



Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area, concluded under the auspices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

Accord sur la Conservation des Cétacés de la Mer Noire, de la Méditerranée et de la zone Atlantique adjacente, conclu sous l'égide de la Convention sur la Conservation des Espèces Migratrices appartenant à la Faune Sauvage (CMS)



REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO ACCOBAMS



Dubrovnik (Croatia), 22-25 October 2007

Introduction

1. Following the entry into force of the Agreement on 1 June 2001, the First Meeting of the Parties held in Monaco in February-March 2002 and the Second Meeting of the Parties held in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, 9–12 November 2004, the Third Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) was held from 22 to 25 October 2007 at the Hotel Grand Villa Argentina, Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Participants

2. Representatives of the following States Parties to the Agreement took part in the meeting: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Ukraine.

3. Representatives of the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water management (Croatia), Ministry of the sea, tourism, transport and development (Croatia), and representatives of riparian States– Algeria and Montenegro attended the Meeting

4. Representatives of the following intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and scientific institutions or bodies also attended the Meeting as observers: ANIMAL FRIENDS CROATIA, ALNITAK, ASCOBANS, ASMS OCEAN CARE, BLACK SEA COMMISSION, BLACK SEA COUNCIL FOR MARINE MAMMALS (CMM), BLUE WORLD INSTITUTE FOR MARINE RESEARCH CONSERVATION, COUNCIL OF EUROPE-BERN CONVENTION, DELPHIS MDC, EMORY UNIVERSITY, ESSENCE CONSULTING, EUROPEAN CETACEAN SOCIETY (ECS), FACULTY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE - UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, ILIA CHAVCHAVADZE STATE UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE FOR MARINE AND COASTAL RESEARCH OF DUBROVNIK, INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE (IFAW), IWC, MORIGENOS, NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENCE COUNCIL (NRDC), OCEANA, PELAGOS SANCTUARY, “PRIRODA” - PUBLIC INSTITUTION FOR MANAGING, RAC/SPA, TETHYS RESEARCH INSTITUTE, TUI-AG, TURKISH MARINE RESEARCH FOUNDATION (TUDAV), UNIVERSITY OF MILANO-BICOCCA, WHALE AND DOLPHIN CONSERVATION SOCIETY (WDCS).

5. A representative of the Secretariat of UNEP/CMS attended the Meeting.

6. The Secretariat of ACCOBAMS acted as Secretariat for the Meeting.

7. The full list of participants is attached as Annex I of this report.

Agenda item 1: Welcoming address

8. Mr Javier Pantoja Trigueros, representing Mr Miguel Aymerich Huyghes, Chairperson of the Bureau, welcomed participants and highlighted the active, efficient, scientific work that had been carried out under the leadership of ACCOBAMS in the three years that had ensued since the previous Meeting of the Parties. Its work was a standard that others could usefully emulate and was becoming ever more necessary in view of increasing human pressure on the Agreement Area.

9. Mr Jadran Antolović, State Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Croatia, welcomed participants to Dubrovnik, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. He underlined the necessity of cooperation among all the countries of the region, and said that his country had been one of the first signatories to ACCOBAMS (Annex XII).

10. Ms Heidrun Frisch, from the Secretariat of CMS and ASCOBANS, said that Mr Robert Hepworth, the Executive Secretary of CMS, was unable to attend the Meeting. He had, however, recorded an address, which was shown to the participants (Annex XII). He reminded participants that the Mediterranean was a 'hot spot' for activities related to the Year of the Dolphin, which had been extended into 2008.

11. Ms Marie-Christine Grillo-Van Klaveren, Executive Secretary of ACCOBAMS, also welcomed participants to the Third Meeting of the Parties. She looked forward to fruitful discussions in the conducive atmosphere of Dubrovnik and congratulated the Croatian Government on its active role at the international level, particularly with regard to the conservation of Mediterranean terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

Agenda item 2: Granting the right to vote

12. The representative of the Chairperson of the Bureau recalled that countries that ratified the Agreement and deposited the relevant instruments with the Depositary did not become Parties to the Agreement until a specified period had elapsed. In order that as many Parties as possible could take part in decision-making, he invited the participants to consider draft Resolution 3.1 contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc22, in which Algeria would be granted the status of fully participating Party with the right to vote.

13. Following a comment by one delegation about the conformity of the draft Resolution with Article XIV of the Agreement, the Executive Secretary explained that a similar waiver had been granted to Portugal at the Second Meeting of the Parties. Although Algeria had deposited its instrument, it would become a full Party only on the first day of the third month subsequent to that deposition. The dispensation would be valid only for the duration of the Meeting.

14. The Resolution 3.1 was **adopted** (Annex X).

15. The Executive Secretary welcomed the participation of Algeria, which already had a Focal Point and had undertaken many activities related to the work of ACCOBAMS.

16. The representative of Algeria described some of the activities undertaken in his country since 1962 for the preservation and protection of nature. Algeria considered the work of ACCOBAMS to be a just and noble cause, to which it would give its fullest support.

Agenda item 3: Election of the Bureau

17. The representative of the Chairperson of the Bureau informed the Meeting that, following consultations among the heads of delegations prior to the Meeting, it was proposed that the new Bureau be composed of the representatives of Croatia, Italy, Morocco and Ukraine.

18. The Meeting approved the composition of the Bureau as follows:

Chairperson:	Ms Ana Štrbenac (Croatia)
Vice-Chairperson:	Mr Oliviero Montanaro (Italy)
Vice-Chairperson:	Mr Volodymyr Domashlinets (Ukraine)
Vice-Chairperson Rapporteur:	Ms Amina Moumni (Morocco)

19. Ms Ana Štrbenac, the new Chairperson of the Bureau, thanked the Meeting for having elected her and looked forward to fruitful discussions.

20. The Executive Secretary congratulated the members of the previous Bureau for their efficient work during the past three years.

Agenda item 4: Adoption of the agenda

21. The Chairperson invited comments on the provisional agenda proposed by the Secretariat in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc01-Rev1 and annotated in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc02-Rev3.

22. The delegation of France expressed a general reserve concerning document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc31. Following a debate on the feasibility of the actions provided for in draft Resolution 3.10 with respect to ‘anthropogenic noise’, on its conformity with the relevant articles of ACCOBAMS and the Law of the Sea Convention and on the appropriateness of making reference to the European Habitat Directive, the Meeting decided to set up a working group, coordinated by France and Spain, to review the draft Resolution and make suggestions on the issue.

23. The representative of Spain said that his delegation had provided an information document on new mass strandings of dolphins in his country.

24. The Executive Secretary informed the Meeting that a new document would be submitted under agenda item 11(d), containing a request from a nongovernmental organization in the Syrian Arab Republic to become an ACCOBAMS Partner.

25. On that understanding, the Meeting **adopted** the agenda, which is contained in Annex II to this report, and the proposed timetable contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc04-Rev2.

Agenda item 5: Admission of observers

26. The Chairperson presented the requests for admission as observers to the Third Meeting of the Parties, as listed in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc06-Rev2.

27. The Meeting **approved** the participation of the observers listed in the document.

Agenda item 6: Establishment of the Credentials Committee

28. In accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of the Rules of Procedure of the Meetings of the Parties, a Credentials Committee was established, composed of the representatives of France, Bulgaria, Cyprus and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Chairperson invited the Committee to meet and to submit its conclusions at a later stage of the Meeting.

Agenda item 7: Opening statements

29. The Chairperson invited the delegations of the new Parties to ACCOBAMS, as well as the riparian States, to make statements (Annexe XII).

30. The representative of Slovenia said that it was the first Meeting of the Parties his country had attended. All cetaceans had been fully protected at national level in Slovenia since 1993, and in the past 12 months his country had significantly increased its involvement in that area at international level. Slovenia had ratified the International Convention on the Regulation of Whaling and had joined the group of like-minded countries that did not support commercial whaling. It had decided to accede to ACCOBAMS because of its concern for the uncertain future of cetaceans because of global warming, habitat loss, fisheries, disturbance and other human activities. It would also continue to promote the protection of migratory species within the framework of the European Union, of which it would be assuming the presidency in the first half of 2008.

31. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, also addressing a Meeting of the Parties for the first time, began by thanking the Croatian authorities for hosting the Meeting and the Principality of Monaco for the continuous support it had given the ACCOBAMS Secretariat. For the past three years his country had been implementing the Agreement, had established a national network to monitor the stranding of cetaceans, and had undertaken activities on capacity-building and public awareness. His country had received fruitful financial and technical support from the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) for the protection of animals, including cetaceans, during the implementation of CITES and ACCOBAMS.

32. The representative of Italy, addressing the Meeting of the Parties for the first time as a Contracting Party, said its accession had been an important step for his country to become part of the establishment of a common Mediterranean approach to the conservation of cetaceans. Italy had passed a substantial body of legislation protecting marine mammals, and had established 27 marine protected areas, including the PELAGOS Sanctuary. The Government of Italy was funding research as well as public awareness activities. Italy was pleased to support the regional tissue bank under ACCOBAMS.

33. The representative of Lebanon said that, because of the situation of conflict that had prevailed in his country, it had not always been in a position fully to fulfil its commitments to protect and conserve its natural resources. Various contacts and exchanges with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, and particularly its Executive Secretary, had culminated in his country adopting the necessary legislation for accession to ACCOBAMS on 11 February 2004; however, for a number of reasons – both of a budgetary nature and to do with political and military conflicts – no activities concerning cetaceans had been undertaken since then. A joint project on cetaceans had been drawn up with the Syrian Arab Republic in March 2006 but had not been finalized, and scientific exchanges on the project remained in abeyance. With encouragement from the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, Lebanon had planned to launch once again its cetacean activities in the spring of 2007, but because of the situation in the Nahr el

Bared camp the relevant meeting had been postponed until the end of 2007 or the beginning of 2008.

34. The representative of Algeria, thanking the Contracting Parties for having adopted Resolution 3.1 regarding its right to vote, said that the Presidential Decree ratifying its application to accede to ACCOBAMS had been issued in March 2007. He thanked the Executive Secretary for her active encouragement, and said that henceforth the mission of ACCOBAMS would be the mission of Algeria.

Agenda item 8: Progress reports

(a) Report of the Depositary

35. Introducing the report of the Depositary (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc07), the representative of Monaco informed the Meeting that since the Second Meeting of the Parties the Depositary had recorded the deposit of the instruments of ratification of five riparian States: Algeria, Cyprus, Italy, Lebanon and Slovenia.

36. The Depositary had informed all the Contracting Parties, the European Community, the Treaty section of the United Nations, the permanent secretariats of ACCOBAMS and CMS of those accessions and the dates of entry into force of the Agreement for each country.

37. In addition, the Depositary, through the various diplomatic officers of the Principality of Monaco, had supported the action taken by the Permanent Secretariat to raise awareness among the other riparian States and the European Community with a view to their accession.

38. It was to be noted that the Parliament of Montenegro might ask to accede to the Agreement as a riparian State.

39. The Executive Secretary said that the report of the Depositary should be amended to reflect the accession of Algeria, which would take place on 1 December 2007.

40. The report of the Depositary, as orally amended, is presented in Annex III.

(b) Report of the Secretariat

41. The Executive Secretary introduced the report of the Secretariat (Annex IV) and reviewed the main points concerning the status of ratifications, the support received by and the functioning of the Secretariat, contacts with countries, the supplementary conservation funds, capacity-building, the promotion of research and monitoring, communication and awareness, elaboration of guidelines, the promotion of the Agreement within relevant intergovernmental organizations, and institutional relations.

42. One observer, welcoming the decision of the new Parties to join what he described as a very important agreement, said that it had clearly been the enthusiasm and inspiration of the Executive Secretary that had encouraged them to do so. He also noted the continuing support given to ACCOBAMS by the depositary government.

(c) Report of the Bureau

43. The representative of the former Chairperson of the Bureau introduced the report of the Bureau (Annex V). He noted that the reports of the third and fourth meetings of the Bureau were contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf06. He then highlighted the main issues, namely membership of the Agreement, amendments to the text of the Agreement, budgetary matters, the extended Bureau, partners, activities of the Scientific Committee and the 2010 targets.

44. One observer sought clarification concerning the Bureau decision not to take in charge the representatives of non-paying countries within the Scientific Committee. He also asked about the outcome of the Secretariat's approach to the relevant Greek authorities concerning the common dolphin population in the area; predictions were being made that the common dolphin could disappear by 2010.

45. The Executive Secretary said that the non-payment of ordinary contributions by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was regrettable, and she hoped that the situation would be resolved soon. The Government of Greece was not represented at the Meeting, but the Secretariat was in continual contact with its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Secretariat was informed that the Ministry of the Environment would be responsible for matters relating to ACCOBAMS for Greece.

46. One representative sought clarification regarding the procedure for accepting applications for partnership. It was decided that, when appropriate, such applications be sent to national focal points before being submitted to the Bureau.

47. The Executive Secretary explained that the Bureau's mandate was to evaluate and decide on the applications received. The Meeting of the Parties could review the status of Partners. It was decided that the Secretariat could provide national focal points with information concerning applications for partnership.

48. The Executive Secretary, referring to the decision of the Second Meeting of the Parties on the need to create an interface between the Scientific Committee and the Parties (see Report of the Second Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS, paragraphs 63-66), presented the draft amendments to the Bureau's rules of procedure contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc62).

49. The representative of Italy emphasized that the sentence "The nomination of each expert should be endorsed by the National Focal Point in his/her country." should not be interpreted to mean that the experts represented their countries, as that would limit their independence to air their views as experts.

50. On that understanding, the amendments to the rules of procedure were **adopted** (Annex VI).

(d) Report of the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee

51. The Chair of the Scientific Committee, introducing document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc10 as presented in Annex VII, said that the Scientific Committee had met twice since the Second Meeting of the Parties, holding its third meeting in Cairo in May 2005 and its fourth in Monaco in November 2006. Information on those meetings could be found in documents ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf07 and ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf08.

52. Issues discussed by the Committee at its meetings had included: comprehensive population estimates and distribution in the ACCOBAMS area (the 'ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative'); species-oriented conservation plans to cover those species needing special attention, such as Mediterranean common and bottlenose dolphins, fin whales and Black Sea cetaceans; strandings, including live strandings; tissue banks; interactions between cetaceans and fisheries, including bycatch, competitive interactions, acoustic deterrent devices and prey depletion; anthropogenic noise; collisions; whale watching; specially protected areas for cetaceans; the creation of emergency task forces and of databases and directories; Euroflukes; the granting of exceptions for the purpose of non-lethal in situ research; release of cetaceans into the wild; the IUCN Red List of cetaceans of the Mediterranean and Black Seas; dolphin assisted therapy; cooperation with national focal points; and amendments to the CMS. The Committee had also adopted changes to its rules of procedure.

53. At its fourth meeting, the Committee had prepared 13 recommendations (see document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc18), which he presented to the Meeting. He expressed satisfaction that the Third Meeting of the Parties had established a working group to discuss the issue of anthropogenic noise.

54. The Meeting expressed great satisfaction with the work of the Scientific Committee. It was stressed that its recommendations must be implemented in order to be effective, given the plight of many cetacean species in the ACCOBAMS Area. Attention was drawn to the European Union's new Marine Strategy Directive, under which Member States of the Union would be obliged to carry out environmental status assessments of marine waters. European Union funding might be made available for such activities, and data gathered could also be used to prepare the comprehensive survey of the abundance and distribution of cetaceans referred to in recommendation SC4.4. One participant said that his country would shortly undertake surveys of cetaceans in its waters using marine equipment recently supplied by another Contracting Party.

55. The Executive Secretary, responding to a suggestion that a memorandum of understanding be signed with the CMS with respect to the particularly endangered common dolphin, said that, while such agreements were valuable, action was more important; however, the Secretariat remained open to all proposals from Parties.

56. The Chair of the Scientific Committee, in response to a question from the floor, said that recommendations SC4.4 and SC4.10 were related, insofar as the priority for a comprehensive survey was to obtain figures on population size for all species in the area, including those for which insufficient data had been available when the IUCN Red List had been prepared.

(e) Report of the Sub regional coordination units

Report of the Black Sea Sub regional Coordination Unit

57. Speaking on behalf of the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission, Mr Alexei Birkun, briefly outlined the report of the Black Sea Sub regional Coordination Unit (Annexe VIII).

Report of the Mediterranean Sub regional Coordination Unit

58. Speaking on behalf of the Mediterranean Sub regional Coordination Unit, the representative of SPA/RAC reviewed the activities carried out in the period since the last Meeting of the Parties (Annexe IX).

59. The Executive Secretary thanked the Sub regional coordination units for their support and role in implementing ACCOBAMS.

Agenda item 9: Report by the Credentials Committee

60. The Chairperson of the Credentials Committee said that the Committee had met to verify the credentials of the delegates of each Contracting Party represented at the Third Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS.

61. She informed the Meeting that the credentials of the following Parties had been deemed valid: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Ukraine. The credentials of Algeria, which was not yet a Party but had been granted the right to vote under Resolution 3.1, were also deemed valid.

62. The credentials submitted by four Parties had not been exactly as required under article 4 of the Rules of Procedure of the Meeting of the Parties, but the Committee had taken an exceptional decision to grant the right to vote regardless. She stressed the need for Parties to comply with all the provisions of article 4, particularly paragraph 4 thereof, in submitting credentials.

63. In response to a question from one participant, the Executive Secretary confirmed that credentials should specifically authorize each Representative or Alternative Representative to vote. She recalled that Article 4 of the Rules of Procedure of the Meetings of the Parties required that a version of all credentials be submitted in English or French.

Agenda item 10: National reports

(a) Synthesis of national reports of the Parties

64. Mr Chedly Raïs, ACCOBAMS expert, presented a synthesis of the 14 national reports that had been received in due time (document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc13). He recalled that detailed national information was presented in the reports themselves, which were available as information documents.

65. A number of representatives indicated that they would hand in corrections to the information presented in the synthesis.

66. The Executive Secretary said that the corrections would be made, and the synthesis would be posted on the ACCOBAMS website. She said, however, that some of the reports were incomplete, especially with regard to the annex requested in the reporting format. The Secretariat had also asked for the contact details of the national institutes registered with CITES and for information on the procedures to be followed for obtaining permission to carry out research in waters under national jurisdiction. Perhaps the new reporting system would ensure that all information arrived in time.

67. Representatives responded to some specific queries on their national reports from the representative of a nongovernmental organization.

(b) Range States activities

68. The Chairperson invited delegations representing Range States to inform the Meeting about those of their activities that were relevant to the conservation of cetaceans.

69. The representative of Montenegro said that preservation of the environment was a priority in the State policy, in which the principles of sustainable development and rational use of resources were integrated into all sector policies and strategies. The Government was aligning its legislation with that of the European Union, ratifying environmental conventions and agreements, undertaking efficient management of protected areas, strengthening capacity and raising awareness about the environment. He acknowledged the generous assistance of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, which had involved Montenegro in specialized courses and sent experts to the country to bring local experts up to date on implementation of environmental principles. Nongovernmental organizations had also made significant contributions in raising awareness. He hoped that his country would accede to the Agreement shortly (Annex XII).

70. The Executive Secretary congratulated Montenegro on the activities it had already carried out and looked forward to its ratifying the Agreement in the coming months.

(c) ACCOBAMS system for reporting on line

71. The Chairperson said that, in accordance with the decision of the Second Meeting of the Parties, the Secretariat would be introducing a new system for reporting online in accordance with draft Resolution 3.7 (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc28).

72. Mr Raïs then explained that the intention had been to keep the existing format for national reporting, which had in fact been designed so that it could eventually be used in an online format. He then demonstrated how online national reports could be elaborated. He said that the Secretariat would give further consideration to the procedure for validating reports online, and the intention was to introduce the system on a trial basis for the triennium.

73. In answer to a number of questions and proposals from the floor, Mr Raïs and the Executive Secretary explained that national focal points would receive user names and passwords from the Secretariat. There could be several users for every focal point, and the Secretariat would, upon request, supply codes for them to use. It would for focal points to decide if they wanted to grant access to partners in their countries, because they would then be in a position to alter what had been inserted. It was important to have a system that could be harmonized and streamlined with other online reporting systems, such as that of CMS, and the idea of a handbook and of publishing feedback in the form of a newsletter were proposals worth considering. In the case of reporting amendments to legislation, it was important to report the amendment but also to keep the pre-amended text, so that the change could be easily seen and understood. It was a good idea to incorporate follow-up to Resolutions and Recommendations.

74. The representative of CMS said that her organization was exploring ways of having integrated online reporting systems throughout the CMS family; the advantage was that it was of great assistance in the task of updating information, and meant that national focal points did not have to insert the same information several times over.

75. The Resolution 3.7 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Agenda item 11: Institutional arrangements

(a) Status of the Secretariat

76. The Executive Secretary, referring to the decision of the Second Meeting of the Parties contained in Resolution ACCOBAMS-MOP2/2004/Res.2.2, informed the Meeting that a Letter of Agreement had been received from UNEP regarding closer cooperation with the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat, the provisions of which had expired in March 2007 after two years of application. Steps had been taken to reach a similar arrangement with UNEP to replace the previous Letter of Agreement.

77. The representative of the CMS Secretariat underlined the importance of strong links between organizations within the CMS family and UNEP, as regional agreements were key operational tools in achieving CMS objectives. She expressed appreciation to ACCOBAMS for its efforts towards harmonization and coordination with other organizations, and encouraged Parties to give full support to those efforts.

(b) Draft amendments to the Agreement

78. The Chairperson announced that one of the two proposed amendments to the Agreement, that proposed by Portugal, had been withdrawn, leaving the Meeting to consider only the amendment proposed by Tunisia, contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc 54.

79. The representative of Tunisia emphasized that his country had proposed the amendment in order to bring the Agreement in line with other international instruments and the recommendations of the Scientific Committee by banning the use of drift nets, regardless of length.

80. Mr Tullio Scovazzi, Legal Expert of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, responding to a question on the scope of application of the Agreement and whether Parties had the right to prevent vessels from non-Party flag States from keeping on board or using drift nets, said that the Agreement applied to nationals of Parties, to vessels flying the flag of a Party and to the territorial sea and fishing or exclusive economic or fisheries zones of a Party. Obligations could not, therefore, be imposed on nationals of non-Parties on the high seas within the ACCOBAMS area. In response to a question from a representative of a nongovernmental organization regarding the definition of drift nets, he said that including a specific definition in the Agreement could be problematic, as the concept was quite general.

81. One participant, expressing support for the draft amendment, suggested that the words “one or more” be deleted from the last sentence, as they were superfluous. The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee suggested that the words “for fishing” be deleted from the same sentence, for the same reason.

82. The amendment, incorporating the changes proposed, was **adopted** (Annexe X).

83. The Executive Secretary stated that, in accordance with the provisions of Article X, paragraph 4 of the Agreement, the amendment would enter into force on 22 March 2008.

(c) Appointment of members of the Scientific Committee

84. The Executive Secretary, recalling the decision of the Second Meeting of the Contracting Parties to ensure balanced representation among the regions of the ACCOBAMS

area, suggested that the Heads of delegation should hold informal consultations to discuss the appointment of Regional Representatives of the Scientific Committee and report back to the Meeting.

85. She read out the names of the representatives designated by CIESM, which was not represented at the Meeting, as follows: Mr Alexei Birkun; Ms Ana Cañadas; Mr Christophe Guinet; Mr Dan Kerem; and Mr Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara. IUCN had designated Mr Randall Reeves to be a member of the Scientific Committee.

86. The representatives of ECS and IWC announced that those organizations had designated, respectively, Mr Simone Panigada and Mr Greg Donovan to be members of the Scientific Committee.

87. The Executive Secretary drew attention to draft Resolution 3.3, contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc24. Referring to annex I, article 2 of the draft Resolution, she asked to which regions Italy and Tunisia wished to be attached for the purpose of designating qualified regional experts.

88. The representative of Tunisia requested that his country be attached to the Central Mediterranean region.

89. The representative of Italy, expressing the view that the annex should be amended to state more clearly that attachment to one or other region was solely for the purpose of designating experts to serve on the Scientific Committee, opted for his country to remain within the Central Mediterranean region. In response, the Executive Secretary said that this is covered by Article 1 of Annex I to Resolution 3.3.

90. The Meeting agreed that the Regional Representatives on the Scientific Committee be experts from the Parties to ACCOBAMS, as reflected in Article 4 of Annex I to Resolution 3.3.

91. The draft Resolution 3.3, as orally amended, was **adopted** (Annex X).

92. The Meeting approved the composition of the Scientific Committee, as follows:

Regional representatives nominated through the regional consultation process conducted during the Meeting:

Baker, Mohamed (Eastern Mediterranean, alternate)
Beaubrun, Pierre (Western Mediterranean and contiguous Atlantic area, alternate)
Boutiba, Zitouni (Western Mediterranean and contiguous Atlantic area)
Bradai, Mohamed Nejmeddine (Central Mediterranean, alternate)
Holcer, Drasko (Central Mediterranean)
Ibrahim, Ameer (Eastern Mediterranean)
Krivokhizhin, Sergey (Black Sea)
Mikhailov, Konstantin (Black Sea, alternate)

Other members:

Birkun, Alexei (CIESM)
Cañadas, Ana (CIESM)
Donovan, Greg (IWC)
Guinet, Christophe (CIESM)
Kerem, Dan (CIESM)
Notarbartolo di Sciara, Giuseppe (CIESM)

Panigada, Simone (ECS)
Reeves, Randall (IUCN)

(d) Status of ACCOBAMS Partners

93. The Executive Secretary introduced draft Resolution 3.5 on strengthening the status of ACCOBAMS Partners (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc26) and the report on the activities carried out by the ACCOBAMS Partners (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf14). She recalled that the status of ACCOBAMS Partner had been created by the First Meeting of the Parties in its Resolution 1.13. There were now 27 such Partners, and the Secretariat was receiving increasing numbers of applications for that status. The Meeting was being requested to adopt new criteria for that application and rules and commitments for the Partners. Among other things, they would henceforth be required to report on implementation of their collaborative programme with ACCOBAMS at least 2 months before the Bureau met to prepare the Meeting of the Parties, and the Parties were to be in a position to withdraw the status of ACCOBAMS Partners from any Party if it had (i) no activities that were considered relevant or (ii) activities that were contrary to the achievement of ACCOBAMS goals.

94. Following an exchange of views, it was decided to establish a working group, to be coordinated by the observer for WDCS, to consider proposed amendments to the draft Resolution's annexes, specifically its Rules 5 and 6 and Annex III.

95. Following that review of the draft Resolution by the working group, the Meeting **adopted** Resolution 3.5 (Annex X).

96. The representative of Italy stated for the record that it was necessary to give a mandate to the Bureau and the Secretariat, in coordination with the Scientific Committee, to develop an appropriate mechanism to address the issue of how Partners might participate, when appropriate, in evaluating project proposals, project implementation and evaluation of project results.

97. The application for the status of ACCOBAMS partner submitted by the Syrian Society for the Conservation of Wildlife (SSCW) was **adopted**.

98. The Chair drew attention to the list of ACCOBAMS Partners contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc65-Rev1.

99. One participant, while expressing strong support for collaboration with nongovernmental organizations, said that one report contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf14 included elements that were inaccurate and inappropriate and that, as suggested by the Secretariat, it should be re-evaluated.

100. The Executive Secretary stated that she will request the relevant Partner to revise its report taking into account the comments made by the focal point as for the inaccuracies contained in the Partner report. The Executive Secretary should ensure that future Partner reports are accurate and appropriately drafted by seeking, as necessary, the advice of the relevant National Focal Point.

101. On that understanding, the list of ACCOBAMS Partners as presented in Annex XI was **adopted**.

Agenda item 12: Work programme and financial arrangements

(a) Report by the Fund Management Controller

102. The Executive Secretary informed the Meeting that the accounts of the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS were audited by an independent auditor. She introduced the report of the Fund Management Controller contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc02-Rev3. The Meeting took note of the document.

(b) Report by the Secretariat on budgetary matters

103. The Executive Secretary, introducing the report on incomes and expenditure relevant to the Trust Fund in 2005–2007 contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc14, outlined the Fund's main sources of income and items of expenditure and gave updated figures on the payment of contributions to date. She highlighted the importance of contributions being received promptly, particularly given the small size of the ACCOBAMS budget.

104. In response to questions from the floor, she confirmed that resources donated by Parties to fund joint projects they undertook would be counted as voluntary contributions for the period 2008–2010. While some of the surplus from the previous triennium had already been allocated, some had been left unused to give the Secretariat additional flexibility in funding projects costing more than € 15 000 as planned within the framework of the Conservation Grants Fund.

(c) Report on the Supplementary Conservation Grants Fund

105. The Executive Secretary introduced the report on incomes and expenditure relevant to the Supplementary Conservation Fund in 2005-2007. Three new projects had recently been granted funding from the Supplementary Conservation Fund: two projects run by the Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation, Croatia, to educate nongovernmental organizations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Slovenia about ACCOBAMS and its conservation objectives, and to train operators of whale-watching excursions; and one project presented by Tunisia concerning interactions with fishing boats, to be run in cooperation with ICRAM. Funding had also been approved for a pilot project on the use of acoustic repellents in Morocco, although additional information was being sought from the Scientific Committee, before the project began.

106. The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee, supported by two observers, stressed that the Committee was available to provide assistance to Parties and the Secretariat in evaluating the scientific content of conservation projects. It was pointed out that allocating funds to a project which later turned out not to have a sound scientific basis did not represent a sensible use of resources.

(d) Work programme for the period 2008-2010

107. The Meeting considered document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc25, containing draft Resolution 3.4 and an annex outlining the programme of work for 2008-2010.

108. The Executive Secretary, introducing the draft Resolution, said that it was based on the information in the annex, which had been formulated by the Scientific Committee. The programme of work had been drawn up in accordance with the budget, which had already been approved by the Meeting.

109. The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee summarized the future work proposed in the annex, emphasizing the emerging issues of climate change and marine litter.

110. The representative of the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission said that a regional consultation had been held to identify the main sources of marine litter in the Black Sea. With regard the issue of marine litter, the greatest problem for cetaceans in the region appeared to be discarded fishing nets, often associated with illegal and unregulated fishing. He said that UNEP and the Black Sea Commission were planning a project to counteract such pollution.

111. The representative of the WDCS welcomed the work programme. He suggested that there be clear coordination between the activities of ACCOBAMS and the IWC relating to Climate Change in order to avoid overlap and to ensure that the flow of information was coherent.

112. In answer to a query regarding genetic studies in the frame of the Odyssey Program, the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee said that the nongovernmental organization that was to have collected tissue samples from sperm whales for such studies had so far produced few results.

113. Several suggestions were made for amendments to the draft Resolution, including wording to impart a sense of urgency with respect to the disappearance of the common dolphin and to inform national focal points about planned workshops and working groups. It was proposed that references to the appropriate Resolutions be added throughout the annex.

114. The representative of Italy said that, in future, the work programme and the budget should be presented in such a way that the budget line for each activity could be identified, to make it easier to assess the feasibility of each proposed action. Furthermore, he suggested that the roles and tasks of the Secretariat, the Scientific Committee, the Parties, Range States and Partners, and their interaction and coordination, be more clearly defined. He further proposed that timetables be set for addressing the priorities. Those suggestions might be considered during the intercessional period.

115. The Executive Secretary assured the Meeting that timetables would be drawn up for the meetings of the Bureau and the Scientific Committee. She assured the representative of Italy that the work programme was prepared with the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee in line with the budget. Items that were to be financed by external contributions remained in abeyance until such contributions were received.

116. The draft Resolution 3.4, as orally amended, was **adopted (Annex X)**.

(e) Adoption of the budget for the period 2008-2010

117. The Executive Secretary, introducing documents ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc17, ACCOBAMS-MOP/2007/Doc23-Rev1, containing draft Resolution 3.2, and ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf32, outlined the main elements within the ACCOBAMS budget and expressed gratitude to major donors whose contributions to the administrative costs of the Secretariat made conservation actions under the Agreement possible.

118. The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee highlighted the issue of ensuring that Parties availed themselves of the expertise of the Scientific Committee and that the

Committee made informed decisions about priorities for ACCOBAMS research and conservation activities.

119. After some discussion, in which various changes were suggested to clarify the meaning of the proposed amendments, draft Resolution 3.2 was revised and then **adopted** as orally amended (Annex X).

Agenda item 13: Implementation of the Agreement

120. The Meeting considered the draft Resolutions and documents submitted under this agenda item.

Draft Resolution 3.6: Procedure for submission of projects (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc27)

121. The ACCOBAMS Consultant introduced draft Resolution 3.6, explaining that establishing a procedure for the submission of projects which included specific dates and time-frames would ensure that due consideration could be given to all submissions.

122. It was suggested that paragraph (5) of the form contained in annex 1 to the draft Resolution be amended to make it clear that a letter of support should be sought from the national focal point of the country in which the project would be carried out when the project was submitted. One participant stressed the importance of not obstructing essential research in cases where such approval might prove difficult to obtain, for example because populations moved between the territorial waters of various Parties. In response to a question from the floor, the ACCOBAMS Consultant said that such approval would not be required in the case of projects carried out in international waters.

123. The Executive Secretary, also responding to a question from the floor, clarified that paragraph (6) of the form referred to funding from either the ACCOBAMS Trust Fund or the Supplementary Conservation Fund.

124. There was some debate as to whether the form should request authors of projects that would be co-financed by ACCOBAMS and other donors to provide assurances that additional funding would be forthcoming, given the difficulty of guaranteeing that such would be the case.

125. The draft Resolution 3.6, as orally amended, was **adopted** (Annex X).

Draft Resolution 3.11: Conservation plan for Black Sea cetaceans (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc32 and ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc19)

126. The representative of the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission introduced draft Resolution 3.11 and the Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc19, which had been adopted by the fourth meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee.

127. The Executive Secretary said that consultations between the Secretariat and the European Commission had not revealed any obstacles to the adoption of the Plan by the European Union's new Black Sea Member States, and expressed the hope that non-Parties with Black Sea coasts would also adopt the Plan, and that the Plan would be presented to the next Ministerial meeting of the Black Sea Commission.

128. The draft Resolution 3.11 was revised and **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.17: Conservation of the Mediterranean common dolphin: *Delphinus delphis* (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc38)

129. Mr Giovanni Bearzi (Tethys Research Institute) made a presentation illustrating the dramatic situation with respect to the short-beaked common dolphin in the Mediterranean Sea. As an example, he presented data showing the decline in the species in the area of Kalamos, Greece, from which it would disappear by 2010 if Parties did not take drastic measures to implement management solutions. Research had shown that those solutions were both feasible and acceptable.

130. Introducing draft Resolution 3.17, the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee commented that, regrettably, the common dolphin was not listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive of the European Commission.

131. Several representatives proposed amendments to the draft Resolution, to include mention of Annex II to the Habitats Directive and of the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution (Barcelona Convention) and to add a specific mention of the relevant authorities of the European Commission, both environment and fisheries.

132. In response to a call by the Executive Secretary for concrete proposals to avert eradication of the species, the representative of Italy said that aware of the relevance of the issue, the Istituto centrale per la ricerca scientifica e tecnologica applicata al mare (ICRAM), would be interested in addressing the problem. Priority actions would be identified in collaboration with the Scientific Committee. He also stated his willingness as a Bureau member to raise the concerns of ACCOBAMS in the European Commission.

133. The representative of Spain described several relevant national and regional projects covering the species that were already under way.

134. The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee recalled that the representative of Morocco had reported during this meeting that driftnet fishery was to be phased out in its territorial waters, and he encouraged that country to ensure that action was taken as soon as possible.

135. The representative of Malta said that her country would be pleased to collaborate with Italy on projects related to conservation of the common dolphin.

136. The representative of the SPA/RAC also agreed to continue its support of actions on the issue.

137. The representative of Croatia asked that the members of working groups be posted on the ACCOBAMS website.

138. The draft Resolution 3.17, as orally amended, was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.22: Marine Protected Areas for cetaceans (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc43)

139. The Chairperson drew attention also to document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc57 containing criteria for the selection and format of proposals for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for cetaceans and document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc61 containing guidelines for the establishment and management of MPAs for cetaceans, as well as the report of a global scientific workshop on spatio-temporal management of noise (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf33) and the information document on applying the format for

the proposal of protected areas for cetaceans (the Alborán Sea case study; ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf38).

140. The draft Resolution was introduced by the representative of Croatia, and document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc57 was introduced in a presentation given by Mr Erich Hoyt (WDCS).

141. It was recalled that, at their Second Meeting, the Contracting Parties had requested the Scientific Committee to elaborate criteria and to prepare a special format for proposing protected areas for cetaceans, adapted from the existing format for proposing SPAMIs. The draft Resolution was the starting point in a process whereby Parties would become active players in the designation, creation and effective management of MPAs, which were, along with legislation and its enforcement, education and research, an important tool in addressing a matter that was of increasing urgency.

142. There followed an exchange of views during which some representatives expressed concern regarding the necessity to assess the coherence of the draft Resolution with international legal and political frameworks, as well as to evaluate the practical and financial implications related to the management of an international MPA.

143. The draft Resolution 3.22 was revised and **adopted** as orally amended (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.12: By-catch, competitive interactions and acoustic devices (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc33)

144. The representative of Oceana, introducing document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf23, said that her organization was conducting a campaign against illegal fishing gear and particularly against the use of drift nets. One aspect was to identify the legal loopholes whereby fishing fleets continued to use such gear.

145. After an introduction to the draft Resolution by the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee, the representative of CMS proposed that mention be made in the preamble paragraphs of CMS Resolution 822 on the adverse effects of such devices on cetaceans. He suggested also that mention be made of ACCOBAMS Resolution 2.12 on the same issue.

146. A number of requests were made for clarification of the text of the draft Resolution.

147. The draft Resolution 3.12 as orally amended was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.13: Dolphin interaction programmes (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc34)

148. The draft Resolution was introduced by the representative of Cyprus, who emphasized the adverse effects of the capture of dolphins in the wild, including the introduction of non-native species.

149. The Chairperson the Scientific Committee, introducing ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf22, said that the Committee had reviewed the risks of human interaction and had found that it was difficult to ensure that contacts were not intrusive and stressful for the dolphins. They could therefore not support commercial programmes for human-dolphin interactions. He suggested that the title of the document be changed to indicate that it reflected the opinion of the Scientific Committee and not ACCOBAMS policy.

150. Several representatives suggested that the mention of particular species be replaced by 'cetaceans' throughout the draft Resolution. A number of further amendments were proposed to clarify the meaning.

151. The Resolution 3.13 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.14: Ship strikes on large whales in the Mediterranean Sea
(ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc35)

152. The representative of Italy, introducing the draft Resolution, said that the risk for ship strikes would increase in the near future, mainly as a result of the large increase in cargo and passenger shipping over the past few decades. Furthermore, maritime traffic was most dense in areas in which cetaceans congregated.

153. Several representatives described the measures that had been taken to reduce ship strikes, and several amendments were proposed for clarification of the text.

154. The Resolution 3.14 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.16: Conservation of fin whales in the Mediterranean Sea
(ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc37)

155. The Executive Secretary, introducing the draft Resolution and document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf10, said that the draft Resolution was based on the outcome of the workshop described in that document.

156. The representative of IWC added that, at the workshop, it had been proposed that a coordination group be established, and he suggested that that group be mentioned in the draft Resolution.

157. The Resolution 3.16 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.9: Guidelines for the establishment of a system of tissue banks within the ACCOBAMS Area and the ethical code (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc30)

158. The representative of Italy, introducing the draft Resolution, said that tissue banks were the modern approach to conservation, allowing understanding of genetic identities and grouping of species. The banks should undergo continuous assessment in order to contribute to scientific solutions to responding to hazards.

159. The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee introduced document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc60, which laid out guidelines for establishing a system of tissue banks, with an ethical code. He also introduced document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf24, which contained an annex on procedures for running tissue banks.

160. The representative of WDCCS, which had prepared the information document, said that it emphasized that tissue banks had to be set up and operated by properly trained people using standard methods.

161. The Executive Secretary, noting that annex 1 to document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc60 was incomplete, asked Contracting Parties to supply the missing information. She thanked the Government of Italy for its support, given through the tissue bank in Padua.

162. The Resolution 3.9 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.19: IUCN Red List of cetaceans in the Mediterranean and Black Seas
(ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc40)

163. The representative of Monaco, introducing the draft Resolution, thanked the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, the IUCN and others who had contributed to establish a closer working relationship between ACCOBAMS and the IUCN.

164. The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee introduced document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf11, which was a report of the workshop at which the Red List for cetaceans of the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea had been drawn up. The full report could be found on the websites of both ACCOBAMS and the IUCN.

165. The Resolution 3.19 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.20: Guidelines on the release of cetaceans into the wild (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc41)

166. The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee introduced the draft Resolution, which had been prepared and adopted by the Committee.

167. The representative of WDCCS presenting the draft guidelines (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc58) outlined the problems associated with uncontrolled releases and escapes of non-native species, which could result in genetic pollution and disease. He welcomed in particular the annex, which listed the diseases that could be transmitted and asked the Scientific Committee to keep that list under continual review.

168. In answer to a query, the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee said that cetacean releases were rare and important enough to warrant individual attention to each case. Examination of each case was important, as each situation could be widely different from others.

169. An amendment was proposed to make the text less proscriptive.

170. The Resolution 3.20 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.21: ACCOBAMS-CIESM-PELAGOS Joint Cetacean Sighting Database (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007Doc 42)

171. The Executive Secretary introduced draft Resolution 3.21. The Chair of the Scientific Committee drew attention to the working programme for the ACCOBAMS-CIESM-PELAGOS Joint Cetacean Sighting Database contained in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc 55. It was stressed that the budget was indicative; certain estimates were already considered too low and should be increased.

172. Following a discussion on several aspects of the working programme, including certain inconsistencies in the text, it was agreed to amend the draft Resolution to “welcome” rather than “endorse” the working programme, thereby providing flexibility to allow for further work while recognizing the positive work undertaken so far. It was also agreed to delete the reference to Monaco as the premises of the central database, since the issue hasn't yet been examined by PELAGOS. Some additional amendments were proposed to clarify the meaning of the draft Resolution.

173. The observer for one nongovernmental organization offered to share data obtained from its research programme in the PELAGOS Sanctuary.

174. The draft Resolution 3.21, as orally amended, was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.23: Commercial whale-watching: Towards a label (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc44)

175. The Representative of France introduced draft Resolution 3.23 and document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc59, which contained proposed guidelines for whale-watching operators in the PELAGOS/ACCOBAMS area to acquire a label. She also drew attention to

documents ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf 36, ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf42 and ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf46.

176. During the ensuing discussion, several amendments were suggested to the draft Resolution and the proposed guidelines to clarify their meaning and avoid inconsistency with other texts. Particular emphasis was placed on the need to restrict approaches to cetaceans by air. Attention was drawn to the necessity of avoiding overlap, while at the same ensuring consistency with the existing guidelines for commercial cetacean-watching activities in the ACCOBAMS area adopted under Resolution 1.11 of the First Meeting of the Parties. Also an amendment to Document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc59 was made.

177. The ACCOBAMS Consultant highlighted the need for the new guidelines to be no less proscriptive with respect to interactions with cetaceans than the guidelines concerning pleasure craft activities and the protection of the marine environment in the Mediterranean recently adopted by the Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Mediterranean Action Plan.

178. The draft Resolution 3.23, as orally amended, was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.25: Cetacean live stranding (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc46)

179. The representative of Spain, introducing the draft Resolution, said that it was based on the outcome of the workshop on rescue organized by ACCOBAMS in November 2006, national experiences and the advice of the Scientific Committee. A number of actions were recommended.

180. The representative of WDCS introduced documents ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc63 and ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc64, which had resulted from the workshop. The first, which would be issued in the form of a leaflet, would be updated as new information and techniques became available. It might be posted on suitable websites. The second document contained an initial list of contacts involved in rescue operations in the Agreement Area.

181. Several representatives raised the issue of mass hysteria among the public when a large cetacean was stranded, as had occurred off the coast of France in summer 2007. Several representatives suggested that guidelines be drawn up for controlling public access to such sites. The representative of WDC drew the Meeting's attention to the full report of the workshop, which was annexed to the report of the Scientific Committee, in which the control and management of the public and the provision of information were addressed. He suggested that such information be added to the leaflet.

182. One representative noted that the recommendation in the draft Resolution for involvement of zoos and aquaria in rescue activities might pose a dilemma, in view of the ethical aspects and the risks for disease. The Meeting agreed that the text should be revised to pose strong conditions on such involvement, including closing such zones to the public. It was important to involve such establishments in conservation efforts.

183. Several other amendments were proposed to the text to strengthen its intention.

184. The Resolution 3.25 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.29: Guidelines for a coordinated cetacean stranding response (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc50-Rev1)

185. The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee, introducing the draft Resolution, said that it had been drafted to respond to widespread mortality due to disease or to disasters in cetacean habitats. He said that document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc21 contained

guidelines that had been drawn up by an eminent consultant and had been examined by the Scientific Committee as well as an expert in the field. The Committee had concluded that the guidelines were extremely useful but that the work should be continued at a meeting of experts sometime in the coming year. The document would be used as the basis for more comprehensive guidelines.

186. The representative of SPA/RAC, introducing document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf21, said that the MEDACES database was now functioning, and she urged Parties to collaborate in keeping it up to date.

187. The representative of the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission introduced document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf19. He said that all six Black Sea States had stranding networks, which were, however, at different levels of development. The document listed the assistance that would be required by each network to make them fully functional; the main requirement was for capacity-building and standard methods for recording and investigating strandings.

188. The Executive Secretary stressed the importance of collaborating with MEDACES and encouraged Parties to provide data.

189. The Resolution 3.29 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.27: Strengthening North South cooperation (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc48-Rev1)

190. The representative of Italy introduced the draft Resolution, emphasizing the importance of building up expertise in order that the Agreement is implemented in a timely manner. Taking into account the technological disparities between countries in the northern and southern parts of the Agreement Area, information sharing and technical cooperation should be increased.

191. The Resolution 3.27 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.28: Support to the Secretariat (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc49)

192. The Chairperson, introducing the draft Resolution, thanked the Governments of Monaco, the United Kingdom and Italy for their support to the Secretariat. She recalled that the Executive Secretary in her report had stressed the need for more staff and technical support to carry out the duties assigned to the Secretariat.

193. A number of representatives expressed their appreciation for the work carried out by the Secretariat.

194. The representative of Italy reiterated the intention of his Government to continue to support the Secretariat.

195. Several amendments were proposed to ensure harmonization of the working conditions of the Secretariat with that of the secretariats of other agreements under CMS.

196. The Resolution 3.28 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Granting of exceptions (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf47 and ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf48)

197. The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee stressed the delicate nature of the granting of exceptions for the purpose of research, in view of the potential conflict involved in

allowing bona fide research by legitimate experts, which might, however, be intrusive. A balance had to be struck between impeding valid research and ensuring that research was not conducted improperly or uselessly. Guidelines had therefore been drafted (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf47) to help decision-makers draw up national regulations to address the issue and had been presented to the Scientific Committee at its fourth meeting. A working group had been formed to work on the technical aspects of the guidelines, and its progress was reported in document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf48.

198. The representative of the European Cetacean Society, speaking in his capacity as chairperson of the working group, said that the group had met subsequent to the meeting of the Scientific Committee and modified certain sections of the guidelines, in particular Annex II regarding acceptable research methods. The group intended to prepare two documents, one containing guidelines and a pro forma and the other containing instructions on following the guidelines and completing the pro forma. The documents would be revised once the system had been tested in practice. Application of the guidelines would require a legal framework, which should be drawn up by each Party.

199. The Executive Secretary said that the documents would be a unique contribution to addressing the problem and would be used as a model by other organizations. She suggested that finalized versions of the guidelines and instructions be prepared for the next meeting of the Bureau, and that they be tested and revised accordingly for presentation to the next Meeting of the Parties, in 2010.

Draft Resolution 3.15: Comprehensive cetacean population estimates and distribution in the ACCOBAMS area (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc36)

200. The draft Resolution was introduced by a member of the steering group established within the Scientific Committee to work on the comprehensive cetacean survey project. Another member of the steering group introduced document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf 12, and an observer for a nongovernmental organization gave a presentation outlining the main points of document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf16 and providing additional information on the progress made by IFAW in surveying cetacean distribution and abundance in the ACCOBAMS area.

201. The Executive Secretary expressed her gratitude to IFAW for its continued collaboration and for its support for research activities and capacity-building.

202. During the discussion, several amendments were suggested to the draft Resolution.

203. The draft Resolution 3.15, as orally amended, was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Draft Resolution 3.10 on guidelines to address the impact of anthropogenic noise on marine mammals in the ACCOBAMS area (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/Docs31 and ACCOBAMS-MOP3/20)

204. Ms Cañadas, a member of the Scientific Committee, presented information documents associated with the item (Inf17, 33, 35 and 56-Rev1) in which she set out the next steps to be taken in the collection and analysis of datasets from the region.

205. The representative of Spain, as joint coordinator of the working group, introduced the revised draft Resolution.

206. In an exchange of views, amendments were proposed, in particular, to a reference in an operative paragraph whereby Parties were urged to act, as soon as possible, in accordance with the principle that they should “endeavour” to ensure that activities the sole purpose of which was defence or national security were not conducted in a manner incompatible, so far as was reasonable or practicable, with the objectives of the ACCOBAMS Agreement. On the advice of the legal expert of ACCOBAMS, it was agreed that the paragraph be deleted.

207. The draft Resolution 3.10, as orally amended, was **adopted** (Annexe X).

208. In response to a question raised by the Chairman of the Scientific Committee, the representative of Spain said that although the working group had discussed at length whether the Committee should draw up further recommendations and guidelines, it had concluded that from the point of view of the draft Resolution more work needed to be done on the matter during the forthcoming triennium by the Correspondence Working Group, to be established under the Resolution.

Draft Resolution 3.26 on guidelines on the precautionary principle (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Docs47 and ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc56-Rev1)

209. The Executive Secretary introduced the draft Resolution, which, she said, now referred mainly to the issue of noise.

210. The representative of France said that she had a fundamental reservation with regard to the draft Resolution, whose adoption she had no mandate to approve. It was too general in its application to the issue of noise, and she proposed that the issue be deferred until the Fourth Meeting of the Parties.

211. It was so **agreed**.

Agenda item 14: Relations with other organizations

212. The Meeting considered document ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Doc29 containing draft Resolution 3.8 on strengthening collaboration with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).

213. The representative of Monaco stated that fishing was probably, the activity most concerned with cetaceans. He welcomed the draft Resolution, emphasizing the importance of reaching agreements with fishery bodies to prevent the disappearance of species and in particular the common dolphin.

214. Mr Raïs reported that the Secretariat had participated in a number of meetings of the Secretariat of GFCM. Although the relationship had been somewhat difficult initially, the links were now close. GFCM had included the problems of ship strikes and depletion of stocks of cetacean prey on the agenda of their general meeting, and several joint workshops had been held.

215. The representative of PELAGOS reported that his organization was also in close contact with GFCM, which had requested the input of specialists on cetaceans at several meetings.

216. Expressing support for the draft Resolution, several representatives asked that the report of the joint workshops be posted on the ACCOBAMS website.

217. At the request of the Chairperson, the representative of the Council of Europe gave a detailed description of the work undertaken under the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention). She expressed the desire of the Convention secretariat to collaborate with related conventions.

218. The Executive Secretary thanked the representative of the Council of Europe for the assistance of the Council in the preparation of the Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans. She said that the Secretariat was closely following the discussions of the Permanent Committee on the intentional capture of cetaceans by Turkey in the ACCOBAMS Area.

219. Resolution 3.8 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Agenda item 15: Other business

220. There was no other business.

Agenda item 16: Date and venue of the Fourth Meeting of the Parties

221. The Meeting accepted the offer by the Principality of Monaco to host the Fourth Meeting of the Parties in 2010 and expressed its gratitude to the Authorities of the Principality for their kind and generous offer.

222. Resolution 3.31 was **adopted** (Annexe X).

Agenda item 17: Adoption of the report of the Meeting

223. The Meeting reviewed the draft report prepared by the Secretariat and adopted it as orally amended.

224. The Meeting adopted also Resolution 3.30 “Tribute to organizers” (Annexe X).

Agenda item 18: Closure of the Meeting

225. During the closing session statements were made by the representative of Italy, the representative of the Secretariat of CMS and one observer on behalf of several NGOs. The full texts of these statements appear in Annex XII of this report.

After the exchange of the usual civilities the Chairperson closed the meeting at 7.10 p.m. (Thursday 25th October 2007).

ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / *LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS*

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ANNEXE II

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome addresses**
- 2. Granting the right to vote**
- 3. Election of the Bureau**
- 4. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 5. Admission of Observers**
- 6. Establishment of the Credentials Committee**
- 7. Opening Statements**
- 8. Progress reports by**
 - a) Depositary
 - b) Secretariat
 - c) Bureau
 - d) Chair of the Scientific Committee
 - e) Sub-Regional Coordination Units
- 9. Report by the Credentials Committee**
- 10. National reports**
 - a) Synthesis of the National Implementation Reports of the Parties
 - b) Range States activities
 - c) ACCOBAMS system for reporting on line
- 11. Institutional dispositions**
 - a) Status of the Secretariat
 - b) Draft Amendments of the Agreement
 - c) Appointment of Scientific Committee members
 - d) Status of ACCOBAMS Partners
- 12. Working Program and Financial arrangements**
 - a) Report by the Fund Management Controller
 - b) Report by the Secretariat on the budgetary matters
 - c) Report on the Supplementary Conservation Grants Fund
 - d) Working Program for the period 2008-2010
 - e) Adoption of the budget for the period 2008-2010
- 13. Implementation of the Agreement**
- 14. Relations with other Organizations**
- 15. Other business**
- 16. Date and venue of the Fourth Meeting of the Parties**
- 17. Adoption of the Report of the Meeting**
- 18. Closure of the Meeting**

ANNEX III

REPORT OF THE DEPOSITARY

Since the second meeting of the Parties that took place in Palma de Mallorca 9th – 12th November 2004, the Depositary had recorded the deposit of the instruments of four Riparian States: Cyprus Italy, Lebanon and Slovenia.

The Depositary had informed all the Contracting Parties, the European Community, the Treaty section of the United Nations, the Permanent Secretariats of ACCOBAMS and of CMS of those accessions and the dates of entry into force of the Agreement for each of those Countries.

In addition the Depositary, through the various diplomatic officers of the Principality of Monaco, had supported the action taken by the Permanent Secretariat to raise awareness among the other Riparian States and the European Commission with a view to their accession. Finally one must take note that the Montenegro Parliament that had officially declared its independency on June 3rd 2006, might such as a Riparian State ask to accede to the Agreement.

LIST OF CONTRACTING PARTIES AND SIGNATORIES

COUNTRY / PAYS	SIGNATURES	RATIFICATIONS		ENTRY INTO FORCE / ENTRÉE EN VIGUEUR
	Dates	Tool / Instrument	Deposit of the tool/ Dépôt de l'instrument	
ALBANIA / ALBANIE	24/11/1996	25/05/2001	03/07/2001	01/10/2001
ALGERIA / ALGERIE		19/03/2007***	25/09/2007	01/12/2007
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE HERZEGOVINE				
BULGARIA / BULGARIE	16/09/1999	23/09/1999	10/11/1999	01/06/2001
CROATIA / CROATIE	24/11/1996	03/05/2000	10/07/2000	01/06/2001
CYPRUS / CHYPRE	24/11/1996	30/01/2006	14/02/2006	01/05/2006
EGYPT / EGYPTÉ				
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY / COMMUNAUTE EUROPEENNE				
FRANCE	24/11/1996	26/02/04 (AA)***	10/03/2004	01/06/2004
GEORGIA / GEORGIE	24/11/1996	30/03/2001	31/05/2001	01/06/2001
GREECE / GRECE	24/11/1996*	24/11/1996*	24/11/1996*	01/06/2001
ISRAEL				
ITALY / ITALIE	24/11/1996	10/02/2005	24/06/05	01/09/2005
LEBANON / LIBAN		05/05/2004(A)**	13/12/2004	01/03/2005
LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA / LIBYE		12/05/2002	18/06/2002	01/09/2002
MALTA / MALTE	23/03/2001*	23/03/2001*	23/03/2001*	01/06/2001
MONACO	24/11/1996	25/04/1997	30/04/1997	01/06/2001
MONTENEGRO				
MOROCCO / MAROC	28/03/1997	13/05/1999	05/07/1999	01/06/2001
PORTUGAL	24/11/1996	30/09/2004 (A)**	15/10/2004	01/01/2005
ROMANIA / ROUMANIE	28/09/1998	13/06/2000	17/07/2000	01/06/2001
RUSSIA / RUSSIE				
SLOVENIA / SLOVENIE		12/07/2006	25/09/2006	01/12/2006
SPAIN / ESPAGNE	24/11/1996	07/01/1999	02/02/1999	01/06/2001
SYRIA / SYRIE		07/02/02 (A)**	22/03/2002	01/06/2002
TUNISIA / TUNISIE	24/11/1996	31/12/2001	15/01/2002	01/04/2002
TURKEY / TURQUIE				
UKRAINE / UKRAINE		09/07/2003	23/10/2003	01/01/2004
UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME UNI				

* Signature valid for ratification / Signature valant ratification

** A = Adherence / Adhésion

*** AA = Approval / Approbation

ANNEX IV

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Dr. Marie-Christine Grillo-Van Klaveren
Executive Secretary

The present report aims at providing comprehensive information on the activities carried out by the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS since the last Meeting of the Parties as well as an overview on the relations with Countries and other relevant Organizations.

I. Status of ratifications

Since the last Meeting of the Parties, five Countries (Cyprus, Italy, Lebanon, Portugal and Slovenia) acceded to the Agreement and deposited their relevant instruments to the Depository. Therefore the number of Parties to ACCOBAMS reached 20 Parties (as for 31st July 2007).

The Secretariat was also informed that Algeria has published on 29th April 2007 the national Decree on ACCOBAMS accession.

The Secretariat had several exchanges with Riparian States not yet Parties (including Algeria), with. A technical workshop was organized with the participation of scientists and legal experts in Montenegro with the aim to identify the Country's needs for the ratification.

The Secretariat undertook several visits to the Turkish Government on the occasion of international meetings and so far the interest of Turkey for the accession is being thwarted by internal political problems.

Notwithstanding several contacts by the Secretariat, no official feedback was shown from Egypt, Bosnia, Russian Federation and Israel.

In accordance with Article VIII a) of the Agreement, Focal Points have been nominated by the Parties as well as by certain non-member Countries (MOP3.Inf 03). Among the Parties, some Countries have not yet officially appointed their Focal Points: Ukraine, Albania and Libya.

II. Secretariat support

During the period covered by this Report, the Secretariat received substantial support from the Host Country (Principality of Monaco). It also received financial support from Italy and United Kingdom.

Part of the received contributions was used to strengthen the Secretariat, while the other part was used for carrying out activities according to the work plan adopted by the Parties.

On the light of the functioning of the Secretariat during this triennium, the need for a minimum of 4 staff members in the Secretariat became obvious.

Given the ever-increasing tasks of the Secretariat, the Executive Secretary would like to draw the attention of the Meeting to the Draft Resolution 3.28 to *encourage Parties to continue and improve the help to the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS through secondment, or financial support, of administrative, scientific or legal staff.*

III. Contacts with Countries

Convinced of the importance of establishing and maintaining close contacts with the Riparian Countries, the Secretariat undertaken during the triennium many initiatives to meet the national authorities during missions organized in Countries (Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, Montenegro, France, Italy, Spain) and at the occasion of international meetings attended by the Focal Points or other representatives of the national authorities (Greece, Russian Federation, Israel, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Libya, Egypt). The Secretariat also met with

Ambassadors of some Riparian Countries in Monaco. During these contacts, the Secretariat presented the activities of the Agreement and disseminated information material and investigated with the Country representative ways of strengthening cooperation for the implementation of ACCOBAMS. With the representatives of Countries that are not yet Parties, the Secretariat discussed on the more appropriate way to accelerate the accession of their Countries to the Agreement.

In the frame of the Agreement implementation the Secretariat organized the following Meetings and Workshops:

- *Workshop on obtaining baseline cetacean abundance information for the ACCOBAMS area (Valsain - Spain, December 2004)*
- *Meeting on Methodology for Surveying the Black Sea (St Andrews - UK, September 2005), and*
- *The Workshop on Cetaceans Surveying in the Black Sea (Istanbul – Turkey, October 2005).*
- *Joint ACCOBAMS/PELAGOS Workshop on Collision (Monaco, 14-15 November 2005):* The objective of the workshop was to synthesize the knowledge of ship strikes of fin, sperm, and other large whales in the Mediterranean Sea, including the Pelagos Sanctuary and to place them in a global and local context; to determine data gaps vital to a more comprehensive assessment of the issue; to discuss whether mitigation and management measures were necessary; and to discuss what mitigation and management measures might effectively be employed to address the issue.
- *Joint ACCOBAMS/PELAGOS Workshop on Fin Whale (Monaco from 11-13 November 2005),* to provide a rationale background to draw the Mediterranean Fin whale conservation action plan.
- *Seminar on the conservation of cetaceans in the countries of the South and East Mediterranean (Bizerta, Tunisia, 9 to 11 March 2006):* the aim of the workshop was to take stock of the available knowledge on cetaceans in the Southern Mediterranean Countries. The workshop was attended by.....participants (Scientists, officer of national authorities, Etc....)
The main topics addressed during the workshop were the activities developed and project to be developed by the Countries in cetacean conservation and the main issues related to interaction with fisheries, monitoring of strandings and the population estimate. In this context, the technical and financial needs of the participating Countries were identified with the view of elaborating future programs.
- *Round table on the Draft Conservation Plan of Black Sea Cetaceans, Istanbul, 9 May 2006:* on the occasion of the 1st Biennial Scientific Conference in Black Sea, a Round table on cetacean conservation was organized. The Black Sea Cetacean Conservation Plan was reviewed with the aim to identify priority actions. The Round Table was attended by representatives of all the Black Sea Countries.
- *ACCOBAMS/IUCN Red list (Monaco, 5-7 March 2006):* the workshop was organized jointly by the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS and the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation with the view of assessing the status of conservation of cetacean species/populations in the ACCOBAMS area. The assessment was carried out according to the methodology, criteria, and categories of IUCN Red Lists. The results

of the workshop were published and will be of help for further elaborating conservation programmes.

- *Joint PELAGOS/ACCOBAMS workshop on Whale Watching and labelling(Monaco, 23 April 2007)*: organized with the aim to elaborate the Term of Reference of a Label on whale watching.
- *Workshop on Marine Protected Areas (Monaco, 5-8 November 2006)*: in the frame of the 2010 targets initiated with the Sub Regional Coordination Units, the workshop was organized as part of the Fourth Scientific Committee Meeting. The workshop identified criteria for selecting sites of interest for cetacean conservation. A provisional list of potential Protected Areas for cetaceans was drafted. Based on these criteria identified during the workshop, RAC/SPA elaborated Guidelines for the Establishment and Management of Marine Protected Areas for Cetaceans.
- *Workshop on live strandings (Monaco, 3-4 November 2006)* : on the development of techniques and guidelines to deal with the problem of live stranding, a workshop to address cetacean rescue issues
- *Workshop on National Stranding Network in Monaco*: the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS organized in 2006 a training workshop for the staff of the Environment Department of Monaco in charge of cetaceans' strandings. The Workshop consisted of presentations and practical sessions on autopsy techniques conducted by Prof Bruno Cozzi.
- *Joint Workshop on interaction with fisheries (Salambô, Tunisia)*: the workshop was organized within the framework of the activities of the SCME (GFCM's Sub Committee of Marine Environment Ecosystems). It was mainly aimed at launching a joint initiative of the Secretariats of ACCOBAMS and GFCM to collect data about bycatch of cetaceans in fishing gear.
- *Joint ACCOBAMS/CIESM/PELAGOS workshop on sighting database (Monaco, 5th September 2006)*: the objective of the workshop was to built on the existing sighting databases in order to establish a common database compiling, and where necessary improving, the data available in the existing databases .Based on the outcomes of the workshop, a working program was prepared and is submitted to the third Meeting of the Parties of ACCOBAMS.
- *Joint Workshop on Marine Protected Areas (22-25 mai 2007, Salambô, Tunisia)*: in the frame of the collaboration between SCME and the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS, with the participation of international organizations and international programmes (IUCN, WWF, RAC/SPA/PELAGOS,Medpan). The workshop analysed the Med network of MPAs and assessed the coverage of the main Mediterranean habitats.
- *Workshop stranding in Morocco (Mdiq,2007)*: the aim of the workshop was to elaborate operational procedure for the national network of cetaceans stranding monitoring . The workshop also offered the opportunity to train the national scientists on autopsy techniques. It was attended by scientists and researchers from many marine biology centres of Morocco.
- *Italian National workshop on BYcBAMS implementation (Rome, 10th – 11th September 2007)*: the workshop was held as part of the Italian project for the implementation of the activities of the BYcBams project. It was attended by scientists and fisheries experts from many Italian institutions and organizations.

The workshop reviewed the available knowledge on the interactions between the Italian fisheries and cetaceans in the Tyrrhenian Sea with the view of elaborating a strategy for collection of data using a common /standard methodology.

IV. The Supplementary Conservation Funds

In 2002 the Additional Conservation Grant Fund (as established in Resolution 1.6 and 1.7) was launched thanks to voluntary contributions.

The Third Meeting of the Bureau met in 2005 and decided to approve for funding the Project “Assessment of the extent of current cetacean by-catch and strandings in the Romanian Black Sea area” presented by the National Institute for Marine Research and Development “Grigore Antipa” based in Romania.

Three other projects were submitted to the Fourth meeting of the Bureau (Losjin) (see MOP3.Inf 06). The Bureau approved the projects and requested minor complementary information Fund.

V. Capacity building

During the triennium, the Secretariat carried out the following capacity building activities:

- National training on the monitoring of cetaceans Strandings (Morocco and Monaco)
- Strengthening of the Regional Network for the monitoring of Cetacean Strandings in BS, including training activities.
- Assistance to IFAW in establishing contacts with the national authorities in Mediterranean Countries in order to carry out surveys in the Mediterranean area.
- Finalization of the Educational kit thanks to the financial support from UNEP, CMS, RAC/SPA and the Black Sea Commission.
- Elaboration of a Kit Conference aimed to the recognition of the main species in the area.
- Training of Coast Guards of the Principality of Monaco on cetacean identification.
- Collaboration with Legambiente (Italy) in the project “Cetacei dei mari nostril” aimed at public awareness on the protection of the marine environment and cetaceans.
- Training on cetacean conservation in several localities in Italy, including surveys at sea, organized thanks to the financial support of the Italian Ministry of Environment and the scientific support of then NGO Menkab.
- Assistance to Countries in elaborating their National Action Plan for the Conservation of cetaceans (Tunisia and Albania)
- Assistance to Montenegro in developing the national legislation for the conservation of cetaceans as part of the national legal framework for biodiversity.
- ACCOBAMS training course on cetacean research methods and conservation strategies In collaboration with Tethys Institute for Lebanese and Libyan scientists.
- In order to avoid overlapping and duplication, the Secretariat agreed with RAC/SPA to integrate the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) on cetacean in the regional CHM on marine and coastal biodiversity being set up by RAC/SPA. As first step, the regional CHM has a section on cetaceans, which will evolve to include further detailed information on cetaceans (conservation programmes, legislation, experts, etc.). To this end, the Secretariat will collaborate with RAC/SPA in 2008 establish a jointly-agreed methodology for inserting cetacean related information in the CHM and for its updating.

VI. Promotion of Research and monitoring

2010 targets

According to the Bureau recommendation in paying special care to the conservation of cetaceans' habitats, and to the Resolution 2.14 "Protected Areas and cetacean conservation", in March 2006 the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS, in collaboration, with the Sub Regional Coordination Units contacted all the Riparian Countries to (i) extend if necessary the concept of cetaceans' protection in the already existing protected areas (ii) identify sites, including the high seas, containing important cetaceans' habitats in the Agreement area and (iii) accomplish all the issues which lead to their protection.

Comprehensive cetacean population estimates and distribution in the ACCOBAMS area

A Black Sea – Mediterranean coordination meeting was held in Scotland in September 2005 in view of the Black Sea meeting (Istanbul, October 2005) aimed at finalizing the project on a Black Sea survey.

Interaction with fisheries

As part of the implementation of the *BYCBAMS project*, the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS, received a financial contribution from the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MIPAAF) to carry out some of the activities of the project in Italy: elaboration of common methodology for data collection on bycatch and the development of a national strategy on cetacean bycatch assessment. The activity is being implemented with the participation of the Consorzio Mediterraneo and ICRAM.

Modelling

A compilation exercise of the available data on *Ziphius distribution* is being carried out thanks to the financial contribution from the Italian Ministry of Environment. It is aimed at developing a habitat use modelling exercise

VII. Communication and awareness.

During the triennium the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS paid special attention to developing activities aimed at raising the awareness of the general public about the conservation of cetaceans. The Xth anniversary of the Agreement offered an opportunity to hold a series of events and to publish awareness raising material.

The culmination of these activities was the MIMO event and the launching of the 2007 YoD under the patronage of His Sovereign Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco.

Here are the main awareness raising activities carried out during the triennium:

- Production of a new web site that is a combination of scientific and institutional data, addressed both to the scientific community and to the general public. The design of the website mirrors the identity of the Agreement and its commitment to the preservation of dolphins and whales.
- New version of a database of individuals, research groups, projects and whale-watching activities that makes part of the official web site.
- Legal procedures for the treatment of the personal details.
- Production of a new leaflet (English and French versions) that recalls the design of the web site and contributes to define the Agreement image.
- Production of an institutional banner;
- Production of posters that were distributed to some Partners that organised events on the occasion of the 10th ACCOBAMS Anniversary;
- The 2006 Calendar with CMS
- Production and distribution of 10.000 board games aimed to children from 8 to 12, teaching them about ACCOBAMS, about cetaceans and the threats they face. The game, sponsored by the Italian Ministry for the Environment, was created in six languages (Arabic, French, English, Italian, Russian and Spanish) with the purpose of

gathering ideally all the children of different Countries, ages and cultures on the shore of a common Sea, mingling the enjoyment of a playful activity with an introduction in the issue of marine biodiversity.

- Production of an “ACCOBAMS kit conference” (English and French versions) that includes 2 power point presentations and a video on cetaceans and will be distributed to all ACCOBAMS Parties. The kit conference will represent a useful tool to organize conferences for the large public.
- Production of an ACCOBAMS institutional video (English and French versions) that will contribute to raise awareness on cetaceans conservation and to enhance the Agreement knowledge.
- Setting-up of a media mailing and development of press office activities including dissemination of press releases and production of press reviews.
- Collaboration with a group of people willing to set up an Association aimed to support the Agreement’s work, by financing scientific projects and raising awareness on cetaceans’ protection.
- MAREVIVO: The Secretariat of ACCOBAMS collaborated with MAREVIVO in launching Dolphin Free label whose objective is to encourage the general public consuming sea products issued from fisheries that apply method for mitigating dolphin bycatch.

During all 2006, celebration of the ACCOBAMS 10th Anniversary through a series of events:

- Participation to the *Cetaceans Regatta* aiming to combine the passion for the sea with the protection of cetaceans.

In this frame, the Secretariat organized different activities:

a) A Seminar on Cetaceans recognition: Workshop intended for those working in marine environments (Maritime Police, Local Administrations, divers etc.), focusing on the recognition and the knowledge of Mediterranean Cetaceans. This workshop took place among a series of ACCOBAMS activities aiming to increase competence in the marine environment and providing the basic tools for the recognition of the species. Chairman of the workshop was Mr. Alexandre Gannier from GREC (Groupe de Recherche sur les Cétacés, a group of cetaceans' experts), which is partner to ACCOBAMS. Other activities took place during the meeting: an audio-visual presentation on cetaceans, threats and conservation measures, a documentary on cetacean recognition which was presented after having tested the participants' knowledge on the subject, and a pedagogical photo-exposition.

b) Kids, dolphins and whales: let's learn while playing! Cetaceans Regatta involved a group of pupils in collaboration with "Direction de l'Education Nationale de la Jeunesse et des Sports" (Monegasque equivalent of British Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) in the framework of the "Kids, dolphins and whales: let's learn while playing!" project. During the workshop children were given some rudiments of cetaceans' lives by GREC and played “ACCOBAMS game”. They could also benefit of a pedagogical photo-exposition and participate to a quiz animated by the Secretariat staff.

c) On the occasion of the *Cetaceans Regatta*, the Secretariat also participated to the event in Viareggio (Italy) with an informative stand.

