

ASCOBANS NEWS No. 4



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Extended to
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2007
Year of the Dolphin



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

www.ascobans.org / www.YoD2007.org

EVENTS

ASCOBANS IN RECENTLY OPENED OZEANEUM IN STRALSUND, GERMANY



ASCOBANS was invited by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) to man a joint information booth at the Ozeaneum from 27-30 October 2008. This exhibition presenting cetacean-related conservation work was set up in line with the autumn vacation activities of the Ozeaneum, which attract more than 4.000 visitors a day. Such joint endeavours illustrate the growing collaboration between IFAW and the CMS Secretariat, a partnership that has also greatly benefited ASCOBANS.

The Ozeaneum, opened in July 2008, is an extension of the German Oceanographic Museum in Stralsund. It's one of Europe's biggest institutions for marine science and fascinates people with breathtaking aquariums showing the marine ecosystems of the Baltic and North Seas and the adjacent Atlantic. The Ozeaneum aims to make marine oceanography and species interactions easily accessible for different target groups and offers information about climate change, over-fishing and marine pollution. The "Giants of the Seas" exhibition sports life-size models of cetaceans and illustrates their biology and threats facing these unique animals.

The participation of ASCOBANS in this information week was highly successful. Visitors and staff alike took a profound interest in the approach ASCOBANS takes in international conservation measures. Information material and personal discussions helped to illustrate ASCOBANS' work and to inform people on progress implementing the programme of work agreed by the Parties.

MEETINGS

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION - MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE 58

The 58th Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 58) of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) was held on 6-10 October 2008 in the IMO headquarters in London, UK and was attended by the CMS Marine Mammals Officer/ ASCOBANS Coordinator on behalf of CMS, ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS .



Two items on the Committee's agenda were of direct interest to CMS and its cetacean-related agreements:

1) The development of a guidance document for minimising the risk of ship strikes with cetaceans (Agenda Item 18)

The inclusion of ship strikes in the work programme of the Committee was decided at its last meeting. Ship strikes of cetaceans remain a serious threat to the survival of several species or populations and the increasing number of vessels travelling at high speeds is a serious concern for a UN conservation body like CMS and the regional cetacean agreements ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS. Ships strikes are not only a conservation concern, but have also serious economic and safety impacts. The migratory nature of most cetacean species requires mitigation efforts across their entire migratory range. In order to be effective, these measures need to be coordinated and consistent; requiring close cooperation between the different intergovernmental bodies whose mandate is to protect the marine environment.

The United States had provided a draft guidance document on ship strikes, which was endorsed by the Parties for interim guidance and which will be refined at the next meeting of the Committee. UNEP/CMS stands ready to support the MEPC in this respect.



2) The proposal to include a new work programme item on the agenda of the MEPC on minimising the introduction of incidental noise from commercial shipping operations into the marine environment to reduce potential adverse impacts on marine life (Agenda Item 19)

Growing levels of noise pollution in our oceans are a serious concern for CMS and its cetacean-related agreements. Therefore, UNEP/CMS is pleased to note that IMO Parties endorsed the proposal made by the United States to address the issue of marine noise in the framework of the IMO MEPC.

The Secretariat also takes part in the correspondence group established to progress this issue.

SYMPOSIUM: MONITORING STRATEGIES FOR MARINE MAMMAL POPULATIONS

The 10th annual seminar of CRMM field correspondents is to be held in La Rochelle, France, from 21-23 November 2008. It will consider issues relating to the monitoring of marine mammal populations. In Europe, effective monitoring is required under a variety of frameworks, among them ASCOBANS. The symposium aims to compare available methodologies and assess the performance of the many possible indicators both in terms of their capacity to detect changes in marine mammal populations sufficiently early and in terms of their costs and benefits. ASCOBANS will be represented by the chair of the Advisory Committee, Dr. Stefan Bräger, who will deliver a presentation on obligations under the Agreement and some examples of cetacean monitoring efforts in the ASCOBANS region.

More information on the symposium can be accessed [here](#).

5TH JASTARNIA GROUP MEETING (23-25 FEBRUARY 2009)

At the end of February 2009, the Jastarnia Group, a group of experts from the environment and fisheries sectors of the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea, will meet for the fifth time. This year, upon the kind invitation of Finland, the meeting will take place in Turku in the south of the country.

The Jastarnia Group was established as a working group of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee to discuss progress made and further implementation priorities for the so-called [Jastarnia Plan](#) - the Recovery Plan for the Baltic Harbour Porpoise. This plan, finalised in 2002, was endorsed by the ASCOBANS Parties at their 4th Meeting in 2003. It takes into account the critical conservation status of the only cetacean species native in the Baltic Sea, which despite strict protection on all political levels still experiences higher human-induced mortality than the small population can sustain.

The Group will focus on topics like measures taken by the riparian states to reduce bycatch, research and monitoring activities, progress in the establishment of Marine Protected Areas and public awareness activities.

The Jastarnia Group is made up of national representatives of both conservation and fisheries administrations. Participation of stakeholders and NGOs is welcome. If you are interested in participating in this meeting, please contact the ASCOBANS [Secretariat](#) before 21 January 2009 to receive a registration form and additional information.

