

ASCOBANS NEWS No. 2

November 2007



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

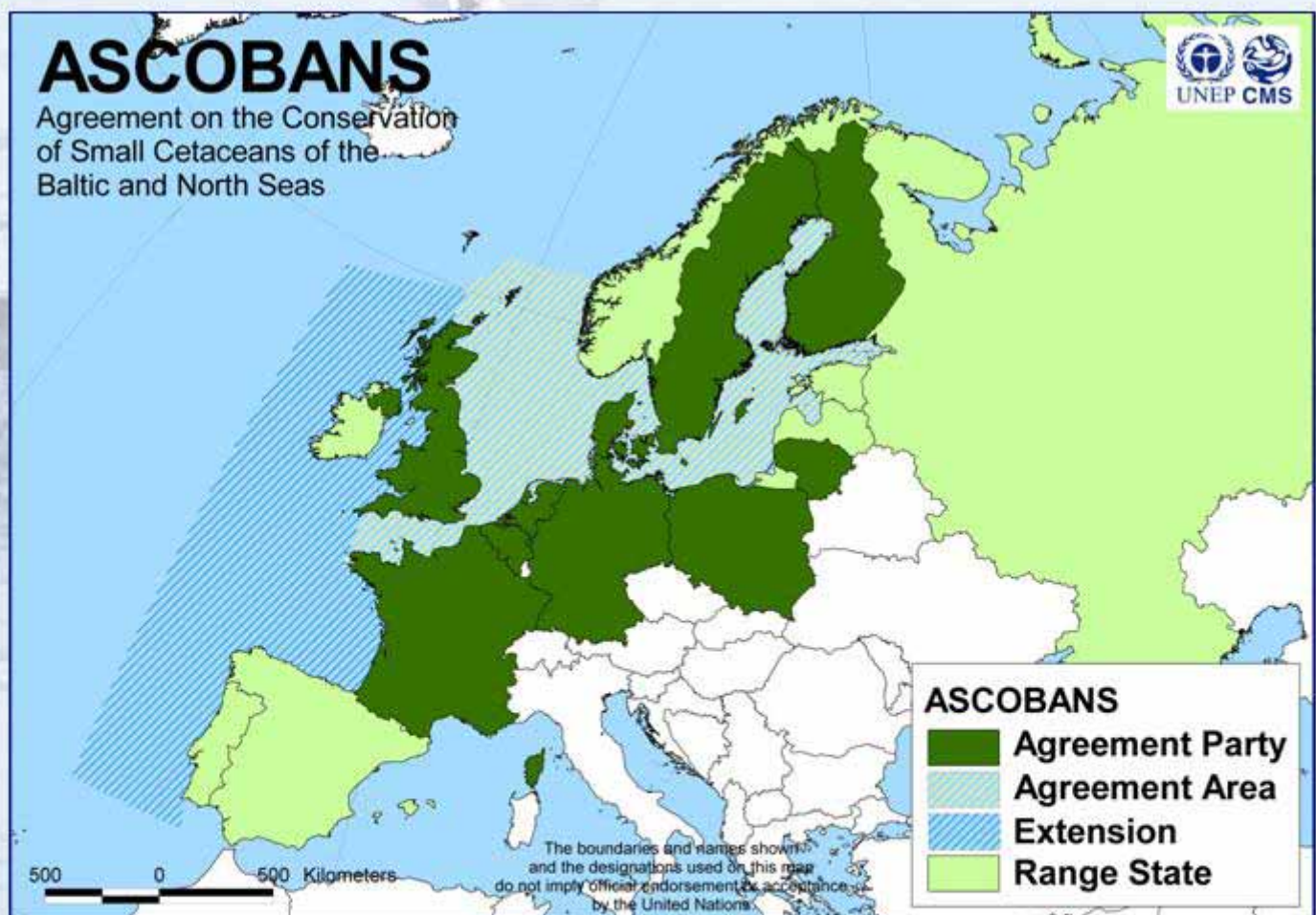
www.YoD2007.org

EXTENSION OF ASCOBANS AGREEMENT AREA COMES INTO FORCE ON 3 FEBRUARY 2008

We have good news and certainly reason to celebrate! The extension of the ASCOBANS Agreement Area, agreed on by Parties at MoP4 in 2003, will enter into force on 3 February 2008. Finland was the fifth country to formally accept the Amendment to the Agreement, following France, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. The Agreement's name will also change to reflect the new geographic coverage: **"Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas"**.

