

**4th MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO ASCOBANS
Esbjerg, Denmark, 19 - 22 August 2003**

Resolution No. 5

Effects of Noise and of Vessels

Recalling that the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas stipulates that ASCOBANS work towards "the prevention of other significant disturbance, especially of an acoustic nature";

Recalling Resolution No. 4 of the 3rd Meeting of the Parties;

Reaffirming that the difficulty of proving the detrimental effects of acoustic disturbance on cetaceans necessitates a precautionary approach in dealing with this issue;

Noting the results of the ASCOBANS study (MoP4/Doc.17) on the effects of noise and of vessels on cetaceans, which range from disturbance to potential lethal consequences from some military sonars and from ship strikes;

Noting Resolution 7.5 of the 7th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species on wind turbines and migratory species;

Recognizing the commitment of Parties to a change to using renewable sources of energy;

Recognizing the potential disturbance caused by offshore extractive industries and other activities including those associated with renewable energy;

Recognizing the political sensitivities in relation to military activities;

Commending the development by the United Kingdom of Regulatory Guidelines on Seismic Surveys and the adoption by Belgium of legislation providing for the establishment of guidelines such as those established by the United Kingdom;

The Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS

Requests Parties and Range States to

introduce guidelines on measures and procedures for seismic surveys to

- (1) alter the timing of surveys or to minimise their duration;
- (2) reduce noise levels as far as practicable;
- (3) avoid starting surveys when cetaceans are known to be in the immediate vicinity;
- (4) introduce further measures in areas of particular importance to cetaceans;
- (5) develop a monitoring system that will enable adaptive management of seismic survey activities;

Invites Parties and Range States to

- (1) develop, with military authorities, effective mitigation measures including environmental impact assessments and relevant standing orders to reduce disturbance of, and potential physical damage to, small cetaceans;
- (2) report before the Advisory Committee meeting in 2005, where possible, on approaches to reduce or eliminate adverse effects on small cetaceans by military activities;
- (3) conduct further research into the effects on small cetaceans of:
 - (a) vessels, particularly high speed ferries;
 - (b) acoustic harassment devices, such as those used in fish farms and elsewhere;
 - (c) offshore extractive and other industrial activities;
 - (d) other acoustic disturbances.

This should include research on physical and behavioural effects, and be at the individual and population levels.

- (4) conduct research and develop appropriate management measures and guidelines to minimise any adverse effects on small cetaceans of the above factors;
- (5) develop and implement procedures to assess the effectiveness of any guidelines or management measures introduced;
- (6) report on high energy seismic surveys per one degree by one degree rectangle using shot point density.

Requests the European Cetacean Society to elaborate methods for investigation of possible damage to cetaceans (including removal of cetacean auditory apparatus from fresh carcasses, and examination for damage to other body tissue) as part of further research into possible effects of noise on cetaceans and their behaviour.

Repeals Resolution No. 4 of the 3rd Meeting of the Parties.