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Agenda Item	1 - Adoption of the Agenda
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Submitted by	Secretariat and Chair
Reference	SEAL 12-2018, Outcome Annex 2

Background

The 13th Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Group on Marine Mammals (EG MAMA 13-2019) will be held on 24-26 September 2019 in Helsinki, Finland, at the premises of Ministry of the Interior (Kirkkokatu 12).

The Meeting will be chaired by Mr. Anders Galatius, Chair of the *ad hoc* Seal expert group.

The Meeting will start on Tuesday, 24 September at 10.00 and will end on Thursday, 26 September by 15.00. The meeting will be arranged back-to-back with a Marine Mammal Workshop to support the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (Thursday, 24 September (approx. 15:00) to Friday, 26 September by 15.00).

The focal items of the Meeting are to follow up on work taking place in the respective teams, questions raised as a result of the two seal-fisheries interaction workshops that took place in 2019, the revision of HELCOM Recommendation 17/2, to support the work on the Baltic Sea Action Plan update and to plan for continued work on indicators related to marine mammals.

Meeting documents will be submitted by the Secretariat to the [document library](#) of the [EG MAMA 13-2019 meeting site](#) via the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#). The Secretariat has prepared [a document template](#) and recommends using the template when submitting documents to the Secretariat.

Those Meeting participants who wish to provide their contributions for the Meeting are requested to submit the documents in electronic format to Professional Secretary Ms. Jannica Haldin (jannica.haldin@helcom.fi). The Secretariat kindly requests the Contracting Parties and Observers to observe the deadlines for submission of documents to a HELCOM meeting. The basic documents and documents requiring action or a decision to the Meeting should be submitted **by 2 September 2019**. Bulky documents should include abstracts embodying the essence of the proposals and action requested from the meeting. Documents containing comments to the basic documents as well as information documents should be provided to the Secretariat by **17 September 2019**.

Please register for the Meeting by answering the [Participation Survey](#) in the HELCOM Meeting Portal by **13 September 2019**. Instructions for the use of the new Meeting Portal are available on the [HELCOM Website](#).

Provisional Annotated Agenda

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda, as contained in document 1-1.

Agenda Item 2 Information by the Chair, Secretariat and Contracting Parties

The Meeting is invited to take note of the Terms of Reference for the Meeting agreed by SEAL 12-2018 and edited and endorsed by STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 (document 2-1).

The Secretariat will inform the Meeting of:

- the outcomes of recent State and Conservation Working Group and Fish Group meetings as well and other relevant recent HELCOM meetings (document to be submitted later).
- the recently published HELCOM database on biodiversity.
- the state of the Baltic Sea Action Plan update (BSAP UP) process.

HELCOM 40-2019 agreed to develop a HELCOM science agenda, concomitantly with the update of the BSAP. The agenda is to outline existing and foreseen HELCOM regional science needs. It will serve the development of activities in HELCOM as well as to inform external funding mechanisms on the research needs of HELCOM. In order to account for the broad range of topics covered by HELCOM work, the dynamic nature of policy and management needs, emerging issues, and the scientific progress, the agenda is envisioned to be regularly updated.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the survey (document to be submitted later) and, if not already done prior to 20 September 2019, submit proposals to the Secretariat (ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi).

The Secretariat will inform the Meeting of the updated HELCOM data and information strategy, adopted by HELCOM 40-2019.

The Chair and the Contracting Parties are invited to inform the Meeting of any relevant information.

Registered mortality of marine mammals

EG MAMA has agreed to annually update information on registered mammal mortality. Contracting Parties are invited to update the reported information, especially data for 2018 (document 2-2) and send it to the Secretariat (laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi) **by 17 September**.

In accordance with the ToRs for EG MAMA 13-2019, Denmark is invited to report data on mortality of marine mammals also from previous years from Kattegat **by 17 September**.

Germany is invited to inform the Meeting on any further progress within OSPAR and ASCOBANS to develop databases for collecting detailed data (including geographical information) of mortality, necropsies and dead bodies, and to propose how to harmonize the HELCOM data collection with these other initiatives.