- Organization of a conference-cycle intended for the Clubs of the Principality of Monaco (Rotary, Lions, Yacht Club...). Members were welcomed by ACCOBAMS' staff and attended an introduction on the Agreement and its activities by the Executive Secretary; an informative documentary was then presented and commented by a cetacean researcher. They learnt about the threats that cetaceans face and ACCOBAMS initiatives towards the issue of conservation measures in favour of the species. During the dinners that followed the conferences, participants could test their knowledge on cetaceans playing a quiz developed by ACCOBAMS and win a guided whale-and-dolphin-watching tour.
- Participation to "Stelle di mare lungo il fiume" festival. ACCOBAMS Secretariat took part in the festival which was held in Rome on 22-26 June, committed to the conservation of biodiversity in the Mediterranean Sea and which was organised by Marevivo (an Italian environmental association). ACCOBAMS 10th anniversary was celebrated on Friday 23rd June, with a round-table on "Political strategies for cetacean conservation in the Mediterranean Sea" - which was attended by the Executive Secretary of the Agreement - and with a series of footages intended to awaken public concerns on the issue of conservation. Throughout the whole event ACCOBAMS Secretariat placed a stand presenting their activities and spreading informative material.
- MIMO event: "Operation MIMO": The 10th ACCOBAMS Anniversary was celebrated in Monaco on 17th September: on this memorable occasion, **H.S.H. Prince Albert II** dived together with the ACCOBAMS Executive Secretary, a team of professional divers and several Monegasque personalities committed to the protection of Marine Biodiversity to submerge a natural-sized dolphin-shaped statue in Larvotto's protected area. The statue was dedicated to the late memory of Rainer III for the commitment he devoted to the birth of ACCOBAMS, the achievement of its goals and the establishment of the Secretariat in the Principality of Monaco. Representatives from ACCOBAMS Parties, Ministers from the Agreement Area, ACCOBAMS' Partners, members of ACCOBAMS' Scientific Committee, the Convention on Migratory Species and representatives from Monegasque Institutions attended the event. Afterwards participants were escorted to the "Blue Note" Restaurant where a cocktail dinner was served. Images from the submersion were shown and a bingo event, dance performance and live music enhanced the evening. T-shirts made by AMAPEI in collaboration with ACCOBAMS were sold to finance whale-watching activities for disable children. On this opportunity, the Convention on Migratory Species with ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS officially launched the Year of the Dolphin campaign 2007 whose Patron is **H.S.H. Prince Albert II**.
- From 21 to 25 November 2006 ACCOBAMS Secretariat installed an informative stand at Fontvieille Shopping Centre in Monaco, aiming to awaken public concern on the issue of cetaceans' conservation. The event closed the series of happenings held throughout 2006 held to celebrate the Agreement's Tenth Anniversary. Videos on cetaceans, distribution of informative material and animation for children characterised the whole week. The impact of the event was strengthened by the partnership with Carrefour Shopping Centre: Supermarket cashiers had been wearing ACCOBAMS sweatshirts throughout the week, and whale-and-dolphin silhouette-boards were hung in the supermarket's premises, emphasising the importance of everyone's commitment in the issue of biodiversity conservation.

Adhesion to the Year of the Dolphin campaign

- The ACCOBAMS Secretariat contributed to this global awareness campaign as a Founding Partner and to contribute to the achievement of the campaign's goals. In this spirit, the Secretariat provided assistance in the development of the campaign's strategies and participated to the organization of some events in Monaco aimed to

raise public awareness. It also urged Parties on the importance of joining this campaign.

- In the frame of the Year of the Dolphin campaign, the Secretariat developed a partnership with the Honorary Consulate of Albania in Monaco and contributed to the organization of the exposition “On the route of dolphins. Sights of sea in Monte Carlo, Genoa and Durres” that introduced paintings and photographs by Claude Gauthier, Lele Luzzati, Flavio Costantini, Artan Shabani and Roland Tasho. Their artworks illustrate universal themes such as the protection of the marine environment. During the exhibition, many side events took place. Among them, a conference organized by ACCOBAMS in collaboration with Sabina Airoidi, marine biologist of Tethys Research Institute, who presented the Agreement and the issues related to cetaceans conservation to large public.
- The Secretariat also established partnerships with the XII Games of the Small States of Europe and with Monaco Yacht Show for the distribution of informative material among large public. It also collaborated with an official YoD supporter, the FMAS (Fédération Monégasque pour les Activités subaquatiques) to the organization of an educational activity for children and to the production of posters on species to be used on this occasion.

VIII. Guidelines elaboration.

According to the Article IV of the Agreement regarding the Secretariat during the last triennium prepared the guidelines here below:

- Guidelines to address the issue of the impact of anthropogenic noise on marine mammals in the ACCOBAMS area;
- Emergency Task Force: Guidelines for a Coordinated Cetacean Stranding Response
- Guidelines for the establishment of a system of Tissue Banks within the ACCOBAMS Area and the ethical code;
- Guidelines on the release of cetaceans into the wild (thanks to the collaboration of WDCCS);
- Guidelines on the Precautionary Principle (thanks to the participation of Ocean Care);
- Guidelines for a coordinated stranding response (thanks to the collaboration of WDCCS);
- Guidelines for applying the Precautionary Principle with regard to noise pollution and the ACCOBAMS Agreement (thanks to the participation of Ocean Care);
- Guidelines for a Label for whale watching operators in the PELAGOS / ACCOBAMS area (in collaboration with PELAGOS);
- Guidelines for the establishment and management of Marine Protected Areas for cetaceans (in collaboration with the RAC/SPA).

IX. Promotion of the Agreement within pertinent Intergovernmental Organisations

The Secretariat attended or was represented by experts in several international meetings for some of them on a regular basis:

ASCOBANS, Black Sea Commission Meetings of the Parties and its Advisory Groups, CIESM, GFCM Meeting of the Parties including the Scientific Advisory Committee and Sub Committee of Marine Environment Ecosystems, Mediterranean Action Plan Meeting of the Parties, PELAGOS Meeting of the Parties and its Scientific Committee, RAC/SPA Focal Points Meetings, Strategic Action Plan Advisory Committee Meetings, IWC Meetings in particular the Conservation Committee and the Scientific Committee.

Collaboration with GFCM

In accordance with the recommendations of the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat endeavoured to strengthen coordination and collaboration with the Secretariat of the GFCM. In this context, it attended the relevant technical meetings organised within the framework of GFCM, in particular the meetings of the GFCM's Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and its Subcommittee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE). As results of this participation, the GFCM identified bycatch in cetaceans as one of the main issues to be addressed to mitigate the impact of fishing activities on endangered species. A joint ACCOBAMS-GFCM programme has been started in 2006 to collect data about the extent of cetacean bycatch in the GFCM area.

The Secretariat attended also the Thirty-First Session of GFCM (Rome, 9–12 January 2007), which welcomed the collaboration with ACCOBAMS and decided to include the following activities in the work programme of the SCMEE:

- to integrate the evaluation of the ByCBAMS project to the knowledge of the cetacean population status and assess the impact of different types of pingers on cetacean and fish species
- to extend work on cetaceans-fisheries interactions to other protected/threatened species

The Thirty-First Session of GFCM issued also Recommendation GFCM/31/2007/2 on the PELAGOS Sanctuary for the conservation of marine mammals. The Recommendation requested the GFCM Secretariat to "cooperate with the PELAGOS Secretariat on the exchange of data and each would report to its respective Governing Body".

Collaboration with PELAGOS

Beyond the participation to the institutional PELAGOS Meetings (see paragraph IV), the ACCOBAMS Secretariat ACCOBAMS developed activities in collaboration with the PELAGOS Secretariat regarding the establishment of a joint sighting database with CIESM and the Term of Reference to set up a label for Whale watching operators.

X. Institutional Relations

a) With UNEP:

In accordance with the Resolution 2.2. The Sec signed a LoA with UNEP concerning the relationship between the Sec and UNEP and the use of the UNEP's logo and flag by the ACCOBAMS.

The Secretariat of ACCOBAMS collaborated with the Regional seas Program of UNEP in the development of a project for the Black Sea concerning the Marine Litters. The project is expected to start in November 2007.

b) With CMS:

The ACCOBAMS Secretariat attended several meetings organized by CMS Secretariat (CoP) and in particular meetings aimed at strengthening coordination within the CMS Family. The ACCOBAMS Secretariat participated to CMS Thesis Award 2005. It also contributed as founding member to the 2007 Year of the Dolphin initiative.

In accordance with the MOP2 Recommendation 2.3 the Secretariat, with the help of the Scientific Committee contributed to the process of amending the CMS appendices concerning the inclusion of *Delphinus delphis* in appendix 1 and extending to the whole Mediterranean the coverage of appendix 2 for *Delphinus delphis* and *Stenella coeruleoalba* (CMS COP8)

In 2007 the Chair of the Scientific Committee participated to the CMS/SPREP Regional Meeting on Cetaceans in Samoa (a Pacific Regional Contribution to the CMS YOD campaign) to review/revise the existing SPREP Whale and Dolphin Action Plan.

c) With NGOs and Partners:

During the triennium, many NGOs collaborated with the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS in undertaking activities for the implementation of the Agreement with special focus on public awareness.

More details on the activities of ACCOBAMS Partners are presented in the Document MOP3. Inf 14

The Secretariat received applications from 11 organizations asking to be accepted as Partners. In accordance with the procedure adopted by the Parties for granting the, status of ACCOBAMS Partner, the Secretariat submitted the received application to the last Bureau Meeting. The Bureau approved of them pending the final decision by the Parties.

e) With the Bureau

Since the second Meeting of the Parties, two meetings of the Bureau were organised with the support of the Secretariat. The reports of these meetings appear in the document MOP3. Inf 06.

f) With the Scientific Committee

The Secretariat provided its support for the meetings of the Scientific Committee held in Cairo (may 2005) and in Monaco (November 2006). The reports of these meetings appear in the documents MOP3. Inf 07 and 08.

The Permanent Secretariat expresses all its gratitude to the Governments that supported the work of ACCOBAMS, to the Scientific Committee for his huge involvement and to the ACCOBAMS 'Partners for their fruitful collaboration in the past triennium working programme.

The Permanent Secretariat also warmly thanks the experts and NGOs having contributed to set up the 2005-2007 activities

ANNEX V

REPORT OF THE BUREAU

During the last triennium two Bureau Meetings were held.

In 2005 (1 - 2 December) the Bureau met in Monaco in the premises of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and in 2007 (11 -12 June), the Fourth Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Bureau was convened to take place in Losinj (Croatia) in the premises of the Blue World Institute. This last Meeting even it included the regular Bureau items was also devoted to the preparation of the MOP3.

Both Meetings were attended by the Bureau's members, the Executive Secretary and the Chair of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS.

Mr. Miguel AYMERICH HUYGHUES chaired both Meetings.

Here after a report was prepared for each Meeting (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf06) and the report here after is collecting the main issues.

1. Agreement membership

Currently (August 2007) 21 Countries are Party to ACCOBAMS. Since the last Meeting of the Parties 5 Countries acceded to the Agreement.

The possibilities for non-riparian States to join ACCOBAMS were discussed and the Secretariat was requested by the Bureau to report on alien fleet activities in the Agreement *area*.

2. Amendments to the text of the Agreement

The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the proposals made by Portugal and Tunisia to amend respectively the text and the annex to the Agreement.

Cooperation with the Focal Points: the problems encountered by the Secretariat linked with the lack of feedback from some Focal Points were mentioned. Acknowledging this situation, the Bureau mandated the Secretariat to prepare a profile and Terms of reference for the Focal Points and to solicit Countries to react more and to inform on policy changes.

3. Budgetary matters

The Executive Secretary regularly informed the Bureau on its activities and on the actions implemented.

The non payment of the ordinary contributions was examined. For the last two years some Parties haven't settled their contribution nor did they partially.

The case of Libya which has never paid its contributions was raised.

The Bureau decided:

- to prevent non-paying countries to be part of the Bureau and not to take in charge their representatives within the Scientific Committee;
- that national expenses related to specific activities should also appear among voluntary contributions.
- to recommend to the Secretariat to prepare a portfolio presenting projects to be implemented and waiting for external financial support in order to be taken into account by Parties when the national budget is under preparation.

The Bureau acknowledged the Secretariat to draft contributions proposal for the forthcoming triennium and suggested that the total budget for the triennium be split in order to have the same amount every year.

Concerning the Supplementary Conservation Funds:

Between 2006 and 2007, 4 projects were presented to be granted by these Funds:

- “Project for the assessment of the extent of present cetacean by-catch and stranding in the Romanian Black Sea area” presented by Romania;
- “Training course for Non Governmental Organizations on cetacean research and conservation & Training course for local tourist boat operators on cetacean observations” presented by Blue World Institute;
- “Study of dolphin/fishing net interactions at the level of traditional fisheries in Kerkennah and Kelibia (Tunisia): assessment of damage and economic loss” presented by Tunisia;
- “Pilot project for use of acoustic devices” presented by Morocco.

The Bureau welcomed all these projects. The two last one, presented in 2007 were submitted to applicants to be reviewed before the formal adoption.

4. The Extended Bureau

Following what had been advised by the Second Meeting of the Parties, the Bureau agreed that in the light of the current meeting, it could be envisaged to include the contribution of one or more experts in juridical and/or economical matters, to support the Secretariat in the preparation of the draft resolutions and take part in the meeting of preparation of the MOP.

5. Partners

The Resolution 1.13 on ACCOBAMS Partnership was amended to include information about how the candidate Partner intends to develop its collaboration with ACCOBAMS in the application form and to make it retroactive for former partners.

The Bureau decided that:

- new Partners should submit a program of collaboration to the Secretariat within three months.
- Partners should provide a programme of the activities relevant to the implementation of the Agreement and planned to be carried out in the time frame between the Meeting of the Parties, as well as a final short report on such activities before the Meeting of the Parties;
- the Partner Status should be renewed upon recommendation of the Secretariat and on the basis of the evaluation of the short reports received.
- With respect to the ACCOBAMS logo, the Bureau also decided to recommend Monaco to see for its international registration

Between 2006 and 2007, 9 applications were welcomed by the Bureau:

- Conservation Biology Research Group, University of Malta, represented by Adriana Vella
- Dipartimento di Biologia dell’Università di Genova, represented by Maurizio Würtz
- Groupe de Recherche sur les Cétacés, represented by Alexandre Gannier
- Morigenos – Marine Mammal Research and Conservation Society, represented by Tilen Genov
- Nature Trust, represented by Sarah Muscat
- ALNITAK (Spain), represented by Ana Cañadas,
- OCEANA (Spain), represented by Javier Pastor Garcia,
- Souffleurs d’écume (France), represented by Pascal Mayol,
- WWF Mediterranean Programme Office.

6. Activities of the Scientific Committee.

Dr. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara (Chair of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS) reported on the activity of the Committee. Regarding the collaboration with Ocean Alliance in

2004 as so far ACCOBAMS has not received the results of the campaign, the Bureau agreed to solicit the NGO in giving feedback on the research campaign and providing to the Meeting of the Parties a progress report on the results.

The Bureau acknowledged the priorities stated in Recommendation SC4.13 with regard to activities needing funding and agreed with the Secretariat that external funding should be found.

Some matters of emergency were raised by the Chair of the Scientific Committee:

Driftnets in Mediterranean, still used in spite the ban on them and **Bycatch in the Black Sea and Cetaceans in captivity in the ACCOBAMS area** .

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to prepare a funding request for the ByCBAMS project, to submit to the next MOP a draft Resolution about the control of cetacean captivity in the ACCOBAMS Area and to consult with the CITES Secretariat about international dolphin transfer, especially in the Black Sea

Regarding the Common Dolphin in the Mediterranean Sea, the Bureau mandated the Secretariat to approach the relevant Greek Authorities to assist them in an ad hoc stock assessment, and establishment of a fishery reserve and recovery plan for small pelagic fish stocks in the Kalamos area, with the view of improving the state of Common Dolphin population in the area.

7. 2010 targets

The Bureau agreed in paying special attention to the ACCOBAMS' protected areas programme being prepared in follow-up of Resolution 2.14 "Protected Areas and cetacean conservation" and recommended the Secretariat to work closely with relevant initiatives, especially the Natura 2000 and the SPAMI networks and to provide its assistance to the Parties in achieving the 2010 targets.

ANNEX VI

<p style="text-align: center;">RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE BUREAU OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION ON CETACEANS OF THE BLACK SEA, MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND CONTIGUOUS ATLANTIC AREA</p>

The composition and functions of the Bureau are settled by the Agreement¹. Rules of procedure of the Bureau, acting as Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties, are already stated in the general Rules of procedures of the Meeting of the Parties which will apply *mutatis mutandis* to the meetings of the Bureau.

PURPOSE

Article 1

The Bureau shall:

- a) Provide general policy guidance and operational and financial direction to the Agreement Secretariat and the Sub-Regional Co-ordination Units concerning the implementation and promotion of the Agreement;
- b) Carry out, between sessions of the Meeting of the Parties, such interim activities on its behalf as may be necessary or assigned to it by the Meeting of the Parties; and
- c) Represent the Parties *vis-à-vis* the Government of the Host Country of the Agreement Secretariat and of the Meeting of the Parties, of Depositary and Parties to other international Organizations on matters relating to the Agreement and its Secretariat.

Article 2

Between two Meetings of the Parties, the Bureau meets at least twice. One of these meetings will be held six months before each Meeting of Parties, and will act as a preparatory meeting for the Meeting of Parties.

Article 3

As part of its functions a and b below, the Bureau will be supported at its preparatory meeting for the Meeting of the Parties by a Working Group and will examine:

- The progress made in the activities of the Secretariat and the Sub-regional Coordinating Units
- The proposals made by the Scientific Committee, and
- The drafts of recommendations and resolutions to be submitted to the Meeting of the Parties.

The Working Group will be made up of three experts having extensive experience in social, economical and juridical aspects of conservation and management of marine biodiversity. The three experts will be selected by the Chair in close consultation with the other Bureau members and the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall invite the three selected experts to attend the Bureau Meeting on a voluntary basis, and shall cover their travel and accommodation fees. In order to ensure a balanced regional representatively in the Working Group, the three experts should be selected as follows:

- one from a Northern Mediterranean Party,
- one from a Southern Mediterranean Party and
- one from a Black Sea Party.

¹ See article VI of the Agreement

The nomination of each expert should be endorsed by the National Focal Point of his/her country.

Cumulative function between member of the Scientific Committee and member of the Working Group should be avoided.

The precise dates of the meetings will be set by the President of the Bureau, after consultation with the Secretariat and the other members. The Secretariat informs the members of the date, place and agenda of each meeting and invites them to participate. The Secretariat also informs the members of the Working Group of the date, place and agenda of the meeting of the Bureau preparatory to the Meeting of the Parties, and invites them to participate.

AGENDA

Article 4

The Secretariat shall prepare the provisional agenda of each meeting, in consultation with the Chairman of the Bureau.

RECORDS

Article 5

The Bureau shall provide a report on its activities for each session of the Meeting of the Parties that will be circulated to all Parties in advance of the session by the Agreement Secretariat.

OBSERVER

Article 6

The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee shall be invited to participate as an observer in the meetings of the Bureau.

SECRETARIAT

Article 7

The Agreement Secretariat shall provide secretariat services for the Bureau meetings.

AMENDMENT

Article 8

These rules may be amended as required by the Meeting of the Parties.

ANNEX VII

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara
Chair of the Committee

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- 5. NEXT MEETING**

This report summarises the activities of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS occurred between the Second and the Third Meetings of the Parties to the Agreement. During this period, the Committee met twice (Cairo, 15-17 May 2005; and Monaco, 5-8 November 2006).

To carry out specific actions adopted by the Meetings during the intersession, several working groups were established. The report includes a list of the recommendations adopted, summaries of the outcomes of the meetings, and a brief description of relevant actions (concluded, in progress and proposed). A more detailed description of the activities, as well as the full reports of both meetings, are available on the ACCOBAMS Website at: <http://www.accobams.org/2006.php/meetings/all>

1. Summary of Meetings

Third meeting (Cairo, 15-17 May 2005). The meeting was attended by 27 persons. Of these, nine were members of the Committee, three were experts invited by the Secretariat, two represented, respectively, the Mediterranean/Atlantic and the Black Sea Sub-Regional Coordinating Units, nine were observers, one represented the CMS, and three represented the Secretariat. The members of the Committee included: (a) three Regional Representatives (Myroula Hadjchristoforou, Cyprus; Giancarlo Lauriano, Italy; Gheorghe Radu, Romania); (b) four components of the CIESM Panel of Experts for ACCOBAMS (Alexei Birkun, Jr.; Ana Cañadas; Christophe Guinet; Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara); (c) Representatives from the European Cetacean Society (Simone Panigada) and the World Conservation Union (Randall R. Reeves). Juan Antonio Raga, Regional Representative for the Western Mediterranean and Contiguous Atlantic, Drasko Holčer, CIESM Panel of Experts, and Greg Donovan, Representative of the International Whaling Commission, could not attend and apologised for their absence.

Fourth Meeting (Monaco, 5-8 November 2006). The meeting was attended by 34 persons. Of these, 11 were members of the Committee; 11 were invited experts; five were observers; one represented the Mediterranean/Atlantic Sub-Regional Coordinating Units, and six represented the Secretariat. The members of the Committee included: (a) three Regional Representatives (Myroula Hadjchristoforou, Cyprus; Giancarlo Lauriano, Italy; Gheorghe Radu, Romania); (b) five components of the CIESM Panel of Experts for ACCOBAMS (Alexei Birkun, Jr.; Ana Cañadas; Christophe Guinet; Drasko Holčer; Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara); (c) Representatives from the European Cetacean Society (Simone Panigada), the International Whaling Commission (Greg Donovan) and the World Conservation Union (Randall R. Reeves). Mohammed Nejmeddine Bradai, Regional Representative for the Western Mediterranean and Contiguous Atlantic, could not attend and apologised for his absence.

2. Recommendations adopted

- Conservation of Mediterranean common dolphin (Recommendation SC4.1)
- Use of driftnets in the Mediterranean Sea (Recommendation SC4.2)
- Anthropogenic Noise (Recommendation SC4.3)
- Programme for a comprehensive Survey of the abundance and distribution of cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area (Recommendation SC4.4)
- Black Sea Cetacean Survey (Recommendation SC4.5)
- Black Sea Cetaceans Conservation Plan (Recommendation SC4.6)
- Work on fin whales and ship strikes in the Mediterranean Sea (Recommendation SC4.7)
- Tissue banks (Recommendation SC4.8)
- Marine Protected Areas for cetaceans (Recommendation SC4.9)

- Red List Assessments (Recommendation SC4.10)
- Captive facilities (Recommendation SC4.11)
- Acoustic Harassment Devices (Recommendation SC4.12)
- Minimum funding for the Scientific Committee (Recommendation SC4.13).

3. Issues arising from the Meetings

3.1. Comprehensive population estimates and distribution in the ACCOBAMS area: the “ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative”

The project is seen as a two-stage activity: (a) collect the baseline abundance and distribution data and (b) develop a long-term monitoring programme to track changes in abundance and shifts in distribution of the different species in the agreement area. Work on stock structure will continue in parallel with the baseline survey work. Where possible, the monitoring programme will attempt to utilise existing research programmes throughout the Agreement area waters, i.e. the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea and the Atlantic contiguous waters.

The Scientific Committee agreed to appoint three experts – A. Birkun, A. Cañadas and C. Fortuna – as co-coordinators of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative. In general, Birkun will take the lead in the Black Sea and Cañadas and Fortuna will share the lead in the Mediterranean. The immediate tasks of the co-coordinators were as follows: (a) arrange and carry out informal consultation of the three co-coordinators with Hammond and/or Borchers in St Andrews (UK) during the first half of September 2005, to homogenize methods; (b) organise and conduct a sub-regional training workshop in the Black Sea; (c) Cañadas and Fortuna to consult with national contacts regarding logistical issues in preparation for a workshop in 2006 to refine methodology and study design, resolve logistical issues and discuss the above-mentioned draft.

Preliminary contacts were made with officers of the European Commission in charge of the Habitat Directive and those working on the development of the Life+ system, aiming at evaluating the prospects of obtaining financial support from the EC to the project. EC officers met apparently were interested by the project, especially because they see close links between the project activities and the EU marine strategy. Furthermore, based on contacts made with the Spanish Office of Science and Technologies, funding possibilities could be envisaged in 2008 within the 7th framework programme of the European Community through DG Research. The next step will be to convene a **second workshop** to finalise the project document and to develop strategy for fundraising and for obtaining the support of national authorities. **The Scientific Committee recommended** that the Secretariat, with the help of the involved experts, starts communicating with countries about the project; and to this end (a) prepare a **document** aimed at providing to the countries a short description of the project and clear information about its objectives and the surveying techniques to be used and (b) organise at the occasion of the next MOP a **special event** to formally present to officials of the Parties the survey objectives and methodologies, and seek information from the country representatives on further details about the needed steps and authorisations for carrying out the field work of the survey in the waters under their jurisdiction. The main conclusions of the discussion under this agenda item are reflected in the Recommendation SC4.4.

3.2. Conservation Plans

3.2.1. Mediterranean common dolphins.

The main challenge for its implementation is to establish appropriate links with the fishing sectors and influence the fishery policies. The enforcement of the already existing regulations would solve a good part of the problems faced by the common dolphin in the Mediterranean. Evidence exists that the situation is clearly deteriorating in portions of the Agreement area,

and some priority actions for the conservation of the species were presented. The Scientific Committee while reiterating that the implementation of the Common Dolphin Conservation Plan should proceed as soon as necessary resources can be allocated, decided to proceed according to its previous decision made in Cairo concerning the steps for implementing the Conservation Plan. To this end **the Scientific Committee recommended** that a small **Steering Committee be created immediately** to facilitate the implementation of the priority actions of the plan and to coordinate with the relevant authorities through the Secretariat, also recommending that seed funding be allocated to the experts working to develop such activities. The main conclusions of the discussion under this agenda item are reflected in the Recommendation SC4.1.

3.2.2. Mediterranean bottlenose dolphins.

During its Third Meeting in Cairo, the Scientific Committee recommended that a series of 5-10 regionally defined working groups be established to draft local Action Plans for bottlenose dolphins in their respective areas. The Committee also recommended compiling a list of individuals and teams who are involved in *Tursiops* research and conservation in the Mediterranean region and the contiguous Atlantic area, to be used to **identify regional clusters** as the basis for defining the working groups. A provisional list was elaborated on the basis of published literature and relevant ongoing projects, including 74 scientists from 15 countries. A few sub-regional action plans were presented as examples of small-scale action plans (e.g., the proposal for conservation plan for bottlenose dolphins in Andalusia and Murcia, developed within EC Nature Life Project, including a strategy for funding and the planned next steps to implement the actions of the conservation plan; the Bottlenose Dolphin Conservation Plan in Croatia; two priority actions for the conservation of bottlenose dolphins in Israeli waters, one on the distribution and abundance and one on the interaction between cetaceans and trawling activity). The Scientific Committee welcomed **the Conservation Plan for bottlenose dolphins in Andalusia and Murcia**, noting that it provided an excellent model, and agreed that it should be used as the basis for a process and format for the development of future Action Plans. In order to progress on bottlenose dolphin conservation activities in the Mediterranean region, **the Committee recommended that a small group of experts be formed** to develop a template to enable sub-regional groups of bottlenose dolphin researchers to develop local action plans comprising high priority research and management actions, based on the Andalusia and Murcia experience. The consolidated final document (Mediterranean bottlenose dolphin Action Plan) will be submitted to the Scientific Committee for final review and then sent to the Parties.

3.2.3. Fin whales.

A **workshop** on fin whales in the ACCOBAMS area was held in Monaco (12-13 November 2005) in collaboration with the PELAGOS Sanctuary. The main objectives of the workshop were to review the existing knowledge regarding this species in the Mediterranean, identify feasible scientific and management actions, and provide **a rational background for a Mediterranean fin whale conservation plan**. In spite of the amount of research work done for this species in the Mediterranean, **the Red List meeting** organised in March 2006 was unable to come up with an assessment for the status of fin whale in the Mediterranean due to lack of information on population trends, and had thus proposed that the species be classified as Data Deficient. The workshop recommended to obtain baseline information on the distribution and abundance of fin whales in the ACCOBAMS area and develop a programme to monitor trends in abundance; to develop a central photo-identification database for use as a long-term management and conservation tool; and examine and elucidate Mediterranean fin whale population structure. **The Scientific Committee** welcomed and endorsed the report of the workshop and **recommended to create Coordination Group (CG)** under the auspices of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee. The primary role of the CG is that of prioritisation, encouraging initiatives to take the process forward and the provision of advice. The CG will

work in close contact with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and Parties, the PELAGOS Sanctuary and the IWC Scientific Committee, as well as other relevant experts and research groups in the region.

3.2.4. Black Sea cetaceans

A Conservation Plan for cetaceans in the Black Sea, first presented at the Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee, was also discussed at **a round table organised in Istanbul in 2006** during a Black Sea Science Conference and attended by 20 scientists from the Black Sea countries. The roundtable concluded that some actions need further coordination and identified the following **four high priority actions**: (a) completion of the basin wide survey; (b) establishment of a regional bycatch network; (c) establishment of a stranding network; and (d) establishment of an MPA network. After further discussion the Scientific Committee adopted the conservation plan, and adopted a recommendation (SC4.6) to the Parties to ACCOBAMS and to the Bucharest Convention stressing the importance of timely action to conserve Black Sea cetaceans.

3.3. Strandings

The situation concerning stranding monitoring in the Agreement area seems to be better in the Black Sea, while in the Mediterranean there is clear need of further effort to promote the creation of stranding monitoring networks. **The Scientific Committee** stressed that the stranding monitoring network is an extremely important conservation tool and **recommended that the Secretariat works, in collaboration with the Agreement's Sub Regional Coordinating Units**, on the preparation of a report providing a general picture on the situation in the Mediterranean regarding the cetacean stranding monitoring. The **unusual stranding of four beaked whales (*Ziphius cavirostris*)** on the 26th of January 2006 on the coast of Almeria, Southern Spain, was discussed. The Scientific Committee commended the action, noted that this matter remained unresolved and called on the relevant authorities to continue their investigations and make their findings available in a transparent way. Progress concerning the **MEDACES** database was discussed, and considering the heterogeneity of contributions the Scientific Committee invited the Secretariat to urge the Parties to provide inputs to the MEDACES as part of their obligations towards ACCOBAMS.

Live standings

The First ACCOBAMS rescue workshop, sponsored by WDCS, was held in Monaco in November 2006, with invited experts and other participants from 11 countries covering the Black Sea, Mediterranean and contiguous Atlantic area. A wide range of issues were discussed and a statement – including a series of recommendation and a range of issues that need further consideration – was developed and agreed for submission to the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee. The workshop considered a range of difficult issues including veterinary decision making in the field, response to mass strandings, human health concerns, response to stranded neonates, capacity issues and the very significant differences across the ACCOBAMS region in capacity and approaches, data recording during rescues and sampling, rescue of dolphins from harbours, and ‘friendly’ solitary dolphins. Following the debate on this item **the Scientific Committee** welcomed and endorsed the workshop’s final statement, and **recommended to establish an advisory panel for ACCOBAMS rescue activities and a veterinary group** as suggested by the workshop. It was also expected that such a group would implement the production of a number of **information material** such as a booklet in appropriate languages to promote rescue activities in the region (Information provided should include basic rescue recommendations, human safety concerns and links to local rescue organisations).

3.4. Tissue Banks

The Committee recommended encouraging the tissue bank in Padua to join and support the ACCOBAMS process for tissue bank development. The 3rd Meeting invited the Secretariat to contact the Spanish Authorities and seek their support for the tissue bank in Barcelona. Furthermore, the Committee asked the tissue bank holders (Padua and Barcelona) to prepare a concept paper detailing the conservation importance of tissue banks. In 2006 the Committee discussed a document on Tissue Banks presented by Prof. B. Cozzi (University of Padua), and stressed that tissue banks are an important research and conservation tool which should be ideally be represented in each ACCOBAMS Member State. **A coordinated network should also be established** to link all ACCOBAMS Tissue Banks. It was further remarked the importance of assuring the continuity of tissue banks, which is something that ACCOBAMS can try to obtain from the Parties. With respect to the ownership of samples, the Scientific Committee accepted **the offer of WDSC to prepare a legal analysis** and provide an overview on the issue including the eventual restrictions. Finally, the Committee adopted the guidelines, which include an ethical code.

3.5. Interactions between cetaceans and fisheries

3.5.1. Bycatch, competitive interactions and acoustic deterrent devices

Technological aspects of the issue of pingers were discussed at the 3rd Meeting, with a view of developing common strategies on the competition issue. The Committee stressed the great importance of this issue and recommended doing a survey to assess its extent, using the proposed questionnaire on dolphin/fisheries rivalry throughout the ACCOBAMS area and making further investigations when a hotspot is identified. Subsequently, a series of initiatives were undertaken by the Secretariat to ensure a prompt implementation of a comprehensive project addressing fisheries- related issues, named ByCBAMS.

ByCBAMS is envisaged acting through two main directions: contacting potential donors to secure funding for the project components and encouraging countries to develop small national projects aimed at achieving the project's objectives. In addition, **a fruitful collaboration** was established, in accordance with the Scientific Committee recommendations, **with the GFCM** and in particular with its Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE). The Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry in charge of Fisheries approved a significant financial support for the implementation of the Components 1 to 4 of ByCBAMS. Furthermore, **a joint workshop** was organised by ACCOBAMS and GFCM on bycatch and a questionnaire disseminated to collect data about cetacean–fishery interactions. The Scientific Committee recommended that scientists from the ACCOBAMS area be informed about all relevant scientific meetings in order to facilitate their participation, and that all available material on the conservation status of cetaceans be communicated to SCMEE, particularly as far as the distribution and abundance of species, and reported interactions between cetacean and fisheries are concerned. **The continuation of large-scale use of illegal driftnets** in the Mediterranean was also discussed at length, and the Scientific Committee decided to again draw the attention of the Contracting Parties that the non enforcement of existing regulations on driftnets has a negative impact on the cetacean populations and seriously affects the credibility of ACCOBAMS (Recommendation SC4.2). It also invited the Secretariat to transmit as soon as possible the text of this recommendation to the relevant Ministries and the European Commission.

3.5.2. Prey depletion

A clear demonstration case of cetacean **prey depletion caused by excessive fishing** (i.e., the common dolphins off Western Greece which have declined 25-fold in 9 years in concomitance with the decrease due to fishing of sardines, their main prey item) was discussed by the Committee. Considering the threatened level of the concerned cetacean

species, and the importance of addressing the situation also **in view of developing mitigation measures applicable to different situations**, the Scientific Committee encouraged the Executive Secretary to pursue her collaboration with a number of concerned NGOs **to reach an agreement with the relevant authorities in Greece** that improves the situation of the common dolphin in the Ionian Sea.

3.6. Anthropogenic noise

Draft guidelines to address the issue of the impact of anthropogenic noise on cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area, in response to MoP Resolution 2.16, were presented and discussed. During the debate the Scientific Committee stressed the importance of a number of underlying concepts that need to be taken into account when considering these guidelines (e.g., the seriousness of threats posed by noise to marine wildlife, the need for regulating and reducing underwater noise, and the need for considering noise a quality parameter when assessing habitat quality and in particular MPAs). Concerned by the proliferation of Controlled Exposure Experiments (CEE), the Scientific Committee stressed that those involved in conducting, funding and managing such experiments should strive for international cooperation, coordination and information exchange and where possible joint programmes of work. Avoidance of duplicative or overlapping research will also help to (i) prevent any unnecessary introduction of noise into the marine environment and (ii) achieve optimal scientific and conservation value from CEE. Considering that certain anthropogenic noise can injure and kill some species of cetaceans, notably beaked whales, **the Scientific Committee recommended that information on the distribution and habitat use of Cuvier's beaked whales in the Mediterranean be assessed and communicated to relevant authorities and noise producers** (e.g. national Navies, NATO, seismic exploration companies, permitting authorities, etc) to prevent the use of high intensity noise in potentially high density or highly suitable areas for this species. While noting that the future basin-wide survey will be invaluable to strengthen understanding of Cuvier's beaked whale ecology in large portions of the Agreement area where such knowledge is currently absent, the Committee recommended that a **habitat use modelling exercise** (such as that available for the northern Alborán Sea) be attempted for other parts of the Mediterranean Sea as appropriate using existing datasets. The Committee further agreed that this effort, requiring the collaboration of all researchers holding effort and sighting data in the area, be coordinated by A. Cañadas. The main conclusions and recommendations of the meeting discussion on this agenda item are reflected in the Recommendation 4.3.

3.7. Collisions

In accordance with the decision of the ACCOBAMS Parties, a **workshop** on large whale ship strike in the Mediterranean Sea was held in Monaco (14-15 November 2005) in collaboration with the PELAGOS Sanctuary. The main objectives of the workshop were to synthesize the knowledge of ship strikes of fin, sperm, and other large whales in the Mediterranean Sea; to determine data gaps vital to a more comprehensive assessment of the issue; and to discuss and prioritise mitigation and management measures that might effectively be employed to address the issue. **The Scientific Committee** welcomed and endorsed the report of the workshop and in order to maintain the momentum generated by the initiative, **recommended creating a Coordination Group** to detail and prioritise the research and management recommendations developed during the Workshop.

3.8. Whale watching

The Committee was informed about the monitoring activities carried out by the Secretariat on the status of whale-watching activities within the Agreement area, **in cooperation with the PELAGOS Sanctuary**. This included the preparation of information material for operators, **the definition of an eco-label**, the updating of the ACCOBAMS website, and a census of operators. In addition, the Scientific Committee recommended that the whale watching guidelines currently adopted by ACCOBAMS be kept updated on a regular basis.

3.9. Specially protected areas

An **ad hoc workshop** was held in the morning of Sunday 5 November with the aim of reviewing the draft programme of work on MPAs for cetaceans, and the workshop conclusions – adopted by the Scientific Committee – are summarised in Annex 5 to the Report of the Meeting. The discussion of the matter was framed on the basis of the request from the Parties (Resolution 2.4) to: (a) draft **criteria for the selection of MPAs**, (b) prepare a **special format for MPA proposals**, and (c) gather information on sites that contain important cetacean habitat in the Agreement area. During the discussion on criteria, a special attention was given to the value of the use of **spatial modelling methods** to determine the presence and extent of important habitat for cetaceans on sound scientific bases. A special format provided by the Secretariat was examined and adopted pending a test run of the proposed Alborán Sea SPAMI. Finally, a number of candidate areas were examined and discussed (please see Annex 5 to the Report of the 4th Meeting of the Scientific Committee for details).

3.10. Emergency Task Force

The Scientific Committee agreed that for optimal effectiveness the Emergency Task Force (ETF) should be subdivided in two, having **different expertise requirements**, respectively addressing (a) unusual mortality events including epizootics and atypical mass strandings (e.g. of beaked whales caused by anthropogenic sound), (b) oil or chemical spill affecting cetacean critical habitat, and (c) single individual emergencies: live stranding, net entrapment, entrapment in a bay or harbour. Concerning (a) the Committee recommended hiring a consultant to prepare a **contingency plan**. The Committee also recognized the need that a network be established as well, and that specialized pathologists be trained. With respect to oil or chemical spill it was agreed to pursue the **contacts with REMPEC and Black Sea Commission** in order to define a joint program of work. With respect to single stranding emergencies it was agreed that the matter had already been addressed by the Live Stranding effort (see 3.1 above).

3.11. Databases and directories

The Scientific Committee was informed about the outcome of the meeting held in Monaco in September 2006 in collaboration with CIESM and PELAGOS to investigate ways and modalities to establish a **joint sighting database**. The Scientific Committee underlined that in the establishment of the joint sighting database, only data on sightings coupled with related effort should be included. However, given the existence of historical sighting-only data, the database should entail an option for gathering also this type of information. The need was stressed for the Secretariats of the involved Organisations (ACCOBAMS, PELAGOS Sanctuary and CIESM) to stimulate scientists to participate to this initiative.

3.12. Euroflukes

The Scientific Committee encouraged the optimization between the joint sighting database and Euroflukes. As a follow-up to this, a short meeting was held in concomitance with the

21st Annual Meeting of the European Cetacean Society (San Sebastian, April 2007) to bring the subject forward. Peter Evans (ECS) informed that development of the matching software is practically concluded and that only a limited amount of work is needed to make it operant. Phil Hammond (Univ. of St. Andrews) will inquire into the possibility of having such work done at his institution at no cost before the beginning of Summer 2007. In the mean time, Simone Panigada and Ana Cañadas volunteered to identify and involve field groups working on the same cetacean species and possibly the same populations (e.g., in Slovenia and Croatia with bottlenose dolphins; in Ukraine and Romania with bottlenose dolphins; in Italy, France and Spain with Risso's dolphins) to test run the software on their respective catalogues in search for possible individual matches. This process is intended to kick-start the process in the expectation that a wider sharing of expertise and photo-id databases in the Agreement area.

3.13. Granting of exceptions for the purpose of non-lethal in situ research

The Scientific Committee was presented with draft "Framework guidelines on the granting of exceptions for the purpose of non-lethal in situ research aimed at maintaining a favourable conservation status for cetaceans", prepared by a consultant hired by the Secretariat. The Guidelines are intended to fit the region's specific needs and to help the Committee and permit authorities handle research applications consistently and efficiently. Considering that many participants, while commending the work done by the consultant, expressed concerns as to the complexity of the matter and the strictness of the proposed measures, the Scientific Committee decided to establish a working group that will exchange by e-mail in order to review the technical part of the guidelines. The Secretariat will be in charge of reviewing the administrative part. The final version should be ready by summer 2007 in order to be submitted to the next MOP.

3.14. Release of cetaceans into the wild

The Guidelines on release of cetaceans into the wild, prepared by the WDCS, had been adopted by the Scientific Committee members via e-mail early in 2006. The Scientific Committee welcomed the guidelines, and agreed that the technical annex "**Protocol for the veterinary screening of cetaceans proposed for release**", which was promised by WDCS, will be added after circulation within the Scientific Committee.

3.15. IUCN Red List of cetaceans from the Mediterranean and Black Seas

The Scientific Committee was informed about the report of a **workshop** on the Red List assessments of cetaceans from the ACCOBAMS area, which took place in Monaco in March 2006. Of the **12 cetacean populations assessed in the region, one was proposed as Critically Endangered, five as Endangered and two as Vulnerable**. The other four were considered Data Deficient, since there was no sufficient information to assess their extinction risk. In addition to the assessment of the regular species, the report contains exhaustive information about visitor, vagrant and introduced species in the Agreement Area. The Scientific Committee recommended that the information contained in the report be used to enrich the contents of the ACCOBAMS website.

3.16. Dolphin-Assisted Therapy

The information was brought to the attention of the Scientific Committee concerning the continued trade in cetaceans, some of which possibly originate from the Black Sea, pointing especially to the proposed **capture of 30 bottlenose dolphins in Turkish waters of the Black, Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean Seas**, to be used in activities related to the so-called "Dolphin Assisted Therapy" (DAT). The Scientific Committee expressed concern about the apparent proliferation of such practice, leading to the possible introduction of non-native species/subspecies/populations into the Agreement area, and the risk of disease

transmission resulting from the keeping of white whales and bottlenose dolphins from outside the region in sea pens. The main conclusions of the discussion under this agenda item are reflected in the Recommendation 4.11.

3.17. Cooperation with Focal Points

The Scientific Committee learned from the Secretariat that a questionnaire had been sent to the National Focal Points of ACCOBAMS to collect information on the activities undertaken at national level to implement the Agreement provisions, but that only few replies were received. It was suggested that the ACCOBAMS network of National Focal Points, some of whom are apparently designated with little consideration for their professional preparedness in the field of cetacean research and conservation, be improved in order to secure proper responding on requests of the Secretariat. Concerned about the interest of having such reports since for the most part the Parties are not providing information, the Scientific Committee invited the Secretariat to give further consideration to how improve these reports.

3.18. Amendments to CMS appendices

A draft proposal for the inclusion of individual species in CMS appendices, to be submitted to the upcoming CMS C.o.P. by the Principality of Monaco, was presented and adopted at the 3rd Meeting. The Monaco proposal was subsequently adopted by CMS, resulting with the inclusion of Mediterranean short-beaked common dolphins in Appendix I and short-beaked common, striped and bottlenose dolphins for the whole of the Mediterranean in Appendix II of the Convention.

4. Changes to the Rules of Procedure

A gap existing in the Rules of Procedure regarding the mandate of the Chair between the election of a new Committee by the Parties and its first Meeting was brought to the Committee's attention. The Executive Secretary proposed an amendment to Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure, which was adopted by the Committee.

5. Next meeting

The Fifth Meeting of the Scientific Committee is expected to take place within the first months of 2008, in a location still to be determined.



Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara
Chair

ANNEX VIII

<p style="text-align: center;">REPORT OF THE BLACK SEA SUB-REGIONAL COORDINATION UNIT</p>
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On the implementation of actions for the conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea region under the Memorandum of Cooperation ACCOBAMS/BSC in 2004-2007

Presented by the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission to the 3rd Meeting of Parties of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS)

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Introduction

The report covers predominantly the period between the 2nd and the 3rd Meetings of Parties to ACCOBAMS, from November 2004 to August 2007 inclusive. The report is prepared as per the Memorandum of Cooperation agreed in November 2004 between the Permanent Secretariat of ACCOBAMS and the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission concerning the functioning of the latter Secretariat in the role of ACCOBAMS Sub-Regional Coordinating Unit for the Black Sea (BS/SRCU).

Regarding the need of specific actions in the sub-region, the gaps in the protection and conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea area could be resumed as follows:

1. Slow progress in:
 - Establishment of a regional bycatch network;
 - Establishment of a regional stranding network;
 - Establishment of a regional MPAs network for the conservation of cetaceans. The proposals to designate nationally certain areas as protected and include specific mitigation activities in management plans are still hanging unattended;
 - Organization of cetacean basin-wide survey;
 - Establishment of rescue facilities for wounded or sick animals;
2. Lack of national action plans in several countries;
3. Insufficient level of knowledge on the status of cetacean populations in the area;
4. Need of creating and reinforcing capacity, development of public awareness;

Besides, certain actions were undertaken at the regional level for the protection and conservation of the Black Sea mammals, as described below:

1. The Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol

This Protocol to the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (the Bucharest Convention) was signed by all six Black Sea countries (Sofia, Bulgaria, 2002). Since then, the Protocol was ratified by Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, and during the reporting period by Ukraine (22 February 2007). According to Article 1.1 of the Protocol, its purpose is “to maintain the Black Sea ecosystem in good ecological state and its landscape in favourable conditions, to protect, to preserve and to sustainably manage the biological and landscape diversity of the Black Sea in order to enrich the biological resources”. The Protocol is annexed with Provisional List of Species of Black Sea Importance. All three species of Black Sea cetaceans – the harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena relicta*), the short-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis ponticus*) and the common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus ponticus*) – are included in this list as Endangered (EN) species.

2. The Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea (BS SAP)

The BS SAP was adopted by the Ministers of Environment of Black Sea countries in 1996 and amended in 2002. Some basic measures for the conservation, assessment and monitoring of Black Sea cetacean populations are indicated in paragraph 62 of this document. The 15th Ordinary Meeting of the Black Sea Commission (Istanbul, Turkey, 20-21 November 2006) approved the information concerning the Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans (see item 3 below) and recommended this plan to be taken into consideration in the new edition of the BS SAP document that should be prepared in 2007 and then, in 2008, adopted by the Conference of the Ministers of Environment of Black Sea countries. Furthermore, the 15th BSC Meeting endorsed the Workplan of the BSC Permanent Secretariat for the year 2006/2007. Among other things this document anticipates a series of activities aimed to improve cooperation with ACCOBAMS and to develop the conservation of cetaceans by means of (a) existing protected areas; (b) fundraising for the assessment of abundance and distribution of Black Sea cetaceans; and (c) strengthening the cetaceans stranding networks.

3. The Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans (CP-BSCet)¹

The CP-BSCet was prepared during the reporting period under the auspices of the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat and the BSC Permanent Secretariat. Initial provisions of the CP-BSCet have been formulated in 1996 within two strategic documents adopted by the Contracting Parties of ACCOBAMS (the ACCOBAMS Conservation Plan – Annex 2 to the Agreement) and the Bucharest Convention (the BS SAP).

The first draft CP-BSCet (November 2004) was presented at the 4th Joint Meeting of the BSC Advisory Group on Conservation of Biological Diversity and BSC Advisory Group on Environmental Aspects of Management of Fisheries and Other Living Marine Resources (Istanbul, April 2005). Later on it was reviewed and discussed at the 3rd Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Cairo, Egypt, May 2005) and then improved in accordance to comments provided by members of the Scientific Committee. The second draft CP-BSCet (April 2006) was discussed in detail by participants of the *ad hoc* Round Table on the Conservation of Black Sea Cetaceans (Istanbul, 9 May 2006, see Annex 1). That meeting was organized by the BSC and ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariats within the 1st Biannual Scientific Conference of the BSC. The third version of CP-BSCet (September 2006) was adopted and commended by the 4th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Monaco, November 2006). Special recommendation on the CP-BSCet was produced by this meeting and delivered to the BSC Secretariat. The CP-BSCet and above recommendation were presented at the 15th Ordinary Meeting of the BSC (Istanbul, November 2006). As a result, the CP-BSCet was commended by the meeting; there were no objections or critical comments from the BSC members, observers and guests. Furthermore, participants of the 15th Meeting of the BSC Advisory Group on the Conservation of Biological Diversity (Istanbul, May 2007) were informed about the improved 3rd version of the CP-BSCet; the national experts on the conservation of biodiversity supported the document.

¹ Birkun A., Jr., Cañadas A., Donovan G., Holcer D., Lauriano G., Notarbartolo di Sciara G., Panigada S., Radu G., and van Klaveren M.-C. 2006. Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans. ACCOBAMS, Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area. 50 pp.

Table 1. Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans: Actions and activities of high priority **URG** – activities addressed as a matter of urgency (Istanbul Round Table, 9 May 2006)

Actions	Activities (sub-actions)
1 Broadening the ACCOBAMS scope	(a) promotion of accession of the Russian Federation and Turkey to ACCOBAMS
2 Proper conservation status of cetacean populations	(a) proper listing Black Sea cetaceans in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals (b) providing correct references to the IUCN status of Black Sea cetaceans in relevant international instruments
3 Cetacean conservation approach in fishery regulations	(a) adopting the Black Sea legally binding document for fisheries and conservation of marine living resources
4 Improvement and harmonization of national legislation	(a) improvement of national legislation in respect of international requirements on the conservation of cetaceans
6 Strategy for reducing cetacean bycatches	(a) establishment of a regional bycatch network URG (b) estimation of bycatch levels and temporal and geographical distribution of bycatches (c) evaluation of sustainable bycatch levels for each cetacean species (d) investigation of effects causing by mitigation measures including pingers and acoustically reflective nets (f) developing management objectives for reducing bycatches in the Black Sea region
8 Elimination of live capture of Black Sea cetaceans	(a) improvement of control assigned to eliminate live capture of cetaceans (b) preparation and adoption of national legal acts banning any intentional capture of Black Sea cetaceans
11 Network of existing protected areas eligible for cetaceans	(a) assessment of existing protected areas with regard to their relevance to cetacean conservation (b) developing the regional network of eligible protected areas URG (c) preparation of the network's cetaceans-oriented strategy, action plan and guidelines (d) protected areas involved in the network should restrain human activities potentially harmful for cetaceans
12 Special marine protected areas for cetacean conservation	(a) developing management plans and creating <i>ad hoc</i> marine protection areas in the defined localities
13 Basic cetacean surveys	(a) carrying out region-wide survey and assessment of cetacean abundance, distribution and hot spots URG (b) carrying out cetacean survey in the Turkish Straits System
15 Regional cetacean stranding network	(a) developing the existing national CSNs with their functional fusion into the basin-wide network URG (b) developing a Black Sea regional database of cetacean strandings (c) establishing cetacean tissue bank(s) accumulating samples from stranded and bycaught cetaceans (d) multidisciplinary study of samples collected from stranded and bycaught animals
18 Measures for responding to emergency situations	(a) assessment of emergency situations demanding special response (e.g. rescue-and-release operations) (b) developing guidelines on how to respond to emergency situations affecting Black Sea cetaceans (c) developing regional strategy (contingency plan) and national teams for responding to emergency situations

Finally, the third draft CP-BSCet will be presented to the 3rd Meeting of Parties of the ACCOBAMS (Dubrovnik, Croatia, 22-25 October 2007) for consideration and adoption by the Parties.

All 18 actions proposed in the CP-BSCet are essential for the conservation of Black Sea cetaceans. These actions consist of 57 smaller actions or sub-actions/activities which were prioritized according to their significance (primary and secondary) in their interdependencies. Special attention to the prioritization of the actions was paid at the above mentioned Round Table on the Conservation of Black Sea Cetaceans (Istanbul, 9 May 2006). The actions and sub-actions of primary priority are listed in Table 1 quoted from the CP-BSCet.

4. Scientific Assessment of the State of Cetacean Populations in the Black Sea.

The IUCN/ACCOBAMS Workshop on the Red List Assessment of Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area (Monaco, March 2006)² assessed the conservation status of Black Sea populations of the harbour porpoise, common dolphin and bottlenose dolphin as Endangered (EN) and confirmed their belonging to the Black Sea subspecies *Phocoena phocoena relicta* Abel, 1905; *Delphinus delphis ponticus* Barabasch-Nikiforov, 1935; and *Tursiops truncatus ponticus* Barabasch, 1940.

Some basic tasks of the assessment and monitoring of the Black Sea cetacean populations on national and Black Sea regional levels were discussed at several meetings of the BSC Advisory Groups. In particular, during their 4th Joint Meeting the Advisory Groups on Conservation of Biological Diversity and on Environmental Aspects of Management of Fisheries and Other Living Marine Resources (Istanbul, April 2005) considered the following issues in the meeting agenda:

- Resolutions of the 2nd meeting of ACCOBAMS Contracting Parties (Palma de Mallorca, 9-12 November 2004) and relevant items of the ACCOBAMS Work Plan;
- Results of cetacean assessment in Georgia (cooperative effort between Ukraine, Georgia and Russia);
- Presentation of proposed methodology and working programme for assessment of abundance and distribution of Black Sea cetaceans;
- Towards regional assessment of Black Sea cetaceans: discussion on methodology and preparation of a workshop;
- Analysis of national reporting on cetaceans and discussion on its further improvement;
- Updating the BS SAP: cetaceans.

Several review talks on the research and conservation of Black Sea cetaceans were presented at the 1st Biannual Scientific Conference of the Black Sea Commission (Istanbul, 8-10 May 2006).

At the 11th Meeting of the Advisory Group on Conservation of Biodiversity (Istanbul, May 2007) there was a discussion concerning the presentation on “Present state and prospects of research and conservation of Black Sea marine mammals according to the BS SAP and ACCOBAMS”. The lecturer (A.Birkun, he represented ACCOBAMS at the meeting) gave overview of studies on Black Sea cetacean taxonomy and population structure, range and primary habitats, population estimates, threats, IUCN status, and the Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans.

² Reeves R., Notarbartolo di Sciara G. (eds). 2006. The status and distribution of cetaceans in the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea. IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, Malaga, Spain. 137 pp.

The BSC State of Environment Report (SOE 2007) is currently under preparation. Scientific assessment of the state of Black Sea cetacean populations and development of relevant conservation measures are included in the report as a special chapter.

5. Black Sea Survey for Basin-wide Assessment of Cetaceans Abundance, Distribution and Human-made Threats (BLASSCET project).

Two meetings, organized and hosted by the BSC Permanent Secretariat and convened with participation of international experts and interested researchers from the Black Sea countries, considered methodological and logistical aspects of the project-proposal for Black Sea basin-wide cetacean survey:

- the 4th Joint Meeting of the BSC Advisory Group on Conservation of Biological Diversity and BSC Advisory Group on Environmental Aspects of Management of Fisheries and Other Living Marine Resources (Istanbul, 6 April 2005); and
- the Workshop on Cetaceans Surveying in the Black Sea (Istanbul, 17-18 October 2005, see Annex 2).

The main objective of the latter workshop was to involve Black Sea researchers in the development of ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative, particularly, in its Black Sea component promoted by the BSC Secretariat. The participants supported the general idea of Black Sea basin-wide cetacean survey and outlined practical steps towards its preparation. Regarding the methodology, it was suggested to combine aerial survey beyond the bounds of territorial waters with a vessel-based survey within territorial sea of the Black Sea states. The workshop recommended, as an immediate task, to draft the project proposal for its further circulation, approval and submission by the BSC Secretariat to potential donors for financing. The Workshop appointed Alexei Birkun as a coordinator of this project, whereas Konstantin Mikhailov (Bulgaria), Irakli Goradze (Georgia), Gheorghe Radu (Romania), Dmitriy Glazov (Russia), Ayaka Öztürk (Turkey) and Sergey Krivokhizhin (Ukraine) were selected as national responsible/contact persons.

The earliest version of the BLASSCET project proposal was submitted to the BSC Secretariat in November 2005 and distributed among experts in December 2005. It was supported by specialists in general and a series of valuable comments was offered regarding the improvement of this document. The Round table on the Conservation of the Black Sea Cetaceans (Istanbul, May 2006) agreed on the ranking of the proposed basin-wide survey as an action of highest priority and urgency requiring coordinated effort of states and full institutional support (*i.e.*, the BSC and ACCOBAMS Secretariats, and the concerned individual Governments).

The required budget of the project was estimated at €248,000. For the purpose of fund raising, the project proposal was submitted to the UNEP Regional Seas Programme, UNDP/GEF Europe and CIS Regional Centre, Humane Society, WWF-Russia, IFAW-Russia and some business entities. However, before March 2006 only \$40,000-50,000 were promised by one Russian company and \$10,000 were allocated by the UNEP Regional Seas Programme. No other funds have been committed until now (August 2007).

In 2006 the BSC Secretariat expressed an idea to apply to some European governments for financial and technical assistance of the aerial component of the Black Sea cetacean survey (€47,000). This idea was based on the fact that Denmark, France and Germany possess adequate aircraft fleets along with high skilled pilots which were involved in SCANS-II cetacean survey in the north-eastern Atlantic (2005). The application document was prepared and submitted in summer 2006 to the Danish Government through the Danish Consulate in

Istanbul. Besides, the BSC Secretariat started consultation process with responsible members of the Black Sea Commission regarding the Black Sea cetacean survey and its possible co-financing by the Black Sea states.

In October 2006 the BLASSCET project proposal was updated again at the request of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat. The state of development of the project was considered at the 4th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Monaco, 5-8 November 2006); consequently, special recommendation on this initiative was produced by the Scientific Committee and delivered to the BSC Secretariat. The 15th Ordinary Meeting of the BSC (Istanbul, 20-21 November 2006) was informed about difficulties on the way of fund raising. The fund rising “for the assessment of the abundance and distribution of Black Sea cetaceans” was included in the Workplan of the BSC Permanent Secretariat for the year 2006/2007.

6. Cetaceans Stranding Networks.

Quantitative criteria for the evaluation of cetaceans’ mass mortality events were prepared in June 2006 by Ukrainian specialists at the request of the BSC Secretariat. In September 2006, a letter on National Strandings Networks in the Black Sea was signed by the Executive Secretary of ACCOBAMS and the Executive Director of the BSC Secretariat. The letter, with two enclosures (the Questionnaire on Cetaceans Stranding Network and the Questionnaire on National Legislations Concerning Cetaceans Protection in the Riparian Countries of the Agreement Area; both questionnaires were prepared in collaboration with the Regional Activity Center for Specially Protected Areas in the Mediterranean, RAC/SPA), was sent to competent experts in the six Black Sea countries. Later on the completed questionnaires were submitted to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and analysed in the document³ presented at the 4th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Monaco, 5-8 November 2006). The report on the State of Development of Cetaceans Stranding Networks in the Black Sea Region is presented also for consideration to the Parties of ACCOBAMS (MoP3, Dubrovnik, 22-25 October 2007).

7. Marine and Coastal Protected Areas.

The Workshop on Black Sea Protected Areas Eligible for the Conservation and Monitoring of Marine Mammals (Istanbul, 14-15 December 2006, see Annex 3), organized by the BSC Permanent Secretariat and supported by the UNEP Regional Seas Coordinating Office, produced a list of eligible protected areas which seemed to be the most appropriate to implement relevant activities and can constitute a frame for development of respective Black Sea network. The participants considered and recommended common methodological approach to the monitoring of Black Sea cetaceans and set up a working group for drafting the network’s strategy and guidelines.

³ Birkun A., Jr., Mikhailov K., Goradze I., Dumitrache C., Glazov D., Öztürk B., Krivokhizhin S. 2006. Cetacean stranding networks in the Black Sea region: the state of development. 4th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Monaco, 5-8 November 2006), SC4/Inf5, 21pp. (unpubl.).

8. Black Sea Information System (BSIS)

The BSIS is maintained by the BSC Permanent Secretariat and it includes a dataset on marine mammals – cetaceans and the Mediterranean monk seal. The idea of this dataset is to collect annual data from each Black Sea country on cetacean sightings, bycatches, strandings, abundance and also national information on strategies/action plans/programmes, research and conservation projects, relevant governmental bodies and institutions, public awareness and educational campaigns, and bibliography on marine mammals.

The BSC Secretariat recognizes the need to develop further the BS information system and improve the reporting methodology for regular and standardized replenishment of the database. Therefore, new format of annual national report on sighted, stranded and bycaught animals was elaborated at the request of the BSC Secretariat by A.Birkun. The format was basically supported by the 3rd Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Cairo, May 2005) and then refined in compliance with comments kindly provided by Dr. Reeves (IUCN/SSC Cetacean Specialist Group). It was presented as an information document at the Meeting on the Establishment of a Joint ACCOBAMS-CIESM-PELAGOS Cetacean Sighting Database (Monaco, 5 September 2006).

ANNEX 1

1st Biannual Scientific Conference BLACK SEA ECOSYSTEM 2005 AND BEYOND

Round table on the conservation of the Black Sea Cetaceans Istanbul, 9 May 2006

Excerpts from the Minutes of the Meeting

The main purpose of the meeting was to set priorities (concrete actions) among the actions proposed in the draft Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans⁴.

After providing background info about the plan, the six objectives were presented:

1. Consolidation of the international and national legal system.
2. Assessment of human/cetacean interactions.
3. Habitat protection.
4. Research and Monitoring.
5. Capacity building, information collection and dissemination.
6. Response to emergency situations.

Eighteen actions are proposed to meet these objectives, with 56 sub-actions. The proposed time span for implementation is 2006-2010.

In the course of the presentation the chair⁵ proposed that the overview of each objective and prioritization of the actions within each objective would make it more efficient for the follow-up discussions.

Round Table Discussion

Actions 11-12 (Marine protected areas)

The chair stated that the establishment of protected areas must be considered when they may clearly solve specific conservation problems deriving to cetacean populations from specific human activities. The following procedure was proposed: (a) identify the areas that contain cetacean critical habitat; (b) assess the presence of specific threats to those habitats, and whether the establishment of an MPA could address such threats effectively; (c) designate the area and include specific mitigation activities in management plan. It was agreed that in the imminence of performing a basin-wide cetacean survey (Action 13), it would be sensible to wait for the results of the survey before a comprehensive set of proposals for MPAs could be made.

In the mean time, it was agreed that criteria should be elaborated for the establishment of protected areas for cetaceans.

Goradze [Georgia] presented a comment/example on harbour porpoises. Often the solution lays in following and/or enforcing existing regulations. In some cases problems can be solved

⁴ Birkun A., Jr., Cañadas A., Donovan G., Holcer D., Lauriano G., Notarbartolo di Sciara G., Panigada S., Radu G., and van Klaveren M.-C. 2006. Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans, 2nd draft. ACCOBAMS, Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area. 43 pp.

⁵ Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee.

through the establishment of certain rules or restrictions of human activities in the areas where no protected status can be established.

Summary: Results of survey will recommend the possibilities and feasibility of establishment of MPAs in different countries. It seems reasonable to develop regional network of existing PAs eligible for cetacean monitoring and conservation.

Recommendations

In conclusion the meeting agreed that the Plan proposed was excellent, and that all the actions proposed should be pursued. Many such actions, which can be undertaken at the level of single institutions, organizations and even single individuals, should be implemented as soon as possible whenever the appropriate resources are located and conditions exist.

However, other actions requiring coordinated effort among nations and full institutional support (i.e., the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, the Black Sea Commission and the concerned individual Governments) should be addressed as a matter of urgency, and completed within the next five years.

These actions include:

- **Completion of a basin-wide survey (possibly before the end of 2007);**
- **Establishment of a regional bycatch network, in tight connection with the:**
- **Establishment of a regional stranding network;**
- **Establishment of a marine protected areas network.**

ANNEX 2

Workshop on Cetaceans Surveying in the Black Sea, 17 -18 October 2005

Concept and AGENDA

Excerpts from the Minutes of the Meeting

Background

Following the Work Programme of the Black Sea Commission, the 4th Joint Meeting of the Advisory Group on Conservation of Biological Diversity and Advisory Group on Environmental Aspects of Management of Fisheries and Other Marine Living Resources (Istanbul, 6 April 2005) considered and approved the Outline of methodology and working programme for region-wide assessment of abundance and distribution of cetaceans in the Black Sea (Annex 1). The same document was presented at the 3rd Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Cairo, 15-17 May 2005). The meeting welcomed the Black Sea assessment initiative and noted that the experience of the Black Sea survey should be integrated within preparing and implementing the ACCOBAMS cetaceans survey (see SC3 Report, page 4). The Scientific Committee agreed to appoint Birkun, Cañadas and Fortuna as coordinators of the ACCOBAMS survey initiative: Birkun should take the lead in the Black Sea and Cañadas and C.Fortuna will share the lead in the Mediterranean. Among immediate tasks of the coordinators were stated two for 2005:

- (a) arrange and carry out informal consultation of the three coordinators with the SCANS-2 specialists, Hammond and/or Borchers, in St Andrews (UK) during the first half of September, to homogenize the methodology; and
- (b) organize and conduct a (sub)regional workshop on cetaceans surveying in the Black Sea in late September or October. One goal of the workshop should be training, “so it will be crucial to have at least one expert on survey methodology present (e.g. Borchers, Bart, Hammond or Donovan)” (SC3 Report, page 4).

Objectives of the workshop:

- to review the information on proposed methodology and drafted outline of the Black Sea cetaceans survey;
- to draw up preliminary survey scheme including its research and logistics blocks;
- to examine spatial and seasonal options and the implications for human, technical and funding resources;
- to discuss the assumed difficulties and obstacles;
- to provide Black Sea participants with new knowledge on surveying techniques used within SCANS projects conducted in the NE Atlantic (training component of the workshop).

Agenda

1. Introductory items (opening of the meeting, election of conveyor, appointment of reporters, distribution of available documents).
2. Information on the ACCOBAMS survey initiative and its links with its pilot component, the Black Sea survey.
3. Review of local cetacean surveys conducted in different parts of the Black Sea in recent years.
4. Overview of methodology and research techniques used within SCANS projects conducted in the NE Atlantic.

5. Examination of the proposed methodology and outline of the Black Sea survey.
6. Draft preparation of survey scheme for the Black Sea and preliminary proposal including rough budget.
7. Discussion on technical details of the Black Sea survey and evaluation of necessary resources.
8. Potential collaborators.
9. Possible pitfalls and obstacles, potential options for solutions.
10. Future steps to develop final proposal.
11. Other.
12. Adoption of the report.

ANNEX 3

WORKSHOP ON THE BLACK SEA PROTECTED AREAS ELIGIBLE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MONITORING OF MARINE MAMMALS

Istanbul, Turkey, 14-15 December 2006

REPORT

Introduction

Workshop on the Black Sea Protected Areas Eligible for the Conservation and Monitoring of Marine Mammals has been held under the UNEP and BSC MOU with main objective to establish a network of existing protected areas eligible for conservation and monitoring of marine mammals. The main objectives of the workshop were as follow:

- inventorize existing Black Sea coastal and marine PAs with regard to the presence of marine mammal habitats, including hot spots, within their boundaries;
- assess the eligibility of existing PAs for the purposes of monitoring and conservation of marine mammals;
- set up a regional network of eligible PAs represented mainly (but probably not only) by biosphere reserves, nature reserves and national parks;
- draw up common aims, objectives and co-operation/co-ordination outline of the network;
- set up common methodology of marine mammal monitoring by PAs-members of the network. The methodology should be based primarily on suitable data recording/reporting schemes of marine mammal sightings (live animals) and strandings (live and dead animals);
- set up a working group responsible for drafting the network's strategy, action plan and guidelines on marine mammal monitoring, conservation and management activities.

The meeting was attended by representatives of Black Sea countries national authorities responsible for conservation of the Black Sea mammals (1 per country) and representatives of coastal protected areas (1 per country) that could form a core group for the future networking. Dr. Alexei Birkun facilitated the meeting and presented ACCOBAMS during the meeting.

1. The Workshop was welcomed by the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission. It was clearly express the importance of involving the personnel of the existing coastal protected areas that have marine components in practical work on conservation and monitoring of marine mammals.

2. Dr. A. Birkun made an introductory presentation about Role of marine and coastal Protected Areas in the conservation of Black Sea marine mammals. The basic concepts, goals and tasks of the Draft Conservation Plan for the Black Sea Cetaceans prepared by ACCOBAMS and adopted by the Back Sea Commission for national negotiations include also the (Action 11) the task on consolidation of the existing coastal and marine protected areas as a network that network should be focused on, prepared for and involved in the conservation and monitoring of Black Sea cetaceans. Several activities are proposed to achieve above target:

(a) regional assessment of existing coastal and marine protected areas with regard to the presence of cetacean habitats within their boundaries and their relevance to cetacean conservation. Basic data on the distribution and abundance of dolphins and porpoises could be helpful for evaluation of those protected areas which are fit for setting into cetacean monitoring activities;

- (b) developing the regional network of eligible protected areas represented mainly by biosphere reserves, nature reserves and national parks. It is essential to ensure that sufficient awareness exists among the operating staff concerning cetacean monitoring and conservation. The relationship with existing cetacean stranding networks and rescue teams could be helpful;
- (c) preparation of the network's cetaceans-oriented strategy and action plan as well as guidelines on cetacean monitoring, conservation and management procedures. The documents should be agreed by members of the network and secured on proper provisions for their implementation. Training of specialists, unconstrained exchange of information and competent co-ordination of the network should be envisaged;
- (d) marine protected areas involved in the network should restrain within their boundaries any human activities potentially harmful for cetaceans.

Recognized the importance of marine protected areas for conservation of the Black Sea marine mammals and recommend to BSC to consider the possibility for proper reflection of this topic in the updated BSSAP

3. Review of marine mammals' related activities in existing Black Sea Protected Areas (presentations by participants from different Protected Areas)

Every country presented the existing coastal and marine protected areas and the type of work that is being conducted in the protected areas with cetaceans.

Bulgaria – based their marine coastal and marine protected areas based on the NATURA 2000 sites

Georgia – presented their activities and recent studies of dolphins in the Black Sea

Romania – presented the operation and arrangement of the marine protected area in Vama Veche; similar to Bulgaria based their coastal and marine protected areas on the NATURA 2000 sites.

Russian Federation – was not presented at the workshops however the work done in Russian territorial waters was presented by Dr. Alexei Birkun

Turkey – has very limited aquatic area in mostly in mouths of rivers where (only 4 protected areas reported for Turkey)

Ukraine – presented developed network of protected areas and studies conducted in the Black Sea.

After discussion it was decided that the participants shall prepare short information on conservation of cetaceans in the coastal and marine protected areas in written form by end January 2007.

4. Discussion regarding the inventory of Black Sea Protected Areas and their eligibility for the purposes of monitoring and conservation of marine mammals

Dr. Birkun made presentation and a proposal for eligibility of existing protected areas for the network. The Protected areas as reported to the Black Sea Commission were analyzed and considered for their eligibility for networking. The participants discussed eligibility criteria and agreed that following criteria shall apply for Protected areas eligible for conservation and monitoring of marine mammals shall:

- have marine part
- have/observe marine mammals in this area
- constitute critical habitats for marine mammals in this area: breeding, calving, feeding and migratory routes
- have status of protected area
- have/develop institutional capacity for monitoring of marine mammals

Based on the above criteria the following protected areas were considered from the vast list of the protected areas reported to the Black Sea Commission:

State	Region
BG	Kaliakra
BG	Koketrajs
GE	Kolkheti National Park
RO	Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve
RO	Vama Veche - 2 Mai Reserve
RU	Sochi National park
TR	Igneada
TR	Kizilirmak Delta
TR	Yaşilirmak Delta
TR	Sarikum Protected area
UA	Dunaiski Biosphere Reserve
UA	Black Sea Biosphere Reserve
UA	Cape Martyan Nature Reserve
UA	Karadagsky Nature Reserve
UA	Opuksky Nature Reserve
UA	Kazantipsky Nature Reserve
UA	Azovo-Sivashsky National Nature Park
UA	Crimea Nature Reserve (Swan Islands branch)
UA	Meotida Landscape Park

5. List of eligible Protected Areas – potential members of the network

The proposed candidate PA for the network shall be updated based on the following questionnaire discussed and agreed by participants:

Questions to the Black Sea Protected Areas Eligible for the Conservation and Monitoring of Marine Mammals:

1. Full name of your protected area
2. Does your PA possess maritime area(s) within its boundaries?
3. How large is the marine part of PA (km²)?
4. Brief geographical description and depth limits of the maritime area(s)?
5. Do marine mammals visit (or stay permanently) in the maritime area(s)?
6. Which species?
7. Do you have any monitoring activities/observations for the marine mammals in your protected areas (how often and how many if you know)
8. Have you seen/record any dead or stranded marine mammals
9. Do you have any staff working in this area
10. Do you have PA management plan and is conservation of marine mammals a part of this plan?
11. Is your PA interested to join the Black Sea Network of PAs eligible for the conservation and monitoring of marine mammals?

