Agenda Item 6.1.4
Further Implementation of the Agreement
Species Action Plans
Species Action Plan for the North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin

Document 6.1.4
Proposed Amendments to Resolution 8.4:
Conservation of Common Dolphins

Action Requested
• Review the proposed amendments
• Introduce changes if needed
• Adopt the resolution

Submitted by
Common Dolphin Group
Resolution No. 4:
Conservation of Common Dolphins

The Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS

1. Encourages Parties to undertake the following actions required for the conservation of common dolphins in the eastern North Atlantic:
   (a) continue work towards establishing a management framework procedure for bycatch in order to enable specified conservation objectives to be met;
   (b) coordinate their monitoring programmes on other direct and indirect pressures, including chemical pollution and anthropogenic noise, to allow assessment of the effects on the population;
   (c) support the research necessary, using both genetic and ecological markers, for a thorough assessment of the range boundary and any subdivisions of the eastern North Atlantic population(s) in order to reassess the management unit;
   (d) coordinate their bycatch monitoring programmes to allow assessment of the population bycatch rate;
   (e) apply appropriate bycatch mitigation strategies for all high- and medium-risk fisheries;
   (f) monitor population status through large- and small-scale surveys at appropriate intervals in order to estimate trends in abundance and detect changes in distribution;
   (g) monitor health and nutritional status, reproductive parameters, pollutant burdens, and causes of mortality using samples and data collected from stranding and bycatch monitoring programmes;
   (h) continue to review of the effects of anthropogenic noise and other threats and pressures on common dolphins, including an evaluation of the population level consequences of disturbance;
   (i) assess the independent, in-combination and cumulative effects of multiple stressors;
   (j) continue requesting overarching legislation for cetaceans in European waters that ensures the effective protection of cetaceans from all threats;
   (k) establish a coordinated and regionalised approach.
ASCOBANS
Species Action Plan (SAP)
for
North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin
(Delphinus delphis)

August 2019

Adopted intersessionally in 2019, in line with ASCOBANS Resolution 8.4
One NE Atlantic Management /MSFD Assessment Unit - ICES WGMME (2014)
MU Abundance – c173,000 *D. delphis*

**Common dolphin**
(Coda 2009 - Coda survey July 2007)

116,709 (CV=0.34)

**Common dolphin**
(Hammond et al. 2013 – SCANS II survey July 2005)

56,221 (CV=0.23)
SCANS III July 2016

>467,673 common dolphins
CV = 0.264
(Hammond et al. 2017)

Irish ObSERVE project
~ 33,215 possible common dolphins (Rogan et al. 2018)
### Summary of actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>Identify the priority bycatch issues</td>
<td>RES-01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>Improve estimates of bycatch rates to support development of conservation strategy</td>
<td>RES-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Implement and assess gear modifications and mitigation measures to reduce bycatch</td>
<td>MIT-01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Implement a wide-scale surveillance programme to monitor trends in distribution and abundance in the NE Atlantic</td>
<td>MON-01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Improve understanding of causes of seasonal and annual variation in abundance and distribution, particularly in relation to human activities</td>
<td>RES-03</td>
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<td>High</td>
<td>Monitor health and nutritional status, diet, life history parameters, and causes of mortality in the NE Atlantic</td>
<td>MON-02</td>
</tr>
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<td>Further our understanding on population structure by assessing and developing suitable techniques for these highly mobile small delphinids</td>
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</tr>
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Terms of Reference

The Common Dolphin Group has the following tasks:

• Coordinate and drive the implementation of the Species Action Plan for the North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin, including assessing funding options where appropriate;
• Collate reports on the progress of implementation, effectiveness, issues encountered and the results obtained;
• Evaluate progress in implementation, specifically with regards to each of the ten actions as defined in the SAP;
• Establish further implementation priorities and make appropriate recommendations;
• Report to each Advisory Committee meeting on the progress;
• Encourage countries to harmonise their national efforts, including allocation of funding;
• Encourage cooperation between ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS (in particular taking into consideration the ongoing initiative of ACCOBAMS/IWC Conservation and Management Plan for Mediterranean Common Dolphins) and other Range States;
• Promote the SAP to relevant stakeholders; and
• Evaluate the effectiveness of the SAP every six years to make recommendations for updating it.
Common Dolphin Group Members

France
- Florence Caurant – University of La Rochelle (Co-Chair)
- Vincent Ridoux – University of La Rochelle
- Sami Hassani - Oceanopolis
- Helene Peltier – University of La Rochelle
- Jerome Spitz – University of La Rochelle

Ireland
- Sinéad Murphy – Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (Co-chair)

Portugal
- Marine Sequeira - Instituto da Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas

Spain
- Graham Pierce - Instituto de Investigacións Mariñas
- Begoña Santos - Instituto Español de Oceanografía

UK
- Farah Chaudry – Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Kelly MacLeod – Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Nikki Taylor – Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Cat Bell - Defra
- Allen Kingston – University of St Andrews

