

REPORT OF THE 5TH MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS NORTH SEA GROUP

**The Hague, Netherlands
28 September 2015**



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

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**REPORT OF THE
5TH MEETING OF THE STEERING GROUP FOR THE ASCOBANS
CONSERVATION PLAN FOR HARBOUR PORPOISES IN THE NORTH SEA
(NORTH SEA GROUP)**

1. Welcome and Announcements

Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) welcomed participants to the Ministry and explained some housekeeping arrangements. Participants wanting to upload presentations were invited to do so.

The Chair, Peter Evans (Sea Watch Foundation), presented apologies from Oliver Schall (Germany) who would not be able to attend the meeting and a few participants who would be arriving later.

A tour de table was conducted allowing participants to introduce themselves.

1.1 Adoption of the Agenda

There were no comments on the agenda so it was adopted as presented.

1.2 Appointment of Rapporteur

Robert Vagg (Secretariat) was appointed rapporteur.

2. Minutes of the 4th NSSG meeting, 28 September 2014, Gothenburg, Sweden

The report of the 4th NSSG meeting had been made available to all participants in advance and a draft had been circulated and amendments made as required. Finn Larsen (Denmark) sought clarification of a reference on page 2 of the report to the number of vessels in the North Sea which he assumed must relate to the total number and not any one national fleet. The Chair clarified that it was indeed the former.

3. Implementation Review: Bycatch Estimation (Actions 3 and 4)

The Chair gave a brief summary of the previous meeting of the North Sea Group (NSG) based on the reports given by Geneviève Desportes and himself to AC21 (see paragraphs 15 and 16 of the AC21 report).

3.1 New Information on Bycatch Estimates (as reported to ICES WGBYC)

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that the preliminary estimates were now available arising from February's meeting of the ICES Bycatch Working Group (WGBYC). He showed a slide from the report depicting estimates of likely bycatch in different areas: the Channel and the Western Approaches had the highest risk.

The Chair conducted a tour de table inviting each country to provide an update.

Denmark had not provided an update for the most recent ICES report. Danish data had been entered in a database and a large REM project had been completed from which the data were still being processed and analysed. There had been no recent bycatch estimates (the latest dating from 2002) and this had related primarily to Inner Danish Waters rather than the North

Sea. The figures presented at a conference two weeks earlier attended by Fabian Ritter (WDC) had been pooled figures that did not specifically refer to Denmark.

Germany had nothing further to report.

The Netherlands reported on a REM project that was still in progress and an estimate might be available next year. Previous estimates had been based on necropsy findings from stranded harbour porpoises.

The United Kingdom referred the Group to the UK's Annual Report to ASCOBANS and to the European Commission under Regulation 812/2004. Monitoring was being carried out with various days' efforts for different fisheries, mainly in the south and west but some in the North and Irish Seas. Seven harbour porpoises and two common dolphins had been caught in static nets, but it was difficult to quantify overall levels due to low sampling effort. The worst case estimate based on limited data was between 1,400 and 1,700 harbour porpoises.

France had pooled all French bycatch data up to 2013 which had produced an average annual bycatch estimate in the North Sea of 150 harbour porpoises, 110 in the Western Channel and 360 per year in set nets. No bycatch had been observed in Area VIId (Eastern Channel) up to 2013, and one occurrence in 2014 was not in the report.

Sweden reported eight bycaught harbour porpoises in 2013. These were stranded animals but marks on the bodies were indicative of bycatch.

Belgium had no new information to present. Estimates for bycatch were based on strandings and necropsies and indirect evidence rather than reports from fishermen. Some bycatch resulted from recreational fisheries and some from professional fisheries. A ban on the use of certain nets had been in force since March 2015. Professional fishermen were not using the nets most associated with bycatch and some of the beached specimens might have originated from outside Belgian waters. Harbour porpoises might also have come in closer to shore in pursuit of prey.

In summary, the Chair highlighted the fact that there remained insufficient monitoring of bycatch in the North Sea.

3.2 Monitoring Projects

3.2.1 Remote Electronic Monitoring Projects

A workshop on REM would be held immediately after the AC (see [ASCOBANS website](#) for details).

3.2.1.1 Update on Danish REM Projects

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that the REM project had started using equipment from Archipelago Marine Research from Canada and the data were logged on a hard disk. Later the Danish company, Anchor Lab, had developed another but similar system where the data were downloaded when the vessel was in telecommunications range. There were also REM trials examining discards in the cod fisheries.

The cameras were trained on the point where the net left the water and would therefore capture on tape any harbour porpoises that fell out into the water and on the deck when the nets were being emptied.

There were normally three cameras on board. Two were trained on the deck including the sorting table and the third was trained on the point where the net left the water and would therefore capture any harbour porpoises that fell out before reaching the deck.

Bycatch totals had been tabulated indicating how the animals had been observed (i.e. video, log book). In 39 cases, 14 had been recorded only by the video cameras.

The effort had been concentrated mainly in Inner Danish Waters and had taken place over the period 2012-2015, with more days at sea spent in ICES Areas 22 and 23 than in Area 24. During 3,400 fishing trips, 175 animals had been bycaught.

The reports from similar vessels varied widely and REM produced very different data compared with observer schemes, as it produced a longer-term view from one vessel rather than a series of snapshots from across the fleet. There were advantages and disadvantages of both approaches. Some fishermen reacted more favourably to this type of observation than others. Some could be persuaded to cooperate through incentives, some cooperated when the objective was to gather evidence of damage caused by seals, while others were happy to volunteer. One had been participating since 2009 and even mentioned a bycatch incident on his Facebook page.

There were several REM projects underway so there was a constant effort to recruit fishermen to take part. Helle Torp Christensen (Denmark) said it often took some time before fishermen saw the advantages of cooperating.

Fabian Ritter (WDC) asked what the costs were per vessel and who had to pay for acquiring and installing the equipment. The Archipelago sets cost around Can\$10,000 and the Anchor Lab system was slightly more expensive. Installation cost was around \$3,000 and then students had to be employed to review and assess the videos. In countries with higher labour costs, REM was less expensive than observer programmes. The equipment has so far been paid for by the different pilot projects.

