UN environment programme

ASCOBANS

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

ASCOBANS/AC30/NR.10

07 August 2026

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

2025 NATIONAL REPORT: FRANCE

2025 ASCOBANS National Report

ASCOBANS

Online Reporting System

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2025 ASCOBANS National Report

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Introduction

Year 2 (2025) ASCOBANS National Report

1 January to 31 December 2025.

As outlined in ASCOBANS Resolution 10.1 *National Reporting 2025-2028*, this form will cover information from 2025 (Year 2), and the following topics included in the Annex to the Resolution:

- High-level Summary of Key Messages
- General Information (Section I)
- Bycatch (Section II A1)
- Resource Depletion (Section II A2)
- Marine Debris (Section II C9)
- Surveys and Research (Section III)
- Use of Strandings Records (Section IV)
- Other Matters (e.g. burning issues) (Section VII)

The National Reports submitted will inform discussions at the 30th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, 1-3 September 2026.

- All questions apply to the **reporting period from 1 January to 31 December 2025**.
- Region in the tables refers to the sub-regions as defined by the HELCOM and OSPAR, and Areas refers to the sub-areas as defined by ICES. An overview and maps of these can be found in Annex A. Species can be chosen from the drop-down list provided, based on ASCOBANS species list, see Annex B.
- Throughout the form, please include relevant web links and add rows where applicable.
- The deadline for the submission of National Reports is **31 May 2026**.

Where possible, National Coordinators should consult with, or delegate to, experts for particular topics so as to ease the reporting burden. The Secretariat has provided a list of potential country contacts as a starting point. Once the baseline information is in place, it should become easier to update in the future.

For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat.

High-level Summary of Key Messages

In your country, for 2025 (Year 2), what does this report reveal about the most successful aspects of implementation of the Agreement?

(List up to five items related to the topics of Year 2: bycatch, resource depletion, marine debris, surveys and research, use of strandings records)

bycatch, resource depletion, marine debris, surveys and research, use of stranding records

Section I: General Information

A. Country Information

2. Details of the Report Compiler

Details of the report compiler

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Does the Report Compiler act as ASCOBANS National Coordinator (i.e. focal point)?

Please select only one option

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

3. Details of contributor(s)

Please provide the following details per contributor: Name, Function, Organization, Postal Address, Telephone, Email, and Topic(s) contributed to.

1406/contributors_ASCOBANS NR 2026.docx

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

A. Fisheries-related Threats

1. Bycatch

AIM: to illustrate progress on understanding, monitoring and mitigating bycatch of small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.4, 9.2 (Rev.MOP10), **8.5 (Rev.MOP9)**, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.8, 5.7, **5.5**, **3.3**

Bycatch, the entanglement of an animal in fishing gear, is identified as a major cause of mortality in small cetaceans. Every effort should be made to reduce bycatch towards zero as quickly as possible. Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed on a number of resolutions that highlight the importance of mitigating bycatch of small cetaceans in the Agreement Area, as available data indicates that levels of bycatch pose a considerable threat to their conservation status. Parties have agreed that modifications of fishing gear and relevant practices shall be applied in order to reduce negative impacts where data indicates unacceptable interaction. The Agreement Area requires improved monitoring, collation of data, and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures, while also taking into account similar work in other areas.

To better understand the extent of the impact of bycatch on small cetaceans, monitoring and mitigation measures in place, and ongoing work in the Agreement Area, countries are requested to provide relevant information.

Note: This section includes bycatch in recreational fisheries.

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

	Used? (Yes/No)	Percentage (% by monitoring method, of total bycaught animals, by gear type if applicable)
Dedicated observer schemes	Yes	In Bay of Biscay: Reinforced ObsMer program in the Bay of Biscay in winter : 1 December to 30 April: observation on 5% on day at sea gillnets pelagic trawlersOBSCAMe+ program (cf. remote electronic monitoring)
Fisheries observes	Yes	All the year : 45% of gillnets and 60 % of trawlers,
Remote Electronic Monitoring	Yes	5925 fishing days (6539 days at sea) were observed for gillnetters progressively equiped during the year 2025 (45 in January to 104 vessels in December 2025). 30 fishing days (52 days at sea) were observed

		for trawlers mostly equiped at the end of 2025 (12 trawlers). This represents an observation effort of 18 per cent for at-risk gillnet vessels and 10 per cent for trawlers in 2025. The observation effort will be higher for the year 2026 with the completion of the total number of vessels collecting data in the sampling scheme for the whole year.
Self-reporting by fishermen	Yes	100%: bycatch reporting by fishermen became mandatory in 2019
Pathological investigation	Yes	
Assessment at stranding site	Yes	

Comments:

These data are a provisional minimum estimate, as stranding data were still being validated/consolidated at the time of reporting. There is a one year lag for data validation and thus data for 2025 cannot be made available before the end of 2026. The final estimate will be provided annually by reverse drift modelling methodology applied on common dolphin and harbour porpoise strandings.

