

## RESOLUTION 4.15

### MARINE PROTECTED AREAS OF IMPORTANCE FOR CETACEANS CONSERVATION<sup>1</sup>

*The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area:*

*Taking in consideration* the Recommendation of the Scientific Committee,

*Aware* that habitat degradation is one of the main causes of population decline for many cetacean species,

*Concerned* that, although some protected areas devoted to cetacean conservation have already been established in the ACCOBAMS area, many of the sites known to be particularly important for cetaceans still remain unprotected,

*Recalling:*

- Article II.1, in which Parties, in order to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for cetaceans shall co-operate to create and maintain a network of specially protected areas to conserve cetaceans,
- Article V.2 in which each Sub-regional Coordination Unit, in consultation with the Scientific Committee and the Agreement Secretariat, shall facilitate the preparation of a sub-regional directory of important areas for cetaceans,
- Article XI.1, according to which the provisions of ACCOBAMS shall not affect the right of any Party to maintain or adopt more stringent measures for the conservation of cetaceans and their habitats,
- The Conservation Plan (Annex 2 to the Agreement), which forms an integral part of the Agreement and requires the Parties to endeavour to establish and manage specially protected areas for cetaceans corresponding to the areas which serve as habitats of cetaceans and/or which provide important food resources for them. Such specially protected areas should be established within the framework of the appropriate international instruments,

*Taking into account:*

- the Decision of the CBD COP10 which encourages Parties and other relevant partner to cooperate, as appropriate, collectively or on a regional or subregional basis, to identify and adopt, according to their competence, appropriate measures for conservation and sustainable use in relation to ecologically or biologically significant areas, and in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including by establishing representative networks of marine protected areas in accordance with international law and based on best scientific information available;
- the Decision of the CBD COP10 which emphasises the need to enhance efforts towards achieving the 2012 target of establishment of the representative network of marine protected areas in accordance with international law, including the United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea;

*Considering* that ACCOBAMS is an appropriate tool for achieving an updated and revised strategic plan and targets for biodiversity for the period 2011- 2020 within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity,

*Conscious* that establishing a network of marine protected areas:

- constitutes an important element of maritime spatial planning and will help achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for cetaceans,
- requires comprehensive inventories of sites that contain critical and/or important habitats for cetaceans,

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<sup>1</sup> **Secretariat's Note:**

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat concerning the extension or delimitation of maritime areas subject to the sovereignty or jurisdiction of any State

*Convinced* that, particularly as regards highly migratory species, to be efficient these protected area must be of a sufficient extent and, as such, they require frequently transboundary cooperation,

*Noting* that inventories of sites of conservation interest have been initiated in other pertinent multilateral Instruments and Treaties, such as the standard data entry form system adopted in the context of the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, the Emerald network instituted in the context of the European Council and the Natura 2000 network instituted by the European Union Habitats Directive,

*Noting* with satisfaction that some protected areas specially devoted to cetacean conservation in the ACCOBAMS area have already been established, such as the International Pelagos Sanctuary, the marine part of Kolkheti National Park in Georgia, and several coastal and marine sites proposed by European Union Countries to be included in the Natura 2000 network for the protection of *Tursiops truncatus* and *Phocoena phocoena* and that also others are in progress, such as the Cres-Lošinj marine protected area in Croatia,

*Taking into account*, the "Guidelines for the establishment and management of marine protected areas for cetaceans and the Criteria for the selection and format of proposals for marine protected areas for cetaceans" adopted by the Third Meeting of the Parties,

*Congratulating* Countries for their effort in establishing marine protected areas or developing inventories to identify sites of special importance for cetaceans,

