3.7 Emerging Issues
 - 3.7.1 Climate Change
 - 3.7.2 Renewable Energy and Migratory Species

- 3.7.3 Conservation Implications of Cetacean Culture
 - 3.7.4 Boat-based Wildlife Watching
 - 3.7.5 Live Captures of Cetaceans
 - 4. Review of New Information on other Matters Relevant for Small Cetacean Conservation
 - 4.1 Population Size, Distribution, Structure and Causes of Any Changes
 - 4.2 Management of Marine Protected Areas
 - 4.3 New Agreement Area
 - 4.3.1 Report and Recommendations of the Extension Area Working Group
 - 4.4 Large Cetaceans
 - 4.4.1 Report and Recommendations of the Informal Working Group on Large Cetaceans
 - 5. Publicity and Outreach
 - 5.1 Reports of Parties, Range States and Partners
 - 5.2 Report of the Secretariat
 - 6. Project Funding through ASCOBANS
 - 6.1 Progress of Supported Projects
 - 6.2 Prioritization of Project Proposals and Other Activities
 - 7. Any other Business
 - 8. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Scientific Session
 - 9. Close of the Session
-
- 10. Opening of the **Institutional Session**
 - 11. Accession and Agreement Amendment
 - 11.1 Report of the Secretariat
 - 11.2 Reports from Parties
 - 12. National Reporting
 - 12.1 Reports from Parties
 - 12.2 Revision to National Reporting Format
 - 13. Relations with other Bodies
 - 13.1 Reports by the Secretariat, Parties and Partners
 - 13.2 Cooperation and Joint Initiatives with CMS
 - 13.3 Cooperation with European Union Institutions
 - 13.3.1. Report and Recommendations of the MSFD Working Group
 - 13.4 Cooperation with Other Stakeholders
 - 13.5 Dates of Interest 2014/2015
 - 14. Report of the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues
 - 14.1 Administrative Issues

- 14.2 Accounts for 2013
- 14.3 2014 Budget
- 15. Project Funding
- 16. Any other Institutional Issues
- 17. Date and Venue of the 22nd Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2015
- 18. Adoption of the List of Action Points of the Institutional Session
- 19. Close of Meeting

List of Documents

Meeting Documents

No.	Document Title	Submitted by	Distributed
Doc.1.2.a Rev.1	Provisional Agenda	Secretariat	12/09/14
Doc.1.2.b Rev.2	Provisional Annotated Agenda	Secretariat	19/09/14
Doc.1.3 Rev.1	ASCOBANS Work Plan 2013-2016 – Progress	Secretariat	19/09/14
Doc.2.1.1.a	Report of the 10 th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group	Jastarnia Group	25/08/14
Doc.2.1.1.b	Proposal for Revised Terms of Reference for the Jastarnia Group	Jastarnia Group	25/08/14
Doc.2.2.1.a	Report of the 3 rd Meeting of the North Sea Group	North Sea Group	07/08/14
Doc.2.2.1.b Rev.1	Interim Report on the Implementation of the ASCOBANS North Sea Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises	Secretariat	17/09/14
Doc.3.1	Revision of EU Legislation on Cetacean Bycatch	Secretariat	25/09/14
Doc.3.1.1.a Rev.1	Report of the Bycatch Working Group	Bycatch Working Group	09/09/14
Doc.3.1.1.b	Report of the Working Group for the Further Development of Management Procedures for Defining the Threshold of 'Unacceptable Interactions'	'Unacceptable Interactions' Working Group	01/09/14
Doc.3.2.1	Report of the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Noise Working Group	Noise Working Group	26/08/14
Doc.4.3.1	Intersessional Working Group on Research and Conservation Actions Undertaken in the Extended Agreement Area: Update for the Period September 2013 to August 2014	Extension Area Working Group	18/09/14
Doc.5.2	Report of the Secretariat on Outreach and Education Activities	Secretariat	22/08/14
Doc.6.1	Progress of Projects Supported through ASCOBANS	Secretariat	25/08/14
Doc.6.2.a	Project Proposals Received for Future Funding	Secretariat	23/07/14
Doc.6.2.b	Activities Requiring Funding	Secretariat	27/08/14
Doc.12.2	Revision of the Annual National Reporting Format	Secretariat	29/08/14

No.	Document Title	Submitted by	Distributed
Doc.13.2	Development of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023	Secretariat	28/08/14
Doc.13.3.1	Report of the Joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Working Group on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)	MSFD Working Group	01/09/14
Doc.13.4	Collaboration with OSPAR on Threatened and/or Declining Species	Secretariat	05/09/14
Doc.13.5 Rev.1	Draft List of Dates of Interest to ASCOBANS in 2014/2015	Secretariat	10/09/14
Doc.14.1	Report on Administrative Issues 2013/2014	Secretariat	27/08/14
Doc.14.2	Report on Budgetary Issues 2013	Secretariat	27/08/14
Doc.14.3	Mid-Term Report on Budgetary Issues 2014	Secretariat	27/08/14

Information Documents

No.	Document Title	Submitted by	Distributed
Inf.1.2.a	Rules of Procedure for the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee	Secretariat	23/07/14
Inf.1.2.b Rev.2	List of Documents	Secretariat	25/09/14
Inf.3.1.a	ICES 2014: Report of the Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC)	United Kingdom	22/08/14
Inf.3.1.b	ICES Advice April 2014: Bycatch of small cetaceans and other marine animals – Review of national reports under Council Regulation (EC) No. 812/2004 and other published documents	Secretariat	30/07/14
Inf.3.1.c	Proposal for a Regulation of The European Parliament and of the Council laying down a prohibition on driftnet fisheries, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 850/98, (EC) No 812/2004, (EC) No 2187/2005 and (EC) No 1967/2006 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 894/97	Bycatch Working Group	12/09/14
Inf.3.2.1	IMO MEPC.1/Circ.833: Guidelines for the Reduction of Underwater Noise from Commercial Shipping to Address Adverse Impacts on Marine Life	Noise Working Group	30/07/14
Inf.3.2.2.a	Concept for the Protection of Harbour Porpoises from Sound Exposures during the Construction of Offshore Wind Farms in the German North Sea	Germany	23/07/14
Inf.3.2.2.b	Development of Noise Mitigation Measures in Offshore Wind Farm Construction 2013	Germany	07/08/14

No.	Document Title	Submitted by	Distributed
Inf.3.2.3	Report of the ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop on <i>Introducing Noise into the Marine Environment – What are the requirements for an impact assessment for marine mammals?</i>	ECS	28/08/14
Inf.3.4.3.a	CMS Draft Resolution: Management of Marine Debris	Secretariat	15/08/14
Inf.3.4.3.b	CMS Report I: Migratory Species, Marine Debris and its Management	Secretariat	30/07/14
Inf.3.4.3.c	CMS Report II: Marine Debris and Commercial Marine Vessel Best Practice	Secretariat	30/07/14
Inf.3.4.3.d	CMS Report III: Marine Debris Public Awareness and Education Campaigns	Secretariat	30/07/14
Inf.3.7.1.a	CMS Draft Resolution: Programme of Work on Climate Change and Migratory Species	Secretariat	15/08/14
Inf.3.7.1.b	Report of the ACCOBAMS Expert Workshop on the Impact of Climate Change on Cetaceans of the Mediterranean and Black Seas	ACCOBAMS	04/09/14
Inf.3.7.2.a	CMS Draft Resolution: Renewable Energy and Migratory Species	Secretariat	08/09/14
Inf.3.7.2.b	Marine Renewable Energy: A Global Review of the Extent of Marine Renewable Energy Developments, the Developing Technologies and Possible Conservation Implications for Cetaceans	WDC	30/07/14
Inf.3.7.2.c	ICES 2014: First Interim Report of the Working Group on Marine Renewable Energy (WGMRE)	United Kingdom	22/08/14
Inf.3.7.3.a	CMS Draft Resolution: Conservation Implications of Cetacean Culture	Secretariat	15/08/14
Inf.3.7.3.b	Report of the CMS Scientific Council Workshop on the Conservation Implications of Cetacean Culture	Secretariat	15/08/14
Inf.3.7.4	CMS Draft Resolution: Sustainable Boat-Based Wildlife Watching Tourism	Secretariat	15/08/14
Inf.3.7.5	CMS Draft Resolution: Live Captures of Cetaceans from the Wild for Commercial Purposes	Secretariat	09/09/14
Inf.4.1.a	ICES 2014: Report of the Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME)	United Kingdom	22/08/14
Inf.4.1.b	The short-beaked common dolphin (<i>Delphinus delphis</i>) in the north-east Atlantic: distribution, ecology, management and conservation status	ZSL	26/08/14
Inf.6.1.a	Project Report: Enhanced detection of harbour porpoises prior to ramming, seismic blasts and ammunition clearance: design and construction of a PAL-porpoise detector (PPD)	Secretariat / F ³	07/08/14

