



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

HELCOM Expert Group on Marine Mammals

EG MAMA 14-2020

Online, 22-24 September 2020

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The 14th Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Group on Marine Mammals (EG MAMA 14-2020) will be held as an online meeting on 22-24 September 2020.

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

The Meeting will start on Tuesday, **22 September at 10.00** and will end on Thursday, **24 September by 15.00 Central European Summer Time (CEST)**.

The focal items of the Meeting are to follow up on work taking place under the teams, to support the work on the Baltic Sea Action Plan update and to plan for continued work on indicators related to marine mammals.

Documents for the Meeting will be made available on the [EG MAMA 14-2020 Meeting site](#) in the HELCOM Meeting Portal. Please note that you need to be a registered user with relevant rights to access the restricted meeting documents. Instructions for the use of the Meeting Portal are available on the [HELCOM website](#).

Those Meeting participants that wish to provide their contributions for the Meeting are requested to submit the documents using the [document template](#) to Professional Secretary Jannica Haldin (jannica.haldin@helcom.fi) **at the latest by 31 August 2020**. Documents containing comments to the basic documents shall be received by the Secretariat not later than seven days before the opening of the Meeting, i.e. **15 September 2020**.

Please register for the Meeting by answering the [Participation Survey](#) in the HELCOM Meeting Portal by **15 September 2020**.

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 EG MAMA 13-2019, edited and endorsed by STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019 (document 2-1).

The Secretariat will inform the Meeting of:

- the state of the Baltic Sea Action Plan update (BSAP UP) process including the outcome from the BSAP UP workshops (document to be submitted later)
- progress with the HELCOM Science Agenda
- progress of work on producing climate change key messages for marine mammals by HELCOM-Baltic Earth Expert network on climate change (EN CLIME)
- the HELCOM monitoring manual update process
- progress of work on the HELCOM indicator manual
- 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 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. The Contracting Parties are invited to update the reported information, especially data for 2019 (document 2-2) and send it to the Secretariat (laura.kaikkonen@helcom.fi) **by 15 September**. EG MAMA 13-2019 agreed that hunting quotas for seals should also be included into the database where relevant.

Denmark is invited to report mortality data from previous years from Kattegat **by 15 September** (ToR point 3f).

Germany is invited to inform the Meeting on the 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 (ToR point 3h).

STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019 invited the Expert Group to collect and collate more precise information on illegal killing and bycatch of marine mammals.

The Meeting is invited to initiate this activity and agree on how it can be done.

Agenda Item 3 Seals in the Baltic Sea

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

Seal population team

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

STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019 invited EG MAMA to discuss

- how knowledge about the partially unknown occurrence and birthplaces of grey seals can be improved,

- present figures on seal abundances in tabular form, to be included in the HELCOM biodiversity database, and population trend curves for all management units to be presented on the HELCOM website and
- to look into the possibility to define the share of the population in national waters.

The Meeting is invited to consider and provide information to the above-mentioned matters proposed by State and Conservation.

Seal distribution team

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

STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019 invited the Expert Group to prepare a proposal on how to further the knowledge on parasites in grey seals, the interaction with fish (including cod) and the possible effects on fisheries.

The Meeting is invited to prepare such a proposal.

Agenda Item 3.2 Monitoring, data collection and reporting

Monitoring guidelines

According to the ToR of the Meeting, the national representatives to EG MAMA are requested to review the new and updated national management and action plans from their respective countries against the guidelines developed by SEAL 8-2014 and present the results for discussion at the Meeting.

The guidelines for monitoring blubber thickness-, guidelines for monitoring of reproductive status as well as guidelines for monitoring for the draft health indicators for marine mammals are to be further improved by the health team intersessionally. The Health Team is invited to submit the monitoring guidelines to the Secretariat (Jannica.haldin@helcom.fi) **by 31 August 2020** and the Meeting is invited to consider the draft guidelines.

Data Flow project

The Meeting is invited to note that funding has been secured for the HELCOM Data Flow project. The project will improve the data flows so that the HELCOM data flows used for core indicators and supporting assessments (e.g. Baltic Sea Pressure Index/Baltic Sea Impact Index and Economic and Social Analyses) would be fully operational for the Third State of the Baltic Sea Assessment (HOLAS III).

Database for seals

EG MAMA 13-2019 agreed that following the suggestion by State & Conservation, the data for the previous year's survey will be provided to the Secretariat in advance of the EG MAMA meetings and noted that Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Poland and Sweden are ready to provide data, and that Finland is working to be able to provide the data.

The Contracting Parties are invited to present the results of the 2019 seal surveys to the Meeting (ToR 3a).

The Secretariat is invited to report to the Meeting on how seal survey data can be included in the HELCOM Biodiversity Database (ToR point 3b).

The Contracting Parties are invited to report on any ongoing telemetry data initiatives at the Meeting and consider presenting the results in the HELCOM Map and Data Services (3c).

Agenda Item 3.3 Core indicators

The Meeting is invited to take note of the work plan for future work on HELCOM indicators on [marine mammals](#) and [bycatch](#) (document 3-1). The Meeting is invited to plan current work on indicators accordingly.

The Marine Mammal Health team is invited to report to the Meeting on the further development of existing and new indicators for the health status of seals and porpoises including considering expanding the reproduction indicator to include ringed seal, harbor seal and harbor porpoise (ToR point 1a).

Agenda Item 3.4 Recommendation 27/28-2

The [Recommendation](#) was evaluated by EG MAMA in 2016 and State and Conservation at the time noted that the effectiveness of the Recommendation, although not fully implemented yet, is overall satisfying. Also, editorial changes were made to the Recommendation in 2016 by the Expert Group, which were accepted by STATE & CONSERVATION 6-2016.