1. *Confirms its encouragement* to the Parties to attain a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss and to establish a representative network of marine protected areas by 2012;
2. *Urges* Parties, in collaboration with the Sub-regional Coordination Units and involving their own scientific community, to share with the Secretariat and the Scientific Committee their draft plans for marine protected areas networks that include cetacean habitat as well as additional proposals for marine protected areas with cetacean habitat, in order to allow the Scientific Committee to give advice on the proposals across the entire region and to facilitate assessment of regional coverage and conservation needs;
3. *Invites* Parties to inventory habitats in the existing marine protected areas in the ACCOBAMS region for the presence of cetacean habitat;
4. *Urges* the States concerned, with the assistance of the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat to implement the development of high seas Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance as part of a regional network, working in conjunction with UNEP- MAP RAC/SPA;
5. *Encourages* the States concerned to promote the institution of the areas of special importance for cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area, as listed in the Annex to this Resolution and to ensure their effective management;
6. *Urges* the Black Sea Parties to explore transboundary cooperation through the Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol to the Bucharest Convention in order to establish protected areas devoted to cetaceans conservation;
7. *Renews* its recommendation that Parties:
  - give full consideration and, where appropriate, cooperate to the creation of marine protected areas for cetaceans in zones of special importance for cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area, as presented in the Annex to this Resolution, within the framework of the relevant Organizations, inviting non-Parties to take a similar action, recalling that these areas have been recommended by the Scientific Committee;
  - also give full consideration to the criteria for the selection and format of proposal for marine protected areas for cetacean and the guidelines for the establishment and management of marine protected areas for cetaceans as adopted by the Third Meeting of the Parties;

8. *Charges* the Scientific Committee to further work on this matter and in particular to:
  - gather knowledge of the existence and location of sites containing important cetacean habitat in the Agreement area, in cooperation with the Sub-regional Coordination Units. Such sites may be located either within territorial waters or beyond them, or in both spaces, as appropriate; detailed investigations in such sites should be performed, to assess whether they fulfil the criteria mentioned above. In particular, such investigations should aim to:
    - *describe cetacean presence and assess the existence of cetacean critical habitat;*
    - *detect the existence of threats to continued use of such habitat by the cetacean populations involved;*
    - *provide arguments in favour of the establishment of specially protected areas as relevant tools to counteract and minimise such threats and contribute effectively to the favourable conservation status of cetaceans in the region;*
  - collaborate, with the concerned Riparian State(s) to prepare the scientific and socio-economic bases for formal proposals if the above investigations provide convincing arguments in favour of the establishment of a marine protected area in particular sites, and the criteria are fulfilled;
  - use, if appropriate, the Supplementary Conservation Grant Fund to facilitate these task;.
9. *Charges* the Secretariat to liaise with the "Pelagos" Agreement management body any other similar Organisations in the ACCOBAMS region in order to facilitate networking and synergies between them in particular at the scientific level;
10. *Invites* Parties to report to the Fifth Meeting of the Parties about progress made on implementing this Resolution;
11. *Decides* that the present Resolution replaces Resolution 2.14.

## ANNEX

### Areas of special importance for cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area

#### *Areas of special importance for the common dolphin and other cetaceans*

- (1) Kalamos (Greece);
- (2) The Alborán Sea;
- (3) Waters surrounding the island of Ischia (south-eastern Tyrrhenian Sea, Italy);
- (4) Waters surrounding the island of Malta and south-eastern Sicily, Italy;
- (5) The eastern Ionian Sea and the Gulf of Corinth (Greece);
- (6) The Sazani Island – Karaburun Peninsula (Adriatic and Ionian Sea, Albania);
- (7) The Gulf of Saronikos and adjacent waters (Argo-Saronikos and southern Evvoikos Gulf, Greece);
- (8) Waters surrounding the northern Sporades (Greece);
- (9) The northern Aegean Sea (Greece); and
- (10) Waters surrounding the Dodecanese (Greece).

#### *Areas of special importance for Black Sea cetaceans*

- (11) The Kerch Strait for the bottlenose dolphin and the harbour porpoise (Russian Federation, Ukraine);
- (12) Cape Sarych to Cape Khersones for bottlenose and common dolphins and the harbour porpoise (Ukraine); and
- (13) Cape Anaklia to Sarp for the common dolphin and the harbour porpoise (Georgia).

