

Agenda Item 2

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

National Report 6

**2022 Annual National Report:
United Kingdom**

Action Requested

Take note

Submitted by

United Kingdom



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

ASCOBANS

2022 ASCOBANS National Report

The deadline for the submission of National Reports is **31 May 2023**.

As outlined in ASCOBANS Resolution 8.1 (Rev.MOP9) National Reporting, this form will cover the year 2022 (Year 3), and the following topics included in the Annex to the Resolution, in addition to the standard Sections I (General Information) and VII (Other Matters):

- Cetacean watching industry (Section II B5)
- Recreational sea use (Section II B6)
- Other sources of disturbance (Section II B7)
- Pollution and hazardous substances (incl. microplastics) (Section II C10)
- Ship strikes (Section II C11)
- Climate change (Section II C12)
- Physical habitat change (Section II C13)
- Other issues (Section II C14)
- Protected areas (Section II E16)
- Education and outreach (Section VI A)

The national reports submitted will inform discussions at the 28th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee (26-28 September 2023).

- All questions apply to the reporting period of 1 January - 31 December 2022.
- 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 2022 (Year 3), what does this report reveal about:

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

- >>> - Long-term monitoring & management of fisheries being developed and implemented with consideration of marine mammals
- The continuation of several long-term monitoring schemes in the UK have been an invaluable source of information on threats, population health & pollutants in the marine environment
- MCCIP Marine Mammal review publication – significant work in collating available research on climate change impacts and identification of knowledge gaps and priority research areas
- Launch of the Joint Cetacean Data Programme in 2022 improves access to data to improve trends in abundance and distribution
- Publication of the Marine Wildlife Bycatch Mitigation Initiative in 2022 sets policy ambition to address bycatch, including for cetaceans.

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

- >>> - Increasing anthropogenic presence in and influence on marine environments from energy, shipping and leisure industries.
- Understanding and management of pressures faced by cetaceans against a backdrop of uncertainties around impacts of climate change.

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

- >>> - Further development of management and monitoring plans for marine protected areas
- Improving understanding of the impacts of climate change on small cetaceans in UK waters, including better understanding the impacts of environmental variables beyond temperature, better understanding cumulative impacts and the impacts of bottom-up changes on marine mammals.
- Continued focus on improving the existing bycatch monitoring and mitigation.

I. General Information

A. Country Information

Name of Party / Non-Party Range State:

>>> United Kingdom

Details of the Report Compiler

Name:

>>> Poppy Cooney

Function:

>>> Marine Support Officer

Organization:

>>> Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Postal Address:

>>> Inverdee House, Baxter Street, Aberdeen, AB11 9QA

Email:

>>> Poppy.Cooney@jncc.gov.uk

Does the Report Compiler act as ASCOBANS National Coordinator (i.e. focal point)?

No

Details of contributor(s)

Please provide the following details per contributor:

Topic(s) contributed to, Name, Function, Organization, Postal Address, Telephone, and Email.

>>> Topic(s) contributed to:

Name: Emily Martin

Function: Marine Species Advisor

Organization: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Postal Address: Inverdee House, Baxter Street, Aberdeen, AB11 9QA

Telephone:

Email: Emily.Martin@jncc.gov.uk

Topic(s) contributed to: ALL

Name: Niki Clear

Function: Marine Species Advisor

Organization: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Postal Address: Inverdee House, Baxter Street, Aberdeen, AB11 9QA

Telephone:

Email: Niki.Clear@jncc.gov.uk

Topic(s) contributed to: Section II C10; Section II C11; Section VI

Name: Rob Deaville

Function: CSIP Project Manager

Organization: Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP)

Postal Address: Institute of Zoology, Regents Park, London, NW1 4RY

Telephone: 020 74496672

Email: rob.deaville@ioz.ac.uk

Topic(s) contributed to: Section II C10; Section II C11;

Name: Rosie Williams

Function:

Organization: Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP)

Postal Address: Institute of Zoology, Regents Park, London, NW1 4RY

Telephone:

Email: Rosie.Williams@ioz.ac.uk

Topic(s) contributed to: Section II C10;
Name: Jon Barber
Function: Marine Chemist
Organization: Centre of Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)
Postal Address: Pakefield Rd, Lowestoft NR33 0HT
Telephone:
Email: Jon.Barber@cefas.gov.uk

Topic(s) contributed to: ALL
Name: Thomas Stringell
Function: Lead Specialist Advisor - Marine Species
Organization: Natural Resource Wales / Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Postal Address:
Telephone: 0300 065 491
Email: Tom.Stringell@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

Topic(s) contributed to: Section II 5 & 6
Name: Samantha Parker
Function: Marine Mammal Senior Specialist
Organization: Natural England
Postal Address: Dragonfly House, 2 Gilders Way, Norwich NR3 1UB
Telephone:
Email: Samantha.Parker@naturalengland.org.uk

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

B. Disturbance (incl. potential physical impacts)

5. Cetacean Watching Industry

AIM: to determine if the developing cetacean watching industry poses a threat to small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 6.1, 5.4

Whale and dolphin watching is a global industry that can provide socio-economic benefits to local communities by attracting tourism, as well as strengthening public awareness of conservation needs. However, it also has the potential of being harmful when it interferes with the behaviour of animals in their natural environment and may even lead to injury or death. As the cetacean watching industry is still scarcely developed in some countries, collecting this data now allows tracking the development of the industry.

It is of particular importance to ASCOBANS to obtain an overview of the current scale of the activities and to monitor the development of the industry in the future. This is done by quantifying the number and locations of operators, reporting negative interactions and providing information on the development and implementation of any guidelines regarding cetacean watching.

Filling out this section accurately and completely will help to detect any indications of potential threats, allow timely mitigation action and enable Parties and Non-Party Range States to work towards a coordinated approach regarding the development of cetacean watching guidelines in the Agreement Area.

Note: We are only addressing commercial cetacean watching activities which take place from vessels and include viewing of small cetacean species. Operators are defined as those offering trips with a **primary focus:** they advertise specifically with the aim to see small cetaceans, or a **secondary focus:** they advertise either for other taxa, such as birds or seals, or large cetaceans, or more general for wildlife, but mention the opportunity to see small cetaceans.

5.1. Do you have any commercial small cetacean watching industry operation in your country?

Yes

5.2. Please identify the total number of operators conducting commercial cetacean watching in your country and provide details in the table.

