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Marine Spatial Planning: why it matters for small cetaceans

ASCOBANS AC26, 8th November 2021

Prof.Dr. Aline Kühl-Stenzel, Policy Officer Marine Conservation

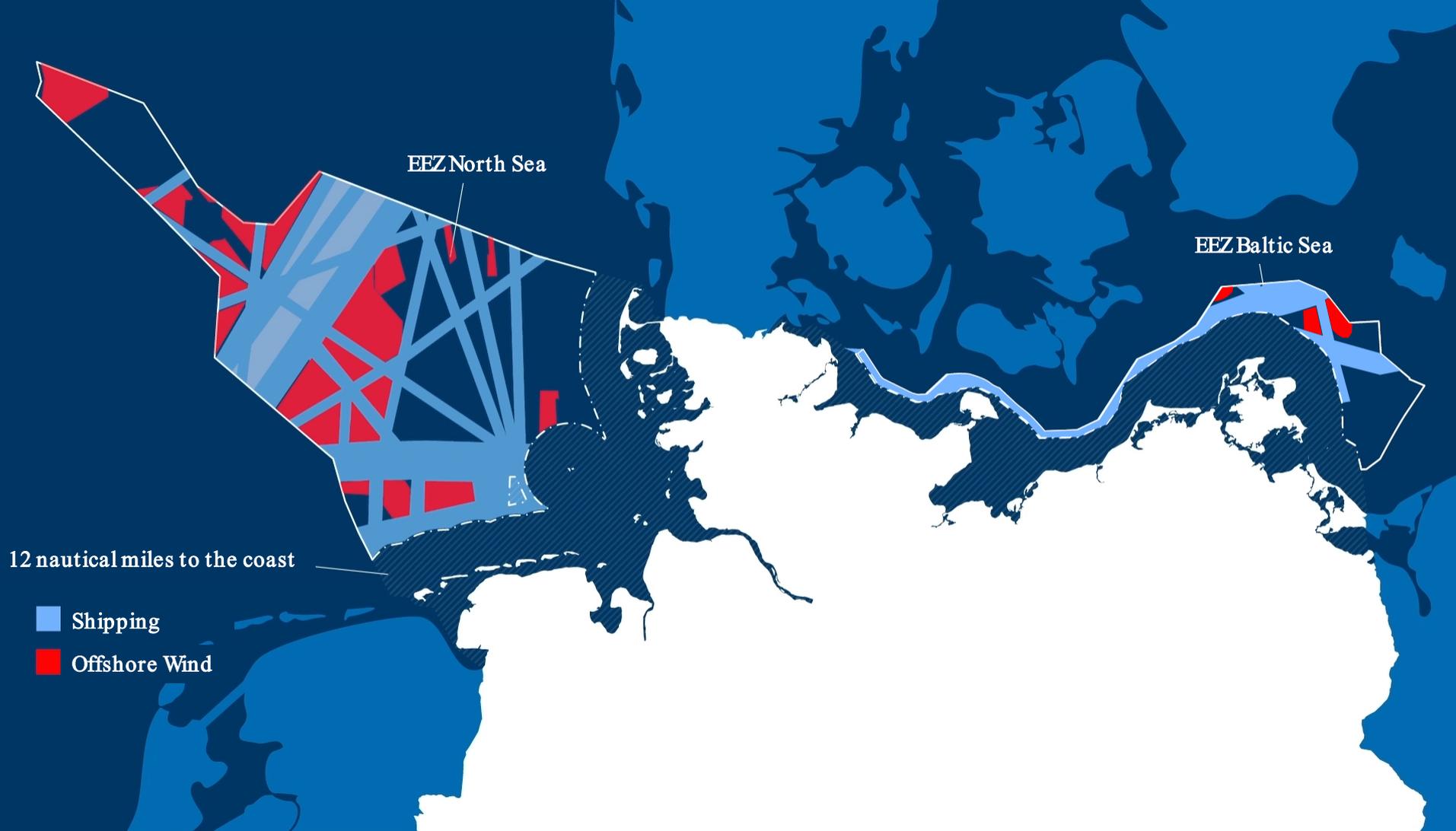


EEZ North Sea

EEZ Baltic Sea

12 nautical miles to the coast

■ Shipping



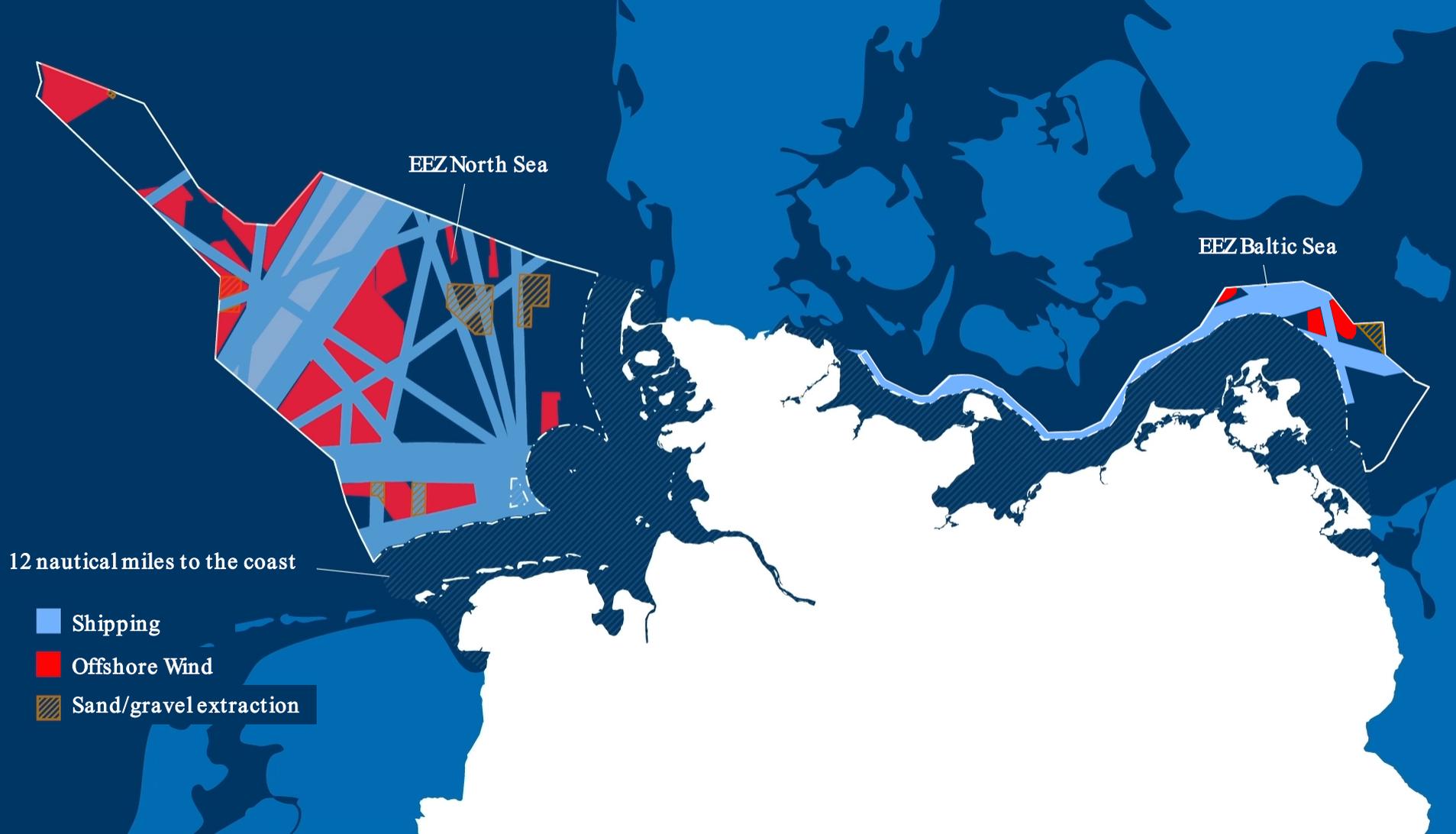
EEZ North Sea

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12 nautical miles to the coast

