

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

General Information

Name of Party:	Period covered: Year 2013
Republic of Poland	Date of report: February 2014 r.

Report submitted by:	
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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) The Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk,

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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 on methods to reduce by-catch

The project of the Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk realized since 2011 and concerning testing in the Puck Bay the traps of a „cod-pot” type as a possible alternative to gill nets which are used in cod fishing is continued.

Planned by the Ministry of the Environment in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development project titled “Testing Alternative Fishing Gear Protecting Harbour Porpoises and Seals as well as Birds Against Incidental Catches on the Polish Marine Areas” hasn’t been completed due to formal reasons.

One plan to implement the project within the scope of the Operational Programme “Fisheries and Sea 2014-2020” prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development the project HELCOM BALTFIMPA titled “Fisheries Management on the Baltic Sea Protected Areas” concerning the impact of different tools and intensity of commercial fishing on habitats and species in respective Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPA) hasn’t been accepted to be financed by the European Commission.

Implementation of methods to reduce by-catch

In 2013, again, the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute (NMFRI) realized the Monitoring Programme of Incidental Catches of Cetaceans (MPICC) based on the obligations resulting from the Council Regulation (EC) 812/2004. In 2013 one was conducting observations on 12 vessels of the length over 15m, operating from 7 ports and 6 boats from 3 ports. Within the scope of the Programme, the observers spent on the sea 124 days including 79 days on the vessels fishing with the usage of the pelagic trawls and 38 days in fishing voyages (the voyages which took place in November this year are not included, the information will be completed till May 2014), including 10 days on the vessels smaller than 15m when gill nets were used during fishing. As the keelboats changed over the gear during the voyages, 7 days of the observations concerned fishing with the usage of the bottom trawl. They are included in the report as the days of the observations although they didn’t meet the requirements of the Council Regulation (EC) 812/2004. During monitoring the fishing activities in the Baltic Sea with the usage of pelagic trawls or gill nets conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute in 2013 (April – November), no incidental catch or entanglement in nets of the cetacean was observed. The observations didn’t prove any cetacean in nets fishing in the Puck Bay’s waters. Polish fishermen didn’t report any case of the harbour porpoise’s catch either.

Please provide any other relevant information, including bycatch information from

opportunistic sources.

The project “Removal of the Ghost Nets from the Baltic Sea” which was realized by WWF Poland was completed. Within the scope of the project one removed 21,275 ghost nets in total, 1,400 kg in the Lithuanian waters and 19,875 in the Polish waters. One of this project’s results is an interactive database of places where there are underwater hooks (shipwrecks, rocks, other obstacles) which may cause rupture of the fishing gear. The database in three languages – in Polish, in English and in Lithuanian is available on the website sieciwidma.wwf.pl. At present there are 333 objects in the database, 233 of these objects were passed to the base by the Hydrographic Office of the Polish Navy at the end of 2013 as a part of the information exchange. The removal of the ghost nets from the Baltic Sea is planned to be continued within the frameworks of the Operational Programme “Fisheries and Sea” as well as within other sources of financing – both in Poland as well as in other Baltic states.

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

<http://www.minrol.gov.pl/pol/Rybactwo/Rybolowstwomorskie/Raporty,opracowania,publikacje>

At the address mentioned above there are Polish reports on the implementation of the Council Regulation (EC) 812/2004 for 2010, 2011, 2012. The report for 2013 will be placed on the website as soon as it is completed and translated into English. The report completion and its inclusion on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development are planned for May 2014 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) of the University of Gdańsk realize the Polish part of the project titled BIAS: “*Baltic Sea Information on Acoustic Soundscape*”. Main goal of the project is to implement descriptor 11 for GES from the Annex *Marine Strategy Framework Directive* on the Baltic Sea’s regional level. Duration of the project was anticipated from September 2012 till August 2016. One fixed five sets of sea-bottom measuring equipment which will aim at recording ships’ underwater noise in the Polish part of the Baltic Sea (the project is also realized by the Foundation for the University of Gdańsk Development).

In September 2013, in the Gdańsk Bay one detonated 2 torpedoes from the Second World War.

In Poland, marine waters are not monitored for the underwater noise. During last few years ships in main sea were recorded. Based on the information of 2011 (a ship type, deadweight tonnage (DWT), draught, length, width and gross weight tonnage (GWT)) one concluded that in the Polish zone, the most threat of noise is constituted through cargo ships, petrochemical and chemical tankers, container ships, tow vessels and passenger ships. Since 2008, figures have been showing that total turnover of all Polish ports have constituted 6.9% of the results for the Baltic Sea basin’s ports.

2.2 Ship Strike Incidents

In Polish zone of the Baltic Sea no collision of cetaceans with vessels was recorded.