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

In the table, provide the sub-regions in which commercial cetacean watching takes place. Identify if small cetacean watching is a primary and/or secondary focus of the operators and, in the first case, what the target species are.

21+

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[A28_Sec-II-B5.2_TourOperators_NC.xlsx](#) - List of operators offering wildlife watching/cetacean related boat-tours in the UK

5.3. Does your country have a definition of the term 'harassment' in general and/or as it relates to the Cetacean Watching Industry?

For example, the US Marine Mammal Protection Act uses the term harassment, and defines two levels: Level A harassment means any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance that has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild. Level B harassment refers to acts that have the potential to disturb (but not injure) a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by disrupting behavioural patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.

No

Provide definition:

>>> There is currently no UK-wide set definition of 'harassment' for small cetaceans. There are specific mentions of harassment in various documents and in general harassment is classed as repeated disturbance. In the UK Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) disturbance of animals is defined as any disturbance which is likely to impair the animals ability to survive, reproduce or rear/nurture young, or effect migration, or significantly affect local distribution or abundance.

5.4. Have there been any incidents of harassment towards small cetaceans in the context of commercial cetacean watching reported to authorities during the reporting period?

Yes. Please provide information below.

Provide per incident: date, context of incidence, outcome for (a) the animal or (b) human, legal procedures/court proceedings/ convictions that took place, responsible authority for such reports, links to websites or documentation of this report.

>>> Please note: All of the reported incidents are in the waters around Cornwall, this is due to an active education, monitoring and reporting scheme rather than a higher level of disturbance incidents occurring in this area.

Date: 2021, data for 2022 has not been published yet

Context: 254 incidences of cetacean disturbance in coastal waters around Cornwall, which were considered probable wildlife crime were reported to the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code group in 2021

Outcome for (a) the animal: Behavioural change observed.

Legal procedures: 2 reported cases were referred to the wildlife crime officers of the police, outcome is unknown

Responsible authority: Wildlife crime officers of the police authorities.

Link: https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/assets/uploads/WCL_Wildlife_Crime_Report_2021_29.11.22.pdf

Date: 17/05/2022

Context: Report of 2+ Risso's dolphin being harassed by a local wildlife tour boat operator near St Ives, Cornwall

Outcome for (a) the animal: Avoidance behaviour (dived) and displaced from the area

Legal procedures: Reported to the police and Marine Management Organisation at the time by the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code

Responsible authority: Cornwall and Devon Police, wildlife crime unit and Marine Management Organisation

Link: Not published information, hosted and shared by the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code group.

Date: 12/08/2022

Context: Report of 10 common dolphin being harassed by a local wildlife tour boat operator near St Ives, Cornwall

Outcome for (a) the animal: Displaced from the area

Legal procedures: Reported to the police and Marine Management Organisation at the time by the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code

Responsible authority: Cornwall and Devon Police, wildlife crime unit and Marine Management Organisation

Link: Not published information, hosted and shared by the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code group.

Date: 02/06/2022

Context: Report of 20+ common dolphin being harassed by a local wildlife tour boat operator near Penzance Cornwall Outcome for (a) the animal: Change in behaviour

Legal procedures: Reported with video footage to the Marine Management Organisation at the time by the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code

Responsible authority for such reports: Cornwall and Devon Police, wildlife crime unit and Marine Management Organisation

Link: Not published information, hosted and shared by the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code group.

Date: 03/10/2022

Context of incidence: Report of 2+ common dolphin being harassed by a local wildlife tour boat operator near Penzance Cornwall Outcome for (a) the animal: Change in behaviour

Legal procedures: No legal actions taken, but report and evidence are stored by Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code group.

Link: Not published information, hosted and shared by the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code group.

5.5. Does your country have any operators that offer swimming with dolphins (or other small cetaceans)?

In some parts of the world, this has become an important tourism industry with potential impacts for both small cetaceans and swimmers. Although scarcely developed, it has occurred within the ASCOBANS Agreement Area, and requires at least background monitoring. Sometimes incidents occur and can lead to harm for small cetaceans and/or swimmers.

No

5.7. Are there any solitary sociable dolphin interactions in your country?

Occasionally, individual solitary dolphins may associate with humans, resulting in increased interactions between the two which may lead to impacts upon either. Sometimes incidents occur and can lead to harm for small cetaceans and/or swimmers.

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

Select "Yes" when you have attached the table.

No. Go to Question 5.10.

5.8. Does your country have any mitigation measures (codes of conduct/guidelines) in place in the event of disturbance or harassment in the context of commercial cetacean watching, swimming with cetaceans, and interactions with solitary sociable dolphins?

Yes. Please provide information below.

Per measure (may include regional measures), please include: date of implementation, application region (Annex A), whether the measure has been effective (include comments), and other relevant information.

>>> Measure: Defra Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code

Date of implementation: In preparation, due for publication May 2023

Region:

Has the measure been effective? No Yes

Comments: Cannot comment on efficacy as Code is yet to be published and tested

Measure: Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code

Date of implementation: First published in 2006, revised in 2017

Has the measure been effective? No Yes.

Comments: The main purpose of the code is to raise awareness and offer practical guidance for responsible marine wildlife watching

Other information:

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/land-and-sea-management/managing-coasts-and-seas/scottish-marine-wildlife-watching-code>

Measure: Welsh local codes of conduct

Region: Irish Sea & Celtic Sea

Has the measure been effective? Difficult to say

Other information: Codes are for guidance and awareness and are not legally binding.

<https://wildseas.wales/respect/>

Measure: Local or organisational voluntary codes

Date of implementation: various

Has the measure been effective? Useful tools for public and industry engagement. These voluntary codes and guidelines make recommendations on best practice such as: appropriate method of approach; minimum distance to cetaceans; appropriate speed and methods to reduce noise; maximum numbers of vessels; and time limits to spend with cetaceans.

Other information/Links:

WiSe Scheme <https://www.wisescheme.org> - training scheme for minimizing wildlife disturbance, for commercial boat operators and the general public.

Sea Watch Foundation <https://www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk/marine-code-of-conduct/> - best practice advice for recreational activities.

The Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code - <https://cornwallmarinelifecode.org.uk/>

- code of conduct promoting best practice for encountering marine life in Cornwall, supported by a dedicated group and data collection of local wildlife disturbance incidences.