An estimate based on observation data was made for pelagic pair trawlers : https://archimer.ifremer.fr/doc/01022/113395/127771.pdf

ICES WKEMBYC uses both onboard observer data and stranding data to estimate bycatch mortality in the Bay of Biscay. Mortality estimates obtained by either method give results in the same order of magnitude.

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

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes

Please provide details:

(Mass bycatch incidents, unusual species bycatch etc.)

In 2024 (01/01/2024 – 31/12/2024), a total of 1615 strandings of dead cetaceans were registered along the French seaboard (https://www.observatoire-pelagis.cnrs.fr/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/rapport_echouages_2024.pdf). A provisional total of 422 small cetacean strandings were found during the winter of 2025-2026 (01/12/2025 to 30/04/2026; https://www.mer.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2026-05/20260507_bulletin_cetaces_b10_corrige.pdf). These figures for the winter of 2025-2026 are a provisional minimum estimate, as stranding data is still being validated/consolidated at the time of reporting.

Regarding OBSCAMe monitoring of bycatch with on-board cameras, the following observations were made on gillnetters:

- 21% of bycaught animals fall into the water before being brought on board.

Most may not have been observed onboard by the crew/onboard observer.

1.5. Are there any mitigation measures in place?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in this table - download and then attach it using the blue 'clip' button.

Please select only one option

- No
- (●) Yes

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

Please select only one option

- (●) No
- Unknown/not applicable
- Yes

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

List initiatives/ projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information

With regard to the bycatch of small cetaceans in the Bay of Biscay, following lengthy and difficult consultations with the fishing industry, the Government has adopted a national action plan for 2024, 2025 and 2026, comprising:

Pursuant to Article 3 of the Order of 24 October 2023 establishing spatio-temporal measures aimed at reducing incidental catches of small cetaceans in the Bay of Biscay for the years 2024, 2025 and 2026, a 30-day winter closure of the Bay of Biscay to high-risk gear;

Under the Order of 13 December 2024 on improving the collection of data on incidental catches of marine mammals and on the trialling of technical devices to reduce incidental catches of common dolphins on board fishing vessels flying the French flag:

- a large-scale trial of technical devices and cameras on board fishing vessels
- the strengthening of on-board observation and an increase in the fishing effort monitored by observers on board.

The OBSCAMe+ project, standing for 'Observation to better understand by-catches of protected marine species through remote electronic observation', took over from the OBSCAMe project in 2023. The on-board cameras will thus enable data to be collected in order to assess the effectiveness of technical devices designed to reduce by-catches of common dolphins. The OBSCAMe+ project aims to install cameras on a significant number of fishing vessels (100 gillnetter and 15 trawler vessels equipped), and to collect and analyse data on these bycatches.

Delmoges is an interdisciplinary research project utilising modern technologies. Its initial aim is to fill knowledge gaps with new data on dolphin habitats and movements, their relationships with prey and their environment, as well as their interactions with fishing gear. Drones, cameras, hydrophones, environmental DNA identification tools... a range of innovative techniques will thus be deployed, particularly during new winter campaigns at sea. In a second phase, the project aims to collaboratively develop a range of scenarios for reducing incidental dolphin bycatch using various levers for action, whilst assessing their ecological and socio-economic consequences (the bycatch reduction scenario component remains incomplete due to the national context surrounding this issue, which has complicated operations).

https://delmoges.recherche.univ-lr.fr/valorisation-2/.

https://delmoges.recherche.univ-lr.fr/valorisation-2/.The Delmoges project was completed in 2025. All results (in French) are available at https://delmoges.recherche.univ-lr.fr/

LICADO Project: an EMFF Measure 39-funded project aimed at developing new acoustic deterrent devices (ADDs, or *pingers*), including directional and interactive prototypes, for net fisheries, while also exploring technical and operational mitigation measures for gillnet fisheries (e.g. pingers and net reflectors). The project ran over a three-year period, covering three consecutive winter fishing seasons, and was completed in May 2022. It comprised two main components: (i) the development of acoustic deterrent systems to reduce cetacean bycatch, including the design of a new pinger prototype, and (ii) the assessment of fishing practices and bycatch avoidance strategies.