Shipping

Offshore Wind





EEZ North Sea

EEZ Baltic Sea

12 nautical miles to the coast

- Shipping
- Offshore Wind
- Sand/gravel extraction
- Marine Protected Area

**Ultimate aim:
Good Environmental
Status**

Overview

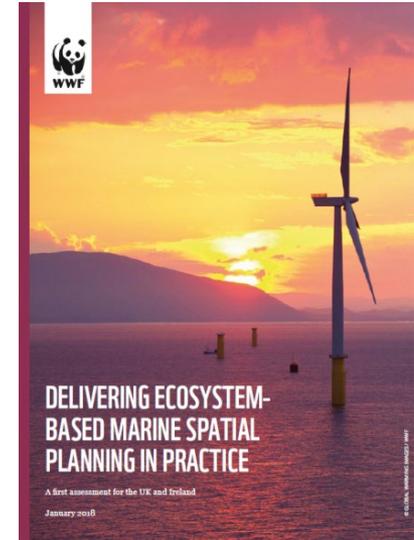
- 1) Overview Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)
- 2) Cetacean-friendly MSP
- 3) Recommendations

Useful background: Penina Blankett's presentation on MSP @ AC23 (2017)
(<https://www.ascobans.org/en/document/marine-spatial-planning>)

Status MSP by Party

Party	MSP (EEZ) finalised
Belgium	Finalised MSP (2020-2026)
Denmark	In evaluation (1st MSP)
Finland	Finalised (2020-2030)
France	Not fully finalised, step-by-step approach
Germany	2nd MSP (1st Sept)
Lithuania	In revision (1st MSP)
Netherlands	3rd MSP in preparation (2022-2027)
Poland	Adopted April 2021
Sweden	Final plans not yet adopted (late 2021?)
UK	Separate plans (England East, South, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales)

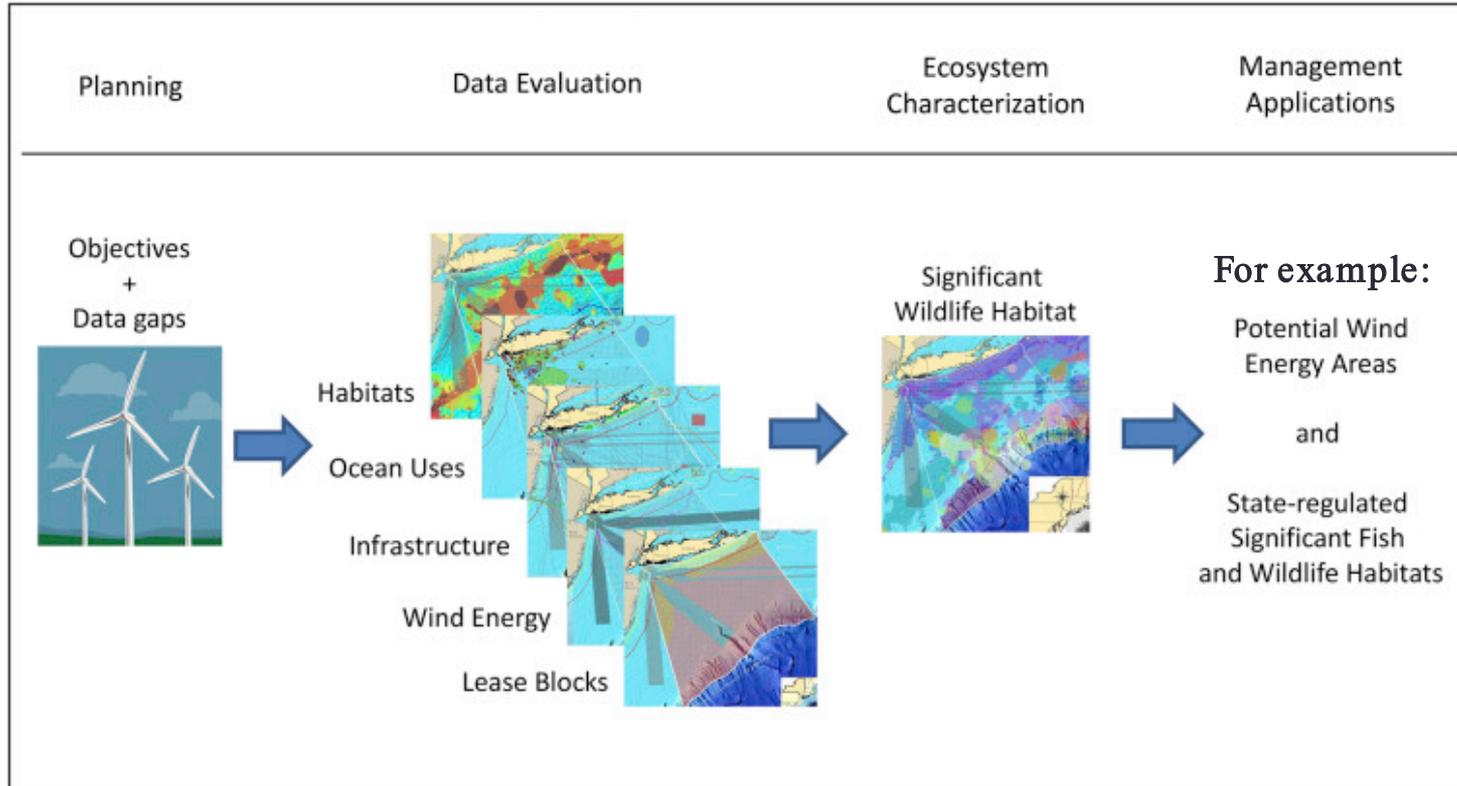
Evaluations on national MSPs are coming from BirdLife and WWF



How does Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) work in practice?



