



EU updates in relation to bycatch – Marine Action Plan & MSFD

DG Environment Unit C2 - Marine environment and clean water services

ASCOBANS meeting, 9 January 2024

Marine Action Plan (February 2023)

- State of seas & sustainability of fisheries
- Bring “nature back into our lives”
- Bridge fisheries and environment worlds
- Builds on existing framework

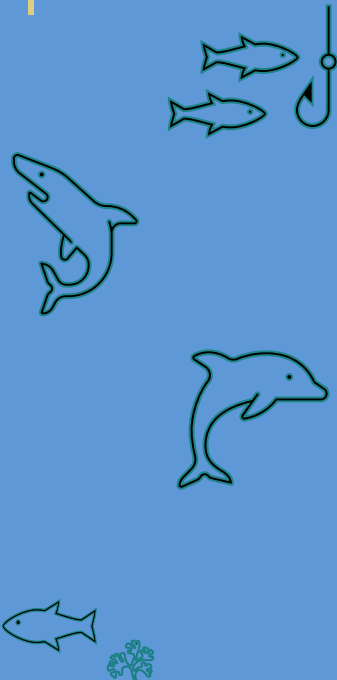
What is in the Action Plan

- Improve gear selectivity & address bycatch of sensitive species 
- Protect the seabed 
- Transition & knowledge 
- Governance 

Gear selectivity and sensitive species

Why?

Sensitive or threatened species are at risk



How?

New, innovative techniques to boost selectivity

Set threshold values for incidental bycatch under MSFD (criterion D1C1)

Gradual approach for measures

- **2023** → harbour porpoise (Baltic & Black Seas, Iberian Atlantic) & common dolphin (Bay of Biscay)
- **2024** → angel sharks, common skate, guitarfish, Maltese skate, great white shark, sand tiger shark, smalltooth sand tiger shark, spiny butterfly ray, sturgeons, marine turtles, Balearic shearwater and Mediterranean monk seal
- **2030** → remaining sensitive marine species

Improve the protection of the European eel

Governance and process

Measures

→ Measures for priority species
→ Phasing out bottom fishing in Natura 2000 sites protecting the habitats and species (Habitats Directive)

→ Bottom fishing phased out in all MPAs
→ Protect remaining sensitive species

2023

2024

2030

Governance

New special group established

Member States' roadmaps prepared & delivered

Mid-term review Biodiversity strategy
→ assess action plan progress

Implementation of Member State's roadmaps



Marine Strategy Framework Directive

The MSFD aims :

- to achieve a 'Good environmental status' (GES) of the EU's marine waters through 11 descriptors
- to protect the resource base upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend

It is supported by Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 on standards for good environmental status which:

- Sets criteria and standardised methods for assessing if GES is achieved for each descriptor.
- Requires EU Member States to establish GES threshold values
- Makes specific links to other EU policies to support harmonisation of assessment and monitoring (e.g. BHD, WFD, CFP, etc.)

Commission Decision – Species

D1C1 — Primary: The mortality rate per species from incidental by-catch is **below levels which threaten the species, such that its long-term viability is ensured**. Member States **shall establish the threshold values** for the mortality rate from incidental bycatch per species through regional or subregional cooperation.

D1C2 – Primary: The population abundance of the species is **not adversely affected due to anthropogenic pressures, such that its long-term viability is ensured**.

D1C4 & D1C5 – linked to assessments under the Habitats Directive and to Favourable Reference Values.

Assessments of adverse effects from pressures under other Descriptors to be taken into account.

State of play with D1C1 GES threshold values

- Activity undertaken in 2023 by JRC and DG ENV to support Member States/Regional Sea Conventions in developing and adopting threshold values for D1C1 (through JRC biodiversity expert network).
- Three meetings in 2023 + collaborative work in the JRC's wiki platform to discuss which species are selected, which methods are used and which TVs are proposed.
- JRC and DG ENV to publish an overview of the different approaches and recommendations to Member States/RSCs that do not have TVs in place yet.

MSFD reporting in 2024

- Art 17 requires a 6-year review of marine strategies and any updates to be reported
- Updates for Art. 8, 9 and 10 are to be reported by October 2024:
 - Initial assessment (current status, pressures and impacts, economic and social analysis, costs of degradation) (Art 8)
 - Determination of GES (good environmental status) (Art 9), **including new threshold values adopted.**
 - Environmental targets (Art 10).