DOLPHINFREE Project: an EMFF Measure 39-funded project aimed at developing a pinger capable of emitting a signal that is understandable and interpretable by dolphins, indicating the presence of fishing nets and the associated mortality risk. In a second phase, the project seeks to develop an energy harvesting system to increase the device's autonomy by integrating a passive acoustic monitoring module (developed under the LICADO project). This module detects the presence of dolphins and triggers the emission of an acoustic signal only when necessary, thereby reducing underwater noise pollution. DolphinFree devices were tested on 27 fishing vessels as part of the French National Action Plan

in the Bay of Biscay during the 2025–2026 winter high-risk bycatch season. The first scientific results on the effectiveness of the device are expected in autumn 2026.

PIFIL Project, following the LICADO project: this project aimed to develop a pinger that can be mounted on the vessel's hull and activated during net setting operations. Following its development, PIFIL pingers were tested on 106 fishing vessels as part of the French National Action Plan between 2023 and 2026, during the winter high-risk period for small cetacean bycatch. Scientific results on the effectiveness of the device are expected in autumn 2026. Additional sea trials are expected to be conducted during the 2026–2027 winter season to strengthen and, if necessary, confirm the results on the pinger's effectiveness.

Additionally, in November 2025, the French authorities launched an EMFAF (European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund) call for projects under Specific Objective 1.6 to identify new devices or methods for reducing the bycatch of small cetaceans, complementing the equipment deployment and testing framework established by the Order of 13 December 2024.

Among the projects submitted, described below, some have already been assessed and approved by the Programme Monitoring Committee. The remaining proposals are still under evaluation, with final decisions on their approval expected no later than autumn 2026.

Approved: ECHORAL Project (Testing highly acoustically visible float lines under real fishing conditions to reduce the bycatch of small cetaceans in gillnet fisheries in the Bay of Biscay), led by the French National Committee for Marine Fisheries and Marine Aquaculture (CNPMEM)

The project aims to analyse and test, under real fishing conditions, highly acoustically visible headline ropes (float lines) and floats designed to reduce the accidental capture of small cetaceans, taking into account the dimensions and composition of the headline ropes used on fishing nets. The equipment will be selected on the basis of recent scientific findings from IFREMER and technical feedback from professional organisations (producer organisations and fisheries committees).

The project also includes an assessment of the acoustic characteristics of the fishing gear currently used by gillnet vessels affected by bycatch. The project was approved by the written Programme Monitoring Committee procedure held from 1 to 12 June.

Approved: ECCO Project (Operational Avoidance of Bycatch and User Conflicts), led by the company CLS (Collecte Localisation Satellites)

The ECCO project aims to enhance an existing platform—whose scientific reliability has not yet been fully demonstrated—by improving its mapping and visualisation capabilities. The platform displays, in real time and with forecasts extending up to seven days ahead, the modelled habitat of the common dolphin together with the probability of fishing activity by gear type, in order to predict areas where interactions between dolphins and fishing activities are most likely to occur and where accidental bycatch may result.

One potential application would be to use this tool to improve the management and targeting of measures implemented by the French authorities to reduce accidental bycatch, particularly that of the common dolphin. In the longer term, the platform could also be made directly available to fishing professionals. The project was approved by the Programme Monitoring Committee on 10 July 2026.

Under evaluation: CETADATA Project, led by OCTECH

Led by OCTECH, a company already involved in the manufacture and deployment of the PIFIL pingers and Dolphinfree bio-inspired acoustic beacons, which are currently being tested under the framework of the Order of 13 December 2024, the CETADATA project aims to improve the ergonomics of acoustic beacons whose technical and scientific performance is currently under evaluation.

Improving the usability of these beacons is expected to increase their acceptance by fishers; to this end, technical specifications will be developed jointly with stakeholders. The beacons must also be robust enough to withstand the operational constraints of fishing activities and be suitable for large-scale industrial production at controlled costs.

The project includes the development of enhanced features such as increased battery life, a battery charge indicator, wireless inductive charging, simplified installation on fishing gear, and consideration of acoustic signals adapted to multiple species.

In addition, in response to one of the recommendations arising from the DELMOGES project, OCTECH proposes to develop a platform for aggregating and mapping cetacean detection data collected during trials of these new devices. This platform would provide a better understanding of cetacean distribution and density while adding value to the data collected during the testing campaigns.