IGOs
- Greg Donovan – International Whaling Commission

NGOs
- Peter Evans - Sea Watch Foundation/Bangor University
- Mark Simmonds – Humane Society International
- Fiona Read – Whale and Dolphin Conservation
- Sarah Dolman – Whale and Dolphin Conservation
- Simon Berrow – Irish Whale and Dolphin Group

ACCOBAMS
- JoAn Gonzalvo - Tethys Research Institute, Italy

Fishing industry
- Eunice Pinn – SeaFish
1st Meeting of the Common Dolphin Group
Stralsund, Germany, September, 2019

- Activities contributing to implementation of the Species Action Plan for the North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin
  - French National Working Group on Bycatch
- Update on activities of other WGs, and legislation
- Current status of the ACCOBAMS Conservation and Management Plan for Mediterranean Common Dolphins
- Bycatch as a threat to Common Dolphins
  - Current activities on bycatch monitoring and mitigation in the UK
  - Common dolphins and fisheries interactions in Galicia
  - Nature of fleets in the Bay of Biscay
**EU request on emergency measures to prevent bycatch of common dolphin (Delphinus delphis) and Baltic Proper harbour porpoise (Phocoena phocoena) in the Northeast Atlantic**

**Advice summary**

ICES concluded that the proposed measures by NGOs for both the common dolphin (Delphinus delphis) in the Bay of Biscay and the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise (Phocoena phocoena) are appropriate to reduce the bycatch. However, several spatio-temporal and technical amendments are recommended.

ICES advises, for the common dolphin in the Bay of Biscay, a combination of temporal closures of all métiers of concern and application of pingers on pair trawlers to mitigate bycatch outside of the period of closure. For the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise, ICES advises a combination of spatial-temporal closures and application of pingers in static nets (i.e.

ICES notes ongoing issues with data availability and quality, contributing to high levels of uncertainty in the estimation of population abundance, distribution, bycatch, and other major threats for small cetaceans. Notably, observer coverage is well below 1% of the total effort in most fisheries. ICES recommends enhanced monitoring to assess the effectiveness of management measures and to augment precision in population abundance and bycatch mortality estimates of common dolphin in the Bay of Biscay and of the Baltic Proper harbour porpoise.

ICES further advises that protection measures, considering the life history of small cetaceans, can only be effective when applied for a longer period of time. ICES advice addresses not only the emergency measures, but also considers long-term measures.

ICES notes that conservation objectives set out under relevant EU legislation need to be defined more quantitatively. Furthermore, many EU Member States have not yet established baselines or reference levels for population abundance or pressures, such as bycatch, against which the status of the species can be assessed under the EU Habitats Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). ICES therefore reiterates its previous advice that it is willing to assist competent authorities to establish limits for anthropogenic mortality, against which human impacts can be assessed.
Table 7

Summary of the bycatch rate and mortality of common dolphins for métiers of concern from monitoring (subareas 8 and 9: data pooled 2016–2018) and strandings (French coast, Subarea 8), raised using the annual mean of the available fishing effort data (RDB) for 2016–2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Métier 4*</th>
<th>Métier 5^</th>
<th>RDB fishing effort (DaS^^)</th>
<th>Bycatch rate (animals/DaS fished)</th>
<th>At-sea monitoring estimate (95% CI)</th>
<th>Stranding estimate</th>
<th>% coverage of RDB fishing effort (DaS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTM</td>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>481 (408–555)</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTB</td>
<td>MPD</td>
<td>5195</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>775 (388–1163)</td>
<td>1292</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTR</td>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>58365</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>2061 (1203–3092)</td>
<td>3435</td>
<td>0.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTM</td>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>1.22**</td>
<td>297 (0–890)</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>0.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>SPF</td>
<td>35564</td>
<td>0.0060</td>
<td>213 (0–532)</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNS</td>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>36836</td>
<td>0.0037</td>
<td>137 (0–343)</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>0.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTM</td>
<td>LPF</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>0.0153</td>
<td>8 (0–23)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL (95% Confidence Interval) 3973* (1998–6598) 6620 (4411–10827)

* CIs too wide: not possible to calculate variance in bycatch rates and consequently CIs are summed métier mortality.
# See https://vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1498 for the description of gears.
** Based on ca. one day of monitoring effort.
^ See https://vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1499 for the description of targeted species.
^^ Days-at-sea (DaS).
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Submitted by                 Common Dolphin Group
**EU Member States Conservation Status Assessments for the Common Dolphin, for Article 17 reporting of the Habitats Directive**

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Favourable</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Favourable</td>
<td>Favourable</td>
<td>Favourable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unfavourable-Bad</td>
<td>Unfavourable-Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unfavourable-Bad</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Favourable</td>
<td>Unfavourable-Inadequate</td>
<td>Unfavourable-Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Atlantic</td>
<td>“Unknown”</td>
<td>“Unfavourable-Inadequate”</td>
<td>Provisional assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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