

RESOLUTION 6.16

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN FISHERIES AND CETACEANS

The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area:

Recalling the provisions of Article II, paragraph 3, of the Agreement, inviting Parties to implement, within the limits of their sovereignty and/or jurisdiction and in accordance with their international obligations, appropriate measures for the assessment and management of human-cetacean interactions and stressing that measures concerning fisheries activities shall be applied in respect of any vessel under their flag or registered within their territory, including in all waters under their sovereignty and/or jurisdiction, and outside these waters,

Recalling the following Resolutions:

- Resolution 2.12 on guidelines for the use of acoustic deterrent devices,
- Resolution 2.13 on pelagic gillnets,
- Resolution 2.21 on assessment and mitigation of the adverse impacts of interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities in the ACCOBAMS area,
- Resolution A/3.1, amending Annex 2 to ACCOBAMS, as regards the use of drift nets
- Resolution 3.8 strengthening collaboration with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean,
- Resolution 4.9 on fisheries interactions with cetaceans,

Recalling the commitment of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to reduce cetacean-fisheries interaction through the implementation of the Decision IG.22/12 related to the adoption of the updated Action Plan for the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea,

Fully aware of the complexity of the cetacean-fisheries interaction issue with its negative impacts on cetacean populations as well as its socio-economic implications, in particular the situation of severe conflicts between fishermen and dolphins generated, in some zones of the Agreement Area, by the damages to the fishing gear,

Conscious of the related work underway under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and *recalling* related decisions, in particular CMS Resolutions 9.18 on Bycatch and 10.14 on Bycatch of CMS-listed Species in Gillnet Fisheries;

Conscious of the related work underway under the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS), and *recalling* related decisions, in particular ASCOBANS Resolution 8.5 on Monitoring and Mitigation of Small Cetacean Bycatch;

Commending the collaboration bounds established between the Secretariats of ACCOBAMS and of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), in particular regarding the mitigation of the adverse impacts of interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities in the Agreement area,

Noting with appreciation the recommendations adopted by the GFCM on the mitigation of incidental catches of cetaceans in the GFCM area (Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/2) and on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnet fisheries for turbot and conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea (Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2),

Noting also the validation by GFCM of the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), that includes incidental catches of vulnerable species,

Greatly appreciating the financial support provided by the MAVA Foundation for the joint ACCOBAMS/GFCM Project on mitigating the impact of fishing activities on endangered species, being implemented in cooperation with RAC/SPA,

1. *Invites* the Permanent Secretariat to pursue its collaboration with the GFCM Secretariat and strengthen its involvement in the relevant works and initiatives undertaken under GFCM;
2. *Invites* the Permanent Secretariat to provide assistance to Parties in addressing the issue of interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities, including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, taking into account the social and economic aspects of this issue, ensuring that all activities undertaken in this context are in line with the objectives of ACCOBAMS and considering mutual impacts of mitigation measures;
3. *Invites* the Scientific Committee, in close collaboration with the Permanent Secretariat, to keep a watch over the recent advances in technology regarding the acoustic devices for mitigating the interactions between cetaceans and fishing gears and where necessary propose amendments to the Guidelines for the use of acoustic deterrent devices adopted by the Parties (Resolution 2.12);
4. *Invites* the Permanent Secretariat to strengthen its collaboration also with the Secretariats of CMS, ASCOBANS, the IWC and other relevant Organizations to investigate approaches for achieving significant decrease in the cetacean by-catch levels, using as appropriate the recommendations of the Scientific Committee.
5. *Requests* the Permanent Secretariat, in collaboration with the Scientific Committee, to develop a joint working group with ASCOBANS on bycatch, and to explore opportunities for linking this with other relevant initiatives, including the Bycatch Initiative established under the International Whaling Commission
6. *Invites* Parties and Non-Party Range States to prioritize and allocate funding to :
 - a. monitor cetacean bycatch in relevant fisheries, and report the data gathered to the Permanent Secretariat, as appropriate;
 - b. develop appropriate technical and other measures to mitigate cetacean bycatch, as well as their implementation and evaluation, taking into account potential effects on other species and socio-economic consequences.