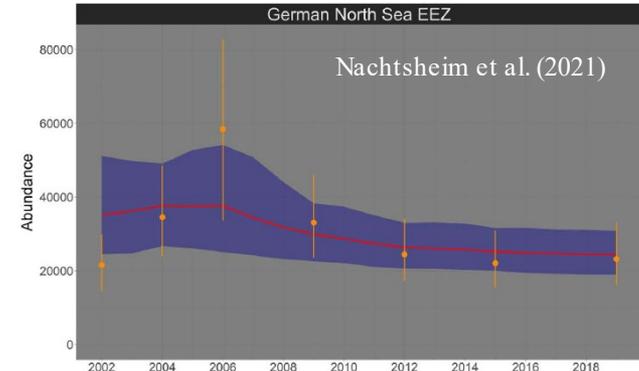
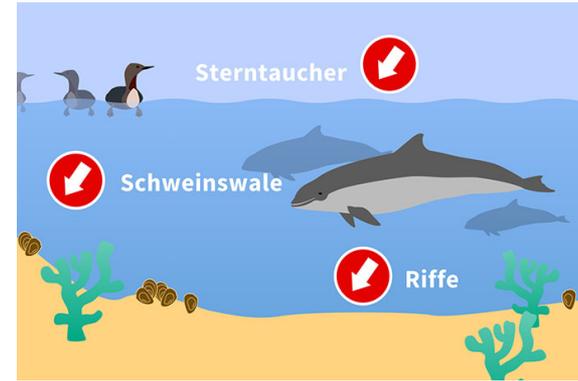
Spatial/temporal distributions of cetaceans should feed into MSP, but also threat-specific sensitivities + precaution



Need to recognize how far we are from „Good Environmental Status“

- IPCC ocean report (2019): acceleration of changes throughout marine ecosystem, poor prognosis (e.g. ocean warming)
- IPBES report (2019): global biodiversity crisis
- EU Commission report on the state of nature (October 2020): Baltic and North Seas not reaching GES
- National example:
 - Harbour porpoises (Baltic proper, but North Sea decline 2002-2019 is also of concern)

➔ **MSP needs to take the pressure out of our marine ecosystem accordingly.**

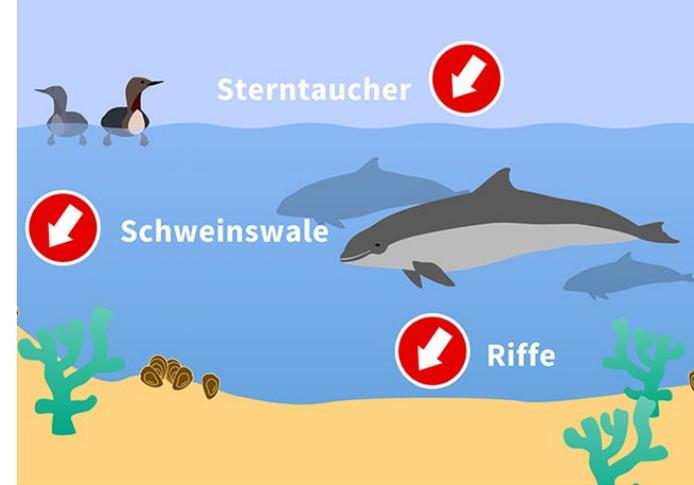


How cetacean-friendly are national MSPs?

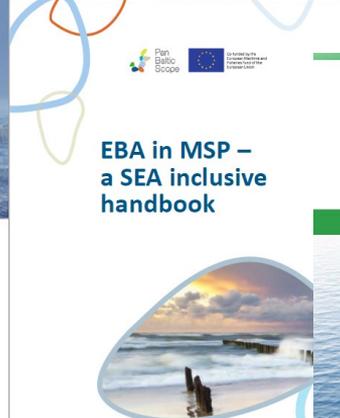


Checklist for cetacean-friendly MSP (not exclusive)

- 1) Application of the **ecosystem-based approach**
- 2) Zonation and rights of different sectors should reflect needs of cetaceans: **avoid conflict!**
 - MPAusage
 - Check individual sectors
- 3) Species-specific **zonation** and management of cetaceans
- 4) Ecological **coherence** across the ocean basin



Step 1: Application of the ecosystem-based approach in MSP



Adopted by the 72nd meeting of VASAB CSPD/BSR on 8 June 2016 and approved by HELCOM HOD 50-2016 on 15-16 June 2016.

Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area

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1. Introduction

This paper presents non-binding guidance for implementing the ecosystem-based approach¹ in the context of maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea. It presents a first step towards a common understanding on how the ecosystem-based approach can be applied in drawing up a spatial plan for a sea area in accordance with spatial planning legislation in force in the Baltic Sea countries. The aim is that this document will be tested in practice and, subsequently, amended as may be needed according to experience gathered.

It is also worth noting that the application of the ecosystem-based approach is wider than "establishing

¹ Except in direct quotes and references to content in existing official documents the "ecosystem-based approach", instead of "ecosystem approach", is used throughout this document as a general term covering both words, which is in line with the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the EU MSP Directive.

Are Parties applying the ecosystem-based approach* (e.g. Germany)?

Selected categories	Done
Participation & communication	Not sufficient
Strategic Environmental Assessment	✓ weak
Best available knowledge & practice	✓ Sensitivity analysis missing
Precaution / adaptation / alternative scenarios	Not sufficient
Mitigation/offsetting	X
Identification of environmental services	X
Cumulative pressure / carrying capacity	X
Risk assessment (e.g. accidents, climate change)	X

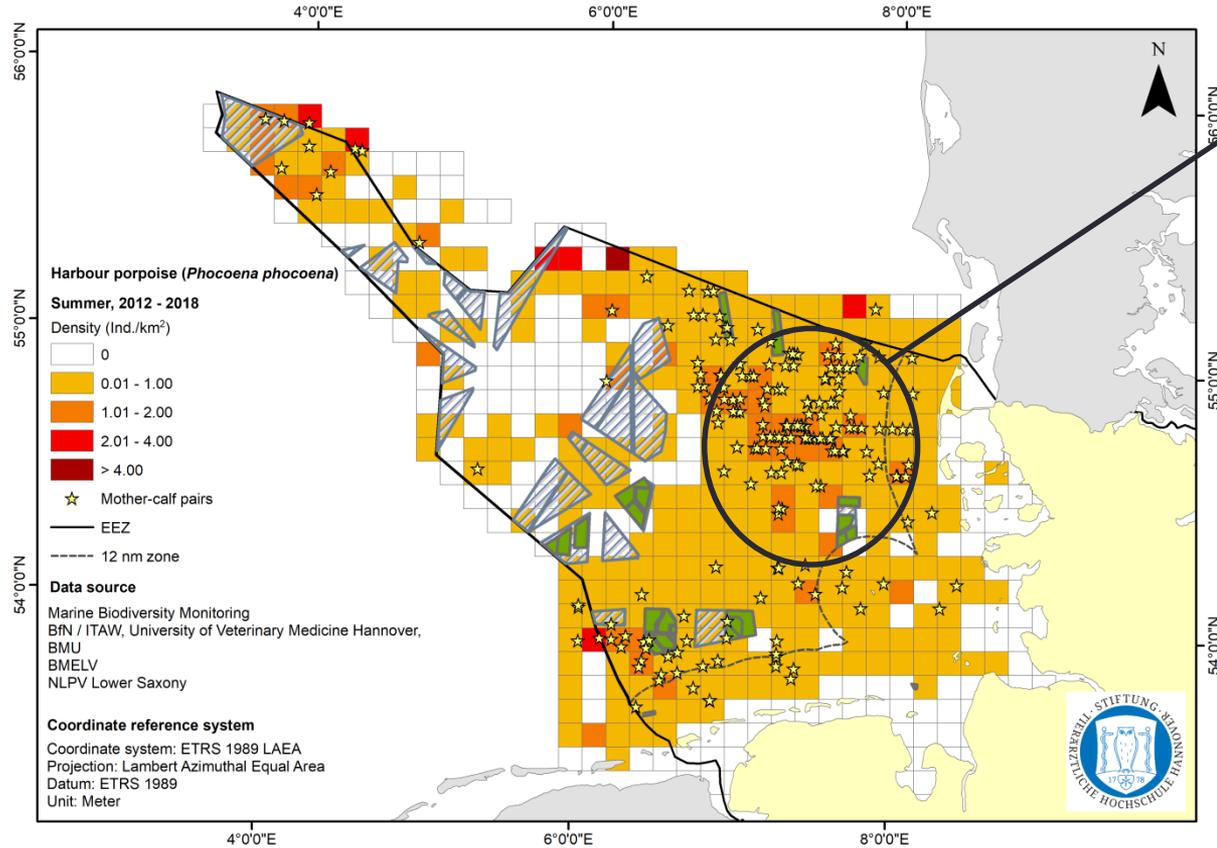
* In line with the HELCOM-VASAB Guidelines for the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach in MSP in the Baltic Sea

Step 2: to what extent do individual sectors avoid conflict with cetaceans?