No.	Document Title	Submitted by	Distributed
Inf.6.1.b	Interim Project Report: Examine habitat exclusion and long term effect of pingers	Secretariat / Aarhus University	07/08/14
Inf.6.1.c	Interim Project Report: Small Cetaceans in European Atlantic waters and the North Sea (SCANS-III)	Secretariat / St. Andrews University	26/08/14
Inf.11.1	Status of Accession and Acceptance of the Agreement's Amendment	Secretariat	14/08/14
Inf.12.1.a	2013 Annual National Report Belgium	Belgium	24/07/14
Inf.12.1.b	2013 Annual National Report Denmark	Denmark	24/07/14
Inf.12.1.c	2013 Annual National Report Finland	Finland	24/07/14
Inf.12.1.d	2013 Annual National Report France	France	24/07/14
Inf.12.1.e	2013 Annual National Report Germany	Germany	24/07/14
Inf.12.1.f	2013 Annual National Report Lithuania	Lithuania	24/07/14
Inf.12.1.g	2013 Annual National Report Netherlands	Netherlands	24/07/14
Inf.12.1.h	2013 Annual National Report Poland	Poland	24/07/14
Inf.12.1.i Rev.1	2013 Annual National Report Sweden	Sweden	28/10/14
Inf.12.1.j Rev.2	2013 Annual National Report United Kingdom	United Kingdom	30/09/14
Inf.13.1	Reports of Representation of ASCOBANS at Meetings	Secretariat	15/09/14
Inf.13.1 Addendum	Reports of Representation of ASCOBANS at Meetings: IWC65 Main Outcomes (INITIAL DRAFT)	Secretariat	22/09/14
Inf.13.3.a	ICES Advice June 2013: Request from EU for Scientific advice on data collection issues	Secretariat	17/09/14
Inf.13.3.b	ICES Advice November 2013: Request from EU for scientific advice on data collection issues – part 2	Secretariat	17/09/14
Inf.13.3.1	ICES Advice May 2014: OSPAR Request on Implementation of MSFD for Marine Mammals	MSFD Working Group	05/09/14

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE ASCOBANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

as adopted by the 19th Meeting, Galway, Ireland, 20-22 March 2012

PART I

DELEGATES, OBSERVERS, SECRETARIAT

Rule 1: Delegates

- (1) A Party to the Agreement (hereafter referred to as a "Party")¹ shall be entitled to be represented at the meeting by a delegation consisting of a Committee Member and Alternate, when appropriate and such Advisers as the Party may deem necessary.
- (2) The Committee Member shall exercise the voting rights of that Party. In the absence of the Committee Member, the Alternate or an Adviser may be appointed by the Committee Member to act as a substitute over the full range of the Committee Member's functions.
- (3) The appointed Committee Member or alternate shall be available for consultation intersessionally.
- (4) Seating limitations may require that no more than four delegates of any Party be present at a session of the Advisory Committee or any working group established by it in accordance with Rule 18.

Rule 2: Observers

- (1) All non-Party Range States and Regional Economic Integration Organizations bordering on the waters concerned, as well as organizations listed in Footnote 3 may be represented at the meeting by observers who shall have the right to participate but not to vote.^{2 3}
- (2) Any other body or individual qualified in cetacean conservation and management which has informed the Secretariat not less than 60 days before the meeting of its desire to be represented at the meeting by observers, shall be entitled to be present unless at least one-third of the Parties have opposed their application at least 30 days before the meeting.⁴ Once admitted, these observers shall have the right to participate but not to vote.

¹ See Agreement, paragraph 1.2, sub-paragraph (e), and paragraphs 8.4 and 8.5. A Party is a Range State or a Regional Economic Integration Organization which has deposited with the United Nations Headquarters its consent to be bound by the Agreement

² See Agreement, paragraph 6.2.1

³ The United Nations, acting as the Depository to this Agreement; the Secretariats, insofar as they are not included under Rule 3, and technical advisory bodies of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and its daughter Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding; the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention); The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR); the Common Secretariat for the Co-operation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea (CWSS); the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC); the International Whaling Commission (IWC); the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM); the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES); the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN); the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO); the European Cetacean Society (ECS); the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

⁴ See Agreement, paragraphs 6.2.2

- (3) Seating limitations may require that no more than two observers from any non-Party Range State or body be present at a session of the Advisory Committee or of any working group established by it in accordance with Rule 18.

Rule 3: Secretariat

Unless otherwise instructed by the Parties, the Secretariat shall service and act as secretariat for the meeting. Secretariat services are provided through the UNEP/CMS Secretariat.

**PART II
OFFICERS**

Rule 4: Chairpersons

- (1) The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee shall hold office until the end of the first meeting of the Advisory Committee following each Meeting of Parties.
- (2) The Chairperson and Vice-chairperson may be nominated for re-election at the end of a term of office. In the event of the election of a new Chairperson or Vice-chairperson, the Advisory Committee shall elect these persons from among the Committee Members or their advisers.

Rule 5: Presiding Officer

- (1) The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Advisory Committee.
- (2) If the Chairperson is absent or is unable to discharge the duties of Presiding Officer, the Vice-Chairperson shall deputize.
- (3) In the event that both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are absent or unable to discharge the duties of Presiding Officer, the appointed Committee Member of the Party hosting the Meeting shall assume these duties.
- (4) The Presiding Officer may vote.

**PART III
RULES OF ORDER OF DEBATE**

Rule 6: Powers of Presiding Officer

- (1) In addition to exercising powers conferred elsewhere in these Rules, the Presiding Officer shall at Advisory Committee meetings:
 - (a) open and close the sessions;
 - (b) direct the discussions;
 - (c) ensure the observance of these Rules;
 - (d) accord the right to speak;
 - (e) put questions to the vote and announce decisions;
 - (f) rule on points of order; and

- (g) subject to these Rules, have complete control of the proceedings of the Meeting and the maintenance of order.
- (2) The Presiding Officer may, in the course of discussion at a meeting, propose:
- (a) time limits for speakers;
 - (b) limitation of the number of times the members of a delegation or observers from a State which is not a Party or a Regional Economic Integration Organization, or from any other body, may speak on any subject matter;
 - (c) the closure of the list of speakers;
 - (d) the adjournment or the closure of the debate on the particular subject under discussion;
 - (e) the suspension or adjournment of any session; and
 - (f) the establishment of drafting groups on specific issues.

Rule 7: Right to Speak

- (1) The Presiding Officer shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak, with precedence given to the Committee Members.
- (2) A Committee Member, adviser or observer may speak only if called upon by the Presiding Officer, who may call a speaker to order if the remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
- (3) A speaker shall not be interrupted, except on a point of order. The speaker may, however, with the permission of the Presiding Officer, give way during his speech to allow any Committee Member, adviser or observer to request elucidation on a particular point in that speech.

Rule 8: Procedural Motions

- (1) During the discussion of any matter, a Committee Member may raise a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately, where possible, decided by the Presiding Officer in accordance with these Rules. A delegate may appeal against any ruling of the Presiding Officer. The appeal shall immediately be put to the vote, and the Presiding Officer's ruling shall stand unless a majority of the Parties present and voting decide otherwise. A delegate raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion, but only on the point of order.
- (2) The following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the Meeting:
 - (a) to suspend the session;
 - (b) to adjourn the session;
 - (c) to adjourn the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion;
 - (d) to close the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion.