RYA The Green Blue <https://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge/planning-licensing/the-green-blue> - guidance proving practical advice and information for recreational boaters, watersports participants, and marine businesses to act in a considerate and environmentally conscious way.

The Blue Flag <https://www.blueflag.global/our-programme> Award programme with stringent standards for boating tourism operators to meet in order to be awarded certification.

The Pembrokeshire Marine Code <https://www.pembrokeshiremarinecode.org.uk/>

Jersey Marine and Coastal code

<https://www.gov.je/Environment/LandMarineWildlife/Mammals/Pages/Dolphins.aspx>

The Northumberland Marine Wildlife Watching Boating Code of Conduct

<http://www.xbordercurrents.co.uk/documents-and-links/codes-of-conduct/>

Thanet Marine Wildlife Watching Code <http://www.thanetcoast.org.uk/factfile/thanet-coastal-codes/marine-wildlife-watching-code/>

The Dolphin Space Programme <http://www.dolphinspace.org/> - accreditation scheme for wildlife tour boat operators in the Moray Firth.

5.11. Have there been any other instances/issues related to the cetacean watching industry during the reporting period in your country?

Yes

Please provide details:

>>> The Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code 2021 report highlighted commercial wildlife boat trips accounted was the second highest cause of disturbance reporting in Cornwall, accounting for a quarter of reports. With leisure craft accounting for half of the reports between 2014 and 2020.

<https://cornwallmarinelifecode.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Marine-Wildlife-Disturbance-in-Cornwall-Summary-Report-2021-final.pdf>

5.12. Is the perceived level of pressure from commercial small cetacean watching in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

Increasing

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>> Some regions reported perceived level of pressure as remaining stable, but nationally it is considered to be increasing due to significant increases in some areas.

Increases to pressure towards bottlenose dolphin and white-beaked dolphin were noted by Natural England local area teams and CMCC reported increasing pressure across all locally present species.

6. Recreational Sea Use

AIM: to determine whether recreational sea use is detrimental to small cetaceans and, if so, to identify types of activity and areas of concern.

Relevant Resolutions: **8.9, 8.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.4**

Recreational use of the sea by humans includes a wide variety of activities, some of which are known to have a potential negative impact on small cetaceans. This includes the use of RIBs (rigid-hulled inflatable boats), hard-hulled boats exceeding 10 knots in speed, yachts and personal watercrafts such as jet skis, kayaks and surfboards; and excludes recreational fishing and sea-angling.

Interactions can cause animals to change behaviour and move away, but can also have more serious impacts, such as injury or even death due to collision. ASCOBANS has agreed on a number of resolutions that highlight the importance to review all available information on recreational use of the sea. Obtaining an overview of best practices and guidelines will enable comparisons to be made across the Agreement Area, and ultimately may lead to the provision of overall, consistent guidelines that might be developed at a regional or national level. In this section we strive to obtain an overview of potential risk areas and national sources that have data on incidents with small cetaceans related to recreational sea use.

6.1. Are data on recreational sea use available for your country?

Yes. Please provide information below.

Provide the type of information (e.g. number of licensed recreational vessels per region, tourist number per region, other) and web link or other relevant link to the data (where can this information be found)

>>> Hotspot map of recreational boating activity in the UK, published by Royal Yachting Association (RYA) last updated in 2019

Web link or other relevant link to data: <https://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge/planning-licensing/uk-coastal-atlas-of-recreational-boating>

6.2. Is the information on main areas of recreational sea use available for your country?

Many Range States are mapping human activities to fulfil obligations under the EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, MSFD, OSPAR, and HELCOM; this information is relevant (though often not readily accessible) to ASCOBANS in understanding the extent and trends of human activities potentially impacting small cetaceans.

Yes. Please provide information below.

Provide per region (Annex A): type of information (e.g. maps, GIS, reports), whether the data is available online, and link to data, or comment on unavailability.

>>> <https://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge/planning-licensing/uk-coastal-atlas-of-recreational-boating>

6.3. Were there any incidents of disturbance or harassment to small cetaceans in relation to recreational sea use in your country?

Yes. Please provide information below.

Per date, please provide: the Area (Annex A), context of incidence (e.g. what kind of recreational activity), outcome for (a) the animal or (b) human, legal procedures/court proceedings/convictions, and link to websites or documentation of the incident.

>>> Date: 9/7/2021

Area: 27.4.b

Context: Pod of feeding bottlenose dolphins harassed by boat circling them repeatedly at excessive speed

Outcome for (a) the animal: Behaviour change witnessed, animals displaced from area

Legal procedures: Prosecution and conviction of speedboat driver

Link: <https://uk.whales.org/2022/06/13/man-convicted-for-harassing-dolphins/>

Date: 12/05/2022

Context: Leisure boat reported to be disturbing a pod of 6 common dolphin near Mousehole, Penwith, Cornwall

Outcome for (a) the animal: Animals dispersed from the area

Legal procedures: Reported to the Marine Management Organisation

Link: Not published information, hosted and shared by the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code group.

Date: 05/05/2022

Context: Hire leisure boat reported to be disturbing a pod of 10+ common dolphin near Port Issac in Cornwall

Outcome for animal: Reported change in animal behaviour as a result of actions taken by the boat operators

Legal procedures: None

Link: Not published information, hosted and shared by the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code group.

6.4. Does your country have any mitigation measures (codes of conduct/guidelines/laws/rules) in place in the event of disturbance or harassment of small cetaceans through recreational sea use?

Yes. Please provide information below.

Per measure, please provide: the date of implementation, Region (Annex A), whether the measure has been effective (yes or no) with comments, and other relevant information.

>>> Same codes as listed under 5.8 apply to both commercial and recreation sea-use

6.5. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on disturbance or harassment of small cetaceans through recreational sea use 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.

>>> Operation Seabird – collaborative project with NGOs, police and the Marine Management Organisation to address the issues of marine wildlife disturbance from recreational use of the sea. Originally established in Yorkshire, but collaborations being established with other UK regions.

<https://yorkshiremarinenaturepartnership.org.uk/collaborate/operation-seabird/>

6.6. Have there been any other instances/issues related to recreational sea use in your country during the reporting period?