#### *Areas of special importance for the bottlenose dolphin*

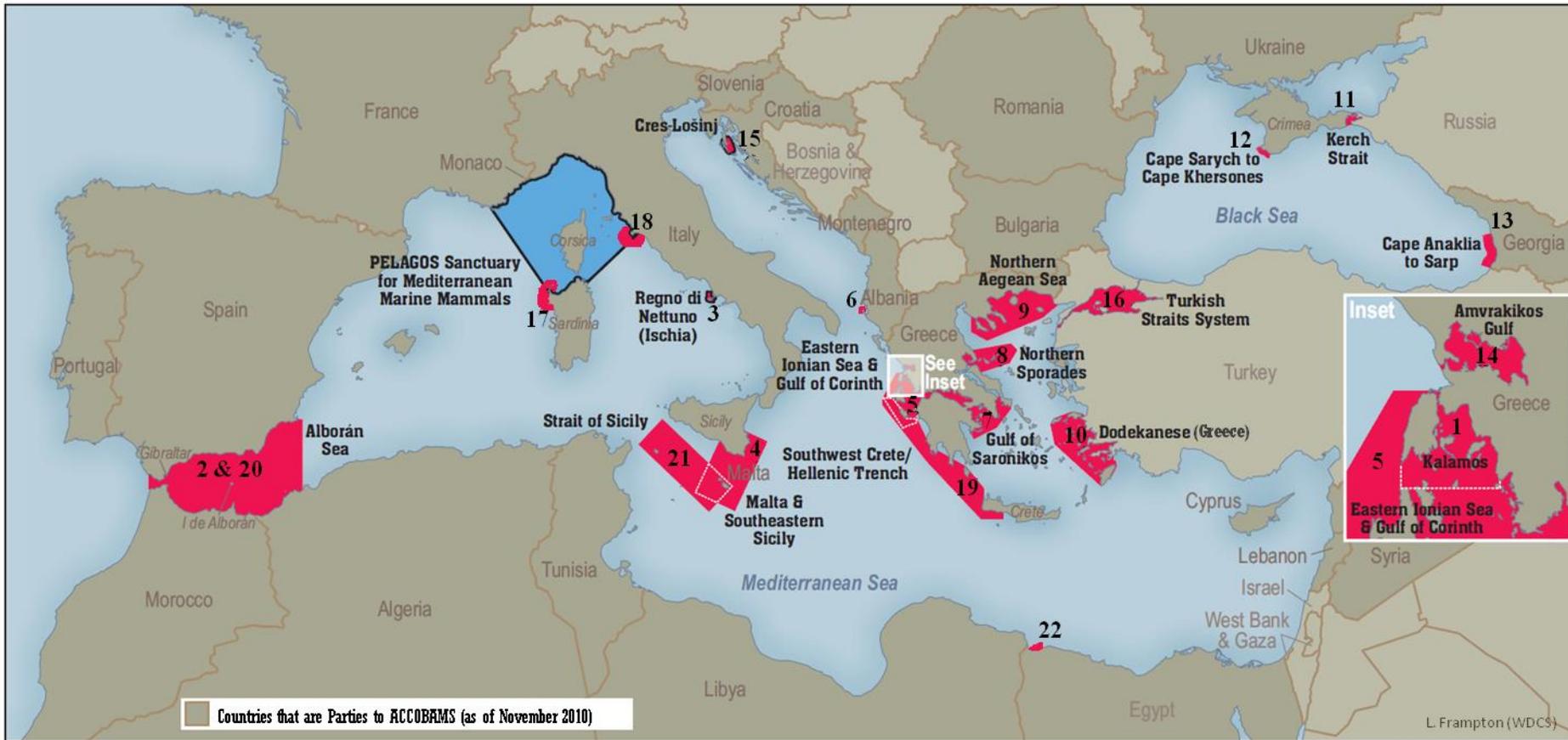
- (14) The Amvrakikos Gulf (northwestern Greece);
- (15) Waters along east coast of the Cres-Lošinj archipelago (designated as part of Croatian ecological network, proposed for protection as regional park, and recognized as a potential NATURA 2000 site) ;
- (16) The Turkish Straits system (also used by all Black Sea cetacean species);
- (17) North western area of Sardinia (Italy); and
- (18) Tuscany archipelago (Italy).

#### *Area of special importance for the sperm whale*

- (19) Southwest Crete and the Hellenic Trench (Greece).

#### *Areas of special importance and diversity for various cetacean species*

- (20) The Alborán Sea and the Strait of Gibraltar, critical habitat and migration corridor for large numbers of ten of the region's cetacean species, being the most diverse cetacean habitat in the ACCOBAMS region;
- (21) The Strait of Sicily for fin whales and common, bottlenose and striped dolphins; and
- (22) Sallum marine protected area (Egypt), sensitive marine ecosystems, including seagrass meadows, shallow and intermediate depth marine habitats.



Map of proposed Marine Protected Areas