The project is expected to be submitted to the October 2026 Programme Monitoring Committee, which will decide whether or not to approve it.

Papers

- Faure J., Niol J., Meheust E., Spitz J. (2025). Long-Term Changes in the Winter Diet of Common Dolphins Reflects Ecological Shifts and Bycatch Dynamics in the Bay of Biscay. Ecology and Evolution 15, no. 7: e71815. https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.71815
- Peltier H., Authier M., Dabin W., Daniel P., Dars C., Demaret F., Meheust E., Ridoux V., Spitz J., Van Canneyt O. (2025). I sink therefore I am : 20 years of tagging small cetacean carcasses in the North-East Atlantic for bycatch estimation. Journal for Nature Conservation, 87, 127005. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jnc.2025.127005
- Rouby, E., Plard, F., Ridoux, V., Mauchamp, A., Dabin, W., Spitz, J., & Authier, M. (2025). Longevity Collapse in Dolphins : A Growing Conservation Concern in the Bay of Biscay. Conservation Letters, 18(5), e13142. https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.13142

- Brevet, M., Authier, M., Peltier, H., Dubroca, L., 2026. Linking by-caught cetacean traits to fishing techniques: Insights from two species of small cetaceans. Ecol. Appl. 36, e70216. https://doi.org/10.1002/eap.70216

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

Status relative to previous years. Please provide the nature of the evidence and describe per species (Annex B) where applicable.

Species	Increasing/Decreasing/Staying the same/Unknown	Nature of the evidence (e.g. strandings, observer schemes)
CD Short-beaked Common dolphinCD Short-beaked Common dolphin	staying the same	stranding and observer schemes
HP Harbour porpoiseHP Harbour porpoise	staying the same	stranding and observer schemes

2. Resource Depletion

AIM: to determine areas where, and to what extent, depletion of fish stocks have occurred during the reporting period. In addition, identify ongoing mitigation efforts regarding detrimental implications for small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.3, **9.4**, 8.9, 8.3, 7.1, 6.1

Depletion in fish stocks due to overfishing and other factors generates pressure on the favourable conservation status of small cetaceans (through possible food shortage). More integrated management and reductions in fishing effort (also prompted by concern about fish stock depletion or other ecosystem considerations) have been encouraged, especially in areas of known risk. Further research, effective fishery regulations and innovation within certain fishing methods are considered to be helpful steps towards mitigating this pressure.

Parties to ASCOBANS have agreed on a number of resolutions that (1) determine the impact of the depletion of fish stocks on small cetaceans, (2) encourage fishing effort reductions and (3) review new information on these depletions to make recommendations. Resource depletion in the Agreement Area requires improved monitoring, collation of data, and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures, while also taking into account similar work in other areas.

It is of particular interest to ASCOBANS to understand the extent of prey depletions, any related ongoing work, monitoring and mitigation measures in the Agreement Area. Countries are requested to provide relevant information.

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

List initiatives/ projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information

Delmoges is an interdisciplinary research project utilising modern technologies. Its initial aim is to fill knowledge gaps with new data on dolphin habitats and movements, their relationships with prey and their environment, as well as their interactions with fishing gear. Drones, cameras, hydrophones, environmental DNA identification tools... a range of innovative techniques will thus be deployed, particularly during new winter campaigns at sea. In a second phase, the project aims to collaboratively develop a range of scenarios for reducing incidental dolphin bycatch using various levers for action, whilst assessing their ecological and socio-economic consequences (the bycatch reduction scenario component remains incomplete due to the national context surrounding this issue, which has complicated operations).

The following findings are drawn from the scientific DELMOGES study. Regarding the health status of the captured individuals, the analyses indicate that their overall condition is generally good and that chemical contamination does not appear to be a contributing factor to mortality. Stomach-content analyses show that the prey items identified consist predominantly of sardines and anchovies, which do not necessarily

correspond to the species targeted by fishers. The occurrence of bycatch therefore appears to be more closely related to a trophic cascade than to dolphins feeding directly from fishing nets.

The analysis of feeding ecology, based on a comparison between contemporary stomach contents and those collected approximately 20 years ago, provides insights into the factors driving the increased proximity of dolphins to coastal areas, thereby increasing their vulnerability during winter. Bycatch appears to occur primarily during feeding activity. Whereas species contributing to the dolphins' diet 20 years ago included a greater proportion of taxa typically associated with offshore waters, such as blue whiting, the current diet contains a higher proportion of species characteristic of coastal environments, such as sandeels (Ammodytes spp.). This shift may indicate a displacement of prey populations towards coastal waters, with dolphins following small pelagic fish, primarily sardines and anchovies. The findings of WP1 are therefore particularly informative and provide the essential biological basis for understanding the research and mitigation approaches developed under WP2.

