REPORT
OF THE 16th MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS JASTARNIA GROUP

Virtual / Online

8 - 9 June 2020

Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas

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1. Opening of the Meeting

1.1. Welcoming remarks

The ASCOBANS Coordinator, Jenny Renell (Secretariat) called the meeting to order and explained some of the technical aspects of the teleconference. There were no objections to the meeting being recorded.

The Chair, Ida Carlén (Coalition Clean Baltic) welcomed all the participants, noting that the number of people attending was higher than ever before.

1.2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair drew attention to the revised agenda (ASCOBANS/JG16/Doc.1.2.a/Rev.1). The Secretariat proposed the addition of an item under Any Other Business regarding a draft resolution on the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise to be submitted to the Meeting of the Parties. There being no other comments, the revised agenda as presented was adopted.

2. Progress under the Jastarnia Plan and the Western Baltic, Belt Sea and Kattegat Plan

2.1. Overview report on progress

The Chair presented an overall report covering the period 2019-2020. Draft progress reports on the Jastarnia and WBBK Plans had been circulated earlier. Final versions would be distributed for comment within a few weeks. Many events had taken place and considerable progress had been achieved.

In the context of the EU Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), Regulation 812/2004 had been repealed in 2019 and replaced by new technical measures Regulation 2019/1241.

In July 2019, a group of NGOs submitted a proposal on emergency measures for the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise as well as the common dolphin of the Bay of Biscay. This was followed up by an event on the threat of bycatch in EU waters in the European Parliament in December 2019. The EU Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Commissioner, Virginijus Sinkevičius, had made a statement in February 2020 on action on bycatch of the Baltic harbour porpoise and common dolphin. During autumn, the European Commission (EC) requested the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) to provide scientific advice on the emergency measures, and the advice had been published in May 2020.

HELCOM Recommendation 17/2 *Protection of harbour porpoise in the Baltic Sea area* had been revised in March 2020, and the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan was being updated with the aim to be ready in 2021. A meeting jointly convened by HELCOM and OSPAR to develop bycatch indicators had been held in September 2019 and was attended by many people at the present Jastarnia Group meeting.

The national Red Lists of species for Denmark, Finland and Sweden had been updated. In Finland, the harbour porpoise was listed as Not Applicable as it was considered an occasional visitor. In Denmark, the species was classified as Least Concern, and the Baltic proper population was not

listed separately. In Sweden the species was listed as Least Concern but the Baltic Proper population was also listed separately and was classified as Critically Endangered.

The harbour porpoise population of the Baltic Proper had not been considered for inclusion on CMS Appendix I at the 13th Conference to the Parties to CMS (COP13) in February 2020, but a proposal should be submitted to COP14. A CMS Concerted Action concerning the Baltic Proper and Iberian Peninsula populations of the species proposed by NGOs had, however, been adopted by COP13.

A concept note for the SAMBAH II project would be submitted for consideration under the EU LIFE programme mid-July.

The proposed ASCOBANS workshop on the management of marine protected areas for small cetaceans had been postponed due to COVID-19. So far, no new date for the workshop has been announced.

Ralph Tiedemann at the University of Potsdam was working on the development of a SNP (single nucleotide polymorphism) panel for population assignment of samples of harbour porpoise tissue. To calibrate the model, Mr Tiedemann needed samples from harbour porpoise carcasses within the distribution range of the Baltic Proper population, and Parties were encouraged to supply Dr Tiedemann with such samples.

Fabian Ritter (WDC) noted that most of the progress related to other forums such as the European Commission and HELCOM. He asked why Denmark had not listed the harbour porpoise population of the Baltic Proper separately. Ejgil Andersen (Denmark) thought one possibility was that there were no harbour porpoises in Danish waters in the Baltic proper. Signe Sveegaard (Denmark) said that she had not been party to the decision. She said that the Danish classification took account of the overall national status, so the high numbers in the North Sea and inner Danish waters led to the Least Concern classification. It was recognized that the Baltic Proper population was different and in future Denmark would look into assessing the three populations separately.

2.2. National progress reports on activities since March 2019

The Chair had circulated draft definitions of progress levels for the Jastarnia Plan and the WBBK Plan. Thanks were expressed to Sweden for the helpful responses provided prior the meeting. The Chair presented the categories regarding the progress made. The meeting was invited to comment, and the Chair amended the text as appropriate.

Patricia Brtnik (Germany) said that she had some comments and would send them to the Chair as soon as possible.

Peter Evans (Sea Watch Foundation/North Sea Group, NSG) questioned some of the terminology. While he was content with ‘progress”, he thought ‘assessment’ would be preferable to ‘levels’ as a description of the comments by the report’s compilers. The new title would then be ‘Draft status assessment criteria for progress of the implementation of the actions of the Jastarnia Plan’, and similarly for the WBBK Plan.

As the revision of the text could not be completed within the time available, the Chair suggested establishing a process to complete the assessment criteria for progress after the meeting. A working group was set up for which Ms Brtnik (Germany), Mr Evans (Sea Watch Foundation/NSG), Ms Kyhn (Denmark), Mr Loisa/Ms Blankett (Finland), Ms Owen (Sweden) and Ms Pawliczka (Poland) volunteered. The Chair would also be a member.

National Updates

The Chair asked Party representatives to make a brief report.

Denmark

Ms Sveegaard reported that national acoustic monitoring efforts were being undertaken in the Little Belt and Flensborg Fjord. A small-scale visual survey (Mini SCANS II) would be carried out in June-July 2020 with funding from Denmark, Germany and Sweden. Aerial surveys being faster and less susceptible to disruption from the weather were planned rather than vessel-based operations. The work would be done in ways consistent with the corona lockdown. Based on surveys in 2012 (MiniSCANS) and 2016 (SCANS-III) it seemed that the Belt Sea harbour porpoise population was stable at approximately 40,000.

In the Baltic Proper, passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) had been performed from June 2018 till June 2019 around Bornholm. It was planned to repeat this every three years or to include it within SAMBAH II.

Denmark was involved in developing the HELCOM indicator for abundance and distribution and the HELCOM indicator for health and reproduction.

On bycatch, a large pinger project running from 2019 to 2020 was being conducted by Aarhus University, DTU Aqua and Fjord&Bælt, involving the Fishtek Marine banana pinger and the Aquamark deterrent device from Aquatec. A study of reaction to pingers was also being conducted using drones.

Eight vessels in the Western Baltic, Belt Sea and Kattegat (WBBK) area had been equipped with video cameras to monitor bycatch. An analysis of data on harbour porpoise bycatch obtained through the use of remote electronic monitoring identified high risk areas was being carried out.

A project studying the effects of the re-routing of shipping lanes in the Kattegat (TANGO) had started (in collaboration with Sweden). Re-routing was being implemented as a safety measure to keep large and small vessels apart, however, the new route will cut through one Swedish N2000 site designated for harbour porpoises, go very close another one, and touch a third one, implying increased sound levels in all three sites designed for HP protection, and potentially impacting harbour porpoises in the area.

Together with Fjord&Bælt, Aarhus University (Line Kyhn) was investigating the effects of TTS (temporary threshold shift - hearing loss) and had a new app called Marine Tracker through which members of the public could record incidental harbour porpoise observations.

Denmark continued to collect up to 20 carcasses for examination and as part of the HELCOM nutrition indicator was looking at blubber thickness in animals.

The Middelfart listening station was doing outreach work and had set some underwater cameras to help research boat noise in relation to harbour porpoises.

Finland

Olli Loisa reported that acoustic monitoring was continued in the north of the Baltic Proper and the collection of opportunistic sightings data continued. The pattern of occurrence of harbour porpoises in Finnish waters remained low but regular. Neither bycatch nor strandings had been reported. Finland was involved in the preparations of the SAMBAH II project.

Harbour porpoise distribution and abundance, and monitoring of underwater noise were included as possible new components in the draft national programme related to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

Sweden

Kylie Owen reported on national and local monitoring programmes. National efforts were being made in the Baltic and Kattegat, and local efforts were being made in Blekinge and Öland counties. A Mini-SCANS survey was being planned with Denmark and Germany to take place in June/July 2020. The monitoring program for National implementation of the Marine Strategic Framework Directive was updated, and the National Action Plan for harbour porpoises is also being updated. The Swedish Museum of Natural History and National Veterinary Institute (SVA) are still collecting reports of live and dead porpoises, some of which are collected for necropsy. A report of necropsies over the past 10 years was prepared (see the detailed report under Agenda Item 3.8).

A new paper on population dynamics suggested that the population in Swedish waters would be viable if it were not for human stressors (Cervin et al. 2020). Sweden was participating in preparations for SAMBAH II. In a project run by WWF Sweden, Coalition Clean Baltic was working on seal-safe pingers in the Baltic Sea, and estimating the effects of noise from the construction of wind farms in the Baltic Proper. The Swedish Museum of Natural History was investigating the effects of noise on acoustic harbour porpoise detection rates in collaboration with the Swedish Defence Research Agency. The TANGO project was also underway as a collaboration between Aarhus University, the Swedish Museum of Natural History and the Swedish Defence Research Agency to examine the influence of a change in shipping lane on porpoise distribution and acoustic behaviour. A PhD student at Lund University was working on foraging behaviours.

A Master's thesis examining a historical (1995-1997) onboard observer programme of bottom gillnet fishery data, found that soak time and string length had an impact on bycatch occurrence, and that the rate of bycatch in on the Swedish west coast was unsustainable at that time. A program (MARELITT) was completed that involved mapping, retrieval, recycling, and prevention of ghost nets.

Sweden was involved in several working and expert groups related to Harbour Porpoises, such as ICES WGBYC (co-chair with UK), ICES WGCATCH, ICES WGMME, HELCOM indicator for harbour porpoise abundance and distribution (co-lead with Germany), OSPAR MMEG, FAO and STECF.