Yes

Please provide details:

>>> Though the 2022 report has not been published, the UK wildlife and countryside link report on wildlife crime in 2021 reported increasing numbers of cetacean disturbance incidences in coastal waters in Cornwall being reported to the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code group. The number of incidences which were perceived to be probable wildlife crime raised from 73 (2018), 90 (2019), 33 (2020) to 254 in 2021.

https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/assets/uploads/WCL_Wildlife_Crime_Report_2021_29.11.22.pdf

6.7. Is the perceived level of pressure from recreational sea use in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

Increasing

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>> Reports to CMCC, Reports from Natural England Area Teams & Natural Resource Wales broadly across all small cetacean species found in the area.

7. Other Sources of Disturbance

AIM: to identify new sources of disturbance that could be a threat to small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 6.1

Overlap of small cetacean and human habitat use is not covered by the questions above, while human activities in the seas are increasing, particularly in the coastal zone. Human activities can, for example, cause a small cetacean to change behaviour, or it can cause physical harm or death. This section aims to identify new sources of disturbance that could be a threat to small cetaceans. The issue of noise is covered under section B3.

7.1. Have there been any incidents of disturbance to small cetaceans in your country during the reporting period, not covered in the items above?

Any incidents of disturbance to small cetaceans not covered in Sections B5 or B6.

Unknown

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

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.

Yes

Comments:

>>> Yes, pollutants in small cetaceans are monitored through a collaboration between the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP), Scottish Marine Animal Strandings Scheme (SMASS) and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Agriculture Science (CEFAS). Additional funding for small cetacean contaminant analyses has been provided through the NERC funded consortium project 'ChemPop' (<https://www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/chempop-does-discharge-chemicals-environment-harm-wildlife-populations>).

10.2. Who is carrying out the pollutant monitoring program? Please provide information on institution(s)/agencies that collect the samples and carry out analyses.

Please provide the following information per institution(s)/agencies: name of institution/agency, role in monitoring (e.g. sample collection, analyses, other), postal address, contact person, telephone, email, weblink.

>>> Name: Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP)

Role in monitoring: Sample collection via necropsy

Postal Address: Institute of Zoology, ZSL, Regents Park, London, NW1 4RY

Contact Person: Rob Deaville/Rosie Williams

Telephone: N/A

Email: rob.deaville@ioz.ac.uk rosie.williams@ioz.ac.uk

Weblink: <https://www.zsl.org/what-we-do/projects/cetacean-strandings-investigation-programme-csip>

Name: Scottish Marine Animal Strandings Scheme (SMASS)

Role in monitoring: Sample collection via necropsy

Postal Address: SMASS, University of Glasgow, G12 8QQ, Scotland

Contact Person: Andrew Brownlow

Telephone: N/A

Email: Andrew.Brownlow@glasgow.ac.uk

Weblink: <https://strandings.org/>

Name: Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Agriculture Science (CEFAS)

Role in monitoring: Analyses

Postal Address: Pakefield Rd, Lowestoft, NR33 0HT

Contact Person: Jon Barber

Telephone: N/A

Email: jon.barber@cefas.gov.uk

Weblink: <https://www.cefas.co.uk/>

10.3. Identify the small cetacean species that were covered by your monitoring program during the reporting period.

>>> BD Bottlenose dolphin

KW Killer Whale

SBW Sowerby's beaked whale

HP Harbour porpoise

10.4. Select the source of your samples.

Respondents may select multiple options.

- Necropsy from stranding
- Necropsy from bycatch

10.5. Select the geographical coverage of your monitoring program

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.

- OII Southern North Sea
- OII Northern North Sea
- OII Channel
- OIII Celtic Sea
- OIII Irish Sea
- OIII Irish & Scottish W. Coast

10.6. Select the contaminant / pathogen analyses you have conducted for small cetaceans.

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.

- POP (e.g. PCBs)
- Toxic elements
- Brucella

Comments:

>>> The POPs analysed were HCB, HCHs, DDTs, PCBs, BDEs, HBCDs, and PFASs. In harbour porpoises additional analyses were carried out to determine concentrations of the following metals: chromium, nickel, copper, zinc, arsenic, cadmium, lead, selenium, manganese, iron, mercury and silver.

Please note- Brucella sp. tested for in majority of small cetacean necropsies conducted by CSIP/SMASS during 2022. Tested species not listed in table 10.3.

Please note- samples have been collected from all small cetacean necropsies conducted in the UK during 2022 for potential future contaminant analyses. Includes ongoing collaborative research for POPs, radionuclides, microplastics etc. Sampled species not listed in table 10.3.

10.7. Does your country determine microplastics in small cetaceans?

- Yes

Do you have a specific protocol to monitor microplastics in small cetaceans?

There is currently no agreed protocol between Parties. Best practice needs to be established to make sure that all results obtained are comparable between research institutes. In particular, it is essential to avoid contamination of samples during processing, e.g. with airborne microplastic fibres.

- Yes

Please provide details and web link or upload document:

>>> Methodology according to;

Nelms, S.E. et al. (2019) Microplastics in marine mammals stranded around the British coast: ubiquitous but transitory?. *Sci Rep* 9, 1075 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-018-37428-3>

10.8. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on impact of pollution and hazardous substances (incl. microplastics) on small cetaceans in your country.

We need to capture information on new knowledge arising from monitoring schemes or other research projects, especially results which enhance our understanding of impacts of hazardous pollutants and/or assess their known or likely effects on small cetacean population status (e.g. considering PCB concentrations in blubber in relation to threshold for inhibition of reproduction). Where relevant, please report separately per pollutant, species and area. List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information.

>>> Authier, M., Brownlow, A., Caurant, F., Das, K., Galatius, A., Geelhoed, S., Hernández Sánchez, M. T., Mendez-Fernandez, P., Murphy, S., Persson, S., Roos, A., van den Heuvel-Greve, M., Vinas, L., Williams, R., & Deaville, R. (2023). Pilot Assessment of Status and Trends of persistent chemicals in marine mammals. *OSPAR*. Gkotsis, G., Nika, M.-C., Nikolopoulou, V., Alygizakis, N., Bizani, E., Aalizadeh, R., Badry, A., Chadwick, E., Cincinelli, A., & Claßen, D. (2022). Assessment of contaminants of emerging concern in European apex predators and their prey by LC-QToF MS wide-scope target analysis. *Environment International*, 107623. Williams, R. S., Brownlow, A., Baillie, A., Barber, J. L., Barnett, J., Davison, N. J., Deaville, R., ten Doeschate, M., Penrose, R., Perkins, M., Williams, R., Jepson, P. D., Lyashevskaya, O., & Murphy, S. (2023). Evaluation of a marine mammal status and trends contaminants indicator for European waters. *Science of The Total Environment*, 866, 161301. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2022.161301>

10.9. If applicable, list any additional evidence/data of reduced impacts of pollutants on small cetaceans following implementation of national mitigation measures (e.g. decline of contaminant levels in blubber over time).

