

RESOLUTION 6.14
POPULATION STRUCTURE STUDIES

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 Recommendation 10.2 of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee on population structure, as well as the Work Programme 2014-2016, as adopted by Resolution 5.2,

Recalling that Article II, paragraph 3 (e), of the Agreement invites Parties to reinforce the collection and dissemination of information,

Recalling ACCOBAMS Resolutions:

- 2.10 on facilitation of exchange of tissue sample,
- 2.11 on facilitation of scientific research campaigns and programs,
- 3.9 on guidelines for the establishment of a system of tissue banks within the ACCOBAMS area and the ethical code,
- 4.18 on guidelines on the granting of exceptions to Article II, paragraph 1, for the purpose of non-lethal in situ research in the Agreement Area,

Taking note of the draft CITES Resolution proposed to the COP 17 and prepared by ACCOBAMS on the identification of origin of cetaceans bred or kept in captivity,

Recalling CMS Resolution 11.23 on Conservation Implications of Cetacean Culture, encouraging governments to take into account culturally transmitted behaviours in conservation and management measures and threat assessments, applying a precautionary approach if there is evidence that influence of culture and social complexity may be a conservation issue for a population,

Recognising the importance of information on population structure highlighted by the project "ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative¹",

Acknowledging that genetic methods represent an important tool among the techniques that are of value in determining units-to-serve, also considering that other methods, such as photo identification and satellite telemetry, provide valuable information on stock structure,

Stressing the relevance of genetic research to elaborate specific conservation measures, as confirmed by the decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) as regards the Black Sea Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*),

Recalling the report of the Joint ECS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Workshop on Cetacean Population Structure (27th ECS Conference, 6 April 2013, Setubal, Portugal), which identified a number of priorities for immediate attention, given conservation concerns,

1. *Urges* Parties to support projects and activities giving information on population structure to help in the definition of specific conservation measures;

¹ Comprehensive cetacean population estimates and distribution in ACCOBAMS area.

2. *Recommends* the re-establishment by the Scientific Committee of a working group on population structure and *takes note* of its terms of reference, as provided in document ACCOBAMS-MOP6/2016/Doc16;
3. *Requests* the Scientific Committee, in collaboration with the Working Group on Population Structure, to implement population structure priorities including region-wide and local genetic/morphometric/pollutant profile studies, based on the knowledge gap analysis performed in 2013, allowing identification of isolated populations and better descriptions of populations, especially as regards:
 - Short-beaked common dolphins, particularly in Greek waters;
 - Risso's dolphins, given some evidence that they may occur in small, local "management units";
 - Killer whales in the Strait of Gibraltar and Gulf of Cadiz with a focus on the relationship with the Atlantic waters outside the Mediterranean;
 - Harbour porpoises in the Black and Aegean Seas and in the Atlantic contiguous area;
 - Cuvier's beaked whales;
 - Fin whales;
4. *Encourages* collaboration between tissue banks and countries to facilitate exchanges of samples for joint analysis;
5. *Decides* that the present Resolution replaces Resolution 4.11.