

## Report of the 1st meeting of the Steering Group for the Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise in the North Sea

Date: Wednesday 4 May 2011, 7 PM - 8 PM

Location: UN Campus, Bonn

Present: Sami Hassani, Jan Haelters, Karl-Hermann Kock, Folchert Van Dijken, Sara Königson, Joop Coolen, Sara Königson, Eunice Pinn, Yvon Morizur, Mark Simmonds, Alison Wood, Russell Leaper, Maj Munk, Oliver Schall, James Gray, Peter Evans, Carola Kaltofen (notes), Marije Siemensma (chair).

Apologies: Martine van den Heuvel-Greve (interim-chair), Dirk Verhaeghe, Marjan Addink

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At the AC18 meeting in Bonn, 4-6 May 2010, the 'Steering Group for the Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise in the North Sea' had its 1st meeting after the establishment of this Steering Group. Marije Siemensma (Netherlands) represented the interim-chair Martine Van den Heuvel-Greve for this meeting.

### 1) Activity report October 2010 – April 2011

- The SG accepted the report on the activities from October 2010-2011.
- New North Sea SG members (see table at the end of this document)
  - o New members of the SG are Maj Munk (Denmark), Yvon Morizur (France), Oliver Schall (Germany), Alison Wood (WDCS), Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) and Russell Leaper (consultant).
  - o The group felt that it would be useful to invite other representatives, particularly fisheries representatives as members of the SG. The SG suggests to:
    - Ask Elizabeth Guttenstein (European Commission) about contacts to relevant organisations. **(AP01)**
    - Learn from the experiences of the Jastarnia Group.
    - Ask regional advisory council (RAC) secretary to send a representative. **(AP02)**
  - o The issue of providing fund to representatives of fisheries organisations was raised. The chair will contact the secretariat on behalf of this issue and ask for funding options. **(AP03)**. It should be noted, however, that attendance of the North Sea SG meetings is possibly also in the interest of invited representatives

### 2) Selection of chair of SG

The Netherlands expressed the offer to continue acting as the chair of this SG in the person of Martine van den Heuvel-Greve. The SG reached general agreement to this offer.

### 3) Activity calendar 2011

The North Sea SG discussed which activities it wants to start this year. The identified tasks as described in the ToR and the report of the North-Sea coordinators serves as guidance for future activities.

The SG identified four action points:

1. Each country should conduct and submit an inventory on the activities in regard to Harbour porpoise conservation in the North Sea, identifying the key persons involved. It was agreed that

the 12 action points as identified in the ASCOBANS Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena* L.) as adopted at the 16th Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS (2009) (Document AC16/Doc.21 (WG)) will serve as the format for the inventory. **(AP04)**. These briefly involve:

1. Implementation of the Conservation Plan: co-ordinator and Steering Committee;
  2. Implementation of existing regulations on bycatch of cetaceans;
  3. Establishment of bycatch observation programmes on small vessel (<15m) and recreational;
  4. Regular evaluation of all fisheries with respect to extent of harbour porpoise bycatch;
  5. Review of current pingers, development of alternative pingers and gear modifications;
  6. Finalise a management procedure approach for determining maximum allowable bycatch limits in the region;
  7. Monitoring trends in distribution and abundance of harbour porpoises in the region;
  8. Review of the stock structure of harbour porpoises in the region;
  9. Collection of incidental porpoise catch data through stranding networks;
  10. Investigation of the health, nutritional status and diet of harbour porpoises in the region;
  11. Investigation of the effects of anthropogenic sounds on harbour porpoises;
  12. Collection and archiving of data on anthropogenic activities and development of a GIS.
2. The New North Sea Plan Coordinator will be asked to attend the NSRAC meeting in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France October 10<sup>th</sup>, 11th, 2011.
- The chair of the SG will initiate contact to the NS RAC and announce the attendance and ensure the option for a ca. 15 minutes presentation to the meeting participants. **(AP05)**
3. The new North Sea coordinator will be asked to prepare a paper that highlights the aspects of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) relevant for the NS SG, take into account on-going national work. **(AP06)**
- The NS SG shall give guidance to the coordinator **(AP07)**. This paper shall help parties to prepare National Strategies of Implementation of the MSFD that would then also include the objectives of the ASCOBANS North Sea Plan.
4. Parties shall assist the new coordinator to reach relevant organisations, particularly fisheries, also including those operating small boats and inshore, e.g. by providing information on meetings and contacts details.

