



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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Agenda items 14 (b)

REVIEW OF ARTICLE IV AGREEMENTS ALREADY CONCLUDED

I. The Secretariat is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species, the report provided by the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of **Seals in the Wadden Sea**, to accompany document UNEP/CMS/Conf.8.10.

2. The report is provided unedited in the format and language that it was submitted.

EXAMEN DES ACCORDS DE L'ARTICLE IV DEJA CONCLUS

1. Le Secrétariat diffuse ci-joint, pour l'information des participants à la 8ème session de la Conférence des Parties à la Convention sur les espèces migratrices, le rapport développé fourni par le Secrétariat de l'Accord sur la conservation des phoques de la mer de Wadden, pour accompagner le document UNEP/CMS/Conf. 8.10.

2. Le rapport est fourni sans avoir été mis au point, dans le format et la langue dans lesquels il a été soumis.

REVISIÓN DE ACUERDOS ARTÍCULO IV YA CONCLUIDOS

1. La Secretaría adjunta, para información de los participantes a la Octava Conferencia de las Partes de la Convención sobre Especies Migratorias, el informe completo presentado por la Secretaría del Acuerdo sobre la conservación de las focas del Mar de Wadden, en complemento en el documento UNEP/CMS/Conf. 8.10.

2. El informe se presenta sin modificaciones editoriales, bajo la forma y en el idioma originales.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF SEALS IN THE WADDEN SEA

Progress Report by the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat

Version 04.07.2005

1. The Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea, which was the first regional agreement under the Bonn Convention, was concluded between Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands on 16 October 1990 in Bonn, Germany, and entered into force one year later. The Secretariat for the Agreement and the coordinating institution for the Seal Management Plan is the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat in Wilhelmshaven, Germany.
2. The aim of the Seal Agreement is to promote close cooperation amongst the Parties in order to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for the Harbour seal population, which was a particular critical issue in the beginning of the 90s, since the population was reduced with about 60% in 1988 as a result of a disastrous Phocine Distemper virus (PDV)-epizootic.
3. Since 1988, the population has recovered significantly to about 20,975 seals in 2002. In 2002, however, the same virus again caused the death of a substantial portion of the Harbour seal population in the Kattergat/Skagerrag area, the Wadden Sea and the North Sea. One year later, in 2003, only 47% of the expected amount of seals - if no epizootic would had occurred - was counted in the Wadden Sea.
4. Again the population has recovered significantly since 2002. According to coordinated aerial flights in the entire Wadden Sea, a total of about 12,800 seals was counted in 2004, of which about 3,700 were pups. This remarkable growth can be attributed to improvements in the reproductive rate as well as reduced initial juvenile mortality.
5. "The Conservation and Management Plan for the Seal Population, 2002-2006", the Seal Management Plan (SMP) builds on the obligations of the Seal Agreement and contains objectives and action points on habitat protection, research and monitoring, pollution and wardening, taking and public information, which are continuously implemented.
6. The plan covers the Wadden Sea stock of the Harbour seal (*Phoca vitulina vitulina*) and is also extended to cover the two breeding stocks of the Grey seal (*Helichoerus grypus*) in the Wadden Sea, the latter one not covered by the Wadden Sea Seal Agreement. The overall aim is restore and maintain viable stocks and a natural reproduction capacity, including juvenile surviving of the Harbour and Grey seal.
7. It is an essential instrument that seeks a balance between conservation and management of the area, and contributes to achieving viable stocks. The Parties continuously amend the plan in order to meet the challenge of protecting this flagship species of the Wadden Sea.