It was not clear why the results differed so much. One vessel took nine animals in a small area over a short time and then just two over a longer period with greater effort.

REM would be extended into the North Sea with up to five vessels which might allow an update of bycatch estimates dating from the 1990s.

A PhD study to identify high risk areas for harbour porpoise bycatch using a relatively simple model, that had proved to be a good means of predicting high risk areas (which were not necessarily the areas of highest harbour porpoise density), should be published in the next six months.

Mark Simmonds (HSI) asked whether proper trials had been conducted to compare observers and cameras. Finn Larsen said that there had, and they had included the logbook entries of captains too. Cameras picked up bycaught animals that fell out of nets before observers saw them, while redeploying observers to different ships was easier than dismantling and reinstalling the equipment. Captains were just as likely to refuse to allow observers on board as they were to refuse to have cameras installed. The main technical problem encountered related to having access to a suitable power supply as the camera could overload the vessel's electricity generator leading to problems with the hauling gear.

In answer to Lonneke IJsseldijk (Netherlands) who asked what happened to the bycaught animals, Finn Larsen said that they were thrown overboard. Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) said that some fishermen claimed to have caught the same animal on several occasions, so the suggestion had been made that bycaught animals should be tagged in some way. Lonneke IJsseldijk said that in the Netherlands, fishermen were being asked to land bycaught animals for necropsy, although to do this requires a permit, and so far, permits have only been granted to fishermen involved in the REM Project. It would therefore be beneficial for all fishermen to be granted permits from the government to land these animals, so that more bycatches can be necropsied and investigated.

Fabian Ritter said that if the different bycatch figures were related to different fishing techniques, then lessons could be learned to reduce the problem. Finn Larsen said that this was exactly what the researchers were looking into and the larger datasets available in the USA were proving helpful.

The Chair commented that a number of factors could play a role in bycatch estimates derived from strandings (e.g. past weather conditions and currents), and without precise knowledge

of time of death, it is difficult to use those data to derive such estimates, so REM should be encouraged where possible as it might prove to be a most cost effective method for increasing bycatch monitoring effort.

The cost of the equipment might come down if more companies entered the production market and more use was made of REM.

3.2.1.2 Update on Dutch REM Project

Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) said that twelve vessels were taking part in the Dutch project at the moment. Problems had been encountered at the start due to a number of reasons, one of them being that no compensation had been offered to the fishermen for the time they lost due to installation and maintenance of the equipment. More recently, requests had been received from captains wishing to take part in the programme. The green light had just been given for extending the project. The problems regarding the power supplies were being addressed and results were expected next year. The cooperation of the fishermen improved markedly when they were able to obtain a research quota for their participation in the project. There is however no guarantee that the higher quota would be continued. The Dutch fleet was smaller than the Danish one, so the number of vessels represented a higher percentage of the vessels operating. Many fishermen were part-time and the coverage of the project accounted for 10 per cent of the fleet's fishing effort. Because of the costs of installing the equipment, the same vessels were being monitored with little switching.

There were relatively high costs associated with installing the new power units needed for the Archipelago system and there were problems surrounding setting cameras so that people's faces were not recorded (as requested by some crews). One smaller vessel had wanted to take part but it did not have a cabin where the equipment could be kept dry.

3.2.1.3 Update on Any Other REM Projects

Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said the UK was conducting an REM project related to landing fish catches in the cod fisheries. Twelve vessels were involved and an incentive of higher quota allocation was offered to encourage participation. The cameras were pointed at the net and sorting board but were not used for monitoring bycatch. The fishermen might turn against the scheme if any major changes were made. The videos could not be used retrospectively for bycatch monitoring as they were deleted after six months and had been provided on a commercial in confidence basis.

Patricia Brtnik (Germany) said that REM projects were being planned in Germany and might also be extended to the Baltic Sea.

Geneviève Desportes said that REM had now proved its effectiveness beyond reasonable doubt and thought it was no longer appropriate to refer to pilot schemes and trials.

3.2.2 Other Monitoring Projects

3.2.2.1 Update on the Danish Monitoring Project in Recreational Fisheries

Helle Torp Christensen (Denmark) said that, in 2011, inspectors had looked into recreational fisheries and had not observed much bycatch. More data were expected to be available in 2016 or 2017. Forty-seven control days had been monitored, seven in the North Sea but no bycatch had been reported.

The observers used a tick box system which might lead to multiple incidents being recorded at the same time. The inspectors examined the nets by removing and replacing them. Licences allowed three small (50 metre) nets to be set.

3.2.3 Synthesis of Bycatch Information from French Set Nets Between 2008-2013, with Focus upon the North Sea – any new information?

Yvon Morizur (France) had addressed this earlier. There were no data on set net fisheries. Recreational fisheries represented a small proportion of effort (10 per cent) compared with full-time fisheries, with individual recreational fishermen using perhaps one 50-metre net plus traps.

The estimates for the number of recreational fishermen and their effort were based on interviews. The results of the survey had not been published.

3.3 Voluntary Reporting

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that Denmark had a long-running project, where 100 recreational fishermen using gill nets or fykes were voluntarily filling out a logbook with information on catches. Only one incident of a porpoise bycatch had been reported over the years.

The Chair commented that in his experience voluntary schemes tended to under-report bycatch.

3.4 Assessment of Bycatch in the North Sea – Knowledge Gaps

The UK had no further information to report. Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that the aeroplane that had been used for some aerial surveys had not been available for a while but might soon be able to resume. This monitors the spatial distribution of porpoises and fishing boats, although obviously not bycatch directly.

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that bycatch should ideally be reported and extrapolated based on hauls and not days at sea, but this would require that data on effort were available by haul. There needed to be changes agreed across the EU

The Chair suggested an Action Point encouraging greater activity.

3.4.1 Missing Fisheries

3.4.1.1 Update on Bycatch Situation in the Southern North Sea and Channel (ICES Areas IVc, VIId, VIIe)

The latest information on bycatch in the Southern North Sea and Channel so far as was known was summarised by Parties in Agenda item 3.1.

3.4.2 Other Matters

No other matters were raised.