Sara Königson reported on a 3-year pilot project with onboard observers, which had ended in June 2019 and a forthcoming 2-year project using electronic monitoring due to run 2020-2021 on the west coast involving volunteer fishermen. Other activities included further voluntary use of pingers, the development of trials for acoustic devices that did not attract seals and investigating the acoustic visibility of gillnets and the extent of habitat exclusion due to pingers.

The HELCOM Action project had undertaken an analysis of fishing effort and bycatch estimates, and was producing maps showing the risk of harbour porpoise bycatch in the southern Baltic.

Types of fishing gear were being developed as an alternative to gill nets (such as cod pots). Trials of small-scale seine fishing gear for flatfish and cod were on hold because of the basically non-existent quotas for the eastern Baltic cod stock set under fisheries regulations.

Germany

Ms Brtnik reported that with respect to the assessment of population status, aerial surveys, both digital and traditional were being conducted as well as acoustic monitoring. A Mini-SCANS survey was being planned with Denmark and Sweden to take place in June/July 2020.

Online maps and maps of harbour porpoise density and distribution derived from the area surveys had been prepared and are published on the website of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN). Acoustic monitoring stations in the Baltic with recorded harbour porpoise positive days can also be found at the BfN website. The sightings programme conducted by the German Oceanographic Museum, Stralsund is ongoing and sighting maps for 2019 had been prepared and one was in preparation for 2020.

Strandings in Schleswig-Holstein were being monitored by the Institute for Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Research (ITAW) in Büsum and by the German Oceanographic Museum in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. ITAW was also assessing bycatch for indicators of the health of harbour porpoises.

Upcoming projects included two on the effects of noise under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD UZ 6). Results of the STELLA project were presented under Agenda Item 3.8 (see the detailed report under Agenda Item 3.8).

Oliver Schall said that an application for funding had been submitted for a project on monitoring of possible effects of the current large number of porpoise alerting devices (PALs) deployed in the German Baltic Sea. If the application was successful, the project would start in 2021 and would last three years. Mr Schall said that the funding round was over-subscribed, and the results would probably be known in August or September. The project was being supported by the conservation section in the Ministry. The Chair asked whether a letter from ASCOBANS would serve any purpose. Mr Schall said that a letter might be useful if it appeared that the project was not on the final shortlist.

Mr Ritter (WDC) welcomed the fact that funding was being sought, but as PALs had been deployed for some time, there would be no chance to assess initial habituation and that this was a serious missed opportunity. He added that the first code of practice for whale watching was being prepared for German waters as a collaboration between WDC and the Federal Agency for Nature Protection (BfN). A press release would be issued shortly.

Poland

Iwona Pawliczka gave a presentation showing Polish strandings data in 2019. All stranding events had taken place on beaches in the western part of the coast over a period of two months. All carcasses were so severely decomposed that no tissue samples were taken.

Three hundred banana pinger units had been issued to 23 volunteer gillnetters and had been used from the west across to Puck Bay. No problems had been reported regarding the use of the equipment nor any incidents of bycatch. Tests of two units of remote electronic monitoring equipment were to be carried out on one fishing boat and on the Hel Marine Station's research vessel.

A project to protect marine mammals and birds and their habitats had started in May and was planned to last four years.

The regulation of cod fisheries following the collapse of the eastern Baltic cod stock included a ban that had been in effect since 2019 but there was a derogation for vessels <12 m and for operations in waters <20m deep. As a result, 643 Polish vessels could still fish, but a new government compensation system might provide incentives for many to stop. More would be known of the effect of the compensation scheme in two months. Ms Kamińska said that no direct taking of cod was allowed but there were quotas for retaining bycatch.

An event had been held in Gdynia as usual for the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise, including a display of models and information about plastic pollution and fishing gear. The event had attracted approximately 1,000 visitors.

Ms Lesz said that a project was under way to ascertain the effects of agriculture on ground water. The results would be known in 3-4 years.

Russian Federation

Alexander Proskurin (Russian Federation), was unaware of any developments from either Kaliningrad or St Petersburg. The Chair was aware of a sculpture of a porpoise made of debris, which had been displayed in Kaliningrad.

Overall

Mr Ritter (WDC) welcomed the information provided from Parties and especially the fact that research was being undertaken. He regretted, however, the imbalance between research and action, given the urgent need for practical measures and mitigation to protect Baltic Proper harbour porpoises. He also noted the discrepancies between the species' Red List status in countries in the region (Least Concern in Denmark and Critically Endangered in Sweden).

3. Updates from across the Baltic and Belt Seas

3.1. Emergency measures for the Harbour Porpoise in the Baltic Sea

Ms Carlström (Sweden) and Ms Kamińska (Poland) gave reports on the recent meetings of ICES bodies.

Ms Carlström reported on the ICES Special Request Advice on emergency measures to prevent bycatch of Baltic Proper harbour porpoises. Emergency measures were foreseen under Article 12 of Regulation 1380/2013 when evidence of a serious threat was produced either by the European Commission or a Member State. Emergency measures applied for six months and could be extended once for a further six months.

In July 2019, a coalition of 27 NGOs had drawn attention to the status of the common dolphins in the Bay of Biscay and harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea, resulting in a Special Request from the European Commission (EC) to ICES for advice. The advice was published by ICES on 26 May 2020. The reaction of the EC was now being awaited.

Ms Carlström described the advisory process of ICES and the involvement of two working groups, WGMME (on marine mammal ecology), WGBYC (on bycatch of protected species) and the workshop on fisheries Emergency Measures to minimize bycatch (WKEMBYC). She also described the measures contained in the NGOs' proposals, which included the closure of the Northern Midsea Bank, the prohibition of static net fisheries in all Natura 2000 sites where harbour porpoises were listed, and mandatory pinger use on all static nets.

In the first stage of the process, the EC Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) requested ICES to review the current conservation status of the species and the threats facing them, and to evaluate whether the measures proposed by the NGOs were necessary and appropriate. The second stage involved proposing alternative measures. ICES proposed different spatio-temporal closures and recognized the utmost importance of the Northern Midsea Bank. The population's status was classified as U2 (unfavourable - bad) with numbers estimated at 497. The main threats and pressures were: bycatch, contaminants, seismic surveys, military sonar and explosions. The majority of bycatch (97 per cent of cases) occurred in static nets, and 5-10 strandings were recorded from Poland and Sweden per annum (the equivalent of 1-2 per cent of the population), above the IMR-NAMMCO Potential Biological Removals (PBR) of 0.7 animals per year. It was recognized that pingers reduced rather than eliminated bycatch and to reach the PBR limit, all fisheries with static nets should be closed seasonally.

Ms Kamińska reported on the ICES WGBYC, which had a similar remit to WGMME. She drew attention to the 2020 WKEMBYC draft report. Data from the North Sea indicated that gillnet and trammel nets had the highest bycatch rates, and gillnets were deployed most. The low level of observer effort in the Baltic Sea had to be improved. The closure of certain fisheries was unlikely to have much effect because the fishing effort in some areas was low.

The terms of reference of WKEMBYC were to assess the emergency measures proposed by the NGOs and, where appropriate, to suggest alternatives. For example, the workshop proposed slightly

different spatial ranges for the implementation of pingers on static nets compared to the NGO proposal.

The final ICES advice included the closure of the Northern Midsea Bank to all fisheries (except those using gears that did not cause harbour porpoise bycatch such as pots and traps), closure of the entire rest of the Natura 2000 Site Hoburgs Bank och Midsjobankarna (for static nets), the closure of Southern Midsea Bank (for static nets), closure of fisheries in the Adlergrund/West Rönnebank and Pomeranian Bay cluster of Natura 2000 sites from November to January (for static nets), closure of fisheries east from Ryf Mew until the borders of Natura 2000 site Zatoka Pucka and Półwysep Helski for static nets, the obligatory use of pingers on static nets for the area of Zatoka Pucka and Półwysep Helski to the West from Ryf Mew, and the prohibition of fishing with static nets without pingers in the entire remaining seasonal distribution range of the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise population.

Monitoring recommendations included gathering accurate spatio-temporal recording of fishing effort and increased dedicated monitoring of bycatch of protected, endangered and threatened species (PETs), better compliance control, long-term acoustic monitoring in key areas, repeated large scale acoustic surveys and taking more samples for necropsy.

While emergency measures can be applied for six months and extended once for a further six months, it was noted, however, that to be effective the measures would have to remain in place for longer than one year.

Ms Blankett (Finland) asked if there had been any developments from the BALTFISH Forum meeting which was taking place simultaneously with the Jastarnia Group meeting. She thought that some of the recommendations were problematic. The Chair had been attending the earlier part of the BALTFISH Forum, but it was behind schedule and that the agenda item had not been reached when she had to leave. The Chair provided an update from the BALTFISH meeting. Not much progress had been made on the ICES emergency measures as fishing quotas had taken up most of the time. ASCOBANS therefore needed to keep up the pressure. The next BALTFISH meeting would be held on 6-7 September 2020 under Estonian chairmanship. It was noted that Estonia may require assistance and advice, so there was an opportunity to exert some influence.

Mr Ritter (WDC) said that he regretted that the NGOs had needed to resort to the ‘nuclear option’ of having Emergency Measures instigated. The NGOs’ concerns had also been raised at the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and the response of BALTFISH was being awaited with interest. He was aware that the measures recommended by ICES were severe and would lead to contentious debate, but he hoped that the outcome would be the wider use of safer fishing gear. He also recognized that the interests of fishermen would need to be taken into account.

Mr Loisa (Finland) said that the recommendations were impractical and disproportionate involving restrictions in areas such as the Gulf of Finland where harbour porpoises were rarely found. Ms Blankett said that the ICES recommendations were more stringent than the proposals of the NGOs in some respects and would have severe consequences for recreational fishers.