The results of WP2 further indicate that the increase in bycatch is embedded within a broader ecological cascade. Ocean warming (+0.8°C over the past 20 years) and reduced freshwater inputs have contributed to a decline in primary production and in the energetic value of plankton, thereby affecting the distribution and body size of small pelagic fish. These changes have resulted in a greater spatial concentration of prey in shallow coastal areas (<100 m), with prey occurring closer to the seabed, thereby increasing the spatial overlap between dolphins, their prey and fishing grounds. Acoustic surveys and models integrating field observations with satellite-derived data show a strong relationship between dolphin density, prey depth and fishing effort, leading to the development of the "trapped food reservoir" concept.

Overall, the findings of WP2 indicate that the phenomenon cannot be understood solely in terms of direct interactions between fishers and dolphins. Rather, they suggest a broader reconfiguration of the coastal ecosystem, in which the risk of bycatch emerges as a consequence of deeper environmental and ecological changes.

DELMOGES does not seek to identify a single solution, but rather to explore a combination of complementary measures while continuing to improve the knowledge base. Several management levers could therefore be combined, including **technical measures** (e.g. net length and soak time), **targeted spatial measures**, **measures differentiated by fleet segment**, and **economic support and incentive schemes for the fishing sector**, including compensation mechanisms and incentive-based approaches.

Two tools could help assess and better target these measures. The first would be a **predictive bycatch risk mapping tool** at an ecologically and operationally relevant spatial scale, covering the Bay of Biscay shelf. The objective would be to develop an operational tool for estimating bycatch risk by integrating spatial and behavioural data on dolphins, their prey and fishing activity. The work currently being undertaken by DGAMPA, CNES and CLS could be integrated with DELMOGES to develop a finer-scale risk map that could ultimately support fisheries management and decision-making by public authorities. At this stage, however, the tool is not yet sufficiently operational or reliable for management purposes. In the longer term, collaboration between **CLS, Ifremer and Pélagis** could combine scientific expertise with operational and technological capabilities.

The second tool would consist of adapting a **data visualisation tool** to assess different management scenarios, their potential effects, their acceptability among stakeholders and the practical modalities for their implementation.

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

9. Marine Debris (ingestion and entanglement)

AIM: to illustrate progress, during the reporting period, on understanding, monitoring and mitigating impacts of marine debris on small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.3, 10.4, **9.3**, 8.8, 8.3, 7.1, 6.1

Marine debris, such as macroplastics and discarded fishing gear, poses a threat to small cetaceans due to the potential for these materials to be ingested or to cause entanglement. Commercial fishing operations, recreational fishing and cargo shipping are notable sources of this material, of which the majority is plastic and ghost nets. However, it is assumed that most of the marine litter worldwide comes from land, although this differs per region. Even small amounts of macroplastics that have been ingested may present serious effects on small cetaceans, such as detrimental influence on the gastrointestinal tract or leaching pollutants into the body, potentially leading to mortality or reduced body condition. Entanglement is well-established as a threat to small cetaceans as plastic debris continues to accumulate in aquatic environments, and may cause physical injuries, reduced survival or drowning.

To better understand the impact of marine debris on small cetaceans and measures in place to mitigate these effects, countries are requested to provide relevant information.

Note: Includes macroplastics and discarded fishing gear. Microplastics are covered under Section C10 Pollution and Hazardous Substances.

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

Please select only one option

- ○ No (Go to Question 9.3)
- ◉ Yes

Provide information below:

Include parameters provided through monitoring (e.g. type of litter (size, shape, material), amount, impacts on species, geographical location, etc.)

Include parameters provided through monitoring (e.g. type of litter (size, shape, material), amount, impacts on species, geographical location, etc.)

Strandings are the subject of systematic external observation by members of the national network, foreign bodies such as macro waste items are systematically recorded. A representative proportion of strandings are examined by dissection or necropsy. This includes a systematic examination of stomach contents. The observation of foreign bodies including plastic debris are systematically recorded.

In 202 no observations were noted on small delphinids out of 83 small delphinids examined. In 2025, one common dolphin found stranded had plastic debris in its stomach. Please note that 2025 data are still not consolidated.