12. Would you like to participate in training for monitoring and conservation of the marine mammals in the Black Sea?

It was requested from the Permanent Secretariat to disseminate this questionnaire to the authorities of candidate eligible protected areas following the procedures and network of the Black Sea Commission; it was also proposed to send such questionnaire by the end of February (tentatively).

In addition to the proposed list the following area were proposed to investigate/prepare for the future protected areas to be established in the Black Sea:

State	PMA's	For conservation	Status
BG	Natura 2000 12 Sites		
GE	Cape Anaklia — Turkish Border	Cetaceans	clarify
GE	Supsa		special status?
GE	Chorokhi		proposed by scientists and RAMSAR advisory mission
RO	Cape Tuzla		Natura 2000
RO	Marine Structure from DD		proposed by scientists
RU	Utrish	Cetaceans	to be consulted
RU	Taman Bay	Cetaceans	proposed by scientists
TR	Cide	monk seal and cetaceans	proposed by scientists
TR	PreBosphorus	Cetaceans	proposed by scientists
UA	Cape Aya — Cape Fiolent	Cetaceans	proposed by scientists
UA	Kerch Strait	Cetaceans	proposed by scientists
UA	Tarkhankut national park	Cetaceans	proposed by scientists

These additional areas shall be consulted /proposed to the Black Sea Commission at the national level and advised to be considered for the updated BSSAP.

7. Developing goals, objectives and outline of co-operation/co-ordination structure of the network

After active discussion of the objectives/cooperation in creating the network of the protected areas eligible for conservation and monitoring of marine mammals the participants agreed that overall goal shall be: to conserve and sustain a viable population of marine mammals in the Black Sea.

In order to elaborate a mechanism for such network the workshop decided on the necessary steps to be undertaken:

1. setting up the working group
2. allocating working space for the network on the BSC website
3. elaborated an action plan for setting the protected area network, eligible for conservation and monitoring of cetaceans by end of April, 2007 (tentative)

8. Proposals on common methodology of marine mammal monitoring by Protected Areas-members of the network (presentation based on the proposed format for annual report on sighted, stranded and by-caught marine mammals)

Dr. Birkun presented methodology used in Ukraine for operation a network existing in Ukraine and corresponding database developed for sighting /stranding and by-catch of the marine mammals as well as a brochure prepared in Ukraine Birkun A., Jr. 2006. Dolphins at sea and on the beach: Legal grounds for the monitoring and conservation. Brema Laboratory, Simferopol, 60 pp. (In Russian). This is a guide for members of the Ukrainian network for cetaceans monitoring and conservation. It was prepared within the NNCC-project (2005) supported by the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and British Council–Ukraine.

The participants appreciated presented approach and recommended to prepare similar documents to become available for all Black Sea Coastal states.

9. Discussion regarding the proposed methodology (specification of data recording and reporting schemes)

After presentation of the database prepared for the Ukrainian network the participants recommended to open the access to this database for all candidate protected areas and use it as a prototype for the network purposes. The concerns about copyrights were cleared by suggesting protection of data by password for the concerned parties. It was advised to the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission to seek small assistance funds for translating and adapting the database into English for the whole the Black Sea.

10. Setting up a working group for drafting the network’s strategy, action plan and guidelines

The need for drafting network strategy, action plan and guidelines was discussed and Dr. Birkun was requested to prepare a full listing of necessary technical guidelines including A Handbook of Guidelines on collecting, recording and monitoring of marine mammals sighting, stranding, and by-catch; documents prepared by ACCOBAMS for adaptation for the Black Sea ACCOBAMS on release; rescue in live stranding, etc.

Working Group on Drafting network strategy, action plan and guidelines:

Dr. Alexei Birkun, Chair	Ukraine
Dr. Gradimir Gradev	Bulgaria
Dr. Violin Raykov	Bulgaria
Dr. Irakli Goradze	Georgia
Dr. G. Radu	Romania
Dr. Ayaka Ozturk	Turkey
Dr. Dmitry Glazov	Russian Federation - to be consulted

11. Any other business: The Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission informed the participants that mapping of habitats for fish species (Annex 4, Black Sea Biodiversity Conservation and Landscape Protocol) mapping of habitats PS shall send a draft TOR prepared for fisheries to the Group for mapping is conducted under the Project. The TORS for this exercise shall be sent by the Permanent Secretariat to the participants as an example and the need for mapping of habitats of marine mammals shall be considered for future activities. It was again requested from the Permanent Secretariat to activate the fundraising campaign for the project proposal on Black Sea Survey for Basin–wide Assessment of Cetacean Abundance, Distribution and Human–made Threats (BLASSCET project).

Optimistic news came from Ukraine demonstrating the picture of *Monachus Monachus* sighting near Crimea peninsula, species that was considered extinct in the Black Sea.

"The Mediterranean monk seal in the northern Black Sea (photo by Victor and Elena Zinko, Ukraine, May 2005)" (please observe copyrights when cited)



Closure of the meeting. The Participants extended special appreciation to UNEP and ACCOBAMS for the support of the very needed and timely organised workshop and expressed their hope that the active involvement of the staff of protected areas in the conservation and monitoring of marine mammals will contribute to the proper conservation and monitoring of the Marine Mammals in the Black Sea.

.....
**Name and title of responsible official from Implementing Partner: on behalf of the BSC
PS Dr. Violeta Velikova, PMA Officer of the BSC PS**

Signature:



Date: 27.08.2007

ANNEX IX

REPORT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SUB-REGIONAL COORDINATION UNIT

The present report was drafted by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) to inform the Focal Points for ACCOBAMS at their Third Meeting (Dubrovnik, Croatia 22-25 October 2007) about the activities in the field of cetacean conservation carried out by RAC/SPA since their Second Meeting (Palma de Majorque, Spain, 9-12 November 2004).

The most undertaken actions concerned mainly those agreed on the joint work programme as appended to the Memorandum of Cooperation signed in June 2005 with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat:

- (i) Organising a scientific seminar on cetaceans in the countries of the southern Mediterranean; this took place from 9-11 March 2006 in Bizerta, Tunisia, in collaboration with the National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies (INSTM) and the Higher Institute of Fishing and Aquaculture (ISPA). Enhancing the forum of exchange between specialists from the southern Mediterranean, this seminar enabled stock to be taken of the state of knowledge on cetaceans in the region, and the requirements of countries for implementing conservation measures and assessing the interactions of these animals with fishing activities
- (ii) Updating the directory of organisations and experts dealing with marine mammal species in the ACCOBAMS area. This directory is available to countries via the Mediterranean CHM (Clearing House Mechanism) and/or RAC/SPA's website, www.rac-spa.org
- (iii) Circulating a questionnaire on fishing-cetacean interaction, the results of which were presented at a joint ACCOBAMS-CGPM workshop on accidental catch, in Rome on 12 September 2006
- (iv) Participating in bringing out an educational kit on cetaceans.
- (v) Participating in setting up a clearing house mechanism for exchange on cetaceans (CHM Cetaceans), a preliminary version is available for downloading at <http://medbiodivchm.rac-spa.org>

RAC/SPA also contributed to the 4th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Monaco, 5-9 November 2006) by giving assistance to the Secretariat. On this occasion, two reports were presented:

- A progress report on the Mediterranean Database on Cetacean Stranding (MEDACES) (<http://medaces.uv.es>), drawn up for RAC/SPA by the University of Valencia (Spain) with the support of the Spanish Ministry of the Environment.
- A report on national cetacean stranding networks, prepared on the basis of questionnaires filled in by the ACCOBAMS and RAC/SPA National Focal Points.

With regard to the small amount of information included in the MEDACES database.

- Data input from the Mediterranean national institutions was promoted by RAC/SPA and data from Greece (Arion Organisation), Turkey (TUDAV) and Tunisia (INSTM) were integrated through the elaboration of memoranda of understanding.

- ACCOBAMS and RAC/SPA asked their Contracting Parties to make these inventorying actions an integral part of their obligations towards the SPA/BD Protocol and the ACCOBAMS Agreement.
- The illustrated guidelines on developing cetacean stranding networks were printed and distributed in collaboration with ACCOBAMS.

With regards to the development of marine protected areas for cetaceans conservation, the Focal Points for SPAs and those of ACCOBAMS were invited to work with the two Secretariats to: (i) extend, if necessary, the idea of protecting cetaceans to already existing protected areas, (ii) identify sites, particularly in the open sea, containing habitats that are important for cetaceans, and (iii) implement all the necessary measures for protecting cetaceans.

In this context and following the recommendation of the fourth meeting of the contracting Parties to Barcelona Convention (Portoroz, 2005) “*To collaborate with ACCOBAMS, and in particular with its scientific committee, for the establishment of specially protected areas for the conservation of cetaceans*”, RAC/SPA prepared draft guidelines on creating and managing Marine Protected Areas for cetaceans. The document was prepared from reflections initiated by ACCOBAMS as part of its work programme on Marine Protected Areas, as presented at the Fourth Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Monaco, 5-9 November 2006). This in particular includes criteria for selecting specially protected areas, a special form for proposing such areas drawn up using the annotated form for inclusion on the SPAMI List, and a set of information on sites containing habitats that are important for cetaceans in the zone of the ACCOBAMS Agreement. The guidelines mainly consist of two parts, which correspond to the two phases of the process: (a) selection and creation of MPAs, and (b) management of MPAs. The document presented as working document (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.308/8) was approved by the eighth SPA focal Points Meeting (Palerme, 4-8 June 2007) and is submitting for adoption by the next meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

Alongside these activities, RAC/SPA participated in organising the Sixth European Conference on Marine Mammals (11-15 September 2006), with the Menendez Pelayo International University and the University of Valencia, and sponsored the participation of two Mediterranean experts.

Support has been granted to the Tethys organization, which jointly with local institutions, several universities (Thessaloniki, Padua, Barcelona, and Vancouver) and cetacean conservation NGOs have carried out a study on the Amvrakikos Lagoon dolphin community (Greece).

This study provided the following information:

- Data on the Amvrakikos Lagoon dolphin community collected over the period 2002-2006, particularly the first information on local dolphin communities, its movements, its social organisation, its reproduction and its interactions with fishing activities
- Damage and destruction due to fishing gear evaluated in 2005 through field observations and interviews with fishermen,

It has proved to be the densest known population of *Tursiops truncatus* remaining in the Mediterranean.

It should be reminded that RAC/SPA supported the setting up of the national network for cetaceans stranding in Tunisia and the elaboration of the National Action Plan for the cetacean conservation in Libya, which was approved by the Libyan authority in 2006.

Within the framework of the celebration of the “Year of the dolphin, 2007” event coordinated by the convention on Migratory Species CMS and the two agreements for the conservation of cetaceans, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS, RAC/SPA has committed the translation of the booklet "Our friends the dolphins", realized on volunteer bases for educational purposes, into Arabic, in order to disseminate it among the concerned countries during the awareness campaigns.

ANNEX X

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED DURING THE THIRD MEETING OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES
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Res 3.1	Granting the right to vote
Res 3.2	Financial and administrative matters for 2008-2010
Res 3.3	Composition of the Scientific Committee
Res 3.4	Work programme 2008-2010
Res 3.5	Strengthening the status of ACCOBAMS' partners
Res 3.6	Procedure for submission of projects
Res 3.7	ACCOBAMS online reporting system
Res 3.8	Strengthening collaboration with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
Res 3.9	Guidelines for the establishment of a system of Tissue Banks within the ACCOBAMS Area and Ethical Code
Res 3.10	Guidelines to address the impact of anthropogenic noise on marine mammals in the ACCOBAMS Area
Res 3.11	Conservation plan for Black Sea cetaceans
Res 3.12	By-catch, competitive interactions and acoustic devices
Res 3.13	Dolphin interaction programmes
Res 3.14	Ship strikes on large whales in the Mediterranean Sea
Res 3.15	Comprehensive cetacean population estimates and distribution in the ACCOBAMS Area
Res 3.16	Conservation of Fin Whales in the Mediterranean Sea
Res 3.17	Conservation of the Mediterranean common dolphin
Res 3.19	IUCN Red List of cetaceans in the Mediterranean and Black Seas
Res 3.20	Guidelines on the release of cetaceans in the wild
Res 3.21	ACCOBAMS – CIESM – PELAGOS joint cetacean sighting database
Res 3.22	Marine protected areas for cetaceans
Res 3.23	Commercial whale-watching : towards a label
Res 3.25	Cetacean live stranding
Res 3.27	Strengthening north south cooperation
Res 3.28	Support to the Secretariat
Res 3.29	Guidelines for a coordinated cetacean stranding response
Res 3.30	Tribute to organisers
Res 3.31	Date, venue and funding of the fourth session of the meeting of the Parties
A/Res 3.1	Amendment of the Annex 2 to the Agreement on the conservation of cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area related to the use of driftnets

RESOLUTION 3.1

GRANTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

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

Aware of the fact that becoming a Party to the Agreement can be a long process that many States have embarked upon but have not yet been able to bring to completion in time for the start of the third Meeting of the Parties on 22 October 2007;

Informed, however, by the Depository that some States have completed the process but must wait until the first day of the third month after completion of the procedures, in conformity with Article XIV, paragraph 2, of the Agreement;

Convinced that the decision-making at the third Meeting of the Parties will benefit from the active participation of as many Parties as possible;

1. *Decides* that Algeria, although it is officially required to meet the above criteria in order to become a Party, shall exceptionally be granted the status of full participating Party with the right to vote;
2. *Instructs* the Credentials Committee to monitor the credentials of Algeria according to the accepted procedures and report to the Meeting.

RESOLUTION 3.2

FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS FOR 2008-2010

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

Recalling Article IX, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the text of the Agreement, stating that the Parties shall determine the scale of contributions to the budget and that the Meeting of the Parties shall adopt a budget by consensus;

Acknowledging with appreciation:

- the financial support and the contributions in kind provided by the Government of the Principality of Monaco for the Agreement Secretariat;
- the substantial support from the Government of Italy for both administrative and conservation activities;
- the financial support over the triennium from the Government of the United Kingdom and
- the support of partner organizations and private companies for Agreement activities;

Recognizing the importance of the participation of all range States in implementation of the Agreement and related activities;

Aware that many Parties, particularly developing countries and countries with economies in transition, might not have the financial means to send representatives to meetings of bodies established under the Agreement;

1. *Takes* note with satisfaction of the audited accounts for the period 2005-2007 presented by the Secretariat;
2. *Agrees* to transfer, to the degree possible, part of the outstanding resources from the 2005-2007 budget to the Supplementary Conservation Grants Fund, as stated in Resolution 2.4, and *charges* the Bureau to set the amount on the basis of recommendations from the Secretariat;
3. *Confirms* that Parties shall contribute to the budget at the scale agreed upon by the Meeting of the Parties in accordance with Article III, paragraph 8 (e), of the Agreement;
4. *Adopts* the budget for 2008-2010, attached as Annex 1 to the present Resolution;
5. *Agrees also* to the scale of contributions of Parties to the Agreement as listed in Annex 2 to the present resolution and to application of that scale to new Parties *pro rata* of the remaining annual financial exercise;
6. *Further agrees* that any annual contribution less than 1000 Euros will be invoiced as 1000 Euros;
7. *Requests* Parties, in particular those that pay the minimum contribution, to consider paying for the entire triennium in one instalment;

8. *Further requests* Parties to pay their contributions promptly, as far as possible but in any case no later than the end of March of the year to which they relate;
9. *Decides* to pay for 2009 and 2010 a contribution calculated according to Annex 2 and to rely on the agreed scale for 2008, unless circumstances require the measures adopted for 2008 to be reviewed;
10. *Invites* the Secretariat to use, as far as possible, ordinary contributions from new Parties and voluntary contributions towards the conservation actions listed in Annex 1 of the present resolution, taking into account the need to ensure sound progresses on the highest priority issues identified by the Scientific Committee or, with the approval of the Bureau, to replenish the Supplementary Conservation Grants Fund;
11. *Invites* the Secretariat to consult with the Scientific Committee on priorities and other matters related to funding priorities on scientific aspects of the Agreement.
12. *Takes note* of Resolution 3.4 of the Meeting of the Parties on the Work Programme for the period 2008-2010;
13. *Recommends* that Parties support requests from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to participate in and implement the Agreement throughout the triennium 2008-2010;
14. *Invites* Contracting Parties and range States and organizations to consider the feasibility of providing adequate personnel for the Secretariat;
15. *Also invites* States that are not party to the Agreement, governmental, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and other bodies to consider contributing to implementation of the Agreement on a voluntary basis;
16. *Charges* the Secretariat to explore the availability of appropriate multilateral and bilateral governmental funds to support implementation of the Agreement;
17. *Approves* the terms of reference for administration of the Agreement budget, as set out in Annex 3 to the present resolution for the period 2008-2010.
18. *Encourages* individual Parties and Range States, when allocating funds for national ACCOBAMS-related research, to ask as appropriate, for the advice of the Scientific Committee in identifying work that (a) is most directly in accord with the conservation priorities identified in resolutions adopted by the Parties and (b) will directly assist the Committee in its priority work.

ANNEX I
DRAFT BUDGET 2008-2010

Item		2008		2009		2010	
		Expected Trust Fund	Host Country	Expected Trust Fund	Host Country	Expected Trust Fund	Host Country
Administration and general management		€		€		€	
10	General management						
110	Administrative staff						
1 101	Executive Secretary	19 800 ¹	76 861	19 800 ¹	78 244	19 800 ¹	79 653
1 102	Executive Assistant	35 000		35 000		35 000	
1 103	Fund management controller	1 000		1 000		1 000	
1 104	Secretary	-	33 743	-	34 350	-	34 969
120	Administrative support						
1 201	Sub-regional coordination units	10 000		10 000		10 000	
1 202	Translators	1 500		1 500		4 000	
1 203	Reviewers	-		-		7 000	
1 204	External assistance	13 000		13 000		16 000	
130	Travel						
1 301	Secretariat staff	15 000		15 000		13 000	
	Total	95 300	110 604	95 300	112 595	105 800	114 622
20	Meetings						
210	Meeting of the Parties	-		-		46 000	
220	Scientific Committee	22 000		22 000		-	
230	Bureau	8 000		8 000		12 000	
	Total	30 000		30 000		58 000	
30	Equipment and premises						
310	Expendable equipment						
3 101	Miscellaneous office supplies	1 200	2 000	1 200	2 000	1 200	2 000
320	Non-expendable office equipment						
3 201	Office equipment	-	1 500	-	1 500	-	1 500
330	Premises						
3 301	Rent and maintenance costs	-		-		-	
	Total	1 200	3 500	1 200	3 500	1 200	3 500
40	Miscellaneous						
410	Operation and maintenance						
4 101	Computer maintenance	1 000	500	1 000	500	1 500	500
4 102	Photocopier	200		200		200	
4 103	Telephone and fax	-		-		-	
4 104	Postal charges	1 000	500	1 000	500	1 000	500
4 105	Network fees	800		800		800	
4 106	Bank fees	1 000	500	1 000	500	1 000	500
4 107	Subscriptions	500		500		500	
420	Hospitality	1 000		1 000		1 000	
	Total	5 500	1 500	5 500	1 500	6 000	1 500
Total administration and general management		132 000	115 604	132 000	117 595	171 000	119 622

¹ With reservations of compliance with National Regulation provisions for civil servants

Item	2008		2009		2010		
	Expected Trust Fund	External contributions ¹	Expected Trust Fund	External contributions ¹	Expected Trust Fund	External contributions ¹	
Conservation actions		€		€		€	
100	National legislation, scientific and technical assistance, capacity-building	20 000		20 000		15 000	
101	Assistance to countries		30 000		30 000		20 000
200	Human-cetacean interactions and emergency situations	15 000		15 000		10 000	30 000
201	Collisions		10 000		10 000		10 000
202	Interactions with fisheries		**		**		**
203	Live stranding and emergency task forces		20 000		15 000	-	10 000
300	Habitats, research and monitoring	20 000		20 000		10 000	
301	Strandings and tissue banks		30 000		20 000		20 000
302	Conservation plans		30 000		20 000		20 000
303	Abundance and distribution		**		**		**
304	Marine protected areas		20 000		20 000		10 000
400	Public awareness and dissemination of information	30 000		30 000		26 000	
401	Database management		20 000		5 000		5 000
402	Awareness campaigns		10 000		10 000		10 000
403	Newsletter						
404	Information material		10 000		10 000		10 000
405	Website management						
406	Promoting sustainable whale-watching		20 000		15 000		10 000
Sub-total conservation actions		85 000	200 000	85 000	155 000	61 000	155 000
Total administration and conservation		217 000		217 000		232 000	
Total budget for the triennium 2008–2010		666 000					

¹ Minimum figure expected

** Amount exceeding 50 000 €

ANNEX II
DRAFT CONTRIBUTIONS 2008-2010

Contracting Party		2008		2009		2010	
		Key	Contribution	Key	Contribution	Key	Contribution
	UN 2007	ACCOBAMS	€	ACCOBAMS	€	ACCOBAMS	€
Albania	0.006	0.07	1 000	0.07	1 000	0.07	1 000
Algeria		0.97	2 160	0.97	2 160	0.97	2 160
Bosnia and Herzegovina							
Bulgaria	0.020	0.23	1 000	0.23	1 000	0.23	1 000
Croatia	0.050	0.57	1 271	0.57	1 271	0.57	1 271
Cyprus	0.044	0.50	1 118	0.50	1 118	0.50	1 118
Egypt							
France	6.301	28.00	62 160	28.00	62 160	28.00	62 160
Georgia	0.003	0.03	1 000	0.03	1 000	0.03	1 000
Greece	0.596	6.82	15 147	6.82	15 147	6.82	15 147
Israel							
Italy	5.079	28.00	62 160	28.00	62 160	28.00	62 160
Lebanon	0.034	0.39	1 000	0.39	1 000	0.39	1 000
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	0.062	0.71	1 576	0.71	1 576	0.71	1 576
Malta	0.017	0.19	1 000	0.19	1 000	0.19	1 000
Monaco	0.003	0.03	1 000	0.03	1 000	0.03	1 000
Montenegro							
Morocco	0.042	0.48	1 067	0.48	1 067	0.48	1 067
Portugal	0.527	6.03	13 394	6.03	13 394	6.03	13 394
Romania	0.070	0.80	1 779	0.80	1 779	0.80	1 779
Russian Federation							
Slovenia	0.096	1.10	2 440	1.10	2 440	1.10	2 440
Spain	2.968	24.00	53 280	24.00	53 280	24.00	53 280
Syrian Arab Republic	0.016	0.18	1 000	0.18	1 000	0.18	1 000
Tunisia	0.031	0.35	1 000	0.35	1 000	0.35	1 000
Turkey							
Ukraine	0.045	0.52	1 144	0.52	1 144	0.52	1 144
United Kingdom ¹			10 000		10 000		10 000
European Commission							
Total expected amount	16.095	100	236 696	100	236 696	100	236 696
TOTAL			222 000		222 000		222 000

¹ Being part of the Agreement area through Special Statute Territories, United Kingdom agreed to contribute on a voluntary basis

ANNEX III
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE BUDGET

1. The terms of reference for administration of the budget of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area shall refer to the financial years beginning 1 January 2008 and ending 31 December 2010¹.
2. The budget shall be administered by the Executive Secretary.
3. The budget shall be administered according to the financial regulations and rules of the Host Country.
4. The financial resources of the budget shall be derived from:
 - (a) *Contributions from the Parties according to Annex 2, including contributions from new Parties, and*
 - (b) *Other voluntary contributions from Parties, contributions from States not party to the Agreement, other governmental, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and other sources.*
5. All contributions to the budget shall be paid in Euros.
6. With regard to contributions from States that become Parties after the beginning of the financial period, the initial contribution (from the first day of the third month after the deposit of the instrument of ratification, acceptance or accession, until the end of the financial period) shall be determined *pro rata* on the basis of the contributions of other Parties according to the adopted scale of assessments and depending on the remaining annual financial exercise.
7. The scale of contributions for all Parties shall be revised by the Secretariat on 1 January of the following year on the base of the updated United Nations scale of contributions. Unless otherwise stated, contributions shall be paid in annual instalments.
8. The contributions are due on 1 January 2008, 1 January 2009 and 1 January 2010. Contributions should be paid into the following account:

<i>Account holder</i>	<i>Swift code</i>	<i>IBAN code</i>
ACCOBAMS	CFMOMCMX	MC 02 1273 9000 7001 0702 3000 M76

9. For the convenience of the Parties, the Executive Secretary shall notify the Parties to the Agreement of their assessed contributions for each of the years of the financial period as soon as possible.

¹ The calendar year 1 January to 31 December is the accounting and financial year, but the official closure date for the accounts is 31 March of the following year.

10. Contributions received into the budget and not immediately required for financing activities shall be invested at the discretion of the Executive Secretary, and any income shall be credited to the budget.
11. The budget shall be audited by a fund management controller.
12. The budget estimates of income and expenditures for each calendar year of the financial period shall be prepared in Euros and submitted to the Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement.
13. The estimates for each calendar year covered by the financial period shall be: divided into sections and objectives of expenditure, specified according to budget lines, include references to the programmes of work to which they relate, and be accompanied by such information as may be required by or on behalf of the contributors.
14. The proposed budget, including all the necessary information, shall be dispatched by the Secretariat to all Parties at least 90 days before the date fixed for the opening of the Meeting of the Parties.
15. The budget shall be adopted by consensus at the Meeting of the Parties.
16. With the authorization of the Bureau, the Secretariat of the Agreement shall make transfers from one budget line to another.
17. Should the Secretariat anticipate a shortfall in resources over the financial period, the Secretariat shall consult the Bureau concerning its priorities for expenditure.
18. Commitments against the resources of the budget may be made only if they are covered by sufficient income.
19. A secured fund is created, equivalent to thirty per cent of the administrative budget.
20. At the end of each calendar year of the financial period, the Secretariat shall submit the accounts of the year to the Bureau. These shall include details of actual expenditure and comparisons with the original provisions for each budget line.
21. The Secretariat shall give the Bureau an estimate of proposed expenditures for the coming year simultaneously with, or as soon as possible after, distribution of the accounts and reports referred to in the preceding paragraphs.
22. The Secretariat shall present the audited accounts for the financial exercises to the Meeting of the Parties.
23. The present terms of reference shall be implemented by the Executive Secretary.

RESOLUTION 3.3

COMPOSITION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

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

Recalling Article VII of the Agreement on the general composition and tasks of the Scientific Committee;

Recalling also that, according to Resolution 1.3, the Scientific Committee consists of 12 members, comprising:

- one qualified expert representing each of the four geographical regions. One alternate will be designated for each regional representative, to participate in meetings only in the absence of that delegate;
- five qualified experts in cetacean conservation appointed by the General Secretariat of the CIESM following consultation with the Permanent Secretariat of the Agreement and the Bureau; and
- one representative each from the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the European Cetacean Society (ECS) and the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) appointed by the individual Organization.

Desirous of establishing a closer link between the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS and scientists working on cetaceans in the Agreement area;

Stressing the need for increasing the representativeness of the Parties' scientific community in the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS;

1. *Decides* that the Scientific Committee consists of no more than 13 members, comprising:

- one qualified expert representing each of the four geographical regions as in Annex 1. One alternate will be designated for each regional representative, to participate in meetings only in the absence of that delegate. If it transpires, however, that the North-South geographical representation is not balanced, the Parties may decide to appoint a fifth regional representative to overcome the imbalance;
- five qualified experts in cetacean conservation appointed by the General Secretariat of the CIESM following consultation with the Permanent Secretariat of the Agreement [and the Bureau]; and
- one representative each from the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the European Cetacean Society (ECS) and the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) appointed by the relevant Organization.

ANNEX 1

Division of the geographical scope of the Agreement into four regions and regional representations

Article 1

In order to ensure balanced geographical representation on the Scientific Committee, the geographical scope of the Agreement is divided into four regions.

Article 2

Because of their geographical situation, Greece, Italy, Tunisia can, at the Meeting of the Parties, select their attachment to a region during the designation of qualified regional experts:

- 'Western Mediterranean' or 'Central Mediterranean' for Italy and Tunisia and
- 'Central Mediterranean' or 'Eastern Mediterranean' for Greece.

Article 3

Article 2 applies to any other Party that wishes to be associated with another region, unless one Party in that region disagrees.

Article 4

For the purpose of facilitating Scientific Committee members' nomination, the regional distribution of Parties is as follows:

Region	Riparian States and regional economic integration organizations
Western Mediterranean and contiguous Atlantic area	Algeria, France, (Italy), Monaco, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, (Tunisia)
Central Mediterranean	Albania, Croatia, (Greece), (Italy), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta, Slovenia, (Tunisia)
Eastern Mediterranean	Cyprus, (Greece), Lebanon, Syria
Black Sea	Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Ukraine

RESOLUTION 3.4

WORK PROGRAMME 2008–2010

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

Acting in accordance with the commitments of the Parties to conserve cetaceans in accordance with the Agreement, especially the fundamental obligations placed upon Parties in Article II;

Recognizing the need to set priorities;

Acknowledging the relevant work being carried out in the framework of other international organizations;

Aware that scientific research in the area covered by the Agreement remains essential to identifying populations with the least favourable conservation status and to addressing the conservation priorities;

Conscious that the current heterogeneity of the distribution of management and research capacity in the area covered by the Agreement must be addressed by capacity-building;

Thanking and congratulating the Scientific Committee for its involvement, its work and its wise advice to Parties in setting up accurate conservation measures;

Recalling that Article IX.3 calls for voluntary contributions to increase the funds available for monitoring, research, training and projects related to conservation;

Recalling Resolutions 1.7 and 2.4, establishing and implementing a Supplementary Conservation Fund;

Considering that Parties, particularly developing countries and countries with economies in transition, require clear priorities for conservation and research activities in order to use their limited resources most effectively in their national actions plans:

1. *Notes* that identification of knowledge gaps (both thematic and geographical) is of particular importance for the Agreement;
2. *Adopts* the Work Programme for 2008–2010 in Annex 1, without prejudice to the pursuance of existing conservation actions, and considers its implementation a priority;
3. *Calls upon* Parties to support projects and activities in line with the Work Programme;
4. *Urges* Parties and specialized international organizations to develop international cooperative projects for implementation of the Work Programme and to keep the Agreement Secretariat fully informed of progress;
5. *Instructs* the Agreement Secretariat to disseminate the Work Programme for priority actions for 2008–2010, to collaborate closely in its implementation with related conventions, international organizations and ACCOBAMS partners, and to seek appropriate donors;

6. *Further urges* the Parties to provide financial assistance to Riparian States in implementing the Agreement and to support implementation of the Work Programme directly or through the financial mechanisms of the Agreement; and
7. *Calls on* the Scientific Committee, the Agreement Secretariat and Bureau, the sub regional coordinating units, ACCOBAMS partners and international and national nongovernmental organizations to promote the actions necessary to facilitate implementation of the Work Programme, bearing in mind all the resolutions adopted by the Meetings of the Parties and develop the timetable.
8. *Calls upon* the Agreement Secretariat to inform in time the National Focal Points of workshops, work programmes, steering committees and working group members and other fora done under the ACCOBAMS framework.

ANNEX 1

n.	Activity	Adopted by MOP2	Accomplished to date	Future work and relevant Resolutions
1	<i>Comprehensive cetacean population estimates and distribution in the ACCOBAMS Area.</i>			
	A. Dedicated surveys	Program a workshop later in 2004 to start planning a comprehensive survey targeting all cetacean species throughout the Agreement area. Goals: to compile the basic information required to begin to explore options, including the total area to be covered, available information to assist in designing survey blocks and stratification, ways of combining the sperm whale survey (largely based on acoustic techniques) with visual surveys, and levels of effort required to provide various layers of coverage.	<p>Steering Committee established, to arrange and carry out informal consultations with experts to homogenize the methodology, to organize and conduct a sub-regional training workshop in the Black Sea, to refine methodology and study design, and to resolve logistical issues.</p> <p>Preliminary contacts made with officers of the European Commission in charge of the Habitat Directive and those working on the development of the Life+ system.</p>	<p><u>Resolution 3.15, 3.27</u> Convene a second workshop to finalise the project document and to develop strategy for fundraising and for obtaining the support of national authorities.</p> <p>Communication with countries about the project through: (a) document aimed at providing to the countries a short description of the project and clear information about its objectives and the surveying techniques to be used; and (b) organise at the occasion of the next MOP a special event to formally present to officials of the Parties the survey objectives and methodologies, and seek information from the country representatives on further details about the needed steps and authorisations for carrying out the field work of the survey in the waters under their jurisdiction.</p> <p>Approach formally potential funding agencies to evaluate the prospects of obtaining financial support.</p>
	B. Genetic studies	The stock identity and structure of the Agreement's cetacean populations should be assessed to test population differentiation and gene flow within and among sub-regions on sufficiently fine geographic scales. To achieve this, a programme of collection of tissue samples from different portions of the Agreement area will be implemented, through national stranding networks and the support of MEDACES and tissue banks (see Action 3), and carefully planned biopsy collection schemes during sighting cruises. In parallel, the necessary laboratory analytical framework should be secured and funded.	During the past decade colleagues have been able to contribute new knowledge concerning population structure of several Mediterranean and Black Sea cetaceans (e.g., fin whales; sperm whales; Cuvier's beaked whales; bottlenose, Risso's, common and striped dolphins; harbour porpoises).	Work on stock structure must continue in parallel with the baseline survey work (1A), giving priority to species (e.g., fin, sperm and Cuvier's beaked whales) where knowledge of population structure within the region is likely to provide the greatest support to conservation. To this end a Genetics Working Group should be created to establish the necessary contacts with (a) persons in charge of National Stranding Networks, (b) persons in charge of Tissue Banks, and (c) persons responsible for field projects in which tissue specimens can be

				collected, in order to secure sources of study material. The Genetics Working Group should prepare a genetics strategy document in which the most urgent actions in terms of conservation needs are identified, discussed and planned.
	C. Sighting database	A systematic effort to create an Agreement-wide sighting database should be started under the auspices of ACCOBAMS. All future available sighting data fulfilling the necessary quality requirements should be used to accrue to the database. Data may be contributed both by ACCOBAMS dedicated surveys and research efforts, and through independent, bona fide research activities conducted in the area. The ACCOBAMS effort may be made to cooperate with global (such as OBIS-SEAMAP or UNEP/MMAP) and regional (e.g., the CIESM database) initiatives, to enrich the database and increase time series by including past sightings. The task of defining the procedures for the establishment, functioning and fruition of the database, as well as the criteria for inclusion of the data and a code of deontology, should be given to the Scientific Committee with the request of proceeding expeditiously to its implementation.	A meeting was held in Monaco in September 2006 in collaboration with CIESM and PELAGOS to investigate ways and modalities to establish a joint sighting database. The need was stressed for the Secretariats of the involved Organisations (ACCOBAMS, PELAGOS Sanctuary and CIESM) to stimulate scientists to participate to this initiative.	<u>Resolution 3.21</u> The ACCOBAMS Secretariats to work with the PELAGOS Sanctuary and CIESM to reach an agreement on the organisational, logistic, practical and financial aspects of the Database. The Scientific Committee to launch a scientific-technical working group to define the remaining technical issues and solicit participation to the programme by research groups willing to contribute their data to the database.
2	<i>Species conservation plans</i>			
	A. Common dolphins in the Mediterranean Sea	The plan is completed and presented to MOP2. Parties and Riparian States are invited to implement appropriate parts of the plan and introduce relevant activities into their national plans. The Scientific Committee will review and further develop and propose amendments to the plan as appropriate, and the Secretariat to appoint a coordinator pending on the availability of the necessary financial resources.	A Common Dolphin Steering Committee was created to facilitate the implementation of the priority actions of the plan and to coordinate with the relevant authorities through the Secretariat.	<u>Resolution 3.17</u> The Steering Committee to produce a set of proposals for action, to be implemented immediately. Further elaboration and urgent implementation of the Mediterranean Common dolphin conservation plan based on the most recent available information. The Scientific Committee provides advice and recommendations for projects and urgent actions to be taken to the Secretariat and the Bureau on a regular basis.
	B. Black Sea cetaceans	Both plans are in their preliminary drafting phases. The Black Sea cetaceans' conservation plan is currently being redrafted by Alexei Birkun for a wider evaluation of donor ship potential. Resources should be allocated for the completion of their drafting and to allow fundraising efforts to continue for their implementation.	A Conservation Plan for cetaceans in the Black Sea, presented at the 3rd Meeting of the Scientific Committee, was discussed at a round table organised in Istanbul in 2006 during a Black Sea Science Conference. The roundtable concluded that some actions need further coordination and identified the following four high priority actions : (a) completion of the basin wide survey; (b) establishment of a regional bycatch	<u>Resolution 3.11</u> Implement immediately the four high priority actions identified by the Scientific Committee on the basis of the conclusions of a roundtable of experts (Istanbul, May 2006).

			network; (c) establishment of a stranding network; and (d) establishment of an MPA network.	
	C. Bottlenose dolphins in the Mediterranean Sea		<p>During its Third Meeting in Cairo, the Scientific Committee recommended that a series of 5-10 regionally defined working groups be established to draft local Action Plans for bottlenose dolphins in their respective areas.</p> <p>Work is in progress to create a Bottlenose Dolphin Steering Committee to develop a template to enable sub-regional groups of bottlenose dolphin researchers to develop local action plans comprising high priority research and management actions, based on the Andalusia and Murcia experience (developed within the EC Nature Life Project). At the same time, a list of individuals and teams who are involved in <i>Tursiops</i> research and conservation in the Mediterranean region and the contiguous Atlantic area is being compiled, to be used to identify regional clusters as the basis for defining the working groups.</p>	The Bottlenose Dolphin Steering Committee to proceed immediately with identifying and implementing priority actions on the basis of activities conducted so far.
	D. Sperm whales	A basin-wide study of the distribution and abundance of sperm whales in the Mediterranean (see Action n. 1), with the identification of critical habitat, should be considered the first step in the implementation of a conservation plan for this species. The drafting of the plan should be completed through the identification of the main past and current threats, and the suggestion of mitigation measures.	Sperm whale survey definitively merged into “Dedicated surveys” (1A).	<p>Address the challenge posed by the persistence of illegal use of pelagic driftnets in the Mediterranean Sea, which continues to be the major threat to the species.</p> <p>Another concern, ship strikes, is addressed under item 6.</p>
	E. Fin whales	Drafting terms of reference for this conservation plan should be among the objectives of the workshop on fin whales which is being planned in 2005.	A Fin Whale Workshop organised in November 2005 in cooperation with the PELAGOS Sanctuary recommended that urgent efforts be made to (a) obtain baseline information on the distribution and abundance of fin whales in the ACCOBAMS area and develop a programme to monitor trends in abundance (see Action 1A); (b) to develop a central photo-identification database for use as a	<p><u>Resolution 3.16</u></p> <p>The Fin Whale Steering Committee to proceed with actions recommended by the Scientific Committee. These would include: (a) develop a list of core members for the FWSC; (b) determine its modus operandi; (c) consider ways to ensure adequate initial funding for the FWSC itself (the FWSC and the Secretariat will explore the broader funding opportunities</p>

			<p>long-term management and conservation tool (see Action 11); and (c) examine and elucidate Mediterranean fin whale population structure (see Action 1C).</p> <p>The Scientific Committee recommended creating a Fin Whale Steering Committee to implement the workshop recommendations. A Steering Committee was established.</p>	<p>to ensure that the recommended work takes place to enable the effective implementation of the actions proposed (e.g. EC projects under FP7); (d) suggest initial high priority work based on the recommendations of the workshop, to be implemented in close contact with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and Parties, the Pelagos Sanctuary and the IWC Scientific Committee, as well as other relevant experts and research groups in the region. An assessment for the status and trend of fin whales in the Mediterranean is seen as a matter having the highest priority.</p>
	F. Harbour porpoises in the Mediterranean Sea	Detailed information on the distribution and density of harbour porpoises in the Northern Aegean Sea, as well as their relationship with the Black Sea population should be viewed as the essential prerequisite for the drafting of a conservation plan.		The Mediterranean dedicated survey (1A) should provide a first description of the overall distribution of the species in Aegean waters. Genetic investigations should be continued to confirm whether individuals found in the Mediterranean belong to the same geographic population found in the Black and Marmara Seas.
	G. Other species	A study should be undertaken by the Scientific Committee to evaluate whether species that have not been included yet in a conservation plan (e.g., Cuvier's beaked whales, long-finned pilot whales, Risso's dolphins and striped dolphins) should be eventually considered, and in the affirmative case, when.	The Meeting on the Red List assessments of cetaceans from the ACCOBAMS area, which took place in Monaco in March 2006, suggested that four cetacean species found in the Mediterranean (fin whales, Cuvier's beaked whales, long-finned pilot whales, and Risso's dolphins) should be considered Data Deficient, since there was no sufficient information to assess their extinction risk.	<u>Resolution 3.19</u> Like for fin whales (see Action 2E), information on abundance, distribution and population structure of the other three species should be collected ASAP to determine if these populations are threatened, and to what extent. While knowledge relevant to this concern will be likely collected at the regional scale under Action 1A, and while relevant ecological information is gathered under different efforts (e.g., see Action 5A involving the modelling of <i>Ziphius</i> habitat), current research projects on these species on a more local basis should be encouraged and facilitated.
3	<i>Stranding networks and Tissue Banks</i>			
	A. Stranding networks	At the present moment efficient stranding networks only exist in a few countries within the ACCOBAMS area. It is therefore urgent to develop networks where they do not exist, and to encourage other Riparian States to do the same. During their first Meeting, the Contracting	The Scientific Committee stressed that the stranding monitoring network is an extremely important conservation tool and recommended that the Secretariat works, in	<u>Resolution 3.20, 3.25, 3.27, 3.29</u> The Secretariat, in cooperation with the SRCUs, should continue promoting progress in the establishment of national

		<p>Parties to ACCOBAMS agreed to endeavour to improve the efficiency, when needed, of national stranding networks (NSN), to help extending the appropriate know-how to countries where strandings are currently not monitored, and to create the basis for the establishment of a wider network at the regional level. Accordingly, that Meeting adopted Resolution 1.10 (.Cooperation between national networks of cetacean strandings and the creation of a database.) which recommended, among other things, that each Party implement a NSN; that NSNs be coordinated within an Agreement-wide stranding network (ASN), and common databases created; and that other riparian countries of the region be invited to participate in such actions. This action intends to proceed to: (a) the strengthening of existing NSNs, also encouraging States having a NSN to integrate national information within the MEDACES database; (b) the creation of NSNs in Countries where they don't exist²; and (c) implementation of an umbrella ASN with a view of enabling a thorough reporting of the findings of dead, injured or sick cetaceans across the Agreement area. To reach such objectives, the full support of Member and Range States will be essential for the promotion, implementation and funding of NSNs. Furthermore, the Scientific Committee will be charged with the establishment of an <i>ad hoc</i> Working Group to carry out the following tasks: (a) Establish the basis of the capacity building programmes to improve the functioning and geographic coverage of NSNs. (b) Promoting the involvement in the effort of scientists and institutions capable of performing necropsies on strandlings to determine the cause(s) of stranding and death, ascertaining pathologies, assessing health condition and parasite loads, and estimating the age of the animals. (c) Contributing to the strengthening of the existing system of Tissue Banks in the Agreement area, where biological samples deriving from NSNs are stored to allow future pathological, toxicological and genetic investigations, and facilitate understanding of cetacean mortality causes and threats. (d) Developing techniques and guidelines to deal with the problem of live strandings. (e) Supporting the Emergency Task Force (ETF) in case of unusual mortality events. (f) Promoting homogeneity among different NSNs to facilitate their functioning under the wider umbrella of an ASN.</p>	<p>collaboration with the Agreement's Sub Regional Coordinating Units, on the preparation of a report providing a general picture on the situation in the Mediterranean regarding the cetacean stranding monitoring.</p> <p>The unusual stranding of four beaked whales (<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>) on the 26th of January 2006 on the coast of Almeria, Southern Spain, was discussed. The Scientific Committee noted that this matter remained unresolved and called on the relevant authorities to continue their investigations and make their findings available in a transparent way. Progress concerning the MEDACES database was discussed, and considering the heterogeneity of contributions the Scientific Committee invited the Secretariat to urge the Parties to provide inputs to the MEDACES as part of their obligations towards ACCOBAMS.</p> <p>Concerning live strandings (which include a range of difficult issues such as veterinary decision-making in the field, response to mass strandings, human health concerns, response to stranded neonates, capacity issues and the very significant differences across the ACCOBAMS region in capacity and approaches, data recording during rescues and sampling, rescue of dolphins from harbours, and 'friendly' solitary dolphins), the First ACCOBAMS rescue workshop, sponsored by WDCCS, was held in Monaco in November 2006, with invited experts and other participants from 11 countries covering the Black Sea, Mediterranean and contiguous Atlantic area. The Scientific Committee welcomed and endorsed the workshop's final statement, and recommended to establish an advisory</p>	<p>stranding networks by filling the current gaps in Member States that don't monitor strandings yet, strengthening existing national networks, and integrating national work into an Agreement-wide effort.</p> <p>Member States and Range States should be encouraged to adopt the actions indicated in the previous ACCOBAMS Working Programme by: (a) establishing NSNs if these don't exist yet, (b) designating a NSN Focal Point to participate in the Agreement-wide activities and to promote the transfer of national stranding data to the MEDACES database, and (c) ensuring that all NSN contribute homogeneously to the building of MEDACES as part of their obligation towards ACCOBAMS. Concerning live strandings, establish an advisory panel, comprising veterinary expertise, based on the outcome of the First ACCOBAMS rescue workshop (November 2006), to coordinate ACCOBAMS rescue activities, to develop comprehensive guidelines, and to implement the production of related information material.</p>
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			panel for ACCOBAMS rescues activities and a veterinary group.	
	B. Tissue Banks		The Scientific Committee discussed a document on Tissue Banks presented by Prof. B. Cozzi (University of Padua), and stressed that tissue banks are an important research and conservation tool which should be ideally be represented in each ACCOBAMS Member State. The Committee recommended that a network be established to link ACCOBAMS Tissue Banks. It was further remarked the importance of assuring the continuity of tissue banks. Finally, Guidelines on tissue banks prepared by the Secretariat, including an ethical code, were adopted by the Scientific Committee.	<u>Resolution 3.9</u> The existing tissue banks in the ACCOBAMS area should be assured continuity by the States were they were established, and their number should increase to create a network able to ensure storage and availability of tissues for study deriving from stranded and bycaught cetaceans. To this end, coordination should be established and maintained between the tissue bank network and the stranding networks, also through the support of MEDACES.
4	<i>Interactions with fisheries</i>			
	A. Bycatch	This action will involve addressing bycatch, depredation, possible solutions to avoid such depredation, and the impact of consequent reactions prompting the fishing community to use acoustic devices. The action is based on the .Guidelines for technical measures to minimise cetacean-fishery conflicts in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. resulting from a workshop organised in Rome on 8 July 2004, and on a project proposal prepared by the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS entitled: .Project for mitigating the adverse impacts of interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities in the ACCOBAMS Area.. Implementation of this comprehensive project will represent the totality of actions dealing with fisheries. The project will involve an assessment of the extent of the by-catch problem in the Agreement area, a set of awareness campaigns targeting the fishing community, and pilot actions on the use of acoustic devices and other by-catch and depredation avoidance measures, and on their possible environmental impact. The Secretariat, in cooperation with the Scientific Committee, will enact all possible initiatives to reach the goal of funding implementing the project mentioned above.	A joint workshop was organised by ACCOBAMS and GFCM on bycatch and a questionnaire disseminated to collect data about cetacean–fishery interactions. The continuation of large-scale use of illegal driftnets in the Mediterranean was also discussed at length, and the Scientific Committee decided to again draw the attention of the Contracting Parties that the non enforcement of existing regulations on driftnets has a negative impact on the cetacean populations and seriously affects the credibility of ACCOBAMS (Recommendation SC4.2).	<u>Resolution 3.8, 3.12, 3.13, 3.27</u> Implement ASAP the current initiative on fishery-related issues, named ByCBAMS. This will involve proceeding in two main directions: (i) contacting potential donors to secure funding for the project components, and (ii) encouraging countries to develop national projects aimed at achieving the project’s objectives. This will include: (a) collaborating with GFCM and particularly with its Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE). (b) implementing components 1-4 of ByCBAMS (including an assessment of the extent of the by-catch problem in the Agreement area, a set of awareness campaigns targeting the fishing community), funded by the Italian Government.

				<p>(c) enforce the ban on driftnet operations in the Mediterranean, so that driftnet fishing will come to an end in the ACCOBAMS area.</p> <p>(d) conducting a survey throughout the ACCOBAMS area to assess the extent of dolphin-fisheries interactions, using the proposed questionnaire, as a follow-up to past recommendations from the Scientific Committee and from a recent joint ACCOBAMS-GFCM workshop.</p>
	B. Operational interactions		<p>Technological aspects of the issue of pingers were discussed by the Scientific Committee, to develop common strategies on the competition issue. The Committee recommended doing a survey to assess its extent, and making further investigations when a hotspot is identified. Subsequently, a series of initiatives were undertaken by the Secretariat to ensure a prompt implementation of a comprehensive project addressing fisheries- related issues, named ByCBAMS. The ByCBAMS project was envisaged to encourage countries to develop localised national activities aimed at achieving the project’s objectives, in cooperation with the GFCM. The Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry approved a significant financial support for the implementation of the Components 1 to 4 of ByCBAMS.</p>	
	C. Ecological interactions (including prey depletion)	<p>Long-lived, slow-reproducing marine species such as cetaceans are becoming increasingly endangered due to growing human impacts on the marine environment. A likely source of problems, which has proven particularly difficult to properly address, is nutritional stress caused by depletion of food resources due to overfishing and environmental degradation. The lack of sufficient food to maximise reproductive potential may be the most important regulator of population size in animals. Unfortunately, it is difficult to assess whether nutritional stress is a contributing factor to the decline of any particular cetacean population. The “nutritional quality” of a diet to an animal is a complex matter to assess given the range of components that can influence its</p>	<p>A clear demonstration case of cetacean prey depletion caused by excessive fishing (i.e., the common dolphins off Western Greece which have declined 25-fold in 9 years likely in concomitance with the fishery-induced decrease of sardines, their main prey item) was discussed by the Committee. Considering the threatened level of Mediterranean common dolphins, and the importance of addressing the situation also in view of developing mitigation measures</p>	<p>Select case studies were advances can be made in the understanding of the complex trophodynamics of the cetacean-fisheries interactions. Detailed studies to be developed for assessment of predator-prey interactions, taking into consideration multi-population approach and the dynamic evolution of the recovery of some species of economic importance (e.g., Black Sea bonito).</p>

		<p>value. The trophic interactions between cetaceans and fisheries have proved particularly hard to track and understand. Gaining a better insight of the roles played by cetaceans in the dynamics and functioning of the marine ecosystem is a key to the proposition of management policies and measures that would ensure that possible competition for prey resources between cetaceans and fisheries is managed in an optimal fashion.</p> <p>To enhance our understanding of the issue, the Scientific Committee is directed to: (1) promote the collection of systematic information on the diet of different cetacean species throughout the Agreement area, and its geographic, seasonal and ontogenetic variability, through direct analysis of stomach contents of bycaught and stranded specimens, and through biochemical investigations such as fatty acids and stable isotope analyses. (2) Investigate the possibility of applying trophodynamic models to data deriving from population surveys, feeding ecology, and fishery ecology to facilitate our understanding of specific trophic issues, such as prey choice by any given cetacean population, its food consumption, its dependence on prey availability, its trophic overlap with other species and with fisheries, the existence of competition with fisheries, and the population's ecological role within the trophic web.</p>	<p>applicable to different situations, the Scientific Committee encouraged the Executive Secretary to pursue her collaboration with a number of concerned NGOs to reach an agreement with the relevant authorities in Greece that improves the situation of the common dolphin in the Ionian Sea.</p>	<p>One of such case studies should be the coastal waters of Western Greece (the "Kalamos" area), to fully address the different aspects of the issue (i.e., fishery ecology and management, trophic ecology of the involved ecosystem, dolphin ecology, governance), ultimately promoting the recovery of the fish stock(s) involved and of the local population of common dolphins.</p>
5	Anthropogenic noise	<p>Although in most cases up to now there is insufficient data to evaluate the potential negative effect of anthropogenic noise on cetaceans, there is now general acceptance that many unusual mass stranding of beaked whales were the result of military sonar activities. Although mass strandings may appear to represent the most critical class of incidents concerning the effect of sound on cetaceans, anthropogenic noise (overwhelmingly from shipping) has been increasing in the oceans (especially in the Northern Hemisphere) since the industrial revolution, especially in recent decades. Whilst there is little evidence to suggest that this generally has acute effects, the chronic effects of increased noise levels and loud point sources (ships, explosives, constructions etc.) may potentially have significant effects at the population level. Two categories of actions can be envisaged to address the issue of anthropogenic noise and its effects on cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area: management and research. Management actions. Despite the overall lack of knowledge of the impact of the many kinds of anthropogenic noise on the conservation status of most cetacean species, there is already sufficient knowledge gathered to justify mitigation actions. These would include: (1) Considering that a significant acute impact is known to occur of high level sound produced by military sonar on beaked whales, particularly <i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>, given our lack of understanding of the conservation status and</p>	<p>Draft guidelines to address the issue of the impact of anthropogenic noise on cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area, in response to MoP Resolution 2.16, were presented and discussed. The Scientific Committee stressed the seriousness of threats posed by noise to marine wildlife, the need for regulating and reducing underwater noise, and the need for considering noise a quality parameter when assessing habitat quality and in particular MPAs). High concern was expressed with respect to the proliferation of playback experiments conducted without the needed safety requirements and with low scientific promise.</p> <p>Considering that certain anthropogenic noise can injure and kill some species of cetaceans, notably beaked whales, the Scientific Committee recommended that information on the distribution and habitat use of Cuvier's beaked whales in the</p>	<p><u>Resolution 3.10</u> Work should proceed to execute the tasks outlined in Resolutions 2.16 and 3.10. In particular:</p> <p>(a) Mandate the Secretariat to convene corresponding Working Group which shall report to the next MOP.</p> <p>(b) The Scientific Committee will continue describing the extent and temporal variability of the habitat of species that are known to be particularly vulnerable to man-made noise (e.g., <i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>). The modelling exercise currently undertaken should be further supported by the Parties through the Secretariat's actions, ensuring that more of the existing data be made available, to increase the model's robustness and to compare different algorithms for best results.</p>

	<p>distribution of this species in the region, in accord with the precautionary principle extreme caution should be regarded as the minimum necessary. At present there are no mitigation measures that can guarantee to eliminate completely the risks posed by military sonar to this species, other than a complete ban on their use. There is at least one (NATO) and probably more protocols or guidelines developed by military authorities with respect to use of such sonar in the context of threats to cetaceans. Guidelines also exist in some countries for the use of other sonic devices (e.g. seismic exploration). All such guidelines and the information upon which they are based (including data and distribution models) should be made available as soon as possible for review by the Scientific Committee, with a view to developing common sets of guidelines for use in the ACCOBAMS area. In the meantime, consultations should be made with any profession using such acoustic devices, including military authorities, and extreme caution should be exercised in their use in the ACCOBAMS area, with the ideal being no further use until satisfactory guidelines are developed. (2) Concerning the low-frequency noise produced by shipping, which is ubiquitous within most of the Agreement area, it is recognised that such noise, largely generated by cavitations of the ships propellers, may have relevant effects on cetacean communication and behaviour. Such sound is likely to be substantially reduced by improvement of ship design, and if appropriate standards were to be developed and adopted in new constructions, the abatement of shipping noise may be substantial in the future. In consideration of the very high density of shipping in the region, and consequent high levels of noise, ACCOBAMS should undertake an active role in the promotion of discussion and initiatives in the appropriate fora (e.g., IMO), targeted to reducing noise produced by ships on a global scale. Research actions. Fundamental research is needed to address this very complex question and a number of new techniques have become available to begin to address this issue. In order to address questions related to the possible effects of anthropogenic noise on cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area, a number of research projects need to be initiated. These may include: (1) a collaborative and co-ordinated temporal and geographic mapping of local ambient noise (both anthropogenic and biological noise) coupled with similar mapping of the distribution and abundance of cetaceans within the agreement area; this will provide the essential baseline information to allow identification of potential areas/times of highest risk and the beginning of an evaluation of the possible relationship between abundance and distribution and noise levels; (2) the compilation of a reference signature database that is made publicly available, to assist in identifying the source of potentially damaging</p>	<p>Mediterranean be assessed and communicated to relevant authorities and noise producers (e.g. national Navies, NATO, seismic exploration companies, permitting authorities, etc) to prevent the use of high intensity noise in potentially high density or highly suitable areas for this species. Accordingly, the so-called “Ziphius modelling initiative” was initiated to strengthen understanding of Cuvier’s beaked whale ecology in large portions of the Agreement area where such knowledge is currently absent, and is currently in progress in collaboration with a number of research groups holding effort and sighting data in the area, under the coordination of A. Cañadas.</p>	<p>(c) Parties and bodies responsible for the establishment of MPAs in the ACCOBAMS area to incorporate concern for noise into management plans for MPA establishment (see also Action 8). Furthermore, Parties to recommend avoiding any significant production of man-made noise in cetacean MPAs of their jurisdiction, and competent authorities to recommend avoiding producing significant noise in MPAs beyond national jurisdiction, as well as in particular in areas containing critical habitat of cetaceans likely to be affected by man-made sound.</p> <p>(d) Parties to recommend using special caution and transparency in the production of underwater noise in the Agreement area,. This will involve including in national reports to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat the listing of any activity that Parties may have authorised likely to introduce in the environment harmful underwater noise, with adequate details on area, time, and type of noise involved.</p> <p>(e) The Scientific Committee to start an effort to map noise in the ACCOBAMS area to detect sites most affected and determine if cetacean critical habitats are involved.</p> <p>(f) The Secretariat and Parties to strengthen stranding networks throughout the Agreement area (see Action 3), and provide for an increase in the abilities to promptly investigate and intervene in case of Atypical Mass Strandings (see Action 10). This should include creating capacity to collect tissues and perform necropsies, in manners that are appropriate to detect the occurrence of gas and fat embolic syndrome in stranded cetaceans.</p>
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		<p>sounds (in conjunction with the mapping exercise above); (3) assessing the potential acoustic risk for individual target species from consideration of their acoustic capabilities and characteristics; (4) the carrying out of targeted, well-defined experiments to identify and quantify the actual and potential risk for individual species (including particularly vulnerable classes of animals such as calves), with a view <i>inter alia</i> to refine and test existing guidelines on the use of noise in the context of cetaceans (e.g. seismic exploration and other specific human activities that involve underwater sound) and where appropriate, develop new guidelines. The ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (supplemented as necessary by appropriate experts) should act as a review body for applications for such research in the ACCOBAMS area, and should develop a <i>pro forma</i> for such applications (which will <i>inter alia</i> consider any existing processes elsewhere in the world and the need within the ACCOBAMS agreement for an EIA); finally, it should reviews the results of such work within a specified timeframe.</p>		<p>(g) Parties and Secretariat to support ongoing international efforts in the development and adoption of vessel-quieting technologies.</p>
6	<i>Ship strikes</i>			
		<p>The potential threat of ship collisions to the conservation of some cetacean populations in the ACCOBAMS area, especially of large whales, is significant. The two species most vulnerable within the area are the fin whale and the sperm whale. Such threat has been exacerbated by the increase in vessel traffic, including fast ferries, over recent years, throughout the area including within existing sanctuary areas. Actions to be undertaken under this topic fall under two headings: assessment of impact at the population level and development of mitigation measures. This work can and should continue in parallel. An <i>ad hoc</i> workshop is planned in the near future, to address and plan actions to address both aspects of the problem. (1) Determination of the impact of ship collisions on the most vulnerable populations. Understanding the potential impact of ship collisions requires knowledge of (a) the number of mortalities and (b) the size of the affected populations. With respect to (a) Riparian States should be encouraged to improve reporting of ship strikes. The importance of evidence from both post-mortem information from strandings networks and the ACCOBAMS central database (see Item 4.1.18) and photo-identification studies (photographs may contain evidence of non-lethal encounters with vessels) in this regard is also recognised. With respect to (b) this action will interface with Work Programme Action n. 1, .Comprehensive cetacean population estimates and distribution in the ACCOBAMS Area. (see above). Also the potential monitoring value of observations from vessels following regular routes (e.g. ferries) should be investigated further. (2) Development of effective mitigation measures. Whilst determination of the impact on cetaceans at the</p>	<p>A workshop on large whale ship strike in the Mediterranean Sea was held in Monaco (14-15 November 2005) in collaboration with the PELAGOS Sanctuary. The main objectives of the workshop were to synthesize the knowledge of ship strikes of fin, sperm, and other large whales in the Mediterranean Sea; to determine data gaps vital to a more comprehensive assessment of the issue; and to discuss and prioritise mitigation and management measures that might effectively be employed to address the issue.</p> <p>The Scientific Committee welcomed and endorsed the report of the workshop and in order to maintain the momentum generated by the initiative, recommended creating a Coordination Group to detail and prioritise the research and management recommendations developed during the Workshop.</p> <p>Coordination Group was established in 2006.</p>	<p><u>Resolution 3.14</u></p> <p>The Coordination Group will detail and prioritise the research and management recommendations developed during the November 2005 Workshop, by liaising with Parties and Range States to obtain information to identify zones containing critical habitat of cetaceans susceptible to be impacted by colliding vessels (also on the basis of mathematical models to predict whales' presence and risk levels), where mitigation measures could be prescribed to transiting vessels.</p> <p>This will be achieved by: (a) reporting from maritime companies, through top-down (i.e., regulatory) and bottom-up (i.e., awareness, involvement) approaches; (b) reporting of ship strikes referring to available evidence from post-mortem (through detailed necropsies) information from strandings networks; (c) reporting of ship strikes referring to photo-identification studies (photographs may contain evidence of non-lethal encounters with vessels); (d) mapping the temporal and geographic</p>

		<p>population level helps to clarify the priority that mitigation against ship strikes might have in any overall conservation plan, it is in both the interests of cetaceans and shipping companies that ship strikes be minimised towards zero. This will require research (initially focussing on fin and sperm whales) at a number of related levels and should include consideration of existing research and management actions (e.g. concerning the case of the North Atlantic right whale and the collaboration with the Pelagos Sanctuary and the SNCM activities): (a) mapping the temporal and geographic distribution and abundance of cetaceans (see above) in relationship to similar information on vessel traffic. Parties and other Riparian States are encouraged to assist in the provision of relevant information on shipping routes and frequencies; (b) behavioural and physiological research (including controlled exposure experiments) into the reasons some cetaceans do not avoid collisions with vessels; and (c) examination of methods that might be used by vessel personnel and ship designers to avoid collisions.</p>		<p>distribution and abundance of cetaceans in relationship to similar information on vessel traffic.</p> <p>This will ultimately lead to the creation of a Mediterranean network, including ACCOBAMS Range States, ACCOBAMS Partners, different research institutes, and concerned shipping organisations to build a central data base on ship strike data, to facilitate information exchange and data sharing. A link with the IWC vessel strike data standardisation group will be established. Concurrently, while these information are achieved and critical areas for involved species are identified, the mitigation measures proposed during the workshop will be initially tested in targeted areas, and successively, if proved to be efficient, proposed for implementation on a wider scale.</p>
7	<i>Whale-watching</i>			
		<p>ACCOBAMS work on this subject has produced thus far 1) the Guidelines for commercial cetacean watching activities in the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area., and 2) a web-based, searchable database of commercial whale watching operators in the ACCOBAMS area (http://www.accobams.org/activities/index.htm) to collect information on whale watching activities throughout the Agreement area, and to provide an updated source of information on whale watching operations in the region. Such preparatory work was needed to support Parties and Range States in the timely adoption of appropriate legislation and rules while the industry is developing, and to enable the gathering of updated knowledge on whale watching activities throughout the Agreement area. Such knowledge will be essential for the description of the industry's development, for the assessment of its potential impact on the targeted cetacean populations, for the assessment of the conservation, scientific, educational and economic values of whale watching, and, ultimately, for the orderly management of such activities. Actions to be undertaken include: (1) the use of the web-based database to its full potential, to thoroughly collect relevant information and provide the Parties, on their next Meeting, with a</p>	<p>The Secretariat has started monitoring the status of whale-watching activities within the Agreement area, in cooperation with the PELAGOS Sanctuary. This includes the preparation of information material for operators, the definition of an eco-label, the updating of the ACCOBAMS website, and a census of operators.</p>	<p><u>Resolution 3.23</u> Work should be continued by the Secretariat to maintain and update a database of commercial whale watching operators in the Agreement area, in cooperation with the PELAGOS Sanctuary, to maintain a census of the operators, monitor the industry's development and growth and identify potential problems before they become too difficult to manage.</p> <p>The development of an eco-label on whale watching will continue in cooperation with the Pelagos Sanctuary.</p> <p>The whale watching guidelines currently adopted by ACCOBAMS will be kept updated on a regular basis.</p>

		comprehensive report on commercial whale watching activities in the Agreement area. The cooperation of the Parties and Range States in this task will be essential, through formal requests to operators active in areas within their jurisdiction to supply all the information needed (and already specified in the database). The Scientific Committee is directed to charge its Regional Representatives to ensure the full cooperation and awareness of relevant operators. (2) Promoting the development of responsible whale watching as a complementary or alternative activity to problematic practices (e.g., fishing in competitive situations with dolphins). Based on <i>ad hoc</i> , site-specific recommendations from the Scientific Committee, Parties should explore the possibilities of such development through awareness, capacity building, and legal and economic facilitation initiatives. (3) Given the evolving nature of whale watching and the complexity which intrinsic in the regulation of this industry, the existing guidelines should be constantly improved as appropriate on the basis of newly available information and experience, keeping into account that operational procedures must be tailored to each specific case. The Scientific Committee is therefore encouraged to maintain a Working Group tasked with further elaborating and updating the guidelines, particularly in cooperation with existing organizations active in whale watching hot spots such as the Pelagos Sanctuary.		
8	Marine Protected Areas			
		The issue of how to proceed with marine protected areas (MPAs) was discussed during the second meeting of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS (Istanbul, 20-22 November 2003), where it was recalled that the Parties to ACCOBAMS adopted a Resolution (Resolution 1.9) on the implementation of conservation priorities, which included 18 actions in its Annex. Of these, Action n° 4 (<i>Development and implementation of pilot conservation and management actions in well-defined key areas containing critical habitat for populations belonging to priority species</i>) identified four initial areas: (a) the coastal waters of western Greece and the small islands archipelago centred around Kalamos (short-beaked common dolphins); (b) the coastal area of southern Crimea, Ukraine, comprised between Cape Sarych and Cape Khersones (harbour porpoises and Black Sea common bottlenose dolphins); (c) the offshore waters of southern Crete, Greece (sperm whales); and (d) the waters of the Lošinj - Creš Archipelago, Croatia (Mediterranean common bottlenose dolphins); each of them containing important habitat for one of the four species of the Agreement area thought as being in greatest need of protection (.priority species.), in which pilot conservation and management projects be developed and implemented as soon as possible. Conservation measures envisaged would involve the establishment of MPAs encompassing critical habitat	In response to requests from the Parties (contained in Resolution 2.4) the Scientific Committee, during an <i>ad hoc</i> workshop which was held as a side event to its 4 th meeting, (a) drafted criteria for the selection of MPAs for cetaceans (a task which can be significantly supported by the rapidly developing methods of spatial modelling), (b) adopted a special format for cetacean MPA proposals prepared by the Secretariat, and (c) made recommendations concerning sites in the Agreement area known to contain important cetacean habitats (listed in Annex 5 to the Report of the 4 th Meeting of the Scientific Committee), which could be candidate areas for the establishment of special MPAs. In 2006, the Republic of Croatia proclaimed preventive protection of important habitat for the Mediterranean common bottlenose dolphin in the area of Creš-Lošinj	<u>Resolution 3.22</u> The Secretariat, in cooperation with the Scientific Committee, to interact with relevant bodies (e.g., the European Commission, the RAC/SPA and the Black Sea Commission) to make full use of existing regulations to promote the establishment of MPAs for cetaceans in the Agreement area. Parties and Range States to communicate to the Secretariat candidate areas within their territorial waters and the adjacent high seas to be considered as cetacean MPAs, and to be organised within an Agreement-wide network of cetacean MPAs. Parties having the responsibility of cetacean MPAs to ensure that these are provided with adequate management and monitoring, to ensure maximum

	<p>of the targeted species, and the adoption of experimental management plans with the involvement of local people and user groups. In its Resolution 1.9 (paragraph 8), the Meeting of Parties called on the Scientific Committee to further develop the actions needed to implement the priorities listed and described in Annex 1 . . . During its first Meeting (Tunis, 3-5 October), the Scientific Committee addressed this issue, and remarked that MPAs containing critical habitat of priority and other species should also be envisaged in other areas in addition to the four identified by the Meeting of the Parties. It was thus decided that proposals for additional areas in which to undertake such actions should be solicited from the conservation community at large, possibly through the Regional Representatives of the Scientific Committee, and sent to the Scientific Committee for an evaluation. In order to proceed in this direction, the four Regional Representatives within the Scientific Committee were requested on 28 May 2004 to solicit proposals from the scientific and conservation community at large for the future consideration and possible designation of MPAs to protect cetacean critical habitat in the Agreement area. The following procedure is envisaged to make further progress in addressing the issue of MPAs in the ACCOBAMS context. (1) Criteria for the establishment of special protected areas for cetacean conservation should be drafted by the Scientific Committee and submitted for adoption by the Contracting Parties. (2) A special format should be prepared for the proposal of protected areas for cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area, adapted from the existing format for the proposal of SPAMIs, and considering the criteria adopted under point (1). (3) Knowledge of the existence and location of sites containing important cetacean habitat in the Agreement area should be gathered by the Scientific Committee through its Regional Representatives in cooperation with the relevant Sub-regional Coordinating Units. Such sites may be located either in the territorial waters of the Agreement's Riparian States, or in the high seas, or in both. (4) Detailed investigations are performed in such sites, to assess whether they fulfil the criteria mentioned in (1). 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; and 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. (5) If the above investigations provide convincing arguments in favour of the establishment of an MPA in a particular site, and the criteria are fulfilled, a formal proposal should be prepared by the Scientific Committee in co-operation with the</p>	<p>Archipelago, in the category of a Special Marine Reserve.</p>	<p>effectiveness.</p> <p>Parties and bodies responsible for the establishment of MPAs in the ACCOBAMS area to incorporate concern for noise into management plans for MPA (see Action 5B).</p> <p>As far as the establishment of specific MPAs recommended by the Scientific Committee is concerned, Parties are urged to:</p> <p>(a) proceed with their 2002 commitment to establish MPAs in Kalamos, Greece (for common and bottlenose dolphins), western Crete + S. Peloponnesus, Greece (for sperm and Cuvier's beaked whales), and Cape Sarych to Cape Khersones, SW Crimea, Ukraine (for bottlenose and common dolphins and harbour porpoises), with a special urgency and concern for the situation of Kalamos (see also Actions 2A and 4C).</p> <p>(b) consider the establishment of MPAs having special importance for Mediterranean common dolphins (as indicated in the Conservation Plan), including: (i) Alborán Sea, Spain-Morocco-Algeria; (ii) waters surrounding the island of Malta and south-eastern Sicily, Italy; (iii) Eastern Ionian Sea and Gulf of Corinth, Greece; (iv) Gulf of Saronikos and adjacent waters (Argo-Saronikos and southern South Evvoikos Gulf), Greece; (v) waters surrounding the Northern Sporades, Greece; (vi) Northern Aegean Sea, Greece; and (vii) waters surrounding the Dodekanese, Greece.</p> <p>(c) recommend the completion of the establishment of an MPA in the waters</p>
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		concerned Riparian State(s), using the special format mentioned in (2). (6) Proposals are submitted to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration and further action.		<p>surrounding the island of Ischia (south-eastern Tyrrhenian Sea, Italy) to protect cetaceans, to mitigate threats to Mediterranean common dolphins such as boat disturbance and uncontrolled fishing.</p> <p>(d) to give full consideration to the creation of the following MPAs in the Black Sea (as recommended by the Scientific Committee): (i) Cape Anaklia to Sarp (Georgia), representing winter habitat for common dolphins and harbour porpoises; (iii) Kerch Strait (Ukraine, Russia), used by semi-resident Black Sea bottlenose dolphins and as a migration corridor for several thousand harbour porpoises moving to and from the Azov Sea, and (iii) the Turkish Strait System and the Marmara Sea;</p> <p>(e) to give careful consideration as candidate MPAs to two further areas, identified by the Scientific Committee: (i) the Strait of Sicily including associated islands (Italy, Malta, Tunisia, high seas), where preliminary data suggest that this highly productive area linking the eastern and western Mediterranean, containing a major tanker shipping lane, comprises important habitat for several cetaceans including fin whales and bottlenose and common dolphins; and (ii) Amvrakikòs Gulf (internal waters of Greece), a semi-enclosed area inhabited by about 150 bottlenose dolphins in one of the world's highest densities for this species.</p>
9	<i>Emergency Task Force</i>			
		During the First Meeting of the Parties a number of implementation priorities were adopted, including one concerning the establishment of an .Emergency Task Force for special mortality events.. The Parties recognised that "In recent years the Agreement area has been the scene of major cetacean mortality events, involving mass strandings over	The Scientific Committee agreed that for optimal effectiveness the Emergency Task Force (ETF) should be subdivided in different sections, having different expertise requirements, respectively addressing: (a)	<u>Resolution 3.29</u> The Secretariat, with the support of the Scientific Committee and the SRCUs, to proceed with the establishment of two Task Forces (ETFs):