Rule 9: Arrangements for Debate

- (1) The Meeting may, on a proposal by the Presiding Officer or by a Committee Member, limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times Committee Members, advisers or observers may speak on any subject matter. When the debate is subject to such limits, and a speaker has spoken for the allotted time, the Presiding Officer shall call the speaker to order without delay.
- (2) During the course of a debate the Presiding Officer may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Committee, declare the list closed. The Presiding Officer may, however, accord the right of reply to any individual if a speech delivered after the list has been declared closed makes this desirable.
- (3) During the discussion of any matter, a Committee Member may move the adjournment of the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, a Committee Member may speak in favour of, and a Committee Member of each of two Parties may speak against the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this Rule.
- (4) A Committee Member may at any time move the closure of the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion, whether or not any other individual has signified the wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion for closure of the debate shall be accorded only to a Committee Member from each of two Parties wishing to speak against the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this Rule.
- (5) During the discussion of any matter a Committee Member may move the suspension or the adjournment of the session. Such motions shall not be debated but shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time allowed to the speaker moving the suspension or adjournment of the session.

Rule 10: Submission of Documents

As a general rule, documents intended for discussion at the meeting shall be submitted to the Secretariat at least 35 days before the meeting, who shall circulate them to all Parties at least 30 days before the meeting.

PART IV

VOTING

Rule 11: Methods of Voting

- (1) Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 1, Paragraph 2, each Committee Member shall have one vote.
- (2) The Committee shall normally vote by show of hands, but any Committee Member may request a roll-call vote. In the event of a vote during an inter-sessional period, there will be a postal ballot, which may include ballot by email or fax.
- (3) At the election of officers, any Committee Member may request a secret ballot. If seconded, the question of whether a secret ballot should be held shall immediately be voted upon. The motion for a secret ballot may not be conducted by secret ballot.

- (4) Voting by roll-call or by secret ballot shall be expressed by "Yes", "No" or "Abstain". Only affirmative and negative votes shall be counted in calculating the number of votes cast by Committee Members present and voting.
- (5) If votes are equal, the motion or amendment shall not be carried.
- (6) The Presiding Officer shall be responsible for the counting of the votes and shall announce the result. The Presiding Officer may be assisted by the Secretariat. Inter-sessional voting by postal ballot, email or fax will be co-ordinated by the Secretariat.
- (7) After the Presiding Officer has announced the beginning of the vote, it shall not be interrupted except by a Committee Member on point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. The Presiding Officer may permit Committee Members to explain their votes either before or after the voting, and may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations.

Rule 12: Majority and Voting Procedures on Motions and Amendments

- (1) Except where otherwise provided for under the provisions of the Agreement or these Rules, all votes on procedural matters relating to the forwarding of the business of the meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of Parties.
- (2) Financial decisions within the limit of the power available to the Advisory Committee shall be decided by three-quarter majority among those Parties present and voting.
- (3) Amendments to the Rules of Procedure require a three-quarter majority among those present and voting.
- (4) All other decisions shall be taken by simple majority among Parties present and voting.
- (5) When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. If the amendment is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.

PART V LANGUAGES AND RECORDS

Rule 13: Working Language

English shall be the working language of the Committee meeting and working groups.

Rule 14: Other Languages

- (1) An individual may speak in a language other than English, provided he/she furnishes interpretation into English.
- (2) Any document submitted to a meeting shall be in English.

Rule 15: Summary Records

Summary records of Committee meetings shall be kept by the Secretariat and shall be circulated to all Parties in English.

PART VI OPENNESS OF DEBATES

Rule 16: Committee Meetings

All sessions of meetings shall be open to the public, except that in exceptional circumstances the Meeting may decide, by a two-thirds majority of Parties present and voting, that any single session be closed to the public.

Rule 17: Sessions of the Working Groups

As a general rule, sessions of working groups shall be limited to the Committee Members, their advisers and to observers invited by the Chairs of working groups.

PART VII WORKING GROUPS

Rule 18: Establishment of Working Groups

- (1) The Advisory Committee may establish such working groups as may be necessary to enable it to carry out its functions. It shall define their terms of reference. The Advisory Committee as well as the working groups may nominate members of each working group, the size of which may be limited according to the number of places available in assembly rooms.
- (2) The working group can appoint committee members, advisers as well as observers as its Chair and Vice-Chair.

Rule 18: Procedure

Insofar as they are applicable, these Rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of working groups.

PART VIII FINAL PROVISIONS

Rule 20: Omissions

In matters not covered by the present Rules, the Rules of Procedure as adopted by the last regular Meeting of the Parties shall be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

Rule 21: Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

- (1) The Committee shall, by three-quarter majority, establish its own Rules of Procedure.
- (2) These rules may be amended by the Committee as required. They will remain in force until and unless an amendment is called for and adopted.

Action Points of the 10th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

JASTARNIA PLAN

Bycatch Reduction

- 1) ASCOBANS should urge relevant authorities to investigate ways of limiting part-time and recreational set-net fisheries. – Priority: High to medium, depending on area
- 2) Parties should step up actions to reduce fishing effort involving gear known to cause high porpoise bycatch rates as required under the Jastarnia Plan, and to provide information documenting the magnitude and location of such effort. – Priority: High
- 3) In order to achieve favourable conservation status for Baltic harbour porpoises as required under the Habitats Directive, Parties should make concerted efforts to eliminate bycatch especially in current and future Natura 2000 sites (SACs) where harbour porpoises form part of the selection criteria. In these areas, this could be achieved by replacing set nets and introducing alternative gear that is considered less harmful. – Priority: High
- 4) The Chair of the Jastarnia Group and the Secretariat should write to ICES requesting statistics on IUU fisheries in the Baltic Sea, broken down by ICES areas, to be presented to the next Jastarnia Group Meeting. – Priority: Medium
- 5) A small drafting group should develop briefing notes on ASCOBANS positions regarding bycatch, insofar as possible based on any drafts that the North Sea Coordinator may prepare for fora in that area. These should be used by anyone representing ASCOBANS at Baltic RACs and other meetings of relevant EU and Baltic Sea bodies in order to maintain a consistent and appropriate approach. – Priority: Medium
- 6) The Secretariat should produce a synopsis of bycatch-related regulations of relevance to individual fishermen, especially with regard to legal sanctions for bycatch and incentives for those delivering carcasses with a view to using the carcasses obtained for porpoise conservation research, irrespective of whether such incentives are laid down in national legislation. Funding should be made available for a consultant to carry out this task on behalf of the Secretariat, based on Terms of Reference to be drafted by the Secretariat and agreed by JG10 (see Annex 5). – Priority: Medium
- 7) The Secretariat should commission a consultant to draft a position paper with ASCOBANS input for the revision process of EC Reg.812/2004, based on Terms of Reference to be drafted by the Secretariat. These Terms of Reference should be approved by National Coordinators, in consultation with the AC Chair. – Priority: High
- 8) Noting the trials of cod pots in Sweden, Parties should undertake or continue efforts to test and implement pots, traps and other porpoise-friendly gear. Parties are encouraged to report on related initiatives or research even where the intention is not primarily the conservation of marine mammals. – Priority: High
- 9) The Secretariat is to prepare a table on a shared cloud document with a synopsis of JG recommendations to facilitate the intersessional review process and Jastarnia Group members should provide comments by 21 December 2014.