9.2. Are these data publicly available?

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes (please provide web link) https://www.observatoire-pelagis.cnrs.fr/pelagis-2/publications/

9.5. How is marine debris managed?

(incl. relevant regulations / guidelines and the year of implementation, current and planned)

Within MFSD framework, Two environmental objectives have been defined to achieve good ecological status of marine waters on the four French seafronts:

- to reduce the input and presence of land-based waste found at sea and on the coast;
- reduce the input and presence of waste at sea from maritime activities, uses and developments.

In addition to the action plan defined within the framework of the DCSMM, which applies to France, in order to put an end to the dumping of plastic waste at sea by 2025 in the French overseas territories as well, the "Zero Plastic Waste at Sea" Action Plan (2020-2025) sets out the objectives of the Interministerial Committee for the Sea (CIMER) and the Biodiversity Plan in 35 actions. It aims to reduce the input of macro and micro-waste into the seas and oceans by 2025, with a view to achieving the "zero plastic waste at sea by 2025" target set by the latter. The Action Plan sets out the government's strategy for combating marine litter, both in mainland France and in the French overseas departments and regions.

Section III: Surveys and Research

A. Biological Information (per species)

1. Abundance estimates

AIM: to provide new information on abundance and life history parameters of small cetaceans during the reporting period.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.3, 8.5 (Rev.MOP9), 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7, 5.5, **4.7**, **3.5**, 3.3

Abundance estimates and information on life history are of critical importance for the determination of broader species attributes such as populations levels, health and overall status. These parameters can contribute towards determination of GES and provide a reference for mortality events. Abundance and life history parameters are typically assessed from monitoring programmes. Fluctuations in these parameters can provide insight into trends in populations. Information on abundance and life history parameters can inform the need for mitigation measures, and regional assessment of these parameters allows for a more spatially targeted and concentrated response to support national assessments.

In the ASCOBANS Area, small cetacean abundance and life history should be monitored in response to a number of ASCOBANS resolutions. Continued monitoring of these parameters is essential to understanding current status and trends.

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

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in this table - download and then attach it using the blue 'clip' button.

Attach maps separately, clearly marking which survey they apply to.

Note: Information relevant to SCANS-IV is to be provided in Question 1.2.

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes. Please provide details in table.

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

List initiatives/ projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study and information relevant to SCANS-IV; web links to other relevant information.

List initiatives/ projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study and information relevant to SCANS-IV; web links to other relevant information.

Aerial surveys

Blanchard A., Doremus G., Gamelin P.-L., Ouzeau, J., Poiriez G, Sanchez T., Van Canneyt O., Williams G., Spitz J., Laran S. (2025). Suivi de la mégafaune marine au sein du Parc naturel marin des estuaires picards et de la mer d'Opale - Programme MAMO - Rapport de campagne 2023-2025 pour le PNM EPMO (OFB-22-0565). 91 pp.

https://www.observatoire-pelagis.cnrs.fr/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/MAMO_Rapport-Campagne-2025.pdf

Van Canneyt, O., Blanchard, A., Laran, S., Dorémus, G., Genu, M., Sanchez, T., Spitz, J., 2024. Rapport de campagne CAPECET II (campagne d'observation aérienne de la mégafaune marine). Observatoire Pelagis (UMS 3462, Université de La Rochelle / CNRS), La Rochelle. https://www.observatoire-pelagis.cnrs.fr/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/L1.3.1-rapport-de-campagne-survols-aeriens.pdf

Large scale oceanographic boat survey

Dorémus, G., Van Canneyt, O., 2025. Protocole d'observation de la mégafaune marine depuis les campagnes océanographiques. Suivi MEGASCOPE (Mise à jour 2025) (Protocole), Cahier technique de l'observatoire Pelagis sur le suivi de la mégafaune marine. La Rochelle Université (France).

Dorémus, G., Vansteenberghe, C., Pessato, A., 2025. MEGASCOPE : Suivi de la distribution de la mégafaune marine en Manche, Atlantique et Méditerranée. Rapport annuel 2024 (Rapport scientifique de l'Observatoire PELAGIS). Observatoire Pelagis (UAR 3462 - La Rochelle Université

et CNRS), La Rochelle Université (France).

https://www.observatoire-pelagis.cnrs.fr/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Rapport_annuel_MEGASCOPE_2023-1.pdf

2. New information on life history parameters

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

For each life history parameters, please identify the species and provide web links and details where applicable.

