UN environment programme

ASCOBANS

AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF SMALL CETACEANS OF THE BALTIC, NORTH EAST ATLANTIC, IRISH AND NORTH SEAS

ASCOBANS/AC30/Inf.3

02 August 2026

30th MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Bonn, Germany, 1-3 September 2026
Agenda Item 3

SUMMARY COMPILATION OF THE 2025 NATIONAL REPORTS SUBMITTED BY ASCOBANS PARTIES

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

This information document compiles, in a summary format, the responses given to the questions in the ASCOBANS National Report Form 2025. The National Reports compiled here are those submitted in time for AC30: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and United Kingdom. Please refer to these full reports for detailed information.

Contents:

High-level Summary of Key Messages

In your country, for 2025 (Year 2), what does this report reveal about:

1. The most successful aspects of implementation of the Agreement?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
1) Among stranded porpoises, there were very few that were probably by-caught. 2) There were no stranded small cetaceans that had been impacted by marine debris. 3) All fresh porpoises were collected and underwent a necropsy.	1) Bycatch: The video monitoring program of gillnet fishery is still ongoing with up to 10 vessels being monitored every year – mainly in the Belt Sea population management unit. 2) Surveys and research: Extensive monitoring is being carried out to monitor the Belt Sea population & SAMBAH-II was successfully completed and CUMBIAH funded and started. + SAMBAH-II partners are already talking about preparing & funding for SAMBAH-III.	Attending SAMBAH II surveys project and the new reporting system in Finland under Information on harbour porpoise sightings in Finland.		1) Implementation and enforcement of North Sea Navigation Regulation: Extension of the reg. to entire Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park, incl. whale sanctuary, continues to be effectively enforced. 16-knot speed limit contributed to reduced underwater noise levels and decreased risk of ship strikes on HP. 2) Progress in spatial protection measures within the whale sanctuary: Restricting fishing practices, particularly set gillnets, led to reduced bycatch risk in key HP habitats. 3) Continued development of acoustic monitoring (e.g. C-PODs) provides unique, high-res. time series that reveals both spatial differences & seasonal dynamics in porpoise occurrence within the Wadden Sea. 4) Collaboration between federal and state authorities, scientific institutions, and NGOs improved the knowledge base for conservation measures. 5) Outreach activities targeting fishers, shipping operators, & public have contributed to better compliance and awareness of HP conservation needs.	1) Participation and completion of SAMBAH-II aimed at estimating the abundance of harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea. 2) Planned participation in CUMBIAH, where further data analysis of noise origin in SAMBAH II will be conducted. 3) Cooperation with University of Klaipeda for monitoring harbour porpoises. 4) Outreach activities (two science conferences held in 2025). 5) New measures.	1) Several good results from CIBBRiNA e.g. the stakeholder engagement best practice guidance, the SCOTI and BEAM work with regards to bycatch assessment, the review of mitigation measures & lots of trials being conducted in the case studies. 2) Tagging pilot successfully tagged 5 porpoises until 2026. 3) SCANS winter survey successfully conducted winter 2024, report published.	1) Finalisation and adoption of the HELCOM Toolbox for bycatch mitigation (incl. information on bycatch mitigation measures for HP). 2) Presentation of the bycatch mitigation measures for HP during the Baltfish Technical WG on HP (19.11.2025). 3) Finalisation of successful data collection within SAMBAH II by National Marine Fisheries Research Institute. 4) Marine debris - Based on all 57 studies conducted in 2024, a GES was found in terms of waste collected on the Polish coast.	1) SAMBAH-II was successfully completed & CUMBIAH funded and started. 2) Monitoring program is working well.	Continued long-term surveillance of bycatch and strandings and associated research plays a significant role in UK capacity to monitor current and emerging trends/risk.

2. The greatest challenges in implementing the Agreement?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
1) Keeping the strandings network up and running. 2) Reporting obligations (MSFD, Natura 2000, OSPAR, …) are currently very high, with challenges for civil servants to be as efficient as possible and to avoid duplication of efforts, with a high risk of losing momentum and efficiency. 3) Keeping a balance between obligations in different fora, such as those related to the protection of species and habitats, and those related to climate change (e.g. the requirements concerning renewable energy). 4) The overlap with other conventions, agreements, directives, ... as also obvious in the reporting to ASCOBANS.	1) Bycatch: Still no overall bycatch estimate for Belt Sea management unit incl. the DK, DE, SE fleet. 2) Resource depletion: Although fishery has been minimised/ closed, recruitment of both herring & cod remain low. Restoring habitat in e.g. the Belt Sea area is a long process. 3) Use of stranding records: Too few stranded/bycaught porpoises are collected and necropsied. Funding to perform necropsies on 25 porpoise / year, but has never been done due to lack of collected animals.	Permanent funding for monitoring is still lacking.		1) Harmonizing EU Habitats Directive (Natura 2000) with CFP. 2) Insufficient data on bycatch levels: Systematic and representative monitoring still lacking, limiting the ability to assess population-level impacts. 3) Cumulative impacts of human activities from shipping, offshore wind energy development, and underwater noise pose risks to HPs. 4) Climate change and ecosystem shifts: Changes in prey availability and habitat conditions add uncertainty to conservation planning and may affect porpoise distribution.	1) Lack of human resources & data availability (research mostly). 2) Lack of finances for monitoring and research on HP state.	1) Bycatch monitoring and mitigation remains a challenge, especially because many Dutch vessels are shorter than 12 m and therefore don't have to adhere to many of the legislations. 2) Concerning strandings, there has been a change of database, which includes some transfer-hiccups and may lead to a trend break. 3) Structural funding for data collection of bycatch.	The latest method of distributing EU funds raises our concerns about whether there will be enough funds to implement the agreement's objectives.	1) It has been challenging to receive bycaught carcasses for monitoring purposes due to practical and legal constraints. 2) Similarly, numbers of stranded animal reports have decreased, limiting available carcasses for monitoring and research. Both are actively being addressed.	-

3. The main priorities for future implementation of the Agreement?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
1) To deal with overlap with other work and/or obligations in international fora, such as those in OSPAR, IWC, ICES, MSFD.	Ensure and support that the result of SAMBAH-II/CUMBIAH & SCANS-V (2027) will	Permanent funding for monitoring, gillnet fisheries ban in the area of regular presence of harbour porpoise		1) Full implementation of fisheries restrictions in the whale sanctuary: Ban on set gillnets, trammel nets, and other shing methods within the 12 nm	1) Participate actively in the CUMBIAH project and strengthen regional cooperation on harbour porpoise conservation.	1) New study into ETP bycatch in gillnet fisheries. 2) SCANS V. 3) Final results and evaluation of	1) Continuation of activities carried out so far, together with promotion of pro-ecological practices throughout the country. 2) Reducing underwater noise (impulse and	-	-

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
2) Finding a balance between species protection and issues related to climate change. 3) The maintenance of the strandings scheme, and the keeping up of monitoring efforts in an area that is increasingly used for industrial activities. 4) Working out the future of aerial surveys, with new major projects planned at sea (offshore wind farms).	actually result in appropriate management measures.	and the first MPA where the harbour porpoise is identified as one of the key justification for designation.		zone for all EU vessels. 2) Development and implementation of standardized, mandatory bycatch monitoring to provide reliable data for management decisions. 3) Reduction of underwater noise. 4) Fishery management measures in the N2K sites in the Baltic EEZ although within the framework of Baltfish.	2) Develop and implement fisheries management and bycatch mitigation measures to reduce impacts on harbour porpoises. 3) Expand research and monitoring on harbour porpoises and fisheries impacts, while increasing scientific involvement and data collection efforts.	tagging pilot project, potential follow-up.	continuous), particularly in Natura 2000 sites and support in the preparation of seasonal noise maps (based on continuous noise monitoring by the Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection). 3) the quantity of lost fishing gear recovered from the sea and disposed of, in tonnes per year, shall be no less than 30. 4) Improving the status of fish populations in transitional marine waters 5) Reducing the amount of waste entering the sea via rivers and from WWTPs.		

Section II: Habitat Conservation and Management (threats and pressures on cetaceans)

A. Fisheries-related threats

1. Bycatch

1.1. How is bycatch assessed/monitored in your country?

Method	BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Dedicated observer schemes							✓		✓	✓
Fisheries observers		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Remote Electronic Monitoring		✓							✓	✓
Self-reporting by fishermen	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pathological investigation	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Assessment at stranding site	✓		✓			✓			✓	✓

1.1. (continued)

BE	*Self-reporting by fishermen:* no response yet. *Pathological investigation:* performed on every stranded animal in a condition that warrants necropsy. *Assessment at stranding site:* Images of most stranded animals are taken and used in the decision process to collect (perform a necropsy?) or not. In certain cases, they hint at a cause of death (e.g., predation by grey seals). Bycatch as a cause of death is assessed during necropsy. Mortality by bycatch of marine mammals in Belgian waters and/or by Belgian fisheries is not immediately considered a priority problem. In Belgium, recreational fishermen are no longer allowed to use gill- and tangle nets, the types of net that pose the greatest risk of entanglement for marine mammals, and there are very few professional Belgian fishermen that use these nets. However, this type of fishery is very popular in adjacent waters.
DK	*Remote Electronic Monitoring*: 9% of the total number of fishing days. Under percentage it is unclear what the unit is, as effort can be measures in many ways, e.g. number of vessels, days at sea, or net-length and soak-time.
FI	*Self-reporting by fishermen*: Mandatory in legislation. *Pathological investigation:* All known bycaught cetaceans will be investigated. *Assessment at stranding site:* All known cetaceans will be investigated.
FR	
DE	*Fisheries observers*: less than 1% *Pathological investigation:* (for federal state MV only): 1 (14,29)
LT	*Self-reporting by fishermen:* 100% Represents reported information, not actual bycatch *Pathological investigation:* 100% *Assessment at stranding site:* 100%
NL	Requirements for monitoring and mitigation of the regulations remain of limited relevance for the Dutch fleet. *Dedicated observer schemes* are not designed to provide bycatch estimates for small cetaceans in Dutch waters, but they are designed to record bycatch events for a sample of the Dutch fishery. In 2025: 14 observer trips onboard NLD flagged active demersal trawlers; 10 observer trips onboard NLD flagged passive demersal vessels; 13 observer trips onboard NLD flagged pelagic freezer trawlers. For the recreational gillnet fisheries, a biennial logbook survey (15–30 voluntary participants) requests full catch records, including bycatch of marine mammals and birds. The last round was 2022-2023. Bycatch of cetaceans has never been reported in these surveys. *Strandings records:* Pathological examinations are conducted annually on approximately 50 stranded harbour porpoises, and at times other small cetaceans. (Probable/likely) bycatch is among the causes of death recorded.
PL	*Fisheries observers:* Less than 1% of fishing effort/or not calculated, no bycatch observed. *Self-reporting by fishermen:* it is obligatory to report bycatch of sea mammals in the logbooks, but in 2025 no report has been provided.
SE	*Observer schemes*: 71% (gillnets in commercial fisheries) *Fisheries observers:* 66% (gillnets in commercial fisheries) *Remote Electronic Monitoring:* 56% (gillnets in commercial fisheries) *Self-reporting by fishermen*: 100% (gillnets in commercial fisheries). We seldom receive carcasses directly from recreational fisheries.
UK	*Dedicated bycatch observers* and *validated electronic monitoring efforts* are focused in areas/gears with known or perceived sensitive species interactions. *Catch sampling observer effort* are focused mainly on fisheries associated with commercial species discards but sampling protocols now include requirements for observers to record and report sensitive species bycatch. - All vessels are required to report incidents.

