



Outcome of the intersessional Meeting of HELCOM Expert Group on Marine Mammals (EG MAMA 14A-2020)

Introduction

0.1 In accordance with the [Outcome](#) of EG MAMA 14-2020 (4.5 to 4.9), the intersessional Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Group on Marine Mammals (EG MAMA 14A-2020), was held online on 19 November 2020.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by delegations Denmark, Finland, Germany, Poland and Sweden. The Meeting was also attended by Coalition Clean Baltic as an observer. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex 1**.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Signe Sveegaard, Denmark. Mr. Joni Kaitaranta and Mr. Florent Nicolas from the HELCOM Secretariat acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

0.4 The Chair of the Meeting Ms. Signe Sveegaard welcomed the participants.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

1.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda as contained in documents 1-1.

Agenda Item 2 Data availability on harbour porpoise

2.1 The Meeting took note of the information in the document 2-1 on the online HELCOM [Biodiversity database](#) and other harbour porpoise data products hosted by HELCOM. The Biodiversity database was developed during the BaltiCheck project (2018-2019) and is currently used for storing HELCOM/ASCOBANS previously reported harbour porpoise data.

2.2 The Meeting discussed about including the possibility of using HELCOM/ASCOBANS data types (i.e. bycatch, stranding, or sighting data) as a search criteria to be displayed when the user is querying data from the Biodiversity database.

2.3 The Meeting took note of the information from Sweden on the [national portal](#) to share acoustic data products on harbour porpoise, which are reported as detection positive minutes. The Meeting also took note of the information that the Swedish database has records on the time of the detection, as well as the start and end time of the monitoring/C-POD deployment (i.e. effort) which is also relevant for harbour porpoise data. Any user can do a query to the portal to download data.

2.4 The Meeting took note of the information from Germany on the [national portal](#) to share data on harbour porpoise. Visual surveys (efforts and sightings positions) and acoustic (i.e. positive days per station per month) data products are available. The Meeting also took note that a data summary is available per CPOD (number of days in uses, depth, etc.). The portal is currently in German, but an English version will be available.

2.5 The Meeting took note of the information on the data format from Finland on acoustic data and also opportunistic sightings. The dataset currently does not include information on effort.

2.6 The Meeting took note that the data processing of acoustic data is currently different among the different Contracting Parties. The data products such as the time units of harbour porpoise

detection are presently not aligned. The task to harmonize the data products at the regional level from acoustic data would be labor intensive and is currently not feasible for the Contracting Parties without extra resources. The Meeting also took note that these extra resources are not really justified until a harmonized acoustic monitoring method is developed as a part of SAMBAH II LIFE, and an indicator is developed for harbour porpoises. Then re-processing is more likely to be justified once a common unit for reporting is agreed upon.

2.7 The Meeting took note that raw acoustic data (i.e. cp1 and cp3 files) can be relatively heavy to be hosted by the HELCOM Biodiversity Database and that this would not serve a purpose since the raw data does not provide the needed information without processing and associated metadata.

2.8 The Meeting discussed about which units (i.e. time of detections, e.g. detection positive minute, detection positive day or even encounter) would be needed for the acoustic data products on the HELCOM Biodiversity database.

2.9 The Meeting discussed about the possibility for the Biodiversity Database to store different units for the time of detection used by different Contracting Parties.

2.10 The Meeting took note that the SAMBAH project (2010-2016) generated data products with click details (i.e. click positive per second) which is a different unit than those used by the different national monitoring programs. The Meeting also took note that these data products are not yet publicly available.

2.11 The Meeting discussed that the data delivered should include fields to identify attributes known to be important such as the visual validation of a CPOD detection (sighting), the filters used to process the data, and the station identification. The Meeting highlighted that the depth can be a sensitive attribute to share and should not be included as an attribute.

2.12 The Meeting agreed that an attribute on the time detection unit is important as well as information about the CPOD position in the water column. The Meeting also agreed that the data source is an important attribute to display.

2.13 The Meeting took note that the acoustic monitoring data for harbor porpoise has several possible uses within the regional assessment frameworks, where the HOLASIII assessment (state of harbour porpoise, noise, bycatch risk, etc.) and the next Red List assessment are of most immediate concern.

2.14 The Meeting discussed the time period and sources to focus on for data reporting and agreed the following:

2.14.1 CPs will aim to report the full timeseries they have available.

2.14.2 The first priority will be data associated with the national monitoring efforts, as these data are by default publicly available; however, additional data is welcome.

2.14.3 Accessing and reporting data from projects and private companies, where restrictions might apply, will be explored in the future to supplement national monitoring data.

2.15 The Meeting agreed that the participants would send sample data to the HELCOM Secretariat (florent.nicolas@helcom.fi) with metadata by 27 November 2020. The Meeting agreed that the Secretariat will check the different unit of time detections available and will propose a common solution to include such acoustic data in the Biodiversity database. The Meeting agreed that another intersessional Meeting would be needed to further work on this topic. This Meeting will take place in early 2021.

2.16 The Meeting took note that the SAMBAH II LIFE project is planning to collate all of the national monitoring programs data on harbour porpoise, and the original SAMBAH data. The SAMBAH II LIFE project application will be submitted 15 February 2021.

Agenda Item 3 Outcome of the Meeting

3.1 The Meeting adopted the Outcome from the meeting via correspondence.

Annex 1 List of Participants

Name	email	Organisation
Chair		
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