Research and Monitoring

- 10) Parties should consider supporting any projects relevant for achieving the aims of the Jastarnia Plan. – Priority: High

- 11) Parties and NGOs are requested to ensure that the results of all relevant projects are made available to ASCOBANS. – Priority: High
- 12) The Jastarnia Group welcomes the project Baltic Smart Gear and recommends that WWF cooperate with other related projects going on around the Baltic Sea.
- 13) Parties should collect data on the extent of ghost nets in their waters, including net types and locations. Regular assessments should then be made of the total quantities of nets lost or discarded, taking account of the distribution of different types of fisheries. – Priority: Medium
- 14) Taking into consideration the future requirements under the MSFD, Parties should implement measures to prevent the loss of fishing gear, and mitigation measures for ghost nets, such as regular clean-ups, provision of disposal containers at ports, deposit systems, mandatory reporting of lost gear, marking of nets etc. Wherever possible fishing communities and other relevant stakeholders should be actively involved. A review of progress should be conducted by JG11. – Priority: High

Marine Protected Areas

- 15) Noting the ongoing process of developing a conservation programme for harbour porpoises in Poland, the Jastarnia Group encourages all stakeholders involved to maintain the momentum of the process and to adopt and implement the programme as soon as possible.
- 16) Parties, Range States and NGOs seeking to develop management plans for SACs and MPAs designated for harbour porpoises are encouraged to make use of the expertise available within the Jastarnia Group, and to consult or cooperate with other Parties that are in the process of developing or have developed management plans. – Priority: Low

Public Awareness

- 17) Parties should establish sightings and strandings programmes, preferably in a coordinated fashion for all Baltic Sea States. They should consider initiating sightings days or weeks, comparable to the National Whale and Dolphin Watch in the UK. They should also consider developing a sightings and strandings app for smartphones. – Priority: High
- 18) Parties are encouraged to consider producing an updated and slightly modified English-language version of the German Oceanographic Museum's publication on marine mammals of the Baltic Sea. Depending on the reaction of HELCOM HABITAT, this publication could be produced jointly with HELCOM. – Priority: Low

Cooperation with Other Bodies

- 19) Parties are strongly encouraged to fulfil their obligations under the current Regulation 812/2004 and the Habitats Directive. – Priority: High
- 20) The Chair of the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat should continue approaching the European Commission and the ICES Bycatch Working Group to draw attention to the need to address the bycatch problem in the Baltic. The ICES Bycatch Working Group should be asked to advise whether enough data for a status assessment for harbour porpoises in the Baltic Proper are available. – Priority: High
- 21) Parties are urged to provide all relevant data to the HELCOM harbour porpoise database. – Priority: Medium

Terms of Reference

- 22) Parties are urged to ensure that calls for participation in the Jastarnia Group are relayed to the environmental and fisheries organizations in their respective countries. – Priority: Medium

SAMBAH-related Action Points

- 23) Parties are encouraged to use SAMBAH results for harbour porpoise conservation in the Baltic Sea. – Priority: High
- 24) ASCOBANS should request HELCOM to make updated and high resolution data on fisheries effort in gillnet and trammel net fisheries available in their web-database. – Priority: Medium
- 25) ASCOBANS Parties are asked to provide information as to the definitions of the term 'fisheries', rules and regulations applicable to the various types of fisheries in their national legislation, as well as related statistics. This information should be provided in time for the next JG meeting. – Priority: Low

WESTERN BALTIC, BELT SEAS AND KATTEGAT PLAN

Stakeholder Involvement

- 26) National Coordinators should provide an overview of measures currently ongoing in their countries actively to engage fishing communities and other stakeholders in the implementation of the Plan, in order to identify existing gaps and lessons learnt of interest to all Parties. Parties should provide the funding required for measures needed to fill the gaps. Parties should explore the possibility of obtaining EU funding for this purpose. – Priority: Medium
- 27) Noting the successful Natura 2000 dialogue forums conducted in Denmark, Parties are encouraged to consider establishing a similar format for the stakeholder working group required under Objective a. of the Plan. – Priority: High

Bycatch Mitigation

- 28) Parties are strongly encouraged to take all necessary steps to develop without delay their joint recommendations to the European Commission regarding the management of harbour porpoise SACs to minimize bycatch rates within these areas. – Priority: High
- 29) Parties should continue to provide funding for research on alternative fishing gear and practices as needed. – Priority: High
- 30) ASCOBANS should seek to influence existing eco-labelling programmes to take full account of the need to avoid cetacean bycatch in certifying fisheries. In the case of MSC, the Secretariat is requested to liaise directly with the organization in order to determine the appropriate means of influencing their eco-labelling programmes. – Priority: Medium
- 31) Parties are strongly encouraged to take all necessary steps to develop as soon as possible agreements to implement immediately the use of pingers in gillnet fishery associated with bycatch irrespective of vessel size or type, as provided for in the Plan, and to enforce the use of pingers. – Priority: High

Assessment of Bycatch Level

- 32) Parties are encouraged to undertake or promote research regarding bycatch estimation.
– Priority: High

Population Status

- 33) Parties are strongly encouraged to continue to undertake and cooperate on inter-SCANS surveys of the Western Baltic (gap area) harbour porpoise population and evaluate trends in population density and abundance. – Priority: High
- 34) Parties are strongly encouraged to lend their support to the projected SCANS III survey.
– Priority: High
- 35) The animals collected should be necropsied and examined with regard to health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality. The resultant data should be fed into a common database, such as the future database required under MOP Resolution 7.4. – Priority: Medium
- 36) Parties are strongly encouraged to coordinate and standardize their monitoring efforts and determine the number of stranded or bycaught animals to be collected for necropsies in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat. For this purpose, ASCOBANS is requested to establish a coordination group comprised of the scientists involved, whose names should be notified to the Secretariat by 15 October 2014. The first meeting of this group could take place in conjunction with JG11. – Priority: High

Habitat Quality

- 37) Parties should use existing data or undertake efforts to collect data on relevant prey and prey communities and investigate the consequences of impacts on these prey communities for harbour porpoises. – Priority: Medium
- 38) Parties should undertake or promote continual monitoring of the effects of projects with a potential impact on harbour porpoise behaviour and distribution, and baseline studies on this issue. Research is also required on the context in which porpoises are using the habitats. – Priority: High

Cross-cutting Action Points

- 39) Pending further discussion with the Jastarnia Group as a whole, with a view to facilitating the implementation of the Plans, the Group reiterates its recommendation, as endorsed by AC17, to appoint as soon as possible a Baltic Sea Coordinator. – Priority: Low
- 40) The Coordinating Authorities of the countries hosting the Group's meetings are asked to ensure the attendance of an expert on the CFP at the respective meetings of the Group.
– Priority: High

Action Points of the 4th Meeting of the North Sea Group

- 1) Monitoring of cetacean bycatch remains inadequate.
- 2) There is a need for much more extensive monitoring coverage than exists at present mainly for the fishing fleets suspected of causing porpoise bycatch.
- 3) The recording of fishing effort needs to be more precise, using the number of hauls in addition to days at sea, and allowing for spatial (ICES divisions) and temporal (monthly/quarterly) stratification.
- 4) There is a need for a more precise differentiation of gear types when reporting effort and bycatch; gillnet-tangle nets (GNS), trammel nets (GTR) and driftnet (GDN) in particular should be reported separately.
- 5) Fishing activities that should not be overlooked include recreational fisheries where there is suspected bycatch, and vessels of 10 metres length and below.
- 6) The existing DCF (Data Collection Framework) schemes cannot be relied upon for estimates of bycatch; monitoring should be fit for purpose with direct monitoring recommended either through dedicated observer schemes or remote electronic monitoring (REM). In the development of the new DCF under the multi-annual Union programme for data collection (EU MAP), the dedicated monitoring of protected species should be specifically identified.
- 7) Other approaches that could be appropriate for assessing the impact of bycatch should be explored further such as taking a risk-based approach to monitoring.
- 8) Initial trials using REM show promise. A technical workshop is recommended that brings together the collective experience of practitioners involved in the use of REM to facilitate the implementation/uptake of this approach at a wider scale. REM could also be implemented as a sampling scheme.
- 9) There is a need for involvement of relevant fishing organisations in the work of the North Sea Group. To improve dialogue in each North Sea country, an overview should be compiled of the fishermen's organisations most appropriate for stakeholder engagement. Those should then be approached on a national level to determine the best ways to develop a better dialogue.
- 10) A list of relevant projects that have included stakeholder engagement (and where there may be transferable lessons learned when engaging with fishing communities) should be compiled.
- 11) A dialogue should be established with the Marine Stewardship Council to discuss ways to improve the incorporation of marine mammal bycatch issues within their certification scheme.
- 12) A workshop is recommended to provide a position on bycatch in relation to the review of Regulation 812/2004 to feed into the European Commission.
- 13) All member states should ensure that annual reports on Regulation 812/2004 are made public.
- 14) All member states should ensure that they provide their effort and bycatch data to the ICES Working Group on Bycatch (WGBYC) in time for their meeting, using the required format.
- 15) There was support for a workshop updating the ECS necropsy protocols, particularly with respect to diagnosis of bycatch. ASCOBANS is encouraged to provide funding support e.g. supporting key participants and the required work for updating the protocol.