	- The Clean Catch programme continues to trial and monitor mitigation measures for cetacean bycatch. - In May 2024 Defra released the response to the consultation on the wider use of Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) in English waters and started implementing the outlined plan. - The Cetacean Investigation Programme (CSIP) and the Scottish Marine Animals Stranding Scheme (SMASS) do investigations of bycatch cases. - Bycatch Evidence Evaluation Protocol. - Review of the risk and evidence of bycatch in Scottish waters. - DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division log stranding records for Northern Ireland. - Welsh Government have contracted Liverpool University to survey and review incidences of bycatch of protected species.

1.2. Which species of small cetaceans were recorded as bycatch by commercial fishing in the reporting period?

Species	BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK	Total
CD – Short-beaked Common Dolphin										✓	
HP – Harbour Porpoise	✓	34			3				12	✓	49+
KW – Killer Whale											
SD – Striped Dolphin											
BD – Bottlenose Dolphin											
RD – Risso's Dolphin											
Non-identified cetacean											
Other											
Total	1+	34	0		3	0	0	0	12	2+	52+

1.2. (continued)

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	Recorded using GN gear type by video-based electronic monitoring.	N/A		In the Belt Sea 27.3.c.22 fishing effort was fully sampled and yielded records of 2 bycaught animals handed over by fishermen, and 1 instance with 0 bycatch, though pathology investigations for this case are not yet complete. In the Baltic Sea 27.3.d, also fully sampled, 1 bycaught HP was recorded and confirmed via pathology investigation. Gear type unknown for all entries.	N/A	N/A	N/A	All caught in gillnet and monitored through REM and Fisheries observers.	-

1.3. Which species of small cetaceans were recorded as bycatch by recreational fishing in the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

1.4. Has there been any notable incidents/issues related to bycatch during the reporting period in your country?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	Yes. One HP was bycaught during a HP tagging field trial. More information on this incident can be found here.	No. In February 2025 alive entanglement of Humpback whale in GNS gears in the Pomeranian Bay (Arkona Basin) in the Baltic Sea (released alive).	Yes. Bycaught animals can show signs of ill health.	No.

1.5. Are there any mitigation measures in place?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes.	Yes. Since 2005 use of pingers in OII Northern North Sea and OII Skagerrak and H Kattegat. Since 2024 use of low gillnets in H Belt Sea and H The Sound.	No.		Yes. OII Southern North Sea: gillnet fishing is banned within the three-nautical-mile zone of the National Park Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea whale sanctuary, and beyond that zone gillnets are restricted in height and mesh size (max 1.30 m stretched span, max 150 mm mesh). OII Southern North Sea: since 2023, EU Delegated Regulation 2022/… (amending 2017/118) has introduced conservation measures for the Natura 2000 sites Sylter Außenriff, Borkum-Riffgrund, Doggerbank, Östliche Deutsche Bucht, Klaverbank, Friese Front, and Centrale Oestergronden. H Arkona Basin: since 2023, Commission Delegated Regulation 2022/303 (amending Regulation 2019/1241) targets reduced incidental catches of the resident Baltic Proper HP population in Natura 2000 EEZ sites in the Baltic Sea.	Yes. Strict species protection under EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in the Gdansk basin: Passive mitigation/prohibition of killing; capture (including bycatch); disturbance. Strict species protection under Law on the Protection of Animals, Plants and Fungi of the Republic of Lithuania in the Gdansk Basin: Passive mitigation/prohibition of killing; capture (incl. bycatch); disturbance.	Yes. Southern North Sea: The use of pingers in bottom-set gillnets in the North Sea is voluntary and not monitored. In certain N2000 sites there are time-area closures in place, as well as mandatory use of pingers. Effects unknown. In certain N2000 sites time-area closures in place for gillnets, designed for birds. Effects unknown. In certain N2000 sites limitations for total set net length and set duration. Effects unknown.	Yes. Pingers on static nets in the Gdansk Basin since 2023. Temporal closures of static nets use (Nov-Jan) in Bornholm Basin since 2023. Permanent closure of static nets use in Bornholm Basin since 2023.	Yes. Acoustic deterrent devices in SD24, Nordvästra skånes havsområde & Sydvästskånes utsjövatten. No bycatches of HP were recorded already in 2024 before the regulation, and throughout 2025, therefore probably most due to reduced fishing effort in the area.	Yes. Acoustic deterrent devices in the Celtic Sea, Northern North Sea, Southern North Sea and Channel have all been effective.

1.6. Have there been changes in fishing effort (for fisheries known to have an impact) in the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	Yes. Decrease in the overall gillnet effort.	Unknown/ N/A. Gillnet fishing effort in commercial fisheries has decreased substantially in the marine area, with reductions exceeding		Yes. Baltic Sea: reduction of fishing effort in gill net and trammel net fisheries targeting cod and	Unknown/ N/A. Scientific advice for 2025 fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea was lower than previous years, mainly due to reduced quotas, stock	No.	Yes. A significant reduction in fishing effort has been observed, resulting from the decommissioning of part of the fishing fleet, with a number of vessels scrapped and not	Yes. Gillnet effort has decreased during many years and is now on a	Yes. Declines in netting effort over the last decade and most other gear types are also

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
		50% in certain locations over the past two decades.		herring due to quota reductions.	declines, but there is still no direct evidence linking this to reduced bycatch.		replaced, including vessels scrapped with financial support provided under the EMFAF 2021–2027.	very low level.	showing declines in most ICES divisions.

1.7. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on bycatch in your country.

BE	-
DK	- CIBBRINA, Homepage – CIBBRiNA - ECOCATCH, Welcome to ECO-CATCH - MITIBYC, Mitigation and bycatch of protected species (113605) - Welcome to DTU Research Database - NET-POT, Development of gillnet fisheries and shore crab pots to build new sustainable fisheries (114523) - Welcome to DTU Research Database
FI	-
FR	
DE	- Project: Bycatch and health assessment on harbor porpoises from 2023 to 2026. - Project: EU LIFE CIBBRiNA - Coordinated Development and Implementation of Best Practice in Bycatch Reduction in the North Atlantic, Baltic and Mediterranean Regions - Project: CUMBIAH - Conservation Union for Management of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise Populations and Their Habitat
LT	Taking into account the European Commission (COM) initiatives and the intention to strengthen the protection of marine mammals (specifically harbour porpoises), discussions on additional measures (such as the use of acoustic deterrent devices – pingers, restrictions on fishing activities, and other management measures) continued in 2025. However, no significant new binding regulatory changes that would substantially alter the situation in Lithuania were adopted. At the Baltic Sea regional level, within the BALTFISH framework, further possible measures are being considered. Currently, a third joint recommendation on measures to reduce bycatch of Baltic harbour porpoises is under preparation (Draft Joint Recommendation for mitigation measures to reduce bycatch of the Baltic proper harbour porpoise).
NL	New project (starting in 2026) to improve the monitoring of ETP bycatch, including the further use of remote electronic monitoring.
PL	MIR PIB is involved in CIBBRiNA project. PL and DE were involved in preparation and finalisation of the HELCOM Toolbox for bycatch mitigation (including overview of different methods to mitigate bycatch of harbour porpoise (among others).
SE	Collaborations within CIBBRiNA and different international working groups and workshops (ICES etc.). Publications: - Königson et al. 2026. Harbour porpoise and harbour seal bycatch in gillnet fisheries: Effects of high frequency acoustic deterrents, gear characteristics, and environmental factors. In review; ICES Journal of Marine Science. - Säterberg et al. 2026. Spatiotemporal patterns in harbour porpoise (Phocoena phocoena) bycatch in the Swedish gillnet fishery. In review; Global Ecology and Conservation.
UK	- Trials of mitigation measures are ongoing through the Clean Catch programme, including the use of passive acoustic reflectors. Acoustic testing of PAR floats and pearly planned for early 2026. The Clean Catch Programme are also running a cetacean bycatch mitigation trial which currently has 9 active skippers recording with REM and 1 pending, across four locations (Plymouth, Mevagissey, Helford and Newlyn). An acoustic monitoring project was also being run through the Clean Catch Programme, with seven acoustic monitoring devices for cetaceans deployed in Cornwall (July 2023 – July 2025).

	- Under the Bycatch Monitoring Programme, single channel hydrophones (soundtraps) have been deployed regularly on static nets to help inform on how relative cetacean density relates to bycatch probability. This work is ongoing and the acoustic dataset is being analysed and will continue to expand. Also, four channel hydrophone arrays have been deployed numerous times to track the fine scale movements of small cetaceans around fishing nets. This work has led to unique findings that will be published in 2026. An analysis of bycatch rates from the Bycatch Monitoring Programme for harbour porpoise and common dolphins was published in the ICES Journal of Marine Science in 2025 (Moyes et al). - A *Fisheries Industry Science Partnership* project with Bangor/Liverpool Universities was completed in 2025. - Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales are currently drafting a report reviewing Acoustic Deterrent Impacts on Marine Mammals and Mobile Fish Species in Welsh Waters. - Ongoing PhD project on bycatch is using data from CSIP strandings and necropsies - collaboration between University of Exeter and CSIP. - The Scottish Entanglement Alliance (SEA) a collaborative partnership involving industry, research, and NGO sectors has continued its work to better understand and reduce marine megafauna entanglement in Scottish fisheries.

1.8. Is the perceived level of pressure from bycatch in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Decreasing (HP), potentially due to fewer gillnets deployed.	Decreasing (HP), due to reduction in gillnet effort.	Unknown.		Unknown.	Unknown (HP).	Unknown (HP). Monitoring effort is low.	Decreasing (HP). Decreasing of fishing effort on static nets as a result of fish stock depletion, leads to the decrease of bycatch risk.	Decreasing (HP). Nature of evidence: observer schemes.	Increasing (CD) - Rates appear to be increasing in nets based on observer data; although the number from strandings/necropsies are staying the same. Decreasing (HP) - Rates appear to be decreasing in nets based on observer data; although the number from strandings/necropsies are staying the same.