-  MPA
-  Fishing
-  Shipping
-  Sand/gravel extraction
-  Offshore wind



How does this match the needs of harbour porpoises?



- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Critical birth habitat
- Decline at Sylt Outer Reef: - 3.79% p.a. 2002 – 2019 (Nachtsheim et al. 2021)





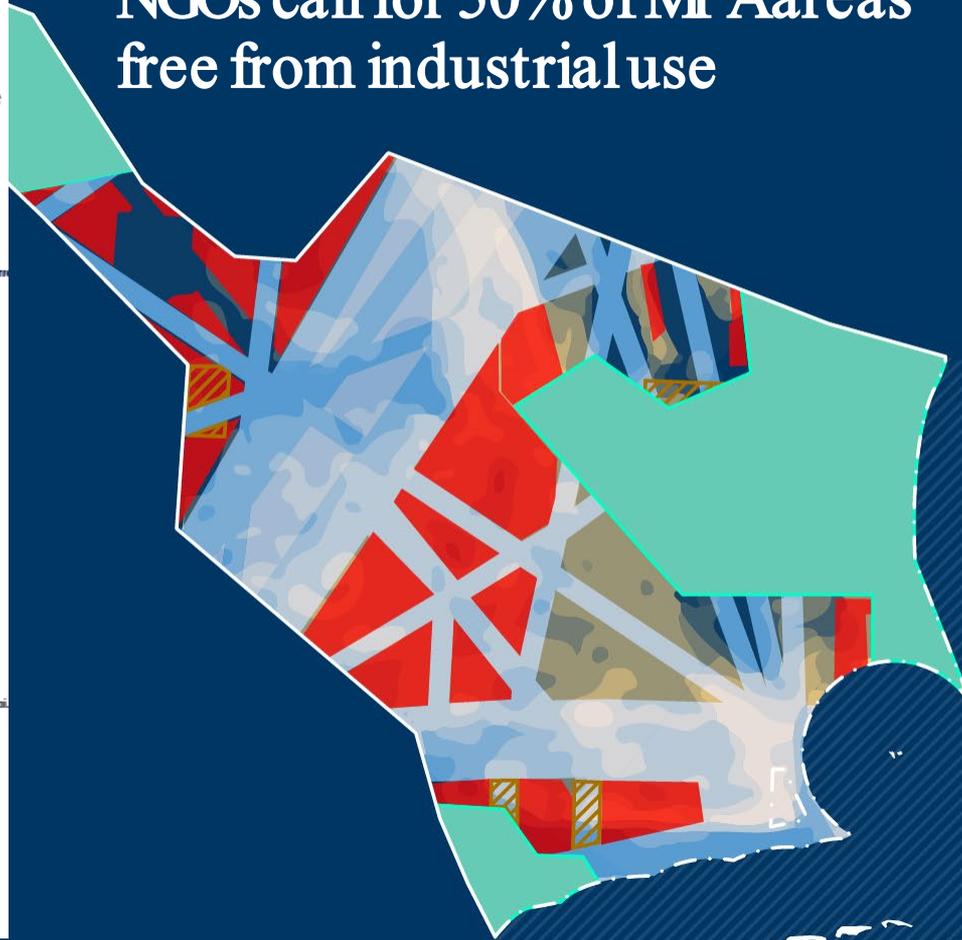
How are our MPAs managed through MSP?

-  MPA
-  Fishing
-  Shipping
-  Sand/gravel extraction
-  Offshore wind



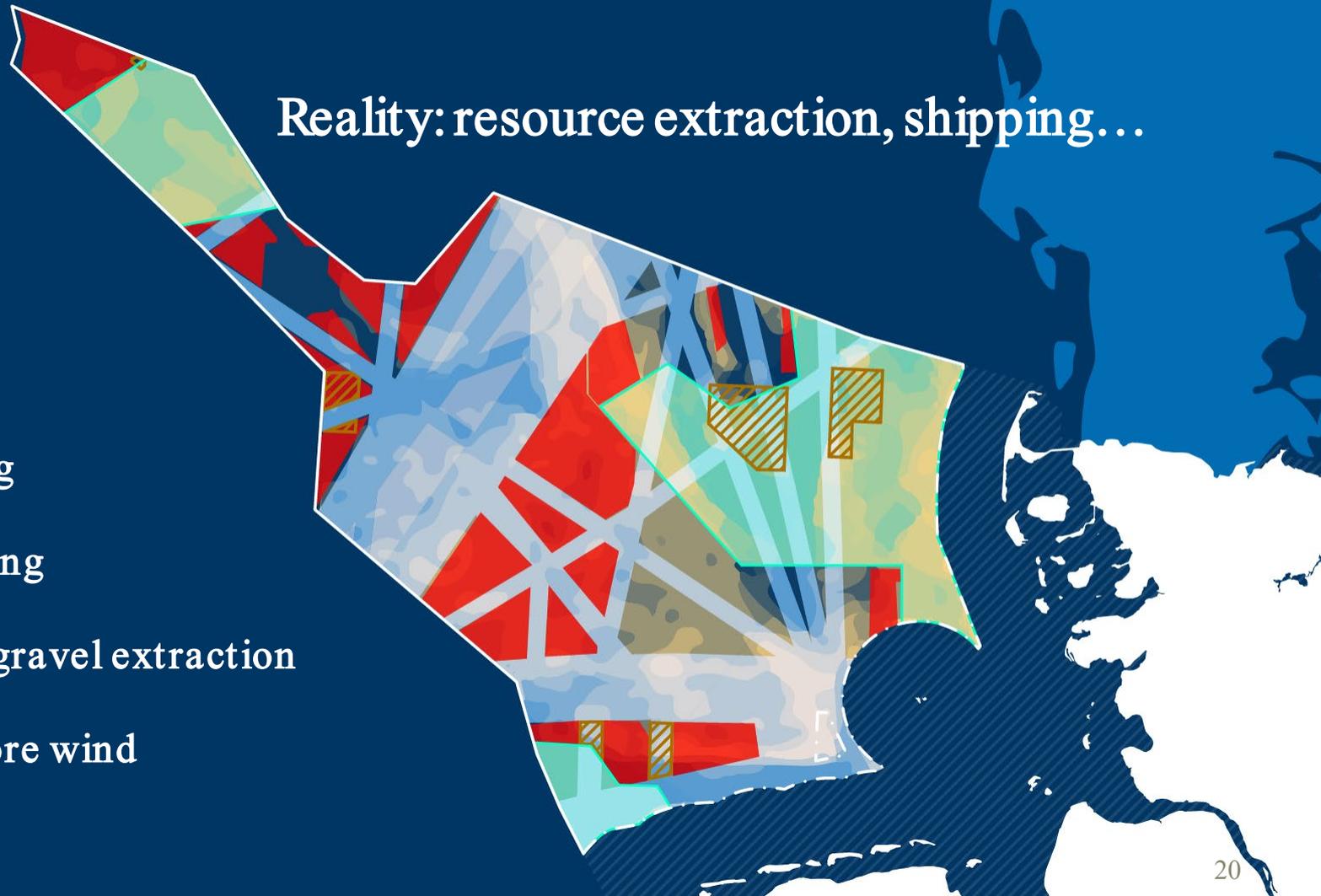


NGOs call for 50% of MPA areas free from industrial use



Reality: resource extraction, shipping...