- 16) Liaison between the North Sea Group and the Noise Working Group should be encouraged in order to advance work on “policy and management” strategies.
- 17) The North Sea harbour porpoise conservation work plan and progress to date needs to be disseminated and explained to a wider audience including stakeholders; it requires greater promotion to interested parties.
- 18) The NSSG underlines the strong need for a coordinator of the North Sea Harbour Porpoise Conservation Plan and therefore requests further support.

Terms of Reference for an ASCOBANS Workshop on the Requirements of Legislation to Address Monitoring and Mitigation of Small Cetacean Bycatch

1) Background

In light of the review of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), EC Regulation 812/2004 is likely to be repealed in favour of bycatch measures (monitoring and mitigating) being subsumed into measures within the new CFP. However, the European Parliament has proposed that “The Commission shall no later than 31 December 2015 review the effectiveness of the measures laid down in this Regulation and accompany this review with an overarching legislative proposal for ensuring the effective protection of cetaceans’. The effectiveness of the Regulation has been reviewed previously by the European Commission (COM (2009) 268 and COM (2011) 578 as required under Article 7 of Regulation) and has been the focus of discussion within the annual ICES Working Group on the Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC). At the ASCOBANS AC21, Parties agreed that the position of ASCOBANS on the legislation required to address small cetacean bycatch adequately should be prepared through a workshop.

2) Aim

To draft an ASCOBANS position paper (report) with regard to the monitoring and mitigation of bycatch required for effective conservation of small cetaceans.

3) Approach

A two-day workshop that will address three main tasks:

1. Review the effectiveness (pros and cons) of existing European legislation that requires the monitoring and/or mitigation of bycatch (i.e. Regulation 812/2004; Article 12(4) Habitats Directive including management within Natura 2000 sites; Marine Strategy Framework Directive)
2. Using appropriate and available data, define the measures and monitoring available for the effective assessment and mitigation of bycatch of small cetaceans.
3. Identify which of these requirements for effective monitoring and mitigation of small cetacean bycatch would be most effectively delivered by the incorporation into legislation (spatial and temporal measures; regionalization; incentives etc.).

4) Output

A final report with clear and detailed recommendations of requirements for revised/new legislation.

5) Logistics

The members of the ICES WGBYC would bring significant expertise to the ASCOBANS workshop. For this reason, the first choice for the venue and timing of the workshop is that it should coincide with the WGBYC meeting in February 2015. If this is not feasible, the possibility of ASCOBANS hosting the meeting in Bonn will be discussed. Germany will be able to cover some costs of the workshop (e.g. travel and subsistence) depending on budget available and expected costs.

The final report will be circulated through the ASCOBANS Secretariat for agreement intersessionally; the urgency of this matter means that it cannot wait until the next AC.

6) Action Points

- The Chair of the ASCOBANS Workshop Steering Group will liaise with the Chair of ICES WGBYC to discuss a 'joint' day at the next meeting.
- If the Chair of ICES WGBYC agrees to allocate some time to joint discussions as part of WGBYC, the ASCOBANS Secretariat will contact ICES to enquire whether they would support the venture and make the necessary arrangements within ICES.
- The ASCOBANS Secretariat will request Parties to supply complete effort and bycatch data for the net fisheries in time and in the format required to the ICES WGBYC in order that they can be used at the 2015 meeting.
- The ASCOBANS Secretariat and the Chair of the Steering Group, with the help of the National Coordinators, will make every effort to involve the relevant stakeholders (fisheries organizations, EU, etc.).
- Germany to liaise with the ASCOBANS Secretariat with regard to financing the workshop.
- Germany will assist the ASCOBANS Secretariat in furthering the report through the appropriate and most direct channels to the Commission.

7) Workshop Steering Group

The Workshop Steering Group comprises Geneviève Desportes (Chair), Sara Königson, Kelly Macleod, Yvon Morizur and Oliver Schall.

Terms of Reference for an ASCOBANS Workshop on Remote Electronic Monitoring with Regards to Bycatch of Small Cetaceans

1) Background

The ASCOBANS North Sea Steering Group, as well as the ICES Working Group on Bycatch (WGBYC), have both highlighted a large gap in knowledge regarding bycatch estimates, and concluded in the 2014 report that current bycatch levels of harbour porpoise in the North Sea may exceed sustainable limits.

Members of the North Sea Steering Group suggested that Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) could be a cost efficient and reliable way to monitor bycatch on fishing vessels, in particular where there are practical barriers to using dedicated observers. This would help address monitoring gaps and thus reduce uncertainty over bycatch estimates.

2) Expected Result

A report providing an overview of: the current status of REM techniques in use; common implementation problems/concerns and solutions to these; the identification of new techniques that can be used to monitor bycatch in the future; the proposal of a best practice protocol on implementing REM for protected species monitoring.

3) Participation

- Small workshop (about 30 participants)
- Anyone currently involved in using REM, in particular those working on cetacean and fisheries monitoring
- Representatives of countries that are interested in starting REM monitoring for cetacean bycatch
- Managers in relevant Parties which already implement REM monitoring
- Companies working with video surveillance

4) Approach

A one-day workshop will be held in 2015 to address three main tasks:

1. Provide an overview of the current status of REM techniques used for cetacean bycatch monitoring
 - Exchange of knowledge and experiences of those that have applied this method
 - Available techniques, future techniques
 - Technical/practical issues of installation – barriers to adoption
 - Involvement of stakeholders
 - Effective sampling design
 - Analyses of data (watching of the films/photos, how to calculate error, low bycatch occurrence, ...)
 - Use of software, future software qualifications, training programmes and opportunities for continuing information and knowledge sharing

- Challenges when including other PET (protected, endangered, threatened) species or as part of a discard fishery
2. Identify new techniques that can be used in future bycatch monitoring undertaken in vessels of less than 10m in length
 - a. Consider EM use on smaller vessels where the current set up is not practical (no space for computer, no dry space)
 - b. Consider whether there are alternative techniques that can be used
 3. Produce an outline on best practice based on the current state of knowledge

5) Workshop Steering Group

The Workshop Steering Group comprises Meike Scheidat and Sara Königson.

Terms of Reference for the ASCOBANS Working Group on Bycatch

The group will work intersessionally by making use of the Advisory Committee Workspace (<http://workspace.ascobans.org>) with the provisional tasks listed below; these can be fine-tuned by the group itself where deemed necessary. The group should coordinate its activities closely with the regional working groups of ASCOBANS.

- 1) Collect and prepare an overview of scientific information related to bycatch of harbour porpoises in the part of the ASCOBANS area not covered by the Jastarnia Plan, the 'Gap Area' Plan and the North Sea Conservation Plan.
- 2) Collect and prepare an overview of information related to bycatch of other small cetaceans.
- 3) Endeavour actively to include participation from relevant non-Party Range States.
- 4) Report on projects related to bycatch mitigation, especially in relation to the cetaceans mentioned in (1) and (2).
- 5) Prepare an overview of new national and international legislation and measures relevant to the monitoring and management of bycatch of the cetaceans mentioned in (1) and (2), and include compliance with relevant legislation.
- 6) Prepare, where useful and appropriate, advice on monitoring, target setting, assessment and management of bycatch of the small cetaceans mentioned in (1) and (2), independently, but also liaising with other working groups within ASCOBANS, such as the MSFD WG, and other fora where this subject is being dealt with, a.o. fisheries fora.
- 7) Report back to the next AC meeting, and where useful provide input in other relevant meetings or working groups intersessionally.