Scale: Region or subdivisions (Baltic and Black Sea); subregion (North-East Atlantic, Mediterranean)

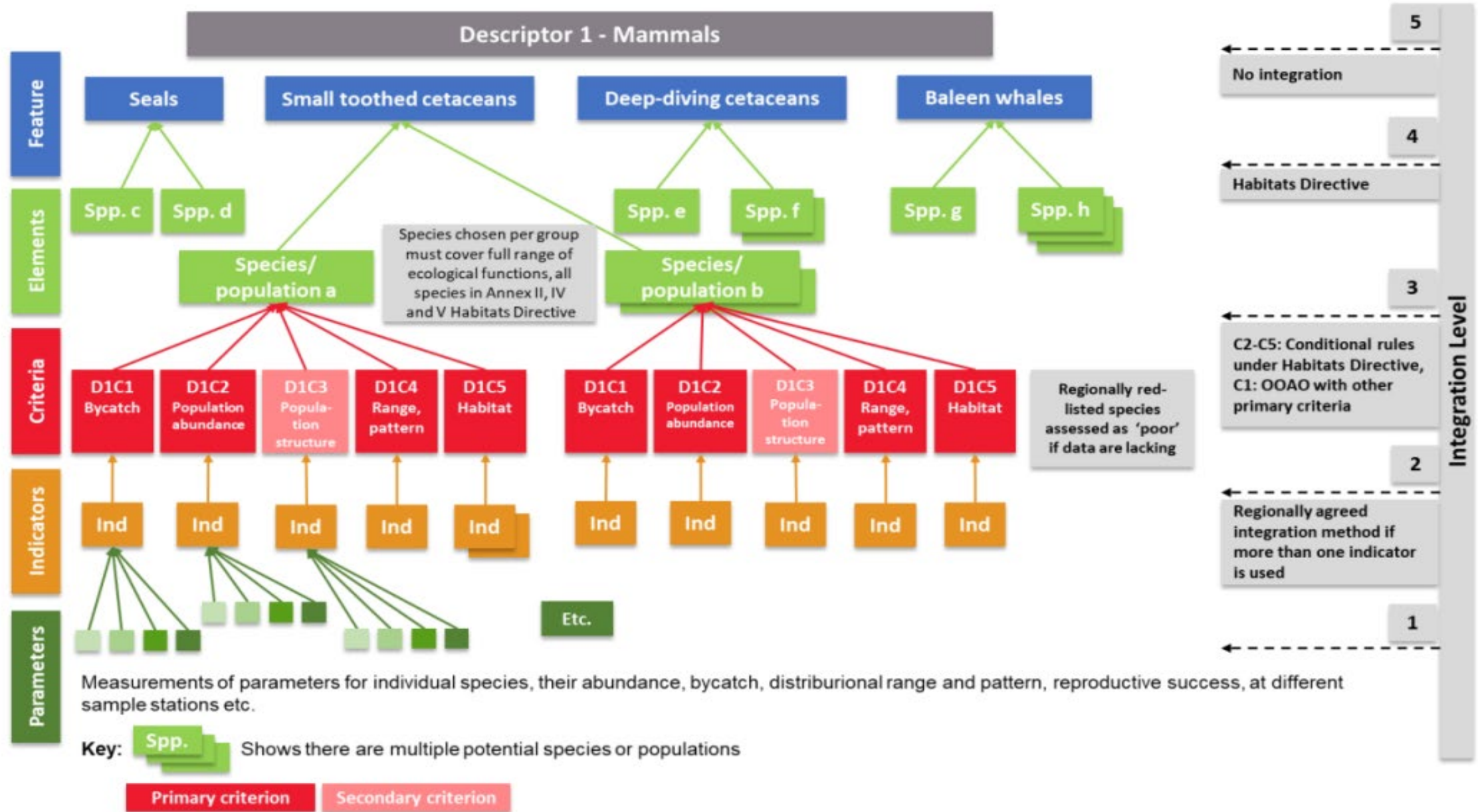


Figure 5.2-1: Levels and methods of integration for mammals under Descriptor 1.

Thank you



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