Agenda Item 2	Review of New Information on Threats and Other Issues Relevant to Small Cetaceans
Document NR.2	**2021 Annual National Report: Poland**
Action Requested	• Take note • Comment
Submitted by	Poland

ASCOBANS

2021 ASCOBANS National Report

The deadline for the submission of National Reports is **31 March 2022**.

As outlined in ASCOBANS Resolution 8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting, this form will cover the year 2021 (Year 2 of the cycle), and the following topics included in the Annex to the Resolution, in addition to the standard Sections I (General Information) and VII (Other Matters):

Bycatch (Section II A1)

Resource Depletion (Section II A2)

Marine Debris (Section II C9)

Surveys and Research (Section III A: Biological Information, B: Monitoring Programmes, C: Other Research)

Use of Strandings Records (Section IV A: Stranding Network and Strandings)

The National Reports submitted will inform discussions at the 27th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee in late 2022.

- All questions apply to the reporting period of 1 January - 31 December 2021.

- Region in the tables refers to the sub-regions as defined by the HELCOM and OSPAR, and Areas refers to the sub-areas as defined by ICES. An overview and maps of these can be found in **Annex A**. Species can be chosen from the list provided, based on ASCOBANS species list, see **Annex B**.

- Throughout the form, please include relevant web links where applicable.

Where possible, National Coordinators should consult with, or delegate to, experts for particular topics so as to ease the reporting burden. The Secretariat has provided a list of potential country contacts as a starting point. Once the baseline information is in place, it should become easier to update in the future.

For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat: ascobans.secretariat@ascobans.org.

High-level Summary of Key Messages

In your country, for 2021 (Year 2), what does this report reveal about:

The most successful aspects of implementation of the Agreement?(List up to five items)

››› A number of long-term, educational campaigns conducted by the Prof. Krzysztof Skóra Hel Marine Station of the University of Gdańsk's Institute of Oceanography, as well as by WWF Poland within the "Protection of marine mammals and seabirds – continuation" project.
Establishing the stranding respond scheme by HMS and WWF within the external project. Collection of stranded carcasses for post-mortem analysis by the HMS.
Establishment of the porpoise monitoring programme within the framework of the State Environmental Monitoring, as a part of the monitoring programme of marine waters (in accordance with the MSFD) and marine species and habitats (in accordance with the Habitats Directive). Harmonisation of the monitoring programme at the Baltic Sea Region level with the HELCOM States Parties (fulfilment of the provisions of the MSFD).
Ongoing work on the preparation of conservation plans for marine Natura 2000 sites, including those where porpoise is a conservation concern.
Ongoing dialogue with the fishing community on the protection of the Baltic Sea ecosystem, including the porpoise.
Started in 2012 and continuing to this day a project to remove lost fishing nets, popularisation of the problem of lost nets in regional and also global level.

The greatest challenges in implementing the Agreement? (List up to five items)

››› Deterioration of the Baltic Sea both in terms of species structure and increasing dead, with changing range from year to year, anaerobic areas on its bottom.
Increase of human pressure in marine areas, including expansion of maritime transport, recreation, military trainings etc.
Taking into account the cumulative effect of anthropopressure in the Baltic Sea in connection with the increasing number of new investments and ventures.
Biodiversity loss and fishing resources depletion what may have also significant impact on cetaceans in the future and their food resources

The main priorities for future implementation of the Agreement? (List up to five items)

››› Save Baltic porpoise populations by improving protection in areas of their existence, monitoring fishery, and reducing and mitigating pressures on Baltic harbour porpoises.
Continuation of activities carried out so far, together with the promotion of pro-ecological practices throughout the country, which affects the quality of the waters feeding the Baltic Sea.

I. General Information

A. Country Information

Name of Party / Non-Party Range State:

››› Poland

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☑ Yes

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II. Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

A. Fisheries-related Threats

1. Bycatch

AIM: to illustrate progress on understanding, monitoring and mitigating bycatch of small cetaceans.
Relevant Resolutions: 9.2, 8.5 (Rev.MOP9), 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.8, 5.7, 5.5, 3.3
Bycatch, the entanglement of an animal in fishing gear, is identified as a major cause of mortality in small cetaceans. Every effort should be made to reduce bycatch towards zero as quickly as possible. Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed on a number of resolutions that highlight the importance of mitigating bycatch of small cetaceans in the Agreement Area, as available data indicates that levels of bycatch pose a considerable threat to their conservation status. Parties have agreed that modifications of fishing gear and relevant practices shall be applied in order to reduce negative impacts where data indicates unacceptable interaction. The Agreement Area requires improved monitoring, collation of data, and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures, while also taking into account similar work in other areas.
To better understand the extent of the impact of bycatch on small cetaceans, monitoring and mitigation measures in place, and ongoing work in the Agreement Area, countries are requested to provide relevant information.
Note: This section includes bycatch in recreational fisheries.