	<p>wide geographical areas, which have evoked great concern and have attracted considerable attention from the scientific community. To face possible new mortality outbreaks, as well as major accidental events affecting cetacean populations or their critical habitats, the establishment of a Task Force for marine mammal mortality and special events, formed by international experts, is highly recommended. When necessary, and if requested by the Secretariat, the Task Force will convene and arrange for a small team of experts to assess the situation on the ground and advise national groups. The development of intervention protocols and of code of conducts to be followed in case of emergency situations should also be included within the tasks of such group". The following steps are proposed, in order to support the expeditious implementation of an ACCOBAMS Emergency Task Force (ETF): (1) Establishment of the ETF, having the primary role to determine when an unusual event is occurring, and directing responses to such event. The Secretariat is directed to draft a roster of contact persons and experts from the scientific and conservation communities and from governmental environment and natural resource agencies, contributing with appropriate fields of expertise (e.g., pathology, epidemiology, toxicology, biology, ecology, acoustics), to volunteer and remain on call in case of emergency. Geographic considerations should be considered as well in making the appointments. Appointment of the members will be done by the Secretariat in cooperation with the Parties, for the duration of the intersessional period. The use of volunteer support in specific circumstances should be considered. (2) Coordination of response to unusual events should be the responsibility of the Secretariat, or person delegated by the Secretariat. The ETF may be called upon to provide its expertise when unusual events occur. It may be envisaged that emergencies might be generally addressed by putting ETF members in contact with local correspondents or officials on the site of concern, to provide guidance and assistance by telephone or email, and only in exceptional cases by dispatching one or more ETF members on the event site. (3) Preparation by the Scientific Committee of a contingency plan including a list of the possible events for which the ETF may be called upon (e.g., epizootic outbreaks, massive oil or toxic chemicals spills in known cetacean critical habitat, cetacean mass mortality of unknown cause); a description of procedures and modalities for the interventions, of the decision-making process, and of the management of information, communication and relationship with the media. For each event type, a set of protocols and guidelines will be prepared detailing actions that the ETF should undertake, as soon as it is notified of the event. Consultation is recommended with disaster management experts from the Agreement Range States, as well from</p>	<p>unusual mortality events including epizootics and atypical mass strandings (e.g. of beaked whales caused by anthropogenic sound), (b) oil or chemical spill affecting cetacean critical habitat, and (c) single individual emergencies: live stranding, net entrapment, entrapment in a bay or harbour.</p> <p>Concerning (a) the Committee recommended hiring a consultant to prepare a contingency plan. The Committee also recognized the need for a network to be established as well, and that specialized pathologists be trained. With respect to oil or chemical spill (b) it was agreed to pursue the contacts with REMPEC and Black Sea Commission in order to define a collaborative effort. Concerning a different category of emergencies, related to cases in which a single cetacean requires specialised intervention (e.g., in cases of live stranding, net entrapment, entrapment in a bay or harbour), the Scientific Committee advised that such cases be dealt with under the actions described under 3A (live strandings).</p> <p>For the "mass mortality" ETF a contingency plan is currently being prepared by a consultant hired by the Secretariat.</p>	<p>(a) A "mass mortality" ETF to address unusual mortality events including epizootics and atypical mass strandings (e.g. of beaked whales caused by anthropogenic sound). A workshop of experts will be organised as soon as possible to examine the draft "Guidelines for a Coordinated Cetacean Stranding Response" and finalise guidelines and procedures. Parties should ensure that appropriate support be given to implementation of the plan wherever such implementation falls within their competence.</p> <p>(b) A "maritime disaster" ETF to address oil or chemical spills affecting cetacean critical habitat. The Secretariat to contact REMPEC and its Black Sea homologous organisation within the Bucharest Convention framework in order to define a collaborative effort, as appropriate.</p>
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		<p>other States where organisms similar to the ETF have been established, to take advantage of pre-existing experience. (3) The contingency plan should be periodically updated, based on past experiences and the development of new techniques and technologies. (4) When appropriate, training and drills should be organised to enhance the effectiveness of the ETF. (5) An emergency fund should be established to enable the timely implementation of the ETF activities (e.g., to compensate experts for the costs incurred in acting in accordance with the contingency plan).</p>		
10	<i>Capacity building</i>			
		<p>Efforts will continue to implement ACCOBAMS strategy for capacity building (inf. 9), to ensure that the abilities needed to fulfil its mandate are available. Such strategy simultaneously addresses the technical, financial and administrative aspects, and strives to strengthen: (a) the institutional capacity of the Agreement itself and of its organs (Meeting of Parties, Bureau, Secretariat, and Scientific Committee), as well as that of the Parties. public administrations, the research and teaching institutions, the media and non-governmental advocacy organisations; (b) the technical capacity of working on the priorities adopted by the Parties in the different fields concerned (e.g., management, science, training, education, public awareness), including individual capacity building of law enforcers, MPA managers, researchers, teachers, media operators, etc.; and (c) the fundraising capacity to secure from both the public and private sectors the financial resources needed to fulfil the goals and objectives of the Agreement. Other elements of this capacity building strategy keep into account the following considerations: (a) The current heterogeneity of the distribution of management and research abilities across the Agreement area must be addressed through diffused training initiatives encompassing the full range of needed expertise, coupled with follow-up support to the trainees once they return to their home bases. (b) Existing research teams with proven expertise and a sound professional record, currently functioning as repositories of cetacean conservation know-how in the area, should be supported and utilised to their full potential to promote the diffusion of relevant capacity. (c) To facilitate access to specialised literature, currently insufficiently available in most of the Agreement area, efforts should be made to create digital libraries to be distributed electronically to corresponding research teams, and support should be provided to existing libraries containing significant cetological bibliographic collections, to ensure continued updating and expansion, to facilitate access to information to the local scientific community, and to provide a framework for capacity building that will encourage documented cetacean research in the Agreement area. (d) The cooperation of all</p>		<p><u>Resolution 3.27</u> Work should proceed along the lines adopted at MOP2.</p> <p>In addition, the following aspects have been identified as particularly relevant:</p> <p>(a) the implementation of Stranding networks in countries where they still don't exist (see Action 3A);</p> <p>(b) a need for improving necropsy skills to detect disease and noise-induced trauma (see Actions 3A and 5), as well as blunt trauma and other evidence of ship strike (see Action 6).</p> <p>(c) develop greater analytical abilities relevant to conservation science, such as those needed to apply spatial modelling techniques to survey data to develop predictive habitat descriptions as a collective exercise (see Action 5), population genetics, population assessment (e.g. line transect, photo-id mark-recapture), and acoustics.</p> <p>(d) photo-identification skills involving the ability of collecting workable photographs from cetacean populations, and apply dedicated software developed through "Euroflukes" (a joint ACCOBAMS – ECS programme) to perform matching of</p>

		<p>individuals and institutions already engaging in capacity building in the ACCOBAMS area with independent programmes are solicited within the wider framework of the Agreement capacity building strategy, through appropriate coordination by the Secretariat. (e) Existing research and teaching organisations in States from the southern and eastern Mediterranean and Black seas should be involved in the development of bilateral or multilateral projects on cetacean research and management in cooperation with other countries, in the promotion of post-graduate programs conducted to develop research activities in their waters in collaboration with universities having expertise in this subject, and in facilitating the participation of their researchers in capacity building activities supported by ACCOBAMS.</p>		<p>identified individuals within and across different study projects.</p>
11	<i>Granting of exceptions</i>			
			<p>The “Framework guidelines on the granting of exceptions for the purpose of non-lethal in situ research aimed at maintaining a favourable conservation status for cetaceans”, prepared by a consultant hired by the Secretariat, were examined and reviewed by the Scientific Committee.</p> <p>Considering the concerns expressed by the Committee about the complexity of the matter and the potential problems raised by the strictness of the proposed measures, a working group was established within the Committee to review by e-mail the technical part of the guidelines. The Secretariat will be in charge of reviewing the administrative part.</p> <p>A major objective of the working group, in addition to establishing a set of well-considered, precautionary guidelines to protect cetaceans from unnecessary harm, was to render the process smooth and to avoid creation of a mechanism that could impede or even preclude worthy research in the ACCOBAMS area as investigators are forced to wait to gain approval of their research projects.</p> <p>A draft document containing suggested modifications is in preparation, and will be circulated to the SC members for additional</p>	<p>The Secretariat to complete the work in cooperation with the Scientific Committee, which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the completion of the legal and administrative aspects involved; • the completion of the technical aspects involved; • a “pro-forma”; • a set of “instructions” on how to best apply the guidelines and complete the pro-forma; • testing and fine-tuning of the process. <p>The Scientific Committee will achieve the document for the Fifth Bureau Meeting and test the guidelines to present a finalised document to MoP 4.</p>

			comments and revisions. Annex II to the draft guidelines (“Technical indicators for acceptable research methods and equipment”) was also modified, describing different research techniques and prescribing best-practice approaches to be followed on a case-by-case basis.	
12	<i>Captivity related issues</i>			
	A. Release of cetaceans into the wild		The “Guidelines on release of cetaceans into the wild”, prepared by a WDCCS were examined and adopted by the Scientific Committee.	<u>Resolution 3.20, 3.25</u> Guidelines to be disseminated by the Secretariat among Parties and Range States in the Agreement area, and commitment to be made by Parties to ensure their application.
	B. Dolphin Assisted Therapy (DAT)		The trade for the captivity industry of dolphins in the Agreement area, some of which possibly originate from the Black Sea, is apparently continuing, and captures of bottlenose dolphins in Mediterranean waters are reported to be ongoing, under authorisation by the Turkish Government. The available information points to a growth of the use of dolphins in DAT facilities across the Agreement area, which fuels such upsurge of dolphin captures. The Scientific Committee expressed concern (Recommendation 4.11) about such proliferation, leading to the possible introduction of non-native species/ subspecies/ populations into the Agreement area, and to the risk of disease transmission resulting from the keeping of non-native cetaceans in sea pens.	<u>Resolution 3.13</u> The Secretariat and Parties to raise awareness among Mediterranean government officials, NGOs and the public at large about the predominantly commercial nature of DAT, and concerns from a cetacean conservation perspective , to organise a series of events with this goal, in cooperation with the Scientific Committee and the ACCOBAMS Partners.
13	A. CMS Amendments		A proposal for the inclusion of individual species in CMS appendices, to be submitted to the upcoming CMS C.o.P. by the Principality of Monaco, was presented and adopted by the Scientific Committee. The Monaco proposal was subsequently adopted by CMS, resulting with the inclusion of Mediterranean short-beaked common dolphins in Appendix I and short-beaked common, striped and bottlenose dolphins	The Scientific Committee to examine whether other cetacean populations in the Agreement area deserve listing in the CMS appendices, and suggest action to the Secretariat for proposals for inclusion.

			for the whole of the Mediterranean in Appendix II of the Convention.	
	B. Directive habitat			The Scientific Committee to contribute in the revision of the Habitat Directive Annexes.
14	<i>Emergency issues</i>			
	A. Climate change		It is recognised that global climate change is occurring and some scenarios envisage rapid environmental changes to occur in particular in the marine ecosystems of the Agreement area.	<u>Resolution 3.19</u> The Secretariat is directed to organise, in cooperation with the Scientific Committee and concerned ACCOBAMS partners, and other related organisation (IWC, IOC, etc.) a meeting of experts to discuss (a) prospected and suspected impacts of a sea temperature increase on the cetacean populations in the Agreement area, (b) implications of such impacts for the current conservation effort (e.g., a discussion of the application of current IUCN Red List criteria in the light of climate change), (c) recommendations for monitoring and research programmes to understand and detect climate change effects on cetaceans in the Agreement area, and (d) suggest possible mitigation measures.
	B. Solid debris (marine litter)			The Scientific Committee is directed to discuss during its next meeting the conservation relevance for cetaceans in the Agreement area of entanglement in, and ingestion of, solid debris (plastics, pieces of fishing gear, and other materials) in collaboration with Organizations involved in Turtles conservation.

RESOLUTION 3.5

STRENGTHENING THE STATUS OF ACCOBAMS PARTNERS

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

Recognizing the significant role played by many organizations and institutions in the conservation of cetaceans in the Agreement area;

Desirous of strengthening the involvement of qualified organizations and institutions in implementation of ACCOBAMS and of encouraging them to undertake further action to achieve the Agreement's objectives;

Recalling Resolution 1.13 on the rules for conferring the status of 'ACCOBAMS Partner' adopted by the first Meeting of Parties;

Taking note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the activities of ACCOBAMS Partners in the past triennium;

1. *Adopts* the new criteria and rules for the status of 'ACCOBAMS Partner' with retroactive effect, together with the formats annexed to this Resolution.

ANNEX I
Rules and criteria for the status of ACCOBAMS Partner

Criteria for applying to the status of ACCOBAMS Partner

Recognizing that organizations and institutions technically qualified for the conservation of cetaceans that are formally recognized as ACCOBAMS Partners by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties will be expected to contribute on a regular basis and to the best of their ability to the further development of policies, technical and scientific tools of the Agreement and to their application, the status of Partner shall be conferred on organizations and institutions that have:

- (a) a statement of purpose that explicitly, or by clear implication, includes conservation of cetaceans and of their habitat, man-cetacean interactions or other activities relevant to the Agreement (without profit);
- (b) experience in providing support to and/or implementing practical research, collection and analysis of information or other educational and training activities that contribute to cetacean conservation;
- (c) demonstrated experience in implementing partnership ventures, such as for training and education, technical and scientific expertise, policy development or evaluation and assessment, particularly when such ventures would bring new and additional benefits to the functioning of the ACCOBAMS partnership;
- (d) a reputation for being willing and able to cooperate with national and international governmental and nongovernmental bodies;
- (e) stated their readiness to contribute actively on a regular basis to further development of policies and tools of the Agreement and their application, particularly by assisting Contracting Parties to meet their obligations under the Agreement; and
- (f) as a preferential qualification, already communicated with the Secretariat and cooperated with ACCOBAMS in the achievement of its objectives.

Rules and commitments of ACCOBAMS Partners

1. Partners shall present at the beginning of their mandate a programme of collaboration with the Secretariat during the triennium. The programme shall be relevant to their contribution to the Agreement in terms of activities carried out in the frame of the Partnership, related to the conservation plan and/or support to the Secretariat.
2. Partners shall commit themselves to make proper use of the ACCOBAMS Partners logo in compliance with the mission and the principles of the Agreement and its conservation plan.
3. At each Meeting of the Parties, the ACCOBAMS Partners should report on implementation of their collaborative programme with ACCOBAMS and on use of the ACCOBAMS Partner logo. To this end, their reports should reach the Secretariat at least 2 months before the Bureau meeting held to prepare the Meeting of the Parties. Parties may decide to withdraw the status of Partner if no activities are reported, if they are considered not to be relevant and if they are contrary to achievement of ACCOBAMS goals.
4. Partners shall be invited to participate in an observer capacity and as advisors in all activities of the Agreement, except when otherwise decided by the Meeting of the Parties.

5. ACCOBAMS Partners shall communicate regularly with the Secretariat concerning activities related to ACCOBAMS objectives. They are also encouraged to share information, including their publications, with their National Focal Points.
6. Partners may also be invited, if required, to contribute to evaluation of project proposals, project implementation and evaluation of project results and to participate in the development of policy and technical and/or scientific instruments for application of the Agreement.
7. Where appropriate, each application from (Appendix 1) of potential Partner should be submitted to the relevant National Focal Point(s) for their opinion, and this opinion should be transmitted to the Bureau to help facilitate a decision.

Appendix 1

Application for the Status of ACCOBAMS' Partner

To the ACCOBAMS Secretariat
Les Terrasses de Fontvieille, Jardin de l'UNESCO
MC-98000 Monaco

The _____ (*name of the Organization / Institution*) represented by _____ in quality of _____ with the aim to apply for the ACCOBAMS Partner Status and in Accordance with Annex 1 to Resolution 3.5, declares the following characteristics apply to the Organization/Institution:

	YES	NO
1. Having a statement of purpose that explicitly, or by clear implication, includes conservation of cetaceans and of their habitat, man-cetacean interactions or other activities relevant to the Agreement (without profit);		
2. Having experience in providing support to and/or implementing practical research, collection and analysis of information or other educational and training activities that contribute to cetacean conservation		
3. Having demonstrated experience in implementing partnership ventures, such as for training and education, technical and scientific expertise, policy development or evaluation and assessment, particularly when such ventures would bring new and additional benefits to the functioning of the ACCOBAMS partnership		
4. Having a reputation for being willing and able to cooperate with national and international governmental and nongovernmental bodies including Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations		
5. Having stated their readiness to contribute actively on a regular basis to further development of policies and tools of the Agreement and their application, particularly by assisting Contracting Parties to meet their obligations under the Agreement		
6. Having already communicated with the Secretariat and cooperated with ACCOBAMS in the achievement of its objectives		

The _____ (*name of the Organization / Institution*) provides as well:

- a. a copy of its Status (original and a certified translation into English)
- b. Curriculum Vitae
- c. the following information:

Address, telephone, email and website	
Statute and mission	
Collaboration with other organizations	
Main reason to request Partnership	Expected benefits to ACCOBAMS
	----- Expected benefits to the Organization / Institution
Please list below ideas for planned or proposed activities relevant for the achievement of ACCOBAMS goals and to be carried under the logo of ACCOBAMS Partnership	

Date and place

Signature

RESOLUTION 3.6

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROJECTS

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

Considering that implementation of the Agreement requires the development and implementation of projects for research and conservation that are in line with the objectives and priorities of ACCOBAMS;

Recalling that, as part of its functions defined in the Agreement, the Scientific Committee should provide advice on the development and coordination of international research and monitoring programmes;

Desirous of encouraging scientists, intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations to consult with the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS when developing research and conservation projects;

1. *Adopts* the procedure in Annex 1 to this Resolution for reviewing projects submitted to the Scientific Committee for support;
2. *Instructs* the Secretariat to provide a letter of support for each project accepted by the Scientific Committee and to inform the Focal Point(s) of the Member State(s) in which the proposed project will be carried out.

ANNEX 1

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROJECTS

Aim

Given the need to ascertain that the objectives and methods of ACCOBAMS are fully reflected in projects for implementation of the Agreement, this document provides a framework for submitting requests to the Secretariat for endorsement or financial support.

Framework

Between sessions, the Scientific Committee may be asked by the Secretariat to evaluate research or management proposals on the form presented in Appendix 2. Any request for endorsement or financial support from ACCOBAMS should proceed as follows:

- (1) Proposals will be examined three times per year (15 January, 1 May and 1 October).
- (2) Projects should be sent to the Secretariat in the format in Appendix 1, which can be downloaded from the ACCOBAMS web site or provided by the Secretariat upon request.
- (3) The format and the project will then be submitted by the Chair for evaluation by a relevant group of experts created by the Scientific Committee. The evaluation will be circulated to the Scientific Committee by the Chair, with a copy to the Secretariat.
- (4) The author(s) of the project will receive comments within 30 days.
- (5) A letter of support should be sought from the National Focal Point of the country in which the project will be carried out.
- (6) If funding is to be provided, a contract will be established between the Secretariat and the person responsible for the project, specifying progress reports on the activity, instalments and the general conditions for funding and for implementation of the project, including commitments for co-financing, if any.

Scientific projects submitted for funding in the framework of the Supplementary Conservation Fund will be submitted to the Scientific Committee for evaluation and then to the Bureau for acceptance.

1.7 Justification (how the activities meet the priorities decided by the Parties)

(maximum 250 words)

1.8 Activities to be carried out and timetable

1.9 Budget estimates (mandatory for applications for financial support)

Please provide for each activity a breakdown of

- personnel
- non-consumable equipment
- consumables
- travel
- field work
- other (specify)

If the financial arrangements for the project include any other financial support for an extra funding, please provide detailed information on the amounts, the donor(s) and the relevant commitments.

1.10 Issues relevant to transfer of technology (mandatory for applications for financial support)

The project should include the concept of transfer of technology, with detailed proposals. Please provide information.

Appendix 2

PROJECT EVALUATION SHEET (*)

Project Title:

Applicant:

1. Are the project objectives inline with the objectives of ACCOBAMS?

Yes No

2. Do the proposed project will clearly contribute to the implementation of the Agreement and the priorities adopted by the Parties?

Yes No

If no, please explain why.

3. Do the proposed activities duplicate or overlap previous or ongoing projects?

Yes No

If yes please give details

4. General appreciation

The project is acceptable

The project needs improvements

Please specify

The project cannot be accepted

Please explain

5. Other suggestions and/or comments (if any)

Do you have collaboration relationship or conflicts with the applicant or with its staff or the proposed project team?

Yes

No

Name of the evaluator:.....
Date:.....

(*This evaluation sheet is to be used by the members of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS and the Sub-Regional Coordination Units to give their opinion about the projects proposed for funding under the Complementary Conservation Fund of ACCOBAMS. The final decision for awarding grants from the Supplementary Conservation Grants Fund is made by the Bureau of ACCOBAMS, on proposal of the Secretariat and, as far as relevant, the advice from the Scientific Committee and/or the Sub-Regional Coordination Units.

RESOLUTION 3.7

ACCOBAMS ONLINE REPORTING SYSTEM

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

Recalling that Article VIII (paragraph b) of the Agreement invites Parties to prepare for each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties a report on implementation of the Agreement;

Recalling also Resolution 1.8 concerning the establishment of a triennial national report format for ACCOBAMS;

Taking note of the ACCOBAMS online reporting system prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with the decision of the Second Meeting of the Parties (points 54 and 55), which invited the Secretariat to develop a system for online national reporting by the Parties and to submit it to the Third Meeting of the Parties;

1. *Instructs* the Secretariat to (i) make the online reporting system available on the ACCOBAMS web site, (ii) ensure its secure functioning and maintenance and (iii) assist ACCOBAMS national Focal Points in using it to submit their national reports;
2. *Invites* all Parties and non-Parties (on a voluntary basis for the latter) to use the online reporting system to submit their national reports;
3. *Invites* the Secretariat to collaborate with the secretariats of the CMS family and of other conventions and agreements under UNEP with the view to harmonizing and streamlining the reporting systems, including by establishing links among online reporting systems, where possible and appropriate;
4. *Invites* the Fourth Meeting of the Parties to evaluate the functioning and user-friendliness of the online reporting system in the light of experience and, if necessary, recommend any necessary changes.

RESOLUTION 3.8

STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION WITH THE GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

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

Deeply concerned that by-catches are by far the primary anthropogenic cause of mortality for most cetacean populations in the Mediterranean Sea;

Aware that effective combat against illegal unregulated and unreported fishing, still occurring in the ACCOBAMS area, is a prerequisite for addressing relations between fisheries and cetacean conservation successfully;

Recognizing that ecosystem-based fishery management can offer a real framework for the conservation of cetaceans;

Firmly convinced that such concerns can be addressed only by close collaboration between relevant regional fisheries and conservation bodies;

Recalling:

- Resolution 2.21 on the assessment and mitigation of the adverse impacts of interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities in the ACCOBAMS area;
 - Resolution 2.25 on prey depletion;
 - Resolution 3.11 on the Conservation Plan for Black Sea cetaceans;
 - Resolution 3.12 on by-catch, competitive interactions and acoustic devices; and
 - Amendment Resolution 3.2 on the use of driftnets:
1. *Expresses* its satisfaction with the collaboration established with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean Sea (GFCM) in developing the ByCBAMS project for assessing and mitigating the adverse impacts of interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities in the ACCOBAMS area, and in particular the work done by the Scientific Advisory Committee's Sub-committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems;
 2. *Recognizes* that further strengthening of the relations between ACCOBAMS and GFCM is essential for implementation of the fishery-related measures of ACCOBAMS;
 3. *Urges* the Secretariat to liaise with the GFCM Secretariat to find ways and means to strengthen their collaboration and, if relevant, to establish a memorandum of understanding to that end.

RESOLUTION 3.9

GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SYSTEM OF TISSUE BANKS WITHIN THE ACCOBAMS AREA AND THE ETHICAL CODE

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

On the recommendation of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee:

Stressing that:

- Parties' decisions on efficient conservation measures must be based on the best available scientific information; and
- The goal of the present resolution is to ensure that appropriate tissues from stranded, by-caught and other marine mammals are appropriately harvested, processed, stored and distributed;

Recalling that:

- Article II, paragraph 3 (e) of the Agreement invites Parties to reinforce the collection and dissemination of information;
- The Conservation Plan, which is fully part of the Agreement, binds the Parties to:
- Develop systematic research programmes on dead, stranded, wounded or sick animals to determine the main interactions with human activities and to identify present and potential threats (paragraph 4 (d));
- Develop systems for collecting data on observations, by-catches, strandings, epizootics and other phenomena related to cetaceans (paragraph 5 (a)); and
- Establish, as appropriate, a sub-regional or regional data bank for storing the information collected (paragraph 5 (e));

Recalling also:

- ACCOBAMS Resolution 1.10 on cooperation between national networks of cetacean strandings and the creation of a database;
- ACCOBAMS Resolution 2.8 concerning the granting of derogations related to Article II and in particular the non-lethal sampling of live cetacean tissues in the wild; and
- ACCOBAMS Resolution 2.10 on the facilitation of exchanges of tissue samples;

Aware that the usefulness of tissue banks is closely associated with the existence of effective stranding networks in the ACCOBAMS area;

Recognizing that stranding networks should be maintained in all Member States and established where they do not exist;

Taking advantage of the existence of a tissue bank in the ACCOBAMS area, the Marine Mammal Tissue Bank of the University of Padua;

1. *Adopts* the guidelines for establishment of a system of tissue banks within the ACCOBAMS Area and its ethical code as presented in the Annex 1 to this Resolution;
2. *Urges* Parties:
 - To promote the establishment of national tissue banks;
 - To make a long-term commitment to maintain the existence and functionality of national tissue banks;

- To ensure that local stranding networks, governmental organizations, non-profit organizations and any other agencies involved in responding to cetacean strandings contribute to national tissue banks (or, in the absence of a national bank, to the nearest regional tissue bank) by harvesting and sending tissue samples according to a recognized protocol;
- To help in establishing a specific tissue bank network; and
- To support existing local national tissue banks, promote their participation in the tissue bank network and facilitate in this respect exchange of tissues in the tissue bank network by arranging proper permits according to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

ANNEX 1

GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SYSTEM OF TISSUE BANKS WITHIN THE ACCOBAMS AREA AND THE ETHICAL CODE

Introduction

The Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS has recognized the need for Institutions dedicated to the preservation of body parts from marine mammals of the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Such Institutions, from now onward identified as Tissue Banks, should a) promote non-invasive or post-mortal collection of samples from cetaceans living in the Mediterranean and Black Seas and adjacent waters; b) prepare such samples for long term storage; and c) distribute them to the community of marine mammal researchers.

Tissue samples hold an enormous potential for scientific exploitation. Sampling skin fragments from living animals by non-lethal methods or removing tissues and organs from stranded animals may allow extensive studies of population health and dynamics, body structure and pathology, including viral pathology. Tissues may be studied comparing materials derived from geographically separated sites, or a given organ may be investigated in a series of animals that died several years apart. Furthermore, the availability of tissues from cetaceans may greatly improve studies on viral incidence, making it possible to compare lesions and/or viral genetics in outbreaks of epidemics that occurred several years one from the other or simultaneously in distant locations.

The importance of Tissue Banks increases when a single bank is flanked by a series of cooperating Institutions, each dedicated to preservation of body parts of marine mammals in a specific marine area. A network of banks (possibly one for each Member State) could ensure information and exchanges that are vital for scientific studies and could also promote prompt action in case of environmental emergencies (i.e. viral epidemics).

Following thorough examination of primary issues on cetacean mortality, anatomy, pathology and toxicology, and on methods for the collection and preservation of tissue samples, the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee has approved the purpose of establishing a network of Tissue Banks dedicated to harvesting, manipulation and storage of tissues sampled from cetaceans of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea..

Goals of the effort

The objective of the present Guidelines is to establish a network of Tissue Banks operating along the shores of the Mediterranean and Black Seas to collect tissues from stranded marine mammals and serve the Agreement by making available biological material, mostly deriving from stranded and by caught cetaceans, to the scientific community. Such material would then be used to promote knowledge, *inter alia*, on mortality causes, functional anatomy, physiology (including respiratory and diving physiology), toxicology, pathology (including infectious diseases), population structure, and trophic relationships of the region's cetaceans.

In an ideal context each ACCOBAMS Member State should work toward establishing a National Tissue Bank to serve the adjacent waters.

Samples from each Tissue Bank should be made available to the scientific community of cetacean researchers for free or at the lowest possible cost. Such costs should be – whenever possible – covered by Institutional funding to increase research opportunities.

Countries of the ACCOBAMS Agreement should support the tissue bank system in the general interest of environmental safety and animal and human health protection.

A coordinated network should be established to link all ACCOBAMS Tissue Banks and a Coordinator should be selected among the scientific personnel of the banks (see also below Super national Integration). The link should be extended also to scientist working toward establishing a Tissue Bank in a specific member State even before the bank opens officially, to ensure all potential assistance and support.

Goal of the network is also to prepare and maintain *on-line* databases available to the scientific community. Researchers may check the availability of a given specimen in real time and send motivated scientific requests for it. Each bank should be connected to the others by a continuous exchange of information and possess a specific CITES authorization to directly export/import from/to similar Institutions, avoid undue delays and fully operate within International authorizations.

A list of active tissue bank can be found in Appendix 1.

Procedures for the establishment and maintenance

Individual Tissue Banks who intend to work within the ACCOBAMS agreement should apply to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat providing an individual action plan based on the present Guidelines or eventual future revisions.

The action plan should include a Section dedicated to the existing equipment and personnel and to the funding perspectives.

The Secretariat will approve the action plan after consultation with the Scientific Committee and the Tissue Bank Working Group. Approval from ACCOBAMS Authorities will allow the new Tissue Bank to enter the existing network and ensure support from the Secretariat in every endeavour to obtain recognition and financial aid from Authorities of the relative Member State.

Once part of the ACCOBAMS network, each Tissue Bank should operate harmonically with the other similar Institutions and promote open exchanges of tissues and information with the other Tissue Banks. Eventual area conflicts and disagreements should be discussed within the Tissue Bank Working Group and possibly resolved with mutual cooperation. Failures to comply will be reported to the Scientific Committee and Secretariat for further arbitrate.

The existing Tissue Banks will establish contacts with all governmental and non-governmental Organizations interested in cetacean investigations and welfare. This action should take place within two years following approval of the present Guidelines. A specific ethical code is presented in Annex 1.

Contacts, exchanges, research programs should follow CITES protocols and International and National regulations concerning protected species. According to ACCOBAMS Resolution 2.10, each Country should designate a specific CITES structure responsible for the Permit procedures.

Super national Integration

The Tissue Bank network will communicate by establishing a *Tissue Bank Working Group* under the responsibility of a Coordinator elected every three years among the scientific personnel of the Tissue Banks. The *Tissue Bank Working Group* will report periodically to the Scientific Committee and will present a report of the activities at the Meetings of the Scientific Committee.

The activities of the *Tissue Bank Working Group* will be reported also to the Secretariat who will suggest specific action plans, research goals and topics of discussion according to the transnational situation.

Objectives, priorities of research and tissues to be stored for the existing and potential future Tissue Banks are established by continuous cooperation between the *Tissue Bank Working Group* and the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, and by periodical scientific meetings organized on a regular basis by the interested Institutions.

The ACCOBAMS Secretariat and Scientific Committee are responsible for changes and modification of the Guidelines for establishing Tissue Banks, with the Coordinator of the *Tissue Bank Working Group* acting as a Consultant of the Secretariat.

How to establish a Tissue Bank in an ACCOBAMS member State

Here follows a short summary of the ideal characteristics of an ACCOBAMS tissue bank

- The Tissue Bank should be hosted within an official Institution to ensure the proper scientific background, expertise, equipment and continuity. Candidate institutions are Museums of Natural History, Oceanographic Museums, Universities (Faculties of Sciences or Veterinary Medicine), Public Health Institutions (Animal Health Departments), Environmental Agencies (Marine Monitoring Institutions) or even Ministries of Environment.
- The Tissue Bank should have an adequate number of rooms and/or offices, even in coexistence with other functions (i.e.: a few dedicated rooms may be equivalent to a whole floor in coexistence with other parties). Tissues should be stored in a dedicated space or storage room, furnished with refrigerators or cabinets depending on the nature of the tissues (frozen or fixed). Tissues stored in the bank should not be maintained together with specimens meant for other purposes.
- Each bank should have a fixed yearly budget desirably provided by public funding. The budget could vary according to the different States, but should ensure the coverage of the basic expenses including laboratory equipment (freezers, cabinets) and reagents (formalin, DMSO, etc), and also current operative costs including mail, telephone, energy.
- Public funding should also cover the cost of at least one dedicated employee (laboratory technician or investigator). A long-term position is desirable to ensure continuity in the developing activities of the bank.
- Each bank should open a dedicated web-site in which scientists from the outside could look into the list of preserved materials and possibly request them directly on-line.

Guidelines for tissue harvesting and storage

Tissues should be harvested from every marine mammal found dead after stranding or floating at sea, provided that the operating conditions (including safety health procedures for personnel responsible of the sampling) allow it.

Non-invasive collection of skin samples or bodily fluid is also acceptable, provided the operating party possesses the required Authorizations to perform such biopsy or sampling from the National Ministry of Environment (for CITES regulation) and Ministry of Health (according to EEC Directive 86/609 and later integrations concerning animal protection).

Sampling should be performed under guidance from expert personnel (veterinarians, biologists with specific training, laboratory technicians).

Cubes of sampled tissues should not exceed 1 cm³. Larger samples will be harder to preserve. Samples meant for molecular biology should be either immediately frozen and stored at -30-80 °C or immersed in DMSO. Samples meant for histology should be immersed in buffered formalin. Detailed instructions on how to perform sampling are contained in:

Bruno Cozzi (editor) *Marine mammals of the Mediterranean and Black Sea Natural History and Biomedicine*, Massimo Valdina Editore, Milan, 2006 I.S.B.N. 88-88176-06-3 Special edition prepared for ACCOBAMS

Tissues should be sampled from every organ of the body. If and when available, at least one tooth should be removed from the mandible to provide data on age of the animal. If tooth removal proves impossible, an X-ray or densitometry of the pectoral fin will also allow insights on age.

If and when possible, the brain should be removed as a whole, and subsequently subdivided into transverse (coronal) section not thicker than 1 cm and immersed in buffered formalin. Focal cerebral areas intended for molecular biology should be frozen following the procedures outlined for the other tissues.

Parasites should be photographed and preserved in alcohol or formalin according to specific research purposes.

Detailed pictures should be taken during sampling. If no veterinarian is present on the spot, photographs of all external signs on the body should be taken before opening the body cavities and organ sampling. Pictures of the organs will also help the pathologists in their diagnosis.

Upon arrival at the Tissue Bank, tissues should be classified and prepared for long term storage, either in deep-freezers (frozen tissues for molecular biology) or specific cabinets (for DMSO and formalin-fixed samples).

An updated database should be available on-line containing information on the stranded animal and the tissues available.

Guidelines for Tissue Bank advertisement and tissue distribution

Stored tissues should be made available to the community of marine mammal researchers for free or at the lowest possible cost. To regulate tissue distribution an Ethical Code is presented in Appendix 2.

Tissue Banks should be widely known and recognized as open sources of biological material. To this effect, the establishment of web-sites is encouraged. A quick research through the on-line database should help scientists from the outside to select tissues and species of interest. When available, data on age, length and body condition of the animal at the moment of sampling should also be available.

Tissue samples could be asked *on-line* or by mail writing a request complete with full address, details on the Institution requiring the samples and a short explanation of the research for which the samples will be analyzed.

Scientists asking for the samples should allow their names and Institutional addresses to be entered into the Bank database and recognize the source of the samples in the Materials & Methods and Acknowledgement sections of their published studies.

Appendix 1

A list of active tissue bank

La Rochelle Bank

Centre de Recherche sur les Mammifères Marins, Université de La Rochelle
23, Av. A. Einstein, 17071 La Rochelle cedex
France
Tel. : +33 54 644 99 10
e-mail: vridoux@univ-lr.fr

Padua Bank

Mediterranean Marine Mammal Tissue Bank - Banca per i tessuti dei mammiferi marini del Mediterraneo
Scientific Coordinator professor Bruno Cozzi
Department of Experimental Veterinari Science, University of Padua
Viale dell'Università 16 35020 Legnaro – Agripolis (PD) - ITALY
phone: +39.049.8272626 - +39.049.8272621, fax: +39.049.8272669
e-mail: bruno.cozzi@unipd.it
web site : <http://www.sperivet.unipd.it/tissuebank/>

Barcelona Bank

Barcelona BMA Tissue Bank
Scientific Coordinator professor Alex Aguilar
GRUMM-GBC, Department of Animal Biology (Vertebrates), Faculty of Biology, University of Barcelona
08028 Barcelona - Spain
Telephone: (+34) 93 402 14 53; Fax: (+34) 93 403 44 26
e-mail: alexa@bio.ub.es

Appendix 2

Ethical Code for cetacean tissue banks active within the ACCOBAMS Agreement

This ethical code is provided by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat for Tissue Banks active within the Agreement. All tissue banks must accept the Code to operate within the ACCOBAMS Tissue Bank and Stranding network.

Periodical revision of the ethical code will be undertaken every three years by the Tissue Bank working Group and approved by the Scientific Committee.

GENERAL DISPOSITIONS

Definition

ACCOBAMS Tissue Banks are public Institutions dedicated to harvesting, preparing, conserving and distributing tissues derived from marine mammals living in the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea and adjacent waters.

General principles

2. Tissue Banks must operate according to relevant rules and regulations of the host country.
3. Their activity must follow procedures approved by the competent State Authorities for treatment of live or dead animals under CITES. Accordingly, Tissue Banks must follow CITES procedures during the acquisition, processing and distribution of tissue fragments or bodily parts.
4. Contacts, exchanges, research programs concerning Tissue Banks alone or in relation to the scientific community must follow CITES protocols and international and national regulations concerning protected species.
5. Tissue Banks must avoid any harm to any marine mammal or vertebrate occurring either directly or indirectly in relation to their activity.
6. Tissue Banks are non-profit institutions. Samples from each Tissue Bank should be made available to the scientific community free of charge. Tissue distribution costs may be met either with public institutional contributions or eventually shared with the requesting parties (i.e. scientists asking for specific tissues for scientific purposes). In this latter case the Tissue Bank should net no profit or gain from the transaction but only aim at covering live expenses.
7. Each National Tissue Bank must operate with the network of ACCOBAMS Tissue Banks.

Goals

ACCOBAMS Tissue Banks should:

1. Encourage non-invasive or post-mortal collection of samples from cetaceans living in the Mediterranean and Black Seas and adjacent waters.
2. Be in line with the guidelines on granting exceptions when a special permit is granted.
3. Prepare such samples for long-term storage.
4. Make samples available to the community of cetacean researchers.
Biological material distributed by Tissue Banks should be used to promote knowledge on mortality causes, functional anatomy, physiology (including respiratory and diving

physiology), toxicology, pathology (including infectious diseases), population structure, and trophic relationships of the region's cetaceans.

RELATIONSHIP AMONG TISSUE BANKS

1. Individual Tissue Banks which intend to work within the ACCOBAMS framework should apply to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat for inclusion in the network. The Secretariat will approve the programme of work after consultation with the Scientific Committee and the Tissue Bank Working Group.
2. Approval from ACCOBAMS Authorities will allow the new Tissue Bank to enter the existing network and ensure support from the Secretariat in every endeavour to obtain recognition and financial aid from Authorities of the relative Member State.
3. Once part of the ACCOBAMS network, each Tissue Bank should operate harmoniously with other similar Institutions and promote open exchange of tissues and information with the other Tissue Banks. Eventual area conflicts and disagreements should be discussed within the Tissue Bank Working Group and possibly resolved with mutual cooperation. Failures to comply will be reported to the Scientific Committee and Secretariat for further arbitrate.

SPECIFIC DISPOSITIONS

1. It is desirable that the Tissue Bank be hosted within an official Institution to ensure the proper scientific background, expertise, equipment and continuity in the long-term. Candidate institutions include Museums of Natural History, Oceanographic Museums, Universities (Faculties of Sciences or Veterinary Medicine), Public Health Institutions (Animal Health Departments), Environmental Agencies (Marine Science Institutions) or even Ministries of Environment;
2. The Institution should be registered within the CITES according to the Resolution CITES Conf 11.15 and the ACCOBAMS Resolution 2.10 in order to facilitate tissue exchanges;
3. The Tissue Bank should be given adequate space, even in coexistence with other functions (i.e.: a few dedicated rooms may be equivalent to a whole floor in coexistence with other parties). Tissues should be stored in a dedicated space or storage room, furnished with refrigerators or cabinets depending on the nature of the tissues (frozen or fixed). Tissues stored in the bank should not be maintained together with specimens meant for other purposes;
4. Each bank should have a fixed yearly budget desirably provided by public funding. The budget could vary according to the different cases, but should ensure the coverage of the basic expenses including laboratory equipment (freezers, cabinets) and reagents (formalin, DMSO, etc), and also current operative costs including mail, telephone, internet access and website, energy. Adequate backup must be provided in the eventuality of a power shortage. Public funding should also cover the cost of at least one dedicated employee (laboratory technician or investigator). A long-term position is desirable to ensure continuity in the developing activities of the bank;
5. Each bank should open a dedicated web-site in which scientists from the outside could look into the list of preserved materials and possibly request them directly on-line

TISSUE HARVESTING AND STORAGE

1. Tissues should be harvested from every cetacean found dead after stranding or floating at sea, provided that the operating conditions (including safety health procedures for personnel responsible of the sampling) allow it. Stranding networks should actively contribute to harvesting tissue samples and properly deliver them to the National Tissue Bank or to a local reference Institution for subsequent transport to the closest ACCOBAMS Tissue Bank.
2. Non-invasive collection of skin samples or bodily fluid is also acceptable, provided the operating party possesses the required authorizations to perform such biopsy or sampling from

the competent Authorities.

3. Sampling should be performed under guidance from expert personnel (veterinarians, biologists with specific training, laboratory technicians) and follow the ACCOBAMS for Tissue Banks.
4. Detailed pictures should be taken during sampling. If no veterinarian is present on the spot, photographs of all external signs on the body should be taken before opening the body cavities and organ sampling. Pictures of the organs will also help the pathologists in their diagnosis.

DATABASE, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY ISSUES

1. An updated *on-line* database should be available containing information on the stranded animal and the tissues available.
2. Information on the distribution and use of the samples distributed by the National Tissue Bank should be included in the National Report.

Scientists asking for the samples should allow their names and institutional addresses to be entered into the Bank database and recognize the source of the samples in the Materials & Methods and Acknowledgement sections of their published studies.

RESOLUTION 3.10

GUIDELINES TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF ANTHROPOGENIC NOISE ON MARINE MAMMALS IN THE ACCOBAMS AREA

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

Recognizing that anthropogenic ocean noise is a form of pollution, caused by the introduction of energy into the marine environment, that can have adverse effects on marine life, ranging from disturbance to injury and death;

Aware that some types of anthropogenic noise can travel hundreds or even thousands of kilometres underwater and is not restricted by national boundaries;

Concerned that, over the last century, noise levels in the world's oceans generally, and in the Agreement area in particular, have increased as a result of human activities such as, but not exclusively, commercial shipping, oceanographic and geophysical research, military testing and training, fishing activities, shoreline development, oil and gas exploration and aquaculture;

Recalling that according to Art. 236 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Convention's provisions regarding the protection and preservation of the marine environment do not apply to warship, naval auxiliary, other vessels or aircraft owned or operated by a State and used, for the time being, only on government non-commercial service. However, each State shall ensure, by the adoption of appropriate measures not impairing operations or operational capabilities of such vessels or aircraft owned or operated by it, that such vessels or aircraft act in a manner consistent, so far as is reasonable and practicable, with the said Convention.

Conscious that the Scientific Committee recommends that Parties and non-Parties carefully consider and act upon the recommendations and guidelines developed and endorsed by the Scientific Committee in order to address the issue of the impact of anthropogenic noise on marine mammals in the ACCOBAMS area ;

Aware of the work on noise undertaken by *inter alia* the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee, the European Union, the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, the NATO Undersea Research Center (NURC), the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas, the United States Marine Mammal Commission, the United States National Marine Fisheries Service and other governmental and nongovernmental organizations;

Recalling that

- Article II requires the Parties to apply conservation, research and management measures to the assessment and management of human–cetacean interactions, on the basis of the precautionary principle;

- the Conservation Plan, which is a full part of the Agreement, requires the Parties to:

- (a) carry out impact assessments to provide a basis for allowing or prohibiting the continuation or the development of activities that might affect cetaceans or their habitats in the Agreement area and to establish the conditions under which such activities may be conducted; and
- (b) regulate the discharge at sea of pollutants believed to have adverse effects on cetaceans, and to adopt within the framework of other appropriate legal instruments stricter standards for such pollutants;

Recalling also Resolution 2.16 on Assessment and impact assessment of man-made noise; Resolution 2.8 on Framework guidelines on the granting of exceptions for the purpose of non-

lethal in situ research; Resolution 2.14 on Protected Areas and Cetacean Conservation; CMS (Bonn Convention) Resolution 8.22 of 2005 Adverse Human Induced Impacts on Cetaceans;

Taking note of the work done by the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee;

Aware that further work is needed to finalise this particular issue:

1. *Urges* Parties to act in accordance with the following principles as soon as possible:

a) Noise should be considered a potentially significant threat to marine mammals and other marine wildlife; this threat can range from continuous noise (e.g. disturbance, masking, site avoidance) with long-term effects to acute exposure with potential short-term harmful and even lethal effects;

b) Particular attention should be given to the management of habitats that host sensitive species, such as beaked whales;

c) Priority should be assigned to high-quality research to map the range of doses of noise to which animals are exposed and to define the exposure doses that might affect the welfare and survival of marine mammals. Specific research is also required to characterize human activities that produce or might produce underwater noise;

d) Consideration of the effects of underwater noise should be included in Environmental Impact Assessments and in the consequent design of mitigation procedures for any activity that might introduce noise underwater;

e) Underwater noise levels should be considered a quality parameter in assessments of habitats, zoning and managing in specially protected areas of Mediterranean interest (SPAMI) under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity of the Mediterranean to the Barcelona Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (hereinafter SPA & Biodiv. Protocol) and other marine protected areas and in other issues related to marine life. This parameter should be considered a priority for the protection of critical habitats and where noise might affect essential behaviour (e.g. feeding, reproduction, nursing);

f) Underwater noise should be reduced; specific guidelines will be required to set limits to the noise irradiated underwater by ships and motorboats, whatever their function, and by any other noise-producing activity. Especially high priority should be accorded to high-power sources and both offshore and coastal construction works.

2. *Encourages* Parties to sponsor research in the ACCOBAMS area to detect and localize beaked whales by passive methods.

3. *Being aware* that controlled exposure experiments on beaked whales can carry significant levels of risk, Parties contemplating such activities in the ACCOBAMS area should inform the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee in advance of any commitment of resources and should permit them only when stringent criteria are met, including: (1) the exhaustion of all possible alternatives, such as the opportunistic study of beaked whales in established acoustic ranges; (2) the availability of monitoring methods with a high probability of detecting both target and non-target animals in real time, across the area of potential exposure; and (3) an experimental design that is sufficient to satisfy clear, specific management objectives and is part of a long-term study of population status and health;

4. *Further encourages* Parties to develop quieter and environmentally safer acoustic techniques and to use the best available control techniques and other mitigation measures to reduce the effect of man-made noise sources in the Agreement area;

5. *Urges* Parties and the management authorities of marine protected areas in the ACCOBAMS area to include consideration of high-power noise sources in their management plans;

6. *Further urges Parties* and the management authorities of marine protected areas in the ACCOBAMS area to work with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in order to minimize exposure of cetaceans in these areas;

7. *Encourages Parties* that are also Parties to the SPA & Biodiv. Protocol to adopt the ocean noise management measures recommended in this Resolution when implementing their obligations under the Protocol to conserve biological diversity (Article 3), to adopt protection and management measures in specially protected areas and specially protected areas of Mediterranean interest (Articles 6 and 7), to protect and conserve threatened and endangered species (Articles 11 and 12), to adopt guidelines for the establishment and management of specially protected areas (Article 16), and to conduct environmental assessments in the planning of projects and activities that could significantly affect protected areas and species and their habitats (Article 17);

8. *Invites* the Secretariat and Scientific Committee to encourage, in coordination with RAC/SPA, the Meeting of the Parties to the SPA & Biodiv. Protocol to take actions consistent with this Resolution when considering the efficacy of measures adopted for the management and protection of areas and species and when examining the need for additional measures, as requested under Article 26 of the SPA & Biodiv. Protocol.

9. *Further invites* the Secretariat to coordinate efforts on this issue with other international bodies, in particular, the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution and the Secretariat of the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic;

10. *Urges Parties* and intergovernmental organizations to inform the Secretariat on current and reasonably foreseeable noise-producing activities occurring under their jurisdiction within the ACCOBAMS area, so far as is reasonable and practicable;

11. *Calls upon Parties* to request information on the possible impact of anthropogenic noise on marine mammals in existing procedures relating to EIA and where necessary, to develop specific measures, by the competent national authorities, for activities which produce anthropogenic noise having an impact on marine mammals.

12. *Invites Parties* to implement mitigation and monitoring measures for noise producing activities within the ACCOBAMS Area, including, avoiding key marine mammals habitats, areas of high marine mammals density and marine protected areas, and defining appropriate buffer zones around them; establish safe, precautionary and scientifically-based exclusion zones around the noise source; effectively monitoring for marine mammals in the vicinity of the source; and managing activities in the light of cumulative, seasonal, and historical impacts from multiple sources;

13. *Decides* to establish a Correspondence Working Group by the Secretariat, that will associate Parties, ACCOBAMS Partners and experts , to address anthropogenic noise deriving from activities such as seismic surveys and airgun uses, coastal and offshore construction works, the construction, the operation and the decommissioning of offshore platforms, playback and controlled exposure experiments, whale watching, blasting of residual war weapons, underwater acoustic devices, military sonar, civil high power sonar operations and shipping activities, in order to develop appropriate tools to assess the impact of anthropogenic noise on cetaceans and to further elaborate measures to mitigate such impacts.

14. *Mandates* the Executive Secretary to convene the Working Group, which shall report to the next Meeting of the Parties.

15. *Invites Parties* to report to the next Meeting of Parties about progress made on implementing this Resolution.

RESOLUTION 3.11

CONSERVATION PLAN FOR BLACK SEA CETACEANS

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

On the recommendation of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee:

Aware that all three Black Sea cetacean species, the harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*), the short-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) and the common bottlenose dolphin (*Turpsiops truncatus*), experienced a dramatic decline in abundance during the twentieth century;

Taking into account that the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)-ACCOBAMS workshop on the Red List Assessment of Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area (Monaco, March 2006) concluded that the Black Sea populations of the harbour porpoise, common dolphin and bottlenose dolphin are endangered;

Conscious that most of the factors responsible for their decline, such as current fisheries by-catches, extensive habitat degradation and other anthropogenic impacts, pose continuous threats to the existence of cetaceans in the Black Sea and contiguous waters, represented by the Sea of Azov, the Kerch strait and the Turkish straits system (including the Bosphorus strait, the Marmara Sea and the Dardanelles straits);

Convinced that the plan is an integral component of discussions on Black Sea regional and national strategies, plans, programmes and projects concerned with the protection, exploration and management of the Black Sea environment, biodiversity, living resources, marine mammals and cetaceans;

Considering that the principal goals of the plan are to provide a framework for and priority actions whereby the Black Sea community can in the short-term (2008-2012) improve the conservation status of Black Sea cetaceans practically and, in particular, obtain the necessary scientific information for a full, long-term conservation plan;

Recalling:

- Resolution 1.12 on conservation of the Black Sea *Turpsiops truncatus*: bottlenose dolphin;
- Resolution 2.11 on facilitation of scientific research and programme campaigns;
- Resolution 2.14 on protected areas and cetacean conservation; and
- Resolution 2.21 on assessment and mitigation of the adverse impacts of interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities in the ACCOBAMS area;

1. *Strongly* welcomes the development of the Conservation Plan for Black Sea cetaceans as presented in Annex I to this Resolution;
2. *Thanks* the authors for their considerable work;
3. *Invites* Black Sea Parties and non-parties to: implement appropriate parts of the conservation plan for Black Sea cetaceans without prejudice to other international obligations; introduce relevant activities into their national plans; and report on that effort to the ACCOBAMS and Black Sea Commission secretariats.
4. *Urges* that those actions that require a coordinated effort and full institutional support from the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, the Black Sea Commission and the national authorities be addressed as a matter of urgency, the actions comprising:

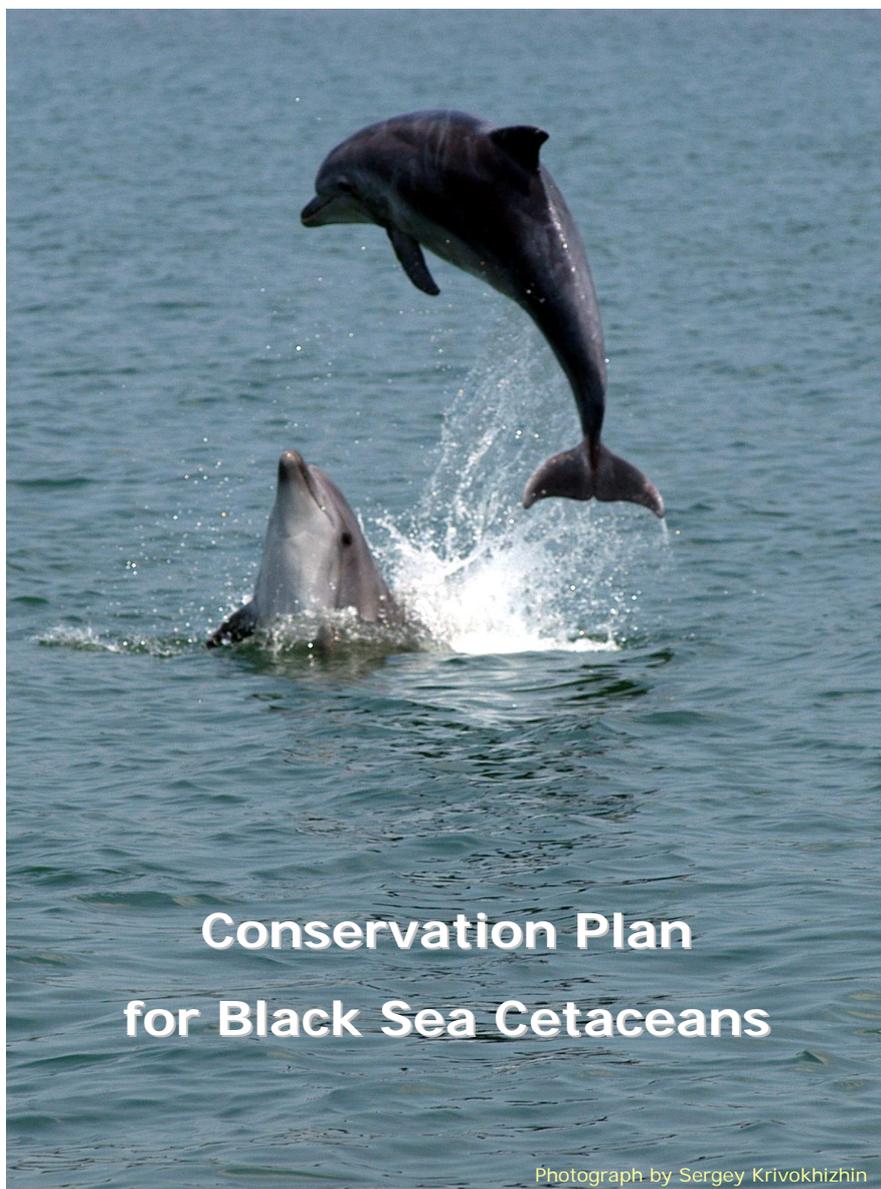
- completion of the basin-wide survey;
 - establishment of a regional by-catch network integrated into a regional stranding network; and
 - continuation of work towards establishment of a network of marine protected areas.
5. *Charges* the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee to:
- review, further develop and propose amendments to the conservation plans, as appropriate; and
 - ensure regular assessment of the adequacy of the provisions of the conservation plan for Black Sea cetaceans, on the basis of advances in scientific knowledge and feedback from countries.

ANNEX 1

Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans
of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS)

and

the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution
(the Black Sea Commission)



Compiled by Alexei Birkun, Jr. (Brema Laboratory)

in consultation with

Ana Cañadas, Greg Donovan, Drasko Holcer, Giancarlo Lauriano, Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, Simone Panigada,
Gheorghe Radu and Marie-Christine van Klaveren

November 2006

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- Annex 3.** Examples of cetacean research and conservation projects implemented in the Black Sea region in 2002–2006
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- Annex 5.** Minutes of the Round Table on the Conservation of Black Sea Cetaceans (Istanbul, Turkey, May 2006)
- Annex 6.** Recommendation of the 4th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Monaco, November 2006)

Correct citation of this document:

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Expertise:

The Conservation Plan was considered at the 3rd Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Cairo, Egypt, May 2005) and the *ad hoc* Round Table on the Conservation of Black Sea Cetaceans (Istanbul, Turkey, May 2006). The improved plan was adopted and commended by the 4th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Monaco, November 2006).

I. INTRODUCTION

First attempts

At the 1st Session of the Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS (Monaco, February–March 2002), a series of analytical reviews has been presented [1-6, 11]¹ addressing main gaps in conservation and research of Black Sea cetaceans. Besides, regional conservation needs and strategies were considered in general [12], and a number of actions have been proposed as ACCOBAMS International Implementation Priorities for 2002-2006 [10]. Among those 18 priorities, adopted by the Parties in Resolution 1.9, most actions (##2–5 and 11–18) concern Black Sea cetaceans to a greater or lesser extent, but one action (#6) is specifically dedicated to preparation of the Conservation Plan for Cetaceans in the Black Sea.

According to above priority #6 (see Annex 1), a comprehensive conservation plan should be developed as a result of a certain Black Sea region-wide project prepared in co-operation between the ACCOBAMS and the Black Sea Commission and (hypothetically) funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). A draft concept paper for the initial project proposal [8] was presented at the same meeting in Monaco and countenanced by the Parties. Soon afterwards, the concept was supported in the documents related to the 9th Ministerial Meeting of the Black Sea Commission (Sofia, June 2002), particularly, in recommendations included in the Report on the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea [16]. The project's concept was also supported by the 1st Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Tunis, October 2002) and by the meeting of the Black Sea Commission's Advisory Group on the Conservation of Biological Diversity (Istanbul, November 2002).

Since then, the concept paper underwent considerable modification aimed to improve it in conformity with suggestions offered from UNEP, potential implementing agency regarding this project. A new version of the project's concept [9] has been approved by the 2nd Meeting of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS (Istanbul, November, 2003). The Recommendation 2.4, addressed to the Black Sea countries, was adopted to support as a matter of high urgency the GEF project with human and financial resources (see Annex 2). In spite of negotiation efforts, undertaken by the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat, no noticeable progress in the development of the GEF project was achieved in 2004 and later on. Thus, this way towards the preparation of the *Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans* reached a deadlock.

Realizable alternative

In 2002-2006, several events potentially important for the development of the *Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans* have occurred on international and national level. In particular, the 2000-2010 Conservation Action Plan for the World's Cetaceans was published by IUCN [15]. Three specific initiatives concerning Black Sea populations of dolphins and porpoises are identified and described in this document for the promotion of conservation-related research and education:

46. Assess abundance and threats to survival of harbour porpoises in the Black Sea and surrounding waters;
47. Investigate the distribution, abundance, population structure, and factors threatening the conservation of short-beaked common dolphins in the Mediterranean and Black Seas;
48. Investigate the distribution and abundance of bottlenose dolphins in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, and evaluate threats to their survival.

¹ Figures in square brackets correspond with numbers of references placed at the end of this plan, (see Section V before annexes).

Furthermore, the status of small cetaceans in the Black Sea has been reviewed in detail by the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission, IWC (Berlin, May–June 2003), and by the IUCN/ACCOBAMS Workshop on the Red List Assessment of Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area (Monaco, March 2006). Clear recommendations have been issued in respect of conservation-oriented research activities required to gain more knowledge on Black Sea cetaceans abundance, distribution, migrations, population structure, life history, ecology, habitat, and anthropogenic threats [17].

In addition, some projects, implemented in the Black Sea countries in 2002-2005 (see examples in Annex 3), contributed to better understanding what should be done in the near future for the conservation of cetaceans. Helpful suggestions applicable to the *Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans* were offered via the Black Sea Commission for the enforcement of international and national legislation, monitoring, assessment and management of human-cetacean interactions as well as for capacity building, training and public awareness [16]. National action plans for the conservation of Black Sea dolphins and porpoises have been developed in Ukraine (2001) and Romania (2004).

One more strategic document [7], aimed to move the preparation of the *Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans* out the dead point, was compiled during the first ACCOBAMS training course on cetacean photo-identification (Kalamos, Greece, July 2003). That meeting provided opportunities for the trainees from three Black Sea countries (Ukraine, Russia and Georgia) and their trainers from Italy to discuss the most appropriate actions and prioritize them in order of four categories: management, capacity building, education and awareness, and research and monitoring. The conclusive paper was encouraged at the 2nd Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Istanbul, November 2003) and supplemented with additional suggestion offered by Turkish researchers [13].

Insistent need in the *Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans* was emphasized again at the 2nd Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS (Palma de Mallorca, November 2004). It was repeatedly stressed that this plan should be based on research and monitoring actions which can fill gaps in the knowledge on present abundance and distribution of Black Sea cetaceans as well as on human-induced threats facing them. The lack of reliable scientific information causes detriment to correct planning of conservation and management activities. The plan presented here has been developed following a request from the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat in accordance with various ideas and suggestions arose from above events and contained in above sources.

II. CONSERVATION status of Black Sea cetaceans

It is generally recognized that all three Black Sea cetacean species – the harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*), short-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) and common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) – experienced a dramatic decline in abundance in the 20th century as a result of large directed catches. Commercial hunting of Black Sea cetaceans was banned in 1966 in the former USSR (present Georgia, Russia and Ukraine), Bulgaria and Romania, and in 1983 in Turkey. However, current fisheries bycatches, extensive habitat degradation and some other anthropogenic impacts pose permanent threats to the continued existence of cetaceans in the Black Sea and contiguous waters represented by the Sea of Azov, Kerch Strait and Turkish Straits System (including the Bosphorus Strait, Marmara Sea and Dardanelles Straits).

The riparian states assumed international obligations to protect Black Sea cetaceans as contracting parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention), and ACCOBAMS. These instruments should contribute to Black Sea cetacean conservation, especially, the ACCOBAMS and Bucharest Convention. All three Black Sea cetacean species are included in the Indicative list of cetaceans to which ACCOBAMS applies (2002) and in the Provisional List of Species of

the Black Sea Importance (2002) annexed to the Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol of the Bucharest Convention. The Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea (1996) envisages some cetaceans-oriented conservation and research actions in its Paragraph 62 [18]. The harbour porpoise and bottlenose dolphin are listed in Annex II and the common dolphin is mentioned in Annex IV of the EC Directive No. 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora.

The Berne Convention's Recommendation No.86 (2001) and Resolution 1.12, adopted by the 1st Meeting of the Parties of ACCOBAMS (2002), are intended to strengthen prohibition measures for deliberate catch, keeping and trade of Black Sea bottlenose dolphins. At the 12th Conference of the Parties to CITES (Santiago, November 2002), a quota of zero for mercantile export of live bottlenose dolphins wild-captured in the Black Sea has been secured. This measure prohibits transboundary transport of captive Black Sea bottlenose dolphins for 'primarily commercial purposes'.

Particular concern was expressed by the 1st Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Tunis, October 2002; Recommendation 1.2) in view of large and potentially unsustainable bycatches of harbour porpoises in bottom-set gillnet fisheries throughout the Black Sea shelf area. It was concluded that the conservation status of these animals would be greatly improved if existing fisheries regulations restricting fishing effort and the use of certain gear types are enforced.

The IWC Sub-Committee on Small Cetaceans (2003) [17] reviewed the status of Black Sea cetaceans in details and concluded that these populations of harbour porpoises, common dolphins and bottlenose dolphins, which are almost completely isolated from their conspecifics in the northeastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea, should be considered as the separate and discrete units for conservation purposes. At the same time, it turned out impossible to evaluate fully the status of Black Sea cetaceans due to a lack of basic information. In this respect, the Sub-Committee strongly recommended to improve the conservation-related cetacean research in the region by means of developing the region-wide (a) line-transect surveys, (b) photo-identification programme, (c) genetic analyses of population structure, (d) studies on cetacean life history, (e) comprehensive assessments of man-made threats including the incidental captures in fishing activities, disturbance caused by marine traffic, and past cetacean losses due to the directed catches.

The IUCN status

In 1996, Black Sea population of the harbour porpoise was inserted as Vulnerable (VU) in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals. The conservation status of Black Sea common dolphins and bottlenose dolphins is not evaluated by IUCN until now, although global status, assigned to *D. delphis* and *T. truncatus*, is Least Concern (LC) and Data Deficient (DD), correspondingly.² However, all three Black Sea cetacean populations are supported by the IUCN 2002-2010 Conservation Action Plan for the World's Cetaceans [15].

In May 2005, the 3rd Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee encouraged the initiative proposed by the Cetacean Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC/CSG) concerning the development of the IUCN Red List of Mediterranean and Black Sea cetaceans. As a result, the IUCN/ ACCOBAMS Workshop on the Red List Assessment of Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area (Monaco, March 2006) assessed the conservation status of Black Sea populations of the harbour porpoise, common dolphin and bottlenose dolphin as Endangered (EN) and confirmed their belonging to the Black Sea subspecies *Phocoena phocoena relicta* Abel, 1905; *Delphinus delphis ponticus* Barabasch-Nikiforov, 1935; and *Tursiops truncatus ponticus* Barabasch, 1940.

² Since 2003, the neighbouring population of common dolphins in the Mediterranean Sea is included as Endangered (EN) in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals.

The excerpts from the Checklists for Red List Assessments containing the justification summaries of the status of Black Sea cetacean subspecies/populations are enclosed as Annex 4 to this Conservation Plan. The summaries represent a quintessence of thorough expert evaluation of current knowledge regarding Black Sea cetaceans and major threats affecting them, and thus, would help to put the Conservation Plan into context of available scientific data making more intelligible the need of different actions proposed. According to the IUCN Red List procedure, these assessments should be further reviewed by independent evaluators from IUCN/SSC/CSG and then submitted to IUCN/SSC for final consideration. It may be expected that this process will take about one year or somewhat more, so, hopefully, the new IUCN status of Black Sea cetaceans will be established before the end of 2007.

III. GENERAL APPROACH, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans

- is created based on a strategy designed by ACCOBAMS and reflected in its Annex 2, the Conservation Plan;
- is intended to complement the existing ACCOBAMS Implementation Priorities for 2002-2006, and Priority #6 in the first place, addressing cetacean conservation, management and research in the Black Sea. It is fully corresponds to the ACCOBAMS Working Programme 2005-2007, Resolutions of the 1st and 2nd Meetings of the Parties to ACCOBAMS, Recommendations and decisions of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Meetings of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee;
- is aimed to facilitate the co-operation among Black Sea riparian states and enhance their abilities essential for the conservation of cetaceans and their habitats;
- envisages common mechanisms aimed to promote cetacean conservation and research actions, as well as capacity building, education and public awareness in the Black Sea subregion under the co-ordination role of ACCOBAMS institutions including the Meeting of the Parties, Permanent Secretariat, Bureau, Scientific Committee and, last but not least, Black Sea Co-ordination Unit represented by the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (the Black Sea Commission);
- expects that it will be adopted and promoted by all Black Sea countries, including those which are still not the Parties of ACCOBAMS, regardless of existing national differences in the available expertise, level of organization, scientific backgrounds and logistical constraints among areas;
- expects also that its implementation will derive adequate support from national, regional, European and global agencies, intended for nature protection and sustainable development, and thus, will be provided with various sources to fund collaborative projects focused on the Black Sea cetaceans conservation.

The principal goals of this plan are to provide a framework and priority actions whereby the Black Sea Community (scientists, fishermen, industry, NGOs, local and national governments, and appropriate intergovernmental organisations) can in the short-term (2006-2010) begin to practically improve the conservation status of Black Sea cetaceans, and in particular obtain the necessary scientific information to allow a full long-term conservation plan to be developed at the end of the period and effective management decisions to be made.

The actions presented below are grouped into six sections in accordance with basic **objectives** wholly correspondent with appropriate items of the ACCOBAMS Conservation Plan:

- Consolidation of international and national legal system
- Assessment and management of human-cetacean interactions
- Habitat protection
- Research and monitoring
- Capacity building, collection and dissemination of information, training and education
- Responses to emergency situations

IV. ACTIONS

All 18 actions proposed (their descriptions are presented on pp. 11-34) are important for the conservation of Black Sea cetaceans. The order of the actions follows above objectives (i.e. corresponds to a format of the ACCOBAMS Conservation Plan) and their numbering does not indicate priorities. These actions consist of 57 smaller actions or sub-actions (activities) which were prioritized according their significance (primary and secondary) in the relation to each other (some actions are clearly more urgent or definitely propaedeutic to others). The priority scores are included in separate cell of the descriptions. Besides, some actions are already on the way of their implementation and that is also underlined in the descriptions.

Special attention to the prioritization of the actions was devoted at the Round Table on the Conservation of Black Sea Cetaceans (Istanbul, Turkey, May 2006; see the minutes in Annex 5). The actions and sub-actions of primary priority are listed in Table 1.

It should also note the interactive nature between the various categories of actions and the actions within categories. In particular, the Research and Monitoring section is absolutely crucial to provide the necessary background to almost all of the other groups of actions (particularly to the Assessment and Management of Human-Cetacean Interactions). In its turn, the Basic Cetacean Surveys action is the most important within the Research and Monitoring category. Synoptic Table 2 listing the main 18 actions (see next page) helps to understand the synergies of different actions and functional links between them.

The implementation of the *Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans* is estimated for a five-year period (2007-2011; see Recommendation of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee in Annex 6). This term seems to be realistic under the stipulation that proper planning, coordination and monitoring of the actions proposed is established and adequate methodological, financial and logistical support is provided. This can be ensured under auspices of the ACCOBAMS, Black Sea Commission and their institutions. The establishing a position of this plan coordinator could be helpful.