The SG agreed on a deadline for the above-mentioned actions, which is set to December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Information will be sent to the new North Sea coordinator (with a CC to the chair of the SG).

#### **4) Next SG meeting**

The SG agreed to have the next meeting back to back with the AC, lasting 0.5 days. In the intervening time, inter-sessional correspondence will be used to progress the work of the SG.

Two suggestions which need to be further discussed and decided upon inter-sessional:

- 1.) Associate next SG meeting with the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee meeting and to schedule it 0.5 day before the start of the next AC meeting. This would potentially motivate fisheries organisations to attend both the SG and the AC meeting.
- 2.) Choose a location of a venue that facilitates fisheries' involvement (e.g. Brussels).

The chair will contact Heidrun/Secretariat on this regard (**AP08**)

## **5) SG recommendation for position of coordinator North Sea Plan**

(Marije Siemensma was substituted as chair by Jan Haelters)

The SG, on request of the Secretariat, came up with a joint recommendation to the Secretariat on their preferences with a short explanation of the rationale. The Secretariat will take the preferences into account and make the final decision, as the use of UNEP funds can only be decided upon by a UNEP Secretariat.

## **6) Closure**

Jan closed the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the North Sea Steering Group.

### **Action points**

**AP01** – The chair of the SG will contact Elizabeth Guttenstein (European Commission) about contacts to relevant organisations to participate in the North Sea SG.

**AP02** – The chair of the SG invites the regional advisory council (RAC) secretary to send a representative.

**AP03** - The chair will contact the secretariat for possibilities for funding industry representatives to attend a SG meeting.

**AP04** - Each country will conduct and submit an inventory on the activities in regard to Harbour porpoise conservation in the North Sea, identifying the key persons involved. Format will be guided by the 12 action points identified in the North Sea Action Plan (deadline December 20<sup>th</sup> 2011, to be submitted to the new North Sea coordinator with a CC to the chair of the SG)

**AP05** – The chair of the SG will ask the new North Sea Plan Coordinator to attend the NSRAC meeting in France, Boulogne- sur-Mer, France, October 10-11 2011. The chair of the SG will initiate contact to the NS RAC and announce the attendance and ensure the option for a ca. 15 minutes presentation to the meeting participants.

**AP06** - The New North Sea coordinator will be asked to prepare a paper that highlights the aspects of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) relevant for the NS SG.

**AP07** - SG shall give guidance to the coordinator in preparing the paper as mentioned under AP06.

**AP08** - The chair will contact the Secretariat on the options to have a SG and AC meeting at a venue that facilitates fisheries' involvement.

## Members of the Steering Group for the Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise in the North Sea

| Name                         | Organization / Affiliation   | Representative of North Sea State | Environmental NGO | Fisheries Organization |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Marjan Addink                | Netherlands Centre for Biodiversity Naturalis, Leiden                        |                                   | X (NL)            |                        |
| Joop Coolen                  | North Sea Foundation   |                                   | X (NL)            |                        |
| Folchert Van Dijken          | Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation                     | X (NL)                            |                   |                        |
| Peter Evans                  | ECS/Sea Watch Foundation   |                                   | X (UK)            |                        |
| James Gray                   | DEFRA  | X (UK)                            |                   |                        |
| Jan Haelters                 | Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences                                  | X (Bel)                           |                   |                        |
| Sami Hassani                 | Oceanopolis  | X (Fr)                            |                   |                        |
| Karl-Hermann Kock            | Institut für Seefischerei  | X (Ger)                           |                   |                        |
| Martine Van den Heuvel-Greve | IMARES Wageningen UR   | X (NL) (chair)                    |                   |                        |
| Sara Königson                | Swedish Board of Fisheries   | X (Swed)                          |                   |                        |
| Russell Leaper               | Consultant   |                                   | X (UK)            |                        |
| Yvon Morizur                 | IFREMER  | X (Fr)                            |                   |                        |
| Maj Munk                     | The Danish Forest and Nature Agency  | X (DK)                            |                   |                        |
| Eunice Pinn                  | Joint Nature Conservation Committee  | X (UK)                            |                   |                        |
| Oliver Schall                | Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety | X (Ger)                           |                   |                        |
| Marije Siemensma             | Marine Science & Communication   | X (NL)                            |                   |                        |
| Dirk Verhaeghe               | ILVO (technical dept.)   | X (Bel)                           |                   |                        |
| Alison Wood                  | WDCS   |                                   | X (UK)            |                        |