Ms Blankett (Finland) highlighted some concerns of the Finnish Government regarding some aspects of the ICES advice on Emergency Measures. While generally supportive of the measures proposed, Finland foresaw some practical and political problems given the current definitions of area and gear. Some of the proposals were a disproportionate response given the scarce number of harbour porpoises in Finnish waters and were likely to be counterproductive as they could turn public opinion against conservation measures. Wider use of pingers may risk undermining the improving cooperation with fishermen.

The proposed Emergency Measures would be better if they included a revised area covered, a clearer definition of fishing gear types and made the use of pingers voluntary rather than obligatory.

Ms Carlström (Sweden) said that CPODs could be placed in the main fishing grounds to provide evidence of the low density of harbour porpoises.

Ms Königson (Sweden) said that the advice from ICES had been presented and could not be changed. Other countries also had their doubts and she did not think that Finland should receive different treatment. The Chair said that the meeting should note Finland's views but not take a position. Subject to the concerns raised by Finland, the Chair in summary said that the meeting generally welcomed the advice provided by ICES.

3.2. Update from the European Commission

Kenneth Patterson from DG MARE welcomed the advice from ICES and confirmed that the European Commission was keen to see the scientific advice implemented.

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was now regionally based to allow locally appropriate measures to be adopted as these were more likely to be accepted. He too was interested to hear what the outcome of the BALTFISH meeting would be. Technical and scientific comments would be welcomed via Jastarnia Group on the scientific and technical advice, but he cautioned that the debate should not be reopened. The European Commission hoped that the Member States could agree a joint position, but if a joint recommendation could not be reached within reasonable time the Commission would be prepared to implement emergency measures.

Mr Ritter (WDC) was concerned that experience showed that achieving agreement by Member States through Joint Recommendations could take some time and this would lead to further delays and the loss of more common dolphins and harbour porpoises. He asked if there was a firm deadline for a decision. There was no set deadline, but the European Commission wanted a decision within a reasonable time.

Sven Koschinski (Invited Expert) said that the WKEMBYC made a suggestion to close a cluster of sites for static nets in the period November-April, but this had been reduced to November-January in the ICES advice. This didn't take into account the variability of water temperature in winter, which was a driver for Baltic Proper harbour porpoise occurrence. Ms Carlström (Sweden) agreed that the reduced closure time was unwelcome.

The Chair suggested an Action Point from the meeting welcoming the ICES advice while not excluding Finland's concerns.

Vedran Nikolić from DG ENVIRONMENT said that DG ENV and DG MARE were working together to address the issue of bycatch and to ensure full implementation of the rules under EU nature and fisheries legislation.

Mr Nikolić's presentation included an overview of the recently adopted EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030, which includes targets on protecting 30 per cent of the area of European seas, strictly protecting a third of the EU's marine protected areas and having clear objectives and comprehensive monitoring of all of them, so that there would be no more 'paper parks'. Guidance would be prepared on how to identify and designate further areas. Other relevant targets include conserving fish stocks, reducing the threat of bycatch and eliminating it where extinction was imminent, establishing fisheries management measures in all marine protected areas and limiting the use of damaging gear types such as trawling. Other targets could contribute to marine conservation, such as restoration efforts aimed to ensure favourable conservation status of protected species, reducing pesticide and fertilizer use, and implementation of a Zero Pollution Action Plan for air, water and soil.

To enable transformative change, an adequate governance framework was needed with appropriate financial support (€20 billion from the European Commission and Member States as well the engagement of the business and education sectors). However, rather than develop new policies, the focus would be on ensuring that existing provisions were properly implemented, including those from

other international forums such as the United Nations General Assembly and the rescheduled Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2021.

Mr Koschinski (Invited Expert) commented that the EU Biodiversity Strategy for the next ten years was quite ambitious, and work should therefore start as soon as possible to reach the set goals. Regarding Joint Recommendations as a tool, he felt that too many compromises would be made in developing them between different national Ministries and then with a broader audience with all the other countries. This would mean it is the compromise of the compromises that reached the EU Commission who then decided on the Joint Recommendation. Mr Nikolić replied that the European Commission was working within the framework available and was trying to cooperate with Member States to deliver as much as possible.

Ms Carlström (Sweden) asked whether underwater noise was included in the pollution plan. Mr Nikolić confirmed that it was and was being dealt with under the MFSD.

3.3. Overview of HELCOM matters related to harbour porpoises

Ms Kamińska (Poland) gave a presentation outlining the roadmap for fisheries data recently adopted by HELCOM. She expressed her thanks to Sven Koschinski for his assistance.

The roadmap included the aim of making two of the indicators operational, namely those for drowned mammals and birds and cumulative impacts on benthic biotopes. It had five chapters, the first to set the scene, and others explaining the context, describing data needs, options on how to address other demands, and a final on follow-up and communication.

The identified gaps included bycatch data from smaller vessels (those under 12 metres), the lack of a representative sample monitoring various net types, standardized effort metrics (e.g. days at sea, fishing hours) and the need to harmonize data across gear types and fleet segments.

Proposed solutions were to improve monitoring efforts including data on fishing effort and bycatch of PETs with more frequent reporting intervals, making it obligatory to keep logbooks regardless of vessel size and to cover a higher proportion of different métiers. Greater use of apps should be made for passive gear types such as gillnets.

Within the Baltic Regional Co-ordination Group more vessels should be monitored in métiers currently under-sampled (e.g. fyke, trammel, set gill nets and set long lines), vessel tracking systems should allow obtaining more precise data on fishing operations, this should be ensured especially for the vessels below 12 m, reported units of fishing effort should be harmonized and the increase of European Maritime and Fisheries Fund EMFF and national contributions to monitoring PETS bycatch should be secured.

Responding to Mr Ritter (WDC), Ms Kamińska said that incentives being offered to fishermen to secure their cooperation could be for example an increased fishing quota and ensuring prioritisation in availability of funding from the EMFF.

HELCOM harbour porpoise Work (2019-2020)

Petra Kääriä reported that the amended HELCOM Recommendation 17/2 on Baltic harbour porpoises had been adopted at the 41st meeting of HELCOM. Some changes were minor amendments, but others involved updates of Red List classifications and population ranges, WBBK population status, and clearer recommendations on data collection.

The current Baltic Sea Action Plan aimed to achieve good environmental status by 2021, and a new plan was being developed to come into effect during 2021. Relevant to the work of the Jastarnia group, a remote workshop (BSAP UP WS-BIO 2020) was planned for 31 August – 2 September 2020.

Within the HELCOM Action project, work on identifying areas with high risk mammals and birds was being led by Denmark and Sweden, focussing on harbour porpoises in the southern Baltic. Results were expected to be available at the end of 2020. A joint OSPAR-HELCOM workshop to examine possibilities for developing indicators for incidental bycatch of birds and marine mammals had been held in September 2019.

HELCOM's core indicators included the number of drowned mammals and birds in fishing gear and harbour porpoise abundance, distribution, health and reproductive rates. Key points arising from the bycatch workshop were data requirements, monitoring, identifying areas of high and low risk, and methodologies for assessment.

The HELCOM Expert Group on Marine Mammals (EG MAMA) now had a standard agenda item on harbour porpoises and was no longer exclusively dealing with seals.

Key messages on marine mammals in the revised 2021 edition of the Baltic Sea Climate Change factsheet were the effects of prey species, temperature and stratification, and that the consequences of the changes were unpredictable.

The HELCOM Expert Network on Noise had also met including a joint meeting with the equivalent OSPAR Intersessional Correspondence Group.

3.4. Update from CMS

The Secretariat provided new information on developments from CMS COP13 in February. There had been no new resolutions of relevance to ASCOBANS, but several decisions had been adopted affecting cetaceans, including on Important Marine Mammal Areas, noise, bycatch, aquatic wild meat, marine wildlife watching, live capture, the Programme of Work for Cetaceans, and animal culture and social complexity. Concerted Action 13.7 concerning harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea and Iberian Peninsula had been adopted.

Action Points arising from AC25 included the proposal for adding the Baltic Proper and Iberian harbour porpoise populations to Appendix I of CMS. This had not happened partly because of the European Union's tight deadlines for submission of documents owing to CMS COP taking place at the beginning of the year rather than the end of the year. There was new CMS guidance on the format of species proposals, which meant that the existing draft needed minor changes.

Mr Ritter (WDC) said that WDC had put forward the Concerted Action together with other NGOs and was accordingly pleased that it had been adopted. WDC as part of that coalition of NGOs was working on an implementation strategy. He announced that NGOs would follow up with Parties.

The Chair proposed an Action Point regarding the timely submission to the European Commission of the proposal to list the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise population on Appendix I to ensure that it would be considered at CMS COP14.

3.5. SAMBAH II update

Michael Dähne (Germany) gave a presentation on the proposed SAMBAH II project (Spatio-temporal monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise and its Habitat Quality). He stressed that the information provided was provisional as the final project proposal had not yet been submitted.

The objectives of the project were to devise actions to secure the survival of the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise by ensuring that it had a 'good environmental status'. A range of approaches to estimate fishing intensity would be adopted. Surveys of vessel and seismic survey noise would be conducted, monthly density maps would be produced, calves would be acoustically identified, and efforts would be made to raise public awareness of the presence of harbour porpoise in the Baltic. The initial

concept note (submitted in June 2019) had been well received resulting in an invitation to submit a full application. However, some changes had been made (e.g. the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) taking over the lead from HELCOM) and co-financing from the participating countries had not been secured, therefore no full application was submitted. The revised concept note was due to be submitted on 16 July 2020 and the notification on whether the project would be invited to submit a full application should be issued in October 2020 with a deadline for submission of a full application in February 2021. If the project was adopted, the grant agreements would be signed in July 2021 allowing the project to commence in September 2021. Mr Dähne described the proposed structure and management of the project.