Table 1. Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans: Actions and activities of high priority

URG – activities addressed as a matter of urgency (Istanbul Round Table, May 2006)

Actions	Activities (sub-actions)
1 Broadening the ACCOBAMS scope	(a) promotion of accession of the Russian Federation and Turkey to ACCOBAMS
2 Proper conservation status of cetacean populations	(a) proper listing Black Sea cetaceans in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals (b) providing correct references to the IUCN status of Black Sea cetaceans in relevant international instruments
3 Cetacean conservation approach in fishery regulations	(a) adopting the Black Sea legally binding document for fisheries and conservation of marine living resources
4 Improvement and harmonization of national legislation	(a) improvement of national legislation in respect of international requirements on the conservation of cetaceans
6 Strategy for reducing cetacean bycatches	(a) establishment of a regional bycatch network URG (b) estimation of bycatch levels and temporal and geographical distribution of bycatches (c) evaluation of sustainable bycatch levels for each cetacean species (d) investigation of effects causing by mitigation measures including pingers and acoustically reflective nets (f) developing management objectives for reducing bycatches in the Black Sea region
8 Elimination of live capture of Black Sea cetaceans	(a) improvement of control assigned to eliminate live capture of cetaceans (b) preparation and adoption of national legal acts banning any intentional capture of Black Sea cetaceans
11 Network of existing protected areas eligible for cetaceans	(a) assessment of existing protected areas with regard to their relevance to cetacean conservation (b) developing the regional network of eligible protected areas URG (c) preparation of the network's cetaceans-oriented strategy, action plan and guidelines (d) protected areas involved in the network should restrain human activities potentially harmful for cetaceans
12 Special marine protected areas for cetacean conservation	(a) developing management plans and creating <i>ad hoc</i> marine protection areas in the defined localities
13 Basic cetacean surveys	(a) carrying out region-wide survey and assessment of cetacean abundance, distribution and hot spots URG (b) carrying out cetacean survey in the Turkish Straits System
15 Regional cetacean stranding network	(a) developing the existing national CSNs with their functional fusion into the basin-wide network URG (b) developing a Black Sea regional database of cetacean strandings (c) establishing cetacean tissue bank(s) accumulating samples from stranded and bycaught cetaceans (d) multidisciplinary study of samples collected from stranded and bycaught animals
18 Measures for responding to emergency situations	(a) assessment of emergency situations demanding special response (e.g. rescue-and-release operations) (b) developing guidelines on how to respond to emergency situations affecting Black Sea cetaceans (c) developing regional strategy (contingency plan) and national teams for responding to emergency situations

Table 2. Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans: Links between actions proposed

Actions	Broadening the ACCOBAMS scope	Proper conservation status of cetacean populations	Cetacean conservation approach in fishery regulations	Improvement and harmonization of national legislation	Retrospective analysis of human-induced cetacean mortality	Strategy for reducing cetacean bycatches	Mitigation of conflicts between cetaceans and fishery	Elimination of live capture of Black Sea cetaceans	Mitigation of disturbance caused by shipping	Management of threats from gas-and-oil producing industry	Network of existing protected areas eligible for cetaceans	Special marine protected areas for cetacean conservation	Basic cetacean surveys	Cetacean photo-identification programme	Regional cetacean stranding network	Strategies for capacity building and raising awareness	Access to information and cetacean libraries	Measures for responding to emergency situations
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1 Broadening the ACCOBAMS scope		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2 Proper conservation status of cetacean populations	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
3 Cetacean conservation approach in fishery regulations	X	X		X	X	X	X	X								X	X	X
4 Improvement and harmonization of national legislation	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5 Retrospective analysis of human-induced cetacean mortality	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X			X		X	X	X	
6 Strategy for reducing cetacean bycatches	X	X	X	X	X		X					X	X		X	X	X	X
7 Mitigation of conflicts between cetaceans and fishery	X		X	X	X	X							X			X	X	X
8 Elimination of live capture of Black Sea cetaceans	X	X	X	X	X								X			X	X	
9 Mitigation of disturbance caused by shipping	X	X		X								X	X	X		X	X	X
10 Management of threats from gas-and-oil producing industry	X	X		X	X							X	X	X		X	X	X
11 Network of existing protected areas eligible for cetaceans	X			X								X	X	X	X	X	X	X
12 Special marine protected areas for cetacean conservation	X			X		X			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
13 Basic cetacean surveys	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
14 Cetacean photo-identification programme	X	X		X					X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
15 Regional cetacean stranding network	X	X		X	X	X					X	X	X	X		X	X	X
16 Strategies for capacity building and raising awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
17 Access to information and cetacean libraries	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
18 Measures for responding to emergency situations	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	

**CONSOLIDATION OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL
LEGAL SYSTEM
(Actions 1 – 4)**

ACTION 1: Broadening the ACCOBAMS scope

Aim	Targets	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Achieve that all six Black Sea riparian states are the Contracting Parties to ACCOBAMS; disseminate the ACCOBAMS process in the countries which have indirect outlet to the Black Sea through the rivers and exert their influence on the Black Sea environment and biota (including cetaceans) by means of fluvial discharges and marine-riverine traffic.	Accession of the Russian Federation and Turkey to ACCOBAMS.	(a) Promote accession of the Russian Federation and Turkey to ACCOBAMS. This action should have positive influence on the concerted region-wide implementation of all other activities proposed in this plan (links to Actions 2–18).	Primary	ACCOBAMS Secretariat and Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission (Black Sea SRCU of ACCOBAMS)
	States of the Black Sea basin, which have no direct outlet to the Black Sea, are involved in negotiations concerning their possible participation in ACCOBAMS.	(b) Initiate the ACCOBAMS awareness process in those European states which are connected with the Black Sea via rivers. Note: States where the Danube is flowing through (most of which are EU Member States) should be made aware of the effects on Black Sea cetaceans and their habitat of discharging certain substances in the river. It could be helpful if the Black Sea Commission is involved in promoting such awareness in cooperation with the European Commission.	Secondary	
Rationale / Background	Up to date, four Black Sea coastal states ratified the ACCOBAMS. They are Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania and Ukraine. The rest two riparian countries, Russia and Turkey, are not the Contracting Parties yet. The both states did not sign the Final Act of the Negotiation Meeting to adopt the ACCOBAMS. Nevertheless, they show willingness to protect Black Sea cetaceans by means of national legislation and in the framework of the Bucharest Convention and some other relevant multilateral treaties. Thus, those states should be considered as potential partners within the ACCOBAMS process. A total of 22 countries belong to the Black Sea drainage basin. Except above six riparian states, most of them (e.g. Austria, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, etc.) are connected with the Black Sea via Danube and Dnieper rivers. It could be envisaged, that these European countries are able, in theory, to affect the Black Sea ecosystem and cetaceans as its hierarchs (top predators) due to river-borne pollution and disturbance caused by the navigation between the sea and rivers. Thus, the involvement of such states in the ACCOBAMS seems to be reasonable.			

ACTION 2: Proper conservation status of cetacean populations

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Ensure that Black Sea cetacean species – the harbour porpoise, the short-beaked common dolphin and the common bottlenose dolphin – are properly classified in the international documents aimed to protect the Black Sea environment, ecosystems, living resources and biodiversity.	Correct evaluation and application of the IUCN conservation status of Black Sea cetacean populations.	(a) The evaluation of the IUCN conservation status of Black Sea cetacean subspecies/populations should be finalized and proper listing assured in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals.	Primary	ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, IUCN/SSC Cetacean Specialist Group, IUCN Species Survival Commission, Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission, ACCOBAMS Secretariat
		(b) Correct references to the IUCN status of Black Sea cetaceans should be provided in relevant documents of international and Black Sea regional significance.	Secondary	
Rationale / Background	<p>Since 1996, the Black Sea population of harbour porpoises is inserted as Vulnerable (VU) in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals, while the conservation status of Black Sea common dolphins and bottlenose dolphins was not assessed by IUCN till recently, and globally these two species – <i>Delphinus delphis</i> and <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> – are listed by IUCN, correspondingly, as Least Concern (LC) and Data Deficient (DD). Nevertheless, all three Black Sea cetacean species/populations are listed as DD in the regional Black Sea Red Data Book (1999) and, at the same time, as Endangered (EN) in the Provisional List of Species of the Black Sea Importance – the document constituting integral part (Annex 2) of the Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol (2002) to the Bucharest Convention. The both latter appraisals were not examined by international cetacean experts. In May 2005, the 3rd Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee encouraged the initiative proposed by the Cetacean Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC/CSG) concerning the development of the IUCN Red List of Mediterranean and Black Sea cetaceans. As a result, the IUCN/ACCOBAMS Workshop on the Red List Assessment of Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area (Monaco, March 2006) assessed the status of Black Sea populations of the harbour porpoise, common dolphin and bottlenose dolphin as EN and confirmed their belonging to the Black Sea subspecies of small cetaceans (<i>Phocoena phocoena relicta</i>, <i>Delphinus delphis ponticus</i> and <i>Tursiops truncatus ponticus</i>). According to the IUCN Red List procedure, these assessments should be further reviewed by two independent CSG evaluators and then submitted to IUCN/SSC for final consideration.</p>			

ACTION 3: Cetacean conservation approach in fishery regulations

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
<p>Ensure that Black Sea intergovernmental agreements and national regulations, purposed to manage Black Sea living resources and their exploitation, include items concerned in the conservation of cetaceans.</p>	<p>Regional and national instruments regulating fisheries are in full correspondence with a goal to protect Black Sea cetacean populations.</p>	<p>(a) The Legally Binding Document (LBD) for Fisheries and Conservation of Living Resources should be adopted by the Black Sea states.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	<p>Black Sea Commission and Black Sea Range States represented by appropriate authorities (including ACCOBAMS national focal points)</p>
		<p>(b) The riparian countries should ensure compliance of their national fisheries regulations with above document stating the necessity of prohibition of any harvesting of marine mammals; reduction of incidental catches of cetaceans at least to sustainable level; and tight cooperation with ACCOBAMS. Links to Actions 1, 2, 4–8, 16 and 17 could be helpful.</p>	<p>Secondary</p>	
<p>Rationale / Background</p>	<p>Black Sea international and national legislation on the management and use of marine living resources is not adequately developed yet. The overfishing and devastating illegal fishing became common region-wide problems causing mass accidental mortality of harbour porpoises in fishing gear and depletion of cetaceans forage sources. In order to rehabilitate the Black Sea ecosystem and achieve sustainable fisheries in the Black Sea, the fisheries management policies need to be improved. The Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea [18] envisages that the Black Sea coastal states should expedite the development of the Fisheries Convention and improve their national regulations on fisheries. On the way towards the Black Sea Fisheries Convention, the intermediate Legally Binding Document (LBD) for Fisheries and Conservation of Living Resources of the Black Sea has been drafted by the Black Sea Commission (2002). This draft document includes some meaningful items devoted to the conservation of cetaceans.</p>			

ACTION 4: Improvement and harmonization of national legislation

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Ensure that in the Black Sea states their laws intended to regulate conservation activities, sustainable use and management of marine environment and resources are brought in accordance with international legislation standards related to cetacean conservation.	National legislative acts are in compliance with international treaties protecting Black Sea cetaceans and their habitats.	(a) National legislation should be improved paying due respect to international requirements concerning the conservation of cetaceans.	Primary	Black Sea Range States represented by appropriate authorities, ACCOBAMS focal points and experts. The co-ordination role of the Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission is expected
		(b) All species/populations of Black Sea cetaceans should be properly classified in national instruments bearing on the management and conservation of marine organisms and their habitats. Appropriate research data should provide solid base for the (re-)assessment of national conservation status of Black Sea cetaceans in all six riparian countries. Note: Links to Actions 1–3, 5–11, and 13–18 will be useful. In particular, see Action 2 as a pattern of similar activity on the regional level. It is envisaged that national conservation status of cetacean species may be diverse in different countries and may differ from the regional one.	Secondary	
Rationale / Background	In the Black Sea countries cetaceans are protected by national laws and appropriate subordinate acts. For instance, in Ukraine these species are protected by the Animal World Law and the Law on the Red Data Book of Ukraine. At the same time, all riparian states are contracting parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Biological Diversity (CBD), Bucharest Convention and CITES. Some Black Sea states are parties to the ACCOBAMS, Bonn Convention (CMS), Berne Convention and Whaling Convention managed by the International Whaling Commission (IWC). In accordance with their specific goals, the above multilateral instruments protect cetaceans and cetacean habitats and should strengthen the conservation status of dolphins and porpoises in the Black Sea states. Meanwhile, at present there is no comprehensive assessment of the conservation status of any Black Sea cetacean species in any riparian state. National laws are in need to be brought in full correspondence with international obligations of the Black Sea countries.			

**ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF
HUMAN-CETACEAN INTERACTIONS
(Actions 5 – 10)**

ACTION 5: Retrospective analysis of human-induced cetacean mortality

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Investigate the feasibility of obtaining meaningful estimates of human-induced cetacean mortality over the 20th century with the view of historical reconstruction of the 'initial' population sizes and, thereby, more clear evaluation of present status and trends of Black Sea cetacean populations.	Adjusted understanding of population dynamics in the past and at present.	<p>(a) Preliminary study should be carried out to check up potential realizability of detailed assessment of human-induced cetacean mortality in bygone years.</p> <p>(b) If the revealed archival datasets appear to be accessible and suitable for such examination, the assessment should be performed and then the acquired information on cetacean removals will serve the reconstruction of past population sizes via modelling.</p> <p>(c) Assessment of historical data with their reference to the current status of the three Black Sea cetacean species would provide better understanding of population dynamics.</p> <p>Note: These activities are linked to Actions 1–4, 6–8, 13 and 15–17. In case of direct kills, above approach will require estimation of species ratios, product conversion factors and methods to account for hunting loss, so that aggregate data on total cetaceans landed by weight can be converted to removals by species, area and year.</p>	Secondary	Cetacean experts and relevant national authorities (including ACCOBAMS focal points) in co-operation with the Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission (Black Sea SRCU of ACCOBAMS)
Rationale / Background	Uncontrolled directed takes were the major threat to cetaceans in the Black Sea until a total ban on this harvest was imposed in 1983. All three species were harvested for oil, meal and other products from the 1830s (as minimum) throughout most of the 20th century. As many as four to five million individuals may have been removed during this time. Besides, other sources of human-induced mortality (mainly bycatch in fishing gear, but also accidents at sea and fatal live-capture operations) contributed to cetacean losses.			

ACTION 6: Strategy for reducing cetacean bycatches

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Develop a system of concordant measures able to decrease cetacean mortality in fishing gear at least to sustainable levels, with ultimate long-term goal of reducing it to zero if possible.	Regional strategy for reducing bycatches adopted by Black Sea countries on the base of valid scientific reasoning and clarification dialog with fishing 'steakholders'.	<p>(a) Establishment of a regional bycatch network.</p> <p>(b) Estimation of bycatch levels (by fishing gear type and cetacean species) and the temporal and geographical distribution of bycatches (and fishing effort by gear type) for legal fisheries and for illegal, unreported or unregulated (IUU) fishing, and for ghost fishing by abandoned nets.</p> <p>(c) Evaluation of sustainable bycatch levels for each cetacean species with regard to their present distribution and abundance (link to Action 13) and past human-induced removals (link to Action 5) analysed, in particular, by means of population modelling.</p> <p>(d) Investigation of potential mitigation measures from scientific and socio-economic perspective, including practicality and implications of using pingers and acoustically reflective nets and their possible effects on other components of the ecosystem.</p> <p>(f) Developing agreed management objectives for reducing bycatches in the Black Sea region, with a focussing on co-operation with fishing community.</p> <p>Notes: These activities should be implemented in accordance with ACCOBAMS BYCAMS project. On application of the activities, the first priority should be given to harbour porpoise bycatches caused by bottom-set gillnet fisheries. Actions (a), (d) and (f) could be implemented by respective workshop(s). Among other management objectives, the time/area closure option and development of marine protection areas (link to Action 12) should be considered. Cetacean carcasses found in fishing gear should be available for postmortem examination and sampling; links to cetacean stranding networks and tissue banks (Action 15) as well as to cetacean rescue teams (Action 18) are recommended. The connection with Actions 1–4, 7, 16 and 17 is also envisaged.</p>	Primary	Cetacean experts and relevant national authorities in co-operation with the Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission and its Advisory Group on the Environmental Aspects of Management of Fisheries and Other Living Resources, and ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee
Rationale / Background	<p>Bycatches are the major source of human-induced mortality of Black Sea cetaceans. All three species are known to be taken as bycatch, although incidental takes of harbour porpoises evoke the greatest concern. Porpoises are caught in a variety of fisheries, but for all that the bottom-set gillnets for turbot, spiny dogfish and sturgeon pose particular threat to their population. Such bycatches occur in the Azov Sea and Kerch Strait and throughout shelf area of the Black Sea including territorial waters of all six riparian countries. Preliminary indications suggest that annual rate of harbour porpoise bycatches can be numbered in thousands, with a peak in April–June during the turbot fishing season. It is known that illegal, unreported or unregulated (IUU) fishing is widespread in the Black Sea suggesting that significant part of bycatches takes place due to this kind of human activity. So far, no special attempts have been made to mitigate cetacean bycatches in the Black Sea region. The acoustic deterrent devices (pingers) and acoustically reflective fishing gear were never used here.</p>			

ACTION 7: Mitigation of conflicts between cetaceans and fishery

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Address the problem of adverse cetacean/fisheries interactions (other than bycatches) and develop measures for this problem solution.	Regional approach to the mitigation and prevention of conflict interactions between fishery and cetaceans including dolphin depredation and prejudicial actions of fishermen.	<p>(a) Evaluation of the magnitude, temporal and geographical scope of adverse cetacean/fisheries interactions (by fishing categories and cetacean species), including clarification of roles of the involved parties in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prey competition and depletion of fish resources; - deterioration of fishing grounds/cetacean foraging areas; - confinement of fishing operational capabilities and living conditions of cetaceans; - so-called dolphin depredation and retaliatory measures from fishermen. <p>(b) Socio-economic study and modelling of adverse cetacean/fisheries interactions on the base of above action and results of basin-wide cetacean survey (link to Action 13).</p> <p>(c) Developing strategies for mitigating conflict interactions in collaboration with fishery specialists. Link to Action 6 may be particularly helpful, although links to Actions 1, 3–5, 16 and 17 are also reasonable.</p> <p>Note: These actions should be implemented in accordance with ACCOBAMS BYCAMS project. Recommendations of the ACCOBAMS Workshop on Interactions between Dolphins and Fisheries in the Mediterranean: Evaluation of Mitigation Alternatives [14] should be taken into consideration.</p>	Secondary	Cetacean experts and relevant national authorities in co-operation with the Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission and its Advisory Group on the Environmental Aspects of Management of Fisheries and Other Living Resources, and ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee
Rationale / Background	Anecdotal notes of beneficial cooperation between Black Sea fishermen and cetaceans are quite dubious, whereas conflicts between them, causing troubles to the both sides, appear to be a real problem. Along with bycatches (see Action 6), fisheries provoke a number of other effects on bottlenose dolphins, common dolphins and harbour porpoises including: changes (diminution or increase) of their foraging potentiality; modification of feeding strategy and behaviour; deterioration of habitats; alteration of distribution pattern and migration ability. These impacts are poorly studied and understood. No reliable data have been presented to refute or support speculations on suspected prey competition between dolphins and humans, although some cases are known when bottlenose dolphins raised trouble to fishermen by damaging their nets or catch, or stealing caught fish from the nets. No statistics are available on such conflicts and respective financial losses, and no appropriate compensation is stipulated for fishermen from their governments. In the Black Sea region there is no management procedure or even approach to address and mitigate dolphin depredation as well as eliminate cruel retaliatory actions resulting sometimes in dolphin deaths.			

ACTION 8: Elimination of live capture of Black Sea cetaceans

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Restrain intentional removal of live cetaceans from the wild.	Complete ban on live captures for commercial, military and other purposes except urgent needs concerned with the conservation of cetaceans according to ACCOBAMS objectives. 10	(a) Improve the control to eliminate any live capture of cetaceans in the Black Sea and contiguous maritime areas. (b) Prepare and adopt relevant national legislative acts (or make appropriate amendments to existing laws) banning any intentional capture of Black Sea cetaceans.	Primary	Cetacean experts and relevant national authorities in co-operation with the Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission, ACCOBAMS Secretariat and CITES Secretariat
		(c) Evaluate the level, time/location characteristics, legality and biological features (sex, age, <i>etc.</i>) of bottlenose dolphin removals in the past. (d) Evaluate the impact of past removals on Black Sea bottlenose dolphin population in general and on local communities of this species which were the objects of capture operations. Links to Actions 1–5, 13, 16 and 17 could be helpful.	Secondary	
Rationale / Background	Directed lethal takes of Black Sea cetaceans are banned in the entire region, and cetacean live captures are prohibited (or can not be permitted) in the countries-parties of ACCOBAMS (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania and Ukraine) in concordance with Article II.1 of the Agreement. However, the live captures still may take place in other two Black Sea states which are not contracting parties to ACCOBAMS. At present (2001-2005), only Russia uses this opportunity issuing permits for the catching live bottlenose dolphins in its internal waters. There have been a number of initiatives to eliminate such practice, including the Berne Convention's Recommendation No.86 (2001) and Resolution 1.12 adopted by the 1st Meeting of the Parties of ACCOBAMS (2002). In 2002, CITES set a zero annual export quota for live specimens of Black Sea bottlenose dolphins removed from the wild and traded for primarily commercial purposes, and the Black Sea Commission adopted the Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol as an annex to the Bucharest Convention. Both last instruments do not address directly the issue of cetacean live capture, however, they create the necessary prerequisites for respective improvement of national legislation.			

10 As consistent with Article II.2 of the ACCOBAMS, any Party may grant an exception to the prohibition of deliberate taking of cetaceans **only in emergency situations** (major pollution events, important strandings or epizootics) as provided for paragraph 6 (Responses to Emergency Situations) of the ACCOBAMS Conservation Plan (Annex 2 to the Agreement), **or, after having obtained the advice of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, for the purpose of non-lethal *in situ* research aimed at maintaining a favourable conservation status for cetaceans**; the Party concerned shall immediately inform the ACCOBAMS Bureau and Scientific Committee, through the Agreement Secretariat, of any such exception that has been granted; the Secretariat shall inform all Parties of the exception without delay by the most appropriate means.

ACTION 9: Mitigation of disturbance caused by shipping

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
<p>Address the problem of adverse impact of heavy marine traffic on Black Sea cetacean populations and develop appropriate conservation/management measures.</p>	<p>Regional strategy for reducing negative effects of shipping/cetacean interactions.</p>	<p>(a) Evaluation of the magnitude, temporal and spatial characteristics of marine traffic levels by shipping categories and integrally in comparison with past and present data on cetacean distribution, migrations and abundance. Links to the results of basin-wide cetacean survey (Action 13) and photo-identification programme (Action 14) would be particularly helpful for this analysis.</p> <p>(b) Assessment of shipping/cetacean interactions (including direct collisions and disturbance caused by vessel noise) in the areas representing important cetacean habitats affected by intense marine traffic. Research schemes should be designed in collaboration with specialists experienced in hydro- and bioacoustics, and cetaceans behaviour.</p> <p>(c) Developing management strategies for reducing adverse impact of the marine traffic on Black Sea cetaceans, with strong emphasis on co-operation with Black Sea shipping companies and other 'stakeholders'. Links to Actions 1, 2, 4, 12, and 16–18 could be helpful.</p> <p>(d) As long as above strategies are completed, in order to start the mitigation of cetacean disturbance as early as possible, certain guidelines should be prepared and disseminated among shipping companies, vessel crews, harbor authorities and other identified audiences (link to Action 16).</p>	<p>Secondary</p>	<p>Institutions involved in cetacean research and conservation in co-operation with agencies and services protecting the Black Sea and managing the navigation</p>
<p>Rationale / Background</p>	<p>The intensity of navigation increased dramatically in recent decades throughout the Black Sea, but mainly – in coastal waters representing primary habitat of harbour porpoises and bottlenose dolphins. In general, the marine traffic has a strong tendency to increase along the predetermined shipping lanes and in the areas surrounding big harbors; it shows annual trend to rise during warm season with a summer peak due to the growth of tourist activities. Marine traffic in the Turkish Straits System is particularly heavy with an obvious hot spot in the Bosphorus Strait. The Kerch Strait is another area where impacts of vessel traffic on cetaceans may be especially acute. It could be suspected that the shipping is important source of cetacean disturbance causing a series of negative effects such as possible extrusion of dolphins and porpoises from preferable habitats, alteration of their migration ways and modification of their behaviour resulting ultimately on population level in the reducing of foraging and reproductive success. However, to date there was no any study of adverse impact of the shipping on Black Sea cetaceans and no special measures have been proposed to mitigate this potential threat. The Bosphorus and Kerch Strait seem to be preferable pilot areas where this conservation problem could be addressed.</p>			

ACTION 10: Management of threats from gas-and-oil producing industry

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Address the problem of potential threats to cetaceans from gas and oil industry operating at sea, and develop pertinent management measures.	Regional strategy for restraining negative influence on cetacean populations of the offshore gas and oil exploring, extraction and transportation.	<p>(a) Evaluation of maritime areas inhabited by cetaceans and, at the same time, exploited or projected for exploitation by gas and oil industry including its exploring, extractive and transporting components. The analysis should be supported by basic data on cetacean distribution, migrations and abundance (links to Actions 13 and 14) and provided with a list of potential specific threats to cetaceans in each area.</p> <p>(b) Assessment of the impact of gas and oil industry on cetaceans in the areas of their seasonal aggregation or preferential occurrence. The research schemes should envisage visual and acoustic observations gaining the knowledge on effects of seismic exploration, boring, gas/oil extraction and transport, etc. on cetacean distribution, abundance, behaviour, health status and food accessibility.</p> <p>(c) Developing measures for the controlling and mitigation of adverse influences of the offshore gas and oil industry on cetacean populations (including the improvement of national legislation regulating this sphere of human activity). Links to Actions 1, 2, 4, 5, 12 and 16–18 seem to be useful.</p> <p>Note: Successful implementation of these actions to a considerable degree depends on close and transparent collaboration with gas and oil companies operating in the Black Sea region.</p>	Secondary	Institutions involved in cetacean research and conservation in co-operation with agencies protecting the Black Sea, and companies managing gas and oil producing industry in the region
Rationale / Background	<p>Certain areas of the Black and Azov Seas are subjected to gas and oil industry, and its rapid growth is expected in the near future in all six riparian countries. This kind of human activity can disturb cetaceans during different stages of its technological chain, starting with geological/ geophysical reconnaissance of deposits by means of trial boring and undersea bursts and ending with transportation of extracted gas and oil by bottom pipelines and tankers. Drilling and seismic exploration is widely spread on the Black Sea shelf. Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine started commercial gas and oil extraction from the sea bottom some tens years ago. Major centres of this industry, which could be considered as areas of permanent risk for the marine environment, are situated in the northwestern Black Sea (Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine) and in the northwestern corner of the Sea of Azov (Ukraine). Those waters are known as important breeding, calving and feeding grounds for Black Sea cetaceans during warm season. Last decades Ukraine exploited seven gas and gas condense deposits in the Black Sea and three gas deposits in the Azov Sea; in August 1982, the explosion of drilling platform in the Azov Sea caused death of over 2,000 harbour porpoises. It was announced that 150 other sites across the Ukrainian shelf are on offer for further exploitation. Georgia and Turkey recently commenced on gas exploring in the southeastern Black Sea, important wintering area of harbour porpoises and common dolphins. At the same time Russia develops tanker loading terminals on the Caucasian coast and pipelines for subsea gas transit to Turkey. So far the impact of gas and oil industry on Black Sea cetaceans was not studied at all, and no specific conservation and management measures were implemented or even suggested.</p>			

HABITAT PROTECTION
(Actions 11 and 12)

ACTION 11: Network of existing protected areas eligible for cetaceans conservation

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Develop regional network of already operating protected areas containing cetacean habitats within their boundaries, taking into account the ACCOBAMS 2010 targets and the ACCOBAMS Criteria for Protected Areas of Importance for Cetacean Conservation.	Existing coastal and marine protected areas, consolidated as a network, are focused on, prepared for and involved in the conservation and monitoring of Black Sea cetaceans.	<p>(a) Regional assessment of existing coastal and marine protected areas with regard to the presence of cetacean habitats within their boundaries and their relevance to cetacean conservation. Basic data on the distribution and abundance of dolphins and porpoises (links to Actions 13 and 14) could be helpful for evaluation of those protected areas which are fit for setting into cetacean monitoring activities.</p> <p>(b) Developing the regional network of eligible protected areas represented mainly by biosphere reserves, nature reserves and national parks. It is essential to ensure that sufficient awareness exists among the operating staff concerning cetacean monitoring and conservation. The relationship with existing cetacean stranding networks (Action 15) and rescue teams (Action 18) could be helpful.</p> <p>(c) Preparation of the network's cetaceans-oriented strategy and action plan as well as guidelines on cetacean monitoring, conservation and management procedures. The documents should be agreed by members of the network and secured on proper provisions for their implementation. Training of specialists, unconstrained exchange of information and competent co-ordination of the network should be envisaged. Links to Actions 1, 4, 12, 16 and 17 are envisaged.</p> <p>(d) Marine protected areas involved in the network should restrain within their boundaries any human activities potentially harmful for cetaceans.</p>	Primary	Coastal and marine protected areas, cetacean experts, Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission, ACCOBAMS Secretariat
Rationale / Background	Coastal and marine protected areas are generally recognised as a primary tool for conservation of the marine environment and biodiversity. At present, over 60 protected areas and sites are established along the coastline of the Black and Azov Seas by riparian states, and additional 40 areas are suggested for further development [12]. Some of them contain cetacean habitats within their boundaries, and could thus serve for cetacean monitoring and conservation, if appropriate management objectives are set, and the personnel is specifically trained. In this context, the most promising protected areas are represented by existent biosphere reserves, nature reserves and national parks which have relatively well-developed infrastructure and research capabilities. The Romanian Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and 'Vama-Veche – 2 Mai' Marine Reserve are involved in cetacean research and conservation in Romania. In 2003-2005, nine coastal protected areas joined the Ukrainian National Network for Cetaceans Conservation co-ordinated by the Brema Laboratory (Simferopol). They are (from west to east): the Dunaisky (Danube) Biosphere Reserve, Chernomorsky (Black Sea) Biosphere Reserve, Swan Islands Branch of the Crimean Nature Reserve, Cape Martyan Nature Reserve, Karadag Nature Reserve, Opuk Nature Reserve, Kazantip Nature Reserve, Azov and Sivash National Park, and Meotida Landscape Park. The inventory of cetacean habitats has been completed and common methodology for cetacean monitoring was introduced in these protected areas. Other Black Sea countries so far do not follow this initiative supported in 2005 by the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and British Council-Ukraine (NNCC-project).			

ACTION 12: Special marine protected areas dedicated to cetacean conservation

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Set up particular cetacean protection modes in well- defined key areas containing cetacean habitats which are vitally important, first of all, for harbour porpoises and bottlenose dolphins, taking into account the ACCOBAMS 2010 targets and the ACCOBAMS Criteria for Protected Areas of Importance for Cetacean Conservation.	Marine protected areas specialized in cetacean conservation are established protecting the recognized cetacean critical habitats.	(a) Developing management plans and creating <i>ad hoc</i> marine protection areas for the conservation of already defined cetacean critical habitats in the Ukrainian (off the south-western Crimea) and Georgian (off the Adjara Autonomy) territorial sea, with regard to their preferential use during cold season by accumulations of bottlenose dolphins (Crimea), common dolphins (Adjara) and harbour porpoises (Crimea and Adjara).	Primary	Cetacean experts, relevant national authorities (including ACCOBAMS focal points), Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission in co-operation with public administrations and other relevant 'stakeholders', ACCOBAMS Secretariat
		(b) Evaluation of other critical habitats, used by cetaceans for resident habitation, reproduction, feeding and migrations, for the purpose of making up a comprehensive list of areas which are eligible for the creation of new marine protected areas (including transboundary ones), introduction of time/area fishing closures, etc. The list should be accompanied with the systematized information on specific threats identified in those areas. Links to Actions 1, 4, 6, 9–11, and 13–18 must be taken into consideration. (c) Preparation of proposals and pushing them forward to establish special protection modes in the areas recognized as expedient for cetacean habitats conservation in accordance with above action. Notes: Management plans should include the monitoring of cetacean communities, targeted research, regulation of impacting human activities, education efforts directed at the fishermen and recreational users, and promotion of more compatible, alternative activities (e.g., dolphin watching) and resource uses. Time/area fishing closures could be envisaged where bycatch is the greatest concern, and where the problem is highly localised and predictable in time and space.	Secondary	
Rationale / Background	According to the ACCOBAMS Implementation Priorities for 2002-2006 [10], particular concern exists for the future of two Black Sea cetacean species, the harbour porpoise and bottlenose dolphin. Both species are listed in Annex II of the EC Directive No.92/43/EEC, implying that special protected areas have to be created for the conservation of these animals. The Action #4 of above Priorities envisages selection of one proper area in the Black Sea (namely, the coastal area of southern Crimea, Ukraine, comprised between Cape Sarych and Cape Khersones) in which a pilot conservation and management project “be developed and implemented immediately”. Bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoises annually aggregate during the fall, winter and spring in this relatively small area. The 1st Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Tunis, October 2002) recommended that more areas be investigated for identification of critical habitats. In 2005, another cetacean wintering area, including important feeding grounds of harbour porpoises and common dolphins, was identified in the Georgian Black Sea.			

RESEARCH AND MONITORING
(Actions 13 – 15)

ACTION 13: Basic cetacean surveys

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Obtain and periodically refresh reliable basin-wide information on cetacean abundance and distribution.	Population sizes and distribution patterns of Black Sea harbour porpoises, bottlenose dolphins and common dolphins are known and their temporal and spatial population trends are monitored.	(a) Carrying out basic region-wide survey with subsequent synoptic assessment of cetacean abundance and distribution, and identification of potential hot spots. The Black Sea proper, Azov Sea and Kerch Strait should be included in the survey scope and adequate methodology, agreed with international experts, should be applied for data recording and analysis. This study must also focus on spatial modelling and on the recognition of critical habitats. The results will contribute to the implementation of Actions 1, 2, 4–12 and 14–18.	Primary	Joint research team, represented by specialists from all Black Sea countries, in co-operation with international experts and under the auspices of the Black Sea Commission, ACCOBAMS and national authorities. In the Turkish Straits System the responsibility lies mainly or exclusively with Turkish researchers and government
		(b) Carrying out similar survey using the same methods in the Turkish Straits System (including the Bosphorus Strait, Marmara Sea and Dardanelles) to complete cetacean assessment in the area connecting the Black and Mediterranean Seas.	Secondary	
		(c) Developing long-term monitoring scheme(s) based on periodic surveying throughout the entire range of Black Sea cetaceans in the Black Sea, Azov Sea and Turkish Straits System. Standard methods should be used so that results could be compared over time (different years and seasons) and from one area to another.		
Rationale / Background	<p>No credible information exists on the abundance and distribution of cetaceans in the Black Sea in whole, although massive directed killing which continued to the early 1980s is believed to have considerably reduced the populations sizes. Such baseline research data, gained primarily and then monitored on regular base, are indispensable for all key sectors of cetacean management. A few line-transect cetacean surveys implemented recently in some Black Sea areas could be considered in this context as important introductory initiatives. In particular, aerial surveys were conducted in the Azov Sea, Kerch Strait and northeastern shelf area of the Black Sea (July 2001, August 2002); vessel-based surveys were performed in the Turkish Straits System (October 1997, August 1998), Kerch Strait (August 2003), entire 12-miles-wide zone of the Ukrainian and Russian Black Sea (September-October 2003), offshore waters of the northwestern shelf area (September 2004), Georgian territorial sea (January, May, August and November 2005), and central part of the Black Sea (September–October 2005). Thus, at present certain abundance estimates and cetacean distribution data are available for relatively small portions of the basin. The necessity of multi-national synoptic basin-wide assessment of cetacean populations was enunciated in the Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea [18] and reiterated in subsequent documents produced by the Black Sea Commission and adopted by Black Sea states [e.g., 16]. This idea was supported in the IUCN Conservation Action Plan for the World's Cetaceans [15] and by the IWC Scientific Committee [17]. Besides, it fully conforms to Resolution 2.19 adopted by the 2nd Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS (2004). A series of competent meetings considered methodological and logistical aspects of the basin-wide cetacean survey making it more intelligible: the 3rd and 4th Joint Meetings of the CBD and FOMRL Advisory Groups of the Black Sea Commission (Istanbul, September 2004 and April 2005), Workshop on obtaining baseline cetacean abundance information for the ACCOBAMS area (Valsain, December 2004), 3rd Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (Cairo, May 2005), Meeting on methodology for surveying the Black Sea (St. Andrews, September 2005), and Workshop on cetaceans surveying in the Black Sea (Istanbul, October 2005). The project proposal has been drafted with a budget between 210.000 and 250.000€.</p>			

ACTION 14: Cetacean photo-identification programme

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Consolidation of cetacean photo-identification studies in order to provide information on population structure, seasonal movements and ranging patterns of Black Sea cetaceans, mostly, bottlenose dolphins and common dolphins.	Basic knowledge on population structure, migration regularity and accumulation features of Black Sea dolphins is gained owing to non-invasive research techniques incorporated in cetacean monitoring schemes.	<p>(a) Developing long-term photo-identification programme that could be similar to and joined with the EUROPHLUKES project. The collecting of cetacean (mainly bottlenose dolphin and common dolphin) images should be standardized, carried out on year-round basis and applied to the whole area of Black Sea cetaceans occurrence. This programme should be concordant with the basic cetacean surveys (link to Action 13) and accompanied with appropriate training and other capacity building activities (link to Action 16).</p> <p>(b) The photo-identification datasets established earlier (2003-2005) and arranged as initial "Black Sea Fins" cetacean identification catalogue should be replenished with new data/images, gained within above basin-wide activities, and then analysed in the aggregate for the entire Black Sea and adjacent waters including the Turkish Straits System and northern Aegean Sea of the Mediterranean. This analysis along with results of genetic study (link to Action 15) should provide new knowledge on population structure, migrations and aggregations (including seasonal accumulations) of Black Sea cetaceans.</p> <p>(c) The photo-identification constituent should be incorporated in subsequent monitoring schemes covering the entire range of Black Sea cetaceans (link to Action 13 and 15). The access to Black Sea photo-identification datasets and catalogues of identified individuals can be secured by means of periodical publishing of relevant data on CD-ROM as well as online on a specially dedicated web site (link to Action 17).</p> <p>Note: Above activities are linked also to Actions 1, 2, 4 and 9–12.</p>	Secondary	Black Sea specialists and research groups/ institutions interested in and prepared for photo-identification studies
Rationale / Background	<p>Photo-identification approach and methodology, which are indispensable for studying cetacean population structure, migrations/ residency and habitat use, were not developed in the Black Sea region up to 2003. A training course on cetacean photo-identification was organized by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and carried out by Tethys Research Institute, Italy, in July 2003 (Kalamos, Greece) and October 2003 (Balaklava, Ukraine) for six Black Sea researchers from Ukraine, Russia and Georgia. Each national team was also provided with proper camera and lenses. That course was complemented with a follow-up in the Kerch Strait (August 2003, June 2004) and territorial waters of Ukraine (September 2003 – October 2004) and Russia (October 2003, June 2004). In co-operation with the EUROPHLUKES project, a catalogue of peculiar dorsal fins has been instituted for Black Sea bottlenose dolphins and common dolphins. This initial "Black Sea Fins" catalogue is available as a CD-ROM published in Ukraine (2004) and on-line (www.dolphin.com.ua/Base/fins/titul_fins.html). In 2005, the collection of Black Sea cetacean images has been replenished with photographs from the Georgian and central Black Sea (including pictures of harbour porpoises in the both areas) as well as with new samples obtained in the Kerch Strait and within inshore waters off the Russian Caucasus and southwestern Crimea, Ukraine. Besides, a corresponding study of bottlenose dolphins has started in Turkey in the Bosphorus Strait; and one trained researcher is available in Romania. However, current, even pooled photo-identification effort is still meagre and the results are not enough yet for comprehensive scientific conclusions regarding the discreteness of Black Sea cetacean populations, patterns of cetacean migrations and seasonal accumulations.</p>			

ACTION 15: Regional cetacean stranding network (CSN)				
Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Basin-wide systematic study of cetacean strandings in order to monitor mortality levels in cetacean populations, and to provide samples for research of cetacean genetics, life history, ecology, pathology, parasitology, ecotoxicology, etc.	National CSNs co-operate on equal terms as partners constituting regional CSN, providing actual information on cetacean stranding rates, causes and trends of cetacean mortality, and promoting the specialized studies with samples collected from stranded dolphins and porpoises.	<p>(a) Developing the existing national CSNs and their functional fusion into the basin-wide network. A standardised methodology of data collecting and sampling should be set up supported by training of CSN members and providing them with appropriate literature (links to Actions 16 and 17). The regional CSN should operate permanently providing reliable information on dynamics of strandings recorded for each Black Sea cetacean species. Besides, in order to determine causes of death, the investigation of stranded animals should be carried out along with morphometric study of cetacean carcasses and samples collecting for further multidisciplinary laboratory analyses.</p> <p>(b) Developing a Black Sea regional Database of Cetacean Strandings which should be compatible with relevant Mediterranean database (MEDACES) and available online for corporative use of CSN members in all Black Sea countries.</p> <p>(c) Establishing Black Sea cetacean tissue bank(s) accumulating samples from stranded and bycaught (link to Action 6) cetaceans. The samples should be collected, fixed, transported and stored according common guidelines prepared in co-operation with already existing Mediterranean cetacean tissue banks.</p> <p>(d) The data and samples collected by the regional CSN should be used to gain new knowledge on cetaceans mortality, population structure and genetics (link to Action 14), life history, ecology, pathology, parasitology, ecotoxicology (persistent organic pollutants and trace elements), etc. These studies will contribute to monitoring schemes (links to Actions 13 and 14) and periodical assessment of the status of Black Sea cetacean populations (link to Action 2).</p> <p>Notes: The functioning of national and regional CSNs should include their tight interaction with a network of the protected areas eligible for cetaceans conservation (Actions 11 and 12) and structures involved in cetacean rescue activities (Action 18).</p>	Primary	Research groups/ institutions, NGOs and specialists involved in the studies of Black Sea cetacean strandings
Rationale / Background	CSNs were organized in all Black Sea countries, but some of them do not work at present, although trained specialists still exist in Bulgaria, Georgia and Russia. Vigorous CSNs are functioning in Romania and Turkey. The most branched CSN operates in Ukraine since 1989; in 2005, it consisted of 19 operational units dispersed along coasts of the Black and Azov Seas. Researchers from the Black Sea region participated in the ACCOBAMS Training course on cetacean monitoring (Constantza, Romania, 2001) and Training course on cetacean strandings and tissue banks (Tajura, Libya, 2004). Over 20 trainees from Ukraine and Russia participated in the Training course on the development of a network for Black Sea cetaceans monitoring and conservation (Koktebel, Ukraine, 2005) supported by the British Government; the participants were provided with common research methodology and unified field equipment for data recording and sampling. The Guidelines for the Development of National Networks of Cetacean Strandings Monitoring (2004) were produced by UNEP/MAP RAC/SPA and ACCOBAMS experts. The Ukrainian network possesses its own database on cetacean strandings, bycatches and sightings (www.dolphin.com.ua/Base/discovery/db_index.php). National CSNs already helped to recognize several mass mortality events among Black Sea cetaceans including the morbillivirus epizootic affected common dolphins in 1994.			

**CAPACITY BUILDING,
COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION,
TRAINING AND EDUCATION
(Actions 16 and 17)**

ACTION 16: Strategies for capacity building and raising awareness

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
<p>Develop long-term capacity building and public awareness strategies in order to provide explicit improvement of cetacean research, conservation and management in the Black Sea region on basis of consolidated educational activities.</p>	<p>Levels of professional education and public awareness in the Black Sea countries are sufficient to achieve sustainable progress in the conservation of all three cetacean populations.</p>	<p>(a) Establishing regular training courses on research methodology, conservation and management of Black Sea cetaceans for different categories of interested and professionally involved people including: university students and lecturers; operating personnel of coastal and marine protected areas; officers of governmental agencies responsible for the protection and exploitation of the sea and marine resources (e.g., national fish protection services and environmental inspectorates); participants of cetacean stranding networks and representatives of environmental NGOs.</p> <p>(b) Developing a grant mechanism providing Black Sea students and young scientists with access to European system of education and making available their participation in international trainings on cetacean research and conservation, such as: the Course on Marine Mammals at the University of Valencia (Spain), annual Distance Sampling Workshops at the University of St. Andrews (Scotland), and the Field Courses on Cetacean Research Techniques organized by the Tethys Research Institute (Italy).</p> <p>(c) Developing a regional public awareness strategy dedicated to cetacean conservation and linked with all other actions listed in this conservation plan. The strategy should stipulate the concerted activities of research and educational institutions, authorities, NGOs and media, providing awareness-raising campaigns, relevant educational tools and guidelines focused on different target audiences.</p> <p>Notes: The Black Sea cetaceans-related courses, mentioned in (a), may be organized at a few national universities, with competent assistance from research institutions experienced in cetacean problems. These courses along with trainings, mentioned in (b), would provide trainees with a possibility to get expert advise and supervision of their research effort. In particular, lecturers involved in the courses (including international cetacean experts) could supervise students carrying out their master's and PhD theses on Black Sea cetaceans.</p>	<p>Secondary</p>	<p>Universities, research institutions, national authorities responsible for public education and nature conservation, environmental NGOs and mass media, with organizational support from the Secretariats of ACCOBAMS and Black Sea Commission</p>
<p>Rationale / Background</p>	<p>Very few young scientists and students are involved in cetacean research and conservation activities in the Black Sea countries. No special course (or any other particular form of education) on cetacean research, conservation and management exists in national universities or other educational institutions. At the same time there are some research organisations and specialists which can provide interested young people with basic knowledge on cetology and practical skills on field and laboratory works with Black Sea dolphins and porpoises. Besides, some researchers and postgraduate students already accumulated sizeable datasets containing valuable scientific information on Black Sea cetaceans. Those data are in need of adequate treatment and analysis including modern approaches in applied mathematics and mathematical modelling which are still not available in the Black Sea region. Special strategies of training on cetaceans-related matters should be developed for members of cetacean stranding networks and staff of coastal/marine protected areas as well as for numerous authorities engaged in the protection, management and exploitation of the Black Sea wild life, environment and marine resources. The enhancement of public awareness in cetacean problems should be guaranteed among different social and professional groups of the Black Sea human population and tourists, with the help of environmental NGOs and mass media.</p>			

ACTION 17: Access to information and cetacean libraries

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Provide unimpeded access to the results of cetacean research and conservation activities implemented in the Black Sea region and beyond; accumulate, systematize, store and make available relevant published information by means of proper data carriers.	Provision of appropriate information to Black Sea researchers, governmental bodies, NGOs and general public particularly as far as access to scientific literature and other publications on cetaceans is concerned.	<p>(a) Developing web sites dedicated to Black Sea cetaceans and relevant research and conservation activities in every Black Sea country. These web sites should be bilingual, using national and English languages, and linked with each other and with the ACCOBAMS and Black Sea Commission web sites.</p> <p>(b) Developing links between world's collections of marine mammal literature and Black Sea scientific libraries. The exchange of literature should be facilitated by all means in order to provide Black Sea libraries (at least one in each country) with necessary support to operate as a source of continuously updated information for Black Sea researchers and students.</p> <p>(c) Compiling comprehensive bibliography on Black Sea cetaceans supplied with annotations and search/ select options via key words, author and subject indices. This bibliography should be available online and continuously replenished with new references.</p> <p>(d) Further development of the Digital Library on Black Sea Cetaceans based on previous experience (see Rationale/ Background) and supported by activities (a), (b) and (c). This library placed on a web site may solve forever an acute problem of prompt accessibility to scientific publications on Black Sea dolphins and porpoises.</p> <p>(e) Information aids (booklets, posters, stickers, etc.) supporting public awareness activities should be designed and published in six Black Sea languages (and in English) and distributed widely along the Black Sea coasts.</p> <p>Note: Above actions are interconnected with all other actions listed in this conservation plan.</p>	Secondary	Libraries, institutions and researchers involved in collection and dissemination of scientific information on Black Sea cetaceans
Rationale / Background	<p>Cetacean research and conservation activities are on the rise in some Black Sea countries, and several useful projects have been implemented during last years (Annex 3). However, basic information about those initiatives as well as on the present state of Black Sea cetacean populations is accessible for narrow circle of specialists, leaving aside many other concerned people. In addition, Black Sea scientists complain that their access to the cetaceans-related literature is straitened because of almost entire lack of requisite publications in the national libraries. This prevents to obtain necessary documentation, learn from the work done by others and publish own results in key scientific journals. With due regard to this problem, Ukrainian researchers try to facilitate professional and public access to the information by means of: (1) specialized web site (www.dolphin.com.ua) operating since 2003 and hosting the Black Sea cetacean photo-identification catalogue and Ukrainian database on cetacean strandings, bycatches and sightings; (2) continued series of CD-ROM issues under the "Black Sea Dolphins" generic heading (five issues were released between 2002 and 2006); (3) "Digital Library on Cetaceans of the Black and Azov Seas" (this CD contains 109 scientific articles and books published between 1903 and 2004); and (4) series of seven educational posters aimed to enhance public awareness (in particular, three posters – "How to behave in the presence of a stranded cetacean", "How to behave in the vicinity of dolphins at sea" and "Make an effort – don't cause harm to cetaceans" – were published and distributed in Ukraine in 2005). However, all above information tools are available for Russian-speaking users mainly. A bilingual (Romanian and English) web site on cetaceans operates in Romania (www.delfini.cier.ro).</p>			

**RESPONSES TO EMERGENCY
SITUATIONS
(Action 18)**

ACTION 18: Measures for responding to emergency situations

Aim	Target	Recommended actions	Priority	Responsible actors
Develop regional strategy, guidelines and operational network able to provide urgent and competent assistance to Black Sea cetaceans involved in emergencies.	A network for responding to cetacean emergency situations, based on appropriate strategy and guidelines and represented by skilled and equipped rescue teams, is functioning in the Black Sea region.	<p>(a) Regional assessment of emergency situations demanding special response, particularly, by means of rescue-and-release operations. The existent data on such situations, including cetacean live strandings and live bycatches, and on the applied rescue activities and their efficacy should be accumulated, analysed and reported in order to address this problem.</p> <p>(b) Developing guidelines and/or code of conduct aimed to specify adequate options and methodology of humane response to the live strandings, live bycatches and other possible emergency situations that may affect Black Sea dolphins and porpoises. The document(s), prepared on basis of above assessment and in terms of appropriate world experience, should be reviewed by international experts and agreed with governmental officials before the implementation.</p> <p>(c) Developing Black Sea regional strategy (contingency plan) including conjectural schemes for responding to emergency situations with regard to the existing and prospective cetacean rescue teams, their location, professional capacity, mobility and their possession of essential needs including communication facilities, field equipment and means for veterinary assistance. The strategy should envisage the functioning of at least one cetacean rescue team in each Black Sea country. It is recommended that rescue teams, co-operating with each other, are incorporated in national and regional cetacean stranding networks (link to Action 15) and involved in the activities designed to reduce cetacean bycatches (link to Action 6). Links to Actions 1–4, 7, 9–13, 16 and 17 could be helpful too.</p> <p>Notes: Consultations are recommended with disaster management, veterinary and public health (sanitary) authorities. Substantial progress in the realization of above actions is expected at the ACCOBAMS Live Stranding and Cetacean Rescue Workshop (Monaco, November 2006).</p>	Primary	Research institutions, NGOs and specialists, including members of cetacean rescue teams and cetacean stranding networks, as far as they are concerned about emergency situations affecting Black Sea cetaceans; ACCOBAMS Emergency Task Force
Rationale / Background	The necessity of adequate responses to cetacean emergency situations is outlined in the ACCOBAMS Conservation Plan. Further development of this task has been achieved in the documents adopted by the 1st (2002) and 2nd (2004) Meetings of the Parties to the Agreement. In particular, a series of specific actions, including the creation of an Emergency Task Force, was agreed within the ACCOBAMS Work Programme for 2005-2007. Cetacean rescue teams operate in Crimea, Ukraine, since 1993. They were created on a voluntary basis by commercial dolphinaria (RDD-project, 1993-1999; MORECET-project, 2002-2006), with managerial control of their activities by the Ukrainian Ministry of Environment and methodological and informational support from the Ukrainian cetacean monitoring and conservation network. Few cetacean rescue operations are known also in the Russian Black Sea. The Dolphin Hotline aimed to collect messages on cetacean emergencies is announced on the web site maintained by the Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission (www.blacksea-commission.org).			

V. REFERENCES

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Annex 1

Excerpt from the ACCOBAMS International Implementation Priorities for 2002-2006 [10]

Action n°	Cons.Plan Art. n°	Budget item n°	Title:
6	4	941	Conservation plan for cetaceans in the Black Sea
<p>This project envisages the co-operation between ACCOBAMS and the Black Sea Commission to prepare a proposal to be submitted to the GEF, concerning a comprehensive conservation and management plan for Black Sea cetaceans. The plan should include efforts to fill the existing knowledge gaps concerning the distribution, abundance, population structure, and factors threatening the conservation of the three species involved, as well as management measures such as the establishment of specially protected areas, the development and implementation of regulations to increase sustainability of human activities in the subregion, and the organisation of training, education and awareness initiatives.</p>			
Activities:	consultations, proposal writing and submission		
Possible synergies:	3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 15		
Duration:	1 year		
Indicative budget:	–		

**Excerpt from the Report of the 2nd Meeting
of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee
(Istanbul, 20-22 November 2003)**

Recommendation 2.4: The Conservation Plan for Cetaceans in the Black Sea

The preparation of a Conservation Plan for cetaceans in the Black Sea is one of the priorities (Action 6) adopted by the ACCOBAMS First Meeting of the Parties. A draft concept paper for the initial project proposal, formulated as a “GEF medium-sized” project in close cooperation with all the Black Sea States, was supported by the ACCOBAMS First Meeting of the Parties (Monaco, 2002), by the ACCOBAMS First Meeting of the Scientific Committee (Tunis, 2002), and by the meeting of the Black Sea Commission’s Advisory Group on the Conservation of Biological Diversity (Istanbul, 2002).

Therefore, a final project proposal is in the process of being submitted to the GEF operational focal points.

In consideration of the increasing urgency that a Conservation Plan for cetaceans in the Black Sea be finalised and implemented, particularly due to concern for the deteriorating conservation status of Black Sea harbour porpoises, the Scientific Committee **strongly recommends**:

- that the ACCOBAMS Parties invite all Black Sea States to endorse the proposal, provide to it all necessary support, and seek the assistance of the Black Sea Commission in the negotiation process with GEF;
- that other possible funding sources be explored as a matter of urgency to increase the chances that activities can be implemented in useful time.

Examples of cetacean research and conservation projects implemented in the Black Sea region in 2002–2006

Program / Initiative	Project (title)	Implementing organizations	Year
Programme for Research, Conservation and Restoration of Marine Mammals in the Black and Azov Seas ('Delfin'-program approved by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine in August 1999)	Pathological conditions of Black Sea common dolphins	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine)	2001-2002
	Infectious diseases in captive Black Sea bottlenose dolphins	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine)	2001-2002
	Workshop on conservation problems of Black Sea cetacean populations (Koktebel, 23-24 October 2002)	Brema Laboratory in co-operation with Crimean dolphinarium (Ukraine)	2002
	Preparation of three issues of the 'Black Sea Cetaceans' Information Base (CD-ROM)	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine)	2002, 2003, 2004
	Bacteriological aspect of Black Sea bottlenose dolphins adaptation to captivity	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine)	2002
	Feeding objects of Black Sea cetaceans and state of their forage reserves	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine)	2002
	Development of national network for the monitoring of Black Sea cetacean strandings and bycatches, formation of a system aimed to render assistance to sick and traumatized cetaceans in Ukraine, conversion of dolphinarium into centres for rescue and rehabilitation of marine mammals (MORECET)	Brema Laboratory, Biological Station PE, Livadia Dolphinarium JE, Karadag Nature Reserve and Nazareth Ltd (Ukraine)	2002-2006
	Pathological conditions of wild Black Sea harbour porpoises	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine)	2003
	Preparation of draft regulations on conservation-related activities of dolphinarium	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine)	2003

Program / Initiative	Project (title)	Implementing organizations	Year
	Assessment of the state of Black/Azov Sea marine mammal populations listed in the Red Data Book	Brema Laboratory in co-operation with the Ukrainian Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Odessa Center of the Southern Research Institute of Marine Fisheries and Oceanography, Odessa Branch of the Institute of Biology of Southern Seas, Chornomorsky [Black Sea] Biosphere Reserve, Lebedyni Ostrovy [Swan Islands] Branch of the Crimean Nature Reserve, Cape Martyan Nature Reserve, Karadag Nature Reserve, Opuk Nature Reserve and Kazantip Nature Reserve (Ukraine).	2003
	Workshop on conservation problems of Black Sea cetacean populations (Kiev, 25 May 2004)	Ministry of Environment of Ukraine in co-operation with members of national network for monitoring of cetaceans (Ukraine)	2004
EU LIFE-NATURE Program	Conservation of the dolphins from the Romanian Black Sea waters	Grigore Antipa National Institute for Marine Research and Development, Mare Nostrum NGO, Museum Complex for Nature Sciences in Constanta (Romania)	2001-2004
Joint initiative supported by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat	Genetic study of Black Sea bottlenose dolphins	University of Durham (UK) in co-operation with Brema Laboratory (Ukraine)	2002
Joint initiatives supported by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine and Russian Academy of Science	Aerial survey of distribution, abundance and species composition of cetaceans in the Azov Sea (Azovka-2001).	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine) and Institute of Ecology and Evolution (Russia)	2001-2002
	Aerial survey of distribution, abundance and species composition of cetaceans in the Russian and Ukrainian waters of the Black and Azov Seas (Azovka-2002)	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine) and Institute of Ecology and Evolution (Russia)	2002-2003

Program / Initiative	Project (title)	Implementing organizations	Year
	Study of accumulations, migrations and habitats of the Black Sea bottlenose dolphin in coastal waters of Russia and Ukraine (Afalina-2003)	Institute of Ecology and Evolution (Russia), Brema Laboratory and Karadag Nature Reserve (Ukraine)	2003-2004
	Distribution, abundance and photo-identification of cetaceans in the northwestern shelf waters of the Black Sea (Afalina-2004)	Institute of Ecology and Evolution (Russia), Brema Laboratory and Karadag Nature Reserve (Ukraine)	2004-2005
	Distribution and abundance of cetaceans in offshore waters of the central Black Sea (Belobochka-2005)	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine) and Institute of Ecology and Evolution (Russia)	2005
Joint Georgian, Ukrainian and Russian initiative	Assessment of cetacean distribution and abundance in coastal waters of the southeastern Black Sea (Afalina-2005)	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine), Marine Ecology and Fisheries Research Institute (Georgia) and Institute of Ecology and Evolution (Russia)	2005
EUROPHLUKES	Photo-identification of Black Sea cetaceans (Black Sea Fins)	Brema Laboratory (Ukraine) and Institute of Ecology and Evolution (Russia) with initiating support derived from the Permanent Secretariat of ACCOBAMS, and the training provided by Tethys Research Institute (Italy)	2003-2004
Small Environmental Projects Scheme (SEPS II) supported by the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and managed by the British Council–Ukraine	Improvement of the Ukrainian National Network for Cetaceans Monitoring and Conservation (NNCC-project)	Brema Laboratory in partnership with the Ukrainian Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Odessa Center of the Southern Research Institute of Marine Fisheries and Oceanography, Odessa Branch of the Institute of Biology of Southern Seas, Chornomorsky [Black Sea] Biosphere Reserve, 'Oasis' NGO, Cape Martyan Nature Reserve, and Karadag Nature Reserve (Ukraine)	2004-2005

Excerpts from the Checklists for Red List Assessment of Black Sea cetaceans

*IUCN/ACCOBAMS Workshop on the Red List Assessment of Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area
(Monaco, March 2006)*

1. Black Sea harbour porpoises

Name of Unit Assessed:

Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena relicta*): Black Sea subspecies

Taxonomy:

Family: Phocoenidae Gray, 1825
Genus: *Phocoena* G. Cuvier, 1817
Species: *Phocoena phocoena* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Subspecies: *Phocoena phocoena relicta* Abel, 1905

Assessment Information:

EN A1d+4c,d,e

Year Assessed: 2006

Assessor(s): Alexei Birkun, Jr. and Alexandros Frantzis

Evaluator(s): IUCN/ACCOBAMS Workshop on the Red List Assessment of Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area
(Monaco, 5-7 March 2006)

Justification:

The Black Sea harbour porpoise, *P. p. relicta*, is Endangered (EN) based on criteria A1d and A4c,d,e. This is based on inference and suspicion as summarised below.

The estimated generation time is around 9-10 years, thus three generations for the Black Sea harbour porpoises would be about 27-30 years.

There are no estimates of unexploited or present total population size, although the available information suggests that the present abundance is probably at least several thousands.

The following information from the last three decades is relevant to the proposed classification. However, it is important to note that very high levels of direct and incidental mortality occurred for a long period prior to that (from the 1830s and throughout the 20th century) and this undoubtedly would have dramatically reduced the population (IWC, 2004).

(1) Large directed takes occurred during the years 1976-1983 before the ban on small cetacean hunting was declared in Turkey in 1983. Within that period, the total number of harbour porpoises killed was at least 163,000-211,000. Illegal direct killing of unknown numbers continued in some parts of the Black Sea until 1991.

(2) Regionally extensive incidental mortality of porpoises in bottom-set gillnets is roughly estimated to be in the thousands over this period. The scale of this mortality almost certainly increased in the 1990s-2000s owing to the rapid expansion of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Black Sea region.

(3) A major accidental mass stranding/mortality event occurred in the Azov Sea in August 1982 as a

result of an explosion of a gas-extraction platform. More than 2,000 porpoises were found on ashore following this event.

(4) Two other mass stranding/mortality events occurred in 1989 and 1990, caused by the combined effects of parasitic and bacterial infections. Although difficult to quantify, mortality of porpoises is believed to have been in the thousands.

(5) Periodically (most recently in November 1993), natural mass mortality events occur as a result of ice entrapment in the Azov Sea. Although no direct estimates are available, these can result in the deaths of several tens or more animals.

(6) There has been ongoing general degradation of the Black Sea environment (including harbour porpoise habitat) and biodiversity during the 1970s-2000s, with perhaps the most serious period in the late 1980s–early 1990s due to a combination of overfishing, water pollution, eutrophication, demersal fish die-offs caused by hypoxia and the population explosion of harmful alien species. This will almost certainly have resulted in a decline in the abundance and quality of harbour porpoise prey.

(7) The species was considered extinct in the Mediterranean Sea until 1997, when a specimen stranded alive in the northern Aegean Sea; a few further strandings and sightings have occurred in that limited area subsequently.

A1d: EN. A reduction in population size of $\geq 70\%$ is inferred based on paragraphs (1) and (3) above, i.e. the directed takes and, to a lesser degree, the accident (considered ‘actual exploitation’ in the context of IUCN criteria). These causes were clearly reversible and understood and they have ceased. Despite the absence of abundance estimates for the initial part of the 30-year period, the suspected decline of $\geq 70\%$ is based on inferences from a crude extrapolation based on the annual removal levels in the Turkish fishery: reduction to $\geq 70\%$ implies that the population in 1976 must have been at least 233,000-302,000, whereas a reduction of $\geq 50\%$ (criterion for Vulnerable) would require a population size of at least 326,000-422,000. The latter seems unrealistic given the length and intensity of past exploitation.

A4c,d,e: EN. A reduction in population size of $>50\%$ over the 30 year period is inferred based on above paragraphs except (1) and (3). During this period, although direct killing has ceased, the other known or suspected causes of a decline (bycatch, habitat degradation, prey depletion, epizootics and adverse climatic circumstances) have not ceased.

2. Black Sea short-beaked common dolphins

Name of Unit Assessed:

Short-beaked common dolphin: Black Sea subspecies (*Delphinus delphis ponticus*)

Taxonomy:

Family: Delphinidae Gray, 1821

Genus: *Delphinus* Linnaeus, 1758

Species: *Delphinus delphis* Linnaeus, 1758

Subspecies: *Delphinus delphis ponticus* Barabasch-Nikiforov, 1935

Assessment Information:

EN A1d

Year Assessed: 2006

Assessor(s): Alexei Birkun, Jr.

Evaluator(s): IUCN/ACCOBAMS Workshop on the Red List Assessment of Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area
(Monaco, 5-7 March 2006)

Justification:

The Black Sea short-beaked common dolphin, *D. d. ponticus*, is assessed for listing as Endangered based on criteria A1d.

There is no estimate of overall population size. However, preliminary data acquired for some parts of the basin suggest that current population size is at least several 10,000s, and possibly 100,000 or more.

The past 60-year period (three generations) includes circumstances that are relevant to Criterion A, as follows:

(1) Very large directed takes occurred during the years 1946-1983 before the ban on small cetacean hunting was declared in Turkey in 1983. Within that 38-year period the total number of common dolphins killed was at least 840,000 but certainly much more because this value is based on incomplete data (see "Threats") which do not include catch statistics from Romania (whole period), Turkey (before 1976 and after 1981) and Bulgaria (before 1958);

(2) A mass stranding/mortality event caused by morbillivirus infection occurred in 1994. Although difficult to quantify, mortality of common dolphins is believed to have been at least in the 100s;

(3) A mass stranding/mortality event of unknown origin occurred in 1990. Stranding statistics suggest that the mortality was not less than some 100s;

(4) There has been ongoing degradation of the Black Sea environment (including common dolphin habitat) and biodiversity (including common dolphin prey) during the 1970s-2000s, with a peak of the devastation caused by overfishing and habitat worsening (including water pollution, its consequences, and a population explosion of a harmful invader) in the late 1980s-early 1990s. These processes, taken together, have led to severe declines in the abundance of common dolphin prey.

A reduction in population size of $\geq 70\%$ (Criterion A1d) is inferred supported by a simple simulation in which the population was assumed to increase at a constant 4% per year and in which documented direct takes (as indicated in paragraph (1) above) were removed, which showed that a decline of greater than 70% in the last three generations would be required to achieve a current population size of 150,000 animals.

Directed killing ceased in 1983 but degradation of habitats, prey depletion and epizootics continued and are inadequately understood.

3. Black Sea common bottlenose dolphins

Name of Unit Assessed:

Common bottlenose dolphin: Black Sea subspecies (*Tursiops truncatus ponticus*)

Taxonomy:

Family: Delphinidae Gray, 1821

Genus: *Tursiops* Gervais, 1855

Species: *Tursiops truncatus* (Montagu, 1821)

Subspecies: *Tursiops truncatus ponticus* Barabasch, 1940

Assessment Information:

EN A2c,d,e

Year Assessed: 2006

Assessor(s): Alexei Birkun, Jr.

Evaluator(s): IUCN/ACCOBAMS Workshop on the Red List Assessment of Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area

(Monaco, 5-7 March 2006)

Justification:

The Black Sea bottlenose dolphin, *T. t. ponticus*, is assessed for listing as Endangered based on criteria A2c,d,e.

There is no estimate of total population size but information from incomplete surveys suggests that the current population size is not less than several 1000s animals.

The past 60-year period (1946-2005; three generations) includes events, circumstances and trends that are relevant to Criterion A, as follows:

(1) Large directed takes occurred before the ban on small cetacean hunting was declared in Turkey in 1983. Within that 38-year period (1946-1983) the total number of bottlenose dolphins killed was at least 24-28,000 but certainly much more (probably by tens of thousands) because this figure is based on vastly incomplete and underestimated data (see "Threats") which do not include any catch statistics from Romania, nor from Turkey before 1976 and after 1981, and from Bulgaria before 1958. Intentional killing and harassment of unknown, probably low, magnitude has been indicated recently in Ukraine;

(2) Regionally dispersed incidental mortality in bottom-set gillnets is roughly estimated at some 100s per year. The scale of this mortality almost certainly increased in the 1990s-2000s owing to the rapid expansion of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Black Sea region;

(3) Live-capture of bottlenose dolphins for their maintenance in captivity along with attendant mortality caused by imperfect capture operations is roughly estimated at 1,000-2,000 since the early 1960s. This practice continues in the Russian Federation, with 10-20 animals taken annually from a small area;

(4) A mass stranding/mortality event of unknown origin occurred in 1990. Although difficult to quantify, mortality of bottlenose dolphins is believed to have been at least in the 100s;

(5) There has been ongoing degradation of the Black Sea environment (including bottlenose dolphin habitat) and biodiversity (including bottlenose dolphin prey) during the 1970s-2000s, with a peak of devastation by overfishing and habitat deterioration in the late 1980s-early 1990s. These processes, taken together, have undoubtedly led to a decline in the abundance of bottlenose dolphin indigenous prey species.

A reduction in population size of $\geq 50\%$ is inferred supported by a simple simulation in which the population was assumed to increase at a constant 4% per year and in which realistic estimates of the direct and incidental takes (as indicated by paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) above) were removed, which showed that a decline of greater than 50% in the last three generations would be required to achieve a current population size of 15,000 animals.

1st Biannual Scientific Conference: Black Sea Ecosystem 2005 and Beyond

**Round table on the Conservation of Black Sea Cetaceans
Istanbul, 9 May 2006**

Minutes of Meeting

The meeting was chaired by Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee.

Irakli Goradze kindly agreed to act as rapporteur.

Participants:

- Alexei Birkun, Jr., Black Sea Council for Marine Mammals, Simferopol, Ukraine.
- Alexander Boltachev, Institute of Biology of Southern Seas. Sevastopol, Ukraine
- A. Cemal Dinçer, Black Sea Technical University, Faculty of Marine Sciences, Trabzon, Turkey
- Irakli Goradze, Department of Environment and Natural Resources of Ajara A.R. Georgia
- Ahmet Kidey, ISPA, Turkey
- Katerina Kosova, Taurida National University, Simferopol, Ukraine
- Sergey Krivokhizhin, Brema Laboratory, Ukraine
- Valodea Maximov, National Institute for Marine Research and Development. Constanta, Romania
- Simeon Nicolaev, National Institute for Marine Research and Development. Constanta, Romania
- Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee
- Bayram Ozturk, Istanbul Univeristy, Faculty of Fisheries, Istanbul, Turkey
- Marina Panayotova, Institute of Oceanology, Varna, Bulgaria
- Gheorghe Radu, National Institute for Marine Research and Development. Constanta, Romania
- Violin Stoyanov Raykov, Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Varna, Bulgaria
- Ahmet Sahin, Black Sea Technical University, Faculty of Marine Sciences, Trabzon, Turkey
- Sembnem Sahin, Black Sea Technical University, Trabzon, Turkey
- Vladislav Shlyakhov, Southern Institute of Fishery and Oceanography (YUGNIRO), Kerch, Ukraine
- Ionel Staicu, National Institute for Marine Research and Development, Constanta, Romania
- Arda Tonay, TUDAV, Istanbul University, Faculty of Fisheries, Istanbul, Turkey

Opening and introductory remarks

The agenda of the meeting was adopted as proposed originally.

The chair reminded the participants that the main purpose of the meeting is to set priorities (concrete actions) among the actions proposed in the draft Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans prepared by Birkun and co-authors¹¹. An introductory note about ACCOBAMS Agreement was made, with and indication about the current status of membership of the Black Sea countries. It was noted with regret that Russia and Turkey had not yet ratified the Agreement. Examples of the few other non-member countries from the Mediterranean region were also presented.

¹¹ Birkun A., Jr., Cañadas A., Donovan G., Holcer D., Lauriano G., Notarbartolo di Sciara G., Panigada S., Radu G., and van Klaveren M.-C. 2006. Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans. ACCOBAMS, Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area.

In the Black Sea the situation was significantly improved since the harvesting of cetaceans was prohibited officially. However, the status of conservation of all three Black Sea subspecies is still not favourable, and was proposed as **endangered** at a recent joint IUCN/ACCOBAMS meeting (Monaco, 5-7 March 2006).

Presentation by Alexei Birkun, Jr.

The floor was given to Birkun, who presented the 2nd draft of a document titled “*Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans: General approach, goals, objectives and aims of the actions proposed*”.

After providing background info about the plan, the six objectives were presented:

7. Consolidation of the international and national legal system.
8. Assessment of human/cetacean interactions.
9. Habitat protection.
10. Research and Monitoring.
11. Capacity building, information collection and dissemination.
12. Response to emergency situations.

Eighteen actions are proposed to meet these objectives, with 57 sub-actions. The proposed time span for implementation is 2006-2010. The necessity of nominating a coordinator of the action plan implementation was emphasized.

In the course of the presentation the chair proposed that the overview of each objective and prioritization of the actions within each objective would make it more efficient for the follow-up discussions.

Birkun described the various actions under each category (= objective) and proposed a ranking, as detailed in the document presented. The following actions were proposed as primary: 1a (Broadening the ACCOBAMS scope: promote accession of Russian Federation and Turkey); 2a (Proper conservation status of cetacean populations: assure listing of species in IUCN Red List); 3a (Cetacean conservation approach in fishery regulations: adopt Legally Binding Document for Fisheries and Conservation of Living Resources); 4a (Improvement and harmonization of national legislation); 6 (Strategy for reducing bycatches); 8 (Elimination of live captures); 12a (Special marine protected areas dedicated to cetacean conservation); 13 (Basic cetacean surveys); 18 (Measures for responding to emergency situations).

