

# ASCOBANS NEWSFLASH APRIL 2013

## OUTCOMES OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE PARTIES



The report of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS), which was held in Brighton, United Kingdom, from 22-24 October 2012, is now available on the [Agreement's website](#).

Key outcomes include the adoption of a new Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat which aims to intensify research and conservation efforts in this heavily used sea area shared by Denmark, Germany and Sweden. In addition, participants agreed on priorities for research and conservation actions in the western part of the ASCOBANS Area, which comprises the Irish Sea and the European North Atlantic, an area home to a large diversity of whale and dolphin species, as well as the harbour porpoise. A resolution on the impacts of chemical pollution on small cetaceans draws attention to knowledge gaps that need to be closed in order to improve the understanding of how lesser-studied contaminants or those of particular concern affect individuals and populations.

All Resolutions passed at the Meeting are contained in the report, and can be accessed individually [here](#).

## JASTARNIA GROUP RECOMMENDS CRUCIAL ACTIONS FOR HARBOUR PORPOISES IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Established to take forward the implementation of the [Recovery Plan for the Baltic Harbour Porpoise](#) (also called Jastarnia Plan), this expert working group met from 16-18 April 2013 in Gothenburg, Sweden, upon the kind invitation of the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management.

Under the chairmanship of Rüdiger Strepel (Coalition Clean Baltic), the Group considered progress made with respect to the various recommendations of the Jastarnia Plan. Also, for the first time, the Group deliberated on the implementation of the new [Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat](#), which was adopted by ASCOBANS Parties in October 2012.

The Group agreed recommendations to be forwarded to the 20<sup>th</sup> ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Meeting (27-29 August 2013, Warsaw, Poland), which identify actions to be taken and priorities for the effective implementation of the two Plans. Also, in a joint session with the project management team of [SAMBAH](#) – Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise, a Life+ funded project, the Group reaffirmed their full support for the project and their keen anticipation of its results, which will fill a very important information need regarding the distribution and abundance of the critically endangered Baltic sub-population of the harbour porpoise. Population densities are so low that traditional survey methods are not suitable for assessing this population. The project results will therefore be vital not only for increasing our knowledge of the status of this species in the Baltic Sea, but also for deciding on appropriate management measures.

The report of the meeting, including all recommendations agreed, will become available shortly and will be published on [this website](#).

Tentative dates for the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Jastarnia Group are 1-3 April 2014. The Secretariat would be pleased to receive offers for hosting this meeting.



Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany), who will retire in August 2013, received a farewell present and the best wishes of the Jastarnia Group. His expertise especially on fisheries-related matters has been highly valued in ASCOBANS during the last 17 years.

## DATES FOR 20<sup>TH</sup> ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING SET

Upon the kind invitation of the Ministry of Environment of Poland, the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee will hold its 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting from 27-29 August 2013 in Warsaw. The Provisional Agenda for the meeting is under development and will be circulated shortly. More details on the venue as well as travel and accommodation options will also be made available soon.

The North Sea Group will meet back to back with the Advisory Committee on 26 August. A full day has been scheduled for this meeting.



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