A. Fisheries-related threats

2. Resource Depletion

2.1. Based on the latest stock assessments, are there any notable depletions of fish species which would be a concern for small cetaceans?

BE	No.
DK	There are two herring stocks relevant to Danish waters: The North Sea autumn spawning herring and the Western Baltic spring-spawning herring. The first is a large population and of relatively little concern according to ICES while the latter were assessed in 2025 to be depleted and at risk. Furthermore, recruitment has been very low since 2006 and even though fishing pressure has been very low in recent years, even lower than recommended levels, but despite this, the stock has continued to decline. Scientists expect that even if fishing stopped completely, the population is unlikely to recover to safe levels anytime soon, because so few young fish are being produced (ICES 2026). The spring spawning herring stock was assessed for ICES sub-divisions 20-24 were assessed visually here.
FI	Yes. There are four Baltic herring management stocks in the Baltic Sea (Bothnian, Central Baltic, Gulf of Riga and Western Baltic). At the moment herring stocks in the Baltic Sea are facing serious challenges, with three out of the four in significant decline. In the central Baltic Sea, herring numbers have dropped by over 80% since the 1970s, with a 40% decrease occurring in just the past four years—bringing the stock to a critical level. In contrast, the herring stock in the Gulf of Riga remains stable and has even shown growth over the past two decades, making it the only Baltic herring stock not currently under severe pressure.
FR	

DE	Yes. Western Baltic: spawning stock biomasses as well as reproduction rates of spring spawning herring and cod are on low levels. North Sea: Based on latest ICES stock assessments for North Sea (ICES Advice on shing opportunities, catch, and effort (2025)), no clear indication of widespread depletion across all key prey species relevant to small cetaceans. However, some key forage fish stocks, particularly sandeel, show signs of low biomass and poor recruitment, with ICES advising zero catch in parts of the North Sea.
LT	Yes. Research (according to the multiannual plan for the Baltic Sea results) in 2025 confirmed that: several Baltic stocks (especially herring stocks) remain critically depleted; some stocks are in low productivity states, meaning recovery is di cult even with reduced shing. Baltic cod stocks (both eastern and western) remain collapsed or near-collapse with zero-catch scientific advice continuing into 2025–2026; herring stocks show mixed but still weak status, with central Baltic herring slightly fluctuating but remaining below fully healthy levels and some sub-stocks declining; sprat remains one of the more stable species but is still considered vulnerable due to poor recruitment in recent years and ecosystem pressures; and overall biomass of key commercial stocks remains below historical sustainable levels, with many stocks cod and some either at or below precautionary biological limits, meaning shing pressure must stay strictly limited or in some cases fully closed to allow recovery, with HELCOM noting that only a minority of fish stocks in the Baltic Sea meet GES and that improvement since the baseline period has been limited or absent.
NL	Yes. Despite further signs of recovery in some fish stocks, the latest OSPAR assessment indicates that None of the fish species groups (coastal, demersal or pelagic fish) in the Greater North Sea was found to be in good environmental status. Information on individual prey species stock assessments that are potentially directly relevant as targeted prey by harbour porpoises (ICES advice): Whiting: For the North Sea and eastern English Channel stock (whg.27.47d), fishing pressure is below the MSY threshold and spawning stock biomass remains above critical reference levels, indicating the stock is in good status (achieved). Status for whg.27.7b-ce-k (failed) and whg.27.3a (unknown) remain unchanged from previous assessments. North Sea cod (cod.27.47d20) is now in such a poor condition that ICES has recommended zero commercial catch, with stocks assessed as critically depleted (failed). Sandeel: The picture remains mixed. For SA3r and SA4, ICES advice is for zero catch in 2025, reflecting continued low stock status (failed). North Sea autumn-spawning herring (her.27.3a47d) has shing pressure below F~MSY~ and SSB estimated at 1.52 million tonnes, though ICES notes the stock remains in a low productivity phase (achieved). European sprat: An analytical assessment was performed for the combined North Sea and Division 3.a sprat (spr.27.3a4), with fishing pressure below F~MSY~ (achieved). For English Channel sprat (spr.27.7de), the stock size is above MSY B~trigger~ and fishing pressure is below the F~MSY~ proxy (achieved).
PL	Yes. All Baltic cod stocks have been significantly depleted for several years. In addition herring stocks and especially western herring stock (ICES subdivision 20-24) (spring spawners) is significantly depleted, but also central herring (ICES 25-29, 32) is not in a very good state. According to latest ICES advice for 2025 for cod (24-32), western and central herring (20-24, 25-29, 32) and sprat (22-32), there is no significant improvement of stocks observed, especially concerning SSB (Spawning Stock Biomass).
SE	Yes. The Bothnian -, Western Baltic-, and Central Baltic herring stocks are showing significant decline. All Baltic cod stocks and cod stocks in the Sound and Kattegat have been significantly depleted over several years.
UK	Yes. An evaluation of the sustainability of fisheries catch limits occurs annually. For 2025, the review highlighted that for several species the agreed Total Allowable Catches (TACs) exceeded ICES advice. For example, agreed TACs of cod stocks in the Irish Sea, West of Scotland, Rockall Cod, Celtic Sea, Eastern Channel and North Sea, herring stocks in the Celtic Sea, Irish and North Sea (bycatch) and A-fleet herring (North Sea and Eastern Channel), whiting stocks in the Irish Sea, West of Scotland and Celtic Seas, and mackerel in the North Sea & Western Channel all exceeded advice set by ICES. Several of these TACs have also exceeded ICES advice at least multiple times over the last 5 years. For more details, please see Cefas (2024). Gilmour, F., Bell, E., O'Brien, CM. 2025. Assessing the sustainability of negotiated fisheries catch limits by the UK for 2025. Cefas project report for Defra. 32pp

2.2. Where are these depletions in national waters occurring?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	The stocks are NOT nationally assessed. See ICES reference	OSPAR & HELCOM: Bothnian Sea, Archipelago Sea, Aland Sea,		Southern North Sea,	Eastern Gotland Basin, Gdansk Basin, Baltic Sea,	Southern North Sea, Northern	Arkonia Basin, Bornholm Basin, Gdansk	Kattegat, Belt Sea, The Sound, Arkona Basin, Eastern Gotland Basin,	-

	above for South of 62° North (North Sea, Western Baltic, Irish Sea, Celtic Sea)	Northern Baltic Proper. ICES: Baltic Sea, Archipelago Sea, Bothnian Sea, Bothnian Bay		Arkona Basin, Belt Sea.	Southern Central Baltic - East	North Sea, Central North Sea	Basin, Eastern Gotland Basin	Western Gotland Basin, Northern Baltic Proper, Bothnian Sea, Bornholm Basin, Aland Sea	

2.3. What measures are being taken to manage pressures on depleted fish stocks, including relevant regulations/guidelines (current / planned / year of implementation)?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	TAC regulation annually for fishing mortality.	ICES advice and EU TAC in 2025		Quota reductions for Western Baltic cod and spring spawning herring.	1) Increase fishing opportunities for salmon in Gulf of Finland and decrease fishing in other areas. 2) Implement national quotas. 3) Spatial and temporal fishing restrictions. 4) Reduce fleet capacity. 5) Technical conservation measures. 6) Participate in regional joint recommendations. 7) Fisheries control and enforcement. 8) Coordination of fisheries management. 9) Restore commercial fish stocks.	1) Dutch EEZ seabed protection (no bottom impacting fisheries) increased from 0.3% to 7,2% expected to further increase to 13,8% at the end of 2026. (Implemented 2022 – 2026). 2) Dutch Dogger Bank Natura 2000 area: bottom trawling now requires individual permits and environmental assessment; blanket exemption ruled unlawful (Court ruling May 2026; practical implementation pending).	1) TAC/Quota (EU fisheries regulations for commercially exploited fish species). 2) Multiannual plans (EU fisheries regulations). 3) Protection of spawning sites (national measure in coastal regions). 4) Closed seasons (EU fisheries regulation for commercially exploited fish species).	EU TAC & ICES advice.	- Fishery Management Plans: 5 more FMPs introduced in 2025. - Seasonal fisheries closures: All fisheries restrictions currently in place can be seen here. - MMO Byelaw work: English MPAs (outside 6nm) are/will be subject to new fishing bylaws prohibiting certain activities. - Sandeel fishery closure: Prohibitions on fishing for sandeel in English waters of the North Sea and all Scottish waters were implemented before the start of the 2024 fishing season. - Sandeel MPAs: Sandeels are also a protected feature of 4 MPAs: Mousa to Boddam NC MPA, North-west Orkney NC MPA,Turbot Bank NC MPA and the North East Lewis MPA.

2.4. Is there any evidence within your country's national waters that resource depletion may be impacting small cetaceans (e.g. evidence of starvation)?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	Yes. Only indirectly since the Belt Sea porpoise's population is declining and prey depletion is assumed to be one of the major drivers.	No.		No.	No.	No.	No. Due to very low number of harbour porpoises present in Polish waters it is not possible to collect enough samples to confirm that resource depletion may have an impact on small cetaceans.	Although body condition of stranded and bycaught animals is monitored and there are some animals in poor or emaciated condition, it is not known how representative this is of the general population.	Yes. Evidence of starvation in several stranded cetaceans through necropsies performed under the strandings monitoring programme. However, it is not possible to confidently link this with resource depletion, as there are multiple drivers for nutritional loss e.g. disease, maternal separation etc.

2.5. Are there any national efforts to evaluate cetacean body condition at sea (e.g. surveys)?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	Yes, Aarhus University are conducting a pilot study on drone measurements of porpoises at se. Contact person: Frederik Christiansen: f.christiansen@ecos.au.dk	No.		No.	No.	No.	No. Due to very low number of harbour porpoises present in Polish waters it is not possible to collect enough samples to evaluate cetacean body condition at sea.	No.	No.

