

Agenda Item 7.1

Publicity and Outreach

Reports by the Secretariat, Parties and
Partners

Document 7.1

Report of the Secretariat on
Outreach Activities

Action Requested

- Take note
- Comment
- Consider coordinating the 2023 Season's Greetings card competition

Submitted by

Secretariat



Note: Delegates are kindly reminded to bring their own document copies to the meeting, if needed.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

1. This report has been developed in response to [Resolution 9.1 Work Plan for the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee and Secretariat 2021-2024](#) > Work Plan Activity 48, which requests the Secretariat to report on outreach and communication matters at each meeting of the Advisory Committee. This document reports on activities by the Secretariat since the 27th Meeting of Advisory Committee (AC27), noting also the updated Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan that was endorsed by MOP9 ([ASCOBANS/MOP9/Doc.5.3](#)), and [Resolution 5.8 Educational and Promotional Activities](#) (2006).

Public Events

2. The 20th International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP) was on 21 May 2023. The IDBHP aims to promote public support through (national) institutions staging various events and exhibitions at museums and scientific institutions around the Baltic Sea. The aim is that the IDBHP would be observed by at least one notable institution in every country around the Baltic Sea. Parties' support to ensure this continues is encouraged.
3. The Secretariat promoted IDBHP on its social media channels. Event notifications were received from Professor Krzysztof Skóra Hel Marine Station (Poland), and Coalition Clean Baltic (Sweden).

Meetings and Scientific Conferences

4. The Secretariat attended IWC Conservation Committee meeting and the 68th Meeting of the Commission in Slovenia in October 2022, and the 8th Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS in Malta in November 2022.
5. In April 2023, the Secretariat attended the 34th Conference of the European Cetacean Society in Spain, and organised three workshops in conjunction with the conference:
 - [ASCOBANS-ACCOBAMS Marine Debris Workshop - New and Emerging Aspects](#) (co-organised with ACCOBAMS Secretariat)
 - [ECS/ASCOBANS Workshop on Scoping the Development of a European Marine Strandings Database](#)
 - [ECS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Workshop: Current cetacean bycatch issues in European waters](#) (co-organised with ACCOBAMS Secretariat).
6. In addition, the Secretariat attended a number of online meetings on cetacean conservation, such as the EU Marine Expert Group meeting (March 2023). The Secretariat also made a presentation at the CMS Energy Task Force webinar (October 2022), highlighting the threats to cetaceans resulting from offshore wind energy construction.

Electronic Media

7. Website:
 - The Secretariat continues to maintain the ASCOBANS [website](#), however with less news items updated during this reporting period. Other content updates occur as required, while also dependent on staff capacity.
 - Due to technological requirements, a major upgrade of CMS Family-wide websites is necessary to improve functionality and to enhance security. The upgrade started in 2021, with the latest content management technology (Drupal) and is expected to be delivered by the end of 2023.

8. Social media:

- On the ASCOBANS [Facebook page](#). The Secretariat has shared, for example, updates from relevant meetings, general news stories of relevance to small cetaceans in the Agreement area, news items related to threats to cetaceans. Ninety-nine posts were published on the page in 2022, which is 175% more than in 2021. The post with most reach – ca. 5,300 people – in 2022 was a video created by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, sent in for the 30th anniversary of ASCOBANS. The IDBHP post reached nearly a thousand people. In 2022, the overall reach compared to year 2021 went up over 250%. The anniversary year also generated 85% more visits to the Facebook page. To date in 2023, nearly thirty posts have been published, and the post about the ECS/ASCOBANS workshop on scoping the development of a European marine strandings database has had the most reach (ca. 1,300 people).
- The ASCOBANS [Twitter account](#) was launched in March 2022 and has had relatively good engagement rates. A hundred-and-sixty-eight tweets have been published since. In 2022, the tweet with the most impressions, i.e. total number of times a tweet has been seen, was a post about the Secretariat attending ACCOBAMS MOP8 (ca. 6,000 impressions). To date in 2023, the tweet that has generated most impressions is about the ECS/ASCOBANS workshop on scoping the development of a European marine strandings database (ca. 2,900 impressions).

9. Newsletter: The ASCOBANS Newsletter, which compiles leading news items from the ASCOBANS website from the past year, was circulated in December 2022. The [Newsletter](#) was sent to all contacts in the ASCOBANS database, including Parties, non-Party Range States, Approved Observer Organisations, and other observers.

Publications and Information Material

10. Information Material: As in the past, and in line with Parties' instructions through the Work Plan, the Secretariat continues to distribute information material upon request. The material – such as brochures, postcards, leaflets, pens, bags – is being used throughout the Agreement Area during ASCOBANS events and those by other institutions. Most of these can be found in pdf-version on the [ASCOBANS website](#). The Secretariat did not receive any requests for materials during this reporting period.
11. Exhibition Material:
- ASCOBANS Exhibition and Threat banners: [The Whale Workshop](#) continues presenting inflatable, life-sized models of cetaceans and other marine life in the Agreement Area in all its shows, also showing an English version of the ten-banner exhibition about the Secretariat and its functions.
 - 'Die Letzten 300': ['The Last 300' -exhibition](#) comprises art and design work submitted for a creativity competition organised by Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), NABU, and OceanCare in partnership with ASCOBANS Secretariat in 2013, targeting German-speaking areas. The Secretariat currently stores this exhibition in the UN building in Bonn, Germany, but has been requested to vacate the storage space and is coordinating with WDC regarding the future location of the exhibition.
12. Season's Greetings card: In 2022, the Secretariat produced its Season's Greetings card in-house, and posted it the ASCOBANS website and social media pages in December 2022 (see image below). This year, Parties and stakeholders are invited to consider coordinating the 2023 Season's Greetings card competition. The Secretariat invites expressions of interest to be announced at AC28, or to be sent via email by 1 November 2023.

