

Resolution No. 11:

CMS Family Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessments for Marine Noise-generating Activities

Mindful that Parties to CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS have in several resolutions recognized underwater noise as a major threat to many marine species;

Recalling that the Conservation and Management Plan annexed to the Agreement stipulates that ASCOBANS work towards “the prevention of other significant disturbance, especially of an acoustic nature”;

Further recalling Resolution No. 2 of MOP6 on Adverse Effects of Underwater Noise on Marine Mammals during Offshore Construction Activities for Renewable Energy Production and Resolution No. 4 of MOP5 on Adverse Effects of Sound, Vessels and Other Forms of Disturbance on Small Cetaceans;

Also recalling related decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties to CMS, in particular Resolution 9.19 on Adverse Anthropogenic Marine/Ocean Noise Impacts on Cetaceans and other Biota, and Resolution 10.24 on Further Steps to Abate Underwater Noise Pollution for the Protection of Cetaceans and Other Migratory Species;

Noting related decisions adopted by the Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS, in particular Resolution 4.17 on Guidelines to Address the Impact of Anthropogenic Noise on Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area, and Resolution 5.15 on Addressing the Impact of Anthropogenic Noise;

Aware that these resolutions also call for noise-related considerations to be already taken into account in the planning stages of activities, especially by making effective use of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA);

Reaffirming that the difficulty of proving detrimental effects of acoustic disturbance on cetaceans necessitates a precautionary approach in dealing with this issue;

Grateful to the Principality of Monaco for providing funds for the development of these guidelines for the CMS Family under the Migratory Species Champion Programme, and to OceanCare for co-funding the project;

Expressing thanks to the experts that contributed to the development of this document, as well as to focal points and members of the scientific advisory bodies and working groups of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS that provided input and comments;

Recognizing that anthropogenic marine noise affects many species, and that the adoption of guidelines for environmental impact assessments for marine noise-generating activities would benefit a number of CMS species, including cetaceans, pinnipeds, marine turtles and sharks;

Noting also other related resolutions adopted at this meeting, in particular Resolution No. 6 on Ocean Energy, Resolution No. 8 on Addressing the Threats from Underwater Munitions and Resolution No. 9 on Managing Cumulative Anthropogenic Impacts in the Marine Environment;

The Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS

1. *Notes and welcomes* the progress on the “CMS Family Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessments for Marine Noise-generating Activities” presented in ASCOBANS/MOP8/Doc.6.2.7.b;
2. *Agrees* that there is a need for further updates to the document and *invites* CMS to establish a process allowing Parties to CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS and Signatories to relevant Memoranda of Understanding to contribute further to the document’s development;
3. *Recognizes* the broad scope of the guidelines and therefore *invites* CMS to consider the adoption of revised “CMS Family Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessments for Marine Noise-generating Activities” at the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
4. *Recognizes* that the work done in relation to underwater noise is rapidly evolving, and *invites* the CMS Scientific Council, in collaboration with the Joint Noise Working Group of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS, to review and update such guidelines regularly, as appropriate;
5. *Invites* the private sector and other stakeholders to take note of the development of these draft guidelines in assessing, mitigating and minimizing the negative effects of sound on marine species;
6. *Welcomes* the efforts of the private sector and other stakeholders to reduce anthropogenic noise in the marine environment and *strongly encourages* them to continue making this a priority;
7. *Requests* the Advisory Committee, supported by the Joint Noise Working Group of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS, to continue monitoring new available information on the effects of underwater noise on cetaceans and their prey species, as well as the effective assessment and management of this threat, and to make recommendations to Parties as appropriate; and
8. *Requests* the Advisory Committee, supported by the Joint Noise Working Group of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS, to engage and collaborate with other relevant bodies considering anthropogenic noise, including the IWC, ICES, HELCOM and OSPAR.