1.1. How is bycatch assessed/monitored in your country?

For the reporting period, please identify whether the following methods were used and the percentage (by monitoring method, of total bycaught animals, by gear type if applicable):
Dedicated observer schemes
Fisheries observes
Remote Electronic Monitoring
Self-reporting by fishermen
Pathological investigation
Assessment at stranding site
››› Data obtained thanks to WWF Blue Patrol patrolling the beaches and observers.
Fisheries observers under Data Collection Framework and EU Regulation 2019/1241 (below 1% coverage of the gillnet fishing effort)

Comments:
››› It is also obligatory (under national legislation) to report sea mammal or a bird bycatch in the logbook, regardless vessel size.

1.2. Which species of small cetaceans were recorded as bycatch by commercial fishing in the reporting period?

Please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.
Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.
☑ Other

››› From 1 of January until 31 of December 2021 - none from the above list.

1.3. Which species of small cetaceans were recorded as bycatch by recreational fishing in the reporting period?

Please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below
Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.
☑ Other

››› From 1 of January until 31 of December 2021 - none from the above list.

1.4. Has there been any notable incidents/issues related to bycatch during the reporting period in your country?

☑ No

Please provide details (mass bycatch incidents, unusual species bycatch etc.):
››› No such data during reporting period.

1.5. Are there are mitigation measures in place?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.
☑ Yes

The following measures are in place:

››› In accordance with the European Commission Delegated regulation no 2022/303 from 15 of December 2021, Poland is obliged to implement three month closure (Nov-Jan) for static nets for the entire Natura 2000 site Ostoja na Zatoce Pomorskiej PLH990002 as well as marine part of the Natura 2000 site Wolin i Uznam PLH320019, in addtition, whole year static net closure for the Southern Middle Bank adjacent to the Swedish border as well as an obligation for the whole year obligation for pinger use on static nets for the entire Puck Bay.
Fishermen should equip their nets with pingers until 1 of June 2022.

1.6. Have there been changes in fishing effort (for fisheries known to have an impact) in the reporting period?
☑ Yes

Please provide details:

››› Baltic Sea resources are depleted

1.7. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on bycatch in your country.

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information.
››› National Marine Fisheries Research Institute (MIR-PIB) in Poland joined EU LIFE application organised under NL leadership (project CIBBRINA) on bycatch mitigation and prevention. Within this project Poland is especially interested in the development of effective tracking systems for small vessels (below 12 m).

1.8. Is the perceived level of pressure from bycatch in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?
☑ Unknown

2. Resource Depletion
AIM: to determine areas where, and to what extent, depletion of fish stocks have occurred during the reporting period. In addition; identify ongoing mitigation efforts regarding detrimental implications for small cetaceans.
Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 8.3, 7.1, 6.1
Depletion in fish stocks due to overfishing and other factors generates pressure on the favourable conservation status of small cetaceans (through possible food shortage). More integrated management and reductions in fishing effort (also prompted by concern about fish stock depletion or other ecosystem considerations) have been encouraged, especially in areas of known risk. Further research, effective fishery regulations and innovation within certain fishing methods are considered to be helpful steps towards mitigating this pressure.
Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed on a number of resolutions that (1) determine the impact of the depletion of fish stocks on small cetaceans, (2) encourage fishing effort reductions and (3) review new information on these depletions to make recommendations. Resource depletion in the Agreement Area requires improved monitoring, collation of data, and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures, while also taking into account similar work in other areas.
It is of particular interest to ASCOBANS to understand the extent of prey depletions, any related ongoing work, monitoring and mitigation measures in the Agreement Area. Countries are requested to provide relevant information.

2.1. Based on the latest stock assessments, are there any notable depletions of fish species which would be a concern for small cetaceans?
☑ No

Please provide details:

››› Baltis Sea fishing resources are seriously depleted. Both cod stocks in the Baltic Sea has collapsed in 2019. Also western herring is seriously depleted. In addition, even though salmon population is not in a very bad shape its fishing quota has been significantly reduced in order to protect natural salmon populations in the Baltic Sea. Flatfishes and sprat are in a better condition but also requires protective measures.

2.2. Where are these depletions in national water occurring?

Please choose the sub-Regions from Annex A as defined by OSPAR & HELCOM.

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.
☑ H Eastern Gotland Basin
☑ H Gdansk Basin
☑ H Bornholm Basin
☑ H Arkona Basin

Please choose the sub-Areas from Annex A as defined by ICES.

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.
☑ 27.3.d.24 - Baltic West of Bornholm
☑ 27.3.d.25 - Southern Central Baltic – West
☑ 27.3.d.26 - Southern Central Baltic – East

2.3. What measures are being taken to manage pressures on depleted fish stocks, including relevant regulations/guidelines (current/planned/year of implementation)?