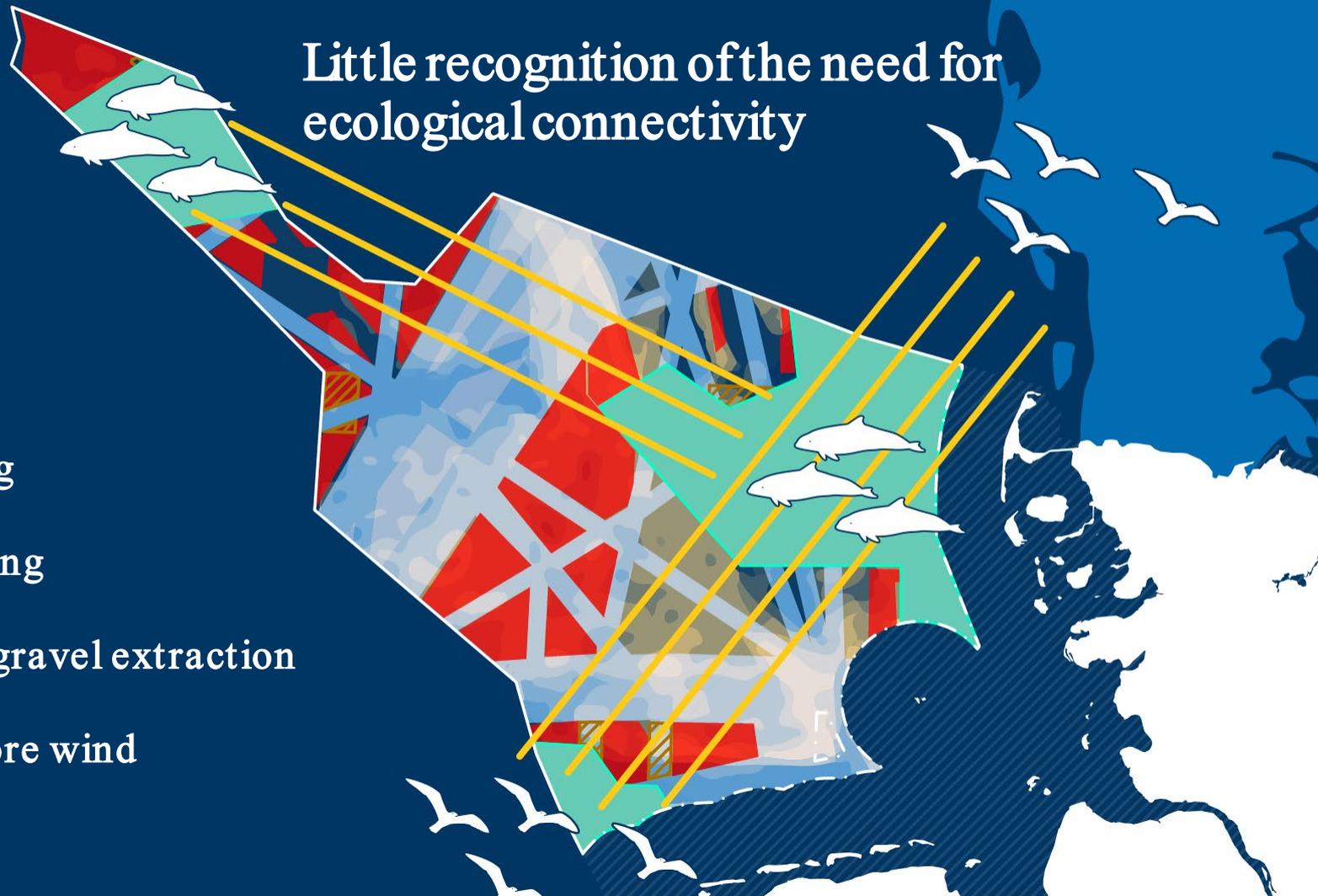
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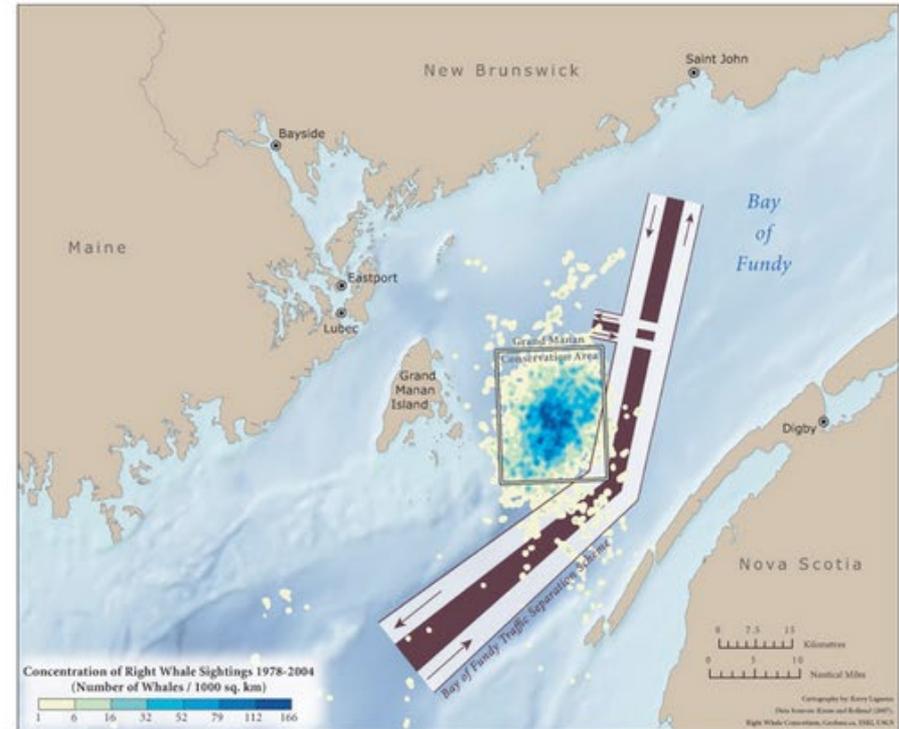
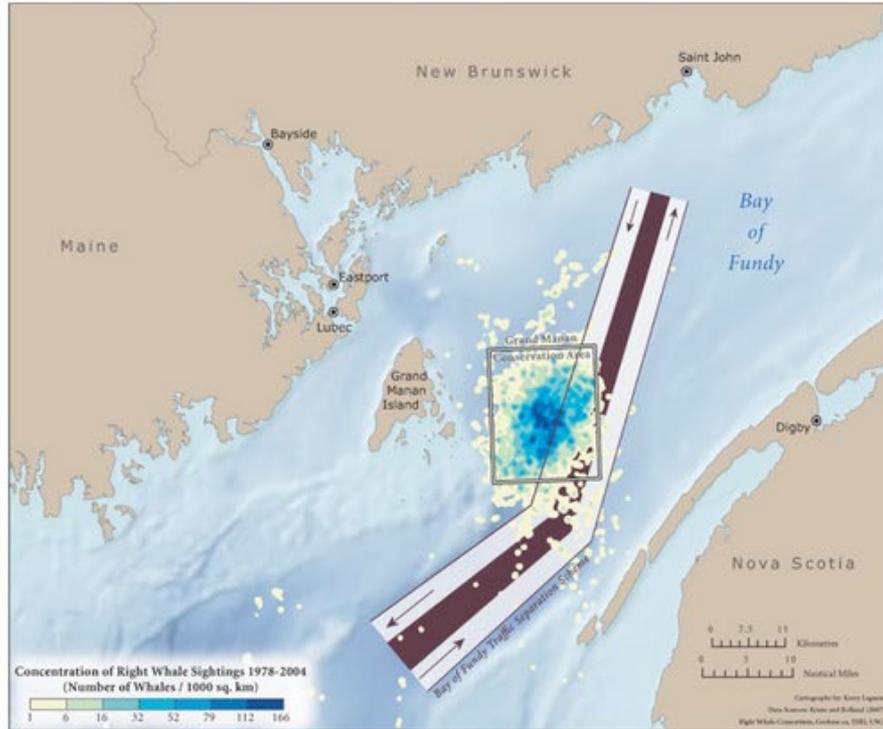