DATES AND VENUES FOR NEXT AC AND MOP IN 2009 TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON

The question of a potential host for the 16th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee has yet to be settled. The Secretariat is still awaiting official confirmation on this matter and will send out the information as soon as a date and venue have been agreed. Please note that AC16 is scheduled to take place in calendar weeks 17 or 18 (19 only if otherwise not possible).

Once a host for AC16 has been secured, Parties will be given opportunity to express their interest in hosting the 6th Meeting of Parties in October 2009.

OTHER ITEMS

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE BALTIC HARBOUR PORPOISE

The 7th International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP) will be celebrated on **17 May 2009** in institutions throughout the Baltic Sea region. Initiated to raise awareness of the critical situation of the populations of Harbour Porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*), the only cetacean species native to the Baltic Sea, this event has been observed every year since 2003.

Raising public awareness plays an important role in supporting effective conservation action. The IDBHP aims to promote public support through various events and exhibitions at museums and scientific institutions around the Baltic Sea countries. The number of institutions staging events that mark the IDBHP has grown significantly. It is our hope that, ultimately, the IDBHP will be observed by at least one notable institution in every country around the Baltic Sea.

The new edition of the Handbook for Exhibitors for the IDBHP has been posted on the [ASCOBANS website](#). Interested institutions are encouraged to contact the Secretariat about production and shipment of information and exhibition material.

ASCOBANS AWARD No. 3 IN 2009

The 11th Meeting of the Advisory Committee to ASCOBANS (2004, Poland) recommended the creation of a biennial award to be presented to an individual or institution in recognition of outstanding cetacean conservation-related PR or educational initiatives. The first ASCOBANS Award went to Hel Marine Station, Poland, in 2005. A second one was awarded to Petra Deimer and her [NGO](#) Gesellschaft zum Schutz der Meeressäugetiere in 2007.



Promoting public awareness is an essential element of conservation work and an area in which ASCOBANS has an important role to play. Unless people are convinced that small cetaceans are present in their local waters, that these creatures are worth saving, and that the animals' existence is threatened, they are not likely to support recovery efforts. While the ASCOBANS Secretariat engages in PR and educational activities of its own, successful awareness raising is dependent on the efforts of various actors at national and international levels. Among these are governmental and other public institutions, non-governmental organizations and scientific and educational institutions.

The Secretariat now calls for nominations for the third ASCOBANS Award, which is to be presented in 2009. **Nominations should reach the Secretariat by 31 December 2008.** The Secretariat will then get in contact with the nominees in case more supporting documentation is needed for the jury to come to a decision. The jury will be formed and come to a decision on the margins of the 16th Advisory Committee in April 2009. The formal presentation of the prize will then take place during the 6th Meeting of Parties in autumn of 2009.

CALL FOR PHOTOS

The Secretariat is currently working on the redesign of the www.ascobans.org website as well as developing a new ASCOBANS Exhibition in the form of pull-up banners.

In order to make our material as representative, informative and attractive as possible, we have made a call for photos, which we would also like to extend to you. While we are working on the content and wording of the info panels, we are short of photos to complement and illustrate our message. We are therefore asking you to look in your picture archives to see if there are any photos you can provide the UNEP/ASCOBANS Secretariat with, for use in some of our material. We will always give due credit to the photographer and/or organisation whenever we use or print a photo, so for each submission please include in the file name (a) the species that can be seen on the image (if known) and (b) how the image shall be credited when applied.

Should you have any particular reservations with regards to your pictures (e.g. ok to use on the website but not on the exhibition banner or only to be used in PowerPoint presentations), please let us know and we will respect your restrictions. We can reassure you that under no circumstances will we pass on any images to third parties without consulting the submitter of the photo first.

As we are trying to cover as wide a ground as possible, we are also in need of a wide range of pictures to go with it. Apart from beautiful 'happy' pictures of our admittedly photogenic small-cetacean charges, we would also need some less beautiful documentation of some of the major threats they face. This includes bycatch and ship strikes, as well as any other key issues such as marine noise, pollution or habitat degradation. We would also be happy to receive photos of rescue operations and other conservation activities or of cetacean research and outreach/education activities (e.g. in MPAs) in the ASCOBANS region (Baltic, North and Irish Seas and parts of the North East Atlantic).

FILES FOR LOCAL PRINT PRODUCTION

We would like to reiterate that you can obtain the files needed for print production of the Dolphin Manuals and the new banner and postcard for the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise free of charge from the CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat (for non-profit use only).



The **Dolphin Manual** is currently available in Arabic, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish (downloadable from the [Year of the Dolphin website](#)). Should you wish to reprint one of those editions, please contact the Secretariat. The production of a print-quality PDF of any other language can also be coordinated through the Secretariat. Please approach us in order to get a quote from the designer. Sponsors, be it in-kind through translations or paying for production, will of course be acknowledged in the publication.

Print-quality PDFs for the English-language version **IDBHP banner and postcards** can also be requested from the Secretariat. Further, we would be happy to send to you the InDesign-file, into which you can have the text inserted in your own language. Alternatively, we also offer to coordinate with the designer here to produce the material in your language if the translation is provided by you. Please approach us in order to get a quote from the designer.