	Yes/No	Describe per species
Age of sexual and physical maturity		
Inter-birth intervals		
Calf and adult mortality rates		
Potential reproductive span/capacity		
Longevity		
Diet		
Age and sex structure		
Other relevant factors		

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B. Monitoring and Survey Schemes

3. Overview of current monitoring and survey schemes

AIM: to provide information on the progress of monitoring programmes, relevant methodologies and aims thereof, and status of small cetaceans during the reporting period.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.3, 8.11 (Rev.MOP9), 8.9, 8.8, 8.5 (Rev.MOP9), 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7

Monitoring programmes provide important data on biological and environmental attributes, such as population status, abundance and spatial-temporal distribution. They create opportunities for new research and development, including potential improvements to methodology for monitoring in terms of accuracy, practicality and cost efficiency.

In the ASCOBANS Area, application of coherent monitoring programmes focused on small cetaceans, which collect and provide objective, robust and comparable data, is a key component in understanding and improving the conservation status of small cetaceans through appropriate management. Parties have agreed to design, implement and support relevant monitoring programmes through a number of resolutions. Such efforts are also supported by legislation from a number of bodies which identify monitoring as a requirement in management systems. Additionally, Parties have been encouraged to coordinate their monitoring programmes, which promotes international cooperation and synergies. Parties have also been encouraged to review such monitoring programmes and propose improvements for the betterment of conservation efforts.

It is the interest of ASCOBANS to understand the current monitoring programmes utilised, their outputs, and future activities in the Agreement Area. Countries are requested to provide information relevant to their activities as well as potential improvements to such programmes and efforts.

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?

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in this table - download and then attach it using the blue 'clip' button.

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes. Please provide an overview in the table.

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

Provide the number of surveys, area covered, relevant species, and timeframe of the survey.

Provide the number of surveys, area covered, relevant species, and timeframe of the survey.

MAMO, Eastern Channel: 2023-2025 (https://www.observatoire-pelagis.cnrs.fr/pelagis/programmes/mamo/?lang=en)

SPEE, Shelf of the Bay of Biscay: six 2024-2026 (https://www.observatoire-pelagis.cnrs.fr/pelagis/programmes/capecet/?lang=en)

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

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes

Provide information below.

Please provide the collaborators and links per programme.

Anita Gilles (DE, https://www.tiho-hannover.de/en/clinics-institutes/institutes/institute-of-terrestrial-and-aquatic-wildlife-research-itaw/scans-iv-survey/winterscans-iv-survey)

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

Per species, please identify the relevant outputs. Provide web links if available.

SCANS 4 results :

https://www.tiho-hannover.de/en/clinics-institutes/institutes/institute-of-terrestrial-and-aquatic-wildlife-research-itaw/scans-iv-survey

Open discussion at BioMonWeek 2026 :

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1vaI9D04mA&list=PL-1YwbPvENS1bERJ_QQJrTRr3ZMTRnPkt&index=5

C. Other Research

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

Per project, please provide the institution, duration, aim(s) / objective(s), and the method.

Participation in the NW Atlantic Ocean workshop (Germany 2023) for designation of Important Marine Mammal Areas:
https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org

https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org/immas-focus-the-spotlight-on-marine-mammal-species-and-special-habitats-requiring-protection-in-the-north-east-atlantic-ocean-and-baltic-sea/

Section IV: Use of Strandings Records

A. Stranding Networks and Strandings

AIM: to provide information on stranding events and demonstrate progress of stranding networks in understanding, monitoring and mitigating strandings of small cetaceans.

Relevant Resolutions: 10.4, 10.3, **8.10 (Rev.MOP9)**, 8.7, 8.4 (Rev.MOP9), 8.3, 7.4, 7.3, 7.1, 6.1, 5.7

Stranding of cetaceans is an ever-present occurrence and analysis through necropsy and sampling can provide indications of reason for injury and death. Stranding numbers also provide information on population status, abundance and distribution. Effective response to strandings contributes to the maintenance of favourable conservation status of small cetaceans and also has implications for animal welfare. Comprehensive stranding networks are a critical asset in managing small cetacean strandings and have resulted in large numbers of animals rescued and returned to sea. These networks also have the capacity to guide the public on animal welfare, human health and safety considerations during stranding events.

In the effort to mitigate the anthropogenic causes of these occurrences, Parties have agreed to measures through a number of resolutions. Continued monitoring of stranding causation and further developing guidance for best practices in stranding response and necropsies was identified by Parties as important tasks to pursue, as was setting up stranding response networks. This information is to align with appropriate sampling practices and countries should ensure that the data is available for researchers. Additionally, development and support of international strandings databases and regular reporting is conducted through relevant research institutes and stranding schemes. ASCOBANS Secretariat encourages the ongoing funding and support of engagement with organizations for further development of guidelines, best practices and maintaining dataflow for capacity building across stranding networks.

