

**Revised Format for the
ASCOBANS Annual National Reports**

General Information

Name of Party:	Period covered: year 2012
The Republic of Poland	Date of report: February 2013

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Any changes in coordinating authority or appointed member of advisory committee: No	

List of national authorities, organizations, research centres and rescue centres active in the field of study and conservation of cetaceans, including contact details

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2) Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdansk,

PL - 84-150 Hel, Morska 2, phone +48 58 6750 836, fax +48 58 6750 420,

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NEW Measures / Action Towards Meeting the Objectives of the Conservation and Management Plan and the Resolutions of the Meeting of Parties

Please feel free to add more rows to tables if the space provided is not sufficient.

A. HABITAT CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

1 Direct Interaction with Fisheries

Investigations of methods to reduce bycatch

In 2011 the Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdansk, launched a pilot project aimed at testing cod-pots in the Bay of Puck as a possible alternative for gillnets used in catching cods. The current stage of the project is aimed at conducting tests for improvement of fish catch and fishery.

The Ministry of the Environment in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development received funds from the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management (National Fund) for implementation of the project “Testing of alternative catch tools protecting porpoises, seals and birds from by-catch in the Polish marine areas”. It is planned to test under the project whether it is possible to apply: cod pots, gillnets with larger mesh, as well as all aspects of application of at least 2 types of pingers in Poland. In 2012 formal works were conducted over the application and the procedure of determining the contractor. The implementation of the project depends on the closing date of the tendering procedure. The project is planned to be completed in October 2014.

There is a similar project planned under the HELCOM BALTFIMPA project – “Fisheries management in the Baltic Sea Protected Areas” . One of the main objectives of the BALTFIMPA project is e.g. to answer the question of the impact of various tools and intensity of commercial fish catches on habitats and species in particular Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPA). So far, no research on this subject has been conducted in Poland. The research project is aimed at helping the participating countries, including Sweden, Finland, Poland, Denmark and Russia, test the principles of the protection of the environment and living resources in particular Baltic Sea regions without blocking fisheries, and only, if necessary, limiting the intensity of hunting or particular fish species, and replacing catch tools with tools minimising or eliminating bycatch of birds and marine mammals often observed in fish catches, e.g. with the use of gillnets. The HELCOM BALTFIMPA project is planned to include two parts: introductory and preparatory, the so-called *Initial phase*. Duration: January 2012 – the end of March 2013, and the main part of the project aimed at testing various catch tools, and preparing decision-making scenarios in the field of fisheries management in certain pilot areas in the Baltic Sea. Duration: July 2013 – the end of 2015.

Poland plans to implement the BALTFIMPA project in the selected Natura 2000 pilot area “Ostoja na Zatoce Pomorskiej” (PLH990002), a special area of conservation (PLB990003), being the „habitat” and „bird” Natura 2000 area at the same time. One of the main tasks will be to test alternative catch tools (cod pots) in terms of the volume of accidental catch of protected fish, bird and mammal species, and the efficiency of catch of target species. It will be also essential to organise meetings with stakeholders when it is planned to analyse various decision-making scenarios in the field of fisheries management in the Natura 2000 area “Zatoka Pomorska”. Poland’s involvement in the main part of the project will depend on granting funds for the project by the European Commission under LIFE+.

Implementation of methods to reduce bycatch

In 2012 MIR-PIB again implemented the Monitoring Programme for Accidental Catches of Cetaceans (PMPPW, Polish: *Program Monitorowania Przypadkowych Połowów Waleni*) based on the obligations under the Regulation (EC) 812/2004. In 2012 10 operating vessels in 7 ports were observed. Under the Programme implementation observers stayed in the sea for 129 days, including 70 days on the vessels conducting catches using midwater otter trawls and 59 days on cruises (including 9 days in below 15m vessels) while using gillnets. In 2012 no accidental catch was observed. No porpoises were also observed - either during the participation of the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute in Gdynia (MIR-PIB, employees in cruises on cutters and fishing boats under various research tasks, also during PMPPW, or during other research cruises in the entire Polish marine area. Polish fishermen also did not report any case of by-catch porpoise.

