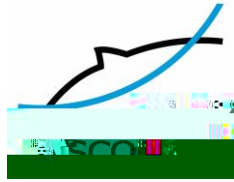




Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas



habitat changes, together with other pressures on the small cetaceans is duly taken into account in order to effectively contribute to an ecosystem-based approach. (A/RES/74/19 IX 192, 199, 202, 213, 215, 219, 224, 246; X 263, 267, 274; XI 287)

2. The **North Sea Group** was formed in 2010 to facilitate the implementation of the ASCOBANS North Sea Plan for **Harbour Porpoises**. The most recent meeting (NSG8) took place in September 2019. New information on bycatch estimates, EU Common Fisheries Policy and status in relation to cetacean bycatch, noise budgets in the North Sea, and overall implementation of the conservation plans were reviewed. Reports of the annual meetings can be accessed at the working group page³. (A/RES/74/19 X 279, 280, 284)
3. The **Jastarnia Group** was established to facilitate the implementation of the ASCOBANS Plan for **Baltic Harbour Porpoises** (Jastarnia Plan). Reports of the annual meetings can be accessed on the working group page⁴. The most recent meeting was held in May 2020 via Zoom, which was the first official ASCOBANS meeting held online. It provided inter alia updates on national implementation of the Jastarnia and WBBK Plans, discussed the potential effects of cod fishing ban in the Baltic Sea, discussed the potential reasons for increased Harbour Porpoise strandings on the Polish coast, and discussed the ICES Special Request Advice on emergency measures to prevent bycatch of Common Dolphin and Baltic Proper Harbour Porpoise in the North-East Atlantic. It also saw presentations on recent research in the Baltic Sea region, including trials using acrylic pearls on static nets to mitigate bycatch of harbour porpoises.
4. The **Common Dolphin Group** is the Steering Group of the ASCOBANS Species Action Plan (SAP) for North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin⁵. It was formed in 2019 and held its first meeting in September 2019. The meeting discussed activities contributing to the implementation of the SAP, and prioritizing actions for the Steering Group and Range States over the next year.
5. An **ASCOBANS Workshop on Management of MPAs for Small Cetacean** was planned to be held in April 2020 in Finland but had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic (new dates are to be confirmed). The workshop aims to review and share experiences on best practice approaches to MPA management, taking them beyond being merely 'paper parks'. The objectives are to discuss and make recommendations on (i) criteria and clear options for well-formulated conservation objectives for small cetacean MPAs, and (ii) a toolbox