Little recognition of the need for ecological connectivity

-  MPA
-  Fishing
-  Shipping
-  Sand/gravel extraction
-  Offshore wind

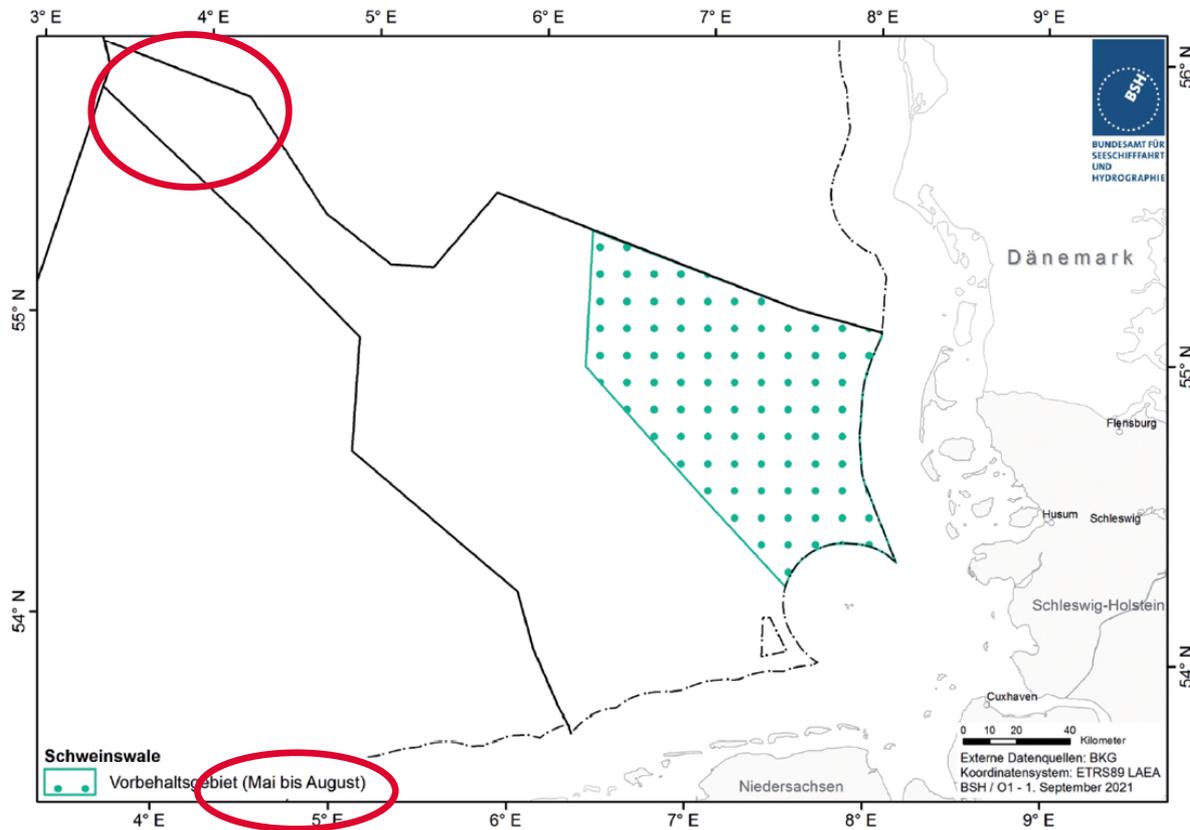


All sectors should be assessed to avoid conflict... (e.g. shipping)



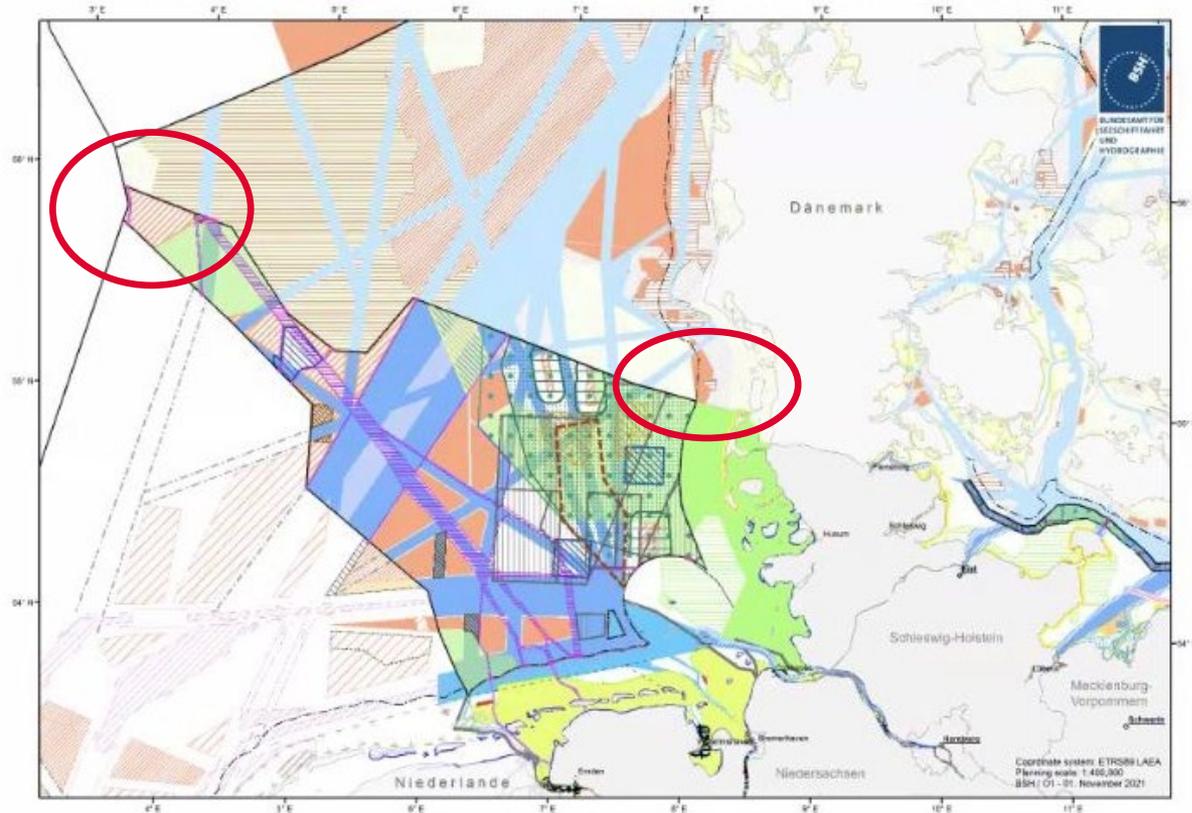
Vanderlaan ASM, Taggart CT, Serdynska AR, Kenney RD, Brown MW. Reducing the risk of lethal encounters: vessels and right whales in the Bay of Fundy and on the Scotian Shelf. *Endangered Species Res* 2008;4(3) 283-283.