Please provide any other relevant information, including bycatch information from opportunistic sources.

WWF Poland continued the project financed by the Baltic Sea 2020 Foundation “Collecting ghost nets in the Baltic Sea”. In 2012 the project was implemented not only by the Polish but also by the Lithuanian party. Under the project in 2012 22 tons of ghost nets were collected in Poland and Lithuania. The conference is planned for March 2013 to sum up the results of the project. One of the project results is the interactive database on the locations of ghost nets with the option to report the loss of catch tools. The project has been supported by the Polish and Lithuanian Ministries of the Environment.

In addition, please attach or provide link to your country’s Report under EC Regulation 812/2004.

<http://www.minrol.gov.pl/pol/Rybactwo/Rybolowstwo-morskie/Raporty-opracowania-publikacje>

The above-mentioned website presents Polish reports on the implementation of the Council Regulation (EC) 812/2004 in 2010 and 2011. The 2012 report will be uploaded to the website when finished and translated into English. It is planned to complete the report and upload it to the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in May 2013 at the latest.

2 Reduction of Disturbance

2.1 Anthropogenic Noise

Please reference and briefly summarise any studies undertaken

The Institute of Oceanography (including the Marine Station), University of Gdansk, implement the Polish part of the project (financing under LIFE+, National Fund, FRUG) called BIAS “Baltic Sea Information on Acoustic Soundscape”. The main objective: implementation of descriptor 11 for GES from Annex to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive at the regional level of the Baltic Sea. The planned project duration: September

2012 - August 2016.

On 1 October 2012 the Polish Navy conducted operation of destroying a torpedo from the time of the World War II. In accordance with the decision of the General Directorate for Environmental Protection the following actions were taken before the explosion:

- disturbances by pincer movements of 2 fast boats, beginning from the operations centre,
- disturbances made by sound-ranging devices,
- disturbances made by 20 g micro explosives directly before detonation of the unexploded bomb.

The power of the explosion and shock wave was lower than expected – probably as a result of the long soaking period.

After detonation the region of operation was checked twice: directly after the explosion and the next day. No damages were detected, and no organisms that may have been damaged as a result of the operations were observed. Therefore, it may be assumed that the operation was effective.

2.2 Ship Strike Incidents

In the Polish zone of the Baltic Sea no collisions of cetaceans and vessels were noted.

Please list all known incidents and for each, provide the following information:

Date	Species	Type of injury	Fatal injury (Yes / No)	Type of vessel (length, tonnage and speed)	Location (coordinates)	More information: (Name / Email)

2.3 Major Incidents Affecting Significant Numbers* of Cetaceans

Date	Location	Type of incident	Further Information

*Two or more animals

2.4 Pollution and Hazardous Substances

Please report on main types of pollution and hazardous substances (including source, location and observed effects on cetaceans). Please provide information on any new measures taken to reduce pollution likely to have an impact.

Amendment to the water legislation aimed at transposition into national law of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive provides for preparation of the marine strategy including: preliminary assessment of the marine environment, set of properties for good environmental status of marine waters, set of environmental objectives for marine waters, marine waters monitoring programme, and the national programme of protection of marine waters. Marine waters monitoring will be continued by the Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection.

While the Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection acts as a leader of the flagship project on the collection of dumped chemical weapons (under the Priority Area 3 of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – Dangerous Substances), in 2012 Poland participated actively in works on preparing the comprehensive report thereon taking account of e.g. the issue of minimising the impact of dumped chemical weapons on biosphere. Works were conducted under the HELCOM MUNI working group.

Moreover, the Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection (together with the Ministry of Environment of Finland) as one of the coordinators of the Priority Area 1 of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region aimed at reducing nutrient inputs, monitored the actions under the flagship projects implemented in this area in 2012.