>>> Decline of PCB concentrations detailed in:

Williams, R. S., Brownlow, A., Baillie, A., Barber, J. L., Barnett, J., Davison, N. J., Deaville, R., ten Doeschate, M., Penrose, R., Perkins, M., Williams, R., Jepson, P. D., Lyashevskaya, O., & Murphy, S. (2023). Evaluation of a marine mammal status and trends contaminants indicator for European waters. *Science of The Total Environment*, 866, 161301. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2022.161301>

10.10. Have there been any instances/issues related to pollution and hazardous substances in your country during the reporting period?

No

10.11. Is the perceived level of pressure from pollution and hazardous substances in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

Decreasing

Staying the same

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>> HP Harbour porpoise

Modelling of PCB blubber concentrations in HPs shows decreasing impact.

CD Short-beaked Common dolphin

Modelling of PCB blubber concentrations appears to be decreasing in females & juveniles but staying the same in males. Manuscript in prep.

Please note, 10.11 relates to expert opinion on PCB blubber concentrations in selected small cetacean species only. It does not include opinion on all contaminants/pathogens listed in Table 10.6.

11. Ship Strikes

AIM: understanding the potential risk of ship strike as a cause of injury/death in small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 8.9, 8.2, 8.1 (Rev.MOP9), 6.1, 5.4

Ship strikes are collisions between vessels and cetaceans. In the last decades, evidence has emerged that ship strikes might occur more often than previously thought and can have a significant impact on small resident cetacean populations. Most research so far has focused on large cetaceans as those animals are often carried visibly into port at the bow of a vessel. For small cetaceans, ship strike events are not well documented.

Ship strike occurrence is directly linked to the frequency of shipping activity, including such directed at cetaceans, i.e. cetacean watching. To quantify this pressure, it is important to know what kind of vessels are involved in the strike, as well as the type, size and speed of the vessel. But it is also important to have information on the small cetaceans involved, in particular if the animals were engaged in certain behaviour such as feeding.

Ship strike can cause direct death or injury in cetaceans. Even collisions that are non-fatal might leave individuals with a reduction in their chance of survival. To determine the occurrence of ship-strikes, different sources are used. For small cetaceans, direct observations are the rarest. Necropsies of stranded animals can find evidence of characteristic trauma and photographs of animals that survived ship strikes can show typical injuries, such as marks left by propellers. One way to quantify how many animals in a population are impacted by ship strike is to assess the percentage of animals in a photo-identification catalogue that bear ship strike marks.

As this is still a not well documented threat, this section aims to obtain an overview of what kind of data and research is available and ongoing in the countries.

11.1 Are there reports available in your country of ship strikes with small cetaceans from visual observations?

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) has a global database for ship strike incidents with small cetaceans. Whether or not your country is Party to the IWC, it is encouraged for countries to provide all ship strike incident information to the IWC database.

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

No

11.2. Are there reports in your country of vessel strikes from necropsies of stranded animals for 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.

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[Sec-II_C_11.2_VesselStrikeStrandings.xlsx](#)

11.3. Does your country have a protocol in use to determine that a cause of death in post-mortem examination is due to a vessel strike?

Yes

Please provide information below:

>>> All cetacean post-mortem investigations (including tissue sampling) were conducted using standard procedures e.g.;

Ijsseldijk, L.L., Brownlow, A.C. and Mazzariol, S. (editors) (2020) Best Practice on Cetacean Post-mortem Investigation and Tissue Sampling. Joint ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS document
<https://www.ascobans.org/en/document/best-practice-cetacean-post-mortem-investigation-and-tissue-sampling-0>

11.4. Is there evidence in your country from existing photo-identification catalogues of small cetaceans of any non-lethal ship strike during the reporting period?

For populations of small cetaceans, such as bottlenose dolphins, one can identify those animals in photo-identification catalogues of animals that show ship-strike evidence (e.g. scars). Monitoring the % of animals that show ship strike evidence can be a useful tool to monitor the development of this threat.

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

No

11.5. Do you have any other photographs or evidence of ship strikes outside of the photo identification catalogue?

No

11.6. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on ship strikes and its possible effects on small cetaceans 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).

>>> Organisation Cetacea (Orca) conduct research into ship strike via platforms of opportunity. The majority of this work is carried out in the Bay of Biscay and further afield, working to quantify the impact and develop a toolkit and training to reduce the impacts: <https://www.orcaweb.org.uk/our-work/saving-large-whales-from-ship-strike>

11.7. List any management/policy actions/relevant regulations/guidelines related to mitigating ship strike for small cetaceans (re-routing, tracking animals, ship speed limits) in your country and the year of implementation (current and planned).

Provide web links if available.

>>> See 11.6 - Organisation cetacean have developed training and a toolkit for mitigating ship strike:
<https://www.orcaweb.org.uk/our-work/saving-large-whales-from-ship-strike>

11.8. Have there been any other instances/issues of ship strike on small cetaceans in your country in the reporting period?

No

11.9. Is the perceived level of pressure from ship strikes on small cetaceans in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

Staying the same

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>> CD Short-beaked Common dolphin - From monitoring through UK stranding programmes (CSIP and SMASS)

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 12.21 on Climate Change and Migratory Species.

12.1. Does your country undertake monitoring that has potential to contribute to knowledge and identification of climate impacts on small cetaceans?

Climate change will have a multitude of possible direct and indirect effects on small cetaceans. Attempting to quantify this is challenging. These questions are an attempt at providing an overview of the type of monitoring programmes that are conducted that may provide indirect evidence of climate change on small cetaceans.

Yes. Continue to Question 12.2.

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

Hold 'Ctrl' to select multiple options.