Mr Evans (Sea Watch Foundation) asked how the difficulties experienced in SAMBAH with equipment failure and confidence ranges would be addressed. Mr Dähne said that detection functions across the Baltic would be better. The coverage of CPODs deployed would depend on the participation of countries and it was not clear whether Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania would participate. In comparison to the previous SAMBAH project, a higher density of devices would be placed in areas with higher density of Baltic Proper harbour porpoises, and lower density of devices in the areas with lower Baltic Proper harbour porpoises. The detection function would be determined acoustically at stations with higher detection rates. Further, also waters deeper than 80 meters, which were not surveyed in SAMBAH, were planned to be surveyed in SAMBAH II, and Germany would also cover Fehmarn this time. Recordings from captive Harbour Porpoise calves would be used to locate juvenile wild animals.

Ms Nyström (WWF Sweden) asked what consideration had been given to outreach and dissemination. Mr Dähne said that this aspect needed to be discussed further, but it was hoped that some NGOs would be involved and that their networks could be used to promote the project and its results. It was also hoped to include a socio-economic study with fisheries institutes.

3.6. Cod fishing ban

Ms Königson (Sweden) gave a presentation on the new cod fisheries restrictions applying in ICES areas SD25-32, where targeted fishing was prohibited but a small quota was in place for bycatch. There was an exception in Area 24 for vessels under 12 metres and operations at depths of less than 20 metres. The quotas in Areas SD22-24 had been reduced by 60 per cent and in the eastern Baltic by 92 per cent. Recreational fishermen in Areas SD22-24 and 25-26 were allowed a quota of five per day each.

The result had been a decreased fishing effort in deeper waters offshore, with many vessels transferring to the Öresund on the west coast, resulting in an increase in fishing effort there.

Ms Sveegaard (Denmark) asked if other flag vessels were operating there. There were some in Areas SD 25-26 and several Polish and German vessels in SD24.

Mr Koschinski (Invited Expert) asked whether fishermen changed to targeting flat fish species. This was unlikely because of the limited market outside the tourist season. There was some demand for turbot during the summer.

Ms Kamińska (Poland) provided a map showing changes in fishing effort by the Polish fleet. There was little targeted cod fishing. The main target species was herring.

The Chair suggested returning to this subject the following year.

3.7. Increase in strandings in Polish waters

Ms Pawliczka (Poland) presented data on cetacean strandings in Poland over the years. In the period 2017-2019, there had been many more incidents. At the same time there had been more

seals stranding. She was wary of drawing conclusions, as many factors were likely to be having an effect, including wind and currents.

Mr Dähne (Germany) said that over the same period there had been an increase in stranding along the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern coast. Weather conditions might have played a role (the sunny period in 2018 with low winds had seen over 100 strandings but incidents were less frequent in 2019).

Underwater Explosions

Mr Koschinski (Invited Expert) stated that explosions could kill harbour porpoises outright, but that they could also deafen them impairing their ability to orientate and hunt their prey. At distances of up to 12 km from an explosion, they could suffer permanent hearing loss.

An autopsy of a dead harbour porpoise showed the effects of explosions on inner ear tissue. While the wound might heal, hearing was not restored, leaving the deaf harbour porpoises more prone to being bycaught, as they would not “see” the net with their echolocation nor hear pingers.

The animals, whose carcasses had stranded in Poland in 2019, might have died a long way from the beaches where they were found. It was not clear whether explosions related to munitions were to blame as the Nordstream 2 pipeline was in the vicinity. There had been 58 detonations in Finnish waters, albeit with the use of bubble curtains, and a further 21 explosions in Danish waters in the Fehmarn Belt and Kiel Bight in October 2019, but there had been no strandings that could be associated with them. The Swedish navy said they had not conducted any detonations that could have caused the increase in strandings, but it was possible that private companies had.

Between 29 August and 18 September 2019 NATO had been responsible for 45 detonations in the western Baltic Sea. Some World War II ground mines had been detonated in a marine protected area during the nursing period. The German Government was investigating the incident through a working group involving the Ministries of Defence, Environment and Transport. The report of the Environment Ministry (BMU) was expected in the summer of 2020.

A World War II mine 3km off the coast at Gdynia, Poland was to be exploded shortly. Mr Koschinski wished to relay the offer from a German company to provide a bubble curtain.

Ms Lesz (Poland) said that there was a set procedure including the involvement of environmental institutions. She recalled a presentation made by Professor Krzysztof Skóra at one of the AC meetings. It was hoped that noise from two smaller vessels with loud engines circling the area of the detonation as well as small explosives from point zero around in spiral would scare harbour porpoises off. Alternatives to detonating the mine had been explored but were not feasible as it was too close to the beach. The kind offer to provide a bubble curtain was acknowledged and it had been passed to the appropriate offices. The explosion was scheduled to take place on 16 June 2020 and plans were well advanced.

The Chair said that she was impressed by the speed in which Mr Koschinski had secured the offer of a bubble curtain. Mr Koschinski stated that he would check with the owner whether the vessel and the curtain could be made available on 16 June. He had no idea if the noise from the circling boats would serve as an effective deterrent, as habituated porpoises were known to follow much noisier vessels such as ferries. It was known that bubble curtains reduced the danger zone by 90 per cent.

Mr Dähne (Germany) agreed that there was no evidence that vessel noise was an effective deterrent. Regarding the strandings, there were methods available to model transportation of carcasses taking into account reverse drifting and the rate of decomposition, but these methods had never been implemented to the Baltic Sea. The number of stranded porpoises in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in 2019 during mine removal was nine. This was higher than in 2017 (eight) and 2018 (four) but not significantly so.

Mr Evans (Sea Watch Foundation) said that there were many strandings in Poland but in most cases the carcasses had decomposed. If the explosions were taking place near the coast, one would expect the carcasses to be in better condition, so they probably died further offshore.

Mr Koschinski said that the prevailing currents ran from west to east and it was possible that the carcasses had drifted a long way before reaching the shore. Easterly winds might have pushed the carcasses back and forth against the current.

Mr Ritter (WDC) found the report interesting but alarming. It seemed that not even the most basic attention was being paid to the presence of harbour porpoises before permission for explosions was given. If a bomb were found in a marine protected area, then account should be taken of season and according sensitive times for protected species. He suggested that a letter be sent to the German, Polish and Swedish authorities.

Mr Koschinski said that there was a NATO naval exercise taking place in Aug-Sept 2019, and this included mine seeking and detonation. NATO should be aware of the conservation issues.

The Chair asked whether an urgent letter should be sent to Poland. Ms Brtnik (Germany) said that Poland should be encouraged to accept the offer of the bubble curtain. The Chair asked whether an Action Point was justified because of the large number of explosions taking place. There were many possible mitigation measures available and she suggested including the issue on the agenda of the next meeting of the Jastarnia Group.

Regarding the planned explosion in Puck Bay, Ms Kamińska (Poland) feared that it might be too late for the bubble curtain to be used. Nonetheless, those organizing the explosion should be made aware of the mitigation measures and the dangers facing porpoises. She asked whether there was any indication that the German navy was changing its practices after the recent incident.

Mr Koschinski said that he was not on the working group but understood that the German navy had been taken aback by the outcry at the incident. He had observed on a website tracking shipping how the vessels involved in the exercise had been navigating through Danish waters. There was a need for greater transparency. Not only should advance warning of explosions be given so that mitigation measures could be prepared but reports were needed after the event. Fishers also needed to be warned as the explosions killed fish.

Ms Blankett (Finland) said that no further exercises were currently planned in Finland. As SAMBAH II was to include an outreach element, she asked if this could be extended to awareness of military actions.

Ms Pawliczka (Poland) said that the guidance earlier referred to by Ms Lesz was practice that had been adopted from experience. Formal and up-to-date guidelines were needed, and the requisite inter-ministerial dialogue should be initiated. The use of bubble curtains should be among the minimum mitigation measures deployed. Conservation agencies also needed more notice of when explosions were to take place.

Mr Dähne said that the MFSD required that a noise registry be established as munitions explosions were only part of the problem along with seismic tests and pile driving. Navies were also obliged to adhere to the requirements to use the register. The only working example of a noise registry of which he was aware was the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in the United Kingdom (mnr.jncc.gov.uk).

Ms Carlström asked whether the report from the BMU would only be in German, adding that an English translation would be helpful. She reported that the Swedish navy was planning to explode bombs on 24 June and the mitigation proposed was the use of boats and military sonar as deterrents. Mr Koschinski had no evidence that such measures worked and wondered if the navy had proof of their measures' effectiveness or whether they were just window dressing. He also asked whether

the Swedish navy had access to biological maps. He had heard of scepticism about bubble curtains, but they were tried and tested, and the German authorities recognized them as a mitigation measure. He welcomed the fact that advance notice of the exercise had been given. Ms Carlström said that despite them being publicly available, data from three monitoring stations in the vicinity had not been used by the Armed Forces in their application for permit to carry out the activities.

In response to the Chair's enquiry whether a letter to the Polish authorities urging that the offer of a bubble curtain be accepted would be useful, Ms Kamińska thought that it might be counterproductive if Poland were singled out. All governments should be written to. The Polish representatives said that they would follow up with the authorities to see if the bubble curtain could be used.

3.8. Updates on recent research

STELLA

Isabella Kratzer (Thünen Institute) gave a presentation on the modifications to gillnets to reduce harbour porpoise bycatch that had been studied within the STELLA project. Daniel Stepputtis was available to answer questions afterwards. The aim was to find an acoustically reflective adaptation to gillnets that did not reduce the efficiency in catching fish.

Ms Kratzer described the stages of the trials and simulations, which had resulted in acrylic glass being identified as the optimal material. Experimental verification had helped determine the optimal size and shape of the reflectors - small resonating spheres. Trials off the coast of Denmark had not been successful as the porpoises had swum past the nets. The nets could not be moved closer to shore where the porpoises were swimming because the water was too shallow. Trials were transferred to the Turkish part of the Black Sea, where incidents of bycatch were considered more likely. It was not clear why some porpoises still became entangled. They had possibly stopped clicking or were clicking in the wrong direction.

