

# ASCOBANS COMMON DOLPHIN SAP

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SAP Coordinator & Co-chair

1

## ASCOBANS Common Dolphin SAP

- In 2016, Parties to ASCOBANS adopted Resolution 8.4 *Conservation of Common Dolphins*, requesting the Steering Group to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for the Common Dolphin in the eastern North Atlantic with the aim of restoring the population to a favourable conservation status.
- Common Dolphin SAP adopted intersessionally in 2019
- Resolution was amended at the 9th Meeting of the Signatories in 2020 ([Res.8.4. \(Rev.MOP9\)](#)).
- Sinéad Murphy and Florence Caurant appointed as Co-chairs of the SAP
- Sinéad Murphy appointed as Coordinator of the SAP, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023
- Three meetings of the 'Common Dolphin Group' – Steering Group implementing the Plan: Sept 2019, Dec 2020, and Nov 2022
- CD4 Meeting to be held online 9-10<sup>th</sup> January 2024

2

### Summary of actions

Priority	Action	Code
Essential	Identify the priority bycatch issues	RES-01
Essential	Improve estimates of bycatch rates to support development of conservation strategy	RES-02
Essential	Implement and assess gear modifications and mitigation measures to reduce bycatch	MIT-01
High	Implement a wide-scale surveillance programme to monitor trends in distribution and abundance in the NE Atlantic	MON-01
High	Improve understanding of causes of seasonal and annual variation in abundance and distribution, particularly in relation to human activities	RES-03
High	Monitor health and nutritional status, diet, life history parameters, and causes of mortality in the NE Atlantic	MON-02
Medium	Further our understanding on population structure by assessing and developing suitable techniques for these highly mobile small delphinids	RES-04
Medium	Improve understanding of and develop mitigation for the risks of anthropogenic sound	MIT-02
Medium	Ensure screening and assessment of the occurrence and effects of hazardous substances	MON-03
Low	Monitor for potential increases in anthropogenic activities that lead to incidences of death, injury or adverse health effects	MON-04

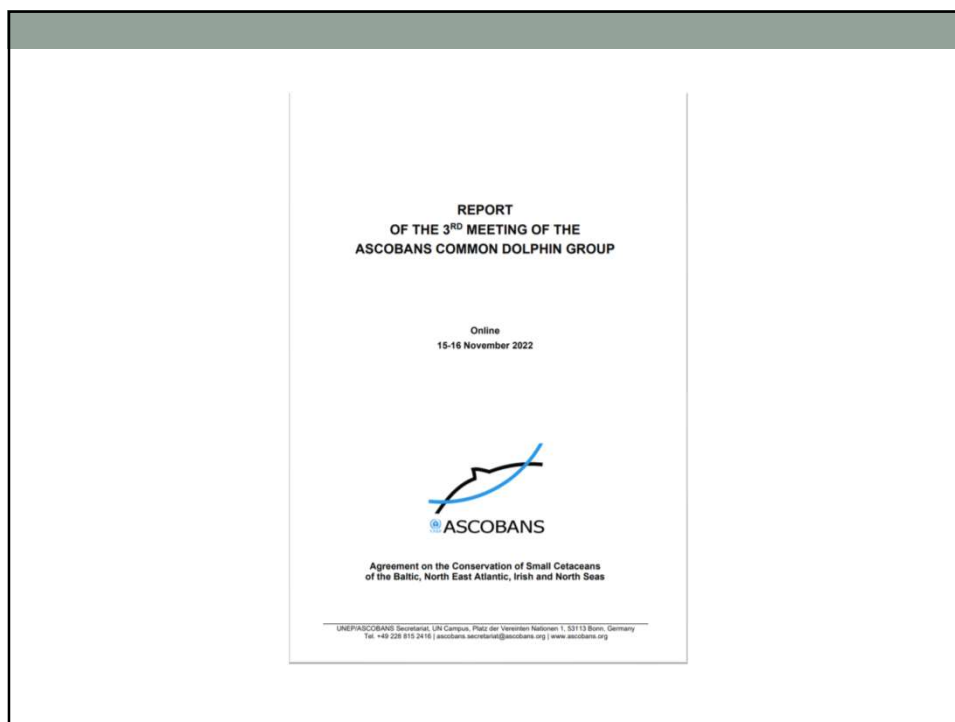
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### CD3 Meeting 15-16 Nov 2022, online

