OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic

Meeting of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on the implementation follow up of measures for the protection and conservation of species and habitats (ICG-POSH)

Paris (France): 9-11 October 2018

Roadmap for the implementation of collective actions within the Recommendations for the protection and conservation of OSPAR listed Species and Habitats

Action 12 - Development sheet

Action	Analyse whether any of the key areas justify selection as MPAs for the protection of whale populations and whether such areas may become a component of the OSPAR MPA network.
Participