

## Priority Recommendations

1. Work nationally (e.g. through work plans) and regionally (through Regional Coordination Groups) to improve quality and availability of fishing effort data (e.g. by region, gear type, net length, vessel size category, season, and country).
2. ASCOBANS to write to the North Sea Regional Coordination Group (RCG) to introduce our work and its relevance to data collection, and where ASCOBANS may contribute. In addition, Parties should contact their own fisheries administrations to facilitate representation of ASCOBANS interests at RCG meetings.
3. ASCOBANS to request a seat in the North Sea Regional Advisory Council.
4. Make better use of funding from the EU (e.g. EMFF) to jointly implement better bycatch monitoring and mitigation.
5. Encourage further analysis towards fine-scale risk-mapping to better understand factors determining high bycatch and to direct resources to high-risk areas and times.
6. Investigate gear specific solutions to mitigate bycatch, including alternative fishing methods to static gillnetting.
7. Encourage Parties to pass on bycatch monitoring and mitigation recommendations under ASCOBANS, at a national level, to the appropriate persons to facilitate engagement internationally.
8. Recommend to Parties that at future meetings of the Advisory Committee and the North Sea Group a fisheries representative from the respective Party is present.
9. Parties to identify further ways to directly engage relevant sectors of the fishing industry.
10. Recommend that North Sea-wide information on life history parameters be collected and analysed from strandings and bycaught animals in order to assess for evidence of temporal changes in those parameters that may have resulted from anthropogenic activities.
11. Identify and / or fill gaps (for example in Lower Saxony) in stranding networks within the North Sea Region.
12. Encourage adopting the 'Best Practice on Cetacean Post Mortem Investigation and Tissue Sampling', when available, which includes instruction on how one can define "bycatch" in strandings.
13. Consider promotion (and funding) of a cross-border workshop on Harbour Porpoise conservation and management of the North East Atlantic, as proposed by the Netherlands.
14. Parties to fill in gaps in monitoring and survey data / data analysis to determine trends in distribution and abundance within their North Sea EEZ, and identify causes for observed changes.
15. Parties to support coordination of SCANS-type surveys through a central body and undertake these ideally at a six-year frequency.