Participants were then invited to propose additions to the high priority activities.

Nicolaev stated that Romania has a national plan for the conservation of dolphins. The Black Sea Conservation Plan is not an international but regional plan. He agreed with the proposal about the responsibilities of implementation of the plan in the Black Sea - to clearly define the responsible people. Better relations are needed between actors and ACCOBAMS.

Round Table Discussion

The chair thanked Birkun for his hard and important work, and proposed to continue the discussion of the plan, by examining each action and soliciting comments from participants from each country.

Action 1 (Broadening the ACCOBAMS scope). Russian representatives were missing from the meeting. Concerning Turkey, the following comments were made by Ozturk on behalf of TUDAV (NGO): Turkish fishermen cooperatives have a strong lobby in Parliament and Government. He thought that Turkey is reluctant to join ACCOBAMS for this reason. In his perspective Turkey will not join ACCOBAMS at least for the next few years. The fishermen are traditionally doing turbot fishing (2 months a year). Stocks

are depleted. Turbot fishing is main problem for cetacean by-catch and therefore joining of ACCOBAMS may result in banning of turbot fishing. However, cooperation with scientists is possible. One way is to lobby the government through the scientific community, and another is to elaborate fisheries regulations.

Action 3 (Cetacean conservation approach in fishery regulations)

The current status of Fisheries convention was queried. Nicolaev explained that the Advisory Group on Fisheries and Other Living Resources to the Black Sea Commission has elaborated a technical document. The overall recommendation was to stop the process as two countries are soon entering EU and it makes sense to discuss this issue after the joining of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU.

The general conclusion was to strengthen the scientific cooperation and support the process given that the scientific community is not necessarily dependent on governmental positions. Such cooperation is already underway.

Goradze commented that the recent changes in Georgian legislation ensure better protection and conservation of cetaceans if duly followed and enforced. All three species are listed in the National Red List and new fishing rules provide good opportunity for prevention and avoidance of cetaceans by-catch.

Action 6 (Strategy for reducing cetacean bycatches)

The need was recognized to establish cooperation among all Black Sea countries to organise a regional database on by-catch. Ukrainian participants have commented that it is feasible with little financial effort. Romanian by-catch statistics are more difficult to provide than stranding statistics. The quality of information can be a problem. A regional scheme should be based on national structures. Cooperation to exchange the views is necessary. Volunteers were invited to make plan on the creation of a monitoring scheme and prepare a proposal.

Recommendations: (a) Proceed ASAP to create regional (based on national) database that will include by-catch information; (b) need to establish a link between the regional Black Sea effort and the wider ACCOBAMS effort called BYCBAMS.

Action 8 (Elimination of live capture of Black Sea cetaceans)

Live captures only occur in Russia. Romania said that dolphinarium need live dolphins but ministry does not allow captures. Some countries try to obtain dolphins from Russia, but the latter refuses. Probably the Black Sea Commission could act to resolve this problem, as the exploited bottlenose dolphin community in the Russian Kerch Strait is small and the live capture is obviously unsustainable.

Action 10 (Management of threats from oil & gas producing industry)

The impact of sound generated by oil & gas exploration was discussed. It was advised to take special focus on the impact of oil-gas exploration activities on the cetacean populations. Information about the influence of military sonars on the cetaceans is not available and was not considered as important impacting factor in the Black Sea.

Actions 11-12 (Marine protected areas)

The chair stated that the establishment of protected areas must be considered when they may clearly solve specific conservation problems deriving to cetacean populations from specific human activities. The following procedure was proposed: (a) identify the areas that contain cetacean critical habitat; (b) assess the presence of specific threats to those habitats, and whether the establishment of an MPA could address such threats effectively; (c) designate the area and include specific mitigation activities in management plan. It was agreed that in the imminence of performing a basin-wide cetacean survey (see Action 13, below), it would be sensible to wait for the results of the survey before a comprehensive set of proposals for MPAs could be made.

In the mean time, it was agreed that criteria should be elaborated for the establishment of protected areas for cetaceans.

Goradze presented a comment/example on harbour porpoises. Often the solution lays in following and /or enforcing existing regulations. In some cases problems can be solved through the establishment of certain rules or restrictions of human activities in the areas where no protected status can be established.

Summary: Results of survey will recommend the possibilities and feasibility of establishment of MPAs in different countries. It seems reasonable to develop regional network of existing PAs eligible for cetacean monitoring and conservation.

Action 13 (Basic cetacean surveys)

There was no doubt among participants that research and monitoring activities that will provide essential information about the numbers and distribution of cetaceans in the Black Sea are of highest priority. Such activities will also provide a good opportunity for non member countries to be involved in regional processes. Everybody agreed on the ranking of this action as high priority.

Action 14 (Photo-identification programmes)

Participants agreed that this was of secondary priority although this would not necessarily mean that it be postponed. If the means and good will are available, photo-id programmes are a good source of relevant information on cetacean ecology and behaviour.

Action 15 (Regional stranding network)

It was proposed by the meeting to give high priority to this action and to link it to by-catch. It was also recommended that the network should have a regional nature. The issue of tissue banks was also linked to strandings because these help to a better understanding of the causes of cetacean mortality. The recommendation was made to draft a proposal similar to that on regional by-catches.

Actions 16-17 (Capacity building and access to information)

This effort is ongoing and considered a very important issue, as many problems can be avoided if proper capacity building and awareness rising strategy and activates conducted.

Action 18 (Response to emergency situations)

It is advisable to have a contingency plan ready in case of epizootic outbreaks. The plan should define the measures for responding the such emergency situation. Protocols for other specific emergency situations should be elaborated as well. The region's countries should follow the general lines of ACCOBAMS and then develop emergency plans tailored to the Black Sea specificities.

Recommendations

In conclusion the meeting agreed that the Plan proposed by Birkun and co-authors was a very good plan, and that all the actions proposed should be pursued. Many such actions, which can be undertaken at the level of single institutions, organizations and even single individuals, should be implemented as soon as possible whenever the appropriate resources are located and conditions exist.

However, other actions requiring coordinated effort among nations and full institutional support (i.e., the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, the Black Sea Commission and the concerned individual Governments) should be addressed as a matter of urgency, and completed within the next five years.

These actions include:

- **Completion of a basin-wide survey (possibly before the end of 2007);**
- **Establishment of a regional bycatch network, in tight connection with the;**
- **Establishment of a regional stranding network;**
- **Establishment of a marine protected areas network.**

**Recommendation of the 4th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee
(Monaco, 5-8 November 2006)**

Recommendation on the Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans

The preparation of a Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans was one of the priorities assigned at the 1st Meeting of the Parties (Monaco, 2002; Resolution 1.9, Action 6). The 1st draft of the Plan was considered at the 3rd Meeting of the Scientific Committee (Cairo, 2005) while a further draft was discussed and supported in general and in most details by participants of the Round Table on the Conservation of Black Sea Cetaceans (Istanbul, May 2006).

At its 4th meeting in Monaco, the Scientific Committee adopts and commends the 3rd, substantially improved, version of the Plan, prepared under the auspices of the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat and the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission.

Consequently, the Scientific Committee **recommends** that the ACCOBAMS Parties and the Parties to the Bucharest Convention (through the Black Sea Commission) endorse its views of the Plan and :

- (1) agree that it should form an integral component of discussions of the Black Sea regional and national strategies, plans, programmes and projects concerned with the protection, exploration and management of the Black Sea environment, biodiversity, living resources, marine mammals, and cetaceans, in particular; and
- (2) facilitate the implementation of all actions proposed in the Plan such that they are completed as soon as possible and preferably within the next five years;

In particular, it **urges** that those actions which require coordinated effort and full institutional support from the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, the Black Sea Commission and the concerned individual Governments are addressed as a matter of urgency. These are:

- (1) completion of the basin-wide survey;
- (2) establishment of a regional bycatch network integrated with a regional stranding network; and
- (3) continue to work towards the establishment of a marine protected areas network.

RESOLUTION 3.12

BY-CATCH, COMPETITIVE INTERACTIONS AND ACOUSTIC DEVICES

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

On the recommendation of the Scientific Committee:

Renewing its concern about the negative impacts on cetacean populations of fishing activities in the Agreement area;

Concerned by the increasing unregulated use of acoustic devices by fishermen in many countries in the Agreement area;

Noting with satisfaction the progress made to implement the ByCBAMS project for mitigating by-catch of cetaceans;

Welcoming the collaboration established between ACCOBAMS and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean to address the issue of by-catch of cetaceans and other endangered marine species;

Aware that prey depletion is one of the main factors in competitive interactions between cetaceans and fishery activities;

Conscious that, given the uncertainties about the efficiency of acoustic devices in reducing interactions between cetaceans and fisheries in the Agreement area, further scientific studies are needed to assess both the effectiveness and the environmental impacts of acoustic devices on cetacean populations and the marine environment in the Agreement area;

Recalling that the Agreement invites Parties to collect and analyse data on direct and indirect interactions between humans and cetaceans in relation to fishing and to take appropriate remedial measures, applying, when necessary, the precautionary principle;

Recalling also CMS Resolution 8.22 on adverse human induced impacts on cetaceans and Resolution 2.12, and its annexed guidelines, which urges Parties to:

- strictly regulate the use of AHD (acoustic harassment devices) in order to alleviate conflicts between cetaceans and fisheries or mariculture operations in the Agreement area; and
- strongly recommend that the use of pingers, where authorized and appropriate, be conducted only after controlled studies to ensure that they are an effective mitigation measure:

1. *Encourages* Parties to join the ByCBAMS project by:

- collecting data on the present cetacean by-catch in the project area, establishing, where necessary, official schemes for independent observers on fishing boats;
- raising the awareness of fishermen about the need to mitigate the impact of fishing on cetacean populations; and
- enhancing the capacity of fishermen to properly handle and release alive cetaceans caught incidentally in their fishing gear;

2. *Invites* the Scientific Committee to analyse, on the basis of the available knowledge, the utility of acoustic devices in cetacean–fishery interactions, the report to be finalized and made available on the web site of ACCOBAMS before the end of 2008;

3. *Instructs* the Secretariat to prepare, in close collaboration with the Scientific Committee and relevant organizations, technical specifications and conditions for the use of acoustic deterrent devices in the Agreement area, which should be submitted to the Fourth Meeting of the Parties of ACCOBAMS;
4. *Also invites* the Secretariat and the Scientific Committee to collaborate with relevant organizations and bodies to consider further the relations between prey depletion and increasing interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities, proposing remedial solutions where possible.

RESOLUTION 3.13

DOLPHIN INTERACTION PROGRAMMES

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

On the recommendation of the Scientific Committee:

Noting the ongoing proliferation of dolphinarium and activities that involve direct human contact with dolphins such as swim-with-dolphins (SWD) and dolphin-assisted therapy (DAT) programmes;

Concerned:

- that many of these programmes involve the capture of cetaceans from the wild and their placement in captive facilities;
- by the continued trade in cetaceans, some of which are known to be originating from the Agreement Area;
- that these activities are likely to expand in facilities holding cetaceans in sea pens and tanks and that in this case they would present a significant risk of injury and disease transmission to both interacting parties (dolphins and humans);
- by the growing body of literature that discloses the risks associated with human interactions with marine mammals (and specifically, whales and dolphins), in the wild ;
- that short- and long-term behavioural changes in cetaceans, in response to vessel or swimmer presence, and displacement from primary resting areas have been reported in numerous studies;

Aware:

- that Swim with Dolphin programmes (SWD) and Dolphin Assisted Therapy programmes (DAT) are businesses which are growing in number all over the world, including in the Agreement area ;
- of the possible introduction of non-native species/subspecies/populations and the risk of disease transmission and genetic pollution resulting from the keeping of whales and bottlenose dolphins from outside the region in sea pens from which they might escape;
- that there are risks associated with direct contact between humans and marine mammals, especially cetaceans, that relate to the harassment of wild animals and present risks to the safety of swimmers;
- of the obligations towards cetacean conservation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention) , the Barcelona Convention Protocol relating to Specially Protected Areas and Biological diversity in the Mediterranean and the EU Habitat Directive;

Recalling:

- that Article II of the ACCOBAMS Agreement requires Parties to “prohibit and take all necessary measures to eliminate, where this is not already done, any deliberate taking of Cetaceans”
- that Article II. 4 of the ACCOBAMS Agreement requests the application of the precautionary principle in implementing such measures;
- that the CMS Art I.1.(i) definition of “taking” – as used in ACCOBAMS – includes harassment;

DAT usually refers to activities involving dolphins. However, for the purpose of the present resolution, it refers to activities involving all cetaceans.

Further recalling:

- that CITES Article XV 2.b) provides that, in order to determine the appropriate level of protection for marine species in international trade, CITES shall consult inter-governmental Bodies having a function in relation to those species especially with a view to obtaining scientific data, these bodies may be able to provide and to ensuring co-ordination with any conservation measures enforced by such bodies and;
- the IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group action plan stressing that : "Removal of live cetaceans from the wild, for captive display and/or research, is equivalent to incidental or deliberate killing, as the animals brought into captivity (or killed during capture operations) are no longer available to help maintain their populations. When unmanaged and undertaken without a rigorous program of research and monitoring, live-capture can become a serious threat to local cetacean populations";

Recalling also:

- Resolution 2.8 on the "Framework guidelines on the granting of exceptions for the purpose of non lethal in situ research aimed at maintaining a favourable conservation status for cetaceans";
- Resolution 1.12 on the "Conservation of the Black Sea *Tursiops truncatus*: Bottlenose dolphin";
- Resolution 2.17 on "The release of cetaceans into the wild";
- Recommendation SC4.11 of the Scientific Committee on "Captive facilities".

Recognizing that:

- the capture and long-term captivity of cetaceans from the ACCOBAMS area are therefore contrary to the spirit of the Agreement;
- there exists no scientific evidence that DAT is any more effective than any other animal assisted therapy and it has not been demonstrated effectively to have any long-term benefit;
- activities that promote or enable direct interactions between humans and marine mammals dramatically increase the potential for harassment.

1. *Requests* Parties to prohibit any cetacean interaction programme that involves closely approaching, interacting with, or attempting to interact with wild cetaceans, with the exception of authorized research activities granted according to Resolution 2.8 and cetacean-watching activities carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for commercial cetacean-watching activities in the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area, adopted within the framework of ACCOBAMS. This includes attempting to swim with, touch, feed or otherwise elicit a reaction from the animals.
2. *Urges* Parties:
 - Not to allow imports of dolphins that have been captured from the wild, and to screen very carefully all information submitted for the importation of captive-bred dolphins;
 - To provide the Secretariat with information on dolphin-assisted therapy and other interaction programmes or activities existing or planned in the areas under their jurisdiction
3. *Charges* the Secretariat to:
 - collect information on the activities undertaken in the Agreement area involving deliberate and direct human contact with cetaceans, compile a report on the issue and submit it to the Scientific Committee and to the next MOP
 - request the Scientific Committee to assess the evidence available and come up with a clinical opinion on the issues, including a judgement as to whether DAT is necessary or whether it can be easily substituted with therapies involving terrestrial domestic animals and submit this, with their recommendations, to the next MOP.

4. *Charges* the Scientific Committee to monitor the issue, and where necessary, make recommendations to the next Meeting of the Parties.

RESOLUTION 3.14

SHIPS STRIKES ON LARGE WHALES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

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

On the recommendation of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee:

Aware that large cetaceans (fin and sperm whales) are particularly threatened by impacts with vessels;

Also aware that the speed, rather than the shape or displacement, of vessels is the most significant variable in ship strikes;

Recognizing that the speed and number of vessels will increase substantially in the near future;

Noting with interest:

- the decision of the Spanish Government to reduce the speed of vessels crossing areas of particular importance for sperm whales in the Strait of Gibraltar;
- the decision applied in the Bay of Fundy (Canada) to re-route shipping lanes crossing areas of importance for the North Atlantic right whale;
- the proposal to reduce speed of vessels along the eastern coast of the USA in areas of importance for the North Atlantic right whale;
- the designation of an Area to be avoided in the Roseway Basin proposed by Canada and recently approved by the IMO to protect the North Atlantic right whale; and
- Decision 884/2004/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council (29/04/04);

Stressing that the collaboration of non-parties is of particular importance in this context;

Taking into account the relevant recommendation of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and the report of the joint ACCOBAMS–PELAGOS workshop on large whale ship strikes in the Mediterranean Sea¹ as presented in the document (ACCOABMS-MOP3/2007/Inf 09)

1. *Urges* Parties:

- to communicate with the captains and crews of shipping companies to obtain information on past, present and future ship strikes;
- to allow and support the conduct of thorough necropsies of carcasses to determine the cause of death, involving as necessary external expertise such as that of the United States stranding networks;
- to allow and support feasibility studies to assess the efficiency of dedicated observers in alerting captains of the presence of whales and the risk of collision, and to record and report collisions when they occur;
- to organize and run education and training courses for vessel crews, coast guard personnel, port officials and maritime traffic managers, to increase awareness about the risk of collisions, the importance of reporting strikes and how to avoid collisions;
- to liaise with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and the Scientific Committee to provide advice to managers on high-use areas by species and season;
- to make use of measures already available under IMO instruments to divert ship traffic from sensitive areas and to work closely with IMO to develop additional mitigation strategies; and
- to encourage the decrease in night time transit of high-speed and fast ferries;

¹ Weinrich M, Panigada S, Guinet C (eds). *Report of the joint ACCOBAMS–PELAGOS Workshop on Large Whale Ship Strikes in the Mediterranean Sea, Monaco, 14–15 November 2005*. Monaco: ACCOBAMS, 2006, 35 pp.

2. *Instructs* the ACCOBAMS Secretariat to:
 - investigate the most appropriate ways of raising cetacean issues with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre, of obtaining relevant information from them and of liaising with the Ship Strike Working Group of the International Whaling Commission (IWC);
 - liaise with the Secretariats of PELAGOS and IWC in order to create a regional database of ship collisions, with the involvement of the relevant scientific bodies;
 - liaise with the PELAGOS Secretariat to investigate ways of using the PELAGOS Sanctuary as a model and testing ground for mitigation measures; and
 - encourage collaboration with non-parties;

3. *Mandates* the Scientific Committee to:
 - create a steering group under the auspices of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee to work closely with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and Parties, the PELAGOS Sanctuary Secretariat, the IWC, IMO and the Convention on Migratory Species, and other relevant experts and research groups in the region;
 - investigate, in collaboration with the Secretariat, the best way of obtaining accurate information on the number of ship strikes and associated details and to report to the Fourth Meeting of the Parties;
 - define, taking into account existing relevant work and collaborating with relevant experts, an agreed protocol to assess ship strikes that could be adopted by the Parties between two Meetings of the Parties; and
 - use the Strait of Gibraltar as a model and testing ground for mitigation measures;
 - identify areas with high shipping density and assess for these areas the potential risks of collision with cetaceans

RESOLUTION 3.15

COMPREHENSIVE CETACEAN POPULATION ESTIMATES AND DISTRIBUTION IN THE ACCOBAMS AREA

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

On the recommendation of the Scientific Committee,

Acknowledging that, at its meetings, the Scientific Committee has drawn the attention of the ACCOBAMS Parties to the fundamental importance of obtaining baseline population estimates and information on the distribution of cetaceans in the area as soon as possible;

Aware of the great importance of such information for assessing risk and determining appropriate mitigation measures and the associated priority actions;

Aware that the lack of such information may reduce the credibility of proposed conservation measures and make it difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate whether ACCOBAMS is meeting its conservation objectives;

Recalling that identification of the components of biological diversity is a fundamental priority, expressed *inter alia* in the Convention on Biological Diversity;

Recalling Article II (3) of the Agreement and its Conservation Plan (paragraph 2);

Recalling also Resolution 2.7 on the Working Program 2005-2007 and Resolution 2.19 on the abundance and distribution of cetaceans within the ACCOBAMS area;

Recognizing the excellent work already carried out on this issue by the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat, including the organization of the following meetings:

- first workshop on obtaining baseline cetacean abundance information (Valsain, Spain, 17–19 December 2004);
- working group meeting on methodology for surveying the Black Sea (St Andrews, Scotland, 15–16 September 2005);
- workshop on cetacean survey in the Black Sea (Istanbul, Turkey, 17–18 October 2005); and
- working group meeting on obtaining baseline cetacean abundance information (St Andrews, Scotland, 18–19 December 2006);

Acknowledging that the Scientific Committee at its Fourth Meeting again reiterated that this work remains the highest priority for research in the area;

Recognizing in particular that, for this project to be successful, it is essential to find the relatively small amount of seed funding, particularly for the work of the coordinators;

Expressing its satisfaction to the Italian Government for its financial support;

1. *Endorses* all the work carried out and agreed by the Scientific Committee during the above-mentioned meetings to draft a proposal for a multi-species survey and associated monitoring programme;

2. *Reaffirms* the earlier commitment of the Parties to the project, particularly in Resolution (2.19), urging the Parties, range States and international organizations to assist in the process and to consider providing financial or in-kind (e.g. vessels, aircraft, personnel) support for the survey;
3. *Urges* the Parties and *invites* all range States to appoint a national contact person, whose tasks will be to:
 - facilitate the work of the Steering Group by interacting promptly at all levels during finalization of the project proposal and its subsequent realization;
 - respond promptly to requests for information from the Steering Group and Secretariat with respect to, e.g. national regulations, operational restrictions and available observation platforms; and
 - assist in obtaining permits for vessels and aircraft to operate in waters under national jurisdiction;
4. *Requests* the Parties:
 - to adopt a synergistic approach to coordination of ongoing monitoring projects and to the support of future surveys funded at national level under ACCOBAMS in collaboration with the Secretariat, in concordance with the Conservation Plan (paragraph 4), stating that Parties shall undertake coordinated, concerted research on cetaceans and facilitate the development of new techniques to enhance their conservation;
 - to ask the Scientific Committee for advice on the development and coordination of an international research and monitoring programme, in compliance with Article VII (3d) of the Agreement; and
 - to give high priority in their national research budgets to providing:
 - the essential seed funding required for essential planning and coordination; and
 - the necessary financial and/or in-kind support for the ACCOBAMS basin-wide survey in the form of e.g. appropriate vessels, aircraft and/or observers and matching funding for European Union proposals.

RESOLUTION 3.16

CONSERVATION OF FIN WHALES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

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

On the recommendation of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee:

Aware that comprehensive information on the fin whale throughout the Mediterranean Sea is still lacking;

Also aware that the data for the proposed International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List assessment of Mediterranean population(s) are deficient¹;

Further aware that fin whales are particularly vulnerable to impacts with vessels;

Aware also of the need for a conservation plan for the fin whale in the Mediterranean Sea;

Stressing that the collaboration of non-parties is of particular importance in this context,

Recalling:

- Resolution 2.8 on granting exceptions for the purpose of non-lethal in-situ research and
- Resolution 3.4 on the work programme for 2008–2010;

Taking into account the relevant recommendation of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and the report of the Joint ACCOBAMS/PELAGOS workshop on fin whales in the Mediterranean Sea² as presented in the document (ACCOBAMS/MOP3/2007/Inf 10);

1. *Urges* Parties to support:

- initiatives on abundance and long-term monitoring, including:
 - o the Basin-wide survey referred to in Resolution 3.15;
 - o the development of models to explain and predict fin whale distribution and abundance;
 - o the use of platforms of opportunity (e.g. ferries, merchant ships) to obtain effort-based information on areas for which little or no information exists;
 - o seasonal use of aerial surveys to obtain information on specific areas (e.g. the PELAGOS Sanctuary); and
 - o the development and maintenance of long-term monitoring programmes, including appropriate databases (e.g. photo-identification catalogues);
- the combination of photo-identification data in a centralized catalogue with a common data collection and matching protocol;
- the development and coordination of targeted biopsy sampling programmes, including coordinated multidisciplinary analyses and identification of appropriate laboratories to ensure that the results are comparable;
- prompt analysis of existing acoustic data and collection of new data, e.g. by using existing arrays (e.g. military) and pop-ups;
- research on automatic recognition of fin-whale sounds and triangulation on locations;

¹ Reeves R, Notarbartolo di Sciarra G (eds). *The status and distribution of cetaceans in the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea*. Malaga: IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, 2006, 137 pp.

² Donovan G, Panigada S, Guinet C (eds). *Report of the Joint ACCOBAMS–PELAGOS Workshop on Fin Whales in the Mediterranean Sea, Monaco, 14–15 November 2005*. Monaco: ACCOBAMS, 2006, 35 pp.

- targeted telemetry studies in specific areas (e.g. the Straits of Gibraltar and the Sicily Channel); and
 - in-depth studies of the relations between whales and their prey in the Ligurian Sea and the western Mediterranean Basin;
2. *Calls upon* riparian States, range States, international organizations, international scientific institutions and others to participate in and support ACCOBAMS studies;
 3. *Invites* Parties to inform the Secretariat of projects in the framework of ACCOBAMS implementation;
 4. *Instructs* the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and, as relevant, on the advice of the Scientific Committee and in particular of its coordination group established in this context to:
 - liaise with the appropriate authorities, industries, research institutes and organizations to obtain: detailed bathymetric data; pollutant information; data on ambient noise levels; data on noise from transient activities, e.g. military sonar, seismic activities; and data on fin-whale prey distribution, abundance and health;
 - facilitate the holding of a joint workshop with the SCANs (Small Cetaceans in the European Atlantic and the North Sea) II project and the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) on general theoretical and practical aspects of small-scale monitoring for trends; and
 - improve ways of sharing fin-whale tissue samples between countries, as referred to in Resolution 3.9 on guidelines on tissue banks;
 5. *Mandates* the Scientific Committee to implement this resolution in close collaboration with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and Parties, the PELAGOS Sanctuary Secretariat, the IWC Scientific Committee, the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species and other relevant experts and research groups in the region.

RESOLUTION 3.17

CONSERVATION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMON DOLPHIN *Delphinus delphis*

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

On the recommendation of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee:

Aware that the short-beaked common dolphin, once one of the commonest cetacean species in the Mediterranean, has declined in the past few decades and has almost completely disappeared from large portions of its former range;

Taking into account the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Animals, which in 2003 listed the Mediterranean common dolphin population as endangered;

Conscious of the impact of fishery activities on the survival of Mediterranean common dolphins;

Convinced that, if ecosystem-based fishery management, as invoked by the existing international, regional and national legal instruments for the management of the Mediterranean Sea, were fully implemented and enforced, the decline of common dolphins would probably cease;

Deeply concerned that, despite the strong scientific evidence, strategic planning and multiple expressions of concern and recommendations, *inter alia* by the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and relevant ACCOBAMS Partners, insufficient action has been taken to ensure recovery of the common dolphin in the region;

Recalling:

- Resolution 2.14 on protected areas and cetacean conservation;
- Resolution 2.20 welcoming the conservation plan for common dolphins in the Mediterranean Sea;
- Resolution 2.25 on prey depletion;
- Recommendation 2.3 on the advisory role of ACCOBAMS in amendments to the appendices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS); and
- the inclusion, in 2005, of the Mediterranean population of common dolphins in Appendix I of the CMS:

1. *Urges* Parties to implement the conservation plan for common dolphins according to Resolution 2.20, taking into account in particular the need for international coordination and adequate funding;
2. *Urges* Parties and *invites* non-Party riparian States to:
 - implement appropriate parts of the conservation plan for Mediterranean common dolphins¹ without prejudice to other international obligations; and
 - introduce relevant activities into their national action plans and report on those efforts to the ACCOBAMS permanent Secretariat;
3. *Requests* the Secretariat to:
 - participate, in close cooperation with the Scientific Committee, in fisheries meetings, such as those organized by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the

¹ Document 49 of the Second Meeting of the Parties

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), to obtain information on the impact of fishing activities on Mediterranean common dolphins and to encourage collaboration;

- liaise with the GFCM Secretariat to organize a joint workshop on the situation of common dolphins in the Mediterranean Sea and on ways to mitigate the impact of fisheries;
- work closely with the CMS Secretariat to encourage Parties to implement conservation actions, consistent with the decisions taken so far and the listing of Mediterranean common dolphins in Appendix I of the CMS; and
- convey the international concern for common dolphins to the environment and fisheries directorates of the European Commission, in particular for the inclusion of the common dolphin in the Annex 2 to the Habitat Directive and to identify appropriate strategies and funding opportunities;
- Promote appropriate collaboration with the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols' work programmes in order to identify, support and implement activities and projects of common interest for the protection of the Mediterranean common dolphin

RESOLUTION 3.19

IUCN RED LIST OF CETACEANS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEAS

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

On the recommendation of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee:

Recalling Resolution 1.3 acknowledging the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as a full member of the Scientific Committee;

Recalling also Resolution 2.22 on strengthening relations with the IUCN;

Considering with attention the assessments of ACCOBAMS and IUCN experts on Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea cetaceans¹;

Aware of the need for better data and analyses to improve understanding of the status of several cetacean species in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions;

Further recalling:

- Resolution 3.9 on guidelines on tissue banks and an ethical code;
- Resolution 3.10 on guidelines to address the impact of anthropogenic noise; and
- Resolution 3.15 on comprehensive cetacean population estimates and distribution in the ACCOBAMS area:

1. *Adopts* the following IUCN–ACCOBAMS Red List assessment:

Species	IUCN category
Killer whale (<i>Orcinus orca</i>)	Critically endangered
Sperm whale, Mediterranean population (<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>)	Endangered
Short-beaked common dolphin, Mediterranean population ² (<i>Delphinus delphis</i>)	Endangered
Short-beaked common dolphin, Black Sea sub-species (<i>Delphinus delphis</i>)	Endangered
Common bottlenose dolphin, Black Sea sub-species (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>)	Endangered
Harbour porpoise, Black Sea sub-species, including animals in the northern Aegean Sea (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>)	Endangered
Common bottlenose dolphin, Mediterranean population (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>)	Vulnerable
Striped dolphin, Mediterranean population (<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>)	Vulnerable
Fin whale, Mediterranean population (<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>)	Data deficient
Cuvier's beaked whale, Mediterranean population (<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>)	Data deficient
Long-finned pilot whale, Mediterranean population (<i>Globicephala melas</i>)	Data deficient
Risso's dolphin, Mediterranean population (<i>Grampus griseus</i>)	Data deficient

¹ ACCOBAMS. ACCOBAMS–IUCN workshop for the establishment of a Red List of cetaceans in ACCOBAMS area, Monaco, 5–7 March 2006.

² Assessed in 2003

2. *Urges* Parties to implement measures to address the threats to the populations assessed according to the list above, with particular regard to critically endangered and endangered populations, and to update their national Red Lists;
3. *Further urges* concerned Parties and *calls upon* non-party riparian States to pay specific, immediate attention to the conservation of killer whales, Mediterranean short-beaked common dolphins, Mediterranean sperm whales and Black Sea and northern Aegean Sea harbour porpoises;
4. *Encourages* the scientific community to improve knowledge on: population structure, animal abundance, causes of mortality and links between animal health and potential threat factors (e.g. toxic contaminants, anthropogenic noise);
5. *Also encourages* Parties, non-parties and international organizations to provide appropriate financial, logistical and technical support for these investigations;
6. *Further encourages* the IUCN Red List authority to complete the listing of Mediterranean and Black Sea populations, taking into account the conclusions of the workshop of experts¹;
7. *Charges* the Secretariat to link with the IUCN Red List authority for this purpose.

RESOLUTION 3.20

GUIDELINES ON THE RELEASE OF CETACEANS INTO THE WILD

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

Aware that there is increasing interest in the area covered by the Agreement for commercial operations involving ‘swim-with’ and ‘dolphin-assisted therapy’ programmes in controlled environments (including captive facilities and enclosed and semi-enclosed sea areas);

Convinced that the extent of such operations is likely to be an increasing threat to wild cetacean populations due to illegal takes and reintroductions;

Further aware that cetaceans originating from the Mediterranean and Black Seas are currently in captivity in several countries and that programmes for further captures are being authorized in the area covered by the Agreement;

Particularly concerned by the risks that cetacean releases and similar operations represent to wild populations of dolphins due to potential introduction into the environment of exotic pathogens and genetic mixing;

Conscious that the chances of survival of released dolphins, especially if born in captivity, are very low;

Agreeing that the only reason for any release should be conservation;

Stressing that, for all objectives, the overriding priority in any release programme should be that it does not affect the conservation status of existing wild cetacean populations;

Noting that the welfare of released animals must be of utmost concern;

Recalling:

- Article II of the Agreement, which prohibits the deliberate taking of cetaceans from the wild;
 - Resolution 2.17 on the release of cetaceans into the wild, requesting the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat, in close consultation with the Scientific Committee and in liaison with pertinent ACCOBAMS partners, to develop guidelines on proposals for the release of cetaceans into the wild that are not contrary to the Agreement, on the basis of scientific knowledge and lessons learnt from previous release programmes;
 - Resolution 3.13 on dolphin interaction programmes;
 - Article 9 of the Convention on Biological Diversity requiring Contracting Parties to adopt measures for the recovery and rehabilitation of threatened species and for their reintroduction into their natural habitats under appropriate conditions; and
 - the IUCN/SSC Guidelines for Re-introductions, approved in response to the increasing occurrence of re-introduction projects worldwide and to the growing need for specific policy guidelines to help ensure that re-introductions achieve their intended conservation benefit and do not cause adverse side-effects of greater impact:
1. *Adopts* the Guidelines on proposals for the release of captive cetaceans into the wild as presented in Annex 1 to this Resolution;

2. *Urges* Parties and *invites* Riparian States to communicate in due time any planned release of cetaceans into the wild to the Scientific Committee for information and advice;
3. *Requests* the Scientific Committee to provide such review and advice via the Secretariat in a timely fashion;
4. *Urges* Parties who are also Parties to CITES to ensure close liaison between their CITES authorities and the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS through the Agreement Secretariat on this issue.

ANNEX 1

GUIDELINES FOR THE RELEASE OF CAPTIVE CETACEANS INTO THE WILD

Definition of terms

- ~ “Release”: deliver from confinement, restraint or suffering.
- ~ “Agreement area”: Area covered by the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area.
- ~ “Habitat”: any area in the range of cetaceans where they are temporarily or permanently resident, in particular, feeding areas, calving or breeding grounds, and migration routes.
- ~ “Acclimation”: the process of becoming accustomed or adapting to a new environment or situation.
- ~ “Native population”: population originating in the place or region in question.
- ~ “Subspecies”: taxonomic subdivision of a species, consisting of an interbreeding population of individual animals.
- ~ “Conspecifics”: individuals of or belonging to the same species

1. Aims and objectives of release

1.1. Aims

Recalling ACCOBAMS Article II, which prohibits the deliberate taking of cetaceans from the wild, these guidelines aim to ensure that special consideration is given to proposals for the release into the wild of captive cetaceans that originate from, or are a result of breeding between cetaceans originating from, the Agreement area. Within this context, the release should be guided by the principles of preservation and/or conservation of the species and/or population concerned and aimed at improving the health and welfare of the individual animal(s) proposed for release.

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of the release may include: to enhance the long-term health and survival of the individual(s) released; to enhance the long-term survival of the species or population; to maintain and/or restore natural biodiversity; to promote conservation awareness; to rescue individuals held in poor conditions; or a combination of these.

2. Planning for the release

2.1. Choice of release site

- The release site should be preferably within the historic range of the population from which the animal(s) proposed for release originate or descend.
- The release should only take place where the habitat requirements of the species are satisfied, and likely to be sustained for the foreseeable future.
- Local experts should be approached, through the Scientific Committee if appropriate, to determine the status and biology of wild populations at the release site and to determine the species’ critical needs. This could involve collection of information on habitat preferences, intraspecific variation and adaptations to local ecological conditions, social behaviour, group composition, home range size, shelter and food requirements, foraging and feeding behaviour, predators and diseases.
- The release project should consider any potential impact on the native population of the species in the area into which the animals are proposed for release. Preparation for the release should therefore include research and/or consultation on the past and present abundance of the species/population from which the animals originate or in the area into which the animals are proposed for release.

2.2. Evaluation and preparation of the animal(s) for release

- Cetaceans proposed for release must be subjected to a thorough veterinary screening process before transportation to the acclimation or release site. This is to ensure absence of any non-endemic or contagious pathogens with the potential to have an impact on the native population of the area into which the animals are proposed for release. The precise nature of this has yet to be defined but such screening is key to minimizing the potential for transmitting lethal disease agents into wild populations. Any release should abide by the protocol for the veterinary screening of cetaceans as presented in Appendix 1.
- Information on the age, sex, reproductive status, history (including, where appropriate, time in captivity, number and species of other animals in the same facility), population origin (and exact location of capture, if applicable and known) and health (present and past) of each of the animals proposed for release should be made available.
- Cetaceans proposed for release should preferably be of the same subspecies as the native population of the site chosen for release and show similar ecological characteristics (morphology, physiology, behaviour, habitat preference).
- Local endemic or epidemic infectious diseases should be vaccinated against, prior to release.
- Body condition should be appropriate for the environmental conditions at the release site.
- Cetaceans to be released should be given the opportunity to acquire the necessary experience to enable their survival in the wild, through training and/or conditioning in the captive environment or in a temporary holding enclosure at the release site, where appropriate.
- Cetaceans should demonstrate the following behavioural characteristics prior to release: a) foraging capability b) normal (non-habituated) behaviour towards humans and human structures c) lack of sensitivity to any monitoring equipment.
- The proposed release of captive-bred animals should remain subject to review.

2.3. Logistics of the release

- Persons involved in the planning of a release should consult the available literature, seek expert advice and submit a detailed proposal to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and the Scientific Committee for full review and consultation with the appropriate national and regional authorities.
- Personnel and other stakeholders involved in the release project should be multidisciplinary and could include government personnel, natural resource management agencies, non-governmental organizations, funding bodies, universities, veterinary institutions and other expert bodies, providing a full range of suitable expertise.
- Appropriate local and national authorities and interests should be informed about the project noting that where animals may migrate across national boundaries, more than one national authority may need to be approached.
- The release project should have all the necessary national and international permits to ensure the legality of the release.
- The estimated costs of the project should include the full release and monitoring programme and the availability and reliability of the financial and logistical resources required to carry it out.
- Plans for the transportation of animals to the release site should include measures to minimize stress and other health-related problems during transport and ensure access to a suitably qualified veterinarian at all times.
- Measures should be taken to ensure that accurate information is provided to local, national and international interested parties and the media.
- Measures should be taken to ensure the released cetacean is not at risk from human activities at the release site, including provisions to reduce the impact of public interest on the success of the release and to ensure that the released cetacean(s) pose(s) no risk to local inhabitants.

3. On-site rehabilitation and release

- Following transportation, acclimation prior to release should take place in a suitable environment, preferably in an enclosed sea pen in a sheltered bay, exposed to the natural forces and environment of the sea (e.g. waves, rocks), with an adequate supply of live fish for the animals to establish hunting techniques. The provision of a ‘halfway house’ of this type can provide the means of gradually returning the animals to the wild, while enabling monitoring of their condition in their natural environment prior to release. It could also provide a site to which the animals can be returned in case of illness or other incapacity following release.
- A suitably qualified veterinarian should be available throughout the rehabilitation process and cetaceans should undergo further veterinary screening prior to release.
- Release into the wild environment should occur as soon as the animals demonstrate the behavioural characteristics referred to in 2.2. and environmental conditions are deemed fit for the release to be carried out.

4. Post-release monitoring

- Post release monitoring of all cetaceans released should be carried out.
- Monitoring techniques should provide sufficient information about the post release activity without disrupting the normal activities of the animal.
- Photo-identification techniques, which use a photograph taken of both sides of a cetacean’s dorsal fin, can be used to identify released individuals. By circulating photo-identification images throughout the fishing community and to other boat users, sightings of released individuals can be monitored. Information can also be distributed throughout the community close to the release site to encourage the reporting of sightings. Other monitoring techniques, including freeze-branding, tagging and telemetry should be subject to review, according to the provisions of ACCOBAMS Resolution 2.8.
- In addition, dedicated demographic, ecological and behavioural studies of released cetaceans should be undertaken to contribute to a study of long-term adaptation by the individual(s) released and the native population. The study should record factors such as the behaviour, body condition and association with conspecifics of the released cetaceans.
- Measures should be put in place to ensure any problems with the release can be addressed, such as the collection and investigation of mortalities, interventions (e.g. supplemental feeding, veterinary aid) and decision-making in relation to revision, rescheduling, or discontinuation of the programme where necessary, including animal recovery and placement.
- Public relations activities, including education and media coverage, should continue post-release, with the goal of helping to contribute to the success of the release.

5. Evaluation of the release

- A written evaluation of the release and any post-release monitoring should be presented to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat.
- Project managers should also seek publication of the results in scientific and popular literature.

Appendix 1

DISEASES TO TEST FOR BEFORE RELEASING REHABILITATED CETACEANS

The following list of diseases has been described from wild cetaceans. They do not all have the same level of pathological effect and thus pose varying levels of threat to free-ranging cetacean populations.

The only disease agents, at this time, for which screening is essential before releasing a rehabilitated cetacean, are the morbilliviruses; this is due to their potential to cause an epizootic if released into a naïve population.

Brucella and erysipelas are contagious but do not appear to have the potential to create mass mortalities. Testing for these diseases before releasing a rehabilitated cetacean should depend on the clinician's evaluation of the animal's state of health and the potential risk for the wild population.

Even if the tests described below are negative, the clinician must make the final decision for release, as a disease can be subclinical, and different factors can influence the correct interpretation of a diagnostic test. The clinician's overall evaluation of the patient should therefore prevail over laboratory tests.

MORBILLIVIRUS

Morbillivirus are RNA viruses that infect both odontocetes and mysticetes. Different strains have been identified (i.e. Dolphin Morbillivirus = DMV & Porpoise Morbillivirus = PMV) but are believed to represent the same viral species (CMV = Cetacean Morbillivirus). Relatively recent outbreaks have caused extensive die-offs, including the striped dolphin epizootic in the Mediterranean Sea in the early 1990s. Morbillivirus may be enzootic in certain cetacean species (for example, long- and short-finned pilot whale (*Globicephala melas* and *macrorhynchus*)).

This virus causes typically pneumonia, encephalitis and immunosuppression, which allows secondary infections to develop, which may lead to the death of the animal.

It is recommended that stranded dolphins and whales should always be tested for morbillivirus before they are released, as they could be the source of a mortality event if they were to be shedding the virus in a naïve environment.

The infection involves a viremia during which the virus can be isolated or amplified with the help of RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction) from the animal's serum. An active infection can also be identified checking antibody titers. Before release, dolphins and whales should be checked for serological evidence of active infection. It is therefore important to have collected and, if possible stored, serum for this successive tests to be carried out. A monoclonal antibody-based competitive enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (C-ELISA) can be used on sera from several species, which avoids the need for multiple anti-species enzyme conjugates.

BRUCELLOSIS

Marine *Brucella spp.* is a Gram negative bacteria that has raised a lot of concern in recent years, as it has been proved to be responsible for some cases of zoonosis. Cetaceans can get infected by marine strains of *Brucella*, but the infection is generally of little concern. *Brucella* is known to have caused abortion in captive bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), reproductive tract lesions in minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) and brain lesions in striped dolphins (*Stenella coeruleoalba*).

The infection comprises a bacteremia during which the bacteria can be isolated by culture from the blood, or its DNA can be amplified using PCR. An active infection can also be identified looking for antibody titers. A basic competitive enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay test (C-ELISA) using *Brucella abortus* can be used. If the animal has high(er) titers, an active infection is still present and the animal may be shedding bacteria in its environment.

ERYSIPELAS

The causative agent of erysipelas is *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae*, a Gram-positive, rod-shaped bacteria. In the wild, cetaceans can be occasionally infected by *Erysipelothrix*, and two types of disease can result. The first one is a subacute cutaneous form characterised by rhomboid (diamond shaped) skin pigmentation; the second one is an acute systemic form that rapidly leads to death. No epidemics have been described so far.

ELISA or microtitration agglutination testing for high or increased *Erysipelothrix sp.* antibodies can identify animals that are still diseased. It is important to have sera from the start of the rehabilitation in order to be able to follow the serological evolution.

RESOLUTION 3.21

ACCOBAMS– CIESM – PELAGOS JOINT CETACEAN SIGHTING DATABASE

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

On the recommendation of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee:

Recognizing the importance of an ACCOBAMS– CIESM –PELAGOS joint sighting database as a tool for cetacean conservation in the ACCOBAMS area;

Recalling that Resolution 2.7 on the Working Programme 2005–2007 states that: “A systematic effort to create an Agreement-wide sighting database should be started under the auspices of ACCOBAMS. All future available sighting data fulfilling the necessary quality requirements should be used to accrue to the database. [...] The task of defining the procedures for the establishment, functioning and fruition of the database, as well as the criteria for inclusion of the data and a code of deontology, should be given to the Scientific Committee with the request of proceeding expeditiously to its implementation”;

Acknowledging that such a database would support the conservation and scientific goals of the participating organizations by providing them with a readily accessible body of knowledge, collected across time (past, present and future), on the occurrence, distribution, abundance and habitat use of cetaceans in the Mediterranean and Black Seas and contiguous Atlantic area:

Noting that the ACCOBAMS area will benefit from cooperation between the existing Euroflukes Project and the future ACCOBAMS–CIESM–PELAGOS joint sighting database and strengthen both initiatives;

Stressing that the collaboration of Parties and Range States is of particular importance for the establishment of the ACCOBAMS–CIESM–PELAGOS joint sighting database:

1. *Welcomes* the working plan for establishment of a joint ACCOBAMS–CIESM– PELAGOS cetacean sighting database proposed in the Annex 1 to this Resolution;
2. *Requests* the Secretariat to continue assisting the work of the Scientific Committee and the Data Availability Group of the joint sighting database towards definition of an agreed availability protocol and database format;
3. *Instructs* the Secretariat to collaborate with the other partners to achieve physical establishment and operational activation of the central database by the end of 2008;
4. *Urges* Parties and *invites* Range States to facilitate, by all necessary means, the work of the Secretariat and the Scientific Committee, especially by ensuring the full collaboration of national Focal Points in gathering data on existing sightings and associated data.

ANNEX 1

“ACCOBAMS-CIESM-PELAGOS Joint Cetacean Sightings Database”: (JCSDB) Working programme

Aims

The Meeting agreed on the following “*Joint Cetacean Sightings Database*” general aim:

1. Supporting the conservation and scientific goals of the participating Organisations by providing a readily accessible body of knowledge, collected across time (past, present and future), concerning the occurrence, distribution, abundance and habitat use of cetaceans in the Mediterranean, Black Seas and contiguous Atlantic.

In order to meet this general aim, some provisional operational objectives of the JCSDB were identified, as follow:

1. Organising a single, accessible, scientifically credible and robust database, integrating relevant and validated existing datasets to future information. Such dataset will contain information collected within the ACCOBAMS area.
2. Gathering data that can be analysed to obtain effective and predictive distribution and abundance maps for all cetacean species within the ACCOBAMS area including PELAGOS;
3. Implementing new spatial analysis tools, in order to define *ad hoc* models for the region that will allow the correct use of new baseline and monitoring data.

These preliminary operational objectives are not meant to be exclusive but should be regarded as priorities.

Next steps:

1. Location:

The MOP and the relevant representative of the other partners (CIESM and PELAGOS Sanctuary) should agree on the location where the central database (hardware and software) will be physically held.

2. Data Management & Availability Group:

The Data Management & Availability Group should be established and it should include at least the following people:

- a. The Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee,
- b. The Chair of the PELAGOS Sanctuary Scientific Committee,
- c. A representative of CIESM,
- d. An appointed coordinator by the hosting Organisation, and
- e. A representative for each group providing data.

This group will have to clearly identify all procedure for:

- database accessibility policy, by establishing rules on: i) data transmission to “Third Parties” (applicants eligibility); ii) submission of data access proposals; iii) evaluation of data access proposals; and

- data quality control, by defining rules on data validation methods (for example, on eligibility of datasets and data providers, methods and protocols for data collection, data verification system).

Details on basic principles to be followed by this Group, on general agreed concepts of data sharing policies and on a possible procedure for Data Availability are reported in the final report of the Joint meeting (ACCOBAMS-MOP3/2007/Inf13). This document should be accepted by the Parties as draft guidelines for future implementations.

3. **Data gathering:**

ACCOBAMS Parties should agree on basic concept on some default mechanisms of how data should be gathered. Some example could be the following:

1. ACCOBAMS Partners should be obliged to make their data available because the acknowledged partnership is given that
 - a. the JCSDB is one of the main priorities of ACCOBAMS,
 - b. *“Organisations and Institutions technically qualified in the conservation of cetaceans formally recognised as Partners of the ACCOBAMS by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties will be expected to contribute on a regular basis and to the best of their ability to the further development of policies, technical and scientific tools of the Agreement and to their application”* and
 - c. ACCOBAMS Partners *“stated their readiness to actively contribute on a regular basis to further development of policies and tools of the Agreement and their application, particularly by assisting Contracting Parties to meet their obligations under the Agreement”* (MOP1 report); and
2. ACCOBAMS Contracting Parties should request in a mandatory way to all Institutions and Organisations benefiting of national or international funding related to ACCOBAMS (including ratification laws) to participate to the JCSDB with their relevant data.
3. ACCOBAMS Contracting Parties should promote the definition of formal agreements to interface the JCSDB with existing databases (including CIESM, Euroflukes, etc.)

4. **Database design:**

A small group of experts on the main available statistical methods on distribution, abundance and habitat use of cetaceans and Information Technology people should meet (or discuss via email) to decide on the minimum amount of compulsory information, its format and the technical requirements (software- and hardware-wise).

5. **Database budget:**

Parties should agree a provisional budget including at least the following elements:

Construction costs:

- *Database development [technical-intellectual costs (3 months)]* 10,000€
- *Compilation and verification of the historical data (full time for one year)* 15,000 €
- *Dedicated PC and accessories* 3,000 €

Running costs:

- *Database moderator (One member of each SC Committee)* 6,000 €/yr
- *Database administrator (part-time job: maintenance and check)* 3,000 €/yr

- *Structural expenses for the hosting of the database* 250 €/yr
- *Material maintenance* 500 €/yr

Costs are roughly estimated and do not include taxes. They are referred to the JCSDB start-up costs (Construction costs) and annual cost for its maintenance (Running costs).

RESOLUTION 3.22

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS FOR CETACEANS

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

On 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 that the Agreement invites the Parties to endeavour to establish and manage specially protected areas for cetaceans corresponding to the areas that serve as habitats and/or provide important food resources for them;

Conscious that establishing a network of marine protected areas will help achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for cetaceans;

Taking into account the recommendation of the fourth meeting of the Scientific Committee stressing the importance of following a staged process in identifying and selecting candidate marine protected areas;

Recognizing that establishing an efficient network of marine protected areas for cetaceans requires comprehensive inventories of sites that contain critical and/or important habitats for cetaceans;

Noting that inventories of sites of conservation interest have been initiated in other pertinent multilateral instruments and treaties (the standard data entry form system adopted in the context of the SPAMI Protocol of the Barcelona Convention, the Emerald network instituted in the context of the European Council, and the Natura 2000 network instituted by the European Union Habitats Directive);

Considering that ACCOBAMS is an appropriate tool for achieving the targets set by the CBD to attain a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 and in the target set out to achieve a representative network of Marine Protected Areas in 2012;

1. *Encourages* Parties to contribute to the international effort to achieve the 2010 and 2012 targets set by the CBD.
2. *Welcomes* the criteria for the selection and format of proposals for marine protected areas for cetaceans as presented in the Annex 1 to this Resolution.
3. *Welcomes* the guidelines set out in the Annex 2 to this Resolution.
4. *Recommends* that the Parties give full consideration, and where appropriate cooperate to the creation of marine protected areas for cetaceans in areas of special importance for cetaceans in the Agreement coverage area, within the framework of the relevant Organizations, and *invites* non-Parties to do the same. In particular, the following areas have been recommended by the Scientific Committee:

Areas of special importance for the common dolphin and other cetaceans (see map in Annex 3)

- (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 southeastern Sicily, Italy;
- (5) the eastern Ionian Sea and the Gulf of Corinth (Greece);
- (6) the Gulf of Saronikos and adjacent waters (Argo-Saronikos and southern Evvoikos Gulf, Greece);
- (7) waters surrounding the northern Sporades (Greece);
- (8) the northern Aegean Sea and
- (9) waters surrounding the Dodecanese (Greece).

Areas of special importance for Black Sea cetaceans

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

Areas of special importance for the bottlenose dolphin

- (13) The Amvrakikos Gulf (northwestern Greece);
- (14) the Cres-Lošinj special marine reserve (under preventive protection status until end of July 2009) and
- (15) the Turkish straits system (also used by all Black Sea cetacean species).

Area of special importance for the sperm whale

- (16) southwest Crete and the Hellenic Trench (Greece).

Areas of special importance and diversity for various cetacean species

- (17) the Alborán Sea and Straits of Gibraltar, critical habitat and migration corridor for large numbers of 10 of the region's cetacean species; the most diverse cetacean habitat in the ACCOBAMS region and
- (18) the Strait of Sicily for fin whales and common, bottlenose and striped dolphins.

5. *Congratulates* the Croatian authorities for having declared preventive protection status for a 3-year period for the Cres-Lošinj special marine reserve;
6. *Strongly recommends* that the Croatian Government declare Cres-Lošinj a permanent protected area before the end of the 3-year period;
7. *Further invites* Parties to report to the next Meeting of the Parties about progress made on implementing this Resolution.

ANNEX 1

CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF PROTECTED AREAS

1. Discussion of the merits or otherwise of potential MPAs must occur within the context of the most appropriate tools for addressing particular actual or potential threats to cetacean populations and enabling them to reach or maintain favourable conservation status. A key issue when considering MPAs to protect important cetacean habitat and thus conserve cetacean populations is what is meant by important. Large areas may be important at some level to cetaceans but not all areas can be protected. The aim should be to protect the most important habitat/areas; the challenge is to identify which are the most important habitats/areas (see (2) below).
2. The concept of 'critical habitat' is commonly referred to in the context of MPAs and a number of suggestions and definitions for this exist (e.g., breeding areas; feeding areas; migratory corridors etc). However, in the context of cetacean conservation and management it is important to incorporate the concept of actual and/or potential threats at the population level into consideration of 'critical' and appropriate for consideration as an MPA. Thus the definition of what comprises 'critical habitat' and suitable candidates for MPAs can be best addressed on a case-by-case basis in the light of the available scientific knowledge. The spatial modelling approach is a powerful tool in this regard.
3. Criteria to identify sites containing cetacean critical habitat may include:
 - Areas used by cetaceans for feeding, breeding, calving, nursing and social behaviour;
 - Migration routes and corridors and related resting areas;
 - Areas where there are seasonal concentrations of cetacean species;
 - Areas of importance to cetacean prey;
 - Natural processes that support continued productivity of cetacean foraging species (upwellings, fronts, etc.);
 - Topographic structures favourable for enhancing foraging opportunities for cetacean species (canyons, seamounts).
4. These criteria can be applied for the identification of sites containing cetacean critical habitats, in need of protection due to the occurrence of significant interactions between cetaceans and human activities, where:
 - Conflicts between cetaceans and fishing activities have been reported;
 - Significant or frequent bycatch of cetaceans is reported;
 - Intensive whale watching or other marine tourism activities occur;
 - Navigation presents a potential threat to cetaceans;
 - Pollution runoff, outflow or other marine dumping occur;
 - Military exercises are known to routinely occur.

5. In every one of the above cases, one has to consider very carefully whether the threat can be the focus of regulatory action that is generic, or whether MPA creation would provide added value.

6. In specifying potential MPAs, to the extent possible and noting that this can be a staged process, proposals should include information on the following:
 - clearly stated objectives of the MPA;
 - the rationale for choosing an MPA as the appropriate management tool and the particular temporal and geographical boundaries (including specification of the data and analytical techniques used);
 - a draft management plan that is linked to documented actual and potential threats to one or more populations of cetaceans;
 - proposals for mitigation measures (and/or research designed to develop such measures), with consideration of appropriate compliance monitoring (to ensure that such measures are correctly implemented) plus scientific monitoring to ensure that each of the proposed mitigation measures (where there are more than one) are working as expected;
 - proposals for overall monitoring to ensure that stated objectives are being met;
 - details of consultation with and views of interested stakeholders;
 - details of legal aspects of the proposed MPA, including co-operation with the appropriate local, national and international authorities must occur.

FORMAT FOR THE PROPOSAL OF PROTECTED AREAS FOR CETACEANS

INTRODUCTION

During MOP2, the Contracting Parties to ACCOBAMS asked the Scientific Committee to prepare a special format for the proposal of protected areas for cetaceans, adapted from the existing format for proposing SPAMIs under the Barcelona Convention.

The draft data-entry form below is based on the SPAMI template. It is comprised of the following 7 main sections:

- Area identification
- Executive summary
- Site description
- Statement about the importance of the area for the cetacean species
- Human population and use of natural resources
- Protection regime
- Proposed management measures and relevant institutional arrangements

1. AREA IDENTIFICATION

COUNTRY/COUNTRIES (in the case of transboundary areas)

--

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVINCE OR REGION

--

NAME OF THE PROPOSED MPA

--

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

(Please describe the co-ordinates here and make a separate annex with a map and a description of geographical co-ordinates for the proposed area).

--

SURFACE AREA OF THE PROPOSED MPA (total)

(in national unit)	(in ha)
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LENGTH OF THE ADJACENT COAST (km)

--

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (maximum 3 pages)

Supply a summary of the information contained in sections 3 to 7.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

TYPOLOGY OF THE SITE

Marine surface area (sq. km):

Marine internal waters

Territorial seas

High seas

MAIN PHYSICAL FEATURES

3.2.1. Geology/Geomorphology

Give a brief description of: (i) geological aspects (lithologic and tectonics); (ii) processes of sedimentation and erosion observable in the area; (iii) coastal geomorphology and (iv) island system. Indicate sources.

--

3.2.2. Other interesting physical features: Such as hydrodynamics, volcanic formations, caves, underwater formations, etc.

BIOLOGICAL FEATURES

3.3.1. Habitats: A brief description of dominant marine habitats, on the basis of the habitat classifications adopted within the framework of MAP (and their coverage in ha)

3.3.2. List of regionally/globally important species (flora and fauna, cetaceans excluded)

List here ONLY those species protected by international agreements which are known to be present in the area. Any other species may be listed if they are clearly considered of regional importance and have high representation in the area. Put the species list under separate headings for Marine Plants, Terrestrial Plants, Marine Invertebrates, Fish, Amphibians and Reptiles, Birds, and Mammals. For each species state:

- a) its relative abundance as Common (C), Uncommon (U) or Occasional (O),
- b) Its global status as rare (r), endemic (e) and/or threatened (t), and
- c) its status as an important resident population (R), or important for its breeding (B), feeding (F), wintering (W) or migratory passage (M)

SPECIES	Rel. Abundance (C) (U) (O)	Regional STATUS (r) (e) (t)	Local STATUS (R) (B) (F) (W) (M)

3.3.3. Flora: Describe in a few sentences the main plant assemblages significant in the area.

3.3.4. Fauna: Describe in a few sentences the main fauna populations present in the area, cetaceans excluded.

4. IMPORTANCE OF THE AREA FOR CETACEANS

4.1. Cetacean species present in the area: For each species known to occupy the area, list the following information (duplicate table for each species):

Name of species	
Density (relative or absolute)	
Group size (mean, range)	
Habitat use (include maps if available). Spatial modelling highly recommended.	
Diet	
Life history parameters	
Existing threats ¹	
Potential threats	
Known status and trends	

4.2. Describe scientific information on the population which is not available but considered essential for its protection

4.3. Features of the area that make it of particular importance to cetaceans (e.g., areas used by cetaceans for feeding, breeding, calving, nursing and social behaviour; migration routes and corridors and related resting areas; areas where there are seasonal concentrations of cetacean species; areas of importance to cetacean prey; natural processes that support continued productivity of cetacean foraging species (upwellings, fronts, etc.); topographic structures favourable for enhancing foraging opportunities for cetacean species (canyons, seamounts).

4.4. Rationale of proposal: reason(s) why the establishment of a protected area is considered essential to the protection of the population (as opposed to other more wide-ranging or generalised measures)

¹ E.g., conflicts between cetaceans and fishing activities; significant or frequent bycatch of cetaceans, Intensive whale watching or other marine tourism activities; navigational threats to cetaceans; pollution runoff, outflow or other marine dumping; military exercises.

4.5. Measures that would be desirable to protect the population outside the limits of the proposed area

4.6. Is the area likely to support protection of cetaceans as part of a wider regional network of MPAs?

4.7. State the goals of the proposed MPA:

5. HUMAN POPULATION AND USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

5.1 Human population

Description of local residents and visitors

Resident population

Tourist population

Main human settlements and their populations

5.2 Current human use and development

a) Briefly describe the current use of the area for subsistence, artisanal, commercial and recreational fishing, tourism and other economic sectors.

Fishing:

Tourism:

Maritime traffic:

Whalewatching:

Military activities:

Infrastructures / construction:

Research:

b) Enter how many of the users depend on these resources, seasonality of use, and provide an assessment of the social and economic importance of their use and of the perceived impact on the conservation of the area, in a score of 0-1-2-3 (meaning null, low, medium, high).

ACTIVITY AND CATEGORY	ASSESS IMPORTANCE OF								Estimated No. of Users	Seasonality
	Socio-economic impact				Conservation impact					
FISHING	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Subsistence	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Commercial, local	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Commercial, non-local	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Controlled recreational	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Uncontrolled recreational	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Other										
TOURISM	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Regulated	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Unregulated	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
Indicate the type of tourism	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
- ecotourism	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
- general marine tourism.....										
. mass or general tourism	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
.										
Tourism facilities										
OTHER ACTIVITIES	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3		

5.3 Traditional economic or subsistence uses

Name any environmentally sound traditional activities integrated with nature, which support the well being of the local human population. E.g. target species, if closed seasons or closed zones are used as management techniques.

Whalewatching
Artisanal fisheries
Scuba diving
Yachting

5.4. Identification of stakeholders

5.4.1 Institutional (International, regional, national, local)

--

5.4.2 Private (Industry, military, scientific, NGOs, other)

5.5 Expected development and trends

5.6 Potential conflicts in the area (between cetaceans and human activities or potential conflicts between users).

Prey depletion:

Fishery interactions (bycatch / predation):

Acoustic pollution:

Debris pollution:

Collisions:

Harrassment:

6. PROTECTION REGIME

6.1. Legal status

6.1.1 Historical background of the protection of the site (if any)

6.1.2 Proposed legal status

(use the national conservation categories)

6.1.3. If the area lies partially or totally on the High Seas, list here the proposed institutional arrangements.

7. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT MEASURES AND RELEVANT INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Please suggest here how the management of the proposed MPA will be undertaken. Indicate management measures which could be used for the proposed MPA to protect cetaceans and reduce or eliminate conflicts with human use of the area. For example, you could suggest an MPA with zoning and a highly protected critical habitat area and/or you could use other management tools such as regulations to control pollution dumping or boat noise, shipping activities, fast ferries, undersea noise pollution, and dumping activities. Suggestions and proposal for enforcement can be made here as well. What about educational programmes for public and all users of the area? Which existing institutions, government or other agencies can undertake management and enforcement, or will new agencies need to be created?

7.1. Describe provisions for the establishment of a management body and formulation of a management plan²

7.2. Define management objectives designed to meet the stated goals (listed in section 4.7). Effective management of an MPA is founded on the articulation of clear and quantifiable objectives to attain the institutional goals, and the implementation of a monitoring system to assess whether these objectives are being met. A significant challenge to the effective management of MPAs dedicated to the protection of top predators such as cetaceans is the need for a framework to guide and assess effectiveness in the context of broader ecosystem-level objectives, which seek to extend conservation benefits from the protected species and their habitats to marine trophic webs and ecosystem-wide processes. Ecosystem-level management requires a clear rationale and a firm knowledge base.

7.3. List periodic management reviews to assess whether objectives are met. A fundamental step in the management process involves the monitoring and periodic review of activities to assess whether the objectives are being met. A practical way of achieving this result is to devise specific management indicators. Pomeroy *et al.* (2004) provide an excellent review of the MPA management evaluation process, including the development and application of indicators (subdivided into biophysical, socio-economic and governance indicators). Given the complexity involved in selecting appropriate indicators, planning and conducting the evaluation, and consequently adapting further management actions, it is strongly recommended that the entire MPA management evaluation process be the subject of specific training

² The management plan will, among other things, detail the measures enacted to reach the objectives. These include: Zoning, to separate highly protected no-entry sites containing cetacean critical habitat from human-use sites where activities such as whale watching, tourism, moderate fishing and vessel traffic may occur in a regulated fashion; Regulations and mitigating measures to maintain potentially harmful human activities (e.g., fishing, vessel traffic, military exercises) within acceptable levels; Research activities to generate knowledge susceptible to allow management adaptiveness and increase management effectiveness; Enforcement and compliance monitoring to ensure that rules are respected and measures are correctly implemented; Monitoring of the status and trends of the target populations and relevant human activities as a feedback mechanism to the management plan, to ensure that the proposed mitigation measures are working as expected; Monitoring and periodic review to ensure that the stated objectives are being met; Development of risk assessment techniques to take cumulative impact into account and identify emergent risks; Promotion of fair decision-making and conflict resolution concerning access to ocean resources within the protected areas; Administration, financing and fund-raising; Implementation of education and awareness programmes.

ANNEX 2

Guidelines for the Establishment and Management of Marine Protected Areas for Cetaceans

Note: These Guidelines are part of an effort jointly undertaken by the RAC/SPA and the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS to support the relevant national authorities in the Mediterranean countries and the rest of the ACCOBAMS area in the promotion, establishment and management of protected areas for cetaceans

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6. Acknowledgements

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1. Executive Summary

These Guidelines are part of an effort jointly undertaken by the RAC/SPA and the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS to support the relevant national authorities in the Mediterranean countries and the rest of the ACCOBAMS area in the promotion, establishment and management of protected areas for cetaceans. The impetus for such effort was provided by a recommendation from the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted during their 14th Ordinary Meeting in Portoroz, Slovenia, in 2005.

Whether MPAs are appropriate tools for the conservation of cetaceans has been the subject of considerable debate. Before establishing protected areas for cetaceans, careful consideration should be given to whether such areas are likely to achieve the intended goals. The main argument against using protected areas for cetaceans is that it is difficult to encompass within a single area the year-round distribution of highly mobile species. On the other hand, cetaceans may be good subjects for space-based protection because they are particularly vulnerable to anthropogenic threats, and as such are good focal species for their ecosystem. Ways exist of minimising problematic aspects connected with the use of MPAs to protect cetaceans, while enhancing the positive side of such practice. Perhaps the best answer to the main critique to the use of MPAs to protect cetaceans, i.e. that cetacean populations are too mobile and have too large a total range to be encompassed by a single protected area, would be to establish a network of protected areas, which will protect at least the main portions of their critical habitat.

The guidelines mainly consist of two parts, which correspond to the two phases of the process: (a) selection and creation of MPAs, and (b) management of MPAs. Creating MPAs is a complex process that normally involves, in sequence: (a) the definition of goals of the prospective MPA, based on the existing knowledge of the presence of cetaceans in the area and of the existence of threats to their survival; (b) the rationale for the proposal, where the case is made for the establishment of an MPA as an effective tool to counteract the known threats to cetaceans and thus to ensure the populations' favourable status; (c) the compilation of all the pertinent bibliographic information (published as well as "grey" literature and user knowledge derived from interviews, etc.); (d) the collection of updated scientific information through dedicated research targeting the species of concern, human activities in the area, and the existence, types and distribution of threats; (e) the analysis of data to identify the existence of critical habitats within the considered area, or sites where the target species concentrate for specific activities or purposes; (f) the drafting of a science-based MPA proposal, inclusive of maps to support decisions on conservation priorities based on links among areas important to cetacean populations, ecological processes and human activities, to be presented for consideration by the competent authorities and by all the stakeholders; and (g) the beginning of a consultation phase involving the building of consensus through awareness campaigns, stakeholder participation, socio-economic analysis and, wherever necessary, conflict resolution.

While proposals may be prepared by any individual or organisation, the responsibility for formally establishing MPAs rests with the competent authorities. Proposals may be brought to the attention of the authorities by anybody; however the process may be greatly facilitated by channelling proposals through recognised regional bodies such as the RAC/SPA and ACCOBAMS. Each Mediterranean riparian nation may independently assess needs and opportunities for establishing cetacean MPAs within its remit, in order to grant as quickly as possible legal protection to those sites that have already been identified in areas under its jurisdiction as being particularly important for cetaceans. While that happens, however, an attempt to initiate such a process in an organised, region-wide fashion was recently made, and is presented here.

Management of an MPA for cetaceans does not sensibly differ from managing any other type of MPA. Excellent summaries exist explaining how MPAs are managed, and the basic management principles

equally apply to protected areas for cetaceans. The section of this report dedicated to management therefore contains only a summary of the main elements of MPA management practice, with a special reference to their relevance to cetacean conservation. In particular, the need is emphasized for: (a) a management body and management plan; (b) the definition of clear management objectives; (c) periodic management reviews to assess whether objectives are met; (d) management training; and (e) consensus building and maintenance.

With one exception (the Pelagos Sanctuary), all the MPAs existing in the Mediterranean have been exclusively or primarily established to protect coastal waters only or primarily. As a consequence, most existing Mediterranean MPAs contain habitat of coastal cetaceans. Such areas, which are already protected by the existing law, may in the future become useful components of regional networks of MPAs designed to protect particular cetacean species. Managers of existing Mediterranean MPAs should be encouraged to conduct or promote research to determine whether the areas under their remit contain cetacean habitats. In the affirmative case, appropriate cetacean conservation measures should be included in the area's management plan. Furthermore, two-way communication should be established between single MPA management bodies and region-wide conservation organisations such as the RAC/SPA, and ACCOBAMS in particular for cetacean conservation measures, to facilitate the network growth, share experiences, and obtain assistance in matters such as capacity building, problem solving and sharing of resources.

2. Introduction

Within the framework of the development of Special Protected Areas, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention had recommended, during their 14th Ordinary Meeting in Portoroz, Slovenia (2005), to promote the creation of protected marine and coastal areas specifically for Mediterranean cetaceans. This decision was based on the collaboration with ACCOBAMS, and referred in particular to the implementation of ACCOBAMS Resolution 2.14 (Palma de Majorca 2004) on protected areas and cetacean conservation, mandating the Agreement's Scientific Committee to draft criteria for the selection of such areas.

In this connection, the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS and RAC/SPA jointly decided to offer support to the relevant national authorities in the Mediterranean region and in the ACCOBAMS area in order to:

- Extend, if necessary, the concept of cetaceans protection to the already existing protected areas;
- Identify sites, including the high seas, containing important cetaceans habitats in the Agreement; and
- Implement all measures needed for cetacean protection.

Following the elaboration of the ACCOBAMS programme of work on marine protected areas³, which consists of i) criteria for the selection of Specially Protected Areas, ii) a special format for proposals for such areas and iii) information on sites that contain important cetacean habitat in the Agreement area, RAC/SPA decided to contribute to this programme by elaborating "Guidelines on needs for the establishment and management of MPAs for cetaceans", to be presented during the next meeting of the SPA Focal Points.

3 The ACCOBAMS programme of work on marine protected areas, as presented during its Fourth Scientific Committee Meeting (Monaco, 5-8 November 2006), appears on Document UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.308/Inf.11.

These guidelines are meant to:

- Take into account the criteria of selection of Specially Protected Areas elaborated by ACCOBAMS and discussed by the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee during its 4th Meeting, Monaco 5-8 November 2006;
- Provide basic information and training material to support MPA managers in the process of establishing and/or managing MPAs containing cetacean habitat;
- Suggest concrete actions to promote the long-term conservation of cetaceans in the existing or future MPAs;
- Provide support to all those concerned with the policy and practice of marine and coastal protected areas for cetaceans, including practitioners, decision-makers at the various levels of government, NGOs, academics, and international agencies.

For best results in achieving the goal of conserving Mediterranean cetacean populations through habitat protection, a few initial recommendations and considerations are offered here.

First, several international and regional organisations exist which are concerned with the task of protecting the region's marine biodiversity – and cetaceans in particular – through the establishment of protected areas⁴. These include, among others, UNEP MAP's RAC/SPA, ACCOBAMS, the Bern Convention and the European Commission. Of these, ACCOBAMS is the sole Agreement which focuses exclusively on cetaceans, and advocates the creation of MPAs for cetacean conservation, including in the high seas (ACCOBAMS Agreement, Annex 2, Art. 3). This considered, inter-institutional coordination and cooperation should be accorded a very high priority to optimise effectiveness and resources, and avoid duplication of effort and overlap.