Per measure, please provide timeframe information and relevant driver.
››› TAC/Quota has been significantly reduced for most of the commercially exploited fish species. Since 2019 it is not allowed to carry out direct fishing for cod, directed fisheries for salmon has been banned for Central Baltic. Discussion on possible banning of eel catches is ongoing within BALTFISH. Other measures include work on selective gears with the aim to limit bycatch of cod when fishing for flatfishes.

2.4. Is there any evidence within your country's national waters that resource depletion may be impacting small cetaceans (e.g. evidence of starvation)?

☑ No

2.6. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on resource depletion in your country.

List initiatives/project (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information.
››› Regular fisheries monitoring has been carried out within Data Collection Framework to assess the status of major comercially exploited fish stocks in the Baltic Sea.
In addition, during a reporting period, a complex, regular monitoring of pollutants, pressures and presence of different species of coastal fish, including their population status, has been carried out for the Puck Bay - area important for harbour porpoise. (MIR-PIB Zatoka Pucka/19).

2.7. Is the perceived level of pressure from resource depletion in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

☑ Unknown

B. Disturbance (incl. potential physical impacts)

3. Noise (impulsive i.e. piling and continuous/ambient i.e. shipping)

AIM: to illustrate progress on understanding, monitoring and mitigating negative effects on small cetaceans from underwater noise during the reporting period.
Relevant Resolutions: 9.2, 9.1, 8.11 (Rev.MOP9), 8.9, 8.6, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.1, 6.2, 6.1
Small cetaceans are especially susceptible to underwater noise due to their high responsiveness to sound and wide hearing range. Good environmental status, as defined by the European Union, suggests that the introduction of energy, including underwater noise, is at levels that do not adversely affect the marine environment. Anthropogenic noise pollution has generally increased in recent times and generates a broad range of frequencies due to a wide variety of human activities. Impulsive and continuous noise present different impacts on small cetaceans, which include communicative masking, behavioural response and physiological injury. Noise in marine environments potentially impedes communication, affects distribution and hence feeding and reproduction of small cetaceans. Studies show that not only cetaceans but also fish and other marine life may be negatively impacted by anthropogenic noise.
Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed on implementation of measures through a number of resolutions that (1) highlight the potential impact that noise pollution may have on small cetaceans in the Agreement Area and (2) commit to reduce the pressure presented by underwater noise. The Agreement Area requires improved monitoring, collation of data, and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures.
To better understand the extent to which noise negatively impacts the health of small cetaceans, and to learn about new work relevant to the topic, countries are requested to provide related information.

3.1. To which noise registers/databases has your country contributed to date?

ICES Impulsive Noise Register (for HELCOM and OSPAR Parties)
☑ No

National Registry
☑ Yes, please specify (e.g. JNCC noise registry):

››› Within the project of the National Marine Waters Protection Programme (NMWPP) it is planned to develop noise maps on the basis of existing information and vessel traffic forecasts using Chief Sanitary Inspectorate's (GIS) environmental tools. It is also planned to create a register of impulsive noise sources on the basis of data from existing environmental impact assessment (EIA) reports and information from relevant institutions. The establishment of the noise register will be coordinated at regional level through Polish participation in the EU expert group ("TG Noise"). The register may also be coordinated by HELCOM. Mapping of noise should be coordinated at local level but taking into account the advice of TG Noise and the project methodology.

Other
☑ No

3.2. Any instances/issues in the reporting period including information on planned or completed significant developments/activities, including the details of monitoring in place before, during and after the project.

If you selected 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.
☑ No

3.3. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on underwater noise in your country.

List initiatives/project (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books)from any study; web links to other relevant information.
››› The data obtained during the monitoring, along with the interpretation of the research results obtained, were included in the final report from the implementation of the work entitled "Pilot implementation of marine species and habitats monitoring". The data were reported to the SI MGiSM (the Information System of Monitoring of Species and Habitats) database and compiled in an Access format file.
Two algorithms have been used to analyse the records, namely KERNO and HEL1. The second algorithm (HEL1) has been developed specifically for the detection of porpoises in the Baltic Sea based on work carried out in Poland at the Hel Marine Station of the University of Gdańsk's Institute of Oceanography (SMIOUG) in 2010.
The use of the second algorithm is recommended for areas of low porpoise numbers in the Baltic Sea.
The KERNO algorithm is used to automatically identify a series of cliques (clique clusters) and recognises their four properties:
• data quality class based on the probability of origin of cliques - random artefacts or emitted by cetaceans in a narrow high frequency band (porpoises): high, medium, low, and questionable,
• class of cliques (of cetacean species): sounds of porpoise characterised by NBHF (Narrow Band High Frequency), other cetaceans (dolphins), sonar, unknown,
• quality of species classification: high, medium, low,
• ICI classification quality: using the KERNO classifier, only series of cliques of high and medium quality, belonging to species emitting in the NBHF of the ICI series, have been selected for export.
The HEL1 algorithm is used to remove false detections resulting mainly from unclear series from unknown sources.
Three types of quantitative measures are used to detect the occurrence (presence/absence) of porpoises in the study area:
• minutes of positive detections of porpoises per hour (sum of minutes during which the presence of porpoises was recorded in each hour,
• days of positive porpoise detections,
• the number of recorded porpoises clipping series.

