

Revised Format for the
ASCOBANS Annual National Reports

General Information

Name of Party:	Period covered: Year 2014
Republic of Poland	Date of report: February 2015

Report submitted by:	
Name: Monika Lesz	Function: focal point for the ASCOBANS Agreement
Organization: Department of Forestry and Nature Conservation, the Ministry of the Environment	Address: 00-922 Warszawa, Wawelska 52/54
Telephone: +48 22 57 92 667 Fax: +48 22 57 92 290	Email: monika.lesz@mos.gov.pl
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

1) Ministry of the Environment, Department of Forestry and Nature Conservation,

00-922 Warszawa, Wawelska 52/54

Telephone: (48 22) 57 92 550, Fax: (48 22) 57 92 290

e-mail: departament.lesnictwa.i.ochrony.przyrody@mos.gov.pl

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

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

Contact person: Iwona Pawliczka, e-mail iwona.pvp@ug.edu.pl , tel : +48 58 67 51 316

3) National Marine Fisheries Research Institute Kołłątaja 1, 81-332 Gdynia,

Telephone: +48 587-356-232, Fax: +48 587-356-110

e-mail sekretariat@mir.gdynia.pl

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

Implementation of methods to reduce bycatch

Operational Programme "Fisheries and Sea" 2014-2020 provides for the allocation of funds to alternative fishing gear.

In 2014, the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute (MIR-PIB) once again implemented the Monitoring Programme for Incidental Catches of Cetaceans (PMPPW, Polish: Program Monitorowania Przypadkowych Połowów Waleni) based on the obligations under Regulation (EC) 812/2004. In 2014, observations were carried out on 15 over 15m vessels operating in 5 ports and 10 boats in 5 ports. Under the Programme observers stayed in the sea for 134 days, including 65 days on vessels fishing with pelagic trawls and 69 days on cruises (including 11 days in below 15m vessels) when fishing was carried out with gillnets. Moreover, 11 days of observations were spent on fishing boats in the region of the Bay of Gdańsk. This was due to the fact that the region scheduled for monitoring (the Bay of Puck) was considered to be the place of the greatest abundance of porpoise (Kuklik I., K. Skóra. O morświnie. "Source: Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdansk (www.morswin.pl)") and in accordance with point 6 of the recitals to Regulation 812/2004 "should be given priority". Similarly to 2013, during the observations it turned out that in most vessels the fishing gear used in this area did not require bycatch monitoring under Regulation 812/2004.

During the monitoring of fishing with pelagic trawls and gillnets in the Baltic Sea carried out by the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute in 2014, no incidental catch and no cetaceans entangled in nets were observed. Observers did not record any cetacean in catches carried out with nets in the Bay of Puck. Moreover, it needs to be noted that information on bycatches of protected species registered in log-books is submitted to the Fisheries Monitoring Centre. Sea fishing inspectors verify whether the captains of fishing vessels comply with the obligation to use pingers.

WWF Poland, WWF Germany and WWF Denmark carry out the *Baltic Smart Gear Development and testing of bycatch minimizing fishing gear Technologies* project together. The aim of the project is to collect information on the possible technologies that could reduce the bycatch of marine mammals and birds in gillnets while preserving the

effectiveness of nets at the current level. The next stage of the project, for which funds are currently raised, envisages a call for proposals for a technology that would attain the above goal. The winner will acquire funds for testing their gear on site. The Smart Gear project is financed by the Seed Money Facility under the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

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

On 5 February 2014, a Polish fisherman reported a porpoise bycatch in his cod net (GNS).

On 17 March 2014, a live porpoise was spotted in the Piast Canal swimming towards the Szczecin Lagoon.

Moreover, on 27 June 2014, in the vicinity of Darłówek, a humpback whale was noticed.

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>

The above website presents Polish reports on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 812/2004 in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. The 2014 report will be uploaded to the website when finished and translated into English, which is scheduled for May 2015 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, implements the Polish part of the project entitled BIAS: "*Baltic Sea Information on Acoustic Soundscape*". Its main objective is the implementation of descriptor 11 for GES from Annex to the *Marine Strategy Framework Directive* at the regional level of the Baltic Sea. The project is planned for September 2012 – August 2016. The sea bottom has been equipped with five sets of measurement devices whose purpose is to record the underwater noise produced by vessels in the Polish part of the Baltic Sea and to assess the impact of acoustic pressure on living organisms, mainly fish (the project is also implemented by the Development Foundation at the University of Gdansk).

