



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Ad hoc Seal Expert Group

Hel, Poland, 5-7 October, 2016

SEAL 10-2016

Document title	Outcome of an ad hoc German Swedish meeting on seal indicators, 2016-09-09, Malmö
Code	8-2
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Agenda Item	Agenda Item 8 – Core indicators and other activities under the Seal Expert Group teams
Submission date	29.9.2016
Submitted by	Germany and Sweden
Reference	Outcome SEAL 9-2015, Para 6.18

Background

SEAL 9-2015 proposed that the Lead Country representatives and the health team will continue the discussion on the indicators on population condition intersessionally and report the conclusions to SEAL 10-2016.

In order to follow up this proposal, Swedish and German experts and S&C HODs met on 9 September 2016 in Malmö and discussed the issue.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of and discuss the outcome of the ad hoc meeting.

Outcome of ad hoc German Swedish Seal meeting, 2016-09-09, Malmö

The following people attended the meeting:

- *Prof. Prof. h. c. Dr. Ursula Siebert* (Institute for Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Research (ITAW), University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover)
- *Dr. Tero Härkönen* (Department for Environmental Research and Monitoring, Swedish Museum of Natural History)
- *Dr. Karin Hårding* (Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, University of Gothenburg)
- *Tina Kesselring* (Institute for Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Research (ITAW), University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover)
- *Dieter Boedeker* (German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation BfN AS Vilm)
- *Dr. Norbert Häubner* (Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management)

Background and scope of the meeting

At HELCOM SEAL 9, 2015 (Berlin) it was proposed that the Lead Country representatives for mammal indicators and the health team of HELCOM Seal should intensify the discussion on appropriate health indicators for marine mammals and to clarify possibilities to synchronize the development of such indicators within the HELCOM region. The colleagues involved were of the opinion that a personal meeting would be most purposeful.

The meeting started with an introduction about the scope of this meeting by Dieter Boedeker and Norbert Häubner followed by two presentations about the development of the HELCOM seal health indicators by Karin Hårding and an overview of the work of the ITAW by Ursula Siebert.

The meeting concluded the following:

In principle it is possible to synchronize the development of the HELCOM core indicator “Nutritional status of marine mammals” and the development of health indicators done at ITAW. In order to facilitate a further development of the health indicators for marine mammals all participants agreed on a better and more intensive cooperation between the existing indicator group and the Seal Health team.

Some answers on specific questions:

What could be achieved until HOD 51?

- The meeting concluded that a document should be send both to SEAL 10-2016, State & Conservation 5-2016 and HOD 51-2016:
 - Stating the state of play in autumn 2016 and how the available health indicators should be tested in HOLAS II
 - Noting the aim to develop health indicators for all marine mammals (grey seal, harbor seal, ringed seal and possible harbor porpoise) for future assessments (beyond HOLAS II) in the whole HELCOM area.
 - Describing a new concept and how it connects to available health indicators within the HELCOM area.
 - Renaming the available indicator “Nutritional status of marine mammals” reflecting the outcome of SEAL 8-2014 (paragraph 5-19 in the outcome).
 - Investigating the possibility of an exposé for HOLAS II on how an additional indicator developed by the ITAW should look like and complements the existing health indicators for marine mammals.
 - Noting that Karin Hårding and Ursula Siebert are willing to act as co-leads for compiling the document.

Long term goals (beyond HOLAS II): What could be achieved in the third MSFD cycle?

- Overall aim: a set of operational indicators to describe health status of marine mammals in the HELCOM area.
- Common data base for health related parameters across the whole HELCOM region – funding needed.
- Develop indicators on both dead and live catches must go along with revised monitoring guidelines.
- Secure funding for this work.
- Seal Health team should be responsible for this development.

The meeting took place in a constructive and friendly atmosphere.