2.5 Other Forms of Disturbance

Please provide any other relevant information, e.g. relating to recreational activities affecting cetaceans.

No information

3 Marine Protected Areas for Small Cetaceans

Please provide any relevant information on measures taken to identify, implement and manage protected areas for cetaceans, including MPAs designated under the Habitats Directive and MPAs planned or established within the framework of OSPAR or HELCOM.

For three years there have been 9 marine areas in Poland with the status of Baltic Sea Protected Areas under the Helsinki Convention – HELCOM BSPA, all within the borders of Natura 2000 areas. At least three of them – in the Bay of Pomerania, the Bay of Puck and in Ostoja Słowińska – are crucial from the perspective of protection of porpoises. There are no management plans for these areas at the moment taking account of protection of the species. They are being developed, and they are planned to be completed in 2014.

Please indicate where GIS data of the boundaries (and zoning, if applicable) can be obtained (contact email / website).

The General Directorate for Environmental Protection provides the exact borders of Natura 2000 areas (<http://www.gdos.gov.pl/Articles/view/1889/Kontakt>).

The above-mentioned data are also presented at: <http://natura2000.gdos.gov.pl/datafiles>

B. SURVEYS AND RESEARCH

4.1 Overview of Research on Abundance, Distribution and Population Structure

Please provide a brief summary of (and reference to) any national work.

Poland participated in the SAMBAH project (Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise). In Poland the project is implemented by the Maritime Branch of the Institute of Meteorology and Water Management, the Hel Marine Station and the Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection. The project completion is planned for December 2014.

Yearlong monitoring of the coast with the involvement of volunteers trained by the Hel Marine Station, the so-called “Blue Patrol” will be continued. The project is implemented by WWF Poland.

4.2 New Technological Developments

Please provide a brief summary of any relevant information

The University of Gdansk commenced the construction of the modern research vessel designed e.g. for observation of marine mammals and related hydroacoustic tests. INFO LINK: <http://www.hel.ug.edu.pl/aktu/lastminut/inicjal.html>

4.3 Other Relevant Research

Please provide a brief summary of any relevant information

No information

C. USE OF BY-CATCHES AND STRANDINGS

5 Post-Mortem Research Schemes

Contact details of research institutions / focal point	Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk Iwona Pawliczka, iwona.pvp@ug.edu.pl
Methodology used (reference, e.g. publication, protocol)	Post-mortem analyses are performed according to the procedure described in: Kuiken, T and Hartmann, M.G. (1993). Dissection techniques and tissue sampling. Proceedings of the ECS Workshop, Leiden.

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<p>Collection of samples (type, preservation method)</p>	<p>The Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk within the scope of research following from its statutory activity collects data on dead porpoises and dolphins from bycatch or from the seashore. The dead specimens that are collected by the facility are subject to analyses to the extent possible given the state of the carcass. The standard scope of sampling covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -establishing the species; -event location; -determined or possible cause of death; - establishing the body length and weight; -establishing the sex; -fat sample collection for genetic tests; -teeth sampling to establish the age of the animal; -full post-mortem examination and storage of biological samples in line with Kuiken &Hartmann 1993.
<p>Database (Number of data sets by species, years covered, software used, online access)</p>	<p>As of 1988 the data have been introduced to the standard Access database. There is no on-line access to the database.</p>
<p>Additional Information (e.g. website addresses, intellectual property rights, possibility of a central database)</p>	<p>An electronic atlas of mammals distribution in Poland is being prepared under the title “Atlas of Mammals in Poland” (Polish: <i>Atlas ssaków Polski</i>) (prepared by Institute of Nature Conservation of the Polish Academy of Sciences) Link: http://www.iop.krakow.pl/ssaki/Katalog.aspx The atlas will include also data on cetaceans distribution. (the data are introduced by SMIOUG based on its database). An example concerning the porpoise: link: http://www.iop.krakow.pl/ssaki/Gatunek.aspx?spID=183</p>

5.1 Number of Necropsies Carried out in Reporting Period:

Species	Recorded cause of death
None	

Please provide any other relevant information on post-mortem / stranding schemes.

