

ASCOBANS NEWSFLASH DECEMBER 2013

WINNER OF CREATIVITY COMPETITION “THE LAST 300” ANNOUNCED

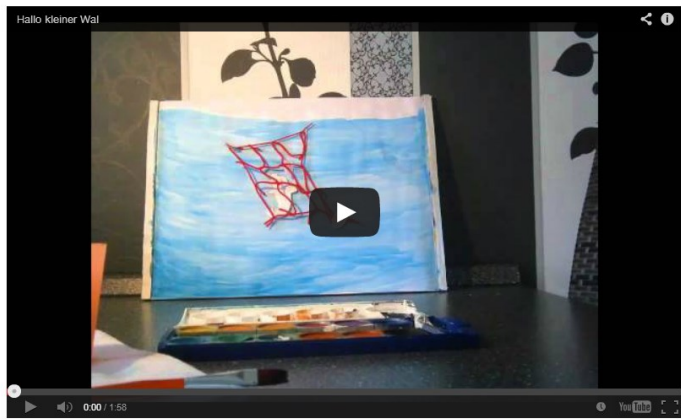
Berlin/Munich, 10 December 2013 – ASCOBANS, together with the environmental organizations NABU, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, and OceanCare, today announced the winner of the creativity competition “the Last 300”.

The public interest in the competition which aimed to highlight the plight of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise, proved that many people in Germany identified with “their whale species”. The Harbour porpoise, the only species of whale found regularly in German waters, faces threats from underwater noise, overfishing of its prey, bycatch and destruction of its habitat. It is feared that there might only be 300 of the creatures left, hence the name of the competition.

The winner of the competition is 15-year-old Laura Stattkus, who produced a stop motion film entitled “Hello, little whale”. Her prize is €500 in cash and a trip to the island of Fehmarn.

All entries, including the three winners, can be viewed on the German-language website www.schweinswal.eu.

The full press release (in German) can be found [here](#).



Hallo kleiner Wal

NEW SECRETARIAT STRUCTURE:

WELCOME TO MELANIE VIRTUE, THE NEW ASCOBANS SENIOR ADVISOR

The CMS Executive Secretary, Bradnee Chambers, implemented a new structure of the Secretariat in November 2013. Designed to allow more even attention to be given to all parts of the CMS Family and mandates, one of the key changes was to abolish the former Science and Agreements Units. Instead, an overarching Implementation Support Team consisting of a Scientific Advisor, Marco Barbieri, and three species teams dealing with avian, terrestrial and aquatic species were created.

Borja Heredia, who had served as ASCOBANS Senior Advisor since January 2010, is now heading the Avian Species Team. The entire team would like to express their thanks to Borja for his support and guidance!

ASCOBANS is now part of the newly created Aquatic Species team, headed by Melanie Virtue. Besides all of the CMS Secretariat's work on cetaceans, this team also deals with other aquatic mammals, sharks, other fish, marine turtles and cross-cutting marine issues such as bycatch, underwater noise, marine debris and pollution. Time allocations for ASCOBANS of course remain the same, with 15% of the Senior Advisor's time dedicated to ASCOBANS.

Melanie is a primatologist by training and was Coordinator of the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP), based at UNEP in Nairobi till 2009. Wanting to widen her species expertise, she joined CMS in 2009 as Interagency Liaison Officer and then took over the Agreements Unit portfolio in 2011, covering everything from the Aquatic Warbler to Pacific Islands Cetaceans. As leader of the Aquatic Species Team, Melanie is keen now to focus more directly on just a few taxa and a few Agreements, ensuring that they are implemented well, and that overlapping interests such as bycatch, ocean noise and marine debris are dealt with effectively.

Details of the new Secretariat structure and professional staff responsibilities can be found on the [CMS website](#).



For more information, please contact:
Ms Heidrun Frisch
UNEP/ASCOBANS Coordinator
+49 228 815 2418 / h.frisch@ascobans.org



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