



**2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Joint Bycatch Working Group**  
**Online, 5-6 February 2025**



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**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
**OF THE JOINT BYCATCH WORKING GROUP OF ACCOBAMS AND ASCOBANS**

*(Prepared by the Secretariats)*

The Secretariats are proposing small amendments to the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Joint Bycatch Working Group. The Meeting is requested to review and agree on the amendments in Annex 1 to this document, and assess whether further amendments are necessary. Any changes are subject to endorsement of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE  
OF THE JOINT BYCATCH WORKING GROUP OF ACCOBAMS AND ASCOBANS

(NB. Proposed new text is underlined. Text to be deleted is ~~crossed out~~.)

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A JOINT BYCATCH WORKING GROUP  
OF ACCOBAMS AND ASCOBANS**

**Joint Bycatch Working Group composition**

This Working Group will be comprised of members and observers of the scientific and advisory bodies of ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS. ~~The current ASCOBANS Bycatch Working Group will cease to exist once the Joint Working Group is established.~~ In the interest of generating the best possible advice for Parties, the working group may decide that it is necessary to add additional group members. External experts (including those from non-Party Range States) may be added with the agreement of the Secretariats and the Co-Chairs.

The Group will nominate and elect two Co-Chairs from among the members, advisers as well as observers of the advisory bodies of ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS. The combined expertise of the Co-Chairs should cover the ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS areas. In line with the practice in many other working groups, the Co-Chairs will serve for a term of three years, after which an election will be called. The Co-Chairs are eligible for re-election.

**Joint Bycatch Working Group modus operandi**

The Working Group will generally operate by MS Teams using the ~~“ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Workspace”~~ ([workspace.ascobans.org](https://workspace.ascobans.org)), virtual calls, and email correspondence ~~for its discussions.~~ Where appropriate (and funding permitting) face-to-face meetings may take place and some tasks may be contracted out.

**Joint Bycatch Working Group tasks**

The Working Group will address the mandates of relevant Resolutions of the two organizations, such as ACCOBAMS Res 2.12, ACCOBAMS Res 2.13, ACCOBAMS Res 2.21, ACCOBAMS Res A/3.1, ACCOBAMS Res 3.8, ACCOBAMS Res 4.9, ACCOBAMS Res 6.16, ACCOBAMS Res 8.16, ASCOBANS Res.8.5 (Rev.MOP9), ASCOBANS Res.5.5 and ASCOBANS Res.3.3, as well as any relevant Resolutions still to be passed, and requests from the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.

It will present reports on progress and new information relevant to the respective region ~~to~~ at each meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, as appropriate. In providing its advice, the working group will liaise as necessary with other relevant bodies and fora, including working groups of the two Agreements, the CMS Bycatch Councillor, the ICES Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species, the IWC Scientific Committee, the IWC bycatch initiative, HELCOM, OSPAR, FOMLR - Advisory Group on the Environmental Aspects of the Management of Fisheries and other Marine Living Resources (Black Sea Commission), NAMMCO, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and NGOs active in the field.

With respect to the areas and species covered by the agreements, the working group is asked to:

- 1) collate and prepare an overview of scientific information<sup>1</sup> relevant to bycatch of affected cetacean species,
- 2) review available information on IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing, recreational fishing, identification of bycatch risk areas, fishing techniques and gears applied in both agreement areas related to bycatch;
- 3) contribute to the assessment process of the EU-MSFD criteria and/or UNEP-MAP Barcelona Convention System (EcAp/IMAP, QSR), and associated targets;
- 4) review and provide updates on bycatch mitigation measures currently available or under development and their effectiveness, using existing sources;
- 5) prepare an overview of national and international legislation and other measures relevant to the monitoring and management of cetacean bycatch, and include an overview of actions taken to deliver on ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS obligations;
- 6) prepare, as appropriate, and in coordination with ICES WGBYC, advice on:
  - a. target setting including potential conservation and user objectives<sup>2</sup>, in accordance with the policies of the two Agreements;
  - b. monitoring cetacean bycatch and fishing operations;
- 7) provide technical support as required to facilitate dialogue with relevant bodies that have certification schemes, such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), by actively contributing to the assessment of relevant fisheries with respect to cetacean bycatch;
- 8) comment on requests for information or advice received through the Secretariats;
- 9) report back to ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and ASCOBANS Advisory Committee meetings, and where appropriate provide input intersessionally to other relevant meetings or working groups under the two agreements.

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<sup>1</sup> Related to abundance and management units, including population dynamics.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Hall, M.A. and Donovan, G.P. 2001. Environmentalists, Fishermen, Cetaceans and Fish: Is There a Balance and Can Science Help to Find it? Chapter 14, pp. 491-521 In: Marine mammals: biology and conservation Eds PGH Evans and J.A Raga. Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York.