Table. Data concerning the date, location, length, sex, place of finding the porpoises and place of samples storage.

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Date	Length	Sex	Place of finding	Place of samples storage
09.09.2012	Undefined	Undefined	Beach between Dąbki and Dąbkowice (kw.26 ICES)	Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk

D. LEGISLATION

6.1 Relevant New Legislation, Regulations and Guidelines

Please provide any relevant information.

WWF Poland under the project “Support for Restoration and Protection of Baltic Mammals” has conducted research on relevant up-date and development of porpoise and grey seal protection plans. Given the significant difference in the opinions of the fishing and environmental protection sectors the company Mediatorzy.pl has been chosen to chair the meetings as it is not related to any of the abovementioned groups. An unofficial but efficient platform for dialogue between representatives of the local authorities, fishermen, scientists, environmental NGOs and representatives of the central government has been established under the project. The project result in a form of draft protection plans will form grounds for the General Directorate for Environmental Protection to consult and adopt the porpoise and grey seal protection plans.

E. INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

7.1 Public Awareness and Education

Please report on any public awareness and education activities to implement or promote the Agreement to the general public and to fishermen.

The General Directorate for Environmental Protection under the project “Poland for the Baltic Sea” has organised a series of meetings concerning the Baltic Sea eutrophication, National Programme for municipal wastewater treatment, actions taken as regards weapons dumped in the Baltic Sea and responsible fishing – including on protected species in the Baltic Sea, with special emphasis on protected fish and porpoise species.

In 2012, the SMIOUG undertook actions aimed at active participation of different social groups in the establishment of protection plans for porpoises and strengthening the social acceptance for

these forms of protection and research. This manifested itself e.g. in the organisation of:

International Day of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise

[<http://www.hel.ug.edu.pl/aktu/2012/mdbm2012.htm>], actions under the Maritime education programme implementation [<http://www.programedukacjimorskiej.pl/pem-subp-ecology-article3.php>] and other different public events, e.g.

- under the Baltic Science Festival http://www.hel.ug.edu.pl/aktu/2012/BFN_2012.html;
- street poster campaign under the slogan “Can humans and marine mammals coexist?”;
- Internet campaign for reduction of underwater noise;
- poster campaign for schools targeted at conservation of fish habitats as a condition for the existence of food stocks for predators and consumer needs of people;
- organisation of an exhibition on the SAMBAH project;
- media and event coverage of the Baltic Sea voyage of a German sailboat FRITSJEN promoting the protection of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise and the SAMBAH project;
- production of a new version of the popular science film entitled “Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoises” (Polish: *Baltyckie morświny*) and broadcasting it five times in the regional public television (TVP3 - Gdańsk).

In 2012, SMIOUG along with FRUG and sponsors (e.g. Lotos Group) prepared and disseminated a special calendar on the occasion of the ASCOBANS 20th anniversary, which promotes the Agreement and porpoise protection.

SMIOUG continues the works on the construction of a museum named “Porpoise house” on the Hel Peninsula, which will be dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge on the biological and environmental problems of life and protection of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise.

SMIOUG also continues to run the website on porpoise: www.morswin.pl

WWF – Poland has organised a cruise on s/y Pogoria for 50 people to promote porpoise conservation (Gdynia Kerteminde).

Between 28 and 29 August 2012 WWF Poland together with the Maritime University of Szczecin has organised workshops on the risks and protection of small cetaceans, with special emphasis on bycatch. Thirty experts from Europe, Asia, America (and via the internet also from Australia) had a chance to share with each other knowledge and practical experience. The workshops were organised under the auspices of ASCOBANS,

POSSIBLE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT

Please provide any relevant information.

Please return this form, preferably by e-mail, to:

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