- Changes in small cetacean abundance
- Changes in small cetacean distribution
- Changes in prey (fish) abundance and distribution
- Changes in fishing effort
- Changes in the occurrence of pathogens (from sampled individuals)

Comments (if possible, provide contact/link to project):

>>> Changes in small cetacean abundance

SCANS IV was carried out in Summer 2022. The survey was carried out in most UK waters (excluding NW Scotland). Data analysis is ongoing but can be fitted alongside data from previous SCANS iterations to identify trends.

Link: <https://www.tiho-hannover.de/en/clinics-institutes/institutes/institute-for-terrestrial-and-aquatic-wildlife-research-itaw/scans-iv-survey>

Changes in small cetacean distribution SCANS IV was carried out in Summer 2022. The survey was carried out in most of the UK waters (excluding NW Scotland). Data analysis is ongoing but can be fitted alongside data from previous SCANS iterations to identify trends.

Link: <https://www.tiho-hannover.de/en/clinics-institutes/institutes/institute-for-terrestrial-and-aquatic-wildlife-research-itaw/scans-iv-survey>.

The Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programmes (CSIP) and Scottish Marine Animal Strandings Scheme (SMASS) operate around the entirety of the British coastline and analysis of stranding records may help identify changes in small cetacean distribution.

Link CSIP: <https://ukstrandings.org/>

Link SMASS: <https://strandings.org/>

Changes in prey (fish) abundance and distribution The ICES Triennial Mackerel Egg survey was carried out in 2022, including in waters along the western and northern coasts of Britain. Data collected from these surveys provide an estimate of total annual egg production, which is used to estimate the spawning stock biomass of mackerel in the Northeast Atlantic. Preliminary results from the 2022 survey and the 2021 survey in the North Sea can be found here: https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Working_Group_on_Mackerel_and_Horse_Mackerel_Egg_Surveys_WGMEGS_outputs_from_2022_meeting_/22128536

Long-term monitoring of demersal gadoid species also takes place through the International Bottom Trawl Survey (IBTS). These occur twice annually in the North Sea and throughout the year in the Northeast Atlantic. While these are designed to capture demersal species, pelagic species may be caught opportunistically, and the North Sea IBTS undertaken in quarter 1 adds a pelagic aspect to the survey to collect eggs and larvae from winter spawning herring in the southern North Sea and Channel. 2022 surveys were hindered by mechanical issues, weather and COVID-19 restrictions. 4 regional surveys in UK waters were expected to be

carried out for the Northeast Atlantic IBTS in 2022. The latest report from the IBTS Working Group can be found here: https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/International_Bottom_Trawl_Survey_Working_Group_IBTSWG_/20502828

The UK participate in monitoring of herring and sprat through ICES pelagic acoustic surveys. In 2022, Herring Acoustic Surveys (HERAS) were expected to be carried out for autumn spawning herring in the North Sea and West of Scotland. These surveys are also expected to collect data on sprat in these regions. The Irish Sea Acoustic Survey (ISAS) was expected to carry out surveys for autumn spawning herring in the Irish Sea and North Channel. These surveys will collect data on fish numbers, biomass and distribution. The report of 2022 survey results is not yet available, but the report detailing 2021 results can be found here: https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Working_Group_on_International_Pelagic_Surveys_WGIPS_/20502822

The annual North Sea Sandeel Surveys (NSSS) sample sandeels buried in the seabed in November and December and compare catches since the 1980's. The latest reports on sandeels in the North Sea can be found here: https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Sandeel_Ammodytes_spp_in_divisions_4_a_b_and_Subdivision_20_Sandeel_Area_3r_northern_and_central_North_Sea_Skagerrak_/21815184 and here: https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Sandeel_Ammodytes_spp_in_divisions_4_b_c_and_Subdivision_20_Sandeel_Area_2r_central_and_southern_North_Sea_/21815175

The International Herring Larvae Survey has been carried out in the North Sea and adjacent areas since 1967. These are conducted in autumn and winter and collect data about herring spawning stock biomass. They are used as a relative index of change in herring spawning stock biomass over time. The database can be found at this link: <https://obis.org/dataset/94829f49-bab5-48a5-9a64-38425f8ec640>

Several surveys are also conducted for herring and sprat in the Western British Isles. These include, although not limited to:

- The industry-science survey programme, a collaborative partnership between Scotland, Netherlands and Ireland which aims to estimate spawning stock size in ICES divisions IVa/VIIc. Acoustic surveys have been conducted every September since 2016.
- The PELTIC pelagic survey which samples clupeid species in the western English Channel, eastern Celtic Sea and Cardigan Bay since 2013.

Changes in fishing effort

Fishing effort in UK waters is monitored through landings data and vessel tracking. The MMO produce annual fisheries statistics which describe annual effort in terms of days at sea, gross tonnage days, or kW days at the level of ICES rectangle (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-sea-fisheries-annual-statistics>).

There is also real-time monitoring of effort in fisheries where effort is regulated, or in fisheries managed by quotas (through landings), but it is not present in all areas/fisheries in UK waters.

Aggregated VMS and landings data for vessels over 12m is submitted to ICES and merged with other nations to produce fine scale spatial effort mapping, annually (<https://www.ices.dk/data/dataset-collections/Pages/Fish-catch-and-stock-assessment.aspx>).

Changes in the occurrence of pathogens

(from sampled individuals) CSIP and SMASS undertake necropsies of stranded animals around the UK coastline. During this process the presence of parasites, and where the animal goes through histopathology, the presence/absence of infection is recorded. This information is inputted to a database and could be analysed to understand changes over time.

Link CSIP: <https://ukstrandings.org/>

Link SMASS: <https://strandings.org/>

12.3. Relevant new research/work/collaborations which provide evidence/data about climate change, including its emerging potential issues and effects on small cetaceans 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); include the species concerned, the climate change effect observed, who did the work)

>>> Martin, E., Banga, R. and Taylor, N.L. Climate change impacts on marine mammals around the UK and Ireland. MCCIP Science Review 2023, 22pp. doi: 10.14465/2023.reu06.mam

As part of the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership (MCCIP), the JNCC carried out a review of current scientific understanding on the impacts of climate change on marine mammals around the UK and Ireland, building from previous reviews in 2013 and 2020. The evidence continues to suggest that the main impacts of climate change on marine mammals are geographic range shifts, reduction in suitable habitats, food web alterations and increased prevalence of disease. However, the diverse range of anthropogenic pressures acting on marine mammals and the difficulty determining causation from correlation in observed changes makes separating climate change induced pressures from wider cumulative pressures difficult. More long-term species monitoring, and a better understanding of cumulative impacts and bottom-up effects are needed to improve confidence in the impacts of climate change on marine mammals and what could happen in the future.