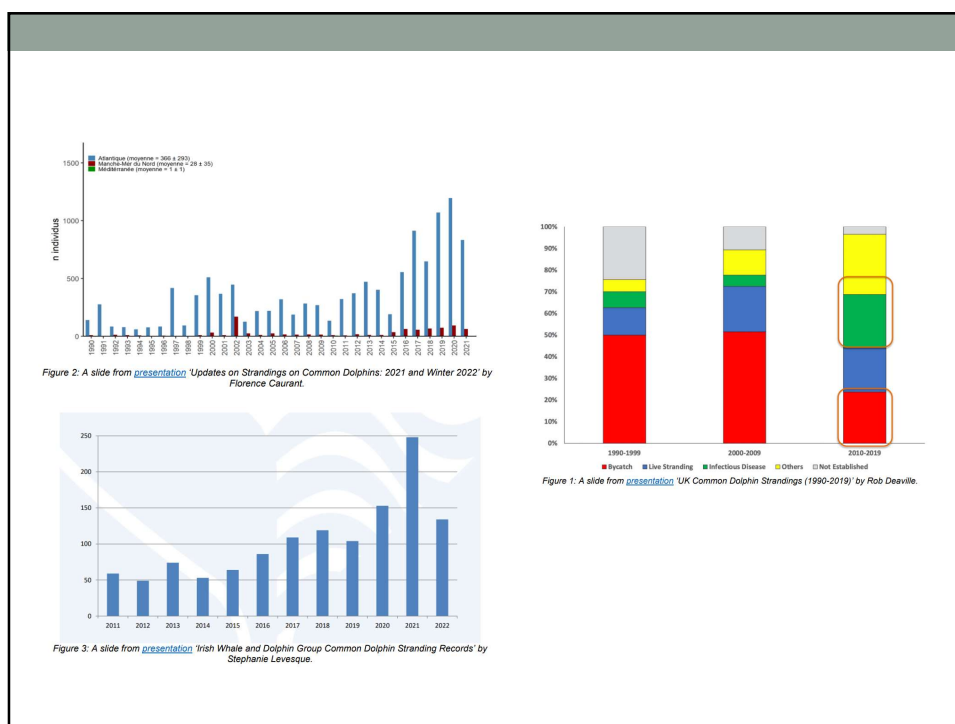
31 attended, from all Range States of the NE Atlantic population, as well as invited experts, IGOs, NGOs, EC, and ASCOBANS Secretariat

- Review of Achievements Table and work undertaken by Parties and Range States
- Updates on large surveys
  - SCANS IV
  - Irish ObSERVE II aerial survey
  - Re-evaluation of SCANS-II and CODA data
  - French aerial surveys
- Stranding patterns
- Reports from relevant meetings/WGs:
  - ICES WGBYC
  - ICES WGMME
  - ICES WKMOMA
  - OSPAR QSR biodiversity indicators
  - CetAMBICion project
  - ASCOBANS funded projects
  - DELMOGES project
- Hazardous substances, causes of mortality, health status, nutritional status, diet and life history analysis
- Updates by PhD Students Etienne Rouby, Sofia Albrecht and Marie Petitguyot
- Update on UK environmental legislation
- Discussion on the development of a Strategic Bycatch Reduction plan by the CDG
- Discussion on a Transboundary Assessment for the common dolphin for reporting under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive
- Update on the Action Plan for the Mediterranean Sea Common Dolphin