3.5. Is the perceived level of pressure from underwater noise in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?
☑ Unknown

4. Ocean Energy
AIM: to understand the extent and development of current and planned ocean energy projects, and progress in monitoring and mitigation of their negative effects on small cetaceans during the reporting period.
Relevant Resolutions: 8.11 (Rev.MOP9), 8.9, 8.6, 8.3, 6.2
Renewable energy is a necessary component of the efforts to supply the energy needs of human populations while combatting climate change. Efforts to harness renewable energy sources, however,

should be conducted in a way that does not have a harmful impact on biological diversity and the marine environment. There are potential adverse effects of ocean energy on small cetaceans from such energy projects. In regard to small cetaceans, this can include potential lethal interactions or injury, negative behavioural impacts from displacement and changes in fecundity, calf survival and juvenile and adult mortality. There remains uncertainty regarding quantifying the (magnitude of the) pressure from ocean energy production on small cetaceans.
Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed to introduce precautionary measures and procedures for activities surrounding the development of renewable energy in marine environments in order to minimise and mitigate possible effects on small cetaceans, by following best practices. Parties have committed to investigating such pressures and robustly monitoring and mitigating them through environmental impact assessments. Addressing all aspects relevant to the conservation of protected species in regard to ocean energy and collaboration with other organizations working on or potentially interested in the issue is to the benefit of small cetaceans in the Agreement Area.
It is of particular interest to ASCOBANS to understand current and ongoing renewable energy projects in the Agreement Area, mitigation measures and procedures in use and other work relevant to the topic. Countries are requested to provide information relevant to their activities.

4.1. Were there any new wind energy farms in development/construction during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue link button below.
☑ No
☑ Not Applicable. Comments:

››› At the moment there are no offshore wind farms in the Polish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), but their construction is planned. It is estimated that the first offshore wind farm will be connected to the power grid in 2025.

4.2. Were there any new wave power installations in development/construction during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.
☑ No

4.3. Were there any new tidal energy installations in development/construction during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.
☑ No
☑ Not Applicable. Comments:

4.4. Were there any new tidal lagoon/barrage installations in development/construction during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.
☑ No

4.5. Has there been any other instances/issues related to ocean energy during the reporting period in your country?
☑ No

4.6. How is the pressure managed, incl. relevant regulations / guidelines and the year of implementation (current and planned)?
››› Due to the lack of renewable energy installations, there are no studies to assess the environmental impact of such installations. The environmental impact, as well as mitigation and remedial measures of the planned offshore wind farms will be determined within the environmental impact assessment procedure. Investors applying for permits rely, among others, on the experience of other Baltic countries on this issue.

C. Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts)

8. Unexploded Ordnance
AIM: to provide information on the mitigation, management and potential negative impacts of unexploded ordnance on small cetaceans during the reporting period.
Relevant Resolutions: 8.11 (Rev.MOP9), 8.9, 8.8, 8.3
Unexploded chemical and conventional munitions present a threat to small cetaceans. Hazards exist from unexploded munitions, which release chronic contaminants, and upon detonation, which is physically

hazardous from extreme underwater noise and a sudden release of toxic substances. Unexploded ordnance is a notable threat in many areas, such as the Baltic Sea, where the quantity is unknown, though estimates are high. Information on disposal, state of corrosion and quantities of dumped munition is limited, as are meaningful data on the measured environmental impacts. The significance of this pressure's impact on small cetaceans requires further quantification. However, it is clear that mitigation measures are necessary to support alternatives to detonations, and when no alternative is feasible, to reduce negative impacts on small cetaceans.
In the ASCOBANS Area, millions of tons of unexploded ordnance are present in the marine environment and thousands of sea users, such as fishermen, encounter such munitions every year. Parties have agreed on resolutions to support (1) research investigating the pressure on marine animals and habitat and (2) mitigation measures regarding effects of disintegrating submerged munitions on the marine environment. Parties are to strive towards providing relevant information to required bodies and supporting efforts to address the negative implications from this pressure in other regional and international organizations and waters.

8.3. Have there been any other instances/issues related to the issue of unexploded ordnance during the reporting period in your country?

☑ Yes

Please provide details:

››› In 2020, 3 naval mines were neutralised, located in the area under the jurisdiction of the Director of the Maritime Office in Gdynia.