3.5 Identification of Bycatch – Conclusions of Necropsy Protocols Workshop

Lonneke IJsseldijk (Netherlands) said that a workshop had been held in the margins of the ECS Conference earlier that year. She would report on it in more detail at the Advisory Committee Meeting. Marks left by nets on bycaught animals began to fade after a few days, and it could be that diseased animals were more likely to be vulnerable to bycatch. The latter could be investigated if more bycaught porpoises are landed and submitted for necropsy.

3.6 Recommendations

New recommendations included further investigation of the features of fishermen's behaviour that might contribute to bycatch and increasing the level of monitoring in areas of high risk (e.g. the eastern Channel and the southern North Sea). The Chair summarised progress reported on the Action Points from the previous meeting.

It was noted that the first Action Point had been more of a statement than a call for action. The 8th Action Point related to REM. Regarding the 9th Action Point on seeking greater involvement in NSG on the part of fishermen's organizations, only the Netherlands appeared to be making any real progress. Regarding increasing dialogue with the Marine Stewardship Council (Action Point 11), the Chair had written to them and had a positive response with the possibility of a meeting being set up. On Action Point 12 (position on bycatch in relation to the review of Regulation 812/2004), a workshop had been held and a report was being prepared but the recommendations had not yet been submitted (this could be discussed at the AC). It was noted that National Reports regarding Regulation 812/2004 were in the public domain, but were not easy to find on the European Commission's website.

The Chair proposed that all Action Points that had not been fully implemented should be retained.

Mark Simmonds (HSI) asked whether in the light of information now available, the Meeting should reconsider the question of the revision of the Harbour Porpoise Plan and the appointment of a coordinator. Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) confirmed that the list of things in need of funding to be discussed at the Advisory Committee included the Coordinator consultancies and the revision of all three Plans.

4. Implementation Review: Development of Alternative Mitigation Methods (Action 5)

4.1 Update on the German PAL Project and the Alternative and Ecosystem-friendly Fishing Gear Project

Patricia Brtnik (Germany) gave a short update of this project which had used a recording of a chain of aggressive clicks in response to which harbour porpoises in the vicinity had increased the number of echolocation clicks emitted. There had been 14 bycatch incidents: 2 in nets fitted with PAL and 12 in nets without it. The results differed appreciably between the North Sea and the Baltic, and one theory was that the recorded clicks came from the captive harbour porpoises from Kerteminde and these might use a Baltic "dialect" not understood by North Sea animals. Possibly the levels of background noise also had an effect.

There were strong seasonal variations and single nets were often used in German waters but these represented a small fraction of overall effort.

A larger project involving more agencies and the Land authorities of Mecklenburg Western Pomerania was in the offing with a greater focus on the Baltic. It might start in 2016.

Finn Larsen (Denmark) said that tests comparing nets with pingers with those without showed 18 incidents in controlled nets without pingers and 12 incidents in nets with them. In the Sound, the ratio was 10:1.

4.2 Update on Dutch Projects (Banana Pinger+)

Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) said that there was not much news to report. The "Banana" pingers had been well received by fishermen but they had to be fully tested at sea in conditions with background noise. There was no money available at the moment for this.

Finn Larsen (Denmark) asked what the purpose of the tests were when the specifications for this type of pinger were known. Meike Scheidat said that consideration had been given to

using this type of pinger in the REM project but there was not enough bycatch reported to make the tests worthwhile.

4.3 Update on UK Projects

The Cornish Wildlife Trust had done a trial but there were no results from the “Banana” pingers; other types were being tested.

4.4 Update on Changes in Fishing Procedures (France, the Netherlands, any others?)

Finn Larsen (Denmark) reported on a large project that was developing modified cod pots, taking over from where the Swedish Agricultural University had left off but working with them to make pots more efficient and economically viable. The features being examined included the shape, the design of the opening design, the number of chambers (one or two), the bait used, effects of light, and protecting the catch from grey seals.

A Danish PhD study had looked at the effective range of two pinger types and potential habituation to these. The two types were the AQUAmark 100 and the AQUAmark 30. The AQUAmark 100 was effective out to distances between 400 and 800 metres and there was no evidence of habituation after months of use. This was not the case with the AQUAmark 300, which had an effective range of less than 300 metres and where habituation occurred after a month or two. The AQUAmark 100 had a randomiser, which reduced the likelihood of habituation. Habituation was not directly measured from the incidence of bycatch.

Sweden was still working on the development of cod pots but this was mainly in response to the seal problem, but a beneficial side product was the reduction of cetacean bycatch. The final results of the trials were not yet available but fish catch rates were improving. The project was being broadened with more fishermen involved. The project had a page on Facebook ([salarochfiske/?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/salarochfiske/?fref=ts)).

5. Other Activities Contributing to the Conservation of the Harbour Porpoise in the North Sea

5.1 EU Habitats Directive

5.1.1 Review of North Sea SCIs/SACs Concerning Harbour Porpoises

In the UK, Natura 2000 sites were being identified. The JNCC had made proposals which had been submitted to Ministers and a public consultation would probably be launched in the next six months. Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) confirmed that stakeholders were being consulted informally prior to the launch of the formal consultation process.

Helle Torp Christensen (Denmark) said that the sites designated in Danish waters did not necessarily coincide with areas where the bycatch risks were highest. SACs were being chosen where harbour porpoises were present most. The process had slowed down during the election campaign.

The Chair reported that DG Environment had held a seminar in St Malo, France in May on marine Natura 2000 sites and the report had been published. Consideration was being given to changing the approach to SACs. Three working groups had been set up to deal with setting conservation objectives – one looking at the national level, one examining habitats and one dealing with highly mobile species. One subject discussed was how to reconcile Natura 2000 sites and other marine activities (fisheries, recreational use, etc.). The seminar had also looked at the regional integration of Natura 2000 issues (cross-border issues, networks and funding). Many countries had encountered the problem that after management plans were agreed, there was no money to implement them. Member States were adopting different approaches but those doing no monitoring to ascertain the effectiveness of the management measures being undertaken were criticised by the Commission.

The Natura 2000 seminar report (see: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/documents/marine_biogeographical_kick_off_seminar_report_en.pdf) contained a number of recommendations for highly mobile species, relevant to both ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS. It was agreed that the report should be discussed at the Advisory Committee.

