

List of Recommendations from AC25

General

1. All Parties and Range States are encouraged to collate information on threats to cetaceans in their countries.

Cetacean Watching Industry

2. Parties are encouraged to implement appropriate codes of conduct and keep a log of cases of harassment/disturbance as reported to regional or national authorities.
3. Parties are encouraged to promote and make use of the IWC-CMS Whale Watching Handbook nationally and are invited to submit case studies on country profiles for the Handbook.

Recreational Sea Use

4. Recreational sea use is poorly mapped across the Agreement Area, and therefore, Parties are encouraged to work towards collecting information wherever risks exist or are highly probable for small cetaceans.
5. Parties are encouraged to keep a log of cases of harassment/disturbance due to recreational sea use and cetacean watching industry as reported to regional or national authorities. Since at the regional level, many different management bodies may be involved, it is important there is good communication across all sector
6. National guidelines/codes of conduct should be developed for all Parties. They could be incorporated within guidelines for commercial cetacean watching, but recreational sea users represent a much wider and more heterogeneous target group and so may require greater effort on education and outreach. These would be then used to aim towards future common protocols.

Pollution and hazardous substances

7. Parties are encouraged to collaborate to monitor pollutants in cetaceans, where possible in existing international fora, such as OSPAR, to ensure that the key pollutants are monitored, particularly persistent legacy pollutants, and to initiate screening for emerging pollutants including those identified as endocrine disrupting pollutants.
8. Parties are encouraged to collaborate to monitor pathogens in cetaceans and ensure that the key pathogens are monitored.

Ship Strikes

9. Information on ship strikes with regard to small cetaceans remains scarce. Therefore, the AC recommends Parties to collect data so as to identify high risk areas for ship strikes.

Climate Change

9. Noting that climate change effects on small cetaceans are not fully understood, Parties are encouraged to gather evidence and/or support research on distinguishing effects of climate change from those of other drivers considering the scales at which different pressures act.

10. Parties should consider cumulative impacts of all threats, including climate change, noting that it may be difficult to mitigate specifically against climate change effects.

Physical Habitat Change

11. Parties are encouraged to ensure that early in the process of drafting maritime spatial plans, the impact of cumulative effects of various physical habitat changes, together with other pressures on the small cetaceans is duly taken into account in order to effectively contribute to an ecosystem-based approach.

Use of bycatches and strandings

12. The Advisory Committee recommends further work in developing best practice on identifying causes of death in stranded cetaceans.
13. Parties are encouraged to establish long-term strandings networks, where networks do not exist yet and when feasible, that provide an adequate coverage of their coastlines and result in complete datasets, and to liaise with existing networks and the IWC strandings initiative for assistance.

Bycatch

14. Parties are encouraged to liaise with OSPAR, HELCOM, and other relevant organizations (including Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, Regional Coordination Groups, Advisory Councils for fisheries), on communicating relevant information and recommendations coming from the Joint OSPAR-HELCOM workshops to examine possibilities for developing indicators for incidental bycatch of birds and marine mammals.
15. Given the many uncertainties around the use of PALs, the Advisory Committee recommends Schleswig-Holstein and the German Government to conduct monitoring and research into this issue, including the assessment of their efficacy in mitigating Harbour Porpoise bycatch.

Harbour Porpoise

16. The Advisory Committee would be pleased to work with CMS and its Scientific Council and ACCOBAMS and its Scientific Committee to help identify and refine further measures, including concerted actions, for the Harbour Porpoise.

Lagenorhynchus species

17. Parties are encouraged to consider including White-beaked Dolphins and Atlantic White-sided Dolphins as priority species for strandings investigations. Analysis of the current samples archive is encouraged, in particular from networks at the margins of current distribution and for historical samples. Emphasis of value in collaboration/data sharing between strandings networks would enable a wider, ecosystem approach to any analysis.

Beaked Whales

18. The Advisory Committee recommends that applying the precautionary principle is of greater importance with Beaked Whales, as compared with other small cetaceans. Given the likelihood of small population sizes in Beaked Whales, and the overwhelming evidence that military activities can have severe impacts on these taxa, and acknowledging the difficulties encountered in gaining reliable information.