



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Ad hoc Seal Expert Group

SEAL 10-2016

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Document title	Proposal on an east-west border for the high and low density areas of harbour porpoises
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Agenda Item	6 – Work on Baltic Sea harbour porpoise
Submission date	5.10.2016
Submitted by	Germany

Background

This document contains a proposal on east-west border for the high and low density areas of harbour porpoises, submitted by Germany, as agreed by SEAL 10-2016.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the proposal.

Germany proposes the Darß' and Limhamn Sills as borderReasons

Since in the meantime the Jastarnia Plan was updated based on information from SAMBAH and this plan is aimed at protecting the Baltic Proper Subpopulation it is best to consider the Jastarnia Plans findings for proposing a boundary. Four recent studies have considered borders between populations: Gallus et al. 2012, Benke et al. 2014, Sveegaard et al. 2015 and now the Sambah report. Benke et al and Gallus et al showed that most probably animals from the Baltic proper use the Pommeranian Bay in Winter times and these results are in line with Sambah results. Sveegaard et al is aimed at proposing a population boundary for the Belt Sea subpopulation and not for the Baltic Proper and also states so in her paper. Therefore to include as many sightings as feasible for the Baltic Proper (to not lose possibly helpful information) while excluding as much data as possible from the much more numerous Belt Sea population it is necessary to move the border to somewhere between north of Rügen to the Darß Sill. Since all older data refer to the Baltic Proper as the range of porpoises from the Baltic Sea it seems to be best to base it still there and that would mean to propose the Darß' and Limhamn Sills as the border for the incidental sightings database.