Fabian Ritter (WDC) said that the report raised a number of key problems: regional cooperation, missing coherence between member states, monitoring and funding, and he suggested that guidance should be sought from the Commission on how these should be addressed.

The Chair said that DG Environment had included 40 topics on the initial agenda for the seminar and had had to set priorities. The top priorities were management procedures for marine species rather than cross-border cooperation. He suggested that a workshop might help identify gaps, such as management needs beyond the requirements of the Habitats Directive and Natura 2000 sites. The target audience for such a workshop could be a sub-set of those who had attended the St Malo event.

Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that the issues were also relevant to OSPAR. National government representatives were facing the problem of how to implement a range of action plans across their portfolio of tasks. The EU sometimes provided a common thread, but it was important to focus on specific concrete actions.

Mark Simmonds (HSI) welcomed the suggestion of a workshop as he found that ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS and the ECS provided a neutral ground for exchanging ideas. From the experience of what different countries were doing to conserve cetaceans, it might be possible to define best practice in various areas.

Jeroen Vis said that with 2016 being the year of the MOP, more attention could be given to the political aspects as well as the science.

Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) asked whether a draft resolution might be a suitable vehicle. If Parties agreed, preparation would have to start soon. The MOP would be more likely to attract political attention if the agenda was sufficiently weighty.

Jeroen Vis asked what the Resolution should address. The “health check” of the Habitats Directive would be completed next year but ASCOBANS Parties were being pulled in different directions, which often muddied the waters rather than providing clarity. What was needed was better integration of policies, as it was apparent that MPAs were not working well for highly mobile species.

Mark Simmonds agreed that the theme of the workshop should be achieving synergies for marine mammals across the EU and that it be linked to the ECS Annual Meeting in Madeira. Sinéad Murphy said that representatives from the European Commission were more likely to attend if the workshop were to take place in Bonn rather than Madeira. The Commission had only attended one ECS meeting and that was the one held in Galway, Ireland.

A Working Group was set up to draft terms of reference for the workshop with Eunice Pinn, Fabian Ritter, Mark Simmonds and Peter Evans as members.

5.1.2 Progress in designing conservation objectives, management plans and conservation measures for harbour porpoises in Natura 2000 areas

The Chair said that Denmark and the UK had made some progress in developing management plans.

Fabian Ritter (WDC) reported that WDC has issued a report on management procedures in the UK. It had identified some areas of concern (AOCs) and some hotspots. Four categories of threat had been defined: barriers, physical trauma, disturbance, and ecosystem effects. Eight key locations had been identified and it was hoped that SACs would be designated there. The report reiterated the “polluter pays” principle and made the case for supporting

ASCOBANS. It suggested that MPAs and SACs should be developed in tandem, and that the European Commission provide guidance to obtain regional and national commitment to reduce levels of harbour porpoise bycatch. An enforceable strategy that aims to ensure reductions in bycatch towards zero is required. Also, Bycatch monitoring should be increased the overlap between areas frequented by harbour porpoises and fisheries should be examined, and strategic investment in alternative techniques relating to pile driving is urgently required.

It was suggested that EIAs in the marine environment should be as strict as those on land and greater transparency should be required from the military over its activities. Shipping and collisions with whales were also of concern. Finally, efforts should continue towards adequate assessment of cumulative impacts.

Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) welcomed the approach of obtaining a comprehensive overview of pressures and not concentrating solely on bycatch.

Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said in response that the government was not yet in a position to decide on management measures but the report would be taken into consideration, and WDC would be included in the consultation process. Some fisheries were operating outside the 12 nm limit.

The Chair said that a combination of issue-based and area-based management measures was vital with regard to wide-ranging species.

Fabian Ritter (WDC) spoke about the German EEZ and the possibility of restricting fisheries in some areas. This would primarily affect set nets and bottom-set gear in the North Sea. The Baltic Sea was not yet covered. A coalition of NGOs was pursuing a court case in Germany, with the hope that the issue would be deferred to the European Court of Justice - as there was a need for clear guidance at the EU level regarding the strategy.

Patricia Brtnik (Germany) said that the recommendations were only in draft and were therefore subject to change. No decisions had yet been made.

Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that no SACs had been designated purely for the presence of harbour porpoises. Harbour porpoises had been a factor in deciding whether sites should be designated. The Chair said that the position was similar in France; some sites had been designated where harbour porpoises occurred but the sites had been chosen because other eligible species were also present.

5.2 New Surveys – Monitoring Trends in Distribution & Abundance (Action 7)

The Chair conducted a tour de table to ask whether any new surveys had been carried out. None had been done in Denmark nor in Sweden with the exception of work related to SAMBAH for which CPOD data were being analysed. In Germany, monitoring had been conducted in May 2014 in the North Sea and had identified an increase in the number of calves between 2002-12, but a slight decrease in 2014. Some investigations of the effect of pile driving on harbour porpoises had been made, using long-term data for comparison.

In the Netherlands there was an estimated harbour porpoise population of some 77,000 animals, representing 1.9 porpoises for every square kilometre. The higher density in the summer was a new feature. There had been few strandings and not many reports of bycatch but incidents might have been occurring further offshore.

Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that few harbour porpoises had been seen in March or April 2015 (whereas in April 2013 harbour porpoises had been reported in record numbers). Guillemots and razorbills were also seen further offshore than normal. Colder weather in March and April in other years might have meant that harbour porpoises stayed inshore and this led to higher numbers of strandings. Strandings were more common in the summer than in the spring.

Fabian Ritter (WDC) said that there had been more harbour porpoises swimming up the rivers Weser, Elbe and Jade in recent years but the sightings scheme had reported virtually none this year. The working theory was that there was a link with the location of prey species, which would also explain the behaviour of the birds.

Jan Haelters added that in the Scheldt in the spring of 2013 the large number of animals examined allowed their diet to be studied. The results had been published. The porpoises appeared to have been following migratory fish up the river, which had returned now that the water was clean enough again.

Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) and Eunice Pinn (United Kingdom) said that they would report on SCANS III at the Advisory Committee.

The Chair reported that land-based surveys conducted along the east coast of the UK had also recorded a drop in numbers.

Sami Hassani (France) said that surveys of megafauna had been done in 2011 and 2012. Routine surveys related to fish stocks had resulted in some sightings and it was planned to carry out aerial surveys with a project off Brittany.