To better understand the extent to which stranding events occur and how these events are managed, it is the interest of ASCOBANS for countries to provide the relevant information on these occurrences within the Agreement Area, procedures undertaken in response to stranding events, necropsies and information on stranding networks.

1.1. Is there a national stranding network in place?

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes

Please provide details:

https://www.observatoire-pelagis.cnrs.fr/stranding/french-stranding-network/?lang=en

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

Please select only one option

- ◉ Whole coastline
- ○ Part of the coastline

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

Please select only one option

- ◉ No
- ○ Yes

1.4. Is there a database of strandings?

Please select only one option

- ○ No
- ◉ Yes

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

Please select only one option

- ○ No

- [x] Yes

Please provide details:

Annual synthesis are provided is provided in the annual report, downloadable from the website.

In addition, raw data are available on request.

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

Please select only one option

- [ ] No
- [x] Yes

Please provide details:

All animals examined by members of the national network are subject to systematic photography, external examination, and biometrics. Most are subject to a level 1 protocol (tooth samples), levels 2 and 3 (dissection or autopsy) concern a large proportion of fresh and very fresh animals

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

If you select 'Yes', please provide details in this table - download and then attach it using the blue 'clip' button. Provide details relevant for recorded stranding events during the reporting period.

Please select only one option

- [ ] No
- [x] Yes

How many strandings occurred during the reporting period?

(Specify live and dead)

Data not yet available for 2025.

Data will be available in october 2025

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

List initiatives/ projects (incl. PhD, MSc); publications (reports, theses, papers in journals, books) from any study; web links to other relevant information)

Petitguyot, Marie A. C. / Fariñas-Bermejo, Andrea / Brownlow, Andrew / Ahola, Markus P. / Álvarez Neches, Elena / Arbelo, Manuel / Authier, Matthieu / Balsera Riesgo, Ramón / Berrow, Simon / Bjørge, Arne / Brackmann, Jens / Brasseur, Sophie / Carreira, Gilberto / Cervin, Linnea / Claver, Cristina / Covelo, Pablo / Crespo-Picazo, Jose Luis / Dabin, Willy / Dähne, Michael / Davison, Nicholas J. / Deaville, Rob / ten Doeschate , Mariel T. I. / Domingo Álvarez, Mariano / Escribano Cánovas, Fernando / Evans, Peter G. H. / Fayos Martínez, Manena / Fernández, Antonio / Fernández, Ruth / Fernández-Maldonado, Carolina / Freitas, Luís / Galatius, Anders / García de los Ríos, Álvaro / Garrido Sánchez, Lucia / Geut, Machteld I. M. / Gilles, Anita / Gozalbes Aparicio, Patricia / Grilo, Miguel / Haelters, Jan / Halldórsson, Sverrir Daníel / Hamm, Thea / Havermans, Jarco / IJsseldijk, Lonneke L. / Jacinto, David / Jussi, Mart / Kamminga, Pepijn / Jensen, Tim Kåre / Kavanagh, Ailbhe Sarah / Keijl, Guido / Leopold, Mardik / López, Alfredo / Marçalo, Ana / Marques, Nuno / Martínez Cedeira, Jose Antonio / Mikkelsen, Bjarni / Miodonski, Joana / Monasterio Iglesias, Juana Maria / Montes Gómez, Jose Eugenio / Neimanis, Aleksija / Neves, Francisco / Pardal, Sofia I. / Pawliczka, Iwona / Peña Pascucci, Ignacio / Petersen, Heidi Huus / Plikshs, Maris / Puig-Lozano, Raquel / Raga, Juan Antonio / Robalo, Joana I. / Roos, Anna / Ruiz Sancho, Leire / Saavedra, Camilo / Sigurðsson, Guðjón Már / Simião, Susana / Solomando Marti, Antonia / Stavenow Jerremalm, Jasmine / Stejskal, Ole / Survilienė, Vaida / Bie Thøstesen, Charlotte / van der Hiele , Jaap / Varas, Jesús / Verdaat, Hans / Verheul, Dylan / Víkingsson, Gisli Arnór / Villalón, Juanjo / Williams, Rosie S. / Woodlock, Johnny / Pierce, Graham John (2025) European stranding networks as a tool for monitoring marine mammal populations (Part I): towards optimising the functioning of networks. ICES Journal of Marine Science , Vol. 82, No. 11, p. fsaf194

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