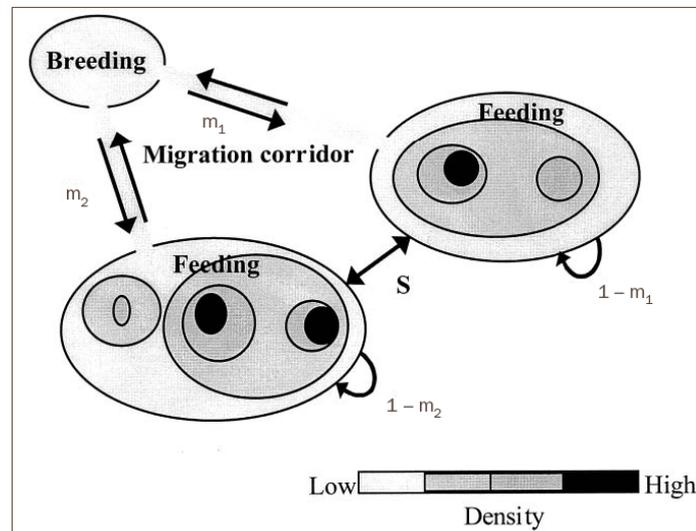
Second, activities related to cetacean habitat protection may be viewed as the responsibility of both regional organisations and national authorities. While both can (and should) cooperate to launch a coherent and coordinated process for identifying sites of special interest for cetaceans, with the view of granting them protection status that will give them long-term protection, the responsibility for the establishment of protected areas within territorial waters ultimately rests with the coastal States. However, considering that large amounts of Mediterranean high seas may be contemplated for protection (given the pelagic nature of many of the region's cetacean species), and further considering that the ultimate goal of this whole effort should be of setting up a network of MPAs that will best serve the purpose of achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for cetaceans in the region, international cooperation is essential to the process. For this reason, although these guidelines are particularly aimed at supporting the work of the national authorities concerned with cetacean conservation (both at the level of government administrations and research institutions), they are also conceived as a support to inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, and Secretariats of relevant international treaties and conventions.

Third, these guidelines refer principally to the Mediterranean region because this is the area of RAC/SPA competence; however, they can easily be extended to the wider geographic range of ACCOBAMS, which includes the Black Sea and the Contiguous Atlantic Area.

Finally, establishing a network of MPAs dedicated to cetacean conservation in the region will likely help reduce the rate of degradation and loss of cetacean habitats, thus helping countries in the region to reach the CBD's 2010 targets, i.e.: *"achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and*

⁴ According to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), "Marine and coastal protected area' means any defined area within or adjacent to the marine environment, together with its overlaying waters and associated flora, fauna and historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by legislation or other effective means, including custom, with the effect that its marine and/or coastal biodiversity enjoys a higher level of protection than its surroundings."

to the benefit of all life on Earth". In this spirit, in 2006 the Secretariats of RAC/SPA and ACCOBAMS jointly invited the Mediterranean countries to create specially protected areas for cetacean conservation in the framework of the 2010 targets.



2.1. Are MPAs appropriate to protect cetaceans?

Whether MPAs are appropriate tools for the conservation of cetaceans has been the subject of considerable debate. A brief analysis of the controversy may help in reinforcing the concept that before establishing protected areas for cetaceans, careful consideration should be given to whether such areas are likely to achieve the intended goals. It is important to keep in mind that establishing MPAs is a lengthy, laborious and costly process, and that easier and faster means of achieving protection for cetacean populations may be available in some cases.

Elements against designating protected areas for cetaceans include:

- Cetaceans are highly mobile animals. Optimal design of a protected area intended to conserve a given population would need to encompass that population's entire year-round distribution. While it may be possible to accomplish such a design for some resident or non-migratory species, the ranges of most cetacean populations are often too large for this to be practicable (Reeves 2000).
- Current procedures for MPA establishment advocate an ecosystem-level approach as opposed to a species-level approach (Agardy, 1994). Large marine megafauna is often targeted by conservation efforts under the impetus of public affection towards charismatic species rather than on the basis of solid theoretical foundations (Hooker and Gerber 2004).

On the other hand, there are positive elements to consider:

- Cetaceans are particularly vulnerable to anthropogenic threats, and as such are good focal species for their ecosystem (Hooker *et al.* 1999).
- Often, more is known about cetaceans, among the most charismatic marine species, than about most other components of a given pelagic ecosystem (Hooker *et al.* 1999). Thus, designing an MPA to protect a cetacean species or species assemblage could help to effectively protect not only cetaceans, but also other species living under their umbrella. Hooker *et al.* (2002)

calculated the energetic requirements of top level predators (i.e., beaked whales) in the Gully (a coastal area with a deep underwater canyon off the northwest Atlantic Canadian shore), and used this to infer the probable structure of the whole ecosystem. Such an ecosystem approach, involving a thorough assessment of the nature and scale of the trophic interactions involved in a marine conservation area, is a desirable trait of rigorous conservation planning (Hooker *et al.* 2002).

Ways exist of minimising problematic aspects connected with the use of MPAs to protect cetaceans, while enhancing the positive side of such practice. For instance, when only a portion of a cetacean population's range can be included within a protected area, there is obvious merit in selecting and designing MPAs in habitats that bear special importance for the species to be protected (Fig. 1), such as key breeding or feeding areas (e.g., grey whales, *Eschrichtius robustus*, in Mexican lagoons or humpback whales, *Megaptera novaeangliae*, in Hawaii) (Reeves 2000).

Fig. 1. Life stages of some marine predators are separated into discrete feeding and breeding areas, with migrations between them. Reserves can be placed in feeding, breeding or migratory habitats. Abbreviations: M, migration rate (m_1 and m_2 indicate different rates for migration to each feeding area); S, mixing between feeding areas (from Hooker and Gerber 2004).

Identifying and designating significant cetacean breeding areas may be rather straightforward, whereas the equally crucial need of identifying essential feeding areas can present enormous challenges to protected area design, especially for marine mammals that depend on pelagic food webs (Reeves 2000). Hyrenbach *et al.* (2000) addressed this challenge by identifying three types of open-ocean "hotspots" – i.e. significant feeding areas for top predators such as cetaceans - defined according to their dynamics and predictability in space and time: (a) static systems determined by topographic features, such as reefs, shelf breaks, submarine canyons, seamounts, and the lee shores of islands; (b) persistent hydrographic features, such as currents and frontal systems; and (c) ephemeral habitats shaped by wind- or current-driven upwelling and eddies. Static systems are relatively stable hotspots that can be mapped, and are the easiest to define and manage. Persistent hydrographic features are more challenging because they are not stationary, thus either requiring that a very large area be placed under protection, or that the boundaries be flexible. Ephemeral habitats are the most challenging, and will require a rather futuristic MPA design based on real-time monitoring of ocean conditions using remote-sensing technology (Hyrenbach *et al.* 2000, Reeves 2000).

Finally, perhaps the best answer to the main critique to the use of MPAs to protect cetaceans, i.e. that cetaceans may have too large a range to be encompassed by a single protected area, could be provided by the establishment of a network of protected areas (see next section).

2.2. Networks of MPAs vs. single MPAs

IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) - Marine defines a network of MPAs as "an organised collection of individual MPAs operating co-operatively and synergistically, at various spatial scales and with a range of protection levels, to fulfil ecological aims more effectively and comprehensively than individual sites could alone" (WCPA/IUCN 2006). More specifically, a network is generally thought of in a geographical and physical sense, as a group that has 'connectivity' between the components, and in some cases a physical connection (Wells 2006).

Several authors (e.g., Kelleher and Kenchington 1992, Kelleher *et al.* 1995, Salm *et al.* 2000, Roberts *et al.* 2003a and b) have listed the various conservation benefits of MPA networks over single MPAs. The following (Wells, 2006) are particularly significant as far as cetaceans are concerned:

- Helping to maintain the natural range of species;
- Ensuring protection of unique, endemic, rare and threatened species spread over a fragmented habitat;
- Ensuring adequate mixing of the gene pool to maintain natural genetic characteristics of the population;
- Ensuring protection of ecological processes essential for ecosystem functioning e.g. breeding and feeding habitats, and large-scale processes such as gene flow, genetic variation and connectivity;
- Ensuring that the ecosystem-based approach to management is followed and that adequate attention is paid to ecological functions and processes.

There are additional benefits if national systems are linked into regional systems (Wells 2006):

- Ensuring the protection of an ecosystem or species that cannot be adequately protected in one country – e.g. species that migrate;
- Ensuring that transboundary protected areas are given adequate attention;
- Sharing effective conservation approaches across similar sites;
- Developing collaboration between neighbouring countries to address common challenges and issues;
- Building capacity by sharing lessons learned, new technologies and management strategies, and by increasing access to relevant information.

Reeves (2000) mentions MPA networks that have become, or are on their way to becoming, unified systems providing population-level protection to marine mammals. The coherence and continuity of these networks, however, derive from their near-shore, essentially linear conformation. Mentioned networks include the trilateral Wadden Sea Conservation Area in western Europe, consisting of “an almost unbroken stretch of nature reserves and national parks” in the south-eastern part of the North Sea, and benefiting a local harbour seal (*Phoca vitulina*) population, and a series of protected areas along the west coast of Florida, deliberately planned with the goal of providing comprehensive protection to the habitat of the regional manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) population. Once completed, this network would limit coastal development in and near the core of the regional manatee population’s range, while enhancing the effectiveness of boat speed regulations and the general ban on the “taking” of manatees (Reeves 2000).

A corollary to the use of MPA networks to protect highly mobile species such as cetaceans concerns the establishment of “conservation corridors” to allow faunal exchanges between protected areas. The utility to cetaceans of corridors, however, will depend on whether they are likely to use them (Reeves 2000), i.e. if they can be designed to connect MPAs that protect separate critical habitats (e.g., breeding and feeding grounds) of the same population. For example, in the hypothetical case in which an area is identified and protected where Mediterranean fin whales travel to breed from their Ligurian Sea feeding grounds, ensuring adequate protection to the corridor connecting the two areas may be a significant conservation measure. Corridors in the marine environment, and particularly in the pelagic realm, may be intrinsically more difficult to design and manage than corridors linking land or freshwater protected areas (Reeves 2000). However, protection through corridors in the sea may not necessarily be analogous to its terrestrial equivalent. It can be conceived that marine protected sites be linked by “virtual corridors” based on conservation measures specifically addressing problems affecting the concerned species in transit, or the quality of their transiting habitat (T. Agardy, pers. comm.).

In conclusion, the process of organising single MPAs into networks – recently advocated by the world’s nations at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), and later by the Convention of Biological Diversity – appears as particularly relevant for the protection of marine migrating species such as cetaceans, and is recommended as a desirable output of a regional cooperative conservation effort.

3. Selection and creation of MPAs

Creating MPAs is a complex process that normally involves, in sequence:

- (a) The definition of goals of the prospective MPA, based on the existing knowledge of the presence of cetaceans in the area and of the existence of threats to their survival;
- (b) The rationale for the proposal, where the case is made for the establishment of an MPA as the most effective tool to counteract the known threats to cetaceans and thus to ensure the conservation of the population(s)’ favourable status;
- (c) The compilation of all the pertinent bibliographic information (published as well as “grey” literature);
- (d) The collection of updated scientific information through dedicated research targeting the species of concern, human activities in the area, and the existence, types and distribution of threats;
- (e) The analysis of data to identify the existence of critical habitats within the considered area, or sites where the target species concentrate for specific activities or purposes;
- (f) The drafting of an ecology-based MPA proposal, inclusive of maps to support decisions on conservation priorities based on links among cetacean populations, ecological processes and human activities, to be presented for consideration by the competent authorities and by all the stakeholders;
- (g) The beginning of a consultation phase involving the building of consensus through awareness campaigns, stakeholder participation, socio-economic analysis and, wherever necessary, conflict solution.

The present document concentrates on the ecological aspects of the MPA creation phase (a-f above) and on the management aspects of the phase which is subsequent to formal MPA declaration by the competent authorities. However, in spite of its cursory treatment in these guidelines, which are predominantly science-based, it is important to bear in mind that the last point listed above (g, i.e. consensus building and socio-economic concerns) is of fundamental importance for the success of the process. Decades of world-wide negative and frustrating experiences have taught the clear lesson that a bottom-up process of MPA establishment is greatly desirable for best and durable results.

3.1 Definition of goals

Hooker and Gerber (2004) list the main goals that MPAs may have: conservation of biodiversity (minimizing extinction risk), protection of vulnerable species, ecosystem protection, reestablishment of ecosystem integrity, segregating uses to avoid users conflicts, and enhancement of the size and productivity of harvested fish or invertebrate populations to help support fisheries outside the reserve. In the case of an MPA established to conserve cetaceans, the latter goal (fish stock enhancement) may have the double benefit of favouring both human and non-human predators. Each MPA may have just one of the above goals, or may also have a combination of them, as they are not mutually exclusive. For example, even though the focus of a protected area may be on higher predators, multispecies or multipurpose reserves are also acceptable if conservation of higher predators is compatible with, for example, fishery enhancement (or vice versa). Fishery no-take zones are often the most effective tool

for marine conservation (Pauly *et al.* 2002). In many cases fishery reserves and fishery no-take zones, established primarily for fishery management purposes, can be envisaged to achieve the double benefit of helping to rebuild depleted fish stocks and allow the recovery of predators which have been negatively affected by their prey's depletion (Bearzi *et al.* 2006). In other circumstances, establishing reserves targeting primarily charismatic megafauna such as cetaceans can have positive cascading, or "umbrella" effects on many other species (for a discussion of umbrella species see Simberloff 1998).

Considering the high mobility of most cetacean species, unless the proposed MPA is very large, it may be difficult for a single MPA to attain the stated goals (see section 2.1 for a discussion). This problem, however, may be overcome through the establishment of a network of MPAs, covering the most significant portions of a population's critical habitat (see section 2.2).

When defining the goals of a prospective MPA for cetaceans, careful consideration should be given to the potential of the initiative for raising awareness about cetaceans and their habitat needs, or raise political will to protect cetaceans. Often, and particularly in their early life stages, MPAs may be seen as meaningless "paper parks" as far as the effective protection that they afford to cetaceans is concerned; in spite of this, however, they may serve the important role of allowing the public and decision makers to ground their conservation ethic in a sense of place. In such circumstances, tying cetacean conservation to specific sites may be a good conservation strategy, and the selection of these sites may have less to do with cetacean ecology than with the site's awareness raising potential (T. Agardy, pers. comm.).

Once the goals of a prospective MPA are set, these will constitute the guidelines for the definition of the objectives in the management phase, whenever the MPA will have been established (see section 4.1).

3.2 Rationale for proposals

The discovery of an area with a particularly rich cetacean fauna is often the first step in the mental process of deciding whether a special area should be designated to protect it. Research may reveal the existence of previously unknown sites having special importance for cetaceans, either because these contain critical habitats, or because negative interactions between cetacean and human activities are reported to occur and constitute threats or potential threats to cetaceans.

Cetacean critical habitat was defined as *a place or area regularly used by a cetacean group, population or species to perform tasks essential for survival and equilibrium maintenance* (Hoyt, 2005). Criteria⁵ to identify sites containing cetacean critical habitat may include:

- Areas used by cetaceans for feeding, breeding, calving, nursing and social behaviour;
- Migration routes and corridors and related resting areas;
- Areas where there are seasonal concentrations of cetacean species;
- Areas of importance to cetacean prey;
- Natural processes that support continued productivity of cetacean foraging species (upwellings, fronts, etc.);
- Topographic structures favourable for enhancing foraging opportunities for cetacean species (canyons, seamounts).

These criteria can be applied for the identification of sites containing cetacean critical habitats, in need of protection due to the occurrence of significant interactions between cetaceans and human activities⁴ where:

- Conflicts between cetaceans and fishing activities have been reported;

⁴ (see page 3, Document UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.308/Inf.11)

- Significant or frequent bycatch of cetaceans is reported;
- Intensive whale watching or other marine tourism activities occur;
- Navigation presents a potential threat to cetaceans;
- pollution runoff, outflow or other marine dumping occur;
- Military exercises are known to routinely occur.

In every one of the above cases, one has to consider very carefully whether the threat can be the focus of regulatory action that is generic, or whether MPA creation would provide added value.

Theoretically the acquired knowledge on the importance of a given area for cetaceans will not warrant per se the establishment of an MPA, which will be necessary in presence of existing threats to cetaceans. However, MPAs may also be desirable to stave off potential threats, which may presumably occur in the future as a consequence of the predictable expansion of impacting activities. In practice, this will extend the potential usefulness of MPAs to protect cetaceans virtually to all known cetacean critical habitats in the Mediterranean.

Protecting cetaceans from anthropogenic threats may be achieved in a number of different ways, and MPAs are just one of the many available tools. Given that establishing an MPA is an elaborate and labour-intensive process, it is important that a proposal for the creation of an MPA to protect cetaceans be buttressed by a solid rationale. This should include a description of the current, suspected or anticipated threats to cetaceans in the area, and a discussion of how the establishment of an MPA may enable the implementation of measures and regulations apt to mitigate or eliminate such threats.

Hooker and Gerber (2004) classify threats to marine predators, in particular to cetaceans, by subdividing them into “direct threats”, “indirect threats”, and “global effects”. The first are those that cause mortality, and include fishery bycatch, direct takes, ship strikes and military sonar. Indirect threats are those which cause accumulating harm over longer time scales rather than immediate death, and include overexploitation of lower trophic levels and habitat degradation (i.e., acoustic and chemical pollution, marine debris, disturbance and physical habitat destruction). Global effects, such as climate change, will have consequences for marine predators and their ecosystems (Hooker and Gerber 2004).

Based on circumstances, the establishment of an MPA will address the different types of threats with different levels of effectiveness. Threats such as entanglement in fishing nets, ecosystem changes caused by competition for prey resources through fisheries, as well as mortality from direct takes and from military sonar, can all be effectively addressed by protection regimes enacted through MPA establishment, whereas wide-ranging impacts such as airborne toxic pollution, the diffusion in the environment of plastics and other debris, and climate change will require mitigation at a wider, even global level.

3.3. A science-based proposal

The next step in the process of the establishment of an MPA will be to prepare a formal proposal. Such proposal will be based on the compilation and analysis of the necessary scientific information, and will contain the key points of a conservation plan, a general definition of the goals of the MPA, and what will be the most appropriate type of MPA designation.

In this respect it is important to resist the temptation of insisting that a “definitive” research programme be carried out on the cetacean fauna of the area prior to the establishment of the protected area. The required knowledge may be collected relatively rapidly, thus avoiding excessive commitment of financial and human resources, and time. An overly detailed data requirement should be avoided at this stage if there is a risk that the inevitable delays in implementation will compromise the outcome.

The information needed for a proposal is conceptually simple, basically consisting of baseline data on: (a) the distribution and abundance of the concerned species, (b) the type and intensity of human activities in the area likely to affect cetaceans, and (c) the known or likely impacts of such activities on these mammals. Such information should make it possible to evaluate the conservation benefits of the proposed MPA for the cetacean population(s) of concern, as well as to determine the area's required size and boundaries. Often the marshalling of more sophisticated information (e.g. on population identity and structure, abundance, habitat use, distribution and dynamics), can be postponed to a later phase and be the responsibility of the MPA management body.

The first task to be performed will obviously consist in the collection of the existing knowledge on the three subjects listed above (cetacean ecology, human activities, and threats) from all the available sources, including published papers, "grey" literature, and local knowledge.

If up-to-date sighting data do not exist for the area, or are too scarce and anecdotal, these will need to be collected through dedicated surveys. Data generated through such surveys, including presence/absence of animals and group sizes, should be related to search effort and to environmental co-variables to assist in the formulation of the proposal. Spreading search effort throughout the year as well as across years to account for seasonal and year-to-year differences and fluctuations in the animals' ecology is optimal. However some judgment is needed to decide whether a more rapid assessment performed, for example, during summer (when weather conditions are more favourable) is sufficient to make a credible case for the creation of an MPA, leaving it to the management body to secure more detailed knowledge on the population ecology of the concerned species.

The information thus assembled can then be analysed in several ways to support the preparation of an MPA proposal. One technique, which may be likened to the so-called "Delphi method", involves for the scientists engaging in the search for a group position through an iterative process in which the different opinions (e.g., concerning the MPA area and boundaries, or the protection measures likely to be implemented) are compared and progressively harmonised.

A more rigorous approach, the use of which, when feasible, was recently recommended by the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS, involves the application of spatial modelling techniques to identify important cetacean habitats and generate data-based MPA proposals and maps. A. Cañadas *et al.* described two types of spatial modelling which may be applied to support the establishment of MPAs for cetaceans: *habitat use modelling* and *density surface modelling* (A. Cañadas *et al.* 2005; A. Cañadas *et al.* 2006; A. Cañadas and P.S Hammond, 2006). The former uses "habitat categories" defined by different types of covariates (oceanographic, topographic, anthropogenic, etc.), to help explain variations in cetacean distribution and predict either areas that are important for target species or factors that are affecting their presence, distribution and density. The latter involves a combination of habitat use modelling with line transect sampling to estimate abundance of populations from surveys that have not been designed to achieve equal coverage probability. The habitat preferences of the studied population can then be illustrated using surface maps of density. Although the authors warn that, when using density surface modelling, and spatial modelling in general, careful attention must be paid to a number of requirements, assumptions and limitations (A. Cañadas *et al.* 2005; A. Cañadas *et al.* 2006; A. Cañadas and P.S Hammond, 2006), when data are available the use of spatial modelling is certainly a powerful method for describing cetacean habitats and strengthen MPA proposals.

A complicating factor when designing MPAs for highly mobile or migratory species such as cetaceans intervenes when the populations to be protected cue on highly dynamic or ephemeral environmental features, such as fronts, upwellings, eddies or currents (Hyrenbach *et al.* 2000; see also Anon. 2007 for a recent discussion of this subject). In such cases the creation of "dynamic MPAs" has been recommended by some authors. Dynamic MPAs are designed to change their location and size as they track a specific habitat feature associated with species movement or concentration. It has been argued that resource managers currently dispose of the technology to map oceanic habitats (e.g., surface temperature isotherms identifying the position of fronts) to communicate this information to vessels at

sea, and to monitor and enforce spatially-explicit management measures in real-time (Anon. 2007; D. Hyrenbach pers. comm.). Examples exist of dynamic management measures which suggest that real-time ocean management is possible (e.g., time-area closures to avoid sea turtle bycatch off the South-eastern U.S., triggered by warm-water conditions in the tropical Pacific Ocean; a mandatory ship reporting system used to avoid ship-strikes of northern right whales off Massachusetts). Other experts, recognising the daunting management and legal implications of dynamic MPAs, suggest instead to set aside for conservation purposes very large and well-selected fixed areas, based around significant ecosystem features and biomass such as spawning or breeding zones (where predators are highly vulnerable to fisheries), or hotspots areas of high pelagic biodiversity (Anon. 2007).

3.4. Format for proposals

A format which may be used to formulate proposals for the establishment of MPAs for cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area, prepared in accordance to Resolution 2.14 of the Second Meeting of the Contracting Parties to ACCOBAMS (adapted from the existing format for the proposal of SPAMIs in the context of the Barcelona Convention), was adopted by the Agreement's Scientific Committee (see Appendix 2 (page 20), Document UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.308/Inf.11), and will be submitted to the Parties to ACCOBAMS In October 2007. The format provides for information to be supplied on the identification of the area, and includes a description of the site, a list of the reasons why the site is important for cetaceans, a list of threats to cetaceans, information on human presence and activities, on the protection regime proposed, on proposed management measures and on relevant institutional arrangements.

In addition to its obvious practical aim of ensuring that proposals are standardised, the format is a very useful checklist of the types of information that need to be collected to make a proposal complete, and thus constitutes a handy support to organising thoughts and bits of information needed in the process. As such, it is here recommended that the format be considered an integral part of these guidelines.

3.5. The process of establishing MPAs

While proposals may be prepared by any individual or organisation, the responsibility for formally establishing MPAs rests with the competent authorities. Proposals may be brought to the attention of the authorities by anybody; however the process may be greatly facilitated by channelling proposals through recognised regional bodies such as the RAC/SPA and ACCOBAMS. Such international organisations, as well as IUCN MED (Malaga), and IUCN's World Commission for Protected Areas (WCPA – Marine), will provide expert support to nations wishing to establish MPAs for cetaceans.

If an MPA is proposed entirely within the territorial and internal waters of a nation, it will have to be established under the general domestic legislation of that nation, which covers both the substantial and institutional aspects of the matter (Scovazzi 1999). Once established, the concerned nation may decide whether the MPA could also be proposed as part of a wider protected areas network, such as the SPAMI network provided for by the SPA Protocol to the Barcelona Convention, the Natura 2000 network (if the nation is an European Union Member State), the Emerald network of the Council of Europe, or UNESCO's World Heritage Convention Sites. The impetus for inscribing one's MPA within an international network may derive from the nation's political will of promoting international cooperation for the protection of what is considered by that nation as common natural heritage.

Considering the pelagic habits of most cetacean species found in the Mediterranean Sea, important portions of their critical habitat will be located beyond the 12 nautical mile-wide territorial waters of any nation, i.e. in the Mediterranean high seas. This will cause most prospective MPAs for cetaceans in the region to be located in waters beyond national jurisdiction. It should be remembered that the existence of high seas in the Mediterranean is likely to be a transient condition, given that nations have the possibility of declaring their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) up to 200 nautical miles from

their coasts. The day in which all Mediterranean coastal nations will have declared their EEZs, the high seas will disappear from the Mediterranean. Until that happens, however, nations will still have the possibility of declaring an MPA resting entirely or in part in international waters by requesting its inscription in the List of SPAMIs of the Barcelona Convention's SPA Protocol. Once an MPA is adopted as a SPAMI by a Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, its regulations will be binding not only for the citizens of the nation(s) which has (have) proposed it, but also for the citizens of all the nations which are party to the SPA Protocol. A classic precedent of such process was provided by the Pelagos Sanctuary for Mediterranean marine mammals, which consists largely of international waters. The Pelagos Sanctuary was established in 1999 by a treaty among France, Italy and Monaco, and adopted as a SPAMI in 2001 in recognition of its Mediterranean importance (Notarbartolo di Sciarra *et al.* in press). It should also be noted that France and Italy have created ecological protection zones which may have an impact on high seas protection measures outside of their territorial waters. In addition to the Pelagos Sanctuary, other important high seas areas are likely to be identified in the future (e.g., the Alborán Sea proposed in 2005 by Cañadas *et al.*). The cetacean populations survey planned in the ACCOBAMS context over the entire span of the Mediterranean and Black Seas may help facilitate the identification of such additional pelagic areas.

3.6. Possible candidate sites for the ACCOBAMS Area

Each Mediterranean riparian nation may independently assess needs and opportunities for establishing cetacean MPAs within its remits, in order to grant as quickly as possible legal protection to those sites that have already been identified in areas under its jurisdiction as being particularly important for cetaceans. While that happens, however, an attempt to initiate such a process in an organised, region-wide fashion was made during the 4th Meeting of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS (November 2006, A map by Lesley Frampton, courtesy of Erich Hoyt © WDCS 2007, appears in Appendix 4 (page 5), Document UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.308/Inf.11).

An initial list (by no means complete) of more than 80 potential candidate sites for cetacean protection is contained in the Appendix 3 (pages 32-67), Document UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.308/Inf.11, where the following information is provided for each site: concerned country; concerned cetacean species; additional features (e.g., other protected species found on site); size of cetacean population thought to be using the area; known threats to cetaceans in the area; known problems caused to humans by cetaceans (e.g., net depredation); current protection status; list of researchers, NGOs, local groups active in the area; and relevant references.

A desirable outcome of the effort, currently planned, to survey the ACCOBAMS area to generate data on cetacean ecology in the region will consist of the provision of elements for the identification of hotspots and critical habitats to be considered for space-based protection. Unfortunately, the formal declaration of protected areas in all such sites may take an extremely long time due to the legal implications and requirements connected with such processes, both in national waters and in the high seas. To address the issue it may be worth considering the alternative possibility that the entire ACCOBAMS area be treated as a protected area for cetaceans (which it in fact is, with the exception of the territorial waters of the few riparian states that are still not Party to the Agreement). An ACCOBAMS-based region-wide MPA might then be made to contain "special zones of protection" in those sites where critical habitat of particular cetacean populations have been identified, and where special protective measures should be implemented to protect these populations. On the one hand, special zones could be merely considered the outcome of a zoning process within the wider ACCOBAMS protected area - a standard management procedure in MPAs – thus possibly benefiting from a fast-track institutional process. On the other hand, it is important that these special zones will benefit from a rigorous protective regime just like any more "traditional" MPA; to this effect, a management structure and planning will have to be implemented.

4. Management of MPAs

4.1. Management needs

Management of an MPA for cetaceans does not sensibly differ from managing any MPA. Excellent summaries detailing the management of MPAs exist (e.g., Kelleher 1999, Salm *et al.* 2000), and the basic management principles listed there will equally apply to special protected areas for cetaceans. This section will therefore only contain a summary of the main elements of MPA management practice, with a special reference to their relevance to cetacean conservation. In particular, the need is here emphasized for: (i) a management body and management plan; (ii) the definition of clear management objectives; (iii) periodic management reviews to assess whether objectives are met; (iv) management training; and (v) consensus building and maintenance.

i. Management plan and management body

An MPA without a management plan is like a ship without a rudder (Reeves 2000). Without an appropriate management plan enforced, the MPA will remain a “paper park” which will only serve to make decision makers look good without any real conservation effect. Even with a management plan, a protected area will be ineffective unless a director is empowered to implement it, i.e. with the necessary legal authority, sufficient financial resources, and adequate staff to proceed with implementation (Reeves 2000). A management plan should be developed with adequate funding arrangements in place to support its implementation in its entirety.

Furthermore, management of an MPA must be assured sufficient stability and longevity to be able to perform its stated tasks within a reasonable minimum amount of time (e.g., a five-year term). Too often in the Mediterranean region MPA management is tightly linked to the vagaries of local political equilibria; when these change, very likely the entire MPA management is changed as well, thus crippling the overall effectiveness of the MPA through intolerable instability, and undermining its very reason for existence. Plan development should be independent of political pressure to ensure that complex issues are adequately dealt with and that a disorganized approach to integrated management is avoided. A strong recommendation should be made to Mediterranean nations wishing to protect cetaceans through the establishment of MPAs to ensure that their relevant legislation is adapted, if necessary, to account for the needed management stability.

The management plan will, among other things, detail the measures enacted to reach the objectives. These include:

- Zoning, to separate highly protected no-entry sites containing cetacean critical habitat from human-use sites where activities such as whale watching, tourism, moderate fishing and vessel traffic may occur in a regulated fashion;
- Regulations and mitigating measures to maintain potentially harmful human activities (e.g., fishing, vessel traffic, military exercises) within acceptable levels;
- Research activities to generate knowledge susceptible to allow management adaptiveness and increase management effectiveness;
- Enforcement and compliance monitoring to ensure that rules are respected and measures are correctly implemented;
- Monitoring of the status and trends of the target populations and relevant human activities as a feedback mechanism to the management plan, to ensure that the proposed mitigation measures are working as expected;
- Monitoring and periodic review to ensure that the stated objectives are being met (see iii);
- Development of risk assessment techniques to take cumulative impact into account and identify emergent risks;
- Promotion of fair decision-making and conflict resolution concerning access to ocean resources within the protected areas;
- Administration, financing and fund-raising;

- Implementation of education and awareness programmes.

ii. Definition of objectives

Effective management of an MPA is founded on the articulation of clear and quantifiable objectives (SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, reachable, and timely) to attain the institutional goals, and the implementation of a monitoring system to assess whether these objectives are being met (see iii). A significant challenge to the effective management of MPAs dedicated to the protection of top predators such as cetaceans is the need for a framework to guide and assess effectiveness in the context of broader ecosystem-level objectives, which seek to extend conservation benefits from the protected species and their habitats to marine trophic webs and ecosystem-wide processes. Ecosystem-level management requires a clear rationale and a firm knowledge base.

iii. Are the management objectives met? Monitoring and indicators

A fundamental step in the management process involves the monitoring and periodic review of activities to assess whether the objectives are being met. A practical way of achieving this result is to devise specific management indicators. Pomeroy *et al.* (2004) provide an excellent review of the MPA management evaluation process, including the development and application of indicators (subdivided into biophysical, socio-economic and governance indicators). Given the complexity involved in selecting appropriate indicators, planning and conducting the evaluation, and consequently adapting further management actions, it is strongly recommended that the entire MPA management evaluation process be the subject of specific training (see next section).

iv. Training of managers

Managing MPAs is a complex endeavour in itself, made more complex by the particular ecological needs of top marine predators in the case of MPAs specifically created to protect cetaceans. Considering that managed MPAs in the Mediterranean are a relatively recent phenomenon, a solid professional tradition of protected area management is still lacking in most places. With the recent increase in MPA popularity within Mediterranean riparian nations, an organised effort for MPA management training and capacity building has become increasingly needed. In particular, training should address: (a) management practices in general; (b) management evaluation procedures (see iii above); and (c) general knowledge of Mediterranean marine ecology, with a special emphasis on top predators (e.g., cetacean population and conservation biology) in the case of managers and management staff dedicated to cetacean MPAs.

Specifically, it is recommended that a training module on cetacean MPA planning and management be prepared, and national and regional training sessions be organised with the support of expert organisations such as ACCOBAMS, the RAC/SPA, IUCN MED (Malaga), IUCN's World Commission for Protected Areas (WCPA – Marine), and MEDPAN.

v. Consensus building and maintenance

Although these guidelines are focused mostly on the ecological aspects of cetacean MPA establishment and management, it is important to stress that the creation and maintenance of consensus and public favour is fundamental to the success of an MPA. A cooperative environment may be best achieved through the enrolment of governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in the process as much as feasible.

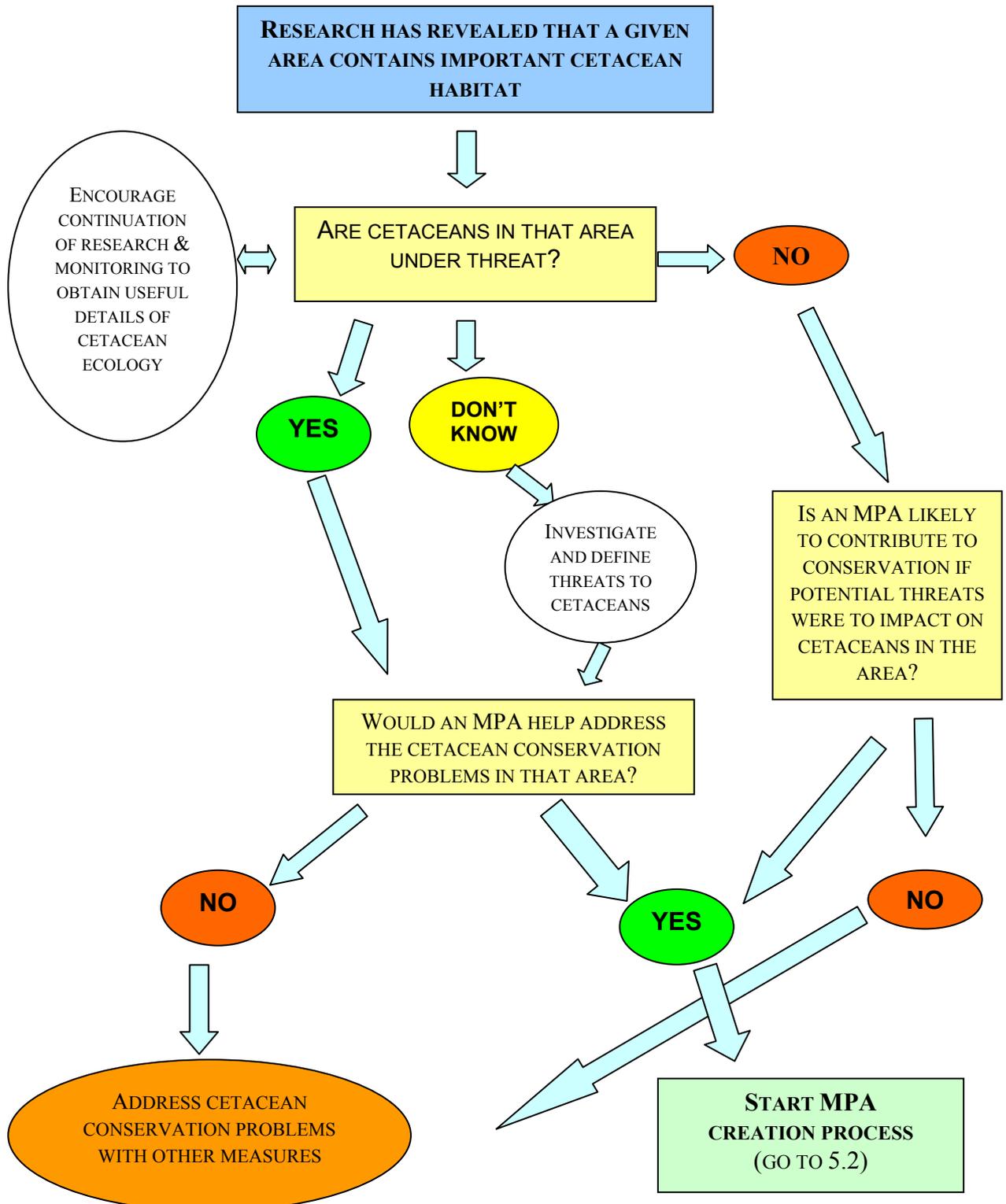
4.2. Cetacean conservation in existing MPAs

With the notable exception of the Pelagos Sanctuary, all the MPAs existing in the Mediterranean have been established to protect coastal waters (Mabile and Piante 2005). As a consequence, most existing Mediterranean MPAs may only contain habitat of coastal cetaceans, such as common bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), short-beaked common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*), and harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*). Such areas, which are already protected by the existing law, may in the future become useful components of regional networks of MPAs designed to protect the above cetacean species.

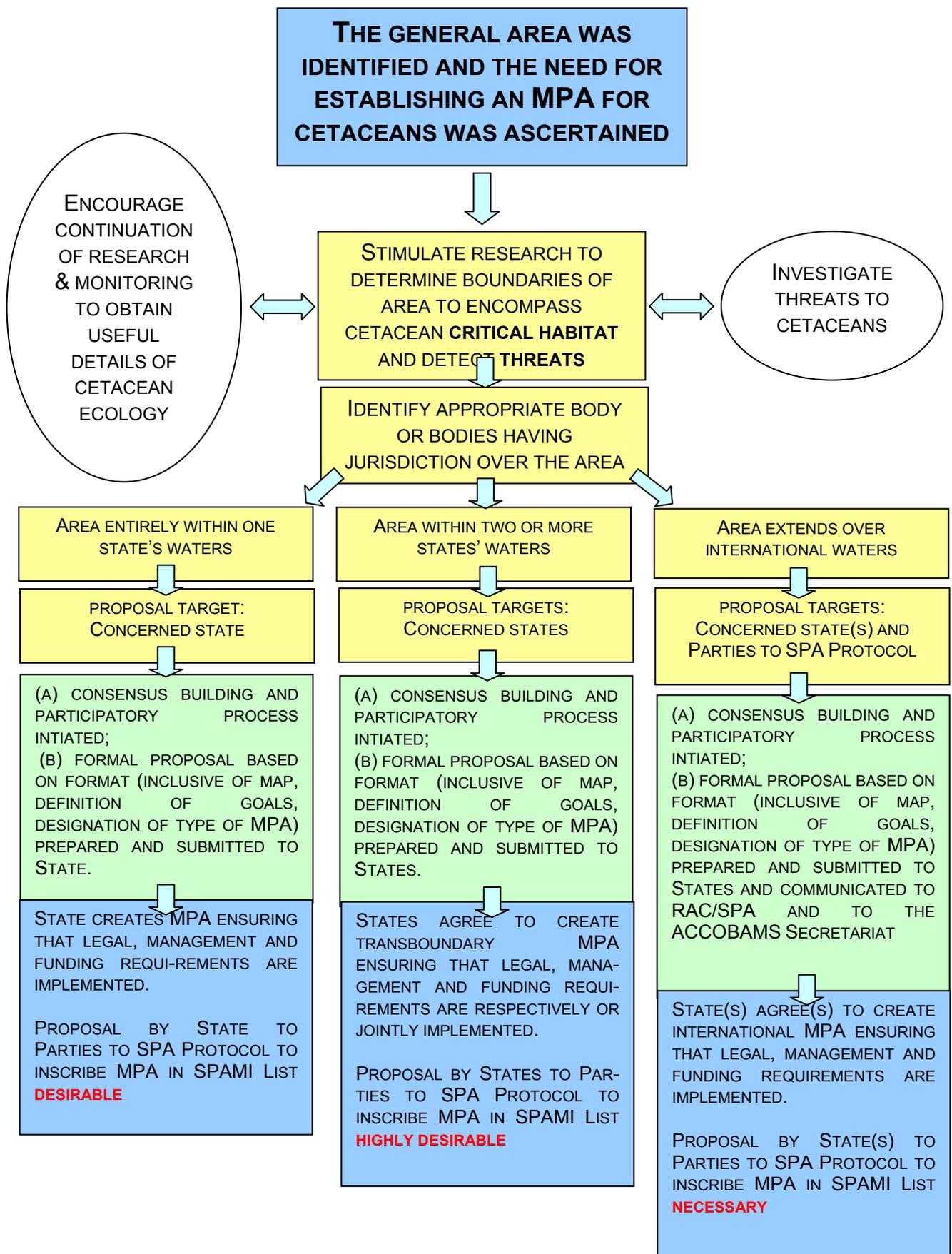
Managers of existing Mediterranean MPAs should be encouraged to conduct or promote research to determine whether the areas under their remit contain important cetacean habitats. In the affirmative case, appropriate cetacean conservation measures should be included in the area's management plan. Furthermore, two-way communication should be established between single MPA management bodies and region-wide conservation organisations such as the RAC/SPA and ACCOBAMS, to facilitate the network growth, share experiences, and obtain assistance in matters such as capacity building, problem solving and sharing of resources.

5. Practical support to the guidelines

5.1. Is the establishment of an MPA an appropriate measure for conserving a given cetacean population?



5.2 What steps need to be undertaken to establish an MPA?



5.3 Once the MPA is established, what management actions does it need to work properly?

- A management body, with a director empowered by the necessary legal authority, sufficient financial resources, and adequate staff to proceed with implementation;
- The definition of clear management objectives to attain the goals that were set when the area was established;
- A management plan detailing ways to reach the objectives;
- Periodic reviews to assess whether objectives are met;
- Management training;
- Consensus building.

5.4 Additional resources helpful for the proper establishment and management of cetacean MPAs

The following is an initial list of resources that can be used in support to the process of establishing and managing MPAs for cetaceans:

- Supporting organisations:
 - Regional Activity Centre/Specially Protected Areas, Tunis
<http://www.rac-spa.org/>
 - ACCOBAMS
<http://www.accobams.org/>
 - Convention on Migratory Species (parent convention to ACCOBAMS)
<http://www.cms.int/>
 - Other Conventions and Regional Organisations:
 - Bern Convention
http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/environment/nature_and_biological_diversity/Nature_protection/
 - Convention on Biological Diversity
<http://www.biodiv.org/default.shtml>
 - European Commission – Environment DG
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/index_en.htm
 - CIESM – the Mediterranean Science Commission
<http://www.ciesm.org/>
 - IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA – Marine)
<http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/biome/marine/marineprogramme.html>
 - IUCN's Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (Malaga)
<http://iucn.org/places/medoffice/en/index.html>
 - MEDPAN – the Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean
<http://www.medpan.org/?language=en>
 - Major advocacy NGOs concerned with cetaceans and with the conservation of the marine environment. These include, among others:
 - Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society
 - WWF Mediterranean Programme Office
 - Oceana
 - International Fund for Animal Welfare
- Expert individuals and organisations: an initial list is contained in Appendix 1 (pages 9-19) Document UNEP (DEPI)/MEDWG.308/Inf.11.
- A specialised library on cetaceans and on MPAs (for useful start-ups on this, see <http://www.accobams.org/2006.php/pages/show/93> and <http://www.cetaceanhabitat.org/>).

6. Acknowledgments

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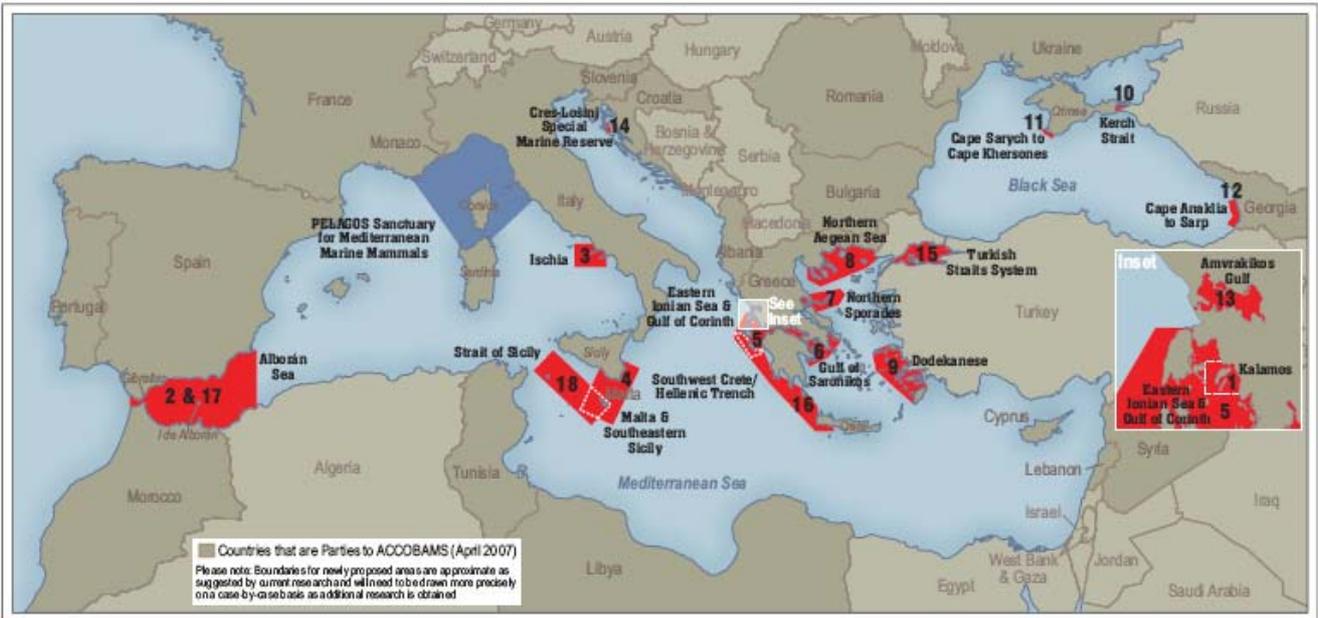
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ANNEX 3

Map of proposed Marine Protected Area



RESOLUTION 3.23

COMMERCIAL WHALE-WATCHING: TOWARDS A LABEL

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

Considering that whale-watching activities for commercial purposes are constantly increasing in the area under the Agreement,

Certain that tourist whale-watching is a remarkable awareness and education tool provided the activity is correctly carried on,

Recognizing the need to regulate this activity,

Hailing the initiative of the Spanish Government to publish their Royal Decree on creating a Mobile Protection Space for cetaceans, particularly concerning the regulating of whalewatching,

Aware of the importance of environmental labels at national and international level,

Recognizing that eco-labels aim at promoting products that comply with the principles of sustainable development,

Also recognizing that eco-labels are an attractive way of informing consumers about the environmental consequences of their choices,

Recalling Principle 8 of the Rio Declaration, according to which “in order to achieve sustainable development and a better quality of life for all peoples, the states should reduce and eliminate non-viable ways of producing and consuming and promote the appropriate demographic policies”,

Recalling:

- Article II 1 of the Agreement, according to which the Parties forbid and take all the steps necessary to eliminate any deliberate taking of cetaceans, including harassing them or trying to engage in any such activity
- Section 2 of Annex 2 to the Agreement, providing for the crafting of guidelines and/or codes of conduct to regulate or manage activities that create interactions between humans and cetaceans, such as tourist activities
- Recommendation 2.1 on the “identification and encouragement of economic activities that help to mitigate anthropic impacts on cetaceans” encouraging the Parties, the Riparian States and the European Commission, directly or through the appropriate Bodies, to identify means of encouraging economic activities that help mitigate human/cetacean interactions,

Recalling the Resolution 1.11 on “Guidelines for commercial cetacean-watching activities in the ACCOBAMS area”, adopted within the framework of ACCOBAMS

Appreciating the collaboration established in this field particularly between ACCOBAMS and PELAGOS,

1. *Encourages* the Secretariat to pursue its collaboration with PELAGOS.
2. *Encourages* the Parties to develop a label, in priority within the PELAGOS area, in the shape of a test, which will confer on whale-watching a sustainable development aspect.

3. *Adopts* guidelines to obtain a label for whale-watching operators in the PELAGOS and ACCOBAMS area, as presented in the Annex I of the present Resolution.

4. *Makes* the Scientific Committee, in collaboration with PELAGOS experts and the ACCOBAMS and PELAGOS Secretariats, responsible for defining:

- the content of training for operators
- measures to check the application of the label
- a communication strategy
- criteria for assessing the label.

5. *Makes* the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Agreement's Scientific Committee, responsible for presenting to the next Meeting of Parties a draft label based on the guidelines mentioned below.

ANNEX 1

PROPOSAL OF GUIDELINES FOR ACQUIRING A LABEL FOR WHALE-WHATCHING OPERATORS IN THE PELAGOS / ACCOBAMS AREA

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Introduction

A. Operators' commitment

1. Undergoing training
2. Applying the Code of Good Conduct
3. Contribution to research programmes
 - a. *Observation sheets*
 - b. Working group on having a scientist on board in the context of specific research programmes
4. Modes of whale-watching outings
5. Message to be delivered to passengers
6. Contribution to the Working group

B. Commitments of coordinator bodies

1. Communication
2. Making sure the contract specifications are respected
3. Advance towards an official status for controlling whale-watching
4. Consideration of the other categories of whale-watching
5. Revision

Works consulted to compose this document

Appendix 1 : Code of conduct

Appendix 2 : Observation sheet

Introduction

Many works have shown that there has been a sizeable development of whale-watching activity in the Mediterranean. But in the absence of a management or regulation programme, this development is everywhere taking place in an uncontrolled manner and does not usually meet the ecological, sociological and economic stakes this activity underpins.

Thus, in accordance with their commitments, the PELAGOS Sanctuary and the ACCOBAMS Agreement have chosen to promote voluntary management of this activity in the form of a label for structures that are committed to a quality and ecological responsibility approach. Decided on in consultation with the operators, the guidelines of this system are presented in this document in two parts: operators' commitments, and the coordinating body's commitments.

These contract specifications can be modified as our knowledge advances, the activity of whale-watching changes, and the thoughts of the work groups suggested below develop. For this reason, this document must be revised every two years.

The label may be requested by all whale-watching operators who promote their whale-watching activities at sea to the public, whether this is for commercial, pedagogic, social or scientific ends.

A. Operators' commitments

1. Undergoing training

High-quality whale-watching requires a fairly great level of skill. This is why the training of staff on board is suggested, under the scientific responsibility of institutions. This training will aim at:

- a. giving added value to the outings of the concerned operators
- b. offering the public quality service and an ecologically controlled approach
- c. mitigating the activity's impacts on cetaceans and helping protect them
- d. and thus ensuring that whale-watching has a sustainable future.

This training, that will last at least one week, will concern the following fields:

- Presenting and identifying the main species of cetacean population in the Mediterranean
- Notions of settlements' and populations' physiology, biology and ecology
- Special ecological features of cetaceans in the Mediterranean (particularly the degree of endemism), threats and conservation status
- Presenting and identifying other species that can be watched at sea (avifauna and ichthyofauna)
- Special ecological features of the Mediterranean
- Roles and importance of cetaceans in the Mediterranean ecosystem
- Regulations specific to cetaceans that can be applied in the Mediterranean, and presentation of the ACCOBAMS Agreement and the PELAGOS Sanctuary
- Reminder of the stakes and values of whale-watching
- Code of Good Conduct for whale-watching and signs of disturbance to be taken into consideration when approaching them (notions of ethology)
- Environmental education for the public: information to be circulated
- Interest of research, databases on cetaceans and teaching of a scientific observation guide that can be applied by operators
- Practical part (sea outings as far as is possible)

To obtain the label, the operators' promise, firstly, that the person responsible for the structure has undergone this training and, also, that each outing will be accompanied by at least one trained person. The only valid training is that which is completed from start to finish, with a recognized final test. The training may be rendered null and void if the label's contract specifications are flouted (§B.2).

The captain of the boat or the helmsman will make sure that the recommendations of the trained person are respected, particularly as regards approaching the cetaceans.

The initial training is free. There will be a charge for training given after suspension for flouting the contract specifications.

2. Applying the Code of Good Conduct

To get a label, operators promise to apply the Code of Good Conduct that appears in Appendix 1.

3. Contribution to research programmes

Collaboration between researchers and whale-watching bodies is vital for designing high-quality activity. This contribution to research constitutes added value for operators, a rich supplement for passengers, a logistical aid for researchers and an asset for the conservation of cetaceans. It may take the shape of observation sheets filled in by the operators, intended to enrich databases. But it can also be seen as a more in-depth form of cooperation in the context of a precise research programme.

3.1. Observation sheets

Operators promise to participate in enriching the joint ACCOBAMS-CIESM-PELAGOS database. To this end, a cetacean observation sheet is provided to whale-watching structures (cf. Appendix 2). It contains elementary data such as the state of the sea, the GPS position, the species concerned and the number of individuals or the direction taken by the animals. This data is collected with an observation effort ('on the transect') according to the positions of the operators and in accordance with the teaching given in the above-mentioned training. The operators promise to fill in the sheets at each outing and to hand them in every month.

3.2. Working group on having a scientist on board in the context of specific research programmes

In the context of specific research programmes, this will involve analysing the possibility of putting a scientist on board units that hold a sizeable number of people (over 12 passengers). For such a step it is necessary to have a good grasp of the means made available (boat speed, height of observer's eyes, sectors prospected and regularity of outings, possibility of having acoustic devices at one's disposal, etc.). It must therefore automatically be the subject of consultation between the operators and scientists within a work group. This must determine:

- the means made available by the operators for research
- how the researchers make their contribution in return (e.g. the scientist participates in informing the passengers).

The results of this reflection must systematically be made available to the scientists who bring all new projects. Then they can study the logistical possibilities offered by the operators and see whether they are compatible with their programme, in order to reduce, if need be, the budgets set aside for the boats. Label-holding operators with units that carry more than 12 passengers promise to participate in this work group.

4. Modes of whale-watching outings

Label-holding operators promise to organise outings that have a naturalist side rather than being strictly focused on cetaceans, in accordance with what is taught in the above-mentioned training. The aim is to mitigate the pressure on the animals while making sure the public are made aware and satisfied.

With a view to limiting the consumption of fuel and making the public really aware, excursions must last sufficiently long (at least half a day, on average a whole day, ideally several days).

Game fishing combined with whale-watching in a single package is not tolerated (the fishing techniques being incompatible with the Code of Good Conduct). To hold labels, structures which offer both activities must organise them in separate excursions.

Commercial swimming with cetaceans⁷ is not tolerated at this stage within the framework of the label. This item will be assessed during the regular updates of the contract specifications (§B.5).

Spotting from the air is tolerated at this stage but is strongly advised against. This item will be assessed during the regular updates of the contract specifications.

Whale-watching in Corsica and on the island of Lampedusa could be subjected to particular recommendations and dispensations from the present contract specifications. If need be, when the time comes, these will be appended to them.

Label-holding operators must provide their passengers with packaging that enables waste to be selectively sorted. As far as is possible, the boats must have tanks to recuperate waste water.

5. Message to be delivered to passengers

In accordance with the Code of Good Conduct, label-holding operators promise to deliver a quality message on board with a common base that includes:

- a description and identification of cetacean species and other species that can be observed
- notions of biology and ecology on Mediterranean ecosystems and cetaceans
- an introduction to the ACCOBAMS and PELAGOS Agreements
- existing threats generally and those linked in priority to any observation activity that does not respect the Code of Good Conduct.

The message must focus on a naturalist approach, not solely on cetaceans.

At the end of the day, a standard assessment sheet will be distributed to customers, who will be invited to transmit their observations to the PELAGOS and ACCOBAMS Executive Secretariats.

6. Contribution to work groups

Direct issues or those related to whale-watching will arise from the work groups in which operators will be invited to participate. These work groups will particularly handle the following topics:

- contribution to research programmes (cf. §3.2)
- research and development to limit the activity's dependence on fossil fuels
- the acoustic insulation of hulls, shafts and motors.

B. Commitments of 'coordinator bodies'

The training structure and/or authority granting the label and checking it and/or the Executive Secretariats of PELAGOS and ACCOBAMS and National Focal Points. This item remains to be clarified

1. Communication

The coordinator bodies promise to deliver a label to registered operators supporting a quality, environment-friendly approach. To promote this label, three tools will be established:

- visual displays to be affixed to the boats and reception centres of the concerned operators
- the use of various means of communication for the public (web page about ACCOBAMS's and PELAGOS's internet sites, PELAGOS National Day, media, and awareness of the prescribers of the tourist offer involved in whale-watching, such as tourist information offices and booking centres, guiding the public towards label-holding operators, etc.)
- a regular (annual) reference work² made available to the public (available in tourist information offices, town halls or naturalist shops). It will present:
 - whale-watching activity in the Mediterranean and the stakes involved
 - the Code of Good Conduct
 - the species that can be observed, their identification, and some basic knowledge about ecology
 - the interest of calling on label-holding operators (pledge of an ecological approach and quality service regarding education)
 - a complete list of label-holding operators, their rates and their address, phone number, etc.

The coordinator bodies will help develop a set of pedagogical tools for operators and their customers (posters, Code of Good Conduct, etc.). Like the *Michelin Guide*

2. Making sure the contract specifications are respected

The coordinator bodies promise to make regular assessments to check that the label-holding operators are respecting the contract specifications defined in this document. To make such assessments, boats will be boarded anonymously. All label-holding operators will be visited at least once a year, more often if necessary (if, for example, there is flouting of specifications, or frequent return of unsatisfactory assessment sheets, cf. §A.5). If the promises regarding the label are not kept, a penalty is imposed. This is done at two levels: that of the staff on board who have undergone the training (the training is then null and void and has to be retaken) and/or at that of the operator (his label may be suspended). The table below summarizes this assessment system.

Infringement	Level	Description of the penalty
1 st report	Staff who have undergone training	Recommendation associated with a reminder of the contract specifications
	Structure (operator)	Recommendation associated with a reminder of the contract specifications
2 nd report	Staff who have undergone training	Warning, possibly associated with invalidation of the training, depending on how serious the infringement is
	Structure (operator)	Warning, possibly associated with suspension of the label for a period of one to two years, depending on how serious the infringement is
3 rd report	Staff who have undergone training	Invalidation of the training
	Structure (operator)	The label is cancelled and for a period of 3 to 5 years no request for renewal may be made. The person responsible for the structure must once again undergo training if he wishes to request that the label be granted again when the cancellation period is over

If after a second infringement report is made a person (who has undergone the training) or a structure (a label-holder) does not commit an infringement for three consecutive years, he is once again considered as though he had never committed any infringement.

3. Advance towards an official status for controlling whale-watching

As well as this label, PELAGOS and ACCOBAMS agree on the need eventually to control whale-watching by a regulatory tool. To this end, this involves taking all the steps leading to whale-watching being granted official status (so far inexistent). This status will mean that the activity can in future be subjected to ‘declaration’ or even ‘authorization’ (delivery of licences). This regulatory approach can go hand in hand with the voluntary label approach, since:

- it will take more time to be enforceable
- and, in the future, it will replace the voluntary approach, which will then only concern regulating the number of operators in keeping with the reception capacity of the sites.

4. Consideration of the other categories of whale-watching

ACCOBAMS and PELAGOS agree on the need, eventually, to appraise and control the other categories of whale-watching (pleasure boating and indirectly commercial, such as game fishing and sea trips). The aim is to effectively and comprehensively protect cetaceans against everything that whale-watching encompasses and act so that the efforts of those working in the field are not wiped out by the possible bad behaviour of other bodies involved in whale-watching.

5. Revision

These contract specifications will be revised a year after they enter into force, and then every three years.

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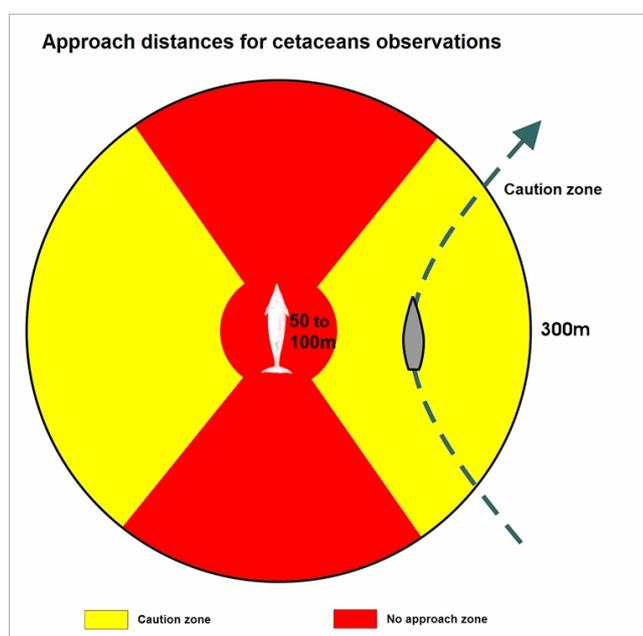
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Appendix 1

Code of Conduct for whale-watching in the Mediterranean

Whale-watching can be a source of serious disturbance if it is incorrectly done. The following rules enable us to limit our impacts on the vital behaviour of dolphins and whales (hunting, resting or inter-individual socialising). Whether one is a pleasure boater, a fisherman, a whale-watching operator or any other user of the marine environment, the rules set out below apply in the same way, in the PELAGOS Sanctuary and elsewhere.

The following illustration defines two essential zones for those approaching cetaceans – the vigilance zone (yellow) and the forbidden zone (red).



1. Vigilance zone (yellow)

The (300m) vigilance zone defines the sector in which the disturbance caused by your boat (presence, noise and exhaust) are strongly experienced by the animals. When you enter this zone, you must respect strict rules in your behaviour to mitigate this disturbance:

The boat's speed must be constant, set by the slowest animal. It must not be greater than 5 knots

- The approach must be made according to a trajectory that gradually aligns itself parallel to the animals' path (green arrow in the illustration). The boat thus takes up its position abeam the animals, following their direction

- It is forbidden to make any sudden change of speed or direction
- To limit acoustic disturbance, sounders and sonars must be turned off
- Be even more vigilant and restrict your approach distance if you notice the presence of newborn animals
- You must instantly leave the vigilance zone if the animals show they are disturbed: for example, flight (speeding up, changing direction, trying to get away from the observer) must be seen as disturbance
- Observation time is restricted to half an hour
- If several boats are present, only one is tolerated within the vigilance zone. Observation time is then shortened to a quarter of an hour, and the other boats must wait outside the 300m zone. Radio contact between the different boats will enable coordination of observation
- When the observation ends, the boat must gradually leave the site, taking a route that unambiguously signals that it is departing. The speed will remain moderate up to a sufficient distance to avoid the risk of collision

2. Forbidden zone (red)

The forbidden zone defines the sector within which your boat must never go (except if the cetaceans spontaneously approach the boat). The distance is 100m for whales and sperm whales and 50m for dolphins. If you go nearer than this, the cetaceans will see your presence as a danger or an intrusion on their vital space, and their behaviour will be greatly disturbed by it.

Also, the boat must not get there before the animals (reduced field of vision). Nor must the boat approach from behind, for it will then be seen as a pursuer

When the boat reaches the edge of the forbidden zone, its relative speed must be cut to zero and its motor put out of gear, idling.

It is forbidden to go inside groups for this will cause social disturbance.

3. Special case when animals spontaneously approach the boat

When cetaceans come up to the boat of their own accord, passengers must not try to touch them, either directly or with an instrument, or swim near them, or feed them. Most of the above rules hold good, especially the ban on going inside groups and the respect for slow, regular movement.

4. Generally speaking...

The moment cetaceans are spotted, or at a distance of 1,000m, special vigilance is necessary and a speed of 10 knots only is essential: other animals may be present in the sector, and the risk of collision is not negligible. Moreover, a higher speed would be likely to disturb the animals, even at a great distance. Generally speaking, whale-watching is not recommended in the 5-mile coastal strip, for the cetaceans there are already very much disturbed by human activity.

An operator must accompany his outing with an educational address on cetaceans and the marine environment. This must be given by a qualified, trained guide. He must be able to identify the species encountered, determine their phases of activity, and notice possible disturbances.

5. In brief

- Keep a slow pace and calm, constant progress from the moment the cetaceans are spotted, particularly within the 300m zone
- No approach nearer than 50m for dolphins and 100m for whales and sperm whales
- Length of observation restricted to 30 minutes, 15 minutes if other boats are waiting
- Only one boat within the 300m zone
- Never try to touch, feed, or swim with a cetacean.

Appendix 2:
Observation sheet

RESOLUTION 3.25

CETACEAN LIVE STRANDING

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

Aware of the work on live stranding undertaken *inter alia* by participants in the ACCOBAMS rescue workshop (November 2006) and that the clear intention of such activities is the safe release to the wild of such animals;

Recognizing that data from rescue attempts is vitally important for improving knowledge and that records should be kept and results shared among rescue networks;

Recalling the conclusions adopted by the Scientific Committee at its fourth meeting on live stranding:

1. *Invites* range States to act on the recommendations of the Scientific Committee in conducting live stranding activities in the Agreement area;
2. *Recommends* the establishment of an advisory panel for ACCOBAMS rescue activities and a veterinary group, as suggested by the Scientific Committee;
3. *Also invites* the Scientific Committee to promote information on rescue activities;
4. *Further recommends* that the Secretariat and the Parties explore the following options:
 - establishment of an ACCOBAMS-wide rescue network;
 - provision of annual reports on rescue activities to a central body, such as the Mediterranean Database on Cetaceans (MEDACES);
 - further analysis of rescue capacity in the ACCOBAMS area, followed by efforts to make rescue coverage comprehensive;
 - development of an ACCOBAMS rescue triage;
 - establishment of a network of expert veterinarians to provide help and advice to each other and to the ACCOBAMS rescue network,
 - involvement of zoos and aquaria in rescue activities, as appropriate, within their logistic frameworks and infrastructures, without exposing such animals for public display and/or display for commercial purposes; and
 - increasing the numbers of trained volunteers and other rescue workers through appropriate training events (noting that there might be national requirements for licensing rescue workers);
5. *Charges* the Scientific Committee, in collaboration with the Secretariat and the focal points, to develop comprehensive guidelines on live strandings;
6. *Further invites* Parties to report to the next Meeting of the Parties about progress made in implementing this Resolution.

RESOLUTION 3.27

STRENGTHENING NORTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

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

Recalling that the Agreement encourages Parties to provide technical and financial support on a bilateral or multilateral basis to assist Range States which are developing countries or countries with economies in transition to implement the provisions of ACCOBAMS (Article IX .4 of the Agreement);

Recalling also Resolution 2.3 recommending Parties to support requests from developing Countries and Countries with economy in transition and charging the Secretariat to explore the availability of multilateral and bilateral governmental funds appropriate to support the implementation of the Agreement;

Considering that achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status of cetaceans requires that appropriate measures be taken in the whole Agreement Area;

Aware that implementing the Agreement requires specific qualifications and financial resources that are not always available in some developing countries;

Desirous of strengthening the North/South cooperation and solidarity in the Agreement area;

3. *Urges* Parties to improve North-South cooperation by developing bilateral and/or multilateral cooperation projects aimed at implementing the Conservation Plan of ACCOBAMS, in particular for cetacean population estimates, reducing bycatch in cetaceans and monitoring cetacean strandings.
4. *Invites* Parties having specific knowledge and experience in cetacean biology ecology and conservation to ensure their assistance to the countries in need of support to undertake activities in line with the priorities of ACCOBAMS. This could be achieved by promoting, *inter alia*, the participation of scientists from Southern countries in activities undertaken in Northern countries.

RESOLUTION 3.28

SUPPORT TO THE SECRETARIAT

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

Recalling:

- Article IV of the Agreement establishing the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS and defining its functions;
- Resolution 1.2 annex1 encouraging Parties to support the staff Secretariat through secondment;
- Resolution 1.6 (Annex 3) related to the Terms of Reference for the Administration of the Trust Fund of the Agreement;

Recalling also that ACCOBAMS was negotiated under the auspices of UNEP and CMS

Desirous of strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS;

Expressing its gratitude to the Government of the Principality of Monaco for hosting the Secretariat and for its valuable human and financial support;

Appreciating also the voluntary contributions provided by Monaco, United Kingdom and Italy to support the Secretariat during the six past years;

Conscious of the need and the interest to increase synergy and consistency between the CMS-related agreements;

Desirous, although appreciating the work fulfilled by the Permanent Secretariat during the past years, to sustain the potential of the permanent Secretariat and to increase it in order to fulfil the new tasks assigned by the Contracting Parties;

1. Invites Parties to continue and improve the help to the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS by covering the costs of seconded staff, or financial support, of administrative, scientific or legal staff;
2. Invites the Host Country to facilitate the administrative steps needed for the stay in Monaco of the staff appointed by Parties to support the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS;
3. Charges the Executive Secretary of CMS, in consultation with the Chair of the Bureau and the assistance of the Executive Secretary of ACCOBAMS, to investigate with the host country authorities ways and means to facilitate the implementation of this Resolution and, in particular, to harmonize, as far as necessary, the status of the Permanent Secretariat with those of the Secretariats of CMS Agreements.

RESOLUTION 3.29

GUIDELINES FOR A COORDINATED CETACEAN STRANDING RESPONSE

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

On the recommendation of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee:

Recalling that the First Meeting of the Parties adopted establishment of an 'emergency task force for special mortality events' as a priority;

Recalling also Resolution 3.10 on guidelines to address the impact of anthropogenic noise;

Recognizing that in recent years the Agreement area has been the scene of major cetacean mortality events, involving mass strandings over wide geographical areas, which have evoked great concern and have attracted considerable attention from the scientific community;

Convinced that in order to address new outbreaks of mortality and major accidents affecting cetacean populations or their critical habitats, a task force should be constituted for marine mammal mortality and special events, made up of international experts;

1. *Takes note* of the guidelines for a coordinated cetacean stranding response presented in the Annex I to the present Resolution;
2. *Urges* the Scientific Committee:
 - to extend those guidelines to the impact of pollution on mortality events;
 - to draft a roster of contact persons and experts from the scientific and conservation communities and from governmental environment and natural resource agencies who could contribute with in appropriate fields of expertise (e.g. pathology, epidemiology, toxicology, biology, ecology, acoustics) and establish two emergency task forces:
 - (i) a 'mass mortality' task force to address unusual mortality events, including epizootics and atypical mass strandings; and
 - (ii) a 'maritime disaster' task force to address oil or chemical spills affecting critical habitats of cetaceans;
 - to use existing experience to prepare contingency plans for each task forces, including descriptions of procedures and modalities for interventions, the decision-making processes and the management of information, communication and relations with the media;
 - to update the contingency plans periodically on the basis of past experience and new techniques and technologies;
3. *Recommends* to the Parties and invites non-Party riparian states:
 - to inform the Secretariat as rapidly as possible about accidental events affecting cetacean populations or their critical habitats and other cases of stranding, so that the emergency contingency plan can be initiated; and
 - to facilitate the organization of training programmes and drills to enhance the effectiveness of the emergency task forces;
4. *Instructs* the Secretariat:
 - in consultation with the Scientific Committee and in collaboration with States and subregional coordination units to contact the relevant experts in order to initiate the emergency contingency plan; and
 - to contact REMPEC and its homologous Black Sea organization under the Bucharest Convention framework in order to define a collaborative effort, as appropriate.

ANNEX 1

GUIDELINES FOR A COORDINATED CETACEAN STRANDING RESPONSE

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1. GUIDELINES CONCERNING BEST PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING CETACEAN MORTALITY EVENTS CAUSED BY EPIZOOTICS

Introduction on main marine mammal epizootics

Marine mammal epizootics occur in pinnipeds and cetaceans worldwide and are the subject of increased scientific research. Repeated outbreaks may have long-term effects on the affected populations (Van Bresseem *et al.*, 1999; Lonergan & Harwood, 2003; Härkönen *et al.*, 2006). Among the micro-parasites causing marine mammal mass-mortalities, morbilliviruses appear by far to be the more lethal and widely distributed of all (e.g. Kennedy, 1998; Van Bresseem *et al.*, 1999, 2001a). *Brucella* spp. cause serious disease in whales, dolphins and porpoises worldwide (Ewalt *et al.*, 1994; Ross *et al.*, 1994; Jahans *et al.*, 1997; Clavareau *et al.*, 1998; Miller *et al.*, 1999; Bricker *et al.*, 2000; Van Bresseem *et al.*, 2001a; Foster *et al.*, 2002; Ohishi *et al.*, 2003, 2004). Leptospirosis led to repeated epizootics of lethal illness in California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*) (Vedros *et al.*, 1971; Dierauf *et al.*, 1985; Gulland *et al.*, 1996) while harmful algal blooms (HBAs) are increasingly recognized as a cause of die-offs in marine animals (Flewelling *et al.*, 2005; HARRNESS, 2005). Below I summarize information on morbillivirus epizootics in marine mammals, *Brucella* spp. and *Leptospira* spp. infections and give a short insight into HBAs.