Fabian Ritter referred to the construction of a windfarm (Butendiek) in the North Sea within a designated Natura 2000 site. This project had been criticised by NGOs because it had taken place in a breeding site in April. One NGO filed a court case against the project. High standard noise mitigation measures such as bubble curtains had been used. Construction had been monitored very well and thousands of ramming events had been recorded, most of them well below the noise threshold. Despite this however, there had been a dramatic effect on harbour porpoise distribution, which might mean that a drastic rethink of mitigation measures was required.

Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that it was not unexpected that the animals left the area during construction. The question was whether they had returned afterwards and how long they stayed away. He felt that it was too soon to say whether the rules needed to be changed. The Chair confirmed that there had been a negative response after a certain decibel level had been reached but whether the effects were short- or long-term was impossible to determine at this stage.

5.3 Update on MSFD and Marine Mammal Indicators

Jan Haelters (Belgium) gave a report from OSPAR (see AC22/Doc.6). The UK led on the subject of indicators for seals, and the Netherlands led on cetaceans. OSPAR had the mandate for leading on MFSD in the North-East Atlantic. Indicator M4 for mammals was concerned with distribution and abundance, and indicator M6 with the incidental capture of cetaceans. Because of uncertainties about how the European Commission would revise or replace Regulation 812/2004, development on the bycatch indicator had been suspended, and there had been few developments on indicator M4 other than abundance of coastal bottlenose dolphins.

An interim report was due to be issued by OSPAR in 2017 based on biodiversity indicators. By 2018 EU Member States were obliged to make their first assessment. The OSPAR assessment would not be based on new data unless some early results were available from SCANS III, or from Anita Gilles' project in the southern North Sea.

OSPAR had commissioned ICES to do the work and the ICES Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME) would be meeting in February 2016. The Netherlands were coordinating the intersessional work, and a workshop would be taking place a few days after the meeting of the North Sea Group to facilitate the work of WGMME and devise a reporting format. This process mirrored a similar one adopted for a seals workshop.

The Tursiops SEAS project would be applying for EU funding and would concentrate on the coastal populations of Portugal, Spain, France, the UK and Ireland.

Sinéad Murphy said that various countries of the North Sea were proposing an indicator for bycatch but this, for the most part, had not yet been defined. The abundance indicator included two metrics “abundance of the population of the cetacean species” and “occupancy by the species of an area”.

5.4 Update on Workshops Relating to Safe Bycatch Limits for Harbour Porpoises

Geneviève Desportes reported on the ASCOBANS Workshop on the Requirements of Legislation to Address Monitoring and Mitigation of Small Cetacean Bycatch (AC22/Inf.4.1.a), which had been held in January 2015. Problems in the North East Atlantic, the North Sea, the “Gap Area” and the Baltic had been examined along with the extent to which various cetacean species were affected. The Workshop had taken place in Bonn but unfortunately the representative of the European Commission had to cancel his attendance at the last minute. Consideration had been given to the impact of not having a dedicated regulation for marine mammals but dispersing the provisions across a wide range of legislation. The consensus view was that having no overarching legislation would lead to a loss of focus on marine mammals. Different priorities had been identified by smaller working groups but all agreed that dedicated legislation, possibly with different regional approaches, was the best way ahead.

Some rules were needed for both full-time and recreational fisheries especially in sensitive areas, and the methodologies for collecting data for reports should be reconsidered. For the “Gap Area” and the Baltic, the harbour porpoise was the only species of concern, with two populations. Where the two populations overlapped in the waters where the Baltic Proper and the Kattegat, the Belt and the Western Baltic met, the focus should be on the smaller more endangered one. Developing new designs of “pinger” and alternative gear was continuing. The situation was similar in the North Sea, where the harbour porpoise was the cause of greatest concern, but other small cetaceans were also present there and in the North Atlantic and these were also in need of attention.

On the issue of bycatch rates, agreement was needed across the EU on protocols and setting of bycatch thresholds, which if not exceeded would not trigger the requirement for mitigation measures to be implemented. Some fisheries without a bycatch problem were already exempt from mitigation measures.

Sinéad Murphy referred to page 25 of the workshop report and the timeframe for setting up a management framework. The timeframe was only a rough sketch at the moment but if the management framework approach was not acceptable one logical conclusion would be for pingers to be attached to all set-nets on all vessels (i.e. irrespective of vessel size, gear type and ICES area) with two or three years of monitoring to assess bycatch rates

Jamie Rendell (UK) said that the report of the workshop on Further Development of Management Procedures for Defining the Thresholds of Unacceptable Interactions was contained in an information document submitted to the Advisory Committee (AC22/Inf.4.1.c). It contained some recommendations around language, thresholds and limits in the context of the ASCOBANS aim of achieving zero bycatch. It also set out some ideas for the agenda of the next workshop in the series, and Annex I described some principles that should be used for setting environmental limits.

Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) confirmed that in the light of the outcomes of the second workshop, changes had been made to the draft letter which it was planned would be sent to the European Commission setting out the ASCOBANS position on legislative requirements to address monitoring and mitigating of bycatch. The current draft was among the meeting documents for the Advisory Committee.

5.5 Certification Schemes – Marine Stewardship Council

The Chair reported that he had made contact with the Marine Stewardship Council as requested. The MSC had expressed an interest in exploring collaboration with the bycatch experts active in the context of ASCOBANS.

Yvon Morizur (France) said that a national certification scheme in France was now operating and it covered measures to protect cetaceans. It was managed by FranceAgriMer, the French agricultural agency.

Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) said that on 15 October an event was being held regarding the harbour porpoise in the Netherlands, and the chair of the Benelux MSC would be participating.

5.6 Others

Sinéad Murphy gave a presentation on reproductive failure in marine mammals and the link to PCBs in European waters. Use of PCBs had been phased out in the 1980s but they remained present in the environment, with estimates provided by CLEEN suggesting that as of 2005 1.1 million tons of PCB containing equipment still requiring disposal, with the highest amounts found in France and Spain.