The Meeting might wish to consider the need for another assessment of effectiveness for the Recommendation and the need to for possible editorial updates (e.g. regarding the new name of the Expert Group).

Agenda Item 3.5 Management of seals and human induced pressures

STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019 invited EG MAMA to discuss how a Precautionary Approach Level for the individual seal populations (Management Units) or something similar can be modelled or otherwise determined (e.g. by expert assessment). If a separate project is required for this purpose, a project description should be drawn up.

The Meeting is invited to discuss this matter and consider the need for a separate project description in case a project will be needed for the task.

STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019 further invited EG MAMA to re-examine if seal populations are adequately protected by HELCOM and Natura 2000 MPAs.

The Meeting is invited to re-examine this.

Marine mammal – fisheries interaction

EG MAMA 13-2020 took note of scientific studies in Germany on different methodologies and techniques for the development and testing of seal safe fishing gear and the mitigation of the bycatch of harbour porpoise. The meeting took note that this investigation has been financed by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and has been carried out by the Federal Institute of Baltic Sea Fisheries (TI).

Germany is invited to present the results of the studies at the Meeting.

The Meeting is invited to continue discussion on the interactions between mammals and fisheries in cooperation with the HELCOM Fish group (ToR point 9a) as well as present progress from the ASCOBANS & ACCOBAMS working group on bycatch (ToR point 9b).

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 national representatives to EG MAMA are requested to review the new and updated national management and action plans from their respective countries against the guidelines developed by SEAL 8-2014 (Annex 2 of the [Outcome](#)) and present the results for discussion at the Meeting.

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.

The Contracting Parties are invited to review the information in the document 3-2, 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 31 August 2020**.

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

Agenda Item 4 Baltic Sea harbour porpoise

Agenda Item 4.1 Report of intersessional activities by the Harbor Porpoise Abundance and Distribution team

The Meeting is invited to take note of information on the recent activities of the team as presented by the team leaders, Ms. Julia Carlström and Ms. Anita Gilles, including the following tasks defined in the ToR of EG MAMA 14:

- i. collate national information on how Favorable Conservation Status has been decided, and develop a suggestion for a regional definition for the term, to support the revision of existing actions to be included in the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan, and provide the information to State and Conservation WG, and
- ii. review the list of by-catch mitigation measures prepared by Fish WG and submit a list of available measures to State and Conservation WG.

Agenda Item 4.2 Monitoring, data collection and reporting

The Meeting is invited to review the status of the [HELCOM-ASCOBANS harbour porpoise database](#) (as part of the HELCOM Biodiversity Database). The Contracting Parties are invited to report updates to the database by filling in the reporting form (available by request) and sending it to the Secretariat (laura.kaikkonen@helcom.fi) **by 31 August 2020**.

The Contracting Parties are invited to review the list of national contacts for updating the HELCOM/ASCOBANS harbour porpoise database (document 4-1) and send possible updates to the Secretariat (laura.kaikkonen@helcom.fi).

The Meeting is invited to take note of information on the status of submitting the SAMBAH II project proposal to the LIFE funding mechanism, to be presented by the application coordinator.

The Harbour Porpoise Distribution and Abundance team will commence the work on drafting monitoring guidelines for distribution and abundance intersessionally and is invited to submit the monitoring guidelines to the Secretariat (Jannica.haldin@helcom.fi) **by 31 August 2020** and present them at the Meeting (ToR point 4b).

Ms. Penina Blankett, Vice-chair of the ASCOBANS AC is invited to report on activities of ASCOBANS, Ms. Ida Carlén, Chair of Jastarnia Group, to report on activities of the Jastarnia Group and Ms. Katarzyna Kaminska, HELCOM representative in the ASCOBANS Working Group on Resource Depletion, to report on activities of the Working Group at the Meeting.

Agenda Item 4.3 Core indicators

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

The Meeting is invited to take note of the work plan for future work on HELCOM indicators on [marine mammals](#) and [bycatch](#) (document 3-1). The Meeting is invited to plan current work on indicators accordingly.

The co-Leads for the Harbour Porpoise Abundance and Distribution indicators, together with the Harbour Porpoise Abundance and Distribution Team, are invited to report to the Meeting on the continued work on developing the indicators on 'Harbour porpoise distribution and abundance', including further defining key monitoring sites and reference levels (ToR point 1b).

Mr. Sven Koschinski, Germany, in collaboration with Poland and Sweden and supported by CG FishData, is invited to report to the Meeting on the continued work on the development of the indicator 'Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gears' (ToR point 1c).

Agenda Item 4.4 Recommendation 17/2

The Meeting is invited to note that the [revised Recommendation](#) was adopted by HELCOM 41-2020.

Agenda Item 4.5 Management of harbour porpoise and human induced pressures

The Meeting is invited to take note of the [ICES special request advice on an EU request on emergency measures to prevent bycatch of common dolphin and Baltic Proper harbor Porpoise](#).

National management plans for harbor porpoises

The Contracting Parties are invited to review the information in the document 3-2, Status of management plans for marine mammals, and to inform the Secretariat (jannica.haldin@helcom.fi) on possible new or updated management plans for harbour porpoises as well as to update information on the current status of management plans for harbour porpoises **31 August 2020**.

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

Agenda Item 5 Future work

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 13-2020.

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 Any other business

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

Agenda Item 7 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 14-2020 Meeting site](#) on the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#).