2.6. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on resource depletion in your country.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	-	Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) conducts annual research surveys to monitor Baltic herring and sprat stocks, which form a core component of ICES stock assessments. Major research focus in recent years has been herring condition and energetic status, particularly in the Bothnian Sea.		No new research.	Lesutiene J, Šiaulys A, Razinkovas-Baziukas A (2025) Analysis of the causes and consequences of the major concern on biodiversity change in the Curonian Lagoon and Baltic Sea Lithuanian coast. (Link) Ivanauskas et al. (2025), Does the Fishery or Climate Change Drive Commercial Catches in a Shallow Eutrophic Lagoon?. Fish Manag Ecol, 32: 159-173. (Link)	1) In 2025, an MSc research project led by Utrecht University was completed on body condition, exemplied as Body Mass Index, of harbour porpoises from the North Sea, with data from 1700 stranded or bycaught HP from 5 countries around the North Sea (UK, FR, BE, NL, DK) between 1990 and 2023. 2) In 2025, Utrecht University started a 4-year project (including a PhD which runs from 2025-2029) to investigate the links between body condition, reproduction, and health of harbour porpoises from the southern part of the North Sea. 3) In 2025, Utrecht University contributed to a chapter for OceanCare, led by Dr Graham Pierce, on how marine mammal welfare can be impacted by prey depletion.	-	1) Stedt et al. (2025). Combining DNA metabarcoding with macroscopic analysis increases the number of detected prey taxa in the estimated diet for harbour porpoises. Frontiers in marine science, 12, 1517330. 2) Report (in Swedish) on sail drone survey of fish in the SAC Hoburgs bank och Midsjöbankarna by County Administrative Boards Kalmar och Gotland in 2023-2025: Hejdström, A. 2026. Inventering av föda för Östersjötumlare Delrapport för 2023–2025. Länsstyrelsen Gotlands län. 3) Data on eDNA for analyses of prey species within the CUMBIAH project were collected twice at all SAMBAH II stations from summer 2024 to summer 2025.	-

2.7. Is the perceived level of pressure from resource depletion in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	Increasing (HP). The relevant prey stocks are still declining, and the marine environment is in a poor status (expert opinion).	Unknown.		Unknown.	Unknown (HP).	Unknown (HP).	Unknown (HP). Too little samples to confirm impact of this pressure on small cetaceans in the Polish marine waters.	-	Unknown (all).

C. Habitat Change and Degradation (incl. potential physical impacts)

9. Marine Debris (ingestion and entanglement)

9.1. Does your country have monitoring in place to assess levels of marine debris?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes.	Yes.	Yes.		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	-	Yes.	Yes.

9.1. (continued)

BE	Monitoring in the frame of OSPAR and the project Anemoi https://www.interregnorthsea.eu/anemoi
DK	Monitoring the content of waste in dead fulmars and waste on beaches.
FI	https://itameri./tutkimus-ja-menetelmat/itameren-tilan-seuranta/meriroskien-seuranta-kehittyy/ (in Finnish) https://indicators.helcom./indicator/beach-litter/
FR	
DE	Germany participates in several OSPAR monitoring programmes, which provide standardized and long-term data series on marine debris, including: - Beach litter (abundance, composition and trends) - Seafloor litter (composition and spatial distribution) - Plastic particles in fulmar stomachs (indicator of plastic ingestion) These programmes are part of the OSPAR Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme (CEMP) and contribute to the OSPAR Quality Status Report 2023. In addition, monitoring of impacts on marine mammals is conducted through regular necropsies of harbour porpoises and seals, including documentation of ingested litter and entanglement cases.
LT	In Lithuania national marine monitoring is carried out by competent authorities, including the Ministry of Environment and its agencies, and forms a key component of Baltic Sea environmental assessment. This monitoring includes water quality, biodiversity (such as fish, marine mammals, and habitats), and different types of pollution, including nutrients and hazardous substances. The collected data provides the scientific basis for evaluating environmental status and are systematically used for reporting and assessment under EU and regional frameworks, particularly the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), as well as within the HELCOM framework and other European Union reporting obligations.
NL	- OSPAR Litter Monitoring Programme of beach litter: Data on the amount of litter on a given stretch of coastline is recorded at item level. Items to be recorded are predefined by the Guideline for Monitoring Marine Litter on the Beaches in the OSPAR Maritime Area (OSPAR Agreement 2010-02). - OSPAR Plastic particles in Fulmar stomachs in the North Sea: Two types of plastic categories are distinguished in the OSPAR Common Indicator. Industrial plastic pellets are separated from consumer debris such as sheets, foams, threadlike materials and hard fragments. For each of these categories the number of particles and mass is recorded. The final assessment is based only on the total weight of plastics in stomachs, but industrial and consumer waste plastics have different sources and as such provide very useful information for interpreting the monitoring data. - Dutch seafloor litter monitoring in the North Sea: monitoring programme developed to evaluate the state of marine waters (GES) within the MSFD for the Marine Litter descriptor. The Dutch monitoring program for this descriptor includes collection of data on the presence, abundance and distribution of macro litter on the seafloor. The data on seafloor litter must be collected during statutory task fish surveys using a standardised GOV Grand Ouverture vertical) fishing net as part of the International Bottom Trawl Survey (IBTS), which is carried out yearly in the North Sea. The results are uploaded to the ICES DATRAS database, and are used in OSPAR assessments of seafloor litter in the North Sea (Volwater and van Hal 2020).

	- Monitoring of macro- or mesoplastic ingestion: During necropsies, presence or absence of macro- or mesoplastic in stomachs of necropsied cetaceans are visually monitored by Utrecht University. In 2025, in none of the visually inspected stomachs during necropsies (n=?), marine debris was detected. In case the stomachs of necropsied animals contain macro- or mesoplastics, these are sampled and saved at WMR, but not analysed (yet). In 2025, no macro- or mesoplastics where observed in the 54 harbour porpoise stomachs that were studied. The stomachs of 4 common dolphins have been inspected, where one showed a "small para n-like chunk". In the stomachs of 1 bottle nose dolphins, 2 Sowerby's beaked whales, 1 white beaked whale and 1 minke whale no macro- or mesoplastics were observerd. - Monitoring of causes of death, including marine debris entanglement: In 2025, none of the necropsied harbour porpoises presented signs of (chronic) debris entanglement.
PL	-
SE	Stranded and bycaught animals (primarily harbour porpoises) are monitored for the presence of marine debris although nothing of significance has been found.
UK	- Benthic litter: Center for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) coordinate and undertake benthic trawl surveys within UK EEZ, which captures benthic litter data. For each trawl survey, various data are recorded. After each tow, fish were sorted, then all litter items were manually picked from the entire net, and classified according to the Cefas classification system. - Beach litter: Abundance of beach litter relies on data collected on a 100 m stretch of coastline during the annual Marine Conservation Society's Great British Beach Clean, which takes place annually on beaches Northern Ireland by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. - Floating litter: Floating litter is assessed through necropsy examinations of corpses of dead beached birds. At dissection, in addition to the date, the discovery location is specified. Industrial pellets are separated from consumer debris. - Marine debris ingestion/ entanglement: As part of its contract with UK government, the UK strandings programme routinely records and summarizes evidence of marine debris ingestion and/or entanglement found in UK stranded cetaceans which were subjected to post-mortem examination. The Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme (SMASS) has developed an app which records levels of litter noted on surveyed sections of coastline. - Some research NGOs (e.g. HWDT, SWF) systematically record marine debris during dedicated cetacean surveys. - Alongside monitoring, there are also several national and devolved strategies: Scottish Marine Litter Strategy, Northern Ireland beaches, Welsh Government strategy to tackle marine plastic waste.

9.2. Are these data publicly available?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. https://www.interreg-northsea.eu/anemoi	Yes. Monitoring of waste in general - Contact person: Jakob Strand, Aarhus University.	Yes. https://rosgis.syke./#info		Yes.	Yes.	Yes. Stichting Nordzee Kühn et al., 2023 Utrecht University	-	Yes, per request.	Yes. Marine litter data from trawl surveys can be found on the ICES Database of Trawl Surveys (DATRAS). Data from other monitoring is not publicly available online but information on marine litter in various regions of the UK can be found in publicly available reports (e.g., CSIP and SMASS annual reports, Marine Litter Reports for Northern Ireland).

9.3. What species of small cetaceans were found to have been impacted by marine debris?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
None in 2025.	-	-		None.	No data.	One common dolphin showed a "small paraffin-like chunk". Otherwise none.	-	-	7 minke whales, 2 humpback whales, 1 sperm whale, 1 indeterminate cetacean.

9.4. Are there any mitigation measures in place?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. General measures in every domain to reduce litter.	Yes. General waste management incl. no open landfills etc. since 1990s. Measure has been effective but unknown with regard to impact on harbour porpoises. There is also no special fee system in harbours since 2015. Measure has been effective as all waste from ships can be delivered at harbours without any additional costs.	Yes. Ghost nets; Litter.		Yes. • "Fishing for Litter": The initiative is actively implemented in Schleswig-Holstein in cooperation with fishers, authorities and the NABU. Litter caught during shing operations is brought ashore and properly disposed of, contributing to the reduction of marine debris in the Wadden Sea region. • Beach clean-up and awareness activities: Regular "Strandmüll-Sammelaktionen" and participation in international initiatives such as Coastal Cleanup Day are organised within the National Park, involving volunteers, NGOs and local authorities.	Yes. • State Environmental Monitoring Programme for 2024–2029: Monitoring of micro-litter levels in the water column, seabed sediments, and molluscs. • Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Water Sector Plan for 2022–2027: Considering the distribution of dominant seabed habitat types in the LT marine area, it is planned to expand macrozoobenthos research under the State Environmental Monitoring Programme. • Protect Baltic project: marine debris mitigation through harmonised monitoring of litter (beach, water, seabed), microplastic sampling in sediments and biota, identification of pollution sources, and awareness-raising activities. • Interreg Baltic Sea Region project "Baltic Sea Munitions Remediation Roadmap" (MUNIMAP) (2024–2027): The MUNIMAP project aims to accelerate and coordinate national processes across countries by developing guidelines for the removal of munitions from the Baltic Sea.	Yes. The MSFD part III ('Measures', in Dutch) contains existing and additional measures for management of D10, marine debris, for 2022–2027. Link. To what extent these measures are successfully implemented and have effect is unknown.	Yes. Ghost Diving Poland in the Gulf of Riga and Bornholm Basin since 2021.	Yes.	No.