Regarding the general state of health of harbour porpoises in British waters, the population had a low pregnancy rate. The study had sought to establish whether there was a link with PCB levels. Over the period 1990-2012, 329 bycaught and stranded specimens had been examined and the females in the sample had been divided into the following categories: immature, pregnant, lactating or resting. Comparisons were made with other areas: Denmark, Iceland, and the Bay of Fundy.

The level of reproductive failure had been examined, with 19.7% showing evidence of foetal death, newborn death and late miscarriage. Another 16.5 % had infections or tumours of reproductive tract tissues that could have contributed to reproductive failure. Modelling was based on four reliable predictors. Harbour porpoises needed high lipid levels and blubber thickness, and young with low lipid levels needed to feed more regularly. There was no significant interaction between variables (i.e. no knock-on effects).

In UK waters, the reproductive failure rate was 39 per cent (compared with 20 per cent in Sarasota Bay, although the latter was for a different species, bottlenose dolphin).

In females, the underlying state of health was a key factor. It was possible that high levels of PCBs were suppressing the immune system. PCB levels had dropped since the 1980s but had reached a plateau and not fallen further.

The SCANS surveys had been held too far apart to provide any certainty regarding trends, but as current estimates were that there were 375,000 harbour porpoises in western European waters, this suggested some reproductive success. There were, however, little data to provide a baseline for the conservation status of the species with the first population abundance estimate produced from data collected in 1994 (SCANS I). The age profile of the population also seemed to be relatively young whereas a population below carrying capacity would tend to be older. A number of factors were therefore likely to be at play.

Mark Simmonds (HSI) thanked Sinéad Murphy for the presentation, which had indicated that there were other problems as well as bycatch to consider. He said that 1994 should not be the baseline date; the environment was not pristine then, and PCBs were present. It appeared that PCBs might not be the only factor and he asked which other substances might be suspected. The issue had also been addressed at the IWC where Paul Jepson had been mandated to examine it further. PCBs also appeared to be a problem for bottlenose dolphins and killer whales.

Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) said that too little was known about reproduction in small cetaceans and asked what further data were needed to advance the study of this subject. A better idea of the age profile of the populations would be helpful but none of the Parties were

doing surveys of that nature. There was a bias in the samples of animals examined from bycatch because juveniles were more likely to fall victim.

Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that there had been plans to undertake a study under OSPAR and a proposal had been drafted but it had not materialised. It would have looked at pollutants in sediments affecting mussels, shrimps and whiting.

6. Overall Progress in the Implementation of the Conservation Plan

The Chair said that this was where in the past Genéviève Desportes in her capacity as Coordinator had presented a table showing overall implementation of the Conservation Plan. It was agreed that the table should be kept up to date and not present information that was two years old. Now that there was no coordinator to update the table, Parties needed to decide how to proceed.

It was suggested that all Parties should send updates to the Chair so that he could amend the table for inclusion in the report for the year. Mark Simmonds (HSI) noted that when the Coordinator had compiled the data, a degree of impartiality had been incorporated into the process, which he thought would be lacking if the Parties were involved in the editing.

It was noted that the table contained more zeroes (indicating no progress) than threes (indicating full implementation). Mark Simmonds suggested that Parties be asked to provide some justification for changing numbers upwards. Parties were asked to provide updated information to the Chair for him to report to the Advisory Committee. This is summarised in Table 1 on page 25.

7. Calendar of Actions 2015-2016

7.1 Priorities of Action Points of the North Sea Plan

The Action Points from the previous meeting were reviewed. New Action Points were considered concerning a workshop on management and cross-border collaboration, an assessment of the reproductive parameters for the harbour porpoise in the North Sea, and examination of shifting distributions as various datasets were not indicating the same results. Further discussions were held within the margins of the meeting.

7.2 Priorities of the Work Plan for the NSSG

The Chair referred to a number of issues mentioned in the AC21 report such as liaising between the NSG and the Noise Working Group and developing a relationship with the MSC, which he said could be tasks assigned to the Coordinator. There were other tasks which might be suitable for a short-term consultant such as collating information on cetacean life history parameters and diet (although NERC was supporting a 5-year multi-disciplinary project called the Marine Ecosystems Research Programme that included research on top predators, the relationship with lower trophic levels, and an analysis of environmental drivers of cetacean species distribution patterns in North West European waters).

Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) was concerned that the Agreement's limited resources were being spread too thin. There were not sufficient resources to retain a full-time consultant to act as coordinator of the North Sea Group, and now consideration was being given to additional tasks to be assigned to a part-time replacement who was yet to be appointed. He felt that it would be better to agree on clear priorities and focus on those.

7.3 Terms of Reference for a Short-term Consultant

The NSG needed to decide whether it wanted to replace Geneviève Desportes, the former coordinator. If so, the Action Point should be reiterated and efforts made to find the required resources.

Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that following the previous approach, a minimum of €25,000 would be needed per coordinator, preferably with some degree of certainty of funding for subsequent years. An alternative would be to break the role of the coordinator into smaller tasks. She reminded the meeting that the UK had given a voluntary contribution of £5,000 and the Netherlands €5,000. In view of the limited funding, the previous Coordinator, the Chair and the Secretariat had developed draft terms of reference (Doc.7.3) for a self-contained contract with no guarantee of extension. She sought the Group's feedback on the proposal.

Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that having a coordinator had been useful but the status quo of hand-to-mouth funding was sub-optimal and Parties were not offering the voluntary contributions needed to finance the post. He suggested passing the onus to the Parties and ask them in turn to fund the coordinator on a rotational basis, if the ASCOBANS budget could not subsume the post. As there were no items in the ASCOBANS budget that could be cut, this option seemed to be unrealistic. While the Netherlands welcomed this idea, Denmark and France questioned whether it would work in practice. Susanne Viker (Sweden) said that Sweden had originally offered to contribute to funding the post, but the priority now was to follow up on SAMBAH and other national activities that were contributing to the implementation of ASCOBANS.

Sinéad Murphy thought it was better to have a neutral third party as coordinator rather than someone embedded in the national administration of one of the Parties. She recalled the reaction when it was suggested that the table in the report should be updated by the Parties themselves rather than ask the Chair to take the lead. Mark Simmonds (HSI) agreed.

Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) said that a four-month contract was not very attractive and would deter good candidates. The NSG should decide whether it wanted a coordinator or some projects; there was not enough money for both.