Brown, A.R., Lilley, M.K., Shutler, J., Widdicombe, C., Rooks, P., McEvoy, A., Torres, R., Artioli, Y., Rawle, G., Homyard, J. and Tyler, C.R. (2022) Harmful Algal Blooms and their impacts on shellfish mariculture follow regionally distinct patterns of water circulation in the western English Channel during the 2018 heatwave. *Harmful Algae*, 111, 102166.

Bull, J.C., Jones, O.R., Börger, L., Franconi, N., Banga, R., Lock, K. and Stringell, T.B. (2021) Climate causes shifts in grey seal phenology by modifying age structure. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 288(1964), 20212284.

Kebke, A., Samarra, F. and Deros, D. (2022) Climate change and cetacean health: impacts and future directions. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, 377(1854), 20210249.

Williamson, M.J., ten Doeschate, M.T., Deaville, R., Brownlow, A.C. and Taylor, N.L. (2021) Cetaceans as sentinels for informing climate change policy in UK waters. *Marine Policy*, 131, 104634.

Snell, M. et al. (2023) An investigation into the effects of climate change on baleen whale distribution in the British Isles, *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 187, 114565, ISSN 0025-326X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2022.114565>

12.4. Have there been any instances/issues related to identified trends in small cetacean populations as a result of climate change in your country during the reporting period?

No

12.5. Is the perceived level of pressure from climate change to small cetaceans in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

Increasing

Unknown

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>> Evidence of the impacts of climate change on all small cetaceans in the United Kingdom may be increasing but more long-term monitoring of marine mammals is needed to better identify changes in the distribution and abundance over time as well as trends in infectious diseases, strandings and changes in phenology. In addition, more work is needed to better understand the impacts of environmental variables beyond changes in temperature, to better understand cumulative impacts in the marine environment and distinguish the impacts of climate change from other pressures in the environment, and to better understand the impacts of bottom-up changes on marine mammals.

13. Physical Habitat Change (e.g. from construction)

AIM: human activities in the Agreement Area have the potential to impact upon small cetaceans. Tracking those activities that cause physical habitat change and improving our understanding of their relative impacts will help shape any necessary mitigation action required.

Relevant Resolutions: **8.11 (Rev.MOP9)**, 8.9, 8.6, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.1, 6.2, 6.1, 5.7

This section aims to review new information on physical habitat change, e.g. from construction, and its impacts on small cetaceans, their prey and their habitat, and make recommendations to Parties and other relevant authorities for further action.

The collation of this information will contribute to the development of risk maps showing the spatial and temporal (by season) distribution of activities that have an impact on small cetaceans, including information provided in National Reports, taking into account the work done by other organizations.

Note: In the term “physical habitat change”, we include a) coastal/marine construction – artificial islands, harbours, bridges, oil/gas platforms, wind turbines, tidal turbines; and b) seabed damage – dredging, bottom trawling.

13.1. Provide spatial information on locations (in form of maps and/or links) of physical habitat change in your country by activity type (dredging, marine construction, coastal construction) for the reporting period.

Many range states are mapping human activities to fulfil obligations under the EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, MSFD, OSPAR, and HELCOM; this information is relevant (though often not readily accessible) to ASCOBANS in understanding the extent and trends of human activities potentially impacting small cetaceans.

Please provide per region (Annex A): the type of information (e.g. maps, GIS, reports), whether the data is available online, and web links to data, or comment on unavailability.

>>> MMO hosts information for England and Wales. Marine Information System (MIS) provided by the MMO -

<http://mis.marinemanagement.org.uk/>

Marine Scotland hosts information for Scotland - <http://marine.gov.scot/maps/nmpi>

Wales Marine Planning Portal - <http://lle.gov.wales/apps/marineportal/#lat=52.5145&lon=-3.9111&z=8&tgt=false>

Defra Mapper:

<http://defra.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=3dc94e81a22e41a6ace0bd327af4f346>

13.2. Does your country have any reported cases of physical habitat changes (e.g. dredging, marine construction, coastal construction) impacting small cetaceans during the reporting period?

If you select 'Yes', please also provide web links if available.

Yes

Please provide details:

>>> Wales - Harbour construction. Aggregate extraction. Oil & Gas prospecting. Impacts not thought to be significant to marine mammals and standard mitigation/best practice used where necessary (assessed via normal planning and licensing)

13.3. Does your country have any mitigation measures (regulations/guidelines) to prevent impacts on small cetaceans during physical habitat change activities (e.g. dredging, marine construction, coastal construction)?

Per measure, please provide: the applicable industry, activity type, whether the measure has been effective with additional comments, and other relevant information.

>>> Yes-

Normally developed as part of marine mammal mitigation plans for projects, which are a requirement of EIAs for offshore development, or as part of Habitats Regulation Assessments.

<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork/MPAMGT/protectedareasmgmt>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site>

Measure: Assessment of effects: EIA, HRA, SEA and any mitigation that might be deemed a requirement (licence condition to remove adverse effect). Also industry best practice mitigation where applicable eg Guidelines on reducing disturbance etc

Industry: Marine renewables, cabling, coastal construction, aggregates, oil and gas, nuclear etc

Activity type: Construction, operation, decommissioning. Prospecting (surveys).

Has the measure been effective? No. Yes. Comments:

Allows development to progress in knowledge that harm to species and MPAs is reduced/removed

13.5. Have there been any other instances/issues in your country regarding physical habitat change during the reporting period?

No

13.6. Is the perceived level of pressure from physical habitat change in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

Increasing

Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable:

>>> Increasing across all species, as seen by an increase in number of planning applications annually

E. Area-based Conservation / Marine Protected Areas

16. Protected Areas, e.g. Natura 2000 Sites

AIM: to provide information on existing and proposed marine protected areas with small cetaceans as part of the selection criteria.