The reflectors would probably be less expensive than pingers, the greatest cost being the labour to attach the reflectors to the nets, the materials themselves being very cheap. The process would have to be automated in some way. The reflectors would, however, only work if porpoises directed their clicks at them and were ineffective if animals had impaired hearing.

Mr Ritter (WDC) was concerned that mitigation actions were being delayed, especially in Germany, while the authorities waited for the results of the STELLA project. Action was needed immediately and should not be delayed until a perfect solution was found.

Ms Königson (Sweden) asked whether the nets would induce porpoises to click more or less. Detecting the reflectors might stimulate more echolocating or result in porpoises falling silent once the presence of the nets had been established. It would be necessary to study porpoise behaviour near nets with the reflectors.

Fjord&Bælt

Magnus Wahlberg gave a presentation on the work of the Fjord&Bælt, where porpoise research was made by the University of Southern Denmark, Aarhus University, and University of Hannover. It now had one elderly female harbour porpoise in the sea pen. The center started up with two porpoises in 1997 and at one stage there had been as many as four.

He described some of the research projects undertaken of relevance to harbour porpoises, the outreach work undertaken by the Institute and some of its forthcoming publications.

Mr Andersen (Denmark) said that one of the main reasons for having invited a representative of the Fjord&Bælt to the meeting was to hear about the useful research work being carried out there. The Institute had been criticized by some animal welfare organizations for acting like a dolphinarium. Mr

Wahlberg did not think comparisons of Fjord&Bælt with dolphinaria were justified. Fjord&Bælt was not a commercial enterprise, and its main task was scientific research and education. The animals kept at Fjord&Bælt had arrived after being bycaught in pound nets. Harbour porpoises were not easy to breed in captivity; out of seven calves born at Fjord&Bælt and Harderwijk in the Netherlands, only three made it to the age of one year. He recognized that there were different views on the husbandry and training of animals and their use in research.

The Chair agreed that some very useful research had been done by Fjord&Bælt.

Insights from Necropsy Examinations of harbour porpoises in Sweden

Aleksija Neimanis and Jasmine Stavenow (National Veterinary Institute of Sweden) reported that the National Veterinary Institute and the Swedish Museum of Natural History had a long history of cooperation and that harbour porpoises were excellent sentinels of the marine environment.

The presentation was based on the results of 109 necropsies undertaken in the period 2006-2019 involving 98 stranded and 11 bycaught animals. The distribution of where the carcasses were found was 40 per cent from the northern section of the west coast, 57 per cent from the southern section and 3 per cent from the south coast. The age and gender breakdown of the animals was 21 male adults, 15 female adults, 45 'juveniles' and 28 calves. Causes of death where this could be ascertained, included predation, abandonment, bycatch, disease/poor health, emaciation and trauma. The health issues included pneumonia, testicular abscesses which might lead to reduced reproductive success, birthing problems and two stillborn calves.

Mr Ritter (WDC) commented on life expectancy saying that most Baltic harbour porpoise females did not reach maturity, living only 3.7 years according to a German study. The sample included very few specimens from the Baltic Proper and not many mature females, but there was evidence that of the females had given birth.

Ms Pawliczka (Poland) said that there was evidence in Poland of pregnant, lactating and mature females. One stranded female was pregnant and 18 years old. She also said that definitions of 'juvenile' differed and often the term 'sub-adult' was used. Ms Neimanis responded that the age classification used might be changed.

Mr Dähne stated that all dead animals were examined in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and even badly decomposed ones could provide useful information. Samples should be taken from all animals found on beaches, as people finding stranded animals were not in a position to assess how badly decomposed a carcass was. Taking samples was relatively easy; all that was needed was a tool to cut, a bag and a means of keeping the material cool. Samples could also be preserved in alcohol.

Ms Pawliczka (Poland) said that the vast majority of the carcasses were badly decomposed but skeletal samples could be taken. The Hel Marine Station also had limited storage space for storing and not enough people with the required skills to take samples.

Ms Owen (Sweden) noted that teeth were very good for genetics and establishing animals' diet. Storage was easy given their size and there was no need to freeze or put them in alcohol. Ethanol storage has implications for the later use of samples for dietary analyses (such as stable isotope analysis), and should only be used if no other way of storing was available.

Ms Kyhn (Denmark) said that the budget for collecting stranded animals was limited and only ten cases could be processed per year and there was little prospect of more resources being made available, despite rumours that the programme would be expanded. Ms Sveegaard was trying to find the source of the rumours.

The Chair asked if it would be useful for guidance to be prepared explaining how to take genetic samples and suggested that an Action Point from the meeting could be to urge Parties to take genetic samples from all carcasses from the Baltic Proper population range.

3.9. Workshop on management of MPAs for Small Cetaceans

Stina Nyström (WWF Sweden) explained that Action Point 11 adopted at the 25th meeting of the Advisory Committee authorized the holding of an international workshop to be organized by WWF Sweden, WWF Germany, CCB, the Finnish Ministry of the environment and the ASCOBANS Secretariat along with Mark Simmonds.

The workshop was originally planned to take place in April 2020 but had been postponed on account of the coronavirus. New dates would be set, hopefully for autumn 2020. It was intended to keep the numbers of participants low with just key MPA managers, experts and policy makers invited.

The Chair said that the workshop had attracted several donors including both the Swedish and German branches of WWF and the Finnish Ministry.

4. Review and update of Action Points

The Chair conducted a review of the Action Points table. The list was projected on screen and each Action Point was discussed in turn. Amendments were shown using the 'track change' function. In some cases, no changes were made, while in others, the dates were adjusted, or more substantive edits were made. (The finalized Action Points table can be found in Annex 1 of this report.)

New Internal Action Points covered the sending of letters to national authorities about mitigation of noise arising from the disposal of munitions, the proposed listing of the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise on Appendix I of CMS, implementation of the CMS Concerted Action for harbour porpoises in the Baltic Proper and off the Iberian Peninsula and ensuring that the terms of reference of the Jastarnia Group on the ASCOBANS website were correct and referred to the Group's responsibility for the WBBK Plan. (The finalized Internal Action Points can be found in Annex 2.)

5. Any Other Business

Draft Resolution for ASCOBANS MOP9

The Chair projected the draft text of Draft Resolution *Baltic Proper harbour porpoise* on screen and sought comments from the meeting making amendments as appropriate to reflect the views expressed. The finalized text can be found on the ASCOBANS MOP9 webpage.

Terms of Reference of the Jastarnia Group and their application to the WBBK Plan

Ms Carlström (Sweden) pointed out that the terms of reference of the Jastarnia Group as published on the ASCOBANS website made no reference to the Group covering the WBBK Plan. The Secretariat undertook to investigate why the TOR online didn't mention WBBK Plan as they should, and would take the appropriate action.

6. Date and venue of the 17th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

The Secretariat represented a table showing the dates and venues of various meetings held under the auspices of ASCOBANS, including the Jastarnia Group meetings. Noting that the current meeting had originally been planned to take place in Gothenburg, the Secretariat enquired whether Sweden would be willing to host the 17th meeting of the Jastarnia Group in 2021.

Ms Viker (Sweden) agreed to this tentatively, proposing Gothenburg as the venue, but all would depend on finding suitable dates. Ms Blankett (Finland) said that May might prove difficult as the postponed CBD COP might be rescheduled for then.

The Chair raised the issue of timing with regard to the following meeting of the Advisory Committee and the possibility of linking the 17th meeting of the Jastarnia Group to a meeting of the North Sea Group, as had been foreseen initially for the current year.

Mr Evans (Sea Watch Foundation – Chair of the North Sea Group) was not sure whether the North Sea Group would meet, at least face-to-face, in 2020, which might have consequences for the timing of its next meeting. In principle, he was in favour of the two groups holding joint or back-to-back meetings. He undertook to ask other members of the North Sea Group for their opinions.

Mr Ritter (WDC) pointed out that the remote meeting had been successful and suggested that consideration should be given to holding more meetings as teleconferences as this would reduce the carbon footprint by reducing the amount of travel. There was general agreement with these sentiments. It was agreed that the Group would aim to have every second Jastarnia Group meeting take place online.

7. Close of the Meeting

The Chair commented that the meeting had been productive and declared proceedings closed at 17:20. The Secretariat mentioned that a questionnaire would be circulated to participants to ascertain their assessment of the online meeting.