9.5. How is marine debris managed? (incl. relevant regulations / guidelines and the year of implementation, current and planned)

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	The Danish Fisheries Agency received a report from the National Institute of Aquatic Resources in March 2022 (Ghost Nets in Danish Waters). New measures are planned for recreational fishermen, where they will be	Finland and other Baltic Sea coastal states work together through HELCOM. These countries are committed to implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan and especially the Helcom Revised Marine Litter Action Plan. Related topics: https://ym./en/plastics-roadmap-for-nland; Publication: • Reduce and		• MSFD (2008/56/EC) • National Reports • Directive 2008/98/EC on waste • Directive (EU) 2015/720 on reducing the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags • Regulation (EU) 2019/883 on port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships • IMO, MARPOL Annex V •	• MSFD (2008/56/EC), implemented since around 2010 and ongoing. • Single-Use Plastics Directive (EU), implemented in LT around 2021. • Broader EU and national waste management legislation (ongoing) further supports prevention of land-based litter. • At the regional level, LT implements measures under the HELCOM Marine Litter	While there are no specific measures to mitigate marine debris as it relates to small cetaceans, a reduction in plastic pollution is part of the OSPAR Regional Action Plan. The MSFD part III	-	-	There are various litter strategies published, aiming to reduce waste entering the environment e.g. Guidance to prevent pollution, Marine Litter Scotland. • The UK has national & international commitments under the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS) (Marine Strategy

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
	required to report lost fishing gear.	refuse, recycle and replace. A Plastics Roadmap for Finland 2.0 . • https://itameri./itameren-tila/meriroska/roskaantumisen-hillitseminen/ • https://itameri./en/controlling-marine-litter/ • Plastics, the environment and the circular economy • The final report of MikroKeinot project (in Finnish) • European Coastline Macro Litter Trends 2015 – 2021 • HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan		Directive (EU) 2024 /3019 on urban wastewater treatment • Regulation (EU) 2025/2365 on preventing plastic pellet losses to reduce microplastic pollution • Directive (EU) 2019/ 904 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment • OSPAR Region Action Plan on Marine Litter • OSPAR Decisions and Recommendations • Runder Tisch Meeresmüll	Action Plan. • Fisheries-related measures are implemented under the CFP of the EU (ongoing), including gear regulations, limited measures to prevent gear loss, and the use of port reception facilities. • The State Environmental Monitoring Programme (ongoing, current cycle 2024–2029) provides systematic monitoring of beach litter, microplastics in water and sediments, and seabed litter to support policy development, while marine spatial planning (since ~2015, ongoing updates) and coastal strip regulation help manage coastal development and reduce land-based inputs.	(‘Measures’ in Dutch) contains existing and additional measures for management of D10, marine debris, for current planning period (2022–2027).			Regulations 2010), OSPAR, and in relation to UN Sustainable Development Goal 14, to reduce marine pollution and address marine litter impacts. • Wales has a nationwide recycling scheme for end-of-life shing gear, as part of broader Welsh Government strategy to tackle marine plastic waste. • Northern Ireland Fishers Against Marine Litter Pledge.

9.6. Relevant new research/work/collaboration on marine debris in your country.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	Monitoring of marine litter performed in Europe within MSFD was reviewed. Marine litter monitoring gaps and critical points were identified and Recommendations for improving future monitoring of marine litter within MSFD: Galgani, F. et al. (2024). Revisiting the strategy for	https://central-baltic.eu/project/resh/ • https://www.metsa./tiedot-teet/muovipulloja-hehkulamppuja-vasemman-jalan-kenkia-ja-kaksi-jaakaappia-vapaaehtoiset-kerasivat-itaisen-suomenlahden-		Unger, B. et al. (2025). When the small ones tease the largest: microplastic and phthalate ester occurrence in cetaceans occasionally found in the German North Sea and Baltic Sea. Marine Pollution Bulletin, 218, Article 118138. (Link); German round table on marine litter - products, supporting studies, activities of members (Link); BioConsult (2025). OSPAR beach litter monitoring at the	Abbasi, Sajjad, et al. (2026). Geochemical signatures in plastic debris from the Curonian Lagoon, Lithuania. PLoS One 21.2 (2026): e0340582.	On 28.11.2025, the EU Member States established new threshold values for sea floor litter under MSFD. This marks the first time that this type of marine pollution has been assigned a specific quantitative standard. In 2025, a multidisciplinary team, under the lead of Utrecht University, published a scientific paper on primary cell cultures to study effects of micro- and nanoplastics (MNPs) on gene expression. This is the first study to	-	-	Ongoing PhD project on marine debris using samples from CSIP necropsies-collaboration between University of Exeter and CSIP.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
	marine litter monitoring within the European marine strategy framework directive (MSFD). Ocean and Coastal Management, 255, Artikel 107254. (Link)	saaristosta-yli-1300-kiloa-roskaa/		german North Sea coast - results 2022-2024 (Link); Guse et al (2025). Fulmar litter monitoring in Germany - update 2024 (Link); OSPAR reports on marine litter (Link); Plastic in the environment - sources, sinks, solutions (Link)		successfully establish cell lines of stranded (deceased) cetaceans and to conduct these risk exposure studies. The approach allows for studying the adverse effects of pollutants (such as MNPs) in a non-invasive way (Roelen et al. 2025) (Link).			

9.7. Is the perceived level of pressure from marine debris in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Staying the same.	Unknown (HP).	Unknown.		Unknown.	Unknown.	Staying the same. Marine debris do not seem to be a particular threat to HPs, based on the post mortem exams conducted. For several indicators (national and OSPAR) decreased values of litter have been demonstrated, but for some no decrease is shown. The effects of micro- and nano plastics on health and immune functioning remains unclear.	-	-	Staying the same. Data from necropsies for both CD and HP suggest that the level of pressure from marine debris is staying the same. Information for other species is unknown.

Section III: Surveys and Research

A. Biological Information (per species)

1. Abundance estimates

1.1. Did your country conduct national dedicated surveys on abundance and distribution during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. See NSG report: 2 aerial surveys completed.	Yes. National monitoring of HP in July 2025 using aerial line transect survey in Skagerrak and Southern North Sea. Abundance estimates from these surveys are not yet available and will be published in Aarhus	Yes. HP: ongoing methods passive acoustic monitoring and opportunistic sightings collection, regular in low		Yes. HP: Under the HABITATWal project, observer-based aerial line-transect surveys in summer 2025 produced abundance estimates: 3,373 animals (95% CI: 1,781–5,451) in the German North Sea, Weser Elbe estuary (stratum E); 1,720 (95% CI: 744–3,075) in the German Baltic Sea, western Baltic Kiel Firth (stratum I); and 1,140 (95% CI: 657–1,790) in the	No.	Yes. Aerial surveys were conducted in March 2025 on the Dutch Continental Shelf for HP;	Yes. SAMBAH II from Jul 2024 – Jul 2025 for HP in the Polish part of the Baltic Sea, Arkona	Yes. In the SAMBAH II project from Summer 2024 – summer 2025. Point transect by passive acoustic	Yes. • Photo-IDs for RD in North-East Lewis MPA and surrounding west coast of Scotland. Estimated number of individuals: 558. • Photo-IDs for BD in Moray Firth SAC

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
	University's 2025 annual report "Marine områder 2025". In inner DK waters, national monitoring is conducted using PAM on HP throughout 2025, with abundance estimates likewise pending publication in the same report.	numbers in Northern Baltic Proper and Åland Sea, elsewhere occasional.		German Baltic Sea off Fehmarn (stratum J). Source: Ramirez-Martinez et al. (2025), "Monitoring of marine mammals in the German North and Baltic Sea in 2025". Surveys in area 27.3.d.24, during all year, no abundance given: Passive acoustic monitoring under project "HaMoNa"); Acoustic HP monitoring; Sporadic citizen-science sightings		results are pending.	Basin, Bornholm Basin, Gulf od Gdansk, Eastern Gotland Basin	monitoring using C-PODs (HP). Data will be analysed in CUMBIAH project 2026 – 2030.	and Tayside waters. Reporting in 2030. • PAM for RD. • Boat line transect for all species. • Land-based sightings for all species. • Aerial survey of the Sea of the Hebrides MPA.

1.2. Other relevant new research/work/collaboration on abundance estimates in regard to small cetaceans in your country during the reporting period.

BE	-
DK	Several windfarm assessment projects in the North Sea including aerial surveys of cetaceans has been conducted: - Sveegaard, S. et al., (2025). Marine Mammal surveys – pre-investigations for offshore wind farms in the area North Sea I. (Link) - Sveegaard, S., & Nabe-Nielsen, J. (2026). Harbour porpoise distribution in the Western Baltic: A comparison of existing models. Aarhus University, DCE - Danish Centre for Environment and Energy. Fagligt notat fra DCE – Nationalt Center for Miljø og Energi (2020-...) Bind 2026 Nr. 02 (Link) - Jakobsen, F., et al., (2025). Finescale distribution and seasonality of harbour porpoises (Phocoena phocoena) investigated with citizen science. Journal of Cetacean Research and Management, 26, 77-86. (Link) - van Beest et al., (2025). Shifts in habitat suitability for harbour porpoises leads to reduced importance of marine protected areas. Biological Conservation, 302, Artikel 111009. (Link) - Gilles, A. et al., (2025). Technical brief - Update of Harbour Porpoise Summer distribution in the Belt Sea. (Link)
FI	Finland participated in SAMBAH II data collection and participates in CUMBIAH, in which abundance estimates will be provided (estimated schedule 2029). In national passive acoustic monitoring programme, no abundance estimates can be produced due to very low density (in average approximately 0.5 harbour porpoise encounters per monitoring station year).
FR	
DE	- Biuw et al. (2025). Report of the Working Group on Abundance Estimates. 32nd meeting of the Scientific Committee as NAMMCO/SC/32/05, Copenhagen (Denmark), 23.-26.09.2025. North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission. (Link) - Gilles et al. (2025). Distributional changes of small cetaceans in European Atlantic waters and the North Sea from SCANS-IV in 2022. In 36th Conference of European Cetacaen Society: navigating waters of change. (Link) - Gilles et al. (2025). Spatial models of cetacean density in European Atlantic waters based on SCANS-IV summer 2022 survey data. Final report published 14 May 2025. 31 pp plus Appendix. (Link) - Hansen et al. (2025). Trends in harbour porpoise abundance from aerial survey monitoring in the North Sea (2011–2023). In 36th Conference of European Cetacaen Society: navigating waters of change (CM–07). (Link) - Ramirez-Martinez et al. (2025). Monitoring of marine mammals in the German North and Baltic Sea in 2024. Monitoring report published: June 2025. 10 pp. (Link) - Ramirez-Martinez et al. (2025). Monitoring of marine mammals in the German North and Baltic Sea in 2025. Monitoring report published: December 2025. (Link)

