

*Accord sur la Conservation des Cétacés de la
Mer Noire, de la Méditerranée et de la zone
Atlantique adjacente*



*Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans
of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and
contiguous Atlantic Area*

Report of the Fourth Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Bureau



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REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE ACCOBAMS BUREAU

The Fourth Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Bureau was convened to take place in Losinj in the premises of the Blue World Institute on 11 and 12 June 2007. It was attended by the Bureau's members, the Executive Secretary and the Chair of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS. The List of Participants appears in Annex 1 to this report.

The Chair of the Bureau (Mr. Miguel AYMERICH HUYGHUES, Spain) welcomed the participants and opened the meeting at 10.00 a.m., on Monday 11th June 2007.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Secretariat introduced the draft Agenda and the List of Documents. The Meeting adopted the Agenda as Annex 2 to this report taking note that the Chair of the Scientific Committee wouldn't be able to attend the meeting the following day, decided to give priority to the discussion of items pertinent to scientific matters (2, 3.5, 4.1 and 5).

2. Issues pertaining to the Bureau

Report of the Secretariat

The Secretariat introduced document ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc05 and reported on the activities carried out since the last meeting of the Bureau as well as on the status of the accession from non parties. With regard to this, she informed the meeting that Algeria ratified the Agreement.

C. Rais informed the meeting on the participation of ACCOBAMS at the SAP BIO (Strategic Action Plan for Biodiversity) meeting where amongst priorities bycatch was strongly considered.

The Chair of the Scientific Committee further informed the meeting on the collaboration accomplished with Ocean Alliance in 2004 and remarked that so far ACCOBAMS had not received the results of the campaign. The Bureau agreed to issue a recommendation in order to solicit the NGO in giving any feedback on the research campaign and providing to the Meeting of the Parties a progress report on the results.

S. Nicolaev informed the meeting on the activities carried out by Romania in the frame of the project "*Assessment of the extent of current cetacean by-catch and strandings in the Romanian Black Sea area*" and on the occasion of the celebrations for ACCOBAMS X Anniversary. The Secretariat acknowledged the commitment of Romania and invited to present the issues of those activities to the Meeting of the Parties P.

Report of the Chair of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the Scientific Committee shortly introduced his report (ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc06) stressing that further elements could be found in the working program.

With regard to most endangered species, the Bureau agreed the following:

- Common Dolphin: the Scientific Committee having decided to implement the Conservation Plan through small scale projects, the Bureau agreed to recommend to the Scientific Committee to progress this way.
- Bottlenose dolphins: the Bureau recommended the Scientific Committee to finalize the conservation Plan for this species and to present it to the Meeting of the Parties.
- Fin whales: the Chair having stressed that because of data deficiency on this population the Scientific Committee wish to create a coordination group working specifically on the issue, the Bureau agreed to

recommend to the Secretariat to meet with the biggest ACCOBAMS Parties and to plan specific cooperation in carrying out dedicated surveys in consideration of the lack of data for some species. With respect to the implementation of the Survey Project, the Chair stressed its key role in filling the gaps on cetacean knowledge. As far as the Black Sea survey is concerned, the Bureau was informed that a meeting in Istanbul was held with the aim to evaluate, review and adopt the Black Sea Cetaceans Conservation Plan.

The Secretariat and S. Nicolaev pointed out that following the issue of the last Meeting of the Black Sea Commission (BSC) further steps should be undertaken in presenting to the Chair of such Commission the relevant decisions taken by ACCOBAMS and the BSC on the common preparation of such document which is illustrating the spirit of collaboration of both Regions in Cetacean conservation. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that the Black Sea Cetaceans Conservation Plan was sent to the Head of Unit of the DG on environment, M. Patrick MURPHY, in order to receive information regarding its adoption by the EU Black Sea Countries.

While reporting on the state of strandings and tissue banks, the Chair of the Scientific Committee recommend that the Secretariat exchange with the Mediterranean Sub-Regional Coordination Unit and make all necessary efforts for MEDACES to be more “contributed”. The Secretariat informed the meeting about its exchanges with the Italian Focal Point regarding the lack of national data. The Secretariat was mandated to approach the Italian authorities in order to encourage the collaboration to this common tool of high importance for cetacean conservation. A report on MEDACES will be provided to the Meeting of the Parties by the Sub-Regional Coordination Units and that all adequate measures will be taken for this tool to be effective and proficient.

The Bureau agreed to recommend to countries to contribute to MEDACES

In the frame of interactions, S. Nicolaev underlined the high importance of this item and insisted on the necessity to correct the estimation of the impact of cetaceans on anchovies population and take into account the effect of other species like Bonito. The Bureau recommended to the Secretariat to contact the BSC Secretariat and ask that this item, which was already discussed by the Advisory Committee, be also part of the agenda of the Living Resources Advisory Committee.