Step 3: are there species-specific provisions for cetaceans?



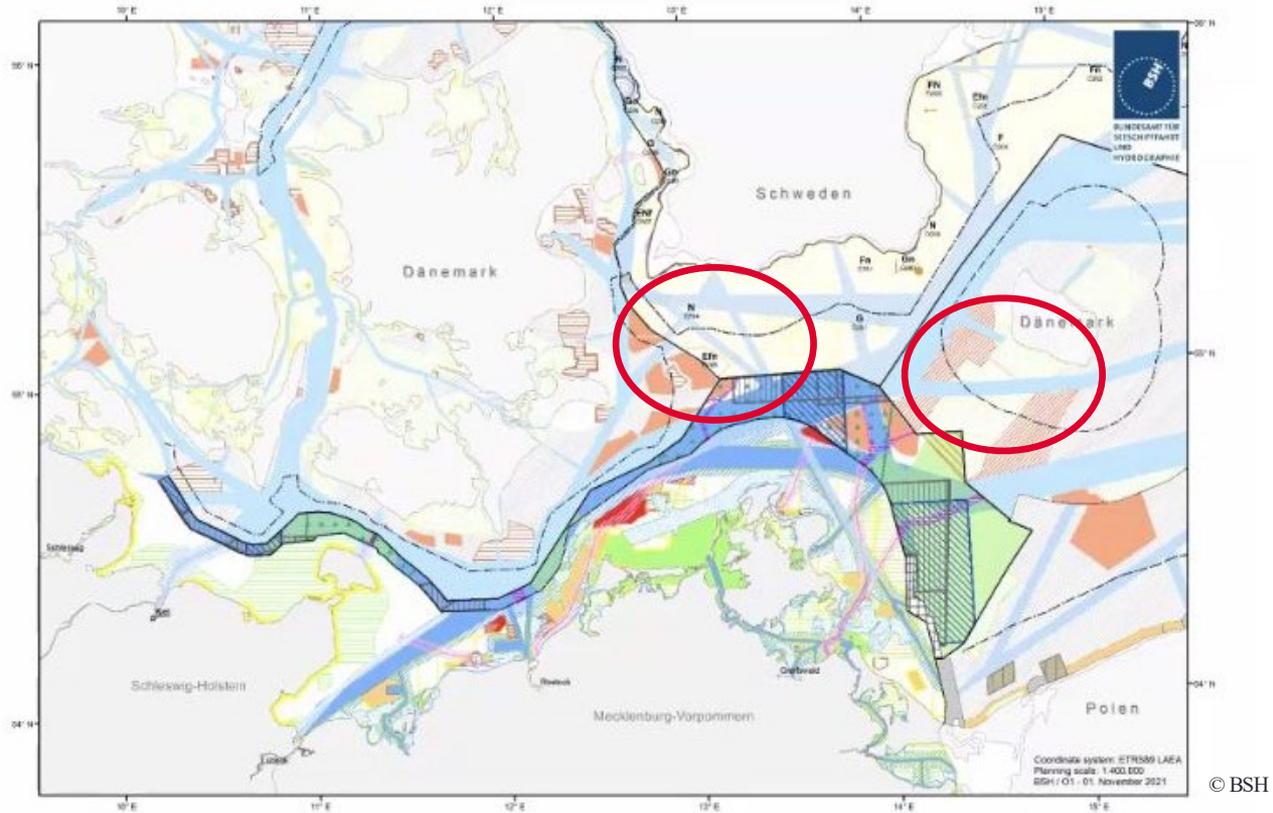
But: there are no provisions for harbour porpoises in the Baltic.

Step 4: ecological coherence across ocean basin



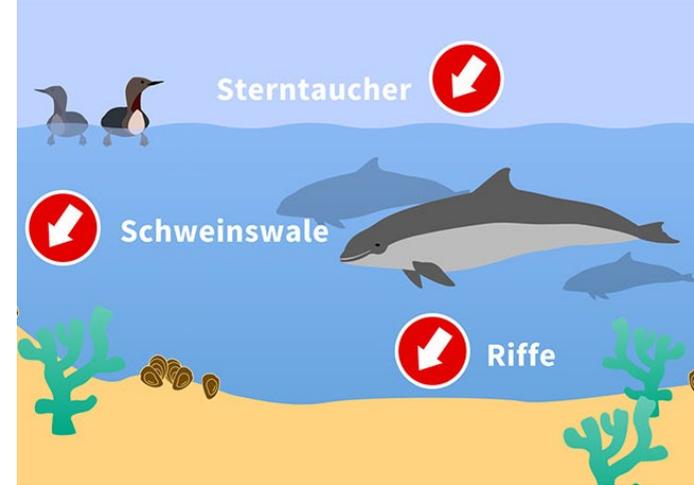
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Coherence in the Baltic?