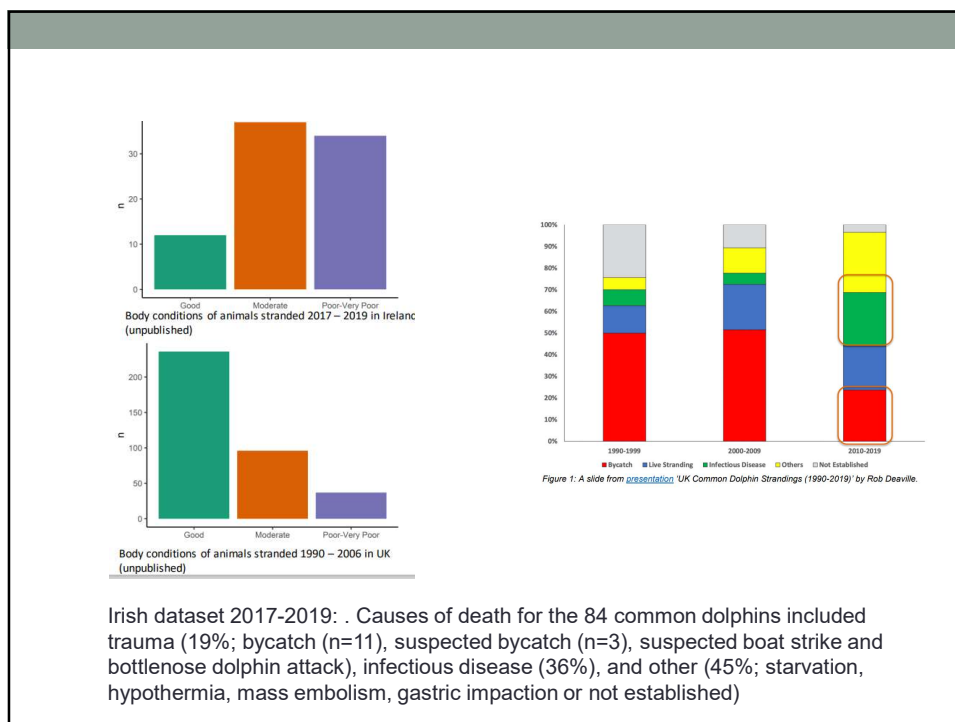
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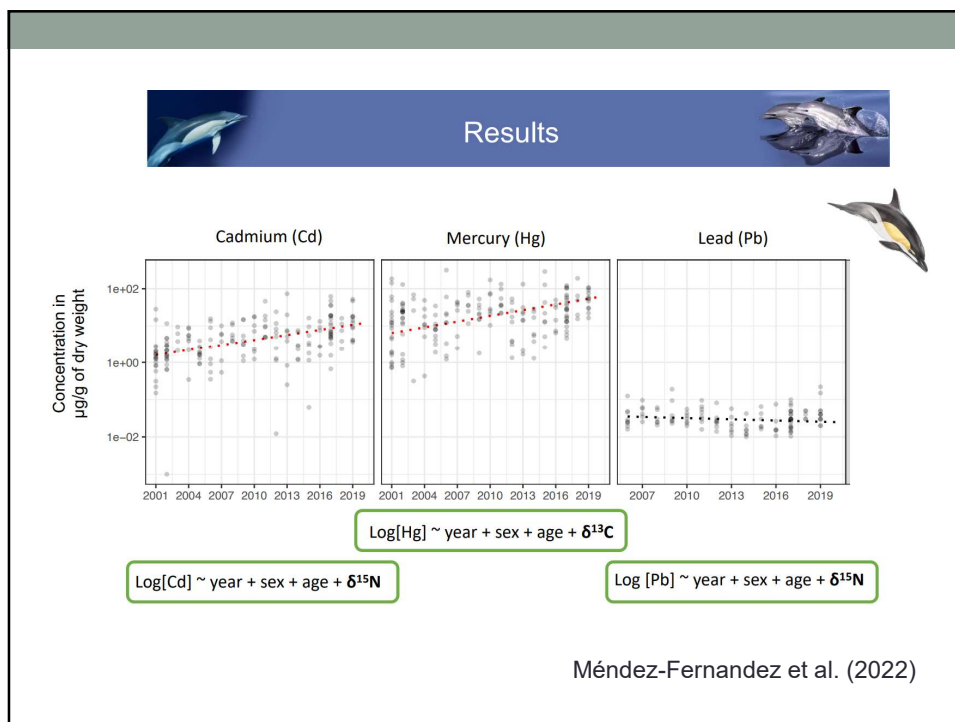
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6