8.4. How is the issue of unexploded ordnance being managed?

Include mitigation measures, relevant regulations/guidelines, year of implementation; may include planned management.
››› Maritime Authorities are responsible for the coordination of operations involving the detonation of explosives in marine areas. Prior to the detonation, they always apply to the Regional Directorates for Environmental Protection (RDEP) for permission to derogate from the prohibitions applicable to protected animal species.
The RDEP decision they receive allows the animals to be disturbed and scared.
Safety zones are established around the facilities to be neutralised.
During the 2 hours preceding the elimination of a particular object:
- high-speed motorboats shall be used, which will stagger the circles started from the centre of the scare area,
- the scare area shall be passed through by vessels with echolocation equipment switched on (scaring of mammals).
The scaring operation shall be carried out twice prior to neutralisation of each dangerous object.
In addition, small underwater explosive charges, so-called micro charges, may also be used to scare animals during the neutralisation of unexploded.
From 2014 to 2020, the above-mentioned activities were based on scientific advice from the Prof. Krzysztof Skóra Hel Marine Station of the University of Gdańsk's Institute of Oceanography.
Since the Jastarnia Group meeting in June 2020, work is underway to develop new methods with more modern protective measures.
According to the order of the Commander of the Navy No. 148/SIM dated 30 October 2013, the institution responsible for clearing beaches of the seacoast of Pomerania (Pomorskie) and Warmia-Masuria (Warmińsko-Mazurskie) Voivodships from explosive and dangerous objects is the 3rd Ship Flotilla, while for beaches of the seacoast of Western Pomerania (Zachodnio-Pomorskie) Voivodship and marine areas of Poland the 8th Coastal Defence Flotilla is responsible.

8.5. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on the issue of unexploded ordnance in your country.

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports,theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to relevant information.
››› Decision support on dumped ammunition Institute of Oceanology of the Polish Academy of Sciences Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020,
Support for decision-making on how to deal with dumped ammunition on the bottom of the Baltic Sea Maritime Institute in Gdańsk Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020,
Decision support on dumped ammunition Jarosław Dąbrowski Military University of Technology Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020,
Decision support on dumped ammunition Polish Naval Academy of the Heroes of Westerplatte Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020,
Characterisation of interactions between, dumped in the Baltic, chemical warfare agents (CW agents) and water by means of experimental studies and first-principles calculations - University of Białystok,

Toxicity and biodegradation of chemical weapons dumped in the marine environment – PRELUDIUM, Institute of Oceanology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

8.6. Is the perceived level of pressure from unexploded ordnance in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same, or unknown?

☑ Staying the same
☑ Not Applicable. Comments:

››› In the future, it is planned to build wind farms, which will certainly increase the noise level at the stage of their construction.

9. Marine Debris (ingestion and entanglement)

AIM: to illustrate progress, during the reporting period, on understanding, monitoring and mitigating impacts of marine debris on small cetaceans.
Relevant Resolutions: 8.8, 8.3, 6.1
Marine debris, such as macroplastics and discarded fishing gear, poses a threat to small cetaceans due to the potential for these materials to be ingested or to cause entanglement. Commercial fishing operations, recreational fishing and cargo shipping are notable sources of this material, of which the majority is plastic and ghost nets. However, it is assumed that most of the marine litter worldwide comes from land, although this differs per region. Even small amounts of macroplastics that have been ingested may present serious effects on small cetaceans, such as detrimental influence on the gastrointestinal tract or leaching pollutants into the body, potentially leading to mortality or reduced body condition. Entanglement is well-established as a threat to small cetaceans as plastic debris continues to accumulate in aquatic environments, and may cause physical injuries, reduced survival or drowning.
To better understand the impact of marine debris on small cetaceans and measures in place to mitigate these effects, countries are requested to provide relevant information.
Note: Includes macroplastics and discarded fishing gear. Microplastics are covered under Section C 10 Pollution and Hazardous Substances.

9.1. Does your country have monitoring in place to assess levels of marine debris?

☑ Yes. Please provide information below.

Include parameters provided through monitoring (e.g. type of litter (size, shape, material), amount, impacts on species, geographical location, etc.).
››› Monitoring on marine litter under the State Monitoring Programme is conductig since 2015 in Poland, as a pilot monitoring within 2015-2017, and in regular basis since 2018. Monitoring covers beach litter, litter deposited on the sea floor and microlitter in water and surface sediment. Data is collected according to guidance developed by Technical Gruop on Marine Litter (TG ML) acting under the Joint Research Center (JRC) of the European Union in collaboration with the EU initiative EMODNET Chemistry.

9.2. Are these data publicly available?

Please provide web link.
☑ Yes

9.3. What species of small cetaceans were found to have been impacted by marine debris? Please provide details in the table.

Please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.

