

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

48th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Bonn, Germany, 23 – 24 October 2018

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REPORT OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF THE BLACK SEA, MEDITERRANEAN AND CONTIGUOUS ATLANTIC AREA (ACCOBAMS)



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

48th meeting of the CMS Standing Committee in Bonn, 23-24 October 2018

I. MANAGEMENT OF THE AGREEMENT

a. Administrative matters

1. As of September 2018, there are 24 State Parties to the Agreement. Turkey became Party to ACCOBAMS on 1st February 2018.

2. A proposal for the extension of the ACCOBAMS to cover the Atlantic EEZ of Spain and Portugal was adopted by the MOP4. By September 2018, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Monaco, Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine deposited their instrument of acceptance with the Depositary.

3. The 6th Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Agreement, was held in Monaco from 22nd to 25th November 2016. The Meeting appointed representatives of France (Chair), Algeria, Albania, Cyprus and Ukraine as Bureau Members for the triennium 2017-2019.

Signature of the Amendment to the Headquarters Agreement with the Host Country, which clarify the conditions governing the functioning of the Permanent Secretariat, was held on 25th November 2016.

4. The 11th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee was held from 7th to 9th February 2017, in Monaco. Mr. Simone Panigada was nominated as the Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee for the period 2017-2019 and Mrs. Ayaka Amaha OZTÜRK as the Vice Chair.

5. The 2nd Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Follow-up Committee was held in Monaco on 5 & 6 March 2018.

b. Regular communication

6. A new web site adopting the CMS Family identity, in both English and French, was launched in January 2017 (<http://www.accobams.org/>).

7. The 4th Conference on Cetacean Conservation in South Mediterranean Countries of the ACCOBAMS was held in Oran (Algeria) from 11th to 13th November 2017. The objective was to assess the knowledge gained on cetaceans in the South of the Mediterranean, to identify potential gaps and to stimulate the development of conservation actions in order to promote the implementation of the ACCOBAMS Agreement.

II. CONSERVATION ACTIONS

a. Improve knowledge about the state of cetaceans



8. Cetacean population estimates and distribution: During the summer 2018, the first large scale cetaceans survey of the Mediterranean Sea (**ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative**) was carried out by combining visual survey methods (aerial- and vessel-based surveys) and passive acoustic monitoring (PAM), with the participation of scientists of the area. Five Research Vessels, ten aircrafts, and around one hundred observers, specifically trained, have been surveying the whole Mediterranean, at the same time, following a harmonized scientific methodology. Data collected will be analyzed with the aim of assessing abundance and distribution of cetaceans populations. Fundraising efforts are ongoing to implement similar survey in the Black Sea in the next years.

b. Reduce human pressures on cetaceans

9. **Interaction with fisheries:** In accordance with Resolution 6.16 on interactions with fisheries, a Joint Working on Bycatch is to be established with ASCOBANS. Several projects aiming at assessing and mitigating impacts of bycatch and depredation by bottlenose dolphins (in particular with purse seine fisheries) are funded by the MAVA Foundation and support the implementation of relevant activities in the Alboran Sea, the Tunisian-Sicily Strait and the Levantine area. Main activities include data collection methodologies, on-board monitoring, mitigation techniques, ... Collaboration with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM – FAO) is pursued within the framework of these projects. ACCOBAMS is represented in the IWC Standing Working Group on Bycatch (SWG IWC-BMI).

10. **Anthropogenic noise:** a **joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS/CMS/ECS workshop** entitled “Best Practice Workshop: Fostering inter-regional cooperation in underwater noise monitoring and impact assessment in waters around Europe, within the context of the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive” was held on Saturday 29th April 2017 in Denmark. Moreover, the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat is one of the partners of the **QUIETMED project** - “Joint programme on noise (D11) for the implementation of the Second Cycle of the MSFD in the Mediterranean Sea”-, project funded by the EU and coordinated by CTN Naval from Spain.

Moreover, the Resolution 6.18 “Implementation of an ACCOBAMS Certification for **Highly Qualified Marine Mammals Observers**” was adopted by Parties in November 2016. The objective is to encourage ACCOBAMS Parties to give permits for activities in their national area, in priority, to industrial companies employing ACCOBAMS Highly Qualified MMOs/PAM operators or at least other internationally agreed certifications. The first training will be held in Romania from 12th to 16th September 2018.

c. Improve Communication, Awareness and Capacity-Building

11. **Capacity to use cetaceans photo ID and undertake aerial surveys:** a 5 days training session will be organized in October 2018 in Byblos, Lebanon. This training, organized in collaboration by ACCOBAMS with SPA/RAC, IUCN Med, MedPAN and Lebanese CNRS.

12. **Stranding:** a joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS/SPA-RAC workshop on marine debris and cetacean stranding was held on Friday 8th April 2018 in La Spezia, Italy during the 31st ECS Conference. Strengthening collaboration between global and regional intergovernmental organizations and NGOs interested in this issue was an objective of this workshop, in order to ensure better synergy and to optimize efforts. Outcomes of the workshop were presented to the E sub-committee of the IWC Scientific Committee. The committee welcomed this initiative, recognized the need of focusing on common protocols to address this issue and indicated that they should be as



simple as possible. A specific workshop was proposed to be held during the World Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, in December 2019.

d. Enhance effective conservation of Cetaceans Critical Habitats

13. **Protected areas for cetaceans:** ACCOBAMS is working on the **identification of new relevant of Cetaceans Critical Habitats (CCH)** in the ACCOBAMS area, in order to propose appropriate threats management or spatial management measures. The identification is based on the overlapping of areas of interest for Marine Mammals (IMMAs) and mapping of anthropogenic threats.