Terms of Reference for an ASCOBANS Workshop on Further Development of Management Procedures for Defining the Threshold of 'Unacceptable Interactions' / Removals of Concern

This workshop is for invited participants representing managers, scientists and stakeholders, including attendees from relevant parts of the European Commission (at least DG Mare/DG Environment), Member State fisheries authorities, the RACs, relevant intergovernmental bodies (Regional Seas Commissions, ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS) and relevant NGOs.

About 30 participants would attend and the workshop would be held in the margins of the ECS meeting in Malta in March.

1) Approach

A one-day workshop that will address three main tasks:

1. Explore existing procedures for defining thresholds of mortality, beyond which population declines are inferred. Procedures relating to bycatch include those developed under the SCANS II project based on the Catch Limit Algorithm approach, PBR and ASCOBANS/IWC threshold of 1.7% / 1%. This would encompass presentations of model scenarios under example conservation objectives. This work would feed into the development of a "common" bycatch mortality indicator for the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, with the development of targets for regularly occurring small cetacean species.
2. Define conservation objectives in relation to thresholds of anthropogenic mortality (specifically from bycatch) for small cetaceans at a European-wide level. This would encompass a review of existing conservation objectives in other fora/geographic areas.
3. Provide an overview of available information on proposed assessment units of regularly occurring species; highlighting the gaps in our current knowledge of those species that are required for establishing removal rates of concern at a European level.

2) Workshop Steering Group

The Workshop Steering Group comprises Kelly Macleod, Eunice Pinn, Jan Haelters, Mark Simmonds and Sinéad Murphy.

ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Priorities for the Work Programme of the Joint Noise Working Group

The Work Programme is contained in Annex 2 of [AC21/Doc.3.2.1](#). The priority actions chosen by the ASCOBANS AC are:

- 9: Develop further comments on ACCOBAMS-MOP5/2013/Doc.22, Doc.23 and Doc.24
- 10: Collaborate with IMO
- 11: Collaborate with OSPAR
- 13: Collaborate with CBD
- 20: Engage industries, Parties, NGO with implementing ship quieting guidelines
- 27: Establish dialogue with stakeholders
- 30: Get a review what the Navy does in EU waters
- 39: Develop European level guidelines for EIA relating to marine noise for ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS to consider
- 40: Map anthropogenic noise/cetacean interaction hot spot
- 47: Host a Joint NWG meeting in the margins of the ECS meeting

Regarding these priorities, the ASCOBANS AC asked the JNWG to note the following:

- It is advised to re-group those actions that fit together (including those that have not been selected as a first priority)
- It is advised to define these priority actions with a timetable that distinguishes between those requiring medium or long-term effort and those of shorter term
- For actions 10, 11 and 13 (collaboration with IMO, OSPAR and CBD), it is advised to contact and collaborate with all other relevant organisations
- For action 39 related to EIA, the recommendation is not to produce guidelines themselves but to produce advice to support the development of national guidelines
- For action 40 related to noise/cetacean mapping to identify areas of potential overlap, it is recommended that information be collected to see where gaps exist rather than for the WG to do the mapping themselves, given that there are a number of ongoing projects
- In general, the collection of information is recommended to see where gaps exist rather than to reproduce ongoing work (e.g. mapping high density shipping areas, sites of military exercises where active sonar is used, etc.)
- For action 47, it is advised that a workshop on one of the priority topics in conjunction with ECS should be held in 2016

Pollution Working Group – Literature Review 2014

M P Simmonds

Thanks to WDC for helping to compile this report.

Overview: since the last meeting there has been considerable interest in the threat posed by marine debris to cetaceans, notably through the IWC's work-streams (see below and annex 1). Work on xenobiotics continues in the IWC's Scientific Committee (here: <https://archive.iwc.int/pages/view.php?ref=3436>) and in summary: The IWC Pollution 2020 Steering Group Meeting report (SC/65b/Rep05) noted that the last 4 years have seen the completion of Phases II and III of the Pollution 2000+ initiative, which has included the finalisation of an individual-based model that can be used to investigate the effects of pollution (particularly polychlorinated biphenyl or PCB) exposure on cetacean populations (Hall et al., 2013). The major points identified were that: (1) the model should include the ability to change the annual accumulation over time, as this would better reflect the gradual decrease in environmental PCBs; (2) the vital rates used to parameterise both the dolphin and the humpback model may need to be updated; (3) a major source of uncertainty in the model relates to the parameters that control the offloading of PCBs from mothers to their calves; and (4) currently, there is no uncertainty incorporated into the model around the relationship between immune function and reduced survival probability. Work on prioritising current contaminants of concern for cetaceans remains important to the SWG and efforts to complete this task should be continued. The Committee commended this work and recognised that the development of a practical modelling tool provides an important step in the Committee's ability to quantify the effects of chronic threats to cetaceans. The Committee endorses the steering committee advice and recommends the addition of leachate and adsorbed chemicals from microplastics to the questionnaire that will be circulated among experts for input on chemicals of concern. In addition, the Committee recognises that continued investigation into the effects of chemicals adsorbed to microplastics, on cetaceans, is needed.

The committee also considered a report from the Deepsea Horizon oil spill: Health assessments of bottlenose dolphins in Barataria Bay, Louisiana (an area that received heavy and prolonged oiling) and Sarasota Bay, Florida (control site) were conducted in 2011 (Schwacke et al., 2014). Barataria Bay dolphins showed evidence of hypoadrenocorticism, consistent with adrenal toxicity and were five times more likely to have moderate to severe lung disease. The Committee commended this work and recommended that these studies continue.

There is also work ongoing under the auspices of OSPAR on the development of a Blubber Toxicity Threshold indicator.

Other Recent Key Publications:

1) Marine debris

Evaluating the impacts of marine debris on cetaceans

Baulch, S. & Perry, C. 2014 *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 80: 210-221

Knowledge of the severity of effects of marine debris lags behind that for other species groups. This literature review examines the impacts of marine debris on cetaceans reported to date. It finds that ingestion of debris has been documented in 48 (56% of) cetacean species, with rates of ingestion as high as 31% in some populations. Debris-induced

mortality rates of 0-22% of stranded animals were documented, suggesting that debris could be a significant conservation threat to some populations.

Plastic debris in the open ocean

Cozar, A; Echevarría, F; Gonzalez-Gordillo, J.I; Irigoien, X; Ubeda, B; et al. 2014 *PNAS*.

Using data from the Malaspina 2010 circumnavigation, regional surveys, and previously published reports, we show a worldwide distribution of plastic on the surface of the open ocean, mostly accumulating in the convergence zones of each of the five subtropical gyres with comparable density. However, the global load of plastic on the open ocean surface was estimated to be on the order of tens of thousands of tons, far less than expected. Our observations of the size distribution of floating plastic debris point at important size-selective sinks removing millimeter-sized fragments of floating plastic on a large scale. This sink may involve a combination of fast nano-fragmentation of the microplastic into particles of microns or smaller, their transference to the ocean interior by food webs and ballasting processes, and processes yet to be discovered. Resolving the fate of the missing plastic debris is of fundamental importance to determine the nature and significance of the impacts of plastic pollution in the ocean.

Report of the IWC Workshop on Mitigation and Management of the Threats Posed by Marine Debris to Cetaceans

IWC/65/CCRep04 96 pages and available here:

<https://archive.iwc.int/pages/view.php?ref=3497> See annex 1 below for summary.

Classify plastic waste as hazardous

Rochman, C.M; Browne, M.A; Halpern, B.S; Hentschel, B.T; Hoh, E; Karapanagioti, H.K; Rios-Mendoza, L.M; Teh, S. & R.C. Thompson 2013 *Nature* 494: 169-171

Plastic debris can physically harm wildlife. Moreover, many plastics may be chemically harmful in some contexts — either because they are themselves potentially toxic or because they absorb other pollutants. Yet in the United States, Europe, Australia and Japan, plastics are classified as solid waste — so are treated in the same way as food scraps or grass clippings. ... We believe that if countries classified the most harmful plastics as hazardous, their environmental agencies would have the power to restore affected habitats and prevent more dangerous debris.