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.

On 13rd of February 2014, the project CHEMSEA devoted to the identification and reduction of the threats connected with the chemical munitions dumped in the Baltic Sea was completed. The project was part- financed by the European Union.

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 four years, 9 marine areas which have status of the protected areas – the Baltic Sea

Protected Areas under the Helsinki Convention – HELCOM BSPAs have been functioning in Poland. They all are situated within the areas of Nature 2000. At least three of them, in the Pomeranian Bay, the Puck Bay and in Ostoja Słowińska have been considered to be crucial in terms of harbour porpoises conservation according to the currently available expertise justified among others by: historically happening by-catch, observations of single animals as well as data on dead harbour porpoises thrown on the seashore.

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

The information on the exact boundaries of the Nature 2000 areas is available in the General Directorate for Environmental Protection. (<http://www.gdos.gov.pl/Articles/view/1889/Kontakt>).

This data are also presented on the website: <http://Nature2000.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 participates in the international project SAMBAH (Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise). From Polish side the project has been realized by the Marine Department of the Institute of Meteorology and Water Management, the Hel Marine Station and the Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection. The project is planned to be completed in December 2014.

The year-round coast's monitoring with the participation of the volunteers trained by the Hel Marine Station, so called Blue Patrol WWF, will be continued. This project has been realized since 2010 by WWF Poland in partnership with the Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk (SMIOUG) under the name: "Supporting Restitution and Conservation of the Baltic Mammals in Poland" and since 2013 also with the Waterbirds Research Group KULING under the name: "Conservation of Mammals and Waterbirds' Habitats". Within the project's scope, SMIOUG does e.g. research with the usage of hydro-acoustic devices C-POD which are used to record the sounds emitted by harbour porpoises. The project is planned to be completed at the end of 2014. The area of the harbour porpoises' detection covers the area from the Vistula River estuary, along the Vistula Split until the border with Russia.

In 2013 one succeeded in increasing the network of the volunteers of the Blue Patrol WWF from 42 to 200 persons. The volunteers patrol beaches on regular basis searching for mammals and birds which the project concerns. As a part of the preparation for monitoring, one organizes regular trainings – in 2013 one organized 21 trainings in which the volunteers of the Blue Patrol WWF participated. Observations made by the field co-operators of WWF are recorded in the database prepared by WWF Poland. In 2013, 750 records concerning the observations of the marine mammals noticed on the Polish coast were entered into the

database. 186 of those records were entered by the volunteers of the Blue Patrol WWF.

4.2 New Technological Developments

Please provide a brief summary of any relevant information

The University of Gdańsk started in 2012 a construction of the modern research vessel designed e.g. to conduct observations of the marine mammals and connected with them hydro-acoustic research. The completion of the construction is planned for 2015.

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	The Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk Iwona Pawliczka, iwona.pvp@ug.edu.pl
Methodology used (reference, e.g. publication, protocol)	Post-mortem analyses are conducted in accordance with the procedure described in: Kuiken, T and Hartmann, M.G. (1993). Dissection techniques and tissue sampling. Proceedings of the ECS Workshop, Leiden.
Collection of samples (type, preservation method)	Within the scope of the research resulting from the statutory activities, the Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk collects data on dead harbour porpoises and dolphins from a by-catch or found on the sea coast. Dead animals, if they are brought to this station, undergo analyses in the scope which is possible due to the body's state. A typical scope of the sampling includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - species identification - stranding location - determined or probable cause of death - determining length and weight of the body – - determining the sex - sampling the adipose tissue for genetic analyses - extracting teeth to determine the animal's age. - complete post-mortem analysis and storage of the biological samples according to Kuiken & Hartmann 1993
Database (Number of data sets by species, years covered, software used, online access)	The data have been entered into standard database in Access since 1988. The database is not accessible on-line.

Revised Format for the ASCOBANS Annual National Reports

<p>Additional Information (e.g. website addresses, intellectual property rights, possibility of a central database)</p>	<p>One has prepared and has been updating an e-atlas of the mammals' location in Poland titled: "Atlas of Mammals in Poland" (Atlas Ssaków Polski) (the author: Institute of Nature Conservation PAS) Link: http://www.iop.krakow.pl/ssaki/Katalog.aspx The atlas includes also information on cetaceans' location. (this data is entered by SMIOUG based on its database. An example concerning an harbour porpoise, a link: http://www.iop.krakow.pl/ssaki/Gatunek.aspx?spID=183</p>
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5.1 Number of Necropsies Carried out in Reporting Period:

Species	Recorded cause of death
No information	

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

Table. Data on the date, location, length, sex, the place of the harbour porpoises' finding and the place of the samples' deposit.