››› None

9.5. How is marine debris managed?

Include relevant regulations/guidelines and the year or implementation, current and planned.
››› In the national waste management plan 2022, issues related to marine litter and sources of its formation, quantities produced and managed, objectives and directions of activities are described in chapters 2.4.5, 3.4.5, 4.4.5, and 5.4.5.
https://sip.lex.pl/akty-prawne/mp-monitor-polski/krajowy-plan-gospodarki-odpadami-2022-18334576

9.7. Is the perceived level of pressure from marine debris in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same, or unknown?

☑ Unknown

10. Pollution and Hazardous Substances (incl. microplastics)

AIM: to illustrate progress on understanding, monitoring and mitigating impacts of important current and emerging pollution-related hazards on small cetaceans. during the reporting period
Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 8.8, **8.7**, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, **7.4**, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7
Marine environments have been subject to a wide range of different types of pollution over the last decades. Top predators, such as small cetaceans that feed on higher trophic prey, tend to accumulate many of these potentially hazardous substances. There are a number of contaminants and pathogens that are known, or suspected, to have impacts on small cetacean health, immune status or reproduction. These include, for example: polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other persistent organic pollutants (POPs), oil pollution (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons), toxins from harmful algal blooms (HABs), sewage, radionuclides, toxic elements, tri-butyl tin (TBT), morbillivirus, and Brucella. In addition, micro- and nano-plastics are also present in marine environment and their impacts are presently poorly understood. Monitoring can be done using body tissue from small cetaceans obtained from live animals through biopsies, or from dead animals that are generally found on the shore. Necropsies allow the sampling of different types of tissue such as blubber, muscle, kidney or liver and these can be analyzed subsequently.

To better understand the impact of contaminants on small cetacean health, to detect new emerging hazards and to work towards a common protocol for analyzing samples, countries are asked to provide information on their programs.
Note:Includes microplastics.Macroplastics and discarded fishing gear are covered under Section C 9 Marine Debris.

10.1. Does your country conduct monitoring of pollutants in small cetaceans?

Several pollutants have serious effects on individual small cetaceans and can threaten populations. The aim is to capture the nature of existing monitoring and identify gaps in terms of which pollutants are monitored, the extent of this monitoring and the establishment of securely funded long-term data series.
☑ No. Go to Question 10.7.

12. Climate Change (incl. ocean acidification)

AIM: to illustrate progress on understanding, monitoring and mitigating negative effects of important and emerging climate change related impacts on small cetaceans.
Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.4, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7
It is certain that climate change is altering the habitat of cetaceans. However, our understanding of how the predicted changes will impact different species and populations can be further developed by identifying issues and trends through reporting. CMS[1] highlights the importance of addressing potential issues through the engagement of (1) researchers to better understand the underlying processes, as well as (2) conservation managers and policy makers to monitor changes and to mitigate negative impacts.Focus should be given to understanding tangible climate change effects relevant to cetaceans, such as changing ocean temperatures, prey depletion / prey range shifts, ocean acidification, increased frequency and intensity of ocean storms, changes in sea ice and weakening of the North Atlantic Drift. Such occurrences require that we gather evidence on the existence and nature of climate change effects on small cetaceans and evaluate current monitoring programmes and mitigation measures.
This section aims to provide an overview of what kind of activities are already ongoing in the member states to address climate change. The focus is on those actions specifically regarding cetaceans as well as the most likely impacts on their habitat and prey. Climate change possibly represents one of the most important future threat to the status of cetaceans in the ASCOBANS region. Direct effects may arise due to ocean warming, resulting in distribution shifts (generally northward) so that the animals continue to occupy waters with temperature regimes compatible with their thermal niches. Key indirect effects will result from changes in prey distribution and abundance due to ocean warming, ocean acidification and changes in ocean current systems.
[1]CMS Resolution 12.21on Climate Change and Migratory Species.

12.2. Which effects has your country been monitoring during the reporting period?

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.

☑ Changes in fishing effort

D. Management of Cumulative Impacts

15. Marine Spatial Planning

AIM: to provide information on existing and proposed marine spatial plans and processes during the reporting period that may impact small cetaceans.
Relevant Resolutions 9.1, 8.9, 8.6, 8.3
A growing demand for use of maritime space increases pressure on ecosystems and marine resources. Marine ecosystems with good environmental status provide notable benefits to a number of economic outputs. Implementation of an integrated spatial planning and management approach can better mitigate negative impacts from maritime activities on marine environments. Spatial planning can support sustainable marine development through coordinated, coherent and transparent decision-making and the encouragement and identification of multi-purpose uses in relevant projects. Marine spatial planning is essential when selecting the most appropriate siting for marine-based projects. Particular attention should be given to critical habitat and relevant species, such as small cetaceans, in order to achieve good environmental status.
ASCOBANS Parties have agreed on a number of resolutions that support the integration of marine spatial planning into development processes. Small cetaceans benefit from good marine spatial planning and this is highlighted in the resolutions. Countries are requested to provide information relevant to their country in this regard.