	- Ramirez-Martinez et al. (2025). WinterSCANS: Estimates of cetacean abundance in the southern North Sea in winter 2024. Final report 9 May 2025. (Link)
LT	Lithuania finished SAMBAH II harbour porpoise monitoring project in 2025, using passive acoustic monitoring which allows to estimate the presence, distribution and population size of the harbour porpoise. However, SAMBAH II (2023–2025) focuses on spatio-temporal monitoring, not health or condition. Thus, these methods do not assess body condition (no visual or physiological data). The results of SAMBAH II in Lithuania showed that approximately 3,000 high-frequency signals were recorded. The majority of these were detected during two recording events, and the signals fell within the frequency range characteristic of harbour porpoises. However, no high confidence sequences of harbour porpoise signals were identified. Further data analysis of noise origin will be conducted during Cumbiah project which will take place in the summer of 2026 (up until autumn).
NL	Reports of SCANS-IV and WinterSCANS conducted in winter 2024 have been published: - Ramirez-Martinez, N. C. et al. (2025). WinterSCANS: Estimates of cetacean abundance in the southern North Sea in winter 2024. Link. - Gilles et al. (2025). Spatial models of cetacean density in European Atlantic waters based on SCANS-IV summer 2022 survey data. Institute for Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Research, University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, Foundation, Buesum, Germany. 2025.
PL	-
SE	- SCANS-IV report on spatial models: Gilles et al. (2025). Spatial models of cetacean density in European Atlantic waters based on SCANS-IV summer 2022 survey data. Final report published 14 May 2025. 31 pp plus Appendix. - In the regional monitoring programme, the County Administrative Boards of Stockholm, Södermanland, Östergötland, Gotland, Kalmar, Blekinge, Skåne, Halland and Västra Götaland carry out monitoring of harbour porpoises using F-PODs (Link). - The County Administrative Boards of Kalmar and Gotland has carried out a towed acoustic array survey in the SAC Hoburgs bank och Midsjöbankarna in 2022, 2024 and 2025 and is also planned for 2026.
UK	- Gilles et al.(2025). Spatial models of cetacean density in European Atlantic waters based on SCANS-IV summer 2022 survey data. Final report published 14 May 2025. 31 pp plus Appendix. - Species reporting under Regulation 6a and 9a of the Conservation of Off shore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 was finalized in 2025. Reports published in January 2026 and are available on JNCC's website here, and NRW's website here. Country level summaries (and Management Unit level assessments - unofficial) are also available – e.g. in Wales. - ORCA and JNCC are currently running a pilot programme aiming to collect data to address identified gaps for cetaceans in UK waters. - Natural Resources Wales completed a suite of Welsh SAC feature condition assessments in 2025, incl. marine mammal features such as bottlenose dolphin (Link) - The POSEIDON project continued.

1.3. Is the abundance of species in your country increasing, decreasing, staying the same or unknown?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Decreasing. Compared to a decade ago, spring densities of harbour porpoises are lower.	Decreasing for HP for the Belt Sea population. Staying the same for HP for the	Unknown.		Decreasing. Regional differences; no abundance estimates through PAM. • Nachtsheim DA, et al. (2021). Small cetacean in a human high-use area: Trends in harbor porpoise abundance in the North Sea over two decades. Frontiers in Marine Science 7: 606609. doi:10.3389/fmars.2020.606609. • Owen et al. (2024) A negative trend in abundance and an exceeded mortality limit call for conservation action for the Vulnerable Belt Sea harbour porpoise	Unknown.	Staying the same. Based on North Sea Wide results from SCANS IV, there are no new national abundance estimates since last reporting period. Note: There are contrasting trends based on stranding data, coastal sea-watching data and Dutch	-	-	AWSD (Unknown) BD (Increasing) CD (Increasing) HP (staying the same) KW (Unknown) LFPW (Unknown) RD (Staying the same) SD (Decreasing) WBD (Increasing)

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
	North Sea population.			population. Frontiers in Marine Science 11: 1289808. doi:10.3389/fmars.2024.1289808.		continental shelf-wide MWTL aerial bird surveys until 2022. (Link)			

A. Biological Information (per species)

2. New information on life history parameters

2.1. Is there new information on the following life history parameters in the reporting period?

	BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Age of sexual and physical maturity										
Inter-birth intervals										
Calf and adult mortality										
Potential reproductive span/ capacity										
Longevity		✓							✓	
Diet					✓				✓	
Age and sex structure									✓	
Other relevant factors										✓

2.1. (continued)

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	*Longevity*: The oldest known HP, Freja, living at the Fjord & Belt Center in Kerteminde, DK turned 31 years in 2026. Species: HP.	-		*Diet*: Heße et al. (2025). A multi-method approach reveals long- and short-term dietary differences in Individual harbour porpoises *Phocoena phocoena* in the southern North Sea. Marine Ecology Progress Series: 755, 115–132. https://doi.org/10.3354/meps14787 MV: Diet Analyses publication in progress. Species: HP	-	Age, Inter-birth intervals, potential reproductive span/capacity, longevity, diet and sex structure are not part of the data collection. Utrecht University jointly published a scientific paper, led by Dr Anders Galatius, on external proportions, body and organ masses, and foetal growth of white-beaked dolphins stranded or bycaught in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands.	-	*Longevity*: Age determination is performed on all examined stranded and bycaught animals (HP). *Diet*: Sampling for hard part and eDNA dietary analysis conducted; results from previous years published in 2025 (HP). *Age and sex structure:* All examined stranded and bycaught animals are aged and sexed.	Population structure of Risso's dolphin in UK; population modelling approaches for marine mammals in Wales.

B. Monitoring Programmes

3. Overview of current monitoring and survey schemes

3.1. Did your country have national monitoring programmes that enabled assessment of the Conservation Status of small cetaceans in your waters (i.e. provides abundance estimates and/or life history parameters and information on pressures) during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes.	Yes. Within MPAs for HP – Passive Acoustic Monitoring and line transect surveys. For wider seas, line transect surveys for HP. Institution: Aarhus University.	No.		Yes.	No.	Yes. Line transect surveys, primarily for birds, but mammals are also recorded, within MPAs & Wider Seas.	Yes. Passive Acoustic Monitoring within MPAs and Wider Sea conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute (NMFRI).	Yes. Within MPAs: Passive Acoustic Monitoring. Wider Seas: Strandings, Passive Acoustic Monitoring and Other (HP, SBW, CD). Institutions: Swedish Museum of Natural History, The County Administrative Board of Kalmar and Gotland in the Natura 2000-site SE0330308 Hoburgs bank och Midsjöbankarna; Swedish Museum of Natural History (NRM), Swedish Veterinary Agency.	Yes. Within MPAs: Line transect surveys, photo-ID, strandings, passive acoustic monitoring, land-based sightings for HP, RD, Minke whale and BD by Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute; NatureScot, Marine Directorate (Scottish Government), HWDT, WDC, CRRU, Universities of Aberdeen and St Andrews. Within Wider Seas: Line transect surveys, photo-ID, strandings, passive acoustic monitoring for CD, KW, RD, Minke whale, HP, BD, WBD by NatureScot, Marine Directorate (Scottish Government), HWDT, WDC, CRRU, Universities of Aberdeen and St Andrews.

3.2. Please provide the relevant information regarding aerial surveying activities.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
2 surveys in 2025 covering national waters.	DK conducts annual or bi-annual aerial surveys in the Southern North Sea, Skagerrak, Kattegat and the Belt Sea.	No aerial surveys conducted in FI for HP monitoring due to very low density of animals.		Since 2002, aerial monitoring of HP in the German North and Baltic Sea (focused on the German EEZ) has tracked abundance, density, and distribution, continuing in 2025. It fulfils obligations under the Habitats Directive, MSFD, and OSPAR/HELCOM. Funded by BMUKN and carried out by ITAW (University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover) on behalf of BfN, it follows the BLMP measurement program and the BLMP "Mammals" fact sheet, with survey areas coordinated with BfN. The 12 survey areas (A–L) are documented at www.bfn.de/wirbeltiere and in Nachtsheim et al. (2019); data available here.	SAMBAH II in monitoring HPs was conducted in 2024-2025. Furthermore, EIA was conducted with inclusion of monitoring the HP in 2022-2025. PAM was carried out as part of the EIA in the planned Wind Farm II and	MWTL-surveys are conducted bi-monthly and target seabirds on the entire Dutch Continental Shelf. HP and other cetaceans are recorded as well. Following the implementation of a new aerial survey scheme (spring & summer survey every 3 years), the first spring survey of the Dutch Continental Shelf was conducted in March 2025. Results are due in 2026,	-	-	2 aerial surveys, Sea of the Hebrides MPA, all cetacean species, August and September 2025.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
				Since 2017, observer-based surveys have been complemented by digital aerial surveys, to align with seabird monitoring and reduce collision risk near offshore wind farms, with both methods run in parallel during the transition toward fully digital surveys.	Curonian Nord offshore wind farm areas from 1 May 2022 to 6 February 2025.	together with summer 2024 survey results. Surveys are dedicated to obtain abundance estimates of HP and other cetaceans on the DCS.			

3.3. Please provide the relevant information regarding Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM).

BE	PAM predominantly to assess the effects of human activities (offshore wind farms and a mussel farm).
DK	DK monitors 16 SACs in Skagerrak and the Belt Sea using 5 PAM stations deployed for 1 year every 6th year.
FI	13 monitoring stations in the Northern Baltic Proper and Åland Sea, 2016 ongoing, HP, C-POD and F-POD.
FR	
DE	ITAW runs 2 acoustic monitoring projects for HPs. In the North Sea, monitoring began end of 2011 and continues today, with 5 C-POD stations across the German Wadden Sea from Sylt to the Elbe mouth. In the Baltic Sea, monitoring started in early 2021 with five C-POD stations from Flensburg to Eckernförde. Separately, under HABITATWal, two AMAR acoustic stations were deployed at the SAC Dogger Bank (German EEZ) each February–June from 2023–2025 to record minke whales and white-beaked dolphins, supplemented in April–May by four SoundTrap recorders (max. 2 weeks/year) alongside ship-based visual surveys; all 6 stations also carried C-PODs for harbour porpoise detection. DMM is conducting passive acoustic monitoring (C-PODs) in the German Baltic Sea (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) since 2002 under the BfN-funded HaMoNa project. (Link)
LT	SAMBAH II (2024-2025): PAM of HP. EIA (2022-2025) PAM of HP. In both projects, PAM was conducted using F-POD acoustic recorders.
NL	PAM is used in several offshore wind farms, during different phases of OWF cycle, 'older' projects use CPODs, but the ones that started more recently use FPODs. The longest PAM monitoring to date is the Borssele OWF in the southwestern part of the Dutch Continental Shelf, running from 2019 to Oct 2026. In 2025, the project 'Waddenzeegeluiden' (Wadden Sea Sounds) started. During the foreseen 4 years it aims to monitor harbour porpoises in the Dutch Wadden Sea using full spectrum sound recorders at 12 PAM stations. One of the project goals is developing a monitoring method that can be implemented after completion of the Waddenzeegeluiden -project.
PL	Entire Polish coast, instruments used C-PoDs, timeframe Jul 2024-Jul 2025, species: Baltic Proper harbour porpoise population.
SE	In 2025, the PAM monitoring was carried out as part of SAMBAH II in the Baltic Sea, where C-PODs were deployed at 217 stations across the survey area (whereof 108 stations in Swedish waters) from summer 2024 to summer 2025 to survey harbour porpoises. In addition, data for estimating the detection function of the C-PODs were collected at one station each in Denmark, Germany and Sweden, and playbacks of artificial harbour porpoise click trains were emitted at all survey stations at least twice for data collection for abundance estimation.
UK	- Data collection has been ongoing since 2018 for the Skerries and Causeway and North Channel. Each acoustic mooring includes two acoustic recording devices; an automated cetacean click detector (CPOD and FPOD, Chelonia Ltd) and a bottom-mounted broadband acoustic recorder, together with an external battery pack for the broadband recorder, and an acoustic release unit to facilitate mooring recovery. - 21 locations around the Scottish coastline within and outwith MPAs as part of the Scottish Passive Acoustic Network (SPAN, Scottish Government), various timeframes but deployment was throughout 2025 and since 2022. - NatureScot deployment of 6 acoustic moorings in the North-east Lewis MPA May-Oct 2025 as a pilot project. - SAMS-o shore windfarm developer-NatureScot-Crown Estate Scotland collaboration, 2-year acoustic project campaign in the Southern Trench MPA year-round.