7



8

Survey	Platform	N	CV	95% CI
CODA	Ship	345,694	0.43	154,962 - 771,186
SCANS-II	Ship	103,932	0.27	61,809 - 174,762
<b>CODA + SCANS-II</b>	<b>Ship Total</b>	<b>449,626</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>223,684 - 903,792</b>
SCANS-II	Aerial	18,730	0.47	10,818 - 28,347
<b>CODA + SCANS-II</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>468,356</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>247,921 - 884,789</b>

Figure 3: A slide from presentation 'Distribution and Abundance of Cetaceans in the European Atlantic: Results from SCANS-III Aerial and Ship Surveys in 2016' by Philip Hammond.

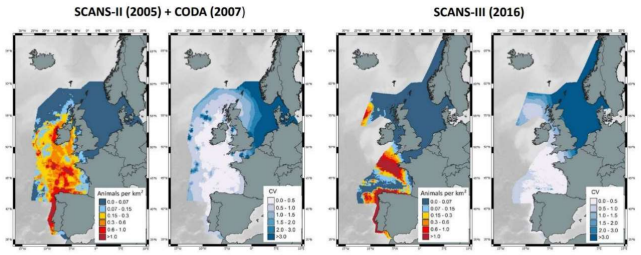


Figure 4: A slide from presentation 'Distribution and Abundance of Cetaceans in the European Atlantic: Results from SCANS-III Aerial and Ship Surveys in 2016' by Philip Hammond.

9

## OSPAR Marine Mammal Bycatch Indicator – QSR 2023

Table d: Overview of threshold values and estimated by-catch per AU. Abundance estimates are rounded. Approximate 95% Confidence intervals were computed assuming a log-normal distribution.

OSPAR Region	AU	Threshold setting approach	Abundance estimates	Threshold values (anthropogenic removal via bycatch)	Bycatch estimates (2020) * = threshold exceeded
Harbour porpoise					
II	Greater North Sea	RLA	Nbest = 345 000 CV = 0,18 (239 000 - 483 000)	1622	5974*
III / IV	Irish and Celtic Seas	mPBR	Nbest = 47 000 CV = 0,14 (35 300 - 60 800)	82	751*
III	West Scotland and Ireland	mPBR	Nbest = 44 300 CV = 0,14 (33 400 - 57 700)	78	305*
IV	Iberian Peninsula	mPBR	Nbest = 2 900 CV = 0,32 (1 500 - 5 100)	0	No estimate from observer data**
Common dolphin					
II, III, IV	North-East Atlantic	mPBR	Nbest = 634 000 CV = 0,31 (336 000 - 1 092 000) Common dolphin and unidentified (common or striped) combined total	985	6406*
Grey seal					
II	North Sea	PBR	Nmin = 119 519	7171	704
III	Celtic Sea	PBR	Nmin = 60 780	3647	1632

\*\*see Results and Results Extended text

OSPAR CO: 80% of K, 80% probability, 100-year time horizon

10



3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Common Dolphin Group  
Online, 15-16 November 2022

ASCOBANS/CDG3/Recommendations  
Dist. 20 January 2023

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE  
3<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS COMMON DOLPHIN GROUP**

*(Adopted by the Advisory Committee)*

These recommendations were made at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Common Dolphin Group (CDG, 15-16 November 2022), which reviewed the latest information related to bycatch and other significant threats. The CDG made the following recommendations:

**Surveys**

1. Parties and Non-Party Range States are encouraged to allocate adequate funding to future SCANS surveys in a timely manner to ensure that such surveys are ideally undertaken in June-July, and in as short a time as possible, noting the common dolphin is a highly mobile species and the abundance in an area may vary greatly between summer and autumn.