2) Other Pollutants

*Associations between Perfluoroalkyl compounds and immune and clinical chemistry parameters in highly exposed bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*).*

Fair, P.A; Romano, T; Scheafer, A.M; Reif, J.S; Bossart, G.D; Houde, M; Muir, D; Adams, J; Rice, C; Hulse, T.C. & Peden-Adams, M. 2013. *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* 32(4): 737-746.

Perfluoroalkyl compounds (PFCs) are ubiquitous, persistent chemical contaminants found in the environment, wildlife, and humans. Despite the widespread occurrence of PFCs, little is known about the impact these contaminants have on the health of wildlife populations. The authors investigated the relationship between PFCs (including Σ perfluorocarboxylates, Σ perfluoroalkyl sulfonates, perfluorooctane sulfonate, perfluorooctanoic acid, and perfluorodecanoic acid) and the clinicopathologic and immune parameters in a highly exposed population (n = 79) of Atlantic bottlenose dolphins (mean Σ PFCs = 1970 ng/ml;

range 574-8670 ng/ml) sampled from 2003 to 2005 near Charleston, South Carolina, USA. Age-adjusted linear regression models showed statistically significant positive associations between exposure to one or more of the PFC totals and/or individual analytes and the following immunological parameters: absolute numbers of CD2+ T cells, CD4+ helper T cells, CD19+ immature B cells, CD21+ mature B cells, CD2/CD21 ratio, MHCII+ cells, B cell proliferation, serum IgG1, granulocytic, and monocytic phagocytosis. Several PFC analyte groups were also positively associated with serum alanine aminotransferase, gamma-glutamyltransferase, creatinine, phosphorus, amylase, and anion gap and negatively associated with cholesterol levels, creatinine phosphokinase, eosinophils, and monocytes. Based on these relationships, the authors suggest that the PFC concentrations found in Charleston dolphins may have effects on immune, hematopoietic, kidney, and liver function. The results contribute to the emerging data on PFC health effects in this first study to describe associations between PFCs and health parameters in dolphins.

Organochlorine pesticides and chlorobiphenyls in the blubber of bycaught female common dolphins from England and Wales from 1992–2006

Law, R.J; Bersuder, P; Barry, J; Babber, J; Deaville, R; Barnett, J; Jepson, P.D. 2013 *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 69(1-2): 238-242.

Concentrations of Σ DDT (summed p,p'-DDT and its metabolites, p,p'-DDE and p,p'-TDE) and of 25 summed CB congeners ranged from 0.2 to 16.1 and 2.1 to 62.4 mg kg⁻¹ lipid weight, respectively. Concentrations of sum HCH, HCB and dieldrin were lower, ranging from not detected to 0.14, 0.01 to 0.27 and 0.01 to 0.73 mg kg⁻¹ lipid weight, respectively. All contaminants studied showed a downward time trend but only that for HCHs was statistically significant. Overall, 72% of the dolphins analysed had blubber PCB concentrations above an established toxicity threshold value.

The distribution and stratification of persistent organic pollutants and fatty acids in bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus) blubber

Ellisor, D; McLellan, W; Koopman, H; Schwacke, L; McFee, W; Kucklick, J.2013 *Science of the Total Environment* 463-464: 581-588.

It is important to understand whether blubber stratification or body location affects POP concentration or the concentration of other important blubber constituents such as fatty acids (FA). To investigate the influence of sampling depth and location on POP concentration, full depth blubber samples were taken from one stranded bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) at six different body....In this individual, both POPs and FAs were heterogeneous with blubber depth and body location. POP concentrations were significantly greater in ventral (average Σ PBDEs 1350 ng/g lipid) and anterior (average Σ PCBs 28,700 ng/g lipid) body locations and greater in the superficial blubber layer (average Σ PCBs 35,500 ng/g lipid) when compared to the deep (8390 ng/g lipid) and middle (23,700 ng/g lipid) layers. Proportionally more dietary FAs were found in dorsal blubber and in middle and deep layers relative to other locations while the reverse was true for biosynthesized FAs. Stratification was further examined in blubber from the same body location in five additional stranded bottlenose dolphins. Although FAs were stratified with blubber depth, lipid-normalized POPs were not significantly different with depth, indicating that POP concentrations can vary in an individual with blubber depth though the direction of POP stratification is not consistent among individuals.

Annex 1. Summary: IWC Workshop on Mitigation and Management of the Threats Posed by Marine Debris to Cetaceans

The Workshop was held in Honolulu from 5-7 August 2014. Thirty-four participants from ten countries attended, including several from the Pacific region. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, the United Nations Environment Programme and its Convention for Migratory Species were all represented, as were relevant industry bodies and a number of non-governmental organisations concerned with marine debris. The primary objectives of the workshop were to: (i) explore how the IWC can engage with the existing international and regional mitigation efforts concerning the management of marine debris; (ii) determine how best to ensure those efforts are informed by the growing understanding of the cetacean-specific impacts of marine debris; and (iii) advise on how best the IWC can lead/engage with action in regions where marine debris has the greatest potential impacts on cetacean populations.

The workshop reviewed initiatives from across the world to address marine debris in general and entanglement of cetaceans in particular, which was viewed as the greatest threat to these animals. These initiatives ranged from high-level agreements between countries to address the issue, to efforts in the field to remove materials directly from the seas and recycle or burn it for energy, to efforts to disentangle whales and other cetaceans snared in netting. The IWC is already highly active in this field and held a workshop on the assessment of marine debris impacts on cetaceans in May 2013 at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and also has a programme of work focused on responding to entangled whales. This initiative was begun by Norway, in partnership with Australia and the USA, and has included workshops in Maui in 2010 and Provincetown in 2011.

Important international initiatives have included inter alia:

- (a) the 5th International Marine Debris Conference: Waves of Change; Global Lessons to Inspire Local Actions, from which came the 'Honolulu Strategy; A Global Framework for the Prevention and Management of Marine Debris' and Honolulu Commitment;
- (b) The 2012 'Manila Declaration', which referenced the Honolulu Strategy and strongly endorsed UNEP GPA's mandate to continue its work on marine litter including the recommendation to create the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML)¹ to promote implementation of the strategy;
- (c) The formal recognition of the issue of marine debris at the inaugural UN Environmental Assembly Ministerial Meeting in June 2014;
- (d) SPREP's new work on stranded cetaceans and programme of work with the IWC; and
- (e) calls for action to reduce the incidental capture of whales in fishing gear at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and by the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), most recently at its thirty-first session in Rome 2013. In addition, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animal (CMS) has a new Resolution on marine debris proposed for adoption at its conference of parties in November 2014 and the workshop also took note of the 'Untangled' symposium hosted by World Animal Protection (WAP) in Miami 2012.

The workshop received information about a number of topics from the assembled experts and it discussed these and generated a number of recommendations which are outlined below. The focal topics discussed included fishing gear marking, using practices in the USA as an example; potential gear modifications; methods for identifying debris hot spots; modelling approaches; work conducted on other species (principally the work of CSIRO in Australia on risk analysis for ingestion and entanglement in seabirds and turtles); debris ingestion; ALDFG; the role and responsibilities of MARPOL; the Nofir project for recycling fishing gear in Norway and elsewhere; the NOAA Marine Debris Programme and the Hawaii Marine Debris Action Plan; the Korean Gear Buyback Programme; the European Healthy

Seas Initiative; the Philippines Net-Works programme; Ghost-Nets Australia; WAP's new Sea Change initiative; and the exemplary outreach work by Northwest Straits Foundation, UNEP and NOAA.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Workshop emphasised that the issue of marine debris, while important for cetaceans, was a major environmental issue in its own right that was already the subject of a number of important international and national initiatives and that there is a need for a coordinating body to help bring these initiatives together. Any lack of strong evidence of quantified impacts for some cetacean species for some debris types at present should not preclude efforts to remove existing debris and prevent future accumulation in the marine environment. It also agreed that from an animal welfare perspective, the absolute number of cetacean entanglements and the associated suffering and times to death are unacceptable, irrespective of population level effects.