With the significant enlargement of the area covered by ASCOBANS westward, not only did ASCOBANS gain three more Range States, Ireland, Portugal and Spain, who will continue to be encouraged to join the other ten Parties as member states, also its political footprint will be significantly larger. The new areas of the North East Atlantic and Irish Seas bring with them different species compositions and a wider set of issues and threats that need to be addressed. But they also increase the scientific expertise the Agreement bodies can draw from and provide a chance to coordinate conservation measures of small cetaceans more effectively in a wider context. The next Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee in the spring of 2008 will further consider the implications of the extension for the organisation and work plan of the various Agreement bodies.

The map below shows the original Agreement Area and the extension, demonstrating the significant gain in cetacean-rich waters. It also gives an overview of Parties and non-Party Range States to the Agreement. The ASCOBANS area will then be contiguous to that of its sister Agreement, ACCOBAMS.



The CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat will be very happy to assist those five Parties that have not yet completed their adoption in any way possible. All Range States joining ASCOBANS after the extension comes into force will automatically accede to the Agreement as amended.

ASCOBANS WEBSITE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following articles were featured on the ASCOBANS website under News & Events in the last months (full articles available [here](#)):

June/September 2007: Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise

Following relevant recommendations by the 3rd Meeting of the Jastarnia Group and the 14th Meeting of the Advisory Committee, ASCOBANS is financially supporting - through pledges from Germany and Finland - the development of a coordinated project aimed to improve the knowledge of the geographic distribution, density and size of the harbour porpoise population in the Baltic Sea using static acoustic monitoring techniques. ...

13 September 2007: Extension of Year of the Dolphin in 2008

Buoyed by the enthusiastic reception of Year of the Dolphin 2007, the founding Partners CMS, its two whale and dolphin agreements ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, and the German-based global travel enterprise TUI AG, today announced their decision to extend the initiative into 2008 to ensure that many more new activities to conserve dolphins and their marine environment will take place around the world. ...

8-10 October 2007: Two joint ASCOBANS/HELCOM Workshops to be held in Bonn

A Workshop on Small Cetacean Population Structure in the ASCOBANS Area will be held on the first two days, drawing together almost thirty experts in order to provide a forum for informal presentation and discussion and for promoting and facilitating cooperation across borders. The third day is reserved for a Workshop on Genetics and Population Structure of the Harbour Porpoise in the Baltic, which will be held in a smaller group specialised on the specific situation of the only native cetacean in the Baltic Sea. ...

8-10 October 2007 UPDATE: Workshops Successfully Concluded

After three very intense and productive days of workshops in the ASCOBANS Secretariat's seat in the UN Campus in Bonn, the experts invited to the Population Structure Workshops left with a bit of "homework". ...

22-25 October 2007: 3rd Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS

Reducing accidental cetacean catches in drift nets, reducing the impact of fishing, preserving habitats and establishing new Marine Protected Areas are some of the topics that have been dealt with by the Third Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area. ...

29 October - 1 November 2007: Year of the Dolphin Conference in Stralsund:

On the invitation of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, a conference entitled "Year of the Dolphin in Europe – Conservation of Small Cetaceans and Marine Protected Areas" was held in cooperation with the German Oceanographic Museum in Stralsund, Germany. ...

8-9 November 2007: CMS Standing Committee Takes Stock of Progress in the Merger of CMS and ASCOBANS Secretariats

The 32nd Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee, convened in Bonn on 8-9 November 2007, has considered progress in the merger of CMS and ASCOBANS Secretariats. The joint CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat gave a report on main ASCOBANS events and activities since the previous meeting of the Committee (Sept. 2006). ...

3 February 2008: Extension of ASCOBANS Agreement Area Comes Into Force

We have good news and certainly reason to celebrate! The extension of the ASCOBANS Agreement Area, agreed on by Parties at MoP4 in 2003, will enter into force on 3 February 2008. Finland was the fifth country to formally accept the Amendment to the Agreement, following France, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. The Agreement's name will also change to reflect the new geographic coverage: "Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas". ...

18 May 2008: The 6th International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise

The CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat is pleased to announce that an updated and revised version of the IDBHP Handbook is available for download from the ASCOBANS Website and upon request as a hardcopy from the Secretariat. ...

JOINT ASCOBANS/HELCOM WORKSHOPS

After three very intense and productive days of workshops in the ASCOBANS Secretariat's seat in the UN Campus in Bonn (8-10 October 2007), the experts invited to the Population Structure Workshops left with a bit of "homework".

The first two days were used to consider the advantages and limitations of different methods to study cetacean population structure and dynamics and for reporting on the state of knowledge with regard to the harbour porpoise, the bottlenose dolphin, the short-beaked common dolphin, the white-beaked dolphin and the Atlantic white-sided dolphin. The group then started to draw up a summary of methodological approaches and their features, including a rough power analysis, with a note on the costs and sample sizes required for each method. This will be published together with the proceedings and recommendations on population differentiation or possible management units for each of the species under consideration to provide policy makers with the information needed to make informed decisions.