15.1. Please provide ionformation in regard to current and foreseen marine spatial planning.

National plan(s) and processes in force:
››› Maritime Spatial Plan of Polish Sea Areas in scale 1:200 000

National plan(s) and processes in preparation:

››› The Spatial Development Plan for Polish sea area has been drafted, but in accordance with national law, it will be adopted in the form of a regulation of the Council of Ministers. Legislative work is advanced, and it is expected that the regulation on the adoption of the plan will enter into force on 31 March 2021.

Further information regarding national plans, including links to online resources and maps where available:
››› https://www.umgdy.gov.pl/?page_id=2161

Transboundary plan(s) and processes in force:

››› The draft development plan for the Polish Sea Areas on a scale of 1 : 200 000 underwent consultations with vulnerable countries as part of the strategic environmental assessment: https://polishmsp.eu/

15.2. Have there been any other instances/issues in your country regarding marine spatial planning during the reporting period.

☑ Yes

Provide provide details:

Provide provide details:
››› Departament Gospodarki Morskiej, Ministerstwo Infrastruktury

III. Surveys and Research

B. Monitoring Programmes

3. Overview of Current Monitoring and Survey Schemes

AIM: to provide information on the progress of monitoring programmes, relevant methodologies and aims thereof, and status of small cetaceans during the reporting period.
Relevant Resolutions: 8.11 (Rev.MOP9), 8.9, 8.8, 8.5 (Rev.MOP9), 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7
Monitoring programmes provide important data on biological and environmental attributes, such as population status, abundance and spatial-temporal distribution. They create opportunities for new research and development, including potential improvements to methodology for monitoring in terms of accuracy, practicality and cost efficiency.
In the ASCOBANS Area, application of coherent monitoring programmes focused on small cetaceans, which collect and provide objective, robust and comparable data, is a key component in understanding and improving the conservation status of small cetaceans through appropriate management. Parties have agreed to design, implement and support relevant monitoring programmes through a number of resolutions. Such efforts are also supported by legislation from a number of bodies which identify monitoring as a requirement in management systems. Additionally, Parties have been encouraged to coordinate their monitoring programmes, which promotes international cooperation and synergies. Parties have also been encouraged to review such monitoring programmes and propose improvements for the betterment of conservation efforts.
It is the interest of ASCOBANS to understand the current monitoring programmes utilised, their outputs, and future activities in the Agreement Area. Countries are requested to provide information relevant to their activities as well as potential improvements to such programmes and efforts.

3.1. Did your country have national monitoring programmes that enabled assessment of the Conservation Status of small cetaceans in your waters (i.e. provides abundance estimates and/or life history parameters and information on pressures) during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below.
☑ Yes. Please provide details in the table.

3.2. Please provide the relevant information regarding aerial surveying activities.

Provide the number of surveys, area covered, relevant species, and timeframe of the survey.
››› Morświn jest objęty monitoringiem w ramach Państwowego Monitoringu Środowiska od 2015. Obecnie są dostępne wyniki za lata 2016-2018. Wyniki za 2021 rok będą dostępne w drugiej połowie 2022 roku.

3.3. Please provide the relevant information regarding Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM).

Provide the location of moored instruments, timeframe of the survey, the relevant species, and the make and model of instruments used.
››› Analiza danych PMŚ pokazała wyższą średnią wartości pozytywnej detekcji w monitoringu krajowym niż w projekcie SAMBAH.W przypadku Zatoki Pomorskiej średnia wartość DPD wynosi 4,56 co stanowi 10 krotnie większą wartość w porównaniu do projektu SAMBAH gdzie odnotowano wartość DPD 0,43. W Ławicy Stilo również odnotowano wyższy wynik czyli 0,32 podczas gdy w przypadku SAMBAH jedynie 0,08 DPD. Uzyskane wyniki świadczą o regularnym występowaniu morświna w polskich obszarach morskich. Wykazano że morświny występują regularnie na monitorowanych stanowiskach badawczych w ciągu całego roku tj wszystkich 12 miesięcy.