The Chair informed that the Scientific Committee adopted the guidelines to address the **impact of anthropogenic noise** and decided to carry out a modelling of *ziphius* data to predict important habitats. It also informed that during a meeting at the ECS it was decided to create a group of data owners, a small group of modellers and to apply the model to other species. M. Aymerich informed the meeting on an ongoing project in Canaries Islands for the assessment on species distribution and the investigations on the problem of noise and military activities.

With regard to **collisions**, the Chair reported the decision of the Scientific Committee to create a coordination group with the aim to detail and prioritize the elements issued by the Workshop on collisions held in November 2006. A. Strbenac informed the meeting on the discussion within IWC where a template for database was developed and M. Aymerich stressed that some efforts have been done in Almeria to modify Maritime Traffic.

The Secretariat informed on the progress made in the development of an **eco-label for whale-watching** operators and M. Aymerich on the preparation of a Spanish decree on whale watching activities. A. Strbenac reported that a workshop on whale watching is being planned for next year in the frame of IWC, following a review on regulations on whale watching and on collisions with whale watching boats.

Concerning **Marine Protected Areas**, the Chair recalled that a list of important critical cetacean habitats will be suggested to the Parties for attention. S. Nicolaev raised the need to refer to the existing documents in Black Sea. C. Rais informed that during the RAC/SPA meeting EU showed interest in financing protected areas in high sea.

The Secretariat was asked to contact EU in order to express the concern of ACCOBAMS in the issue.

The Chair informed that IUCN is preparing a programme on MPAs and the meeting recommended to the Executive Secretary to assist to the IUCN relevant meetings.

The Chair made the point on **databases** and informed on a meeting held on Europlukes stating that the software for matching fins and other parts is ready to be tested; groups working on same populations have been identified to use the software

With regard to the preparation of **guidelines on exceptions**, the Chair pointed out that a group was established with the aim to define some guidelines to be proposed for adoption, to the next Meeting of the Parties He underlined the huge importance of this document as well as the difficulties of the scientists to finalize ità completer par Giuseppe

Cooperation with FP: the problems encountered by the Secretariat with respect to the lack of feed back from some Focal Points were presented. While acknowledging this situation, the Bureau mandated the Secretariat to prepare a profile and a job description of FP and to solicit countries to react more and to inform on political changes.

The Bureau acknowledged the operational way of working of the SC through working and discussion groups S. Nicolaev stressed the need of multidisciplinary in projects.

Supplementary conservation Grants Fund: Projects submitted for funding

C. Rais introduced the project: (1) “Study of dolphin/fishing net interactions at the level of traditional fisheries in Kerkennah and Kelibia (Tunisia): assessment of damage and economic loss” (ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc07) to be implemented by the Institute of Oceanography and Fishery of Salambo in collaboration with ICRAM. The project being the contribution of Tunisia to the BYCBAMS project, the Secretariat proposed to raise the budget up to 15.000 euros in order to prepare a manual as foreseen in the BYCBAMS. The Bureau suggested specifying the dissemination of the results by modifying the objective 5.

A. Strbenac introduced project (2) “Training course for Non Governmental Organizations on cetacean research and conservation & Training course for local tourist boat operators on cetacean observations” (ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc07). In order to have trainings also for Albania and Montenegro, the Secretariat proposed to raise the amount to 15.000. The Bureau proposed that a certificate shall be given to boat operators and Blue World will be invited to include in the trainings information on relevant juridical tools covering the area and on the way to formulate research programmes. Blue World will then inform the Secretariat on the content of the training documents

C. Rais introduced the project (3) “Pilot project for use of acoustic devices” (ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc07 Add 1) and underlined that it could be integrated within the BYCBAM and bottlenose dolphin action plan. S. Nicolaev remarked the need to adopt a way of transferring the results and applying the model to other countries. The Bureau remarked the need of more details and decided to have the project re-circulated after relevant integrations.

A discussion followed on the advisability that the Scientific Committee could be asked advice on such projects and the Bureau decided that in this case a specific evaluation sheet should be prepared.

New requests for ACCOBAMS partnership

The Secretariat introduced document (ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc08) relevant to the applications for granting the Status of ACCOBAMS Partner and gave a brief profile for each organization.

The Bureau recognized that the profile of commercial companies does not match with the one required for partners and that they could be addressed to the Association which will be soon established.