Annex 1: Action Points from 16th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group

Jastarnia and WBBK Plans

(Adopted by the Advisory Committee)

Reference	Action Point (old reference)	Jastarnia Plan		WBBK Plan	
		Applies	Mandate	Applies	Mandate
JG16/AP1	Parties shall establish or further improve local and national monitoring programmes for Harbour Porpoise occurrence and to further ensure these are aligned in terms of timing and methodology between countries, in order to complement large-scale international monitoring activities. (JG15/AP1)	X	**MON-01:** Implement and harmonize long-term continual acoustic Harbour Porpoise monitoring	X	**Objective d:** Monitoring the status of the population
JG16/AP2	All Parties, and other countries bordering the Baltic Sea, are strongly encouraged to support SAMBAH-II, specifically in terms of fundraising, in order for a project proposal to be submitted in 2020 and for the project to start in 2021. Noting that management authorities are required to be formal partners for the SAMBAH-II Life application. (JG15/AP2)	X			
JG16/AP3	Parties are strongly encouraged to continue to undertake and cooperate on inter-SCANS surveys of the WBBK Harbour Porpoise population and evaluate trends in population density and abundance. (JG15/AP3/WBBK)			X	**Rec.7:** Estimate trends in abundance of Harbour Porpoises in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat
JG16/AP4	Parties are strongly encouraged to use the data provided by SAMBAH and national monitoring programmes, in particular in connection with the establishment of MPAs for Harbour Porpoises, as well as with regard to management plans and mitigation measures. (JG15/AP4)	X	**MIT-06:** Expand the network of protected areas for Harbour Porpoises, improve its connectivity, and develop and implement appropriate management plans including monitoring schemes for these areas		
JG16/AP5	Parties should investigate possible detrimental effects of various types of sound and disturbance on Harbour Porpoises (including pinger signals, noise from vessels, seismic surveys, underwater explosions, wind parks or construction). Parties should initiate and support studies on the effect of anthropogenic noise on	X	**RES-07:** Improve knowledge on impact of impulsive and continuous anthropogenic underwater noise on Harbour Porpoises, and development of threshold limits of significant	X	**Objective e:** Ensuring habitat quality favourable to the conservation of the Harbour Porpoise

Reference	Action Point (old reference)	Jastarnia Plan		WBBK Plan	
		Applies	Mandate	Applies	Mandate
	the Harbour Porpoise both on the individual and on a population level. (JG15/AP5)		disturbance and GES indicators		
JG16/AP6	Parties are encouraged to develop and adopt HELCOM-wide harmonized national regulations on sound emissions associated with anthropogenic activities in the marine environment. Such regulations should set upper limits to sound emissions and be consistent with the relevant Indicators for Good Environmental Status to be developed for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Parties are also encouraged to develop and adopt HELCOM-wide coordinated guidelines for noise mitigation, taking into account the CMS Family Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessments for Marine Noise-generating Activities. (JG15/AP6)	X	**MIT-05:** Implement regionally harmonized national threshold limits and guidelines for regulation of underwater noise	X	
JG16/AP7	Parties should promote research on the consequences of impacts on prey communities for Harbour Porpoises. (JG15/AP7)			X	**Rec.10:** Include monitoring and management of important prey species in national Harbour Porpoise management plans
JG16/AP8	Parties are required to establish systems to effectively monitor bycatch covering all sizes of fishing vessels, in line with the HELCOM Roadmap on fisheries data in order to assess incidental bycatch and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea and the ICES Special Request Advice on emergency measures to prevent bycatch of common dolphin and Baltic Proper harbour porpoise in the Northeast Atlantic. (JG15/AP8)	X	**MON-03:** Monitor and estimate Harbour Porpoise bycatch rates and estimate total annual bycatch	X	**Rec.6:** Estimate total annual bycatch
JG16/AP9	Parties should consider the recommendations of the October 2015 ASCOBANS Workshop on Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and implement this technique for bycatch monitoring as appropriate in the national context. (JG15/AP9)	X	**RES-03:** Improve methods for monitoring and estimation of Harbour Porpoise bycatch	X	
JG16/AP10	Parties are strongly encouraged to carry out spatio-temporal risk-assessments of Harbour Porpoise bycatch using Harbour Porpoise	X	**RES-04:** Carry out a spatio-temporal risk assessment of	X	

Reference	Action Point (old reference)	Jastarnia Plan		WBBK Plan	
		Applies	Mandate	Applies	Mandate
	distribution and fishing effort data. (JG15/AP10)		Harbour Porpoise bycatch		
JG16/AP11	Parties should implement, in cooperation with stakeholders, any available fishing gear that does not cause, or is shown to significantly reduce, harbour porpoise bycatch, and strive to replace static nets with such alternative gear, especially in MPAs, as soon as possible. (JG15/AP11)	X	**RES-05:** Further develop and improve fishing gear that is commercially viable with no Harbour Porpoise bycatch **MIT-01:** Implement the use of fishing gear that is commercially viable with no Harbour Porpoise bycatch	X	**Objective b:** Mitigation of bycatch
JG16/AP12	Parties should continue to develop, in cooperation with stakeholders, alternative fishing gear that does not cause, or is shown to significantly reduce, harbour porpoise bycatch, to replace static nets. (JG15/AP11)				
JG16/AP13	Parties should promote the development of pingers not audible to seals and alerting devices other than pingers. (JG15/AP12)	X	**RES-05:** Further develop and improve fishing gear that is commercially viable with no Harbour Porpoise bycatch	X	
JG16/AP14	Parties should monitor the use and functioning of deterrent and alerting devices, including studies to assess their effect on bycatch reduction and on harbour porpoise behaviour and distribution. (JG15/AP13)	X	**MIT-03:** Continue or implement the use of acoustic deterrent devices (pingers) and acoustic alerting devices proven to be successful when and where deemed appropriate **RES-06:** Improve the knowledge on potential population-level effects of the use of pingers, and develop acoustic devices for bycatch mitigation further	X	**Rec. 9:** Ensure a non-detrimental use of pingers by examining habitat exclusion and long-term effects of pingers

Reference	Action Point (old reference)	Jastarnia Plan		WBBK Plan	
		Applies	Mandate	Applies	Mandate
JG16/AP15	With respect to recreational fisheries, Parties should work towards banning or limiting the use of those types of gear known to pose a threat to harbour porpoises, or introduce effective mitigation measures shown to significantly reduce or eliminate bycatch. (JG15/AP14)	X	**MIT-02:** Reduce or eliminate fishing effort with gillnets or other gear known to cause porpoise bycatch in areas with higher Harbour Porpoise density or occurrence, and/or in areas with higher risk of Harbour Porpoise bycatch, according to spatio-temporal risk assessments	X	**Rec.3:** Protect Harbour Porpoises in their key habitats in minimizing bycatch as far as possible **Rec.5:** Where possible replace gillnet fisheries known to be associated with high porpoise bycatch with alternative fishing gear known to be less harmful
JG16/AP16	Parties are encouraged to coordinate and standardize monitoring of stranded and bycaught animals, determining the appropriate number of animals to be necropsied in each country, ensuring that health, contaminant load, life-history parameters and cause of death is examined in a coherent manner, and that tissue samples are collected from all carcasses from the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise distribution range. (JG15/AP15)	X	**MON-04:** Collect dead specimens and assess health status, contaminant levels, cause of mortality and life-history parameters of Harbour Porpoises	X	**Rec.8:** Monitor population health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality
JG16/AP17	All Parties and range states should establish programmes for recording bycatch, strandings and opportunistic sightings for inclusion in a national database, and report annually to the ASCOBANS/HELCOM database. (JG15/AP16)	X	**PACB-01:** Improve communication and education for increased public awareness and collection of live observations and dead specimens of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise	X	**Objective d:** Monitoring the status of the population
JG16/AP18	The Jastarnia Group promotes further cooperation with HELCOM EG MAMA and will strive to cooperate with the HELCOM Fish Group. The Jastarnia Group should invite HELCOM to its meetings. (JG15/AP17)	X	**COOP-02:** Strive for close cooperation between ASCOBANS and other international bodies	X	**Rec.2:** Cooperate with and inform other relevant bodies about the Conservation Plan
JG16/AP19	ASCOBANS should join efforts with HELCOM to liaise with the European Commission and other relevant bodies to improve the implementation by Member States of the EU Technical Measures Regulation and the Data Collection Framework to better incorporate and tackle bycatch concerns. (JG15/AP18)	X		X	

Reference	Action Point (old reference)	Jastarnia Plan		WBBK Plan	
		Applies	Mandate	Applies	Mandate
JG16/AP20	Coordinating Authorities of the countries hosting the Group's meetings are asked to ensure the attendance of an expert on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) at the respective meetings of the Group. The Secretariat should recall this recommendation to the Coordinating Authority of the host country in good time before the meeting. (JG15/AP19)	X	**COOP-02:** Strive for close cooperation between ASCOBANS and other international bodies	X	**Rec.2:** Cooperate with and inform other relevant bodies about the Conservation Plan
JG16/AP21	Parties should ensure that Belt Sea and Baltic Sea populations of harbour porpoises are assessed and managed as separate populations, e.g. in management plans and national redlists. (JG15/AP20)	X	**Other**	X	**Other**
JG16/AP22	Parties are urged to swiftly agree on joint recommendations through Baltfish, following the ICES Special Request Advice on emergency measures to prevent bycatch of common dolphin and Baltic Proper harbour porpoise in the Northeast Atlantic as closely as possible.	X	**MIT-02:** Reduce or eliminate fishing effort with gillnets or other gear known to cause porpoise bycatch in areas with higher Harbour Porpoise density or occurrence, and/or in areas with higher risk of Harbour Porpoise bycatch, according to spatio-temporal risk assessments **MIT-03:** Continue or implement the use of acoustic deterrent devices (pingers) and acoustic alerting devices proven to be successful when and where deemed appropriate		
JG16/AP23	Parties are urged to ensure a proposal to list the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise in CMS Appendix I is brought to CMS COP14.	X	**Other**		
JG16/AP24	Parties are encouraged to engage in the concerted action for the harbour porpoise populations in the Baltic Proper and the Iberian Peninsula, adopted by CMS COP13.	X	**Other**		

Annex 2: Internal Action Points from JG16

1. It was agreed that every second JG meeting would be held online.

2. The ASCOBANS Secretariat and the Chair of the Jastarnia Group to send a letter to all Baltic Proper Range States and their national navies, raising concern of the effect of underwater explosions to harbour porpoises, and to inform them about effective mitigation measures, by the end of July 2020.

3. The coordinator for the Jastarnia and WBBK Plans to compile short guidelines on genetic sampling of stranded animals.

4. A separate discussion to be held regarding the assessment criteria for status of the implementation of the actions of the Jastarnia Plan, including a discussion about where 'not applicable' can be an option. The discussion would take place on an online meeting platform as soon as possible. The following people volunteered for this task: Iwona Pawliczka, Patricia Brtnik, Olli Loisa / Penina Blankett, Line Kyhn and Kylie Owen, and the Coordinator for the Jastarnia and WBBK Plans would lead the discussion.

5. JG Chair and Shirshov Institute in Kaliningrad to discuss Russia's involvement in harbour porpoise projects in the Baltic by October 2020.