3.4. Are any of these programmes carried out in collaboration with other countries?

☑ No

IV. Use of Strandings Records

A. Stranding Network and Strandings

AIM: to provide information on stranding events and demonstrate progress of stranding networks in understanding, monitoring and mitigating strandings of small cetaceans.
Relevant Resolutions: **8.10 (Rev.MOP9)**, 8.7, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.4, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7
Stranding of cetaceans is an ever-present occurrence and analysis through necropsy and sampling can provide indications of reason for injury and death. Stranding numbers also provide information on population status, abundance and distribution. Effective response to strandings contributes to the maintenance of favourable conservation status of small cetaceans and also has implications for animal welfare. Comprehensive stranding networks are a critical asset in managing small cetacean strandings and have resulted in large numbers of animals rescued and returned to sea. These networks also have the capacity to guide the public on animal welfare, human health and safety considerations during stranding events.
In the effort to mitigate the anthropogenic causes of these occurrences, Parties have agreed to measures through a number of resolutions. Continued monitoring of stranding causation and further developing guidance for best practices in stranding response and necropsies was identified by Parties as important tasks to pursue, as was setting up stranding response networks. This information is to align with appropriate sampling practices and countries should ensure that the data is available for researchers. Additionally, development and support of international strandings databases and regular reporting is conducted through relevant research institutes and stranding schemes. ASCOBANS Secretariat encourages the ongoing funding and support of engagement with organizations for further development of guidelines, best practices and maintaining dataflow for capacity building across stranding networks.
To better understand the extent to which stranding events occur and how these events are managed, it is the interest of ASCOBANS for countries to provide the relevant information on these occurrences within the Agreement Area, procedures undertaken in response to stranding events, necropsies and information on stranding networks.

1.1. Is there a national stranding network in place?

☑ No. Go to Question 1.4.

1.4. Is there a database of strandings?

☑ Yes. Continue to Question 1.5.

1.5. Is there data available online or downloadable on request?

☑ No

Please provide details:

››› Data has been collected by Prof. Krzysztoaf Skóra Hel Marine Station, University of Gdańsk through external projects and statutory activities. It is available through the HELCOM/ASCOBANS database.

1.7. Were cases photographed, measured or sampled even if not collected for necropsy during the reporting period?

☑ Yes

1.8. Were there recorded stranding events in your country during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in **this table** - download and then attach it using the blue 'link' button below. Provide details relevant for recorded stranding events during the reporting period.
☑ Yes

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

Sec-IV_A_1.8_0.xlsx - Poland_2021

1.9. Were any necropsies conducted during the reporting period?

☑ No

VI. Information and Education

A. Education and Outreach

A. Education and Outreach

AIM: to determine if there are gaps in the outreach and education activities and if additional material should be produced in your country or by the Secretariat (e.g. on certain themes, species, regions, languages, for certain target audiences).
Relevant Resolutions: 9.1, 8.3, 5.8
ASCOBANS Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan[1] was presented at the 17th Meeting of the Advisory Committee. The purpose of the CEPA Plan was to identify actions and activities to be undertaken by the Secretariat, Parties and relevant partners. In addition, the Advisory Committee recommended the following overarching principles: (i) Carefully identifying the audience – e.g. children, students, policy makers, fishers – and making materials appropriate to each particular audience; (ii) Noting that different localities, communities and cultures may require different approaches; (iii) Preparing outreach and education materials in relevant languages (including on the website); and (iv) Building joint initiatives with 'partner' organizations and others. The CEPA aimed for more effective engagement with audiences, greater impact upon audiences, closer relationship with key conservation issues; more effective connection with educational, fundraising and promotional initiatives; and more effective and easily understood communication of relevant areas of science. In this spirit, the purpose of this section is to highlight successes and to identify potential gaps in outreach and education activities and related materials.
[1] See AC17 Report, Annex 10 (starting on page 65).

1.1. List education/outreach activities in the reporting period in your country, which are of relevance to conservation of small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Area.

E.g. activities during the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Propoise in May.
Per activity, please identify: the organizer, name of activity (incl. translation to English, where applicable), date(s), location, target audience (general public, scientists, children, fisheres; others - please state), and links for further information.
››› On the 24th of July, WWF Blue Patrol took part in an educational event called Fish Day, organized by Hel Marine Station in Hel. Its volunteers communicated to general public about marine mammals, including harbour porpoise, and the need to protect them. It is estimated that 3325 people participated in the event. During the whole year WWF Blue Patrol educated at schools and a number of events reaching in total around 1760 people.

1.2. List current information/outreach materials produced in your country, which are of relevance to the ASCOBANS Area and species.

Per publication, please provide: the name of the publication (inc. translation into English, where applicable), author(s), publisher, year, links (to download publication), and identify whether ASCOBANS may distribute the link to publication for outreach purposes.
››› There were 24 000 copies of updated Blue Guide printed (two versions - in Polish and English), which includes information on harbour porpoise species, its ecology, threats and ways to protect it. The publication are to be given away mostly on the beaches to tourists to increase their awarness on the marine species. And English version of the Guide will be available online at a later stage.

1.3. List other organizations engaged in outreach relevant to the ASCOBANS Area.

Please include web links where applicable.
››› WWF Poland

1.4. List other initiatives/work/collaboration relevant to the ASCOBANS Area that are not included above.

››› WWF Poland "Earth Hour" initiative in 2021 was wholly dedicated to the marine issues, inluding the bycatch threat that Baltic harbour porpoises are facing.