3.4. Are any of these programmes carried out in collaboration with other countries?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
No.	No.	Yes. SAMBAH II data collection and CUMBIAH analysis for distribution and abundance, large consortium of partners from Finland, Sweden, Denmark, UK, Germany, Poland, Lithuania and Estonia.		Yes. If possible aerial line-transect surveys are coordinated with Denmark (Aarhus University) and the Netherlands (Wageningen Marine Research).	Yes. SAMBAH II has 10 partners in Sweden, Finland, Poland, Denmark. As well as working closely with colleagues in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania & Germany to make SAMBAH cover as much of the Baltic Sea as possible.	Yes. (WMR) aerial surveys are coordinated with Germany.	Yes. SAMBAH II.	Yes, SAMBAH II was coordinated by NRM and carried out in collaboration with all countries around the Baltic Sea except Latvia.	No.

3.5. Please provide details on any planned activities relevant to monitoring programmes.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Monitoring as usual continues (strandings network, PAM, aerial surveys).	-	National PAM and opportunistic sightings collection is planned to continue, depending on the long-term funding.		Visual, acoustic and stranding monitoring will continue in 2026.	CUMBIAH (Conservation union for the management of the Baltic HP populations and their habitat) - during this project, which Lithuania (Klaipeda University) will participate in, the data from PAM of SAMBAH II and HP monitoring will be further analysed.	As part of the new survey scheme NL has SCANS-funding allocated. Pending contributions of a few countries, SCANS-V is foreseen summer 2027.	-	The national PAM programme in the Kattegat Sea was paused in 2023 to allocate resources for SAMBAH. The 14 stations of this programme are to be redeployed again using C-PODs in 2026. The national PAM stations have been used continuously throughout SAMBAH II and have been redeployed again afterwards.	Planning and organisation for SCANS-V has started, with aims for survey effort in 2027.

3.6. Relevant outputs/ findings from monitoring programmes to note.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	Sveegaard et al. In press. Passive acoustic monitoring - optimising the power to detect temporal changes in relative density of a cetacean population under pressure.	HP: Very low density, regular in offshore areas of Northern Baltic Proper and Åland Sea, elsewhere in Finland		• BfN: Vertebrates • Acoustic HP monitoring - map • Marine Mammal Sightings reported to the Ocean Museum Germany • HP monitoring • HP Distribution	During the EIA (2022-2023) monitoring a total of 16 HP encounters were recorded, while the recordings registered 20 Detection Positive Minutes (DPM). Encounters were most frequently recorded in December (68.8%), less frequently in March (25%), while only one encounter was recorded in November (6.2%). Encounters were most frequently recorded in fine- and medium-grained sand habitats (68.8%), followed by	MWTL-surveys: Van Bemmelen, et al. 2025. Verspreiding, abundantie en trends van zeevogels en zeezoogdieren op het Nederlands Continentaal Plat in 2024-2025. RWS-Centrale Informatievoorziening BM 25.29. Waardenburg rapport 25-337. Waardenburg	-	In 2025, 93 HPs were reported stranded. In total,18 stranded HPs, 1 by-caught HP and 1 SBW were collected and examined	The monitoring results from 2022-2024 NRW and Sea Watch Foundation annual BND monitoring is in prep. Lohrengel et al. (in prep) Bottlenose Dolphin Monitoring in Cardigan Bay and Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Areas of Conservation: 2022-24. NRW Evidence Report. In addition to the national monitoring programmes highlighted in B3 3.1, there are many ongoing local scale projects (e.g. citizen

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
	MEPS-202505034	occasional records.			gravel and boulder habitats (25%), and much less frequently in boulder habitats (6.2%).	Ecology & Deltamilieu Projecten, Culemborg.		by necropsy.	science and/or developer surveys) which also collect data on marine mammals in UK waters.

C. Other research (not mentioned elsewhere in Section II, III or IV)

Please provide relevant information in regard to other research (not mentioned elsewhere in Sections II, III, IV).

BE	2 projects (master theses) on stomach contents ongoing: one on seals and one on harbour porpoises; results foreseen in 2026.
DK	-
FI	-
FR	
DE	- Nachtsheim et al. (2025). Comparative analysis of harbour porpoise density from parallel observer-based and digital aerial surveys: challenges and opportunities. In 36th Conference of European Cetacean Society: navigating waters of change. (Link) - Vrooman, et al. (2025). Harbour porpoise (Phocoena phocoena) in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and requirements for trilateral monitoring. In 36th Conference of European Cetacaen Society: navigating waters of change (CM–04). (Link) - Project: HABITATWal, institution: ITAW, duration: May 2022 until December 2026, distribution patterns, population sizes and trends of marine mammals as well as their habitat selection will be studied in more detail, method: dedicated surveys. (Link) - Project: Akustisches Monitoring (POD) Schweinswal 2023-2026. (Link) - Project: Untersuchungen zur Habitatnutzung von Schweinswalen in der westlichen Ostsee mittels akustischem Monitoring, 2024-2026. (Link) - Celemín et al. (2025a) Evolution and organization of MHC II genes in harbour porpoises: insights from long-read cetacean genome assemblies, whole genome resequencing and locus-specific genotyping. Molecular Ecology 34, e70006.
LT	-
NL	HP tagging pilot project managed to tag 5 HPs in Dutch waters so far. More information can be found here .
PL	In 2025, the Polish multi-industry corporation “Orlen” organized a competition called “Baltic Biodiversity Grant”. Nine projects were accepted for implementation, including a laboratory examining the conservation status of mussels and rehabilitation centers. and the method. the impact of pharmaceuticals on the macrofauna of the Baltic Sea.
SE	In the POSEIDON project run by Lund University, F-PODs have been deployed at 28 stations since summer 2024. Water samples for eDNA analyses have been taken during ~1.5 years at three stations for analyses of seasonal changes. Publications: - Aiken, et al. 2026. Historical Range Contraction and Extent of Harbour Porpoises (Phocoena phocoena) in the Baltic Sea Revealed by Archival Newspapers. - Hartmann, D., Palmqvist, V., & Stedt, J. 2025. Programmed unmanned aerial vehicles show great potential for monitoring marine megafauna in specific areas of interest. Remote Sensing in Ecology and Conservation. - Celemin, E., et al. 2025. Evolution and Organisation of MHC II Genes in Harbour Porpoises: Insights From Long- Read Cetacean Genome Assemblies, Whole Genome Re- Sequencing and Locus- Specific Genotyping. Molecular Ecology.
UK	-

Section IV: Use of Strandings Records

A. Stranding Networks and Strandings

1.1. Is there a national stranding network in place?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. Strandings network coordinated by RBINS.	Yes. The annual reporting of strandings are reported here. Latest published report is from 2024.	No.		Yes. This issue is under the competency of the German 'Länder' (Federal States). Therefore, there is no national network, but rather local stranding networks in the respective federal states.	No.	Yes. The strandings network consists of volunteers (citizen science). Naturalis Biodiversity Centre maintained the database until the end of 2023, after which it was moved to www.stranding.nl (by Observado.org). Still some issues with database transition, e.g. double records. Additionally, not all strandings appear to be recorded in the database, introducing uncertainty into the reported total.	Yes. WWF Blue patrol volunteers.	Yes. Monitoring of stranded animals is done through voluntary reporting to a website hosted by the Swedish Museum of Natural History. Carcass collection is managed by SVA and facilitated by a coastal network of contacts. Suitable carcasses are brought in for examination at the SVA.	Yes. CSIP and SMASS are contracted to collect/ collate, analyze and report data on all cetacean strandings around the UK coast; and to undertake post-mortem examinations on a proportion of stranded animals to learn more about the anthropogenic pressures these species face in UK waters. The CSIP is contracted by Defra and the Devolved Government of Wales to investigate strandings around the coast of Scotland. Partner organizations of the CSIP are the Institute of Zoology, ZSL, NHM, MEM, CWTMSN, CMPT.

1.2. Does the national stranding network cover the whole, or part of the reporting country's coastline?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Whole coastline.	Whole coastline. Limited to incidental reportings by private beach guests.	N/A		Part of the coastline. It covers the coastlines of the federal states respectively.	N/A	Whole coastline.	Whole coastline.	Whole coastline. SE relies on reports from the general public, police and others and remote areas are not as well-covered.	Whole coastline.

1.3. Are necropsies carried out to determine cause of death?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. Around 30 % of stranded HPs are collected for further	Yes. Annually a number of HPs are necropsied. (13 in 2024)	N/A		Yes. Every animal collected along the coastline of SH will be transported to ITAW, University of Veterinary Medicine Hanover, Foundation. Depending on state of preservation, basic biometrics are recorded, or full necropsy is performed, taking samples from different organs for histological, microbiological and virological investigations varying on a case-to-case basis. If	N/A	Yes. A sample of approximately 50 fresh stranded HPs is necropsied annually, by Utrecht University. Other	No. Hel Marine Station UG carries out the necropsies only if the body	Yes. All suitable (intact, fresh) and prioritized (e.g. based on geographical location, age,	Yes. All cetacean post-mortem investigations (including tissue sampling) in the UK are conducted using standardized and systematic

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
investigation.				possible, cause of death is determined based on macroscopic findings and results from further investigations. Mecklenburg Western Pomerania: Depending on state of preservation, basic biometrics are recorded, or full necropsy is performed, taking samples from different organs for histological, microbiological and virological investigations varying on a case-to-case basis. If possible, cause of death is determined based on macroscopic findings and results from further investigations.		species are also necropsied, if possible (but strandings of other species are limited). Reports can be downloaded here.	is in a good condition.	maturity status) are brought to the SVA for necropsy and extensive data and sample collection.	necropsy procedures. More details: ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS 2019. "European Best Practice on Cetacean Post-mortem Investigation and Tissue Sampling".