6. JG Chair to liaise with the future Chair of Baltfish, Estonia, to offer advice from the Jastarnia Group on the next steps regarding the ICES advice on emergency measures, before the next Baltfish meeting which takes place on 6-7 September 2020.

7. The coordinator for the Jastarnia and WBBK Plans to contact DG MARE, by the end of June 2020, to ask if the group can provide any specific scientific and technical comments regarding the ICES advice on emergency measures, that would be of help to DG MARE.

8. Discussion on available bycatch risk maps to take place at JG17.

9. Countries to report to JG17 on the potential effects of the cod fishing ban.

10. Draft proposal to list the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise to CMS Appendix I to be discussed at JG17, in advance of the 26th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee. Jastarnia Group to follow up with their countries' respective CMS Focal Points regarding which country/countries would be proponent(s) for the listing proposal.

11. Regarding the PAL project in Germany (cf. letter 'Mitigation of marine mammal bycatch: PAL monitoring and application beyond Schleswig-Holstein' sent by Chair of the Jastarnia Group in April 2018), the Chair of the Jastarnia Group to send a follow up letter to the Ministers at the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, if funding is not forthcoming.

12. The Secretariat to write a letter by September 2020 requesting that ASCOBANS be given a seat on the EU Regional Coordination Group for the Baltic (and on RCG for North Sea and Eastern Arctic), but it was understood that there were restrictions based on the use of data.

Annex 3: Technical and Scientific Comments on ICES Special Request Advice on Emergency Measures to Prevent Bycatch

to the EU Commission (DG MARE and DG ENV) from the ASCOBANS Jastarnia Group[1]

This comment refers to Harbour Porpoise, Measure 3:

"Closure of the Natura 2000 sites Adlergrund (DE1251301), Westliche Rönnebank (DE1249301), Pommersche Bucht mit Oderbank (DE1652301), Greifswalder Boddenrandschwelle und Teile der Pommerschen Bucht (DE1749302), Ostoja na Zatoce Pomorskiej (PLH990002), Wolin i Uznam (PLH320019), and the SPA site Pommersche Bucht (DE1552401) (Figure 2) for fishing with static nets during November–January"

In contrast to the proposal by WKEMBYC[2] which called for a seasonal closure of the cluster of Natura 2000 sites during November–April, the ICES Special Request Advice reduced the proposed closure season to November–January. The rationale presented with the measure is that "*Baltic Proper harbour porpoises being (occasionally) present during some winter months*". **This is vague and does not sufficiently reflect scientific knowledge and long-term acoustic monitoring results in German waters of the Pomeranian Bay. Available data from German acoustic and Danish telemetry studies give a more accurate picture of the occurrence of Baltic Proper Harbour Porpoises in the area than this very general statement in the ICES advice.**

As the WKEMBYC report points out, acoustic and telemetry studies show that the southern Baltic Sea area is primarily used by the Baltic Proper population during **November–April** (see also Fig. 2 in the ICES advice, from Carlén et. al 2018). Whereas the summer distribution of the Baltic Proper Harbour Porpoise population is east of a line Hanö-Jaroslawicz, during November-April, Baltic Proper porpoises spread out across the Baltic Sea, and the distribution pattern indicates that a part of the population moves into the southern Baltic Sea where the cluster of Natura 2000 sites proposed for seasonal set net closure is situated (Carlén et al., 2018).

In acoustic monitoring studies of Harbour Porpoises in the German waters of the Pomeranian Bay (i. e., in the cluster of Natura 2000 sites), detection rates peak twice seasonally: once associated with the summer occurrence of Belt Sea porpoises, and once correlated with (1) cold air temperatures and (2) air temperatures lower than water surface temperatures. This suggests that to avoid suffocation during winter, Baltic Proper porpoises migrate into the part of the Pomeranian Bay that is mostly ice-free (Gallus et al., 2012). A study covering approximately ten years of acoustic monitoring data collected in German waters from Fehmarn Belt in the west to the Pomeranian Bay in the east (from approximately 11°E to 14.5°E) supports this interpretation (Benke et al., 2014) and proposes that the Pomeranian Bay is used regularly by Baltic Proper porpoises in winter, and by Belt Sea porpoises in late summer. This is also supported by the seasonal distribution patterns of porpoises satellite tagged in the Belt Sea area (Sveegaard et al., 2011, 2015, Mikkelsen et al., 2016). The results of the tagging studies show that Belt Sea porpoises use the Pomeranian Bay to a very small extent in summer, and even less in winter, indicating that the winter peaks are from porpoises migrating into the Pomeranian Bay from the Baltic Proper.

In the long-term acoustic study (Benke et al., 2014), distinct winter maxima of acoustic activity were found between January and March in addition to a summer/autumn maximum between July and November. Annual minima of activity were recorded in April/May and October/November. The winter maximum has been visible in almost all years since 2002, whereas the summer maximum only became prominent after 2006. Since a correlation with air/sea temperatures was found by Gallus et al. (2012), it can be expected that the seasonal occurrence of Baltic Proper Harbour Porpoises varies between years, depending on weather conditions. The pattern of acoustic activity found by Benke et

[1] Steering Group for the ASCOBANS Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan) and the ASCOBANS Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat (WBBK Plan).

[2] Workshop on fisheries Emergency Measures to minimize Bycatch of short-beaked common dolphins in the Bay of Biscay and harbor porpoise in the Baltic Sea.

al. (2014) varied in time: the winter maximum can be as early as November (in the year 2008), and the summer minimum (interpreted here as the time after Baltic Proper animals had left the area) can be as late as July (in the year 2010). Also, in more recent data, at a number of acoustic monitoring stations within the proposed Natura 2000 cluster this general phenology can be found throughout. An example from 2018 in the graph below demonstrates that the occurrence can last as long as April with no occurrence of harbour porpoises in May 2018 before the next increase of activity begins in June which is interpreted as the influx of Belt Sea animals (Gallus & Brundiers, 2019).

As a conclusion, acoustic monitoring in the Pomeranian Bay with a long-term data series starting in 2002 confirms the seasonal fluctuations in porpoise occurrence and the need for protection measures to cover the whole seasonal management period covering the months November to April.

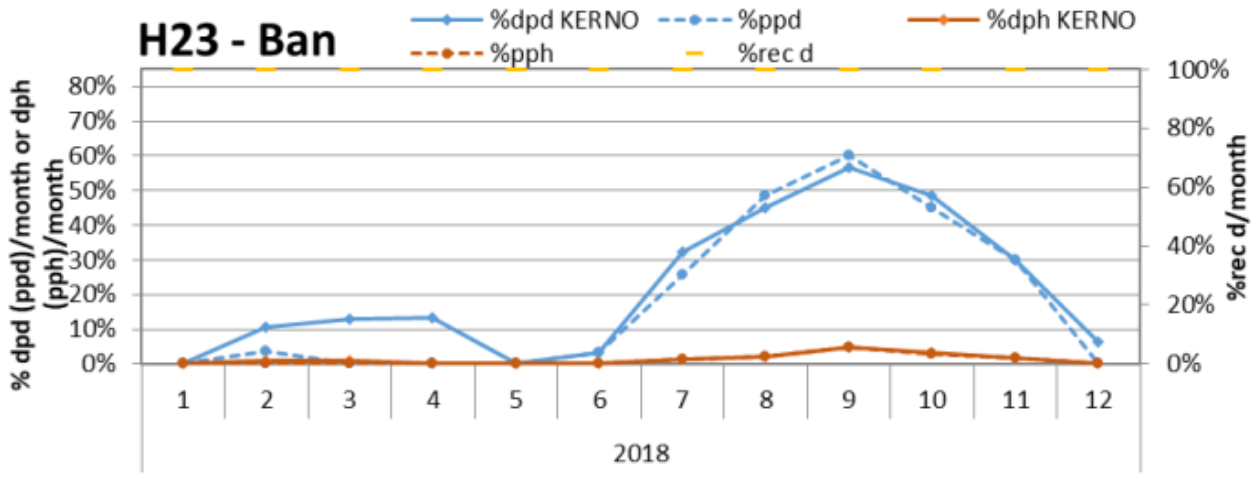

Fig. 1 Acoustic phenology of Harbour Porpoise acoustic activity in the calendar year 2018 at the monitoring station H23 which is situated in the Natura 2000 site ”Pommersche Bucht mit Oderbank“ (Gallus & Brundiers, 2019).

In order to avoid any bycatch of Baltic Proper Harbour Porpoises, a closure for set nets must cover the whole period of their occurrence in the Pomeranian Bight (including inter-annual variation), not only a part of it. Thus, it is proposed that the EU Commission follow the initial suggestion by WKEMBYC to close the Natura 2000 site cluster from November-April.

In the absence of detailed knowledge about the spring, summer and autumn distributions of the Baltic Proper population in German waters, which might be obscured by acoustic activity by animals from the more abundant Belt Sea population, it cannot be ruled out that animals from the Baltic Proper population are in the area even outside the proposed closure period from November-April.