Monitoring guidelines

SEAL 12-2018 took note that Sweden and Germany are working bilaterally to establish a plan to take forward the work to improve the guidelines for monitoring reproductive and nutritional status of marine mammals.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the progress of the work and the further developed guidelines as presented by Sweden, Germany, Denmark and the Health team, and provide guidance as needed.

Marine mammals-fisheries interaction

The Meeting is invited to take note of the outcomes of joint OSPAR-HELCOM workshop to examine possibilities for developing indicators for incidental bycatch of birds and marine mammals, which takes place 3-5 September in Copenhagen.

Agenda Item 3 Seals in the Baltic Sea

Agenda Item 3.1 Report on the intersessional activities under the Seal Expert Group teams

Seal population team

The Meeting is invited to take note of information on the recent activities of the team as presented by team leader Mr. Ivar Jüssi.

Seal distribution team

The Meeting is invited to take note of information on the recent activities of the team as presented by team leader Mr. Mart Jüssi.

Seal health team

The Meeting is invited to take note of information on the recent activities of the team as presented by team leader Ms. Ursula Siebert for seal health.

Agenda Item 3.2 Monitoring, data collection and reporting

SEAL 12-2018 discussed the need to analyze possible repercussions of using a biennial approach for monitoring of seals and for the subsequent abundance analysis. The Meeting invited Sweden to re-run two versions of the power analysis for population trends done in 2007. The first with all data which has become available since the last analysis; the second with data from the period 2000-2018 but only using every second year of data to be run twice using consecutive years as starting point.

The Meeting is invited to take note of and consider the progress and results of the analysis as presented by Sweden.

SEAL 12-2018 invited the Contracting Parties to share information on and result of national telemetry tagging activities as a reoccurring agenda item and activity at the annual EG MAMA meeting.

The Meeting is invited to take note of information on and results of the tagging activities as presented by the relevant Contracting parties. The Meeting is invited to consider presenting the results in the HELCOM Map and Data Services.

Database for seals

State & Conservation 9-2018 agreed that reporting frequency should be included into the guidelines for seal abundance and distribution in the HELCOM area, and suggested that the reporting should take place annually concomitantly with the EG MAMA meeting. The Meeting invited EG MAMA to discuss this at EG MAMA 13-2019 and to agree on a reporting frequency for data on distribution and abundance.

The Meeting is invited to agree on a reporting frequency for data on distribution and abundance and to include this in the guidelines.

Agenda Item 3.3 Management of seals and human induced pressures

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information on the results from the BaltFish symposium as presented by CCB.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the discussions and outcome of the HELCOM seal-fisheries interactions workshop held on the 28 June 2019 in Copenhagen, Denmark, as presented by the Chair (document to be submitted later).

The Meeting is invited to continue discussion on the interactions between seals and fisheries in cooperation with the HELCOM Fish group. The following aspects have been lifted in relation to EG MAMA work as a result of the BaltFish and HELCOM workshops:

- a. the need to define a concretized standard for estimating populations size. EG MAMA should update the population size yearly for the three seal species, so that there are regional, accepted population estimates every year.
- b. define hot spots of seal occurrence as soon as possible.
- c. collect and review information on the food preferences for seals, propose further research, if necessary.
- d. Parasites, reviewing the knowledge and look for causalities.

National management plans for seals

SEAL 7-2013 started the work on harmonizing national management plans as required by the Recommendation 27-28/2 and 'Guidelines for seal management plans' were developed by SEAL 8-2014 (Annex 2 of the [Outcome](#)).

The Meeting is invited to review the current national management plans and their implementation in light of the Recommendation 27-28/2 as well as the 'Guidelines for seal management plans'.

SEAL 9-2015 agreed to review any new or revised national management plans to assess the use of the guidelines and further agreed that Contracting Parties inform the Secretariat when new plans are adopted and make them available in advance of the annual HELCOM EG MAMA meetings.