In 2015, pilot monitoring of underwater noise will be carried out under the State Environmental Monitoring focusing on continuous underwater sounds and impulse underwater sounds. At the request of the General Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, the monitoring of underwater noise is carried out by the Institute of Meteorology and Water Management, Maritime Branch in Gdynia, and is financed by the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management.

A non-mandatory (not required by the Community law) draft Ordinance of the *Minister of the Environment on the scope and method of carrying out seawater monitoring*, which

includes the problems of noise and litter in marine environment, is under way.

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

In the Polish zone of the Baltic Sea, no such cases were noted.

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 13 February, the CHEMSEA project was concluded. It was dedicated to the identification and reduction of threats related to dumped chemical weapons in the Baltic Sea. The project was co-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.

WWF Poland is working on a continuation of the project entitled "Collecting ghost nets in the Baltic Sea" that comprises both active measures consisting in the removal of ghost nets from the Baltic Sea, and the development of tools that will reduce the amount of lost fishing gear and better means to identify the owners. Following fruitful cooperation with Lithuania, the project is to be continued with Estonia "Keep Estonian Sea Tidy", Swedish municipality Simirsham and WWF Germany. The project application will be submitted in response to the

call for proposals to the Baltic Sea Region Programme (INTERREG). Moreover, the removal of ghost nets in the Baltic Sea is included in the Operational Programme "Fisheries and Sea 2014-2020".

Polish fishermen from Kołobrzeg trained German fishermen from the region of Stralsund on the removal of abandoned fishing gear. Campaigns carried out in Germany in 2014 made it possible to remove 2 tons of ghost nets.

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, 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 sites. At least three of them – in the Bay of Pomerania, the Bay of Puck and in Ostoja Słowińska – have been considered crucial in terms of porpoise protection according to the current expert knowledge substantiated e.g. with historic occurrence of bycatches, observations of single specimens and data on dead porpoises washed up.

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 sites (<http://www.gdos.gov.pl/kontakt-3>).

These data are also presented at: <http://natura2000.gdos.gov.pl/datafiles> and <http://geoserwis.gdos.gov.pl/mapy/>

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.

Yearlong monitoring of the coast with the involvement of volunteers trained by the Hel Marine Station, the so-called "Blue Patrol", is continued. The project has been implemented since 2010 by WWF Poland together with the Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdansk, under the name: "Support for the restitution and protection of Baltic Sea mammals in Poland", and since 2013 also with the KULING Waterbird Research Group under the name: "Protection of water bird and water mammal habitats". Under this project SMIOUG carried out research with C-POD hydroacoustic devices used for the registration of sounds emitted by porpoises. The project completion was planned for the end of 2014. The region of porpoise detection covers the area from the Vistula River mouth along the Vistula Spit up to the border of Russia. The project also encompassed the analysis of the fishing effort in the region of hydroacoustic studies of

porpoise abundance (Southern Bay of Gdańsk) and of the correctness of fishing gear marking. Together with the Sea Fishing Inspectorate, works related to the removal of poaching gear were conducted.

The Blue Patrol is composed of 200 volunteers – its members monitor and intervene if water mammals or birds in need of help are observed. Cooperation between the network of volunteers operating in the area and a science and research institution – SMIOUG – allows for a suitable response to all threats concerning Baltic Sea mammals (including porpoises) found on beaches.

4.2 New Technological Developments

Please provide a brief summary of any relevant information

None

4.3 Other Relevant Research

Please provide a brief summary of any relevant information

In 2012, the University of Gdansk commenced the construction of a modern research vessel designed e.g. for the observation of marine mammals and related hydroacoustic tests. Construction works are to conclude in 2015.

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.
Collection of samples (type, preservation method)	Within the scope of research following from its statutory activity, the Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk, 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: <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;

Revised Format for the ASCOBANS Annual National Reports

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – collecting fat sample 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.
Database (Number of data sets by species, years covered, software used, online access)	As of 1988, the data have been introduced to the standard Access database. There is no on-line access to the database.
Additional Information (e.g. website addresses, intellectual property rights, possibility of a central database)	<p>An electronic atlas of mammals distribution in Poland has been prepared and updated, under the title “Atlas of Mammals in Poland” (Polish: Atlas ssaków Polski) (developed by the Institute of Nature Conservation of the Polish Academy of Sciences)</p> <p>Link: http://www.iop.krakow.pl/ssaki/Katalog.aspx</p> <p>The atlas also includes data on the discoveries of dead or bycaught cetaceans and their 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
Porpoise 5 specimens	due to the considerable progress of carcass decomposition – undefined
Porpoise 1 specimen	bycatch

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. Source: WWF/SMIOUG report data base – year 2014

Date	Length	Sex	Place of finding	Place of samples storage
05.02.2014	122cm	Male porpoise	Unieście	Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk
20.06.2014	100cm	1-year-old male porpoise	Beach in Międzywodzie	Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk

Revised Format for the ASCOBANS Annual National Reports

11.07.2014	147cm	Male porpoise	Bay of Puck, Oksywie in Gdynia	Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk
6.08.2014	87cm	Very young male porpoise	Dąbki, Darłowo municipality	Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk
27.08.2014	165cm	Female porpoise	Darłowo harbour	Hel Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk
13.12.2014	Advanced carcass decay	Young male porpoise	Bay of Puck, Hel	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.

A non-mandatory (not required by the Community law) draft Ordinance of the *Minister of the Environment on the scope and method of carrying out seawater monitoring*, which includes the problems of noise and litter in marine environment, is under way.

Works are also carried out on the programme of seawater monitoring developed pursuant to Article 155c of the Act – Water Law, in line with Article 11 of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, which envisages the extension of the State Environmental Monitoring to include research on species and habitats in marine areas.

The previously mentioned Operational Programme "Fisheries and Sea 2014-2020" comprises proposals on testing and introducing alternative fishing gear that reduces bycatch and on removing lost nets from the Baltic Sea. The implementation of OP RYBY [FISH] 2014–2020 is to contribute to a reduced impact of fisheries on the marine environment, including the avoidance and reduction, as far as possible, of unwanted catches.

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.

On 18 May 2014, the Marine Station of the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdańsk, prepared an awareness-raising stand located on the premises of the "Blue Village" next to the "Porpoise's House". The organisation of an annual open-air event combined with an information campaign dedicated to the Baltic harbour porpoise is one of the implemented elements of the Bonn Convention and the ASCOBANS Agreement. The exhibition accompanying the celebrations of the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise showcased the equipment used in research, e.g. the POD acoustic detector. It also included devices used for active protection of these animals, i.e. pingers and marine mammal-friendly fishing gear – cod cages. It was also possible to receive free awareness-raising materials and gadgets.

http://www.hel.ug.edu.pl/aktu/2014/XII_MDBM.htm

On 22 June 2014 in Brzeźno, Our Earth Foundation organised a Baltic Sea environmental picnic under the motto: *"Meet, love, protect the Baltic Sea"*. The picnic was also attended by the employees of the Marine Station, who presented information e.g. on porpoise protection.

http://www.hel.ug.edu.pl/aktu/2014/sprzatanie_baltyku_2014.htm

On 16 December 2014 in Warsaw, a meeting was held organised by WWF Poland, financed with EU funds, as well as by the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management. The meeting was dedicated to the popularisation of the SAMBAH project results. It was attended by representatives of public administration, scientists, representatives of fishermen and NGOs, as well as invited guests from Finland, Sweden and Germany. The results of the SAMBAH project were the topic of several articles in regional and national press.

<http://www.wwf.pl/?15580/Prawie-450-kuzynow-delfina-w-Baltyku>

Knowledge about porpoises is disseminated, and the ASCOBANS Agreement is promoted at www.morswin.pl.

POSSIBLE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT

Please provide any relevant information.

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

UNEP/CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat
UN Campus
Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10
53113 Bonn
Germany

Tel: +49 228 815 2416

Fax: +49 228 815 2440
Email: ascobans@ascobans.org