The third day considered the current knowledge about genetics and population structure of the Baltic harbour porpoise. Due to its rarity, it is extremely difficult to study and the available information shows many gaps. Therefore, the group decided to prepare a project proposal for EU funding for an international and interdisciplinary coordinated research effort, providing not only an overview of available material, but also helping to connect the various actors around the Baltic Sea who are studying and trying to protect this small and possibly distinct population.

ASCOBANS WORKING DINNER ON THE MARGINS OF CMS STC 32

In the margins of the Standing Committee meeting, an informal meeting was convened by the Federal Ministry for the Environment of Germany, which involved the Chair and Vice-Chair of the CMS Standing Committee (UK and Australia), the Chair of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, the representative of the MOP5 Chair (the Netherlands) and the joint Secretariat. The group discussed interim results of the merger of the Secretariats, including both positive aspects and problems encountered. They then turned their attention to the future and considered ideas and strategies for the time until the next ASCOBANS MOP, in order to make the new Secretariat arrangement a success. The open and constructive discussion will no doubt help in setting the priorities for the next months.

CMS/ASCOBANS RESEARCH AND EVENTS CONTRACTOR

As some of you have noticed, a while ago a vacancy announcement for this consultancy was posted on the CMS and ASCOBANS websites. Ms Melanie Klussmann, who was selected for the position, had already been supporting the CMS Inter-Agency Liaison Officer for some time. While her salary is covered 100% out of the CMS budget, the joint Secretariat benefits from her services both for CMS and for ASCOBANS tasks. These include, for example, preparation of the WATCH meeting, held in October in Tenerife, including document production, assistance with the preparations for the ASCOBANS/HELCOM Workshops in early October in Bonn, background research as needed by the CMS Scientific Officer and the ASCOBANS Coordinator and preparation of presentations for various meetings. Her free support is greatly appreciated by the ASCOBANS team.



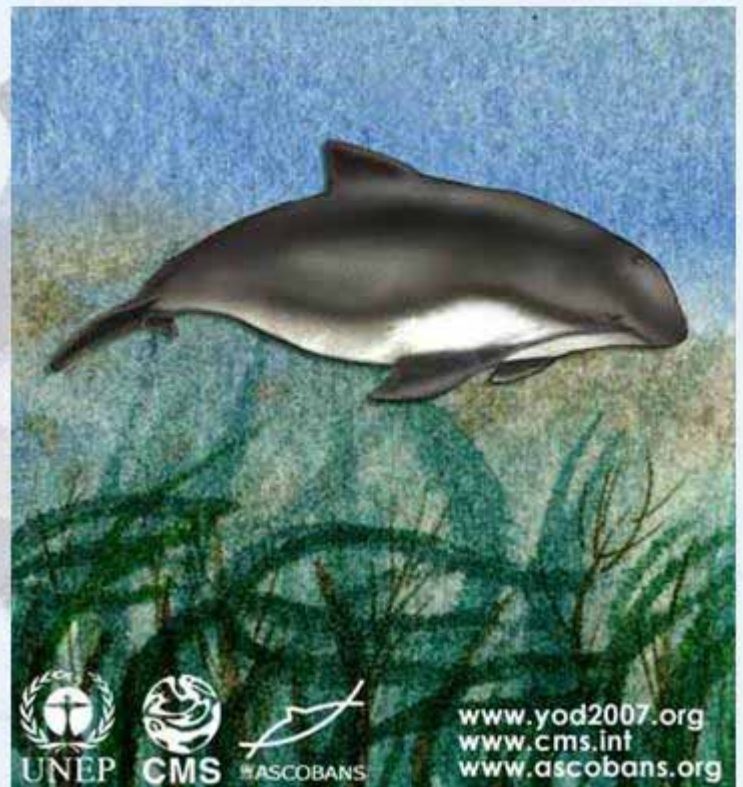
THE 6TH INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE BALTIC HARBOUR PORPOISE

The CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat is pleased to announce that an updated and revised version of the IDBHP Handbook is available for download from the ASCOBANS Website and upon request as a hardcopy from the Secretariat.

As one of the tasks undertaken by the first intern of the new ASCOBANS team, Mr Christian Bogen, the Handbook has been restructured and compressed, allowing the reader to locate topics of interest much easier. We hope that it will serve as a useful guide for those planning their own events for 2008 and will motivate many to join in this outreach event, intended to raise awareness among the people around the Baltic Sea, who often know little or nothing of their native cetacean species and its plight.

In 2008, the 6th IDBHP will be celebrated on 18 May. We hope that many institutions will use this opportunity to organise dedicated events.

The Secretariat stands ready to assist in every way possible. Also, we would like to ask you to keep us informed about your plans, which we will announce on the ASCOBANS website before the event, and to submit a short report on your activities, the feedback received and some photos to the Secretariat afterwards, to help us prepare again an update of the Handbook.



PLEASE MEET TINE LINDBERG, OUR NEW SECRETARY

In the last Newsletter, we had to announce the sad news that Patricia Stadié was leaving the ASCOBANS Secretariat. Now, in our next edition, it is our pleasure to introduce the new "heart and soul" of the Secretariat to you: Mrs Tine Lindberg-Roncari from Norway.

Being fluent in 5 languages spoken in the ASCOBANS area (Danish, English, German, Norwegian and Swedish) and holding a bachelor's degree in International Marketing, as well as having experience in organising meetings and conferences, she easily convinced the panel that she would be the right choice for the position. We are very happy to have her on board! But let her introduce herself:

"Some of you have already been in contact with me or met me here in Bonn, but for the ones of you that haven't, I am the one trying to fill Patricia's shoes now – a very challenging task! I come from Norway, but for the last 5 years I have been living in Italy and here in Bonn and have worked as an event manager for another international organisation.

I just wanted to let you know that I am in the office every morning from 9.00-13.00h, so please do not hesitate to contact me at t.lindberg@ascobans.org or +49 228 815 2416.

I hope to get to know all of you and to see you around."

PROGRESS OF THE YEAR OF THE DOLPHIN CAMPAIGN



The Year of the Dolphin, a joint campaign of seven Partner organisations, ASCOBANS being one of the founding Partners, and more than 40 official Supporters worldwide, tries to achieve these basic objectives:

- To increase general awareness of cetacean conservation issues and promote active involvement of adults and children alike;
- To provide effective education and information tools for outreach to a broad audience;
- To create strong partnerships and provide a platform for joint activities and common goals for UN agencies, the private sector and NGOs; and
- To fundraise for and stimulate concrete activities for the conservation of these species and their habitats and thereby contribute to the 2010 biodiversity target.

Among the over 140 requests for granting of supporter status for the Year of the Dolphin received by the CMS Secretariat from all over the world, were requests from NGOs, universities, research institutions, the media, museums, national parks, the corporate sector and individuals such as journalists, teachers, sailors, whale-watching guides, artists etc. Governmental support in form of voluntary contributions and other funding, distribution of information material or provision of dedicated websites came also from the ASCOBANS region: Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain.



Many other activities, such as public awareness raising among local communities and tourists, publications on the YoD, educational activities in schools, public events, research and dolphin conservation or launches were initiated in 22 countries around the globe. The map on the left shows clearly that Europe has been a hot spot of Year of the Dolphin activities, with so many events in fact that it was impossible to have them all represented individually.

The Year of the Dolphin has been instrumental in the production of a wide range of outreach and educational material, sensitising adults and children alike for the conservation needs of small cetaceans. Thousands of copies of the leaflets, dolphin manuals, posters, postcards etc. have been distributed worldwide, with countless downloads of material from the [dedicated website](#), which also offers the "Dolphin Diploma", a very popular online award for children.

A major conference organised within the framework of the Year of the Dolphin, WATCH – Western African Talks on Cetaceans and their Habitats (16-20 October 2007, Tenerife, Spain), paved the way for the conclusion of the fourth CMS Cetacean agreement. The meeting consisted of two main parts: a) two days of Open Symposium with more than 120 people present, with a variety of interesting presentations both on conservation status and threats of cetaceans of the African Eastern Atlantic Basin and cetacean-related aspects of sustainable development, mainly focussing on best practice in whale and dolphin watching activities (proceedings under preparation); and b) a Government Negotiation Session with over 50 delegates, representing 23 countries, who decided on the way forward for a Memorandum of Understanding for Small Cetaceans and Manatees in Western Africa, stretching from Morocco to South Africa, including Macaronesia and also the inland Range States of the West African Manatee. Associated Action Plans were discussed and substantial progress made towards their finalisation. Range States hope to meet again in 2008 (depending on availability of funds) to conclude the agreement.

More information on the activities undertaken as part of Year of the Dolphin can be found on the [Year of the Dolphin](#) website and in a recent [CMS report](#). We would like to encourage all governments, organisations, groups and individuals to support the campaign and register their activities throughout 2008 as well – the campaign has been extended!