Contracting Parties are invited to review the information in the document 3-1, Status of management plans for marine mammals, and to inform the Secretariat (jannica.haldin@helcom.fi) on possible new or updated management plans for seals as well as to update information on the current status of management plans for seals and information on hunting and regulation quotas **by 17 September**.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the updated Danish seal management plan as presented by Denmark (SEAL 12-2018 outcome para 4.12).

Contracting parties are invited to present any new and updated national management plans to be circulated for discussion at the Meeting.

Agenda Item 3.4 *Core indicators*

The Secretariat will present general information on the status of the work on updating HELCOM core indicators, and the preliminary priority status and aims for the core indicators on seals (document to be submitted later). The Meeting is invited to plan their own current work on indicators accordingly.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information by the Health Team of any proceedings with developing new indicators and further development of existing indicators for the health status of seals and porpoises.

Agenda Item 4 *Baltic Sea harbour porpoise*

Agenda Item 4.1 *Report of intersessional activities by the Harbor Porpoise team*

The Meeting is invited to take note of information on the recent activities of the team as presented by the harbor porpoise team.

Agenda Item 4.2 *Monitoring, data collection and reporting*

The Meeting is invited to review the status of the [HELCOM-ASCOBANS harbour porpoise database](#). The Contracting Parties are invited to report updates to the database by filling in the [reporting form](#) and sending it to the Secretariat (laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi) by **17 September**.

The Contracting Parties are invited to submit national contacts for updating the HELCOM/ASCOBANS harbour porpoise database to the Secretariat (laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi).

The Meeting is invited to take note of information on the submission of the SAMBAH II project proposal to the LIFE funding mechanism, as presented by the application coordinator and the Secretariat.

*Agenda Item 4.3**Management of harbor porpoise and human induced pressures*

The STATE AND CONSERVATION 9-2018 and 10-2019 meetings reviewed the existing actions from the Baltic Sea Action Plan and Ministerial Declarations 2010 and 2013 that have not been implemented yet and made initial remarks on how they could be taken forward or the need to clarify the actions.

The following actions were evaluated as not accomplished and need further efforts:

Action from the Ministerial Declaration 2013.: “Take decisive action to work towards a favourable conservation status of the harbor porpoise based on implementation of the CMS (Convention on Migratory Species) ASCOBANS (Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas) Jastarnia Plan for the harbor porpoise in the Baltic Sea, in particular by addressing the pressing problem of by-catch”

As a result State and Conservation 9-2018 invited EG MAMA to as a first step to define “favourable conservation status” (e.g. threshold value), considering also IUCN red-list criteria and report back to STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019.

The Meeting is invited to provide a definition for “favourable conservation status” (e.g. threshold value) for harbour porpoise, considering also IUCN red-list criteria and other instruments as outlined above.

Action “Evaluation of the effectiveness of existing technical measures to minimise by-catch of harbour porpoises” from the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

As a result, State and Conservation 9-2018 invited EG MAMA and specifically the Harbour porpoise team to as a first step identify and compile which technical measures are available to minimise by-catch of harbour porpoises.

The Meeting is invited to identify which technical measures are available, compile the information and report back to STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019.

National management plans for harbor porpoises

Contracting Parties are invited to review the information in the document 3-1, Status of management plans for marine mammals, and to inform the Secretariat (jannica.haldin@helcom.fi) on possible new or updated management plans for harbor porpoises as well as to update information on the current status of management plans for harbour porpoises **by 17 September**.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the finalized harbor porpoise management plan as presented by Sweden (SEAL 12-2018 outcome para 4.11).

The Meeting is invited to take note of and discuss any new and updated national management plans to be circulated by the relevant Contracting parties prior to or at the Meeting.

The Meeting is invited to take note of information by the Vice-chair of the ASCOBANS AC on activities related to Baltic Sea harbour porpoises under ASCOBANS AC and the Chair of Jastarnia Group on activities of the Jastarnia Group.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the progress on bycatch from the ASCOBANS & ACCOBAMS as presented by the Vice-chair of the ASCOBANS AC.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the invitation by ASCOBANS to nominate representation to the newly established Working Group on Resource Depletion and suggest and agree on appropriate HELCOM representation.