Date	Length	Sex	Place of finding	Place of samples' deposit
26/05/2013	95 cm	Female harbour porpoise	Sarbinów Beach, near the village Dąbki, west coast	The Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk
20/07/2013	142 cm	Indetermined due to the decomposition of the harbour porpoise' body	Unieście, 10 km away from the place where the previous harbour porpoise was found	The Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk
15/08/2013	No data	Male harbour porpoise	Ustka	The Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk

Revised Format for the ASCOBANS Annual National Reports

25/08/2013	170 cm	Male harbour porpoise	Oslonino, the Puck Bay	The Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk
15/11/2013	730 cm	Male northern bottlenose whale (Hyperoodon ampullatus)	near Unieście	The Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk

D. LEGISLATION

6.1 Relevant New Legislation, Regulations and Guidelines

Please provide any relevant information.

The Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection has prepared a draft of *the Minister of the Environment' regulation on the scope and method of marine waters monitoring* including issues of the biodiversity, all elements of the food chain, the seabed integrity, pollution, the underwater noise as well as electromagnetic fields and these factors' impact on the mammals.

One of the results of the project titled "Supporting Restitution and Conservation of Baltic Mammals in Poland" which is realised by WWF Poland and the Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk are the projects of the conservation plan for the harbour porpoise and the grey seal which will constitute a base for the General Directorate for Environmental Protection to conduct consultations and accept plans mentioned above.

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.

In August 2013 Poland hosted the 20th ASCOBAN Advisory Committee Meeting as well as the meeting of the North Sea Group. The meetings aroused the media interest for the theme of the harbour porpoises conservation, some articles in press appeared as well as programmes on country-wide TV and on the radio.

On the area under the SMIOUG management, on 9th of September 2013, one opened a museum under the name "Dom Morświna" ("The Harbour Porpoise's House"). In the museum there are cabinets and boards containing information on the biology, harbour porpoises' usage, and their relations with human as well as current problems which affect these animals. Thanks to the large screen televisions, visitors can watch films and animations devoted not only to harbour porpoises,

but also other cetaceans which visited Polish part of the Baltic Sea during last decades. The records present e.g. the white-beaked dolphin, the fin whale, humpback whales and common dolphins.

On 19/05/2013, for the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise, the Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk organized an educational and informative stand which was situated in Skwer Kościuszki in Gdynia, next to the harbour porpoise' monument.

From 22nd to 24th of May 2013, during the PolFish Fairs, the Marine Station prepared a stand devoted to balanced principles of the marine resources use. The information on the methods of marine mammals' by-catch prevention was not missing.

During annual event "Day of Fish" organized by the Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University Gdańsk with participation of Gaja Club and FishSecretariat, on 28/07/2013, one organized an educational and informative stand with the literature on the fauna of the Baltic Sea – one of the stands was dedicated to harbour porpoises and promotion of the Jastarnia Plan-ASCOBAN.

Conservation, examinations of the harbour porpoises and promotion of the ASCOBAN Agreement were also an element of the educational stand of the Marine Station during the Baltic Science Festival.

From 1st to 31st of July 2013, the Marine Station organized an social campaign for active participation in developing of the areas protection's marine plans Nature 2000, e.g.: in relation to the coexistence of fisheries and harbour porpoises' biological needs. The vehicles of the content were City Lights on the public transport stops. A multimedia agency assessed their efficiency for about 1.5 million people.

The Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography of the University of Gdańsk and the Foundation for the University of Gdańsk Development produced a CD with a film titled : "Bałtyckie Morświny" ("Baltic Harbour Porpoises) in three languages: in Polish, German and English.

The public TV has televised many times (on 3 channels, in the advertising interval) a video promoting SAMBAH project as a part of the activities aiming at harbour porpoises' conservation.

WWF Poland takes many educational actions aiming at improvement in the Polish society knowledge on the marine mammals. In 2013 the following actions were taken: publication 2nd edition so called: "Blue Handbook" – 40-pages pocket-book with information on seals, harbour porpoises and birds being subject to WWF's monitoring. The print run of the handbook accounted for 50,000 copies and was sent to schools, offices and institution all over the coast and was also distributed by the volunteers of the Blue Patrol WWF. Additionally, on the WWF spokesperson's initiative, the theme connected with the marine mammals conservation including the harbour porpoise has often appeared in Polish media. Furthermore, the volunteers of the Blue Patrol WWF have given the lectures (mainly in schools) on the Baltic mammals conservation, have participated in cultural events and organized stands during local open-air events e.g. during concerts of Lato z Radiem organized by the radio channel named Jedynka.

The website www.morswin.pl is the source for spreading the knowledge on harbour porpoises and promoting the ASCOBAN Agreement.

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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