2. Review of New Information on Threats and Other Issues to Small Cetaceans

Jenny Renell, ASCOBANS Secretariat
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Plan Activity</th>
<th>Link to Extant Resolutions</th>
<th>Action By</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Status (where applicable)</th>
<th>Related AC27 docs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>72. Make full use of the information submitted in order to assess progress in the implementation of the Agreement and make recommendations to Parties.</td>
<td></td>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Requires action by AC27.</td>
<td>NR.1-10</td>
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<td>73. Tailor the agenda for each of the meetings of the Advisory Committee to reflect the topics selected for the previous year’s national reports.</td>
<td></td>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Done for AC27, AC26.</td>
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<td>78. Present to Parties, each year no later than 30 June, provided all reports have been received sufficiently in advance of that date, a compilation of Annual National Reports.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>At each AC Meeting</td>
<td>The Secretariat did not meet the deadline, but compilation posted for AC27.</td>
<td>Inf.2</td>
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- Overview of the reports submitted this year:
The most successful aspects of implementation of the Agreement? (1)

- A well-established strandings network (BE)
- Ongoing consultations with the military about mitigating UXO destruction (BE)
- Published: Fishery bycatch estimate based on camera monitoring (DK)
- A pilot study examining HP stomach content did not indicate plastic to be a problem (DK)
- Increase in harbour porpoise PAM detections in 6 MPAs since 2012 (DK)
- Ongoing: acoustic monitoring; participation in the SAMBAH II process (FI)
- HP included in the Finnish Marine Strategy in the Programme of Measures and in the monitoring plan, and in the Prioritized Action Framework (FI)
- Proof of a joint protection spirit: support against the mass killing of 1400+ WSD at the Faroe Islands (DE)
- The preparation of UN convention to avoid & reduce plastic litter, adopted by UNEA 2022 (DE)
- Negotiation of management plans for the German MPAs (DE)
The most successful aspects of implementation of the Agreement? (2)

- Increased public awareness and interest to small cetaceans (LT)
- Use of the updated national HP Conservation Plan to guide policy and research (NL)
- Continuation & formalisation of monitoring tasks; more holistic analyses of data sets (NL)
- Development of an EU proposal to assess bycatch of cetaceans in the North Sea (NL)
- Establishing a stranding respond scheme (PL)
- Establishment of porpoise monitoring programme & harmonisation at the Baltic Sea Region level with the HELCOM Parties (PL)
- Ongoing: preparation of conservation plans for marine N2K sites; dialogue with the fishing community on protection of the Baltic Sea ecosystem; project to remove lost fishing nets (PL)
- Updated HP Action Plan; MPAs with HP include management plans; further development of health & disease monitoring programme (SE)
- Ongoing: implementing several dedicated bycatch monitoring schemes and mitigation methods; cetacean stranding monitoring programmes (UK)
- Several marine debris monitoring programmes (UK)
The greatest challenges in implementing the Agreement?

(1)

- Overlap between the many different fora (BE)
- Slow process to develop and implement indicators of the EU MSFD (DK)
- The lack of sufficient information on bycatch covering the Baltic population (DK)
- The ICES advice on emergency actions for harbour porpoise in the Baltic (FI)
- Bycatch: reducing it (FR, DE); mitigation & monitoring (SE)
- Sufficient noise protection (in particular during the construction of marine wind energy plants) (DE)
- Lack of resources: human, financial, infrastructure (LT)
- Acquiring offshore animals for post-mortem exams (NL)
The greatest challenges in implementing the Agreement?

(2)

- Long-term funding of monitoring / new research projects; understanding the ecological role of the HP in Dutch waters - and beyond (NL)
- Cumulative impacts: methods for assessing (NL); effects in the Baltic Sea (PL)
- Deterioration of the Baltic Sea; increase of human pressure in marine areas; biodiversity loss and fishing resources depletion (PL)
- Indicator development and thresholds (MSFD); underwater noise, thresholds & mitigation measures; protection of threatened species outside protected areas; monitoring the effect of measures (SE)
- Covid19: significant impacts both in terms of carrying out planned and funding new projects (UK)
The main priorities for future implementation of the Agreement? (1)

- Streamlining work in different international fora in order to avoid duplication; continuing the work on mitigation of underwater noise (BE)
- Funding for SAMBAH II (DK, FI)
- Same as the greatest challenge = bycatch in the Bay of Biscay (FR)
- Listing the Baltic proper population of the harbour porpoise in CMS Annex I in the close future and in the resulting nature protection necessities will be a challenge for the future (DE)
- Data collection (LT): information & research on the harbour porpoise; HP detection data via EIA Programme in the planned wind farm territory; data on underwater noise
The main priorities for future implementation of the Agreement? (2)

• Bycatch:
  – International cooperation on assessing bycatch for the North Sea HP (NL);
  – Development of alternative methodologies to make monitoring cost-effective & multi-targeted (NL);
  – Monitoring bycatch in a more effective and covering way even if it is challenging (SE);
  – Improving the existing bycatch monitoring & mitigation (UK)

• Save Baltic HP populations; continue activities incl. promoting pro-ecological practices (PL)

• Resource depletion & its impact - further research needed; exploration of scale of impacts related to marine debris on cetacean species and options for mitigation measures (UK)