ASCOBANS Statement Regarding MREDS (Marine Renewable Energy Developments) and Cetaceans

Recognizing the potentially important contribution of marine renewable energy developments to reducing carbon emissions, the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee agreed, given the potential scale of the industry and the number of unknown consequences to cetaceans, that this matter should be carefully monitored and in particular:

1. A standing agenda item should be maintained at the Advisory Committee to allow parties to bring in new information and developments with regards to marine renewable energy technologies.
2. The Secretariat should oversee the preparation of a presentation to the Advisory Committee on emerging technologies and mitigation.
3. The Advisory Committee should maintain a watching brief on emerging marine renewable energy technologies.

List of Dates of Interest to ASCOBANS in 2014/2015

Date	Organizer	Title	Venue	Participation/ Report
2-3 October 2014	OSPAR	Intersessional Correspondence Group on Biodiversity Monitoring and Assessment (ICG-COBAM) (www.ospar.org)	Gothenburg, Sweden	Jan Haelters
6-17 October 2014	CBD	12 th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12) (www.cbd.int)	PyeongChang, Republic of Korea	Penina Blankett
8-10 October 2014	Benguela Current Commission	3 rd Global Large Marine Ecosystems Conference (http://www.benquelacc.org/index.php/en/component/rseventspro/vent/1-global-lme-conference)	Swakopmund, Namibia	
13-17 October 2014	IMO	67th Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) (www.imo.org)	London, United Kingdom	
20-24 October 2014	EC STECF	EWG 14-17: Preparations for future data collection under the revised DCF (http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg1417)	Hamburg, Germany	Genevieve Desportes (tbc)
21-23 October 2014	HELCOM	Eighth Meeting of HELCOM ad hoc Seal Expert Group (HELCOM SEAL 8/2014) (www.helcom.fi)	Turku, Finland	Penina Blankett
22-23 October 2014	HELCOM	Second HELCOM Workshop on Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter (MARINE LITTER 2/2014) (www.helcom.fi)	Stralsund, Germany	
29-30 October 2014	HELCOM	1 st Meeting of the Expert Group on environmental risks of hazardous submerged objects (SUBMERGED 1-2014) (www.helcom.fi)	Szczecin, Poland	

29-30 October 2014	ACCOBAMS & Pelagos Sanctuary	Workshop on Cetacean Live Strandings (www.accobams.org)	Monaco	ACCOBAMS
2-3 November 2014	CMS	42 nd Standing Committee Meeting (www.cms.int)	Quito, Ecuador	Secretariat
3-7 November 2014	HELCOM	First Meeting of the new HELCOM Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (HELCOM STATE) (www.helcom.fi)	Pärnu, Estonia	Penina Blankett
3-7 November 2014	NAMMCO	21st Meeting of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee (www.nammco.no)	Bergen, Norway	Genevieve Desportes
4-9 November 2014	CMS	11 th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) (www.cms.int)	Quito, Ecuador	Secretariat
9 November 2014	CMS	43 rd Standing Committee Meeting (www.cms.int)	Quito, Ecuador	Secretariat
9-11 November 2014	ICMMPA	Third International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICMMPA-3) (http://icmmpa.org/)	Adelaide, Australia	Simone Panigada (ACCOBAMS SC Chair) / CMS Dugong Secretariat
11-12 November 2014	OSPAR	12th Meeting of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Litter (ICG-ML) (www.ospar.org)	Vigo, Spain	Netherlands?
12-19 November 2014	IUCN	World Parks Congress: Parks, People, Planet – Inspiring Solutions (www.iucn.org)	Sydney, Australia	Simone Panigada (ACCOBAMS SC Chair) / CMS Dugong Secretariat

17-21 November 2014	MARES Consortium	MARES Conference – Marine Ecosystems Health and Conservation (http://www.maresconference.eu)	Olhão, Portugal	
24-28 November 2014	EC STECF	EWG 14-18: Review of DCF National programme amendments for 2014 & development of the revised DCF Multiannual Programme (http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg1418)	Brussels, Belgium	Genevieve Desportes (tbc)
25-27 November 2014	OSPAR	Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Protected Areas (ICG-MPA) (www.ospar.org)	Madrid, Spain	
2-4 December 2014	CBD	CBD Expert Workshop to Prepare Practical Guidance on Preventing and Mitigating the Significant Adverse Impacts of Marine Debris on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Habitats (www.cbd.int)	Baltimore, United States	Secretariat
8-9 December 2014	SAMBAH	SAMBAH conference on the abundance and distribution of porpoises in the Baltic Sea (www.sambah.org)	Kolmården, Sweden	Secretariat / Mats Amundin / JG Chair (tbc)
December 2014	OSPAR	Intersessional Correspondence Group on Biodiversity Monitoring and Assessment (ICG-COBAM) (www.ospar.org)	Madrid, Spain	Jan Haelters
13-14 January 2014	OSPAR	Intersessional Correspondence Group – Protection of Species and Habitats (ICG-POSH) (www.ospar.org)	Gijon, Spain	Secretariat?
12-17 January 2015	IPBES	Third Session of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES 3) (www.ipbes.net)	Bonn, Germany	Secretariat
20-23 January 2015	UN DOALOS	3rd Meeting of the BBNJ Working Group (Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction) (http://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/biodiversityworkinggroup.htm)	New York, USA	Secretariat (tbc)

2-6 February 2015 (tbc)	ICES	Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC) (www.ices.dk)	tbd	Genevieve Desportes
16-19 February 2015	ICES	Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME) (www.ices.dk)	London, United Kingdom	Kelly Macleod
2-6 March 2015	OSPAR	Biodiversity Committee (BDC) (www.ospar.org)	Cork, Ireland	Jeroen Vis
10-12 March 2015	Berlin Institute of Technology	Conference on Wind Energy and Wildlife Impacts (CWW 2015) (https://www.cww2015.tu-berlin.de/)	Berlin, Germany	Meike Scheidat
13-15 March 2015	WhaleFest & Planet Whale	WhaleFest 2015 (http://whale-fest.com)	Brighton, United Kingdom	
21-25 March 2015	ECS	29 th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society (incl. workshops on 21-22 March) (www.europeancetaceansociety.org)	Malta	Secretariat
13-17 April 2015	OSPAR	Environmental Impact of Human Activities Committee (EIHA) (www.ospar.org)	Spain	United Kingdom
April 2015	OSPAR	Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Strategy Framework Directive (ICG-MSFD) (www.ospar.org)	tbd	
May 2015	HELCOM	Nature Protection and Biodiversity (HABITAT 17/2015) (www.helcom.fi)	tbd	Penina Blankett
May 2015	IWC	Scientific Committee Meeting (www.iwc.int)	San Diego, California, USA	Mark Simmonds
Early June 2015	ACCOBAMS	Workshop on the Effectiveness of MPAs Containing Critical Habitats of Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area (www.accobams.org)	Djerba, Tunisia	
22-26 June 2015	OSPAR	OSPAR Commission (www.ospar.org)	tbd	Jeroen Vis (tbc)

Oct/Nov 2015	ACCOBAMS	10 th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (www.accobams.org)	tbd	Secretariat
14-18 September 2015	German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation	4 th International Conference on Progress in Marine Conservation in Europe 2015	Stralsund, Germany	Secretariat
September 2015	ICES	Annual Science Conference 2015 (www.ices.dk)	tbd	
13-18 December 2015	Society for Marine Mammalogy	22 st Biennial Conference on Marine Mammals (www.marinemammalscience.org)	San Francisco, USA	
2015	IMO	68 th Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) (www.imo.org)	London, United Kingdom	
2015	CITES	66 th Meeting of the Standing Committee (www.cites.org)	tbd	Secretariat