Geneviève Desportes pointed out that many of the tasks of the coordinator were not specific to the individual plans so it might be possible to reduce the costs by combining the roles into one. This might also contribute to improving the read across between the three Plans and three Parties, Denmark, Germany and Sweden, who were involved in all three.

Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) saw a potential problem of bottlenecks if all three Plans had deadlines at the same time, and one person was coordinating them all. Meike Scheidat said that the three Plans were at different stages. The Chair did not think these problems were unsurmountable as the various Working Groups were able to liaise and find a way of working together.

Jamie Rendell (United Kingdom) said that it was important to concentrate on a few issues and the Chair sought to reassure the meeting that this was the intention of those who had drafted the terms of reference. He would be happy for the UK voluntary contribution to be spent on the North Sea Plan in some way and not necessarily for funding a Coordinator.

The Group agreed that the TOR provided the best basis upon which to proceed until such time as the funding of the coordinator could be addressed and a more permanent coordinator appointed. It was suggested that noise might be another issue to tackle, but this should be referred to the Noise Working Group and was not a problem specific to the North Sea.

8. Communication

8.1 Relationship with the ICES WGs

Given the number of people dealing with both ASCOBANS and other fora, there were risks of duplication and opportunities for synergies. Jan Haelters (Belgium) said that OSPAR was now jointly working with ICES on seabirds and ensuring cross-representation. ASCOBANS and HELCOM could join in too as there were plans to extend the work to include marine mammals. The ICES WGBYC was likely to become more relevant and this might open the door to fisheries interests, which had long been an aim of ASCOBANS.

Meike Scheidat (Netherlands) suggested compiling a list of committees and fora, and their memberships. Jan Haelters suggested adding a description of each forum's environmental or fisheries characteristics. Finn Larsen (Denmark) sought clarification of the purpose of the exercise given that the ICES bodies were more scientific and the ASCOBANS bodies more related to management and policy. The new bycatch estimates from ICES dating from their February meeting had not even been discussed and these seemed more pertinent to ASCOBANS than deciding who should attend which meeting.

Geneviève Desportes said that cross-representation on other bodies was related to having access to the information presented in other fora.

Jamie Rendell (UK) suggested that care be taken in preparing the agenda of the meeting to ensure that information was not overlooked because of a too slavish adherence to the structure of the previous meeting.

9. Miscellaneous

No business was raised under this agenda item.

10. Next Meeting

Heidrun Frisch (Secretariat) said that since 2016 was a MOP year there would be no AC in conjunction with which to hold the NSG, so a stand-alone meeting would have to be arranged. A spring date could be identified, avoiding a clash with the Jastarnia Group, which would be meeting in Poland at a date yet to be decided. With regard to next year's venue, Bonn was suggested as it was central and convenient.

Heidrun Frisch further sought general guidance from the meeting regarding the most appropriate timing for NSG meetings and whether holding them back-to-back with the AC might be a good idea. One disadvantage was that there was no time to prepare the report before the outcomes of the meeting were being discussed at the AC.

Jeroen Vis (Netherlands) raised the question of the products and audience of the meeting and how to improve the message and increase the NSG's influence in shaping policy.

11. Close

After the customary expressions of gratitude to all those who had contributed to the success of the meeting, particularly to Robert Vagg who acted as rapporteur, the Chair declared business closed.

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Agenda

- 1 Welcome and announcements
 - 1.1 Adoption of agenda
 - 1.2 Appointment of rapporteur
- 2 Minutes of the 4th NSSG meeting, 28 September 2014, Gothenburg, Sweden
- 3 Implementation Review: Bycatch estimation (Actions 3 and 4)
 - 3.1 New information on bycatch estimates (as reported to ICES WGBYC)
 - 3.2 Monitoring projects
 - 3.2.1 Remote Electronic Monitoring projects
 - 3.2.1.1 Update on Danish REM projects
 - 3.2.1.2 Update on Dutch REM project
 - 3.2.1.3 Update on any other REM projects
 - 3.2.2 Other monitoring projects
 - 3.2.2.1 Update on the Danish monitoring project in recreational fisheries
 - 3.2.3 Synthesis of bycatch information from French set nets between 2008-2013, with focus upon the North Sea – any new information?
 - 3.3 Voluntary reporting
 - 3.4 Assessment of bycatch in the North Sea – knowledge gaps
 - 3.4.1 Missing fisheries
 - 3.4.1.1 Update on bycatch situation in the southern North Sea and Channel (ICES Areas IVc, VIId, VIIe)
 - 3.4.2 Other matters
 - 3.5 Identification of bycatch – conclusions of necropsy protocols workshop
 - 3.6 Recommendations
- 4 Implementation review: Development of alternative mitigation methods (Action 5)
 - 4.1 Update on the German PAL project and the alternative and ecosystem-friendly fishing gear project
 - 4.2 Update on Dutch projects (Banana pinger+)
 - 4.3 Update on UK projects
 - 4.4 Update on changes in fishing procedures (France, the Netherlands, any others?)
- 5 Other activities contributing to the conservation of the harbour porpoise in the North Sea:
 - 5.1 EU Habitats Directive:
 - 5.1.1 Review of North Sea SCIs/SACs concerning harbour porpoises
 - 5.1.2 Progress in designing conservation objectives, management plans and conservation measures for harbour porpoises in Natura 2000 areas
 - 5.2 New Surveys – monitoring trends in distribution & abundance (Action 7)
 - 5.3 Update on MSFD and marine mammal indicators

- 5.4 Update on Workshops relating to safe bycatch limits for harbour porpoises
- 5.5 Certification schemes – Marine Stewardship Council
- 5.6 Others
- 6 Overall progress in the implementation of the Conservation Plan
- 7 Calendar of Actions 2015-2016
 - 7.1 Priorities of action points of the North Sea Plan
 - 7.2 Priorities of the Work Plan for the NSSG
 - 7.3 Terms of Reference for a short-term Consultant
- 8 Communication
 - 8.1 Relationship with the ICES WGs
- 9 Miscellaneous
- 10 Next SG meeting
- 11 Close