A discussion rose on the use of ACCOBAMS logo within activities potentially damaging the mission of the Agreement; it was suggested to include this point in the new resolution and to make it retroactive for former partners. With respect to the ACCOBAMS logo, the Bureau also decided to recommend Monaco to see for its international registration.

The Secretariat and the Chair of the Scientific Committee informed the Bureau on the interest showed by “Dokumente des Meeres” in applying for the status of ACCOBAMS Partner and introduced some of the activities carried out by this organization, such as a two workshops on “Spatio-temporal management of noise on a regional scale” and on “Noise-related stress in marine mammals”. The Bureau decided to accept this candidature between two sessions through email.

The Bureau granted the Status of ACCOBAMS Partners to the following organizations:

ALNITAK (Spain), represented by Ana Cañadas

www.alnitak.info

OCEANA (Spain), represented by Javier Pastor Garcia

www.oceana.org

SOUFFLEURS D’ECUME (France), represented by Pascal Mayol

www.souffleursdecume.com

WWF Mediterranean Programme Office

www.panda.org/mediterranean

3. Issues to be submitted to the MOP3

Report on incomes and expenses for 2005-2007

The Secretariat introduced document ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc09 and reported on the incomes and expenses for the last triennium. She also brought to the attention of the Bureau the case of Libya as a country which has never paid its contributions.

The Bureau recognized that some measure should be taken in this respect and proposed to prevent non-paying countries to be part of the Bureau and not to take in charge their representatives within the Scientific Committee.

With regard to the report on the expenses the Bureau agreed that national expenses related to specific activities should also appear among voluntary contributions.

The Bureau recommended to the Secretariat to prepare a portfolio of projects to be implemented and needing for external financial support. Such portfolio should be sent to the Parties for request and in order to be taken into account when the national budget is under preparation.

Contributions for 2008-2010

The Secretariat introduced document ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc10-Rev1 and presented the draft contributions for the forthcoming triennium. The Bureau acknowledged this proposal and suggested that the total budget for the triennium be split in order to have the same amount every year.

Draft budget for 2008-2010

The Secretariat introduced the explanatory note on the draft budget (ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc11). The Bureau acknowledge the document as well as the priorities stated in Recommendation SC4.13 with regard to activities needing funding and agreed with the Secretariat that external funding should be found.

Accession to ACCOBAMS of non-riparian States and report on alien fleets in the Agreement Area

The Secretariat was requested by the Bureau to report on alien fleet activities in the Agreement area and informed that some inquiries were made to GFCM, ICCAT, IMO, and to REMPEC. So far no relevant information was acquired.

Amendments of the text of the Agreement

The Secretariat introduced documents ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc13 and ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc17 concerning the proposals made by Tunisia and Portugal to amend the text and the annex to the Agreement relevant to the use of driftnets and the geographical area.

The Secretariat also recalled the procedure for accepting and implementing amendments and the Bureau agreed that the proposals should be presented as Amendment Resolutions (and to explain the difference with the common Resolution.)

A discussion rose on the legal implications of the extension of the geographical area and the Bureau recognised the need to provide a paper on the political, juridical, financial implications as well as the steps to follow and the constraints.

4. Organization of MOP3

MOP3 Draft Agenda

The Secretariat introduced document ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc14 relevant to the draft Agenda of the Meeting of the Parties. The Bureau proposed little changing and acknowledged the document. It also proposed that the Secretariat prepare a profile for Focal point to be circulated to the Countries.

Requirements for the organization of the Meeting of the Parties

The Secretariat presented document ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc15 relevant to the update of the requirements for the organization of the Meeting of the Parties.

5. Draft Resolutions

The Secretariat introduced documents ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc16; ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc16-Add1 and ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Doc16-Add2 relevant to the draft Resolutions to be presented at the Meeting of the Parties. Following discussion, some slight modifications were brought.

With respect to the way of presenting the working programme, it was proposed to include in it the report of the Chair of the Scientific Committee in order to have an overview on what has been done and what is being planned for the future. Some further modifications were brought to the Working Programme following to discussion with the Chair.

As far as the proposal on the establishment of an Extended Bureau was concerned, 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. These experts should be contracted to support the Secretariat in the preparation of the draft resolutions and take part in the meeting of preparation of the MOP. The budget relevant to the meeting of the Bureau for the last year should then take this into account.



6. Other business

The Secretariat informed the Bureau on the progress made in establishing an Association aimed at supporting the implementation of ACCOBAMS objectives (ACCOBAMS-BU4/2007/Inf01).

7. Closure of the Meeting

After productive discussions, the Chair of the Bureau closed the meeting at 6.00 pm (Tuesday 12th June 2007)

ANNEX 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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