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Annex 4: Status assessment criteria for progress of the implementation of the actions of the Jastarnia Plan

1. **Implementation of the CP: co-ordinator and Steering Committee**
   Yes/No

2. **Increase involvement, awareness and cooperation**

   Public awareness
   0 – No activity
   1 – Occasional and/or local campaigns informing about BS hp
   2 – Nation-wide communications campaign has taken place, but not continuously
   3 – Ongoing and continuous nation-wide information campaign, information on strandings scheme and reporting of observations available on well-established website

   Involvement and cooperation
   N.A. – not applicable
   0 – No activity
   1 – Occasional dialogue meetings for certain issues but no established groups
   2 – Dialogue/reference groups established to involve stakeholders in management of some protected areas or to mitigate bycatch in some of the distribution range
   3 – Dialogue/reference groups established to involve stakeholders in management of all protected areas and bycatch mitigation in the entire distribution range

3. **Monitor and estimate abundance and distribution**

   Population-wide (including modelling)
   N.A. – Not applicable
   0 – No activity
   1 – Surveys carried out every 10-12 years, results with wide confidence intervals of CV>0.4, distribution maps showing probability of detection
   2 – Surveys carried out every 10-12 years, more narrow confidence intervals of abundance estimates with CV>0.2 to 0.4, maps of harbour porpoise density
   3 – Surveys carried out every 6 years, even more narrow confidence intervals of abundance estimates with CV of ≤0.2, maps of harbour porpoise density

   Regional/national monitoring
   N.A. – Not applicable
   0 – No activity
   1 – Some monitoring going on, at local/national scale, not continuously, covering HELCOM key sites where possible (see HELCOM indicator work)
   2 – Continuous (year-round) monitoring for at least two years every six years covering HELCOM key sites where possible
   3 – Continuous (year-round) monitoring for the entire six-year cycle, covering HELCOM key sites where possible

   Population structure in the Baltic region
   N.A. – Not applicable
   0 – No activity
   1 – Samples collected from some carcasses found within the distribution range of the Baltic Proper population, but no analysis
   2 – Samples collected from some carcasses found within the distribution range of the Baltic Proper population, some analysis completed (genetics, life history, morphometrics etc.)
   3 – Samples collected from over 90% of carcasses found within the distribution range of the Baltic Proper population, and all possible analyses completed (genetics, life history, morphometrics etc.)

4. Bycatch

Monitoring bycatch
N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity
1 – Research project on bycatch monitoring
2 – Robust bycatch monitoring of part of static net fisheries
3 – Robust bycatch monitoring in all relevant fisheries

Estimating bycatch
N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No estimates available
1 – Estimate of bycatch available from research project, for part of the fisheries
2 – Robust estimate of bycatch available for >50% of relevant fisheries
3 – Robust estimate of bycatch available for all relevant fisheries

Reducing bycatch
N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity
1 – Research projects ongoing on fisheries closures, effort reduction, alternative gear, ADDs and/or ghost net removal
2 – Clear guidelines and regulations on bycatch mitigation with the aim of reducing bycatch to zero in harbour porpoise MPAs and/or high-risk areas, EU delegated acts in place where relevant, ghost net removal carried out in some parts of the distribution range
3 – Clear guidelines and regulations on bycatch mitigation in all national waters, delegated acts in place where relevant, ghost net removal carried out on a larger scale within the distribution range

5. Monitor and mitigate impact of underwater noise

Improve knowledge on impact of underwater noise and develop threshold limits of disturbance
N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity
1 – Research projects in place to improve knowledge
2 – Threshold limits of disturbance in place for continuous or impulsive underwater noise
3 – Threshold limits of disturbance in place for continuous and impulsive underwater noise

Mitigating effects of underwater noise
N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity
1 – Mitigation measures under development or being tested, available mitigation methods used to some extent
2 – Research on the effectiveness of mitigation measures ongoing. National and/or HELCOM guidelines under development.
3 – Mitigation measures in place for continuous and impulsive noise in the harbour porpoise distribution range. National and/or HELCOM guidelines in place.

6. Monitor and assess population health status

N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity, no plan or guidance on how to act in case of a stranding
1 – Samples collected from some carcasses from within the distribution range of the Baltic Proper population, no analysis carried out
2 – Some analysis and assessments completed on certain organs or tissues, and/or some necropsies carried out

3 – Full necropsies (according to ASCOBANS protocol) conducted for >90% of carcasses in good enough condition, and samples analysed for health indicators, e.g. contaminant levels and life history parameters. Regular (at least every 6 years) assessments of results

7. Investigate habitat use and protect important areas

Investigating habitat use
N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity
1 – Research projects ongoing on spatiotemporal distribution
2 – Spatiotemporal distribution has been mapped and important areas identified in parts of the population range, within the last 10-12 years
3 – Spatiotemporal habitat use has been mapped and important areas identified at a broad scale in the entire population range, and at a fine spatial scale in important areas, within the last 10-12 years

Protecting important areas
N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No harbour porpoise important areas designated as MPAs or other conservation measures introduced
1 – Some important areas designated as harbour porpoise MPAs
2 – Some important areas protected with conservation measures in place
3 – All harbour porpoise important areas protected (effective protective measures in place)

Annex 5: Status assessment criteria for progress of the implementation of the actions of the WBBK Plan

1. **Implementation of the CP: co-ordinator and Steering Committee**
   Yes/No

2. **Actively seek to involve fishermen in the implementation of the plan and in mitigation measures to ensure a reduction in bycatch**
   N.A. – Not applicable
   0 – No activity
   1 – Occasional dialogue meetings for certain issues but no established groups
   2 – Dialogue/reference groups established to involve stakeholders in management of some protected areas and/or to mitigate bycatch in some of the distribution range
   3 – Dialogue/reference groups established to involve stakeholders in management of all protected areas and bycatch mitigation in the entire distribution range

3. **Cooperate with and inform other relevant bodies about the conservation plan**
   N.A. – Not applicable
   0 – No activity
   1 – Few contacts with some national governments and/or other relevant national and international bodies
   2 – Occasional contact with national governments and other relevant national and international bodies
   3 – Continuous dissemination of the plan to national governments and other relevant national and international bodies

4. **Protect harbour porpoises in their key habitats by minimizing bycatch**
   N.A. – Not applicable
   0 – No activity
   1 – Bycatch mitigation measures and/or ghost net removal underway in some harbour porpoise SACs
   2 – Delegated acts in place, bycatch mitigation measures implemented and ghost net removal completed for some harbour porpoise SACs
   3 – Clear guidelines delegated acts in place, measures on bycatch mitigation implemented and ghost net removal carried out in all harbour porpoise SACs

5. **Implement pinger use in fisheries causing bycatch**
   N.A. – Not applicable
   0 – No activity
   1 – Research projects on controlled pinger use underway
   2 – Controlled pinger use in some high-risk fisheries
   3 – Controlled pinger use mandatory in all high-risk fisheries

6. **Replacement of high-risk gillnets with alternative gear**
   N.A. – Not applicable
   0 – No activity
   1 – Research projects on development of alternative gear without bycatch underway
   2 – Alternative gear without bycatch are available but not implemented in all active static net fisheries
   3 – Use of alternative gear without bycatch implemented large-scale in all active static net fisheries

7. Estimate total annual bycatch

Estimate total annual bycatch
N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No estimates available
1 – Estimate of bycatch available from research project, for part of the fisheries
2 – Robust estimate of bycatch available for >50% of relevant fisheries
3 – Robust estimate of bycatch available for all relevant fisheries

Facilitate landing of bycaught harbour porpoises
0 – National and EU legislation does not allow landing of bycaught harbour porpoises
1 – National and EU legislation does not allow landing of bycaught harbour porpoises but there can be derogations from these rules
2 – National or EU legislation allow landing of bycaught harbour porpoises
3 – National and EU legislation allow landing of bycaught harbour porpoises

8. Estimate trends in abundance in the western Baltic, the Belt Sea and Kattegat

Population-wide (including modelling)
N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity
1 – Surveys carried out every 10-12 years, results with wide confidence intervals of CV>0.4, distribution maps showing probability of detection
2 – Surveys carried out every 10-12 years, more narrow confidence intervals of abundance estimates with CV>0.2 to 0.4, maps of harbour porpoise density
3 – Surveys carried out every 6 years, even more narrow confident intervals of abundance estimates with CV of ≤0.2, maps of harbour porpoise density

Identify a survey interval based on power analysis in relation to effort and statistical uncertainty, for population-wide surveys
0 – No survey interval identified
3 – Optimal survey interval identified

Regional/national surveys
N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity
1 – Some monitoring going on, at local/national scale, not continuously, covering HELCOM key sites where possible (see HELCOM indicator work)
2 – Continuous (year-round) monitoring for at least two years every six years covering HELCOM key sites where possible
3 – Continuous (year-round) monitoring for the entire six-year cycle, covering HELCOM key sites where possible

9. Monitor population health status, contaminant load and causes of mortality
N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity, no plan or guidance on how to act in case of a stranding
1 – Samples collected from some carcasses from within the distribution range of the Belt Sea population, no analysis carried out
2 – Some analysis and assessments completed on certain organs or tissues, and/or some necropsies carried out
3 – Full necropsies (according to ASCOBANS protocol) conducted for >90% of carcasses in good enough condition, and samples analysed for health indicators, e.g. contaminant levels and life history parameters. Regular (at least every 6 years) assessments of results

10. Ensure non-detrimental use of pingers by examining habitat exclusion and long-term effects of pingers

N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity
1 – Research projects underway on effects of pingers, such as habitat exclusion or habituation
2 – Some results available, but not conclusive, on effects of pingers, such as habitat exclusion and habituation
3 – Reliable results available on effects of pingers, such as habitat exclusion and habituation

11. Include monitoring and management of important prey species in national harbour porpoise management plans

N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity
1 – Knowledge available on the most important prey species for the Belt Sea harbour porpoise population, also non-commercial species and for harbour porpoises relevant sizes of commercial species, and the biology and distribution of those species
2 – Measures taken to ensure availability of harbour porpoise prey species, also non-commercial and for harbour porpoises relevant sizes of commercial species, within harbour porpoise MPAs
3 – Sustainable management of harbour porpoise prey species, also non-commercial and for harbour porpoises relevant sizes of commercial species, in the entire range of the Belt Sea harbour porpoise population

12. Restore or maintain habitat quality

N.A. – Not applicable
0 – No activity
1 – Research projects on the impact of marine constructions, shipping, seismic testing etc on harbour porpoises underway
2 – Monitoring and mitigation measures to reduce the impact from marine constructions, shipping, seismic testing etc on harbour porpoise are implemented to some extent
3 – Full implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) and the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

Annex 6: List of Participants

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