Morbilliviruses

The genus *Morbillivirus* belongs to the Family *Paramyxoviridae* and includes measles virus (MV) in humans and other primates, canine and phocine distemper viruses (CDV and PDV) in carnivores, cetacean morbilliviruses (porpoise and dolphin morbilliviruses) in cetaceans, rinderpest (RPV) and peste des petits ruminants (PPRV) viruses in artiodactyls. Morbilliviruses are pleomorphic, enveloped virions about 150 nm in diameter with a single-stranded RNA of negative sense polarity (Fenner *et al.*, 1993; Cosby *et al.*, 1988, Mahy *et al.*, 1988, Curran *et al.*, 1990; Barrett *et al.*, 1993). They require large populations of individuals (e.g. 300,000 for measles virus in humans) to be maintained endemically and induce serious, often lethal, systemic diseases in their hosts (Black, 1991). Transmission probably occurs through the inhalation of aerosolised virus, shed by infected individuals.

Since the late 1980s, at least four different morbilliviruses have caused outbreaks of lethal disease in pinnipeds and cetacean species. The existence of immunologically-naïve marine mammal groups and introduction of morbilliviruses from other aquatic or terrestrial mammals where the viruses are enzootic, may be the critical factors involved in triggering an epidemic.

1 1 1 1 *Morbillivirus* epizootics in pinnipeds

Phocine distemper virus (PDV) caused mass mortalities in harbour seals (*Phoca vitulina*) from Northern Europe in 1988 and 2002 (Osterhaus & Vedder, 1988; Kennedy *et al.*, 1988a; Jensen *et al.*, 2002). More than 23,000 seals died in 1988 and 30,000 in 2002 (Härkönen *et al.*, 2006). On both occasions the epizootics started in central Kattegat (Denmark) and subsequently spread to other colonies around the northern European coast. An estimated 60% and 47% (2002) of the North Sea harbour seal population died in 1988 and 2002, respectively (Hammond *et al.*, 2005). Clinical signs observed in seals were those typical of canine distemper and included respiratory, digestive, nervous problems and abortions (Kennedy *et al.*, 1989). Arctic seals may be the reservoir of the virus and harp (*Phoca groenlandica*) and grey (*Halichoerus grypus*) seals the vectors (Härkönen *et al.*, 2006).

An outbreak of CDV caused the death of 5,000-10,000 Baikal seals (*Phoca sibirica*) in 1987-1988 (Grachev *et al.*, 1989; Osterhaus *et al.*, 1989; Mamaev *et al.*, 1996). Clinical signs were similar to those of canine distemper in dogs (Grachev *et al.*, 1989). It is likely that this epizootic was caused by contact with terrestrial carnivores infected with CDV (Mamaev *et al.*, 1996). Several thousands of

Caspian seals (*Phoca caspica*) died in Azerbaijan on the western shore of the Caspian Sea in 1997. A strain of CDV, distinct from the one found in Baikal seals and other field CDVs, was detected by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) in the brain of one adult female suggesting that this virus could have caused the epizootic (Forsyth *et al.*, 1998). A confirmed outbreak of CDV occurred in this species in the spring of 2000, killing more than 10,000 animals. Broncho-interstitial pneumonia and lymphocytic necrosis and depletion were common findings (Kuiken *et al.*, 2006). Caspian seals and/or sympatric terrestrial carnivores could be a reservoir for CDV (Kuiken *et al.*, 2006). Morbilliviruses were isolated from Mediterranean monk seals (*Monachus monachus*) during an outbreak of mortality in 1997 (Osterhaus *et al.*, 1997) that is thought to be primarily linked with HABs (Hernandez *et al.*, 1998; Harwood, 1998).

1 1 1 2 Morbillivirus epizootics in cetaceans

Concurrently with the first PDV outbreak in harbour seals, porpoise morbillivirus (PMV) caused mortalities in harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) from European waters in 1988-1990 (Kennedy, 1998; Kennedy *et al.*, 1988b, 1991, 1992; Barrett *et al.*, 1993; Visser *et al.*, 1993). Bronchointerstitial pneumonia and severe non-suppurative encephalitis were the main findings (Kennedy *et al.*, 1991, 1992).

Dolphin morbillivirus (DMV) infection ravaged the striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*) population of the Mediterranean Sea in 1990-1992 (Domingo *et al.*, 1990; Van Bresseem *et al.*, 1991, 1993). The first dolphins affected by the disease were found in the vicinity of Valencia, Spain, at the beginning of July 1990. The epizootic subsequently expanded to the western and eastern Mediterranean and vanished in the spring of 1992 (Aguilar & Raga, 1993; Bompar *et al.*, 1991; Bortolotto *et al.*, 1992; Webb, 1991; Van Bresseem *et al.*, 1993; Cebrian, 1995; Osterhaus *et al.*, 1995). Although no precise mortality rates could be estimated for this die-off, it is likely that thousands of animals perished (Aguilar & Raga 1993, Forcada *et al.*, 1994). As a relative measure of the impact, the mean school size in the epizootic core regions significantly decreased to less than 30% of the pre-outbreak number (Aguilar & Raga 1993, Forcada *et al.*, 1994). Bronchointerstitial pneumonia, non-suppurative encephalitis and lymphoid depletion and lymphocytolysis were commonly seen in these dolphins (Domingo *et al.*, 1992; Duignan *et al.*, 1992). Serological data indicated that the virus did not persist enzootically in striped dolphins, that this population was losing its immunity to DMV and may soon be at risk from new virus introductions (Van Bresseem *et al.*, 2001a). Pilot whales (*Globicephala* sp.) as well as other gregarious cetacean species have been suggested as reservoir and vector of the disease (Duignan *et al.*, 1995; Van Bresseem *et al.*, 1998, 2001a). A morbillivirus has also been implicated in the die-off of short-beaked common dolphins *Delphinus delphis ponticus* in the Black Sea in 1994 (Birkun *et al.*, 1999).

In 1987-1988, PMV and DMV infections killed over 50% of the inshore population of common bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) along the Atlantic coast of USA, from New Jersey to Florida (Krafft *et al.*, 1995, Lipscomb *et al.*, 1994, 1996; Taubenberger *et al.*, 1996). In 1993-1994, PMV hit coastal bottlenose dolphins along the Gulf of Mexico coasts of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas. The histopathological and immunoperoxidase findings were similar to those reported in European harbour porpoises and Mediterranean striped dolphins (Lipscomb *et al.*, 1994, 1996; Krafft *et al.*, 1995; Taubenberger *et al.*, 1996). Pilot whales (*Globicephala* sp.) and offshore bottlenose dolphins may have been a source of infection for the coastal dolphins (Duignan *et al.*, 1996).

1 1 2 Brucella spp.

Brucellosis is a worldwide, zoonotic disease in mammals characterized by reproductive failures including abortion. The causative agents are Gram-negative bacteria of the genus *Brucella* including *B. abortus* in cattle, sheep, goats and pigs, *B. melitensis* in goats, sheep and cattle, *B. canis* in dogs, *B. suis* in pigs, *B. ovis* in sheep and *B. neotomae* in the desert wood rat (*Neotoma lepida*). In the 1990s, previously unknown strains of *Brucella* were detected by serology, histopathology and direct isolation in free-ranging pinnipeds and cetaceans from the Americas, Europe, the Antarctic and western North Pacific as well as in captive bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) (Ewalt *et al.*, 1994; Ross *et al.*, 1994; Jahans *et al.*, 1997; Clavareau *et al.*, 1998; Miller *et al.*, 1999; Tryland *et al.*, 1999; Bricker *et*

al., 2000, Van Bresse *et al.*, 2001b; Foster *et al.*, 2002; Ohishi *et al.*, 2003, 2004). On the basis of host preference and molecular characteristics, it was proposed that these brucellae belong to at least two new species: *Brucella cetaceae* for cetacean isolates and *Brucella pinnipediae* for pinniped isolates (Cloeckart *et al.*, 2003). Disorders associated with the infection in cetaceans include placentitis, abortion, lung infection, orchitis and non-suppurative meningoencephalitis (Miller *et al.*, 1999; Gonzalez *et al.*, 2002; Ohishi *et al.*, 2004). Transmission to humans has occurred in at least three cases (Brew *et al.*, 1999; Sohn *et al.*, 2003) indicating the zoonotic potential of marine *Brucella*.

1.1.3 Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is a zoonotic bacterial disease of global distribution that affects many species of wild and domestic animals. It is caused by *Leptospira* spp. a flexible, spiral-shaped, Gram-negative spirochete (Family Leptospiraceae) with internal flagella. *Leptospira interrogans* has many serovars based on cell surface antigens. Leptospire enter the host through mucosa and broken skin, resulting in bacteremia. They multiply in organs, most commonly the central nervous system, kidneys, and liver. They are cleared from the blood and most tissues by the immune system but persist and multiply for some time in the kidney tubules. Infective bacteria are shed in the urine. Several severe outbreaks of renal disease resulting in hundreds of stranded Californian sea lions along the coast of California were caused by *Leptospira interrogans*, serovar Pomona (Vedros *et al.*, 1971; Dierauf *et al.*, 1985; Gulland *et al.*, 1996). The epizootic occurrences are cyclical in nature, with an outbreak occurring every three to four years (Gulland *et al.*, 1996; Cullen *et al.*, 2005). Diseased animals were depressed, extremely thirsty and had fever. All necropsied specimens had interstitial nephritis and large numbers of leptospire in the kidney lesions.

1.1.4 Harmful algal blooms (HBAs)

HBAs are proliferations of microscopic algae that harm the environment by producing toxins that accumulate in shellfish or fish, or through the accumulation of biomass that in turn affects co-occurring organisms and alters food webs in negative ways (HARRNESS, 2005). Approximately 20 of the more than 1,000 known dinoflagellate species produce toxins that may cause mortality in fish, birds and mammals (Steidinger & Baden, 1984). Brevetoxins, domoic acid and saxitoxins, have been implicated in die-offs of birds and marine mammals worldwide (Gilmartin *et al.*, 1980; Geraci *et al.*, 1989; O'Shea *et al.*, 1991; Bossart *et al.*, 1998; Scholin *et al.*, 2000; Flewelling *et al.*, 2005). Paralytic toxins may have played a role in the die-off observed in 1997 in the Western Sahara population of Mediterranean monk seal (Hernandez *et al.*, 1998; Harwood, 1998). Domoic acid, a neurotoxin, unambiguously caused the deaths of hundreds of California sea lions along the central coast of California in 1998 (Scholin *et al.*, 2000) while brevetoxin poisoning was responsible for the death of more than 100 coastal bottlenose dolphins from Florida in 2003 (Flewelling *et al.*, 2005; HARRNESS, 2005).

1.2 Things to do in preparation for an epizootic

Marine mammal strandings attract a lot of public attention. Epizootics may cause the stranding of several dolphins over weeks along thousands of kilometres across borders. The degree of response of each country will depend on its economic and logistic possibilities. Some may be able to provide most of the technical and administrative infrastructure needed to face a massive stranding while others may only offer a more reduced support, or none at all. Collaboration between Member States will be a plus to effectively attend these events. The foundation of an expert Sub-Committee on Cetacean Epizootics and Unusual Mortalities (CEUM) within the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee would permit to optimise the answer to die-offs in the Agreement Zone. The CEUM Sub-Committee should ideally have the equipment described in 1.2.2.

The following guidelines are designed for an optimal response to an epizootic. Nevertheless, much can be done with a more reduced infrastructure and equipment.

1 2 1 Technical and administrative infrastructure needed in each Member State to best address emergencies caused by cetacean epizootics

All Member States should at least have an on-scene coordinator body (OSCB) that would contact the CEUM Sub-Committee and any other relevant institution in the case of a suspected mass-mortality, deal with the public and media, ensure that the proper samples are taken, be responsible to obtain all necessary permits and deal with the carcasses. The OSCB should ideally depend on an existing stranding network, a natural science museum, a university or a ministry (Agriculture, Environment, Fisheries). It should collaborate with existing national entities related to marine mammal stranding such as wildlife conservation and rescue centres, aquaria and oceanaria, coastguards, park officials, navy and local authorities.

The OSCB basic technical and administrative infrastructure should include:

- A strandings hotline telephone, dedicated to record any stranding occurring along the coast and operating 24 hours, seven days a week.
- A computer with internet access
- A printer
- Portable telephones
- A GPS to register stranding locations
- Digital cameras
- Video or DVD reader
- A centrifuge to spin blood samples
- Access to a specialized marine mammal library
- A website describing the activities of the OSCB as well as the names of the persons in charge and to be contacted in the event of an epizootic
- A database on cetacean mortality events
- Educative material

1 2 2 Equipment list

The following is an optimal equipment checklist to face stranding of live and dead animals (Geraci & Lounsbury 2005; Raverty & Gaydos, 2007). However, much can still be done with less material and infrastructure (§ 1.2.2.11.).

1 2 2 1 Crowd control, public relations

- Plastic tape and pylons to cordon off necropsy site
- Signs: WARNING—PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARD—DO NOT ENTER
- Educative material on stranding and epizootics as well as on the stranding network

1 2 2 2 Recording material:

- Waterproof pencils,
- Metal clipboards, waterproof labels,
- Data forms, necropsy and collection protocol forms
- Camera and film, extra batteries, video camera with additional memory cards
- Tape measure (metric), at least 20 meters long (plastic and metallic)
- Hoist/crane, scales to record organ weights (0,1-10kg)

1 2 2 3 Animal relief :

- Zinc oxide
- Blankets and towels
- Shovel (to dig pits for fins and tail)
- Ice packs (to keep the extremities cool)
- Tarpaulins
- Foam mattresses
- Water sprayers

- Inflatable rescue pontoon system
(<http://www.jwautomarine.co.uk/images/SlideSh/show024/default.htm>). http://www.jwautomarine.co.uk/pr_sb.htm
- Thermal space blankets (for warming or cooling)

1 2 2 4 *Emergency medical supplies*

- I.V. Fluids and infusion sets (droppers, 10& 60 drops/min.)
- Basic diagnostic set (stethoscope, thermometers)
- Stimulants
- Tranquillizers
- Adrenalin
- Steroids

1 2 2 5 *Euthanasia*

- Needles for large animals
- Sedative: midazolam (0.02 mg/kg)
- Barbiturate: Large Animal Immobilon (Etorphine) administered intramuscularly

1 2 2 6 *Necropsy*

- Rope, at least 20 meters, blankets, stretchers to move carcasses, if necessary
- Standard necropsy instruments. Multiple scalpel handles, scalpel blades, scissors, forceps and knives
- Knife sharpener, if possible in secure pack
- Flensing knives and hooks with appropriate sharpening tools, chain saw, axe, or reciprocating saw to cut through the cranium, chest or vertebrae
- Hammers, chisels and handsaws
- Retractors of various sizes and shapes. Self-retaining retractors with one or two movable arms mounted on a slide bar are most useful
- Sterile instruments for culture collection
- Whirlpacks
- Jars, vials
- Buckets
- Flashlights with extra batteries and light bulbs
- Containers (from vials to garbage cans) for sample collection, including ice chest, dry ice and if possible liquid nitrogen
- Gas generator and flood lights with extra bulbs and gasoline
- Accessible water supply with hose
- Buckets
- Garbage bags, dish soap, paper towels for clean-up

1 2 2 7 *Specific sampling (histology, microbiology, HBAs)*

- 10% neutral buffered formalin
- 4% buffered glutaraldehyde
- 20% DMSO saturated saline solution for genetic analysis, in vials
- Isopropanol alcohol, for contaminant sampling
- Needles and syringes
- Heparinized syringes
- Culture vials for virology and bacteriology
- Transport medium for bacteriology and virology
- RNA later (Ambion; <http://www.ambion.com/techlib/resources/RNALater/index.html>)
- Sterile swabs
- Sterile urine cups
- Glass slides

- Serum tubes for blood and urine collection and gas burner to sear organ surfaces and sterilize scalpel blades
- Culture vials for bacteriological and virological analysis
- Aluminum foil and plastic bags for freezing tissues
- Coolers for samples refrigeration

1 2 2 8 Personal

- Protective clothing for staff and volunteers (hats, boots, protective wear, wet and dry suits)
- Coveralls, aprons, gloves, caps, masks, protective eye and head gear
- Hand soap and towels
- Disinfectant
- First aid kit

1 2 2 9 Large equipment

- All terrain vehicle with trailer
- A boat to reach floating dead cetaceans
- 30m² walk-in freezer
- A wet laboratory to carry out the necropsies.

1 2 2 10 Dispatch

- CITES permits
- Contact airlines that may dispatch the samples and ask where to buy IATA-approved containers. They will be required to send samples by airplanes.

1 2 2 11 Minimal equipment

The following minimal equipment also permits to alleviate the suffering of a stranded live dolphin and take valuable biological and microbiological samples from freshly dead dolphins:

- Recording material
- Camera
- Mobile phone
- Buckets
- Blankets
- Water sprayer
- Zinc oxide, shovels
- Gloves and plastic boots
- Wide plastic sheets
- Butcher knives
- Butcher saws
- Scalpel and scalpel blades
- Vials and jars
- Ropes

1 2 3 Capacity building

Different levels should be considered for capacity building according to the persons concerned i.e. scientists of the OSCB, volunteers and public.

1 2 3 1 Scientists

Scientists of the OSCB with no previous knowledge of marine mammal die-offs should receive specific training to attend live animals, do necropsy, take samples, manage the public and dispose of the carcasses. It would be recommendable that the proposed CEUM Sub-Committee and/or Member States with a large experience in cetacean stranding arrange training courses for scientists of the nascent OSCBs with less practice. Training in rescue techniques and stranding are also offered by several NGOs and marine mammal centres in Spain, Italy, the UK and other European countries. Valuable books include 'Marine Mammal Ashore, a Field Guide for Strandings', (Geraci & Lounsbury, 2005) and 'Stranded Cetaceans: Guidelines for Veterinary Surgeons', RSPCA (1997). Free papers are also available on the World Wide Web. International workshops on cetacean epizootics should be planned within the Member States.

1 2 3 2 Volunteers

Volunteers should be given a formation allowing them to efficiently help during outbreaks of mortality. Workshops on the general biology of dolphins and whales, the reasons why they strand and pathogenic agents they may harbour, should be organized. Volunteers should in particular be informed of the potential health risks involved by contact with stranded marine mammals. Each volunteer should be given a role according to his/her personal skills. Stranding simulations with inflatable plastic whales may be a good idea to give participants a feel how a real event might evolve.

1 2 3 4 Local government officials

Leaflets describing the basic biology of cetaceans and explaining stranding events and epizootics, and how to react to them, should be written, printed and distributed to local governments officials. These leaflets should provide the hotline for strandings as well as the names of the people in charge. Members of the OSCB may arrange talks on marine mammal epizootics for government officials and distribute educational material at this occasion.

1 2 3 5 Public

Booklets for children addressing the basic biology of cetaceans and the possible reasons for die-offs should be written, printed and distributed to kindergartens and primary schools. Posters on the same topics and including the health risk posed by marine mammal strandings should be designed and distributed in schools, libraries, museums, tourism information centres, national parks, universities, etc. National or local companies and businesses may be keen to offer support for printing this material. A website or a newsletter detailing the activities of the OCSB will be useful for the general public.

1. 3 Actions to take during an epizootic event

Several situations may occur during an epizootic:

- Single stranded dolphins may be found dead or agonizing on different beaches
- Several dead dolphins stranded on the shore
- Dead and live cetaceans stranded simultaneously on a beach

In all cases, excellent coordination between the OSCB staff, the proposed CEUM Sub-Committee and other organizations specialised in these events will be the key for a successful answer. The protocols given below are broadly based on Geraci & Lounsbury (2005) and the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (2007 <http://www.iwdg.ie/content.asp?id=31>). The second edition of 'Marine Mammal Ashore: A Field Guide for Strandings' provides extensive information on how to deal with stranded, live or dead dolphins and whales and one or more copies should be in the library of all bodies involved with cetacean strandings. It would be wise to carry one copy to the field.

1 3 1 Protocols for intervention on site

1 3 1 1 Live cetaceans stranded on the beach

The event should be evaluated and attempts made to determine the species and appraise the length of the specimens. The number of stranded dolphins of each species should be estimated. Live animals should be stabilized to ensure that they can breathe and will not overheat or become too stressed:

- Support the animal in an upright position if possible, digging trenches under the pectoral fins;
- Keep the animal moist by covering it with wet blankets or towels, sprayed or doused with a constant supply of water;
- Protect damaged skin with zinc oxide;
- Do not cover or obstruct the blowhole and make every effort to keep sand and water away from the blowhole;
- In sunny weather try to provide shade for the animal by erecting a tarpaulin above it;
- In very cold or windy weather, try to erect a windbreak around the animal;
- If the animals are in the surf zone, move them into deeper waters or shift them so they are perpendicular to the water's edge, with the head facing land;
- Caution: care should be taken around the tail fluke as a thrashing cetacean can maim or kill. Also minimize contact with the animal (use gloves if contact is necessary) and avoid inhaling the animal expired air;
- All noise, contact and disturbance around the animal must be kept to a minimum. Erect a rope barrier to cordon off the area (apart from essential personnel caring for the animal) and ask the local authorities to assist with crowd control at the scene;
- When available, a coastguard or beachmaster should be appointed to liaise with media and control onlookers, and to ensure that the veterinary and rescue teams can get on with the job, without unnecessary interference;
- Contact all people and organizations that have shown interest in helping rescue live stranded cetaceans;
- Evaluate the health of the animal according to the following parameters:
 - presence of obvious injuries
 - entangled nets or ropes around flukes, fins and beak
 - breathing pattern

Small Cetaceans (eg. porpoise or common dolphin): Normal breathing rate = 2-5 breaths/min.

Medium Cetaceans (eg. pilot whale): Normal breathing rate = 1 breath/min.

Large Cetaceans (eg. sperm whale): Normal breathing rate = up to 1 breath per 20mins

- skin integrity
- nutritional status
- heart rate (from 30 to 100 beats/ minute in *Tursiops truncatus*) using a stethoscope for small dolphins and a hand firmly placed under the axillary region for larger cetaceans
- behavioral criteria: alert (responsive to environment stimuli: palpebral reflex), weakly responsive (responsive only after much stimulation), non-responsive (not responsive to noise or touch)
- presence of blood in the mouth or blowhole (critically poor health)
- core body temperature: normal range 36.5 to 37°C. Critical hypothermia: below 35.6°C; critical hyperthermia above 40°C.
 - When the animal seems healthy, attempts should be made to re-float it and guide it to deeper waters by lifting with a tarpaulin or a stretcher, by dragging with slings or using a rescue pontoon system. This should only be attempted when a sufficient number of experienced people are available (e.g. 6 for a medium-sized bottlenose dolphin). Refloats should be attempted on rising tides. Once the animal is towed back to the sea, it should be supported, with its blowhole kept above the surface.

Acclimatation is complete when the whale is able to surface on its own to breathe. This may take several hours and, in cold water, a relief team should be available. A mother and calf should be acclimated together. If several cetaceans beached together they should be released together. All supporting devices should be easy to remove;

- Under no circumstances should attempts be made to refloat calves that are likely to be unweaned;
- When the animal is unfit for immediate release the other options should be considered i.e. rehabilitation or euthanasia. Rehabilitation will only be possible when a facility exists in the country and is reachable by road in no more than two hours;
- If the animal cannot be rescued, humane killing should be considered. Euthanasia is an option for odontocetes and small whales and should be done through the administration of 'Large Animal Imobilon', possibly after sedation. Larger whales should be allowed to die naturally.

1 3 1 2 Dead whales and dolphins

- Necropsy on the beach is a valid option when strandings occur in remote areas, away from public presence, do not threaten human health and weather conditions are favorable. It is recommendable for large dolphins and whales or when no transport is available. If feasible, the animals should be placed on a wide plastic sheet before the necropsy is undertaken. Freshly dead dolphins should be given priority. When the day is hot, attempt to collect the basic information and then quickly open the specimen and collect samples for virology, bacteriology and HBA research.
- When feasible, dolphins and porpoises should be transported to an appropriate facility for complete necropsy. All endeavours should be made to retrieve the animal in as short a time as possible to avoid deterioration of the body before analysis. While awaiting necropsy, specimens should be kept in a cold room.
- In all cases, photographic documentation is strongly recommended.

1 3 2 Protocols for collection, transportation and storage of specimens and samples

1 3 2 1 Protocols for sample collection

Prior to sample collection, some basic data should be collected in order to be able to know indispensable biological parameters. Recording the whale/dolphin condition is important to determine which samples should be given priority. Only the animals considered fresh or slightly decomposed are worth sampling for microbiology. All samples collected for microbiology should be taken as aseptically as possible. Ideally, the necropsy will be made by a scientist while notes are taken by an assistant.

After collection of the basic data, the body may be opened, preferably on a wide plastic sheet or on a necropsy table. All instruments necessary, collecting, bags, jars and vials with or without liquids should be at hand before making the first incision. An assistant should label the containers and take notes and pictures.

The sample priority and field tissue checklist provided in Annex will be useful to make sure that all the necessary samples were collected and preserved adequately.

1 3 2 1 1 Basic Data Protocol

- Investigator (name, tel, address, e-mail):
- Date:
- Location of stranding:

- Presence of other dead aquatic animals:
 - Species:
 - Number (estimation):
 - Indication for an algal bloom: YES/NO
 - Field number:
 - Species⁶:
 - Sex⁷:
 - Standard body length⁸:
 - Condition:
 - alive
 - fresh
 - early decomposition
 - advanced decomposition
 - mummified
 - Evidence for human interactions: YES/NO
 - Net marks
 - Knife cuts
 - Wounds caused by vessel strikes
 - Description-pictures
 - Presence of skin lesions and wounds: YES/NO.
 - Description - pictures
 - Collect samples in formol, DMSO and, if possible, freeze at –80°C
 - Lactating: YES/NO

1 3 2 1 2 Specific sample collection⁹

1 3 2 1 2 1 High priority samples

Reproductive tract

Ovaries and testes should always be examined, weighed, photographed and collected in 10% formalin (4% end concentration) to assess sexual maturity. The presence/absence of corpora albicantia and a corpus luteum should be recorded. Uterus should be opened to check for a foetus. The latter should be measured, weighed and sexed and, if small, conserved in formalin. Presence of sperm in the epididymis should be evaluated. A piece of at least 1x1x1 cm of both testes should be collected in formalin. The following questions may be answered in the field if time permits otherwise in the lab after addressing the mortality event.

6 Species identification should be done by qualified personnel. Ideally a picture of each specimen with its field number should be taken.

7 A picture of the genital region with ID will help to confirm the sex

8 Precise how it was taken (measurements should be parallel to the dolphin body, e.g. total length from snout to fluke notch).

9 Basic and advanced data protocols are also available at the Medaces website: http://medaces.uv.es/home_eng.htm

- Ovaries:
 - presence of corpus albicans: NO, YES
 - presence of corpus luteum: YES, NO

- Foetus in uterus: YES, NO
 - sex
 - length
 - weight

- Testes: YES/NO
 - Right:
 - presence of seminal fluid
 - length
 - weight

- Left:
 - presence of seminal fluid
 - length
 - weight

Virology and serology

- The following organs are targeted by morbilliviruses and should be carefully examined for any changes and lesions.
 - Lungs
 - Spleen
 - Liver
 - Lymph nodes
 - Kidneys
 - Brain¹⁰
- Document and describe any change in organ gross morphology.
- Ten grams or 2x2x2cm of each organ should be conserved on ice and then frozen at –80°C for virus isolation. When no freezer or liquid nitrogen are available, cut tissue samples to ≤ 0.5 cm in any single dimension and preserve in ‘RNA later’ (Ambion) for PCR studies. Once submerged in ‘RNA later’ samples may stay at room temperature for a week. If a longer delay is expected then freeze them at –20°C or –80°C after a night at room temperature (no more than 25°C).
- Preserve small samples of the previously mentioned organs in 10% formalin for histopathological studies.

¹⁰ If the skull should be preserved for a museum collection, separate the head from the body and introduce a small spoon into the foramen magnum to collect a piece of brain/cerebellum.

- Extract 5-10 ml blood directly from the heart after disinfecting the surface with alcohol and put on ice. You may attempt to centrifuge the blood and take the supernatant before freezing to avoid further hemolysis.
- Take some pleural, peritoneal and pericardial fluids, urine, fluid from vesicles in sterile tubes, keep on ice and store at -80°C .

Bacteriology

- Document and describe any changes in organ gross morphology.
- Collect 5-10grs samples from the kidneys, testes, uterus, placenta and foetus (if available), mammary glands, spleen, eventual subcutaneous abscesses, keep on ice and refrigerate at -4°C or freeze at -80°C if long delays are unavoidable ($> 24\text{h}$) before further analysis. When no freezing facilities are available, smaller samples should be kept in DMSO.
- Preserve 1x1x1 cm samples of the same organs in formalin.
- Take a blood sample from the heart and process as described above.
- Collect pleural and peritoneal fluids, urine and pus from abscesses and store half in aerobic containers and half in anaerobic containers. Keep on ice and then freeze at -80°C if a laboratory is not at hand.
- If feasible (a laboratory is ready to receive and analyse the samples in a short time) take swabs from the eyes, blowhole and throat and place them in an appropriate bacterial medium transport and refrigerate.

Biotoxins

- Collect 5 to 10ml of blood in an heparinized syringue, separate the serum and freeze for shipment. If not possible, keep the sample on cold packs and ship to the lab. As several toxins may cause marine mammal mortalities and they concentrate in different organs, it is recommended to take a wide range of samples including:
 - 50 grs of liver, kidney, lung (cranial pole), stomach contents, faeces, brain as well as bile and at least 3ml of urine. These samples should be kept on ice until frozen at -20°C .
 - Samples of brain, lungs and upper respiratory tract should also be preserved in formalin.
- Collect water samples, keep on ice until frozen
- Collect plancton with a plancton net keep on ice until frozen
- Record any other aquatic animal mortality occurring concurrently with the cetacean outbreak of mortality

1 3 2 1 2 2 Intermediate priority samples

- When possible document and describe any change in the gross morphology of all organs not mentioned in 1.3.2.1.2.1. The following should always be examined:
 - Adrenals
 - Tonsils
 - Stomach
 - Intestine
 - Pancreas
 - Bladder
 - Heart

- Collect samples and store according to the procedures described in 1.3.2.1.2.1. for virology and bacteriology.

- Check the mouth, tongue, teeth and/or baleen plates, document any abnormalities and collect samples for virology and bacteriology as described in 1.3.2.1.2.1.

- Description

- Examine the genital slit, penis (whole) and vagina (whole) for the presence of warts or vesicles, describe and take samples for virology as described in 1.3.2.1.2.1.

- Warts: YES/NO

Describe and take pictures

- Vesicles, ulcers: YES/NO

Describe and take pictures

1 3 2 2 Protocol for transportation and storage

All fresh samples should be kept on ice or cold packs, away from the sun while waiting for further processing. Upon arrival in the laboratory, they should be frozen at -20 or -80° C according to the above mentioned protocols. Storage should be organized in a way that samples are easily found when the freezer is full which may be quite a task! Records should be kept of any sample location. Contact the local CITES Management Authority (http://www.cites.org/common/directy/e_directy.html) to know the requirements to obtain permits to export cetacean samples.

1 3 3 Carcass disposal

Carcass disposal may depend on the laws of each Member State. In some countries local authorities are responsible for the disposal of dead cetaceans. When it is not the case the OSCB should develop plans in advance in accordance with national authorities. Their feasibility should be discussed with the bodies that should intervene to help with carcass disposal (coastguards, navy, landfill site owners). The costs of each plan should be established. Here are some recommendations extracted from Geraci & Lounsbury (2005) and a background document from South African National Parks (online <http://www.sanparks.org/about/news/2006/july/whale.php>).

1 3 3 1 Let it lie

In uninhabited areas the carcass may be left on the beach. Weather, tide and scavengers will do the work. Before leaving the carcass baleen or teeth should be extracted. Open the abdomen and thorax to prevent any bloater decomposing in the sun. Care should be taken with large whales.

Specimens that were euthanised represent a risk to scavengers and should be buried, taken to a sanitary landfill, composted or destroyed by incineration

1 3 3 2 Bury it

Burial of small cetaceans in a sandy beach may be relatively easy after cutting the carcasses. Burial of large cetaceans requires heavy equipment and experienced operators. Environmental damage and disturbance should be considered. The burial site should be above the water table to avoid contamination with body fluids. The hole should be deep so that the carcass is buried under at least one or two meters of earth.

1 3 3 3 Burn it

Burning the carcass reduces the mass and volume, allowing for whatever is left-over to be cut up and removed either into the sea or to a landfill site. The burn will involve stacking a cremating pyre of wood around the whale and using solid accelerants in the slits of the blubber, burning it for a few days and then assessing the situation. Anti-oil pollution solvents may be used to mop up the resulting oil effluents.

1 3 3 4 Tow it out to sea

The carcass may be towed out to sea, providing it is released far enough offshore (about 80 km or more) so that currents and winds do not bring it back, it is clear of a shipping lane and has enough ballast to sink. The carcass should be cut opened to avoid bloating and favour sinking. Collaboration with scientists studying 'whale falls' (Hagg, 2005) is beneficial.

Before considering this option, contact the relevant authorities (navy, coastguards) and ask their permission and requirements to minimize problems with boat traffic.

1 3 3 5 Compost it

Carcasses up to 640 kg may be placed in a composting bin and covered with a 'bulking agent' such as sawdust or straw, high in carbon. As anaerobic microorganisms break down the carcass, fluids and odorous gases diffuse into the bulking material where they degrade to carbon dioxide and water. A properly functioning composting unit requires minimal maintenance, emits little odor, has no effects on groundwater, reaches internal temperatures high enough to kill pathogens and break down chemical euthanasia agents. Please see the website of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for more details www.mda.state.ms.us.

1 3 4 Communication management

At least one person of the OSCB should be in charge of communication management. His/her job would include calling the local authorities, giving the volunteers their tasks, write down the name, coordinates (telephone number, e-mail) and tasks of the participants, manage the public and contact other facilities that may help with the stranding event, animal rescue and carcass disposal.

1. 4 Activities to implement after the epizootic

1 4 1 Organize a debriefing meeting with all the people involved in the stranding and ask them their opinion on the event, the number of dolphins they counted and attended, presence of other dead aquatic animals on the beach, if the response to the stranding was adequate in their opinion, what material was missing. Thank all volunteers for their help and distribute any new information material and stickers.

1 4 2 Write an initial report as soon as possible. Points to summarize in the report should include the following (Geraci & Lounsbury, 2005):

- Date and location of the stranding, type of beach
- Nature, timing, effectiveness of the initial response
- Account of the scene as described by the team:
 - species involved and number of specimens per species
 - pattern of stranding
 - presence of other dead or sick aquatic animals
 - cetacean condition
 - indication for an epizootic
 - environmental conditions
 - Necropsy findings
 - Specimens collected, place where they are stored, condition for storage
 - The actions taken and reason for decisions:
 - intended response plan
 - impediments to implementation
 - eventual action
 - Additional information:
 - photographs, maps, drawings
 - reports from independent groups (police, coastguards, stranding networks, rehabilitation facility)

1 4 3 Write a brief note on the event for the media.

1 4 4 Alert the media and public for the possibility of more cetacean stranding on every beaches and encourage them to report.

1 4 5 Contact the laboratories that will analyse the samples and coordinate for sample dispatch according to the airline procedures. Make sure that somebody will collect the samples at their arrival and that the person in charge is not on holidays at the time you send the samples. Keep telephone contact until you are assured that the samples arrived and were properly stored.

1 4 6 Ask for a follow-up of the analysis and prepare a manuscript on the findings together with all involved institutions.

2. CONTINGENCY PLAN DRAFT

In the Mediterranean Sea, epizootics of morbillivirus have caused the death of thousands of striped dolphins in 1990-1992 (Aguilar & Raga, 1990; Van Bressem *et al.*, 1993) and, possibly, of more than 20 pilot whales (*Globicephala melas*) and of an unknown number of striped dolphins this year (2007) (Ana Cañadas, commn to CSG_IUCN@yahoogroups.com, March 2007; Medaces, 2007). *Brucella* spp. serum antibodies were detected in striped and bottlenose dolphins stranded along the coast of Valencia, Spain (Van Bressem *et al.*, 2001b). Biotoxins may have been responsible for the death of several Mediterranean monk seals in the Mauritanian colony (Hernandez *et al.*, 1998, Harwood, 1998). Thus, Member States should be ready for the eventuality of cetacean die-offs in their waters due to morbillivirus infection or HBAs as well as of isolated mortalities related to bacterial infection. The establishment of a CEUM Sub-Committee within the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee would improve answer to strandings by facilitating coordination between Member States and helping with infrastructure and capacity building. The foundation of a 'Cetacean Epizootics and Unusual Mortality Event' Working Group that would communicate by e-mail would greatly facilitate information diffusion. A 'Cetacean Epizootics and Unusual Mortality Event Database' should be constructed and shared by all Member States, possibly under the auspices of the CEUM Sub-Committee. Alternatively, data could be sent to the existing Mediterranean Database of Cetacean Strandings (MEDACES-http://medaces.uv.es/home_eng.htm).

2.1 OSCB

An efficient contingency plan will be based on the foundation of a national OSCB that will be responsible for the activities and decisions related to the epizootic as well as on timely relaying information on the occurrence of a die-off to the Member States and the suggested CEUM Sub-Committee. The easy and open communication between OSCBs will help determine when a die-off is underway, ensure a timely and adequate intervention and, ultimately, to uncover the cause of the epizootics and explore environmental factors that may have enhanced the severity of the event. Minimal personal of an OSCB should be one scientist, preferably a marine mammal research veterinarian with good knowledge in the biology of cetaceans.

2.1.1 Team

2.1.1.1 Administrative support team

At least one person should be in charge of the administration of the OSCB. His/her responsibilities would include:

- Coordination with local authorities;
- Communication with media and public;
- Development of education activities and material;
- Management of volunteers;
- Building of a website;
- Finance management;

2.1.1.2 Scientists

A biologist and a veterinarian, both ideally with experience with cetaceans, should be appointed by the OSCB. Their responsibility should include the following items:

- Develop a stranding network that can react quickly to cetacean mortality events;
- Develop protocols for attending strandings and for the collection of tissues for microbiology and HBA testing ;
- Prepare the material necessary for attending a die-off (everything should be ready and at hand for instant leave);
- Provide field staff and build capacity;

- Recruit and manage volunteers;
- Timely intervention and incident control coordination: an educated decision on response level (equipment and personnel);
- Coordination with other similar networks within and outside the Member States;
- Adequate decision regarding the fate of live-stranded cetaceans (release, rehabilitation, euthanasia);
- Collection of biological data and pictures;
- Necropsy of dead cetaceans;
- Collection of samples;
- Contact with laboratories that will process the samples;
- Contact with the authorities that will deliver CITES permits;
- Contact with the airlines that will transport the samples: ask for their specific requirements for the packaging and dispatch of biological materials;
- Prepare a protocol for packing and dispatching biological material;
- Send the samples;
- Carcass disposal in agreement with national regulation.

2.1.1.3 Volunteers

Volunteers should be recruited to help with strandings. They may have distinct backgrounds and personalities and should be given tasks according to their respective skills.

2.2 Memoranda of Understanding with Cooperators

Memoranda of understanding should be established with other institution and laboratories willing to help at the occasion of an outbreak of mortality. Laboratories (bacteriology, virology, HBAs research) should be asked to send specific protocols for sampling, preserving and sending the samples. Ideally they should provide the vials, fluids and other material required for sampling. Otherwise they should specify the material needed for sampling and the firm where to buy it.

2.3 Get ready to detect an epizootic

Regular visits to the beaches by scientists and volunteers of the OSCB should be organized, so that a baseline for ‘normal’ strandings can be established by species, geographic location, season of the year etc. All cetaceans that are fresh or moderately decomposed should be necropsied and samples sent for parasitological, bacteriological and virological analysis to get an idea of the common macro- and micro-fauna in these populations. The OSCB should make sure that the media have the hotline phone number, distribute posters on epizootics in public places and regularly communicate with coast guards, fishermen associations and any person or organization susceptible to register unusual mortalities of marine mammals.

The following criteria for defining an epizootic are:

- It is unexpected
- It involves the stranding and death of unusual large number of cetaceans from one or several species
- It may start in one country and progress to others
- It may last for several months
- It may recur
- It demands an immediate response

2.4 Get ready to attend an epizootic

When an epizootic is suspected, the OSCB should get in contact with national and international collaborators and the suggested CEUM Sub-Committee and call its volunteers as soon as possible. Once ready, the OSCB scientists should go at once to the site of stranding taking all the necessary

equipment, already pre-packed. They should give volunteers their tasks before attending the animals. The administrator should liaise with the local authorities, public and media.

2.5 Determine the end of the event

The end of the epizootic may be difficult to pinpoint but in the case of morbillivirus infection will likely be gradual. Collaboration between all Member States will be essential to estimate the end of the mortality event.

3. OUTLINE OF A PROGRAMME TO BUILD CAPACITY

Capacity building is a prerequisite to an efficient die-off response. It should concern the staff of the OSCB, volunteers, coastguards and navy officials, fishermen and the general public (please see § 1.2.3.). The following programme outlines the steps that may be taken to realize this target:

- Organization of annual workshops on cetacean epizootics and infectious diseases for the staff of the OSCBs. National and international experts of morbilliviruses, *Brucella* spp. and other bacteria as well as of HBAs should ideally be invited to participate;
- Organization of training courses on cetacean strandings, infectious agents and sample collection for the staff of the nascent OSCBs. These training courses may take place at the OSCB, CEUM facilities or at the laboratory of national and international stranding networks;
- Organization of national meetings with other relevant bodies related to strandings (universities, coastguards, oceanaria, etc) and presentation of documents on cetacean epizootics and diseases;
- Acquire capacity building material (books, papers, reports, CDs, DVDs, protocols) from other stranding networks, NGOs and scientists;
- Development of a library dedicated to marine mammal strandings and epizootics;
- Communication with other OSCBs;
- Preparation of leaflets on the biology of cetaceans and the reasons of strandings and mass die-offs targeting the general public;
- Preparation of children booklets and posters on whales and dolphins and stranding events.

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RESOLUTION 3.30

TRIBUTE TO THE ORGANISERS

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

Aware of the significant effort required in preparing and organizing the present session of the Meeting of the Parties;

1. *Expresses* its gratitude for the invaluable support of the Croatian Government, which made available all the means necessary for the success of this Meeting in Croatia;
2. *Congratulates* the Permanent Secretariat and the Scientific Committee on the excellent preparation for the present session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement and their concrete efforts to facilitate implementation of the Agreement;
3. *Expresses* its strong gratitude to the Government of the Principality of Monaco for its hospitality to the Permanent Secretariat, its competent as well as the devoted staff it provides;
4. *Thanks* the Commission Internationale pour l'Exploration Scientifique de la Méditerranée (CIESM), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and the European Cetacean Society (ECS) for their valuable help and their experts for their major contributions on the Scientific Committee.

RESOLUTION 3.31

DATE, VENUE AND FUNDING OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

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

Recalling Article III, paragraph 2, of the Agreement, which states that the Agreement Secretariat shall convene, in consultation with the Convention Secretariat, ordinary sessions of the Meeting of the Parties at intervals of not more than three years, unless the Meeting of the Parties decides otherwise;

Noting that the third session of the Meeting of the Parties was hosted by the Government of Croatia, from 22 to 25 October 2007,

Aware of the benefits that can accrue to the Agreement and to Parties, particularly developing countries and those with economies in transition, that host sessions of the Meeting of the Parties in regions in the Agreement area;

1. *Decides* that the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties shall take place at the end of 2010;
2. *Welcomes* and accepts with great appreciation the offer of the Principality of Monaco to host the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

AMENDEMENT / RESOLUTION 3.1

**AMENDMENT OF THE ANNEX 2 TO THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
CETACEANS OF THE BLACK SEA, MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND CONTIGUOUS
ATLANTIC AREA,
RELATED TO THE USE OF DRIFT NETS**

Recalling the conditions of the paragraph “a” of the subsections 1 and 4 of the article X, and connected to the amendments methods of the Agreement and of its appendices.

Recalling the conditions of the paragraph “a” of the subsection 1 of the conservation plan subject of the appendix 2 of the Agreement inviting Parties, to forbid to their fishing boats, to fish with one or many mesh and drift nets from which the individual or cumulative length exceeds 2.5 kilometres.”

Worried by the fact that this device is still under use in the agreement’s area on the contrary of the measures of conservation adopted to an international and regional level;

Reminding the Scientific Committee conclusions pointing out the ban on use of mesh and drift nets which represent serious threats for the cetacean population in the Agreement area;

Bearing in mind that the Scientific Committee recommends to forbid the use of mesh and drift nets whatever can be their size in the Agreement area;

1. The Parties agree on what follows:

The paragraph 1 of the conservation plan, object of the appendix 2 of the Agreement here above aimed is abrogated and replace by the following conditions:

Paragraph “a” (new one) work out and implement measures to minimize the fishing negative effects on the conservation of cetacean. Most particularly, no vessels will be authorized to keep on board or to use any drift nets.

ANNEX XI

LIST OF ACCOBAMS PARTNERS

Partners formally appointed by the MOP1

American Society of International Law - Wildlife Interest Group, European Cetacean Society (ECS), Instituto Centrale per la Ricerca Applicata al Mare (ICRAM), National Institute for marine research and development “Grigore Antipa”, Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, Pelagos Cetacean Research Institute, Swiss Cetacean Society (SCS), Tethys Research Institute, University of Valencia, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), BREMA Laboratory.

Partners formally appointed by the MOP2

The Bureau granted the status of ACCOBAMS Partner to the Spanish Cetacean Society (SEC), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the “Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes of Montpellier (France)” (EPHE), “Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation”, “Israel Marine Mammal Research and Assistance Center” (IMMRAC) and “Conservación, Información e Investigación en Cetáceos” (CIRCE), International Fund For Animal Welfare (IFAW), Ocean Care.

Partners formally appointed by the MOP3

Biological Conservation Research Foundation (BICREF), represented by Joseph Vella.

www.bicref.org

Conservation Biology Research Group, University of Malta, represented by Adriana Vella

www.um.edu.mt

Dipartimento di Biologia dell'Università di Genova, represented by Maurizio Würtz

www.dibisaa.unige.it

Groupe de Recherche sur les Cétacés, represented by Alexandre Gannier

www.cetaces.org

Morigenos – Marine Mammal Research and Conservation Society, represented by Tilen Genov

www.morigenos.org

Nature Trust, represented by Sarah Muscat

www.naturetrustmalta.org

ALNITAK (Spain), represented by Ana Cañadas

www.alnitak.info

OCEANA (Spain), represented by Javier Pastor Gracia

www.oceana.org

SOUFFLEURS D'ECUME (France), represented by Pascal Mayol

www.souffleursdecume.com

Syrian Society for the Conservation of Wildlife (SSCW), represented by Akram Eissa Darwich

sscw.syria@gmail.com

WWF Mediterranean Programme Office

www.panda.org/mediterranean

ANNEX XII

STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Mrs. Executive Secretary
Mr. Chairman

Honourable colleagues,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Honourable guests, dear friends, participants of the Third Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Contracting Parties

It is a great pleasure of mine to extend to you all a warm welcome to Croatia, on behalf of the Minister of Culture Mr. Božo Biškupić and in my own name.

We feel exceptionally honoured that you came and we are proud to have the opportunity to host this valuable meeting on conservation of whales and dolphins. Even more so, as this is the first international meeting concerning these issues ever held in Croatia.

What pleases us especially is the fact that we are here in the city of Dubrovnik – the UNESCO World Heritage centre – at the coast of the Adriatic Sea. With a nearly 6,000 km long sea coast and more than 1,000 islands, rocks and reefs, Croatia is a maritime country, whose identity is defined by this invaluable natural asset and resource. Not only can this be found in a great marine biodiversity, but also in our history, tradition and cultural richness.

Though a small country, Croatia is distinguished by a well preserved nature; high diversity of ecosystems; specificity of rare, endemic and relic species. Cetaceans, such as whales and dolphins, are significant components of the biological diversity of the sea, but at the same time they are also the most sensitive link of this ecosystem. We are aware of how anthropogenic impact poses a permanent challenge to the conservation of whales and dolphins in the Adriatic Sea, as well as in our entire region. Also, we are fully aware of our huge responsibility for the survival of these marine mammals. Therefore, we believe that the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black and Mediterranean Seas and contiguous Atlantic Area within the framework of Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as the Bonn Convention) plays a key role in ensuring a long-term survival of cetaceans. We would particularly like to emphasize the necessity of cooperation among all countries in the Region, the necessity which is also fostered by this Agreement. And as we all know, the sea mammals, and the nature in general, do not care about the borders.

Croatia has demonstrated its commitment to solving these issues already in 1999, when the Croatian Parliament adopted the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity, as the first document in Croatia for systematic planning of nature protection, which also defined the action plan for the conservation of dolphins and marine biodiversity. The review of the document is currently underway. Furthermore, the Republic of Croatia is a signatory of all relevant international treaties in the area of conservation of biological diversity. By ratifying the ACCOBAMS Agreement in July 2000, which entered into force in June 2001, Croatia has been involved in the implementation of the Agreement from its very beginning.

As a candidate country for the membership in the European Union Croatia has focused its activities on the harmonisation of nature protection standards with those in the Environmental *Acquis* of the European Union. In that regard in June 2005 the Nature Protection Act has entered into force and the Ministry of Culture is responsible for its enforcement. Provisions under the international nature protection agreements, as well as those under the Birds and Habitats Directives, are fully transposed in the Act. Nature protection is defined by law as an integral activity based on conservation of biological diversity in general, but at the same time ensuring reasonable and sustainable use of natural resources. A number of pieces of secondary legislation have been adopted as well, which ensure the conservation of endangered species and habitats listed in the Annexes of the mentioned

European Directives. An assessment mechanism for plans and projects in protected areas and areas of the ecological network was also prescribed, and currently we are in the process of bringing secondary legislation which will define the ecological network of the Republic of Croatia. In addition, we began drafting the proposal of the NATURA 2000 network.

Although we still have no knowledge of the state of whales and dolphins in the Adriatic Sea, there are intensive research studies underway in several areas. We would stress the Cres-Lošinj archipelago, where the common bottlenose dolphin or the good dolphin has been systematically researched for over twenty years now. This significant area revealed itself as a critical habitat for the good dolphin as well as for other valuable marine species. The Ministry of Culture has therefore declared this area as a special marine reserve under preventive protection status in July 2006. This effort is in compliance with the obligations of the ACCOBAMS Agreement, according to which a network of specially protected areas to conserve cetaceans is being created, which includes areas identified as their feeding areas or areas for calving and breeding. I am pleased that the significance of this area was recognized by the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and that the Parties adopted the resolution at the First Meeting held in Monaco in 2001, by which the Cres-Lošinj archipelago was selected as an international priority area for the conservation of the good dolphin.

The Ministry of Culture, Croatian Bureau of Statistics, public institutions for management of protected natural values, scientific institutions and non-governmental organisations will all enhance the efforts in terms of research, monitoring, protection and finding appropriate solutions to ensure the survival of cetaceans and their - as harmonious as possible - coexistence with the mankind. Special efforts will be directed at the permanent protection and management of the Cres-Lošinj special marine reserve, in cooperation with, and active involvement of, the local community and all other interested parties. We also expect that in course of further research, which will take place within the framework of preparation of the NATURA 2000 network proposal, we will be able to establish new significant areas for the conservation of these sea mammals.

On this occasion, I would like to emphasise once more the commitment of the Republic of Croatia to continue with the efforts of implementing the ACCOBAMS Agreement and to remind of the contributions made by Croatian representatives to the work of the Scientific Committee and the Bureau of the Agreement.

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

We are aware of the challenge which the conservation of biological diversity, especially the conservation of marine biodiversity, puts before us. The year 2010 is approaching, by when the international community is committed, within the framework of implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, to achieve a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss. There are many obstacles along the way – from insufficient administrative capacities, insufficient cooperation between sectors to insufficient technical and financial support. Allow me to emphasize that Croatia, within the scope of its possibilities, wishes to continue the cooperation in the region, to stimulate new ideas and projects, to implement European and global experiences. We believe that the ACCOBAMS Agreement is the appropriate framework for these efforts and for the cooperation of all countries in the Region for achieving this common goal.

I am convinced that this beautiful environment where we find ourselves right now will be an efficient stimulus within the next four days to make the decisions which will positively affect conservation of marine natural heritage to the benefit of present and future generations.

I wish you a successful work and hope that you will also find time to enjoy the beauties of this exceptional city and its surroundings.

STATEMENT OF ACCOBAMS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Your Excellency, Dear Participants,

It is a great honour for the executive Secretary to be welcomed by the Croatian government in this beautiful town representing one of the jewels of our Mediterranean sea.

Allow me Your Excellency, to express my deepest gratitude to you for having organized this meeting of the Parties, as a new proof of the commitment of your Country in the conservation of our natural patrimony.

Croatia, long standing concerns on the international scene, for the Conservation on biodiversity, has always known how to support our characteristics Mediterranean Sea, particularly in these great international Institutions where our valuables, our diversity, our biodiversity are not well known or badly estimate.

I would like to thank you for the part you have taken in this field, not only in the marine field but in the terrestrial as well. This is why I carry a great hope in the conclusions of this meeting, in its outcomes and in the actions, which results from it.

I wish that 2010 (two thousands and ten), will allow us to reap the fruit of our today's engagements and that Dubrovnik's meeting will be a model of engagement for the Countries for the realization of the goals of this Agreement which we have honoured.

Thank you.

DECLARATION DU REPRESENTANT DE L'ALGERIE

Monsieur le Président,
Mesdames et Messieurs,
Honorable Assistance,

J'ai l'honneur de participer, en tant que participant de l'Algérie, à la Troisième Réunion des Parties Contractantes à l'ACCOBAMS.

Ma présence parmi vous aujourd'hui témoigne de la volonté du Gouvernement Algérien à faire parti de l'Accord et ce suite à la ratification de ce dernier par décret présidentiel en mars 2007.

Cet acte, comme tant d'autres, ne constitue ni un aboutissement, ni une fin en soi, mais juste une empreinte de plus marquant la dynamique engagée par les plus hautes instances de mon pays, inscrite dans une logique participative active, initiée dès les premières années de l'Algérie indépendante.

Faut-il pour cela rappeler la Convention d'Alger de 1968, relative à la conservation de la nature et des ressources naturelles, au moment même où l'Algérie devait faire face à de grands défis sur les plans politique, économique et social.

Depuis, l'Algérie a ratifié de nombreux accords et conventions visant la protection et la conservation de la nature et des ressources naturelles dans toutes ses composantes (eaux, sols, air, faune et flore).

Aussi, il est utile de signaler que, dans mon pays, les notions relatives à la préservation et/ou à la protection de l'environnement, des ressources naturelles et des espèces animales et végétales menacées, figurent à tous les niveaux de la réglementation et ce, en conformité avec les recommandations et résolutions issues des Organisations et autres Institutions internationales et régionales dont l'Algérie est membre.

Cette démarche constitue le reflet des convictions de l'Algérie qui a de tout temps milité en faveur des causes justes et nobles, notamment celles empreintes de valeurs civiques universelles.

Elle considère à ce titre, que la mission de l'ACCOBAMS contribue au bien-être présent et futur de l'humanité.

Désormais, la mission de l'ACCOBAMS est celle de l'Algérie.

Mesdames et Messieurs,
Honorable Assistance,
Merci de votre attention.

STATEMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS (CMS)

The UNEP Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, also known as CMS or the Bonn Convention, is a global intergovernmental treaty concluded to protect the travellers in the animal world.

No species group is so much in the focus of CMS Conservation work as Marine Mammals, such as whales and dolphins. By adopting a regional approach for cetacean conservation, addressing the specific needs and threats of populations found in different areas, CMS serves as a framework for three regional treaties for cetaceans: ASCOBANS, concerned with small cetaceans in the Baltic and North Seas, ACCOBAMS for the Mediterranean and Black Seas and a Memorandum of Understanding for the Pacific Islands Region. A first negotiation meeting for a new small cetacean agreement for the Western African Atlantic, spanning from Morocco in the North to South Africa and including Macaronesian Islands of the Canaries, Madeira, Azores and Cape Verde, was held in Tenerife last week, with people from 23 countries present. Their commitment to dolphin conservation and the urgent call by people from the region for the quick establishment of this new treaty to help them coordinate their conservation effort was truly inspiring.

Despite the challenges posed to conservation of these charismatic animals in the ACCOBAMS area, where many ecosystems are degraded, largely due to mismanagement, the Agreement serves as a model for the other CMS cetacean-related agreements. By means of a strong base in science and thanks to the Parties' will to commit to rigorous conservation action, specific threats can be reduced and especially vulnerable populations protected. We are confident that Parties will give priority to the speedy implementation of the crucial measures to protect the severely pressured populations of whales and dolphins, discussed and agreed on this week. In this way, the meeting will have a tangible effect for the cetaceans living in these beautiful waters, which we had in front of us throughout the meeting in this excellent venue. Our special thanks go to the Croatian Government for providing such an ideal setting and such generous support.

The CMS regards meetings like the one in Tenerife last week, starting a new initiative, and this one, setting the direction and pace for an existing agreement for the coming three years, as important milestones on the way to a better conservation status for all cetaceans. Having such encouraging meetings during this present Year of the Dolphin confirms that people from all walks of life take an interest in the charismatic marine wildlife and are willing to do their part in protecting it. The commitment by governments is reflected by the enthusiasm of people throughout the ACCOBAMS area who participate in Year of Dolphin events such as Dolphin Days, teachers planning activities with their students, or tour operators offering wildlife watching experiences that respect the needs of animals and inspire visitors to carry home the message that these animals need our protection.

CMS is proud to have started this initiative together with ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society and the tour operator TUI. This unique partnership has enabled us to reach many more people than we would have been able individually, it has also strengthened the cooperation between the bodies in other areas. The Year of the Dolphin campaign truly is an example of something being more than the sum of its parts.

We are sure that the ACCOBAMS Agreement area will continue to be a hotspot of activities for the conservation of cetaceans during the Year of the Dolphin and beyond.

Thank you

STATEMENT OF ITALY

Madam Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentleman

First of all I wish to thank Croatia for hosting the meeting in the beautiful city of Dubrovnik giving the concrete expression of its support to ACCOBAMS

I wish also to congratulate the Executive Secretary and the staff for the excellent work done for the preparation of the meeting and for all the relevant and clear documents given us.

As you know, Italy has for the first time the honour of participating to a Meeting of the Parties of ACCOBAMS as contracting party instead of as observer. We do believe that the ratification of this agreement, one of the pillar Agreements under the Bonn Convention, represent for our country an important step forward to ensure a Mediterranean and related Sea approach to build a common, effective, comprehensive strategy for the protection of these endangered species.

As you know, Italy even before become a contracting party, was very proactive in ensuring a concrete support to the Agreement and to the Secretariat: Italy has already put into place a legislation ensuring a high level of conservation of marine mammals as a unique living resource of the Mediterranean. Italy has also established and managed 27 Marine Protected Areas interesting all Italian seas and costs to protect marine ecosystems and the endangered marine wildlife. Among these areas is the first Mediterranean international MPA, the PELAGOS Sanctuary, established and managed by Italy, France and Monaco hosting also the ACCOBAMS agreement, and totally devoted to the protection of marine mammals.

Furthermore, our country hosts and finance the Mediterranean Marine Mammal Tissue Bank in Padua, and in the last three years the Italian ministry of environment have funded a number of important projects of research, communication, sensibilization aimed at the improvement of the scientific knowledge and public awareness.

Italy want to confirm to all participants that its strong commitment on this field will continue and it will be improved continuously in collaboration and coordination with all Member Countries to achieve sustainable living conditions for the Mediterranean's cetaceans, especially now that a serious threat, the morbillivirus, is pending on them.

To this aim, I wish to inform this Meeting that, following the warning advice submitted by the ACCOBAMS permanent Secretariat and by the Chair of Scientific Committee, Italy has activated a communication chain to all the institutional and non governmental bodies concerned and that the Italian Ministry of environment is now organizing a task force that will include in its mission the implementation of the Italian stranding network.

Italy is fully committed to cooperate closely with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and the Scientific Committee to front this emergency and would like to offer its technical and scientific collaboration and support to all riparian neighboring states of Mediterranean to give an adequate response to this serious threat.

Finally, Italy highlights its understanding that the framework considering all the relevant international and regional conventions should be improved and tight coordination and collaboration among concerned plans and programs and the use of their resources shall be further developed as a crucial tool to ensure strong synergies on actions of the Agreement and other instruments operating in Mediterranean, needed to appropriately address the increasing challenges that we have to face in the future.

Thank you very much.

Final Statement:

Italy would like to express its high appreciation for the excellent work carried out by the Croatian Presidency, the Permanent Secretariat and the Scientific Committee, fully aware of the amount of the efforts needed to prepare and run the Meeting.

Italy would like to congratulate all the participants for the relevant steps forward that have been accomplished in this meeting.

We would like also to confirm our commitment to fully support the intercessional activities of ACCOBAMS, as member of the Bureau, and to promote a sound and timely implementation of the work programme on which the meeting has agreed.

Italy will continue to support the activities of the Secretariat as well as the implementation of strategic projects, both in cash and in kind, also promoting joint collaboration with other Parties and Range States, bearing in mind the necessity to further develop the north-south collaboration. To this aim, Italy wants to highlight the strategic role of the Bureau and Scientific Committee in mainstreaming and focusing priorities, in close collaboration with the Executive Secretary, and monitoring progresses made in the implementation of the adopted resolutions.

Italy would also express its understanding on the opportunity to further improve the scientific consideration and knowledge aimed at the protection of cetaceans by extending the range of the relevant activities to other areas with strong interactions with the Agreement coverage area.

Madam Chair, Madam Executive Secretary, distinguish delegates, to better achieve these objectives and strategic goals of ACCOBAMS, Italy would like to submit for the consideration of the Parties the following issues to be taken into account in the intercessional period:

- the need to consider among the three experts that will support the Bureau an expert on plans and programmes as well as on fundraising to secure sound and timely synergies and avoid overlaps with all other relevant programs and projects as well as to promote co-financing possibilities within the Agreement coverage area;
- the opportunity, with the aim to ensure the full achievement of a number of relevant and complex resolutions, to strengthen sound collaboration and cooperation among Parties and Range States, through the Executive Secretary, the Bureau and the Scientific Committee;
- the opportunity that the Bureau and Scientific Committee may promote, as an experimental activity and by using voluntary support, programmes and projects as well as collaboration with the interested countries, with the aim to explore the possibility to include the Red Sea in the scientific and technical frame of ACCOBAMS, taking into account the relevant interactions among this Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

Thank you again

DECLARATION DU REPRESENTANT DU LIBAN

Le Liban a toujours manifesté sa volonté d'être présent sur la carte mondiale des pays protecteurs du milieu naturel. Pour atteindre cet objectif, il a signé plusieurs conventions, traités et accords relatifs à la conservation de la diversité biologique et à la gestion durable des ressources naturelles.

Malheureusement, pour des raisons dues à des conflits incessants depuis une trentaine d'années, le Liban n'a pu honorer entièrement ses engagements concernant la sauvegarde et la conservation de ses biens naturels. L'Accord ACCOBAMS vient en tête de ces Accords dont la mise en œuvre reste en attente.

Les eaux marines libanaises recèlent une richesse exceptionnelle de faune et de flore (plus de 2500 espèces) dont plusieurs sont spécifiques pour le Liban.

Les cétacés et plus spécialement les dauphins (*T. truncatus*) sont abondants sur nos côtes et sont observés en permanence par nos pêcheurs, touristes et scientifiques.

La prise de conscience envers ces animaux n'a débuté qu'en 2000 avec la participation, pour la première fois, de notre Centre de Recherches Marines du Conseil National de la Recherche Scientifique libanaise à l'atelier de travail sur les cétacés, qui s'est tenu fin février début mars 2000 à Montpellier.

Les divers échanges avec le Secrétariat d'ACCOBAMS et plus précisément avec Mme Marie-Christine Grillo-Van Klaveren ont constitué le déclic d'une conviction et d'une longue traversée jalonnée de séminaires et de réunions pour l'adhésion du Liban à l'Accord ACCOBAMS. Cette traversée a été couronnée par deux visites de Mme Grillo-Van Klaveren au Liban. La récompense pour le Liban, pour la communauté internationale et pour le Secrétariat d'ACCOBAMS, était la ratification, par le Parlement libanais le 11 février 2004, de la loi de l'accession du Liban à l'Accord.

Pour différentes raisons (budgétaires, conflits politiques et militaires) aucune activité concernant les cétacés n'a été entreprise depuis.

Lors du séminaire scientifique sur les cétacés qui s'est tenu du 9 au 11 mars 2006 à Bizerte en Tunisie, nous avons, avec notre collègue représentant la Syrie, annoncé solennellement la préparation d'une activité commune (libano-syrienne) relative aux cétacés. Le projet a été finement élaboré (une copie a été envoyée au Secrétariat d'ACCOBAMS) malheureusement et toujours pour des raisons politiques l'arrêt de tout échange scientifique entre nos deux pays a gelé le projet.

Relancés par le Secrétariat d'ACCOBAMS nous avons projeté de démarrer au Liban les activités concernant les cétacés pour le printemps 2007 ; la situation interne (événements au camp palestinien du Nahr el Bared) n'était pas favorable, la réunion est remise pour fin 2007 début 2008 (date ultérieure à l'élection présidentielle). Cette réunion se tiendra et nous y tenons.

STATEMENT OF MONTENEGRO

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to greet you on behalf of the Government of Montenegro and on my own behalf and express our gratitude to the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS for having invited us to the Meeting of the Parties.

I take this opportunity to point out that the preservation of environment is recognised as one of key priorities within Montenegrin state policy; in that sense we endeavour towards the integration of principles of sustainable development and rational use of resources into all sectoral policies and strategies.

Thus, Montenegro engages in the alignment of its national legislation with EU *acquis*, in the ratification of conventions and international agreements, in efficient management of protected areas and strengthening capacities and raising awareness concerning the environment. This year the Government has adopted the National Sustainable Development Strategy as well as the Integral Coastal Zone Management Strategy as key documents in the implementation of sustainable development principles. In addition, we amended the List of Endemic, Rare and Endangered Species in Montenegro, including now also the dolphins, and in cooperation with the UNDP we are now developing the Biodiversity Strategy with its Implementation Action Plan.

Towards better implementation of the Agreement provisions, Montenegro has ratified the Barcelona Convention with the accompanying protocol, the Biological Diversity Convention, the Convention on the Sea, Climate Changes Convention as well as the Kyoto Protocol, and thus uses its best endeavours to prepare the platform for its accession to ACCOMBAMS and the Convention on Migratory Species.

I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance from the side of the ACCOMBAMS Secretariat, which involved Montenegro into specialised courses and thus initiated the work conducted at the national level. Many experts also came to Montenegro to help transfer the experiences and lessons learned in other countries which are already parties to the Agreement.

The participation of our young experts to courses and meetings organised by the Secretariat introduced Montenegro in the best way possible into the issues concerning the implementation of the Convention principles.

In addition to the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and the Marine Biology Institute, the non-governmental organisations give a significant contribution to these issues. They actively engage by organising campaigns, public events and media presentations increasing awareness of the need to preserve marine mammals, dolphins in particular, being frequent visitors in our waters.

Moreover, we are striving to establish permanent monitoring of marine mammals which would enable the establishment of a data base on movements and behaviour of such species in this part of the Adriatic Sea.

We certainly expect to be included in the projects of Mediterranean countries dealing with these issues, specialised courses and study visits to give our contribution to the preservation of the Adriatic as a place where whales and dolphins are able to raise their families undisturbed.

Let me finish by expressing once again the gratitude to the ACCOMBAMS Secretariat for investing great efforts for Montenegro to join ACCOMBAMS as a full member and I remain hopeful Montenegro will stand up to its promise and join the Agreement by the end of this year.

STATEMENT OF SLOVENIA

Mr Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to express my gratitude on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia to the Government of the Republic of Croatia for providing this outstanding venue for the Third Meeting of the Parties to the ACCOBAMS Agreement.

This is the first time that Slovenia is attending the Meeting of the Parties to this Agreement.

Conservation of biodiversity is formally declared as one of the priorities of Slovenia's environmental policy. All cetaceans have been fully protected at national level since 1993. In the last year, Slovenia has significantly increased its involvement in this particular area at the international level.

Most recently, Slovenia has ratified the International Convention on the Regulation of Whaling. At the 59th Meeting of the International Whaling Commission, Slovenia actively joined the group of like-minded countries that do not support commercial whaling.

Slovenia recognises the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), its regional Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding as effective international tools for the conservation of migratory species.

Slovenia's decision to accede to the ACCOBAMS Agreement stemmed a need to work closely with other countries to protect sea mammals. Slovenia is aware that many of these species face an uncertain future because of global warming, habitat loss, fisheries, disturbance and other human activities.

Slovenia knows that more action is needed and is committed to work with other range states to identify conservation strategies that will extend beyond national borders. By taking up the EU presidency in the first half of 2008, Slovenia will be responsible for coordinating activities of European Union Member States and presenting common EU positions in the bodies of other multilateral agreements. Slovenia is committed to work in the best interest of migratory species and will continue to promote their protection.

Finally, Mr Chairman, we wish to congratulate the Secretariat, the Parties and non-governmental organisations for the work done to date, and convey our sincere wish that this Third Meeting of the Parties is a success.

Thank you Mr Chairman

STATEMENT OF SYRIA

Thank you Chair,

Since I take the floor for the time, I would like to thank the Croatian people and Government for their kind hospitality and very good organization of the Meeting.

My thanks go to ACCOBAMS Secretariat for their great efforts for the implementation of ACCOBAMS and the preparation of the Third Meeting of the Contracting Parties. I would like also to thank also the Principality of Monaco for its continuous support to the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS.

It is the first time that Syria participates in one of the Meetings and since three years ago, Syria began to implement the ACCOBAMS in cooperation with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and some other partners like the Italian Ministry of Environment and the RAC/SPA and the first step was the establishment of the National Network for the stranding of cetaceans followed by other activities on capacity building, public awareness.

Finally, I would like to refer to the fruitful financial and technical support which Syria received from IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) for the protection of animals including cetaceans, during the implementation of CITES and ACCOBAMS.

Thanks to all partners
Thanks to all of you
Thank you Chair

MARINE CONSERVATION ON PAPER? AN URGENT CALL FOR ACTION TO PROTECT CETACEANS

We, the undersigned institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), note that despite the positive intent of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) and the commitment of ACCOBAMS Parties demonstrated through many Resolutions, Recommendations at previous and in particular at this 3rd Meeting of the Parties, an equivalent degree of essential, tangible conservation activity has not yet taken place.

We are conscious and appreciate of the significant depth of work that has been developed for the Parties by the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS in order for them to mitigate threats to cetaceans. We also recognize that several Parties have made progress in implementing Resolutions and some ambitious decisions have been made and Resolutions adopted in MOP3 of which we highly appreciate. However, although recognizing the overall will by Parties to improve the protection and conservation status of cetaceans in the Agreement area, we wish to express a strong call for action, recognizing that a slow response in implementing decisions and conservation measures would mean the objectives of the Agreement will not be reached.

We note in particular the following concerns:

1. the critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable status of most cetacean population in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (as recognized in Resolution 3.9)
2. the continued use of driftnets in part of the Agreement area, causing an unacceptable level of cetacean bycatch and a destructive impact on marine ecosystems in general, including in the PELAGOS Sanctuary.
3. the continuation of the employment of non-selective fishing methods, the growing intensity of fishing, and the widespread impact of over-fishing leading to ecosystem damage and depletion of cetacean prey.
4. the continued lack of implementation of appropriate mitigation measures to reduce underwater noise.

We therefore urge all Parties to take immediate and concrete action to fully meet their commitments under ACCOBAMS and thereby ensure the survival of cetacean population within the Agreement area.

Signed on 25th October 2007 by:
WDCS, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society,
International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)
Ocean Care, Switzerland
Delphis, Italy
Oceana Europe
Morigenos-Marine Mammals Research and Conservation Society, Slovenia
Animal Friends, Croatia
Blue World Marine Institute for Research and Conservation, Croatia
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)