11



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**Strandings**

2. Considering the increase in cases of infectious disease and starvation reported in the UK and Ireland, Parties should ensure sufficient funding is available for stranding programmes to assess health status, and monitor changes in causes of death. The CDG also recommends this to Non-Party Range States. The need for a consistent and holistic approach to collection and analysis of data and samples from stranded animals should be borne in mind.
3. Parties should include trace metals in national pollution monitoring programmes, given the increasing temporal trends in cadmium and mercury observed in individuals in France.
4. Parties are recommended that North-east Atlantic-wide information on life history parameters be collected and analysed from strandings and bycaught animals to assess for evidence of temporal changes in those parameters at the population level that may have resulted from anthropogenic activities. (CDG2/Rec7)

12



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**Bycatch**

5. Parties are encouraged to continue to review and test a range of mitigation options to reduce bycatch of common dolphins, including acoustic deterrents, gear modifications, fishing practices, time-area closures, move-on procedure etc., mitigation measures that could be implemented at the fleet level. (CDG2/Rec4)
6. Parties and non-Party Range States should better target their bycatch monitoring efforts at the areas and métiers of high bycatch risk for the common dolphin. These include particularly static net fisheries (GNS and GTR) over the Biscay shelf (subareas 8a and 8b) and the coastal zone of the Iberian Peninsula (subareas 8c, 9a, 9b) where current monitoring effort covers only a very small fraction of fishing effort.
7. Portugal and Spain are encouraged to actively increase observer coverage and remote electronic monitoring in small vessel fisheries for estimating bycatch and also monitoring the effectiveness of mitigation measures, given the increase in strandings of bycaught common dolphins in recent years.
8. The Secretariat to establish a Working Group to further explore potential bycatch mitigation measures for beach seine and static gear small scale coastal fisheries operating in Portuguese waters. Members include Catarina Eira, Fiona Read, Graham Pierce, Marina Sequeira, Mark Simmonds, Sinéad Murphy. Others are welcome to join.

13



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**Bycatch**

9. Parties and other relevant EU Member States should continue efforts to harmonize and coordinate assessments for common dolphin and other cetaceans under the MSFD, as presently underway in France, Spain and Portugal under the EU CetAMBICon project.
10. Parties and other relevant EU Member States should seek mechanisms to continue current bycatch mitigation trials and pilot projects, aimed at reducing bycatch of common dolphins and other cetaceans (sometimes also benefiting other PET species), for example those carried out in the EU CetAMBICon project by Spain and Portugal.
11. Further to Recommendation 10, Parties and other relevant EU Member States should take into account, even where results have been promising, the need for further efforts to implement the findings (for example to ensure ongoing industry collaboration and seek mechanisms to cover added costs associated with mitigation) and to continue data collection until sufficient data are available to show whether a (statistically) significant reduction in bycatch is achieved.
12. Parties are encouraged to continue to conduct further analysis towards fine-scale risk-mapping to better understand factors determining high bycatch and to direct resources to high-risk areas and times. (CDG2/Rec5)

14



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**Other**

13. Letters of invitation to be sent from the Secretariat to request Non-Party Range States' participation in implementation of the SAP on Common Dolphins. (CDG2/Rec10)
14. SAP Range States to complete the 'Achievements Table' by end of the year to identify data gaps, as well as actions and funding that are required going forward. The Steering Group should then set priorities for each country. (CDG2/Rec11)