1.4. Is there a database of strandings?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes.	Yes.	Yes.		Yes.	No.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

1.5. Is the data available online or downloadable on request?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. Data available upon request.	Yes. Contact Museum Vest: Charlotte Bie Thøstersen, cbt@musvest.dk	Yes. All HP sightings will be included in the new laji.fi portal.		Yes. Schleswig-Holstein; Deutsches Meeresmuseum. All stranding data and pathological results from necropsies of HP and all other cetaceans stranded published in a yearly report on MEKUN. Mecklenburg Western Pomerania: Annual reports about stranding data and necropsy results on website of Landesamt für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Geologie.	N/A	Yes. https://stranding.nl/ which includes the data on date, location and species, and any additional notes a reporter may provide, including photographs.	On request.	Yes. The Swedish Museum of Natural History hosts all stranding reports and data are available upon request. Data from all animals (stranded and bycaught) examined by necropsy are openly available here (search term 'cetacean')	No.

1.6. Provide details for any new institution(s) responsible for a stranding database, responding to live-strandings, collection of carcasses, and for conducting necropsies.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
RBINS collecting animals; necropsies	Museum Vest: Charlotte Bie Thøstersen,	For database, the MOE is responsible. Live-standings & collection of		Schleswig Holstein: Institute for Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Research (ITAW), Buesum Germany, University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, Foundation. Mecklenburg Vorpommern: German Oceanographic Museum	Lithuanian sea museum info@muziejus.lt	The former strandings database maintained by Naturalis Biodiversity Centre has been moved to www.stranding.nl	-	NRM continues to manage the standing reports database and SVA, together with NRM continues to manage carcass	British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) are the primary organisation responding to live

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
performed by vets at the universities of Liège and Ghent.	cbt@musvest.dk	carcasses will be conducted in ad-hoc basis. The Finnish Food Authority is responsible for conducting necropsies. No new institutions.		(DMM), Stralsund. Lower Saxony: Seehundstation Norden Norddeich, info@seehundstation-norddeich.de ; NLWKN Norden, poststelle.norden@nlwkn.niedersachsen.de; NLPV, Wilhelmshaven, LAVES Nds. Landesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit Lebensmittel- und Veterinärinstitut Oldenburg, poststelle@laves.niedersachsen.de		from Observado.org. Citizen science initiative. There is not a dedicated strandingscoordinator as with walvisstrandingen.nl, but moderators at Standing.nl oversee and manage data input.		collection, necropsy and sampling to NRM Environmental Specimen Bank and SVA´s biobank. SVA perform necropsies and the necropsy results database, including open publication of necropsy results.	strandings in the UK, with additional support from RSPCA and others, all operating under the aegis of the Marine Animal Rescue Coalition (MARC).

1.7. Were cases photographed, measured or sampled even if not collected for necropsy during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. In a lot of cases images provided by the public, with those images also determining if an animal is collected for further research.	Some were and some were not.	No.		Yes. Regional (federal states) differences.	No.	Yes. Volunteers occasionally provide pictures and measurements of stranded animals, and can enter these into the database. However, training or guidance could be useful to improve data collection by volunteers.	Yes. Each case of stranding was photographed, measurements were made for the body length when carcass was complete and samples taken when possible. Only one body of stranded harbour porpoise was in a condition allowing for postmortem and was collected for necropsy.	Yes. Photographs are often available, but measurement and sampling protocols are not yet in place.	Yes. Stranded animals not recovered for necropsy are photographed wherever possible. Additional data and/or samples are collected by volunteers from the Cornwall Wildlife Trust Marine Strandings Network, SMASS and/or BDMLR.

1.8. Were there recorded stranding events in your country during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. 40.	Yes. 281 total stranded HP with 280 dead and 1 alive, which was euthanized.	No.		Yes. In the Southern North Sea, 152 HP stranded (150 dead, 2 alive), and 1 stranded animal (species unspecified, dead) and another 98 HP (all dead). In the Arkona Basin, 32 HP stranded, all dead. No details on live-stranding response methods were provided for the two live animals.	No.	Yes. Total: 406 reported strandings, 395 dead, 11 live. All in Southern North Sea. 397 HP, 4 CD, 2 SBW, 1 BD, 1 WBD, 1 unknown.	Yes. 28 in total. 1 in Gdansk Basin, 23 in Bornholm Basin and 4 in Eastern Gotland Basin.	Yes. 96 dead, 3 live. 93 HP, 2 SBW in Kattegat, 1 SBW in Skagerrak, 1 WBD in Skagerrak, 1 CD in Skagerrak: 1 unknown species in Skagerrak.	Yes. Total: 736 dead and 56 live strandings. Note: an additional 118 cetaceans of indeterminate identity were also recorded stranded in the UK by CSIP and SMASS. 386 HP (incl. 10 live), 300 CD (incl. 31 live), 40 LFPW (incl. 2 live), 17 SD (incl. 4 live), 15 RD (incl. 2 live), 12 BD (Incl. 1 live), 8 WBD (incl. 1 live), 4 NBW, 3 live AWSD, 3 SBW (incl. 1 live), 2 CBW, 2 PSW (incl. 1 live). Data on OSPAR regions and/or euthanasia methods available on request to CSIP/SMASS.

1.9. Were any necropsies conducted during the reporting period?

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
Yes. Standard necropsy protocol CD (1) - too decomposed but animal stayed in river for a while, probably died from natural causes. HP: 14 starvation/ disease; 4(?) predation by grey seal; 2(?) bycaught.	Yes. 13 HP.	No.		Yes. MV: Necropsies on 7 animals from 2025 were conducted, the remaining animals will be dissected in the following year. SH: Necropsies on animals from 2025 were conducted.	No.	Yes. 52 porpoises were necropsied in 2025. Causes of death for HP: infectious diseases, bycatch. Birth complications, trauma, starvation, grey seal attacks. CD: illness, trauma and bycatch. SBW: live stranding and illness. WBD: live stranding.	Yes. 28 carcasses found stranded, 6 strandings in the Baltic Proper population range. 3 sampled for teeth, 1 taken for further analysis.	Yes. 18 stranded HP, 1 bycaught HP and 1 stranded SBW were necropsied. Causes of death for HP: bycatch n=5, infectious disease n=4, non-infectious disease n=3, live stranded n=1, undetermined n=1, abandoned n=1, drowning unknown cause n=1, unsuitable material n=4. Cause of death for the beaked whale was live stranding.	Yes. All cetacean post-mortem investigations (including tissue sampling) in the UK are conducted using standardized and systematic necropsy procedures. Multiple necropsies were conducted on UK stranded cetaceans by CSIP and SMASS during 2025 and a wide range of samples and data were collected during each necropsy. Further details, including information on causes of death, will be available in the 2025 CSIP and SMASS annual reports.

1.10. Other relevant new research/ work/ collaboration on strandings and stranding networks in your country.

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
In 2025 a MSc thesis started on stomach contents of harbour porpoises.	-	-		Petitguyot et al. (2025). European stranding networks as a tool for monitoring marine mammal populations (part I): towards optimising the functioning of networks. (Link). Striewe et al. (2025). Diphyllobothrium stemmacephalum infections in harbor porpoises (Phocoena phocoena) in German waters. (Link)	-	Several Dutch institutes and volunteers affiliated to the stranding network have contributed to a scientific publication at the ICES journal of Marine Science, entitled: European stranding networks as a tool for monitoring marine mammal populations (Part I): towards optimising the functioning of networks (Link). The aim of the study was to characterize the activities and capacities of the stranding networks surveyed, identify differences within and between countries, highlight strengths and weaknesses, and provide recommendations to enhance the value and credibility of the information collected.	-	-	Lennon et al. (2025). The Dead Do Tell Tales: Using Pathology Data From Cetacean Necropsy Reports to Gain Insights Into Animal Health. (Link) Williams et al. (2025). Sea temperature and pollution are associated with infectious disease mortality in short-beaked common dolphins. (Link) Williams et al. (2025). Temporal Increases in Mercury Concentrations are Associated with Increased Risk of Death by Infectious Disease in Harbour Porpoises. (Link) +3 other publications +6 PhD projects with ongoing support from CSIP.

Section VII: Other Matters

A. Other information or comments important for the Agreement

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	New project has shown that USBL systems implemented on geophysical survey ships and large trawlers, can deter and exclude porpoises at up to 5.5 km distance. The extend and impact of this previously unknown threat is unknown and may have a large impact on HPs and should be examined.	-		-	During the 17th National Conference on Marine Science and Technology MARINE AND COASTAL RESEARCH 2025 organised by Marine research institute of Klaipeda University, results from passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) of harbour porpoises was carried out as part of the EIA in the planned Wind Farm II and Curonian Nord offshore wind farm areas was presented.	-	-	Guidelines for offshore piling - assessment and limitation of acoustic impact on fish and marine mammals. Estimation of acoustic impact from piling for offshore wind turbines (Andersson et al. (2025). Beräkning av akustisk påverkan från pålning för havsbaserad vindkraft. Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut.) The report aims to simplify both the preparation & review of noise investigation for the wind power industry and licensing authorities. The report provides a summary of the scientific evidence on harmful sound levels from the piling of monopile foundations and factors that affect sound propagation in the water.	-

B. Difficulties in implementing the Agreement

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
A lot of overlap in reporting obligations.	Baltic Proper HP: Lack of knowledge on current abundance and distribution which will hopefully change in a few years when SAMBAH-II & CUMBIAH progresses. Belt Sea HP: The population has severely declined since 2005 (2.7% per year, Owen et al. 2024) and several studies point to negative impacts on this population especially lack of food and too high bycatch levels. The low food availability is difficult to “fix” and it is a slow process. It is positive in this regard that the herring and cod fishery have been closed. Bycatch numbers are also declining because of the decrease in gillnet fishery, but so far, there are no other protection against bycatch for porpoises in Danish waters for the Belt Sea population.	Lack of permanent funding e.g. for monitoring.		-	Lack of human resources, finances, databases. Unclear fishing impact on HPs in Lithuania. Unclear monitoring data on PAM of HPs and lack of resources (mostly inventory) and national law for monitoring regularly.	-	-	-	Resourcing and capacity.

C. Burning Issues

BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	LT	NL	PL	SE	UK
-	Great that SAMBAH-II and CUMBIAH are now funded and begun. However, a more permanent solution for future funding of abundance estimates of the Baltic Prober population, should be examined. Not sustainable that scientist from all around the Baltic should spend so much time trying to get funding from EU or other sources. For the SCANS surveys covering the neighbouring populations (Belt Sea and North Sea), the funding is now covered by national funding.	-		(Several) Live strandings of one humpback whale in the Baltic Sea incl. entanglement in a fisher net. Whale was live rescued & transported to the North Sea but died afterwards (off the coast of Denmark).	-	-	-	-	-