Relevant Resolutions: 5.7

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are considered under numerous agreements (including the Convention on Biological Diversity, Habitats Directive, Bern Convention, Ramsar Convention, OSPAR Convention, HELCOM, ACCOBAMS, MSFD) as a tool to achieve conservation goals. Part of ASCOBANS remit is to provide expert advice on the conservation and management of small cetaceans. This includes inviting Parties and Range States to continue or initiate research aimed at locating areas of special importance to the survival (in particular breeding and feeding) of small cetaceans as suitable sites for the establishment of protected areas. This also includes advising on appropriate management measures in these areas, on their own or in the context of other intergovernmental bodies to ensure the protection of small cetaceans.

To monitor the progress of such work to fulfil the obligations of Resolution 5.7 and actions in the workplan, ASCOBANS requires information (e.g. location, species, status, spatial data, management plans and monitoring) on existing and proposed marine protected areas with small cetaceans as part of the selection criteria.

It is of particular interest to ASCOBANS to obtain an overview of the current scale of marine protected areas and to review best practice approaches to management of marine protected areas, in order to make recommendations to Parties.

16.1. Does your country have MPAs (existing or proposed) where small cetaceans are the primary reason for the (proposed) designation?

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

Yes

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[Sec-II_E_16.1_MPAMain.xlsx](#)

16.2. Does your country have MPAs (existing or proposed) with small cetaceans are forming part of the selection criteria?

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

Yes

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[Sec-II_E_16.2_MPAPart.xlsx](#)

16.3. Provide information on management measures, including regulations/guidelines, particularly relevant to small cetaceans in MPAs listed above. Including any temporal/spatial restriction of activities (i.e. seasonal fishery closures).

In order to monitor implementation of MPA management measures and make recommendations on best practice, we need to understand what management measures are being used and be aware of examples of what approaches are proving effective.

Please provide per site name, the pressure, and the measure per pressure.

>>> Skomer MCZ - Fishing/ Marine developments not allowed within site, speed limit

16.4. Provide details of existing or proposed monitoring schemes related to the effectiveness of MPAs/management measured listed above for small cetaceans.

>>> - Annual Bottlenose dolphin monitoring to determine condition/status of SAC feature (Cardigan Bay/Pen Llyn ar Sarnau SACs)

- Ad hoc monitoring of porpoise presence in Skomer MCZ waters

16.5. Relevant new research/work/collaboration relating to MPAs in your country.

In order to plan future approaches to MPA management and monitoring, we need to be aware of current gaps and emerging issues.

List initiatives/projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information; include the species concerned, who did the work)

>>> Evans, P.G.H. and Waggitt, J.J. 2023. Modelled Distribution and Abundance of Cetaceans and Seabirds in Wales and Surrounding Waters. NRW Evidence Report, Report No: 646, 354 pp. Natural Resources Wales, Bangor.

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: 8.13, 8.3, 8.2, 5.8

The revised ASCOBANS Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan (see ASCOBANS/MOP9/Doc.5.3 Annex 1) was endorsed by the 9th Meeting of the Parties (2020). The purpose of the CEPA Plan is to identify realistic activities relevant to ASCOBANS and mandated by Parties, to be undertaken by the Secretariat, Parties, and relevant partners. It seeks a clearer focus amongst Secretariat, Parties, Partners, and stakeholders regarding objectives. (The previous CEPA Plan is available at AC17/Report/Annex10.) The purpose of this section is to highlight successes and to identify potential gaps in outreach and education activities and related materials.

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 Proposee 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, fisheries; others - please state), and links for further information.

>>> Organizer Name of activity

(incl. translation to English, where applicable) Date(s) Location Target audience

(general public, scientists, children, fishers; other - please state) Links (for further information)

WDC Education Various - school talks, outdoor activities, community visits - cetaceans in Scotland,

particularly bottlenose dolphins Ongoing Various schools, general public, communities

<https://dolphincentre.whales.org/>

HWDT Talks, volunteering opportunities, research, surveys, Whale track app, Hebridean whale trail Ongoing

West coast of Scotland general public, communities, schools, scientists <https://hwdt.org/>

Sea Watch Foundation

Seawatch National Whale and Dolphin Watch July 2022 National General public

<https://www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk/event/national-whale-and-dolphin-watch-2022/>

CSIP Hauling up Solutions 2 (demonstration dissections of stranded cetaceans to illustrate bycatch issue)

March 2022 Plymouth Fishers, Scientists [https://www.cleancatchuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/HUS2-](https://www.cleancatchuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/HUS2-Report.pdf)

Report.pdf

CSIP

Public demonstration dissections of stranded cetaceans 2022 (various) Various (online and in person) General public, Volunteers Deaville, R. (compiler) Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme 2022 Annual Report (in press)

CWTMSN CWTMSN volunteer network for stranding responses 2003-current Cornwall General public,

Volunteers The Cornwall Wildlife Trust's Marine Strandings Network has been recording and monitoring dead marine wildlife strandings in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly for over 20 years. It trains and supports a team of over 150 volunteers who man the dedicated Strandings Hotline and record all reported strandings of marine organisms on Cornwall's coastline. The army of MSN Volunteers record and photograph all stranded dolphins, whales and porpoises (collectively known as cetaceans) as well as seals, basking sharks and turtles, and facilitate post-mortem examinations of suitable animals to determine causes of death.

<https://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/our-conservation-work/at-sea/marine-strandings-network>

SMASS

SMASS volunteer network for stranding responses 2014-current Scotland General public, Volunteers Since

2014, SMASS has implemented an initiative to recruit and train collaborators and members of the public in the safe, reliable and accurate measurement and sampling of dead stranded marine animals. This encourages the public to report strandings and improves the range and breadth of data from cases unsuitable or logistically impossible to collect for post mortem examination. SMASS currently has over 200 trained volunteers around the Scottish coastline. This programme has proved invaluable to SMASS in both providing rapid and reliable information and images about strandings and in many cases measurement and samples from cases too autolysed, or remote, to enable a necropsy. <https://strandings.org/about/volunteer/>

VII. Other Matters

A. Other information or comments important for the Agreement.

Opportunity to include other information relevant to the topics covered in this form but which are missing.
>>> Cetacean welfare during live stranding or bycatch events is an area of increasing interest and importance.
The UK stranding programmes are currently undertaking a scoping project to enhance the knowledgebase