

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 32)

4 March 2021
Online meeting



Agenda Item: 5.2 Nature conservation and integrated ecosystem management

Subject: new TOR EG-Seals after inclusion of harbour porpoises on its agenda

Document No.: WSB 32/5.2/2

Date: 11 February 2021

Submitted by: EG-Seals / CWSS

From the Leeuwarden Declaration (LD):

Para 16. Agree to duly take account of the fact that harbour porpoises are present in the Wadden Sea, thus addressing the conservation of the species;

Following the review process of Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC), the terms of reference (TOR) of EG-Seals were adopted during WSB 28, 14 March 2019.

Parallel to this review process, the ASCOBANS request from 2017 on the inclusion of harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena L.*) in the trilateral agenda had been dealt with, resulting in the formulation of paragraph 16. of the LD and, as a first corresponding activity, a symposium/workshop on harbour porpoises in the Wadden Sea in April 2019. Based on the outcome and recommendations from this workshop, and on existing knowledge on harbour porpoises in the Wadden Sea, the EG-Seals recommended to include the topic in the work of the expert group. During WSB 30, it was decided to commission EG-Seals to adjust the TOR accordingly. The EG-Seals agreed on new ToR at the 20-2 meeting on 29 October 2020 and, to recognize the inclusion of harbour porpoises on its agenda, to propose a renaming of the expert group to Expert Group Marine Mammals (EG-MM).

This document is displaying new draft TOR for EG-Seals, considering any activities on harbour porpoises under the trilateral umbrella, and a list of group members.

Proposal: The meeting is invited to adopt the terms of reference and the change of name to Expert Group Marine Mammals.

EXPERT GROUP MARINE MAMMALS (EG-MM)

Draft Terms of Reference

Background

The Wadden Sea is part of the habitat of three marine mammal species: the harbour seal, the grey seal and the harbour porpoise. In the framework of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation, the conservation and management of the Wadden Sea seal populations is of high importance. The harbour porpoise has been recognized as a third species to be included in the trilateral activities in an enhanced cooperation with other organizations. In fulfilling its mandate, EG-Marine Mammals will duly consider and seek to promote the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) insofar as these are relevant to its work. The group reports to CWSS and to the secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention, CMS) through CWSS.

Objective

The EG-Marine Mammals provides advice on the elaboration and implementation of the recent Seal Management Plan and is coordinating, together with CWSS, the trilateral seal monitoring. The activities of the EG-Marine Mammals should, i.a. fulfil the obligations of the Wadden Sea Seals Agreement (WSSA) concluded by Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands under the auspices of CMS. The group is furthermore connecting monitoring, scientific protection, conservation and communication activities on harbour porpoises and evaluating the ecological status of this species.

Tasks

Re. seals:

- (1) Evaluate the current Conservation and Management Plan for the Wadden Sea Seal Population (SMP) and formulate - if necessary, in cooperation with further experts - an outline for the new SMP every five years;
- (2) Coordinate, supervise and execute monitoring activities as identified in the SMP and assess the results;
- (3) Formulate concrete plans to achieve the objectives of the SMP, in particular the identified required efforts and objectives;
- (4) Elaborate and submit proposals to the responsible authorities to initiate and implement research activities as identified in the SMP and assess relevant research results;
- (5) Analyse developments in the harbour and grey seal populations and provide management advice to the responsible bodies;
- (6) Report to the appropriate trilateral body.

Re. harbour porpoises:

- (1) Foster the exchange on, and connect where possible, existing monitoring and research programmes to gain an overview on the Wadden Sea/North Sea population;
- (2) Analyse developments in the harbour porpoise population (e.g. on population size, health state, threats) and provide recommendations (e.g. research and monitoring, conservation and management and communication) to the responsible bodies;
- (3) Consider proposals on research activities to the responsible authorities;
- (4) Continue and foster the cooperation with ASCOBANS and other organizations.

Deliverables

- (1) Annual reports on harbour seal and grey seal counts;
- (2) Progress Reports on the implementation of the work plan;
- (3) Evaluation of recent SMP and provide expert advice on the next SMP;
- (4) Draft of Thematic Report on Marine Mammals of next Quality Status Report (next QSR tbc);
- (5) Annual overview on EG-MM activities and findings regarding harbour porpoises based on available monitoring, management and research information and under consideration of the ASCOBANS reports by state parties.

Composition/Membership

- Chairperson from group or CWSS plus
- 1-3 members per region (NL, LS, HH, SH, DK) directly or indirectly involved in 1) monitoring, management or research on the wild population of harbour seals, grey seals and harbour porpoises; 2) from independent scientific organizations or governmental agencies.

Time schedule

Permanent

MEMBERS OF EXPERT GROUP MARINE MAMMALS (EG-MM)

CHAIR

Ms Ursula Siebert

Institute for Terrestrial and
Aquatic Wildlife Research (ITAW),
University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover

DENMARK

Mr Anders Galatius

Department of Bioscience
University of Aarhus

Mr Jonas Teilmann

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Ms Charlotte Bie Thøstesen

Fishery- and Maritime Museum

GERMANY (Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein)

Mr Jens Brackmann

Niedersächsisches Landesamt für
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National Park Authority

Ms Britta Diederichs

Schleswig-Holstein Agency for Coastal Defense,
National Park and Marine Conservation
National Park Authority

Mr Armin Jeß

Schleswig-Holstein Agency for Coastal Defense,
National Park and Marine Conservation
National Park Authority

Mr Peter Körber

Environmental authority of the free Hanseatic
city of Hamburg (BUE),
National Park Administration Hamburg

Ms Britta Schmidt

National Park Authority Lower Saxony

NETHERLANDS

Ms Sophie Brasseur

Wageningen Marine Research

Ms Jessica Schop

Wageningen Marine Research

SECRETARY

Ms Kristine Meise

Common Wadden Sea Secretariat