Action Points

- 1) The NSSG reiterates the need for resources to employ a coordinator for the North Sea Harbour Porpoise Conservation Plan.
- 2) A workshop at ECS in conjunction with ASCOBANS (and ACCOBAMS) is proposed, addressing issues relating to the management that provide better synergies with the various existing European legislative frameworks. Terms of Reference have been prepared for consideration by the AC (see Annex 4).
- 3) There is a need for much more extensive monitoring coverage than exists at present mainly for the fishing fleets suspected of causing porpoise bycatch. Areas to specially consider include the eastern Channel and southernmost North Sea where porpoise have returned in recent years after an absence thought to result from historical bycatch issues. Densities in this region of the North Sea have been reported in recent years as high compared to other parts of the North Sea, in late winter to early summer.
- 4) The circumstances surrounding bycatch events should be examined in more detail to better understand factors affecting observed variation in bycatch levels. This should utilise information from various sources, including, for example, REM or observer monitoring results, survey results, and telemetry studies.
- 5) 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.
- 6) There should be 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.
- 7) Attention should be paid to recreational fisheries where there is suspected bycatch, as well as to vessels of 12 metres length and below.
- 8) The existing Data Collection Framework (DCF) 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.
- 9) There is a need for stronger involvement of relevant fishing organisations. 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) All Member States should ensure that annual reports on Regulation 812/2004 are available to the public with the appropriate web links provided in their national reports to ASCOBANS.
- 12) 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. At present, the Working Group's annual bycatch estimates frequently have to work with incomplete monitoring data.
- 13) Liaison between the North Sea Group and the Noise Working Group should be encouraged in order to advance work on "policy and management" strategies.

- 14) Cross-border collaboration is recommended to synthesise different lines of evidence to compare spatio-temporal trends in porpoise distribution across the North Sea.
- 15) 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.

ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS/ECS Workshop Draft ToR

Working Title:

Conserving Europe's cetaceans through synergy-building between the relevant legislative frameworks

Rationale: Cetacean conservation in Europe is both mandated and mediated via a number of legal requirements and Agreement obligations, including *inter alia* ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, OSPAR, CFP (and other fisheries measures) and the Habitats and Species, Marine Spatial Planning and Marine Strategy Framework Directives. Overlaps between these frameworks have not been critically assessed and this workshop will seek to explore this and identify scientifically sound synergies in order to take forward cetacean conservation in an integrated and effective manner.

The overarching aim of the Habitats & Species Directive is to achieve favourable conservation status for all listed species and habitats. This includes strict protection measures throughout European waters for all cetaceans and, where suitable sites can be identified, requires EU Member States to establish marine protected areas (Natura 2000 sites) for certain marine mammal species. However, there are challenges to spatial management for highly mobile species such as marine mammals, and this workshop will attempt to address ways to integrate both issue-based and area-based conservation measures.

Proposed Participants

Representatives from the European Commission
OSPAR leads on indicator M4 and M6
ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS and CMS Representatives
Marine Mammal Scientists
Policy Implementation Experts/managers
Appropriate Experts in International Law

Draft Agenda

Review of legal requirements, implementation, compliance and identification of key overlaps
Review of actions being progressed under different auspices
Review of approaches to protecting cetaceans by reduction of stressors, marine spatial planning and/or protected areas

- Interpretation of key threats and mitigations (i.e. Fisheries-related, marine noise and chemical pollution, habitat-related) - management measures and challenges
- Cumulative concerns - management measures and challenges
- Data gaps and challenges

Examination of the best ways to integrate area-based and issue-based conservation measures
Recommendations –

- Identification and enhancement of synergies
- Messages to relevant fora

Summary of Progress in the Implementation of the North Sea Harbour Porpoise Conservation Plan (updated Sept 2015)

Except for Action 2, ref. pinger use: na = not applicable; -1, situation is less good than at the adoption of the plan in 2009, 0 = no progress, 1 = small progress or at experimental level; 2, steady progress; 3, fully implemented

Actions form the North Sea Conservation Plan for HP		Priority		SE	DK	DE	NL	BE	FR	UK
1	Implementation of the CP: co-ordinator and Steering Committee	High		No Coordinator at present!						
2	Implementation of existing regulations on bycatch of cetaceans - e.g. EC 812/2004 & Habitat Directive (HD) (* Table 1ab, ICES WGBYC 2012)	High	Vessels requiring pingers	0	14	yes?	yes?	1?	90	6-8
			No. of vessels using pingers	?	?	>3	0	0	>9	6-8
			Enforcement policy	0	?	?	na	na	na	3
			Dedicated observer prog	0	0	0	0	0	(yes)	yes
			Monitoring under HD	0	0	0	0	1	yes	yes
3	Establishment of BYC observation programmes on vessel smaller than 15m long, professional and recreational fisheries	High	Professional	0	1	0	2	0	2	2
			Recreational	0	1	na	0	0	1?	na
4	Regular evaluation of relevant fisheries, extent of HP BYC: Gillnet fisheries =>15m vessels, dedicated, % DAS observed Gillnet fisheries <15m vessels, dedicated, % DAS observed Cetacean scheme appended to DCF / DCR schemes DCF observations in 2014 in NS, % DAS observed	High		0	0	0	0	0	0	1
				0	0	0	0	0	14%	18%
				0	0.2	0	REM	0	0.7	0.33
				no	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
				0	0.76	0	0	0	na	9.4
5	Review of current pingers, dev. of altern.pingers and gear modif.	High		2	2	2	2	na	1	2
6	Finalise a management procedure approach for determining maximum allowable byctch limits	High		General progress SCANS II & WGMME, WGBYC						
7	Monitoring trends in distribution and abundance of HP in NS	High	Large scale	SCANS III in planning stage						
			Reg/survey	0	SACs	3	3	3	1	1
			Reg/modelling	0	0	2	1	0	0	2
8	Review of the stock structure of HP in NS	High		0	1	1	0	0	1	1
9	Collection of incidental HP data through stranding networks	Medium		1	0	0	2	3	1	3
10	Investigation of the health, nutritional status and diet of HP in NS	Medium		0	2	2	2	2	1	3
11	Investigation of the effects of anthropogenic sounds on HP	Medium		0	2	3	2	2	1	3
12	Collection and archiving of data on anthropogenic activities and development of a GIS	Medium		0	0	1	1	1	0	2