Overall recommendations

- **MSP needs to be based on ecosystem-based approach**
- **MPAs must be excluded from industrial use**
- **Priority areas for nature must go beyond Natura-2000 sites**
 - Zonation for small cetaceans, with emphasis on sensitive habitats and seasons
 - Multi-use outside of MPAs
- **Stronger focus on ecological connectivity needed**
 - Between and beyond MPAs
 - Recognizing barriers to movement (e.g. shipping lanes)
 - Coherent application required



Priority recommendations for AC26 (1)

- Guidelines for cetacean-friendly MSP:

“New Marine Spatial Plans for national Exclusive Economic Zones have been developed across ASCOBANS Parties this year. During the evaluation and adaptation process it is of particular interest to ASCOBANS to illustrate how marine spatial planning can be cetacean-friendly and integrate relevant conservation, mitigation and compensation measures. Therefore, the Advisory Committee requests that **guidelines** are produced (involving among others ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS and the European Commission) on how marine spatial planning can ensure that these plans take the conservation needs of [small] cetaceans into account. ASCOBANS Secretariat to seek funding from [...], with a voluntary contribution sought from a Party or Parties. The organizational committee includes [...]. “

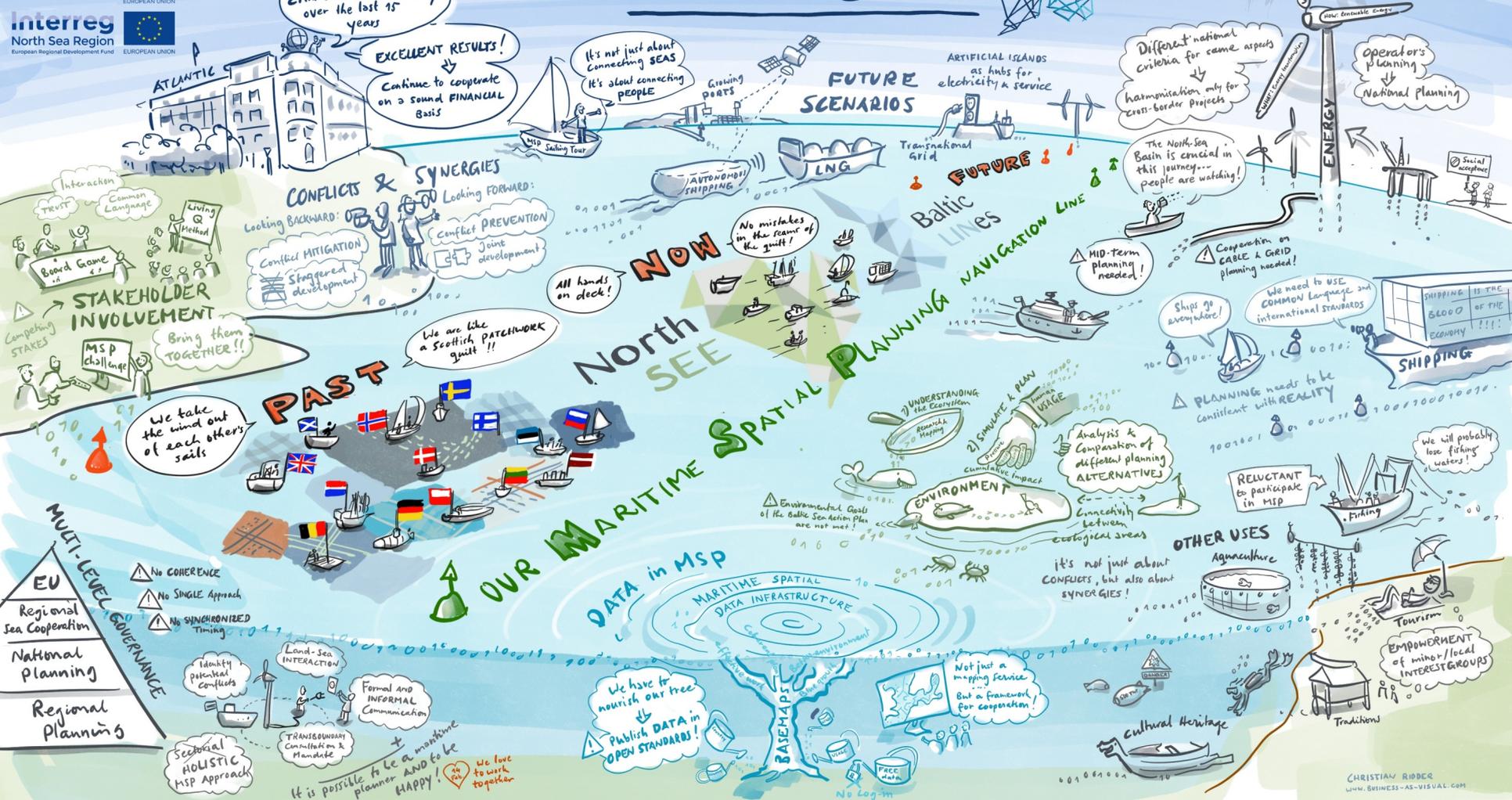
Priority recommendations for AC26 (2)

- **Species-specific zonation for small cetaceans:**
 - “Requests Parties to consistently include the distributions of all relevant cetaceans listed under ASCOBANS in their national marine spatial plans, for example through reservation areas;”
 - ...
- **Update national report format:**
 - “The Advisory Committee agrees that the national reporting format should be updated to better assess how cetacean-friendly national marine spatial plans are. “

Recommendations for national reporting

- Stronger focus on small cetaceans:
 - Are there species-specific priority or reservation areas? Other provisions?
 - Which threats to cetaceans are being managed through MSP in which parts of the population or during which parts of the season?
- Performance against HELCOM-VASAB key elements for applying the ecosystem-based approach in MSP

Connecting Seas



The picture has CHANGED COMPLETELY over the last 15 years

EXCELLENT RESULTS!
Continue to cooperate on a sound FINANCIAL Basis

It's not just about Connecting SEAS
It's about connecting PEOPLE

FUTURE SCENARIOS

ARTIFICIAL ISLANDS as hubs for electricity & service

Different national criteria for same aspects
harmonisation only for cross-border projects

operators planning
National planning

The North-Sea Basin is crucial in this journey... people are watching!

CONFLICTS & SYNERGIES

Looking BACKWARD:
Conflicted MITIGATION
Staggered development

Looking FORWARD:
Conflict PREVENTION
Joint development

No mistakes in the frame of the quilt!

All hands on deck!

We are like a Scottish PATCHWORK quilt !!

Interaction
Common Language
Living Q Method
Board Game
STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT
Competing STAKES
MSP challenge
Bring them TOGETHER!!

PAST

North SEE

NOW

SPATIAL PLANNING

ENVIRONMENT

UNDERSTANDING the Ecosystem
Research Mapping
Cumulative Impact
SINERGIES & PLAN
WAGE

Analysis & Comparison of different planning ALTERNATIVES
Connectivity
ecological areas

Ships go everywhere!
We need to USE COMMON Language and international STANDARDS

PLANNING needs to be consistent with REALITY

RELUCTANT to participate in MIP

we will probably lose fishing waters!

OTHER USES

Aquaculture

it's not just about CONFLICTS, but also about SYNERGIES!

Tourism
EMPOWERMENT of minor/local INTEREST GROUPS

Cultural Heritage

Traditions

MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

- EU
- Regional Sea Cooperation
- National Planning
- Regional Planning

No COHERENCE
No SINGLE Approach
No SYNCHRONIZED Timing

Land-Sea INTERACTION
Identity potential Conflicts
Formal AND INFORMAL Communication
TRANSBOUNDARY Commitment & Mandate

SECTORIAL HOLISTIC MSP Approach

It is possible to be a maritime planner AND to be HAPPY!
We love to work together

We have to nourish our tree
Publish DATA in OPEN STANDARDS!

Not just a mapping service
But a framework for cooperation

SHIPPING IS THE BLOOD OF THE ECONOMY !!!
SHIPPING



Let's discuss...



NABU Headquarters
Prof. Dr. Aline Kühl-Stenzel
c/o Regional Office Hamburg
Klaus-Groth-Str. 21
20535 Hamburg
Germany

Tel. +49 (0)174.1818477
Fax +49 (0)30.28 49 84-20 00
aline.kuehl-stenzel@NABU.de
www.NABU.de