The Meeting is invited to take note of further information by Germany on how and what mitigation measures were used during the ship shock trials discussed in SEAL 12-2018 (SEAL 12-2018 outcome para 4.3).

Contracting Parties are invited to inform of any relevant national activities concerning harbour porpoise.

Agenda Item 4.4 *Recommendation 17/2*

STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 in principle endorsed the technical amendments of the updated recommendation 17/2, taking into account the study reservations of Denmark, Germany and Sweden.

STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 considered that, as new knowledge on the existence of two sub-populations of the harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea and work on the new indicators concerning Baltic harbour porpoise, a revision of the Recommendation 17/2 is needed, and invited HOD 55-2018 to consider initiating a process to revise the Recommendation.

HOD 55-2018 took note of the technical amendments to HELCOM Recommendation 17/2 on protection of harbor porpoise. The Meeting took note of the clarification that Sweden can lift their study reservation on the proposal, and that, while Germany cannot lift their study reservation, they are open to a revision of the Recommendation.

HOD 55-2018 agreed to initiate a process to revise the Recommendation whereby STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019 provides initial revisions to the document, to be submitted to EG MAMA 13-2019 meeting for further revision and to STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019 for endorsement and submission to HOD 57-2019 for approval, aiming at adoption by HELCOM 41-2020.

STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019 formed a drafting group to further consider the revision to forward the process. The meeting took note of the edits proposed by the drafting group to the revision of the Recommendation and further edited the draft as contained in document 3N-16 rev.1 to that Meeting.

STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019 agreed that the draft revised recommendation will be submitted to EG MAMA 13-2019 for review and further input, before being reviewed by STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019 with the intention of submitting the revised recommendation for approval by HOD 57-2019 and adoption by HELCOM 41-2020.

The Meeting is invited to review the version of the Recommendation edited by STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019 (document 4-1) and give further input.

The Meeting is invited to review the situation with the reporting form for Recommendation 17/2 based on developments in State and Conservation 9/ 2018 and in ASCOBANS at EG MAMA 13-2019.

Agenda Item 4.5 *Core indicators*

The Meeting is invited to take note of, and provide input as needed, information by the Health Team of any proceedings with developing new indicators for the health status of harbour porpoises.

‘Harbour porpoise distribution and abundance’

SEAL 12-2018 welcomed the suggestion, and justification for, splitting the harbour porpoise distribution and abundance indicator into two separate indicators.

The Meeting is invited to take note, and provide input as needed, of the efforts by the indicator team in splitting the indicator into two separate indicators, one of abundance and trends in abundance and a second on trends in relative abundance.

Agenda Item 5 *Any other business*

SEAL 12-2018 took note that in Sweden, there is an ongoing project screening seals and fish for nematode infections. Sweden is invited to present the results of the work to the Meeting.

SEAL 12-2018 took note that there is no scientific evidence of grey seal population affecting other marine mammal populations negatively, however, there are publications and material available on aggressive behaviour of grey seal towards other seal species. CCB and Mr. Mart Jüssi are invited to provide further information to the Meeting.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the policy position paper by CPMR Baltic Sea Commission on legalizing trade in seal products from controlled hunting.

The Meeting is invited to consider any other business of relevance for the group.

The Meeting is invited to amend and agree on the Terms of Reference of the next meeting including main tasks and objectives as well as the arrangements of intersessional activities, to be submitted for endorsement by STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019.

The Meeting is invited to decide on the time and place of the next meeting of the group. The list of recent Seal Expert Group meeting hosts is included in document 5-1.

Agenda Item 6 Outcome of the Meeting

A draft Outcome of the Meeting will be presented by the Secretariat for consideration and approval by the Meeting participants. The final Outcome, together with documents and presentations considered at the Meeting, will be made available on the [EG MAMA 13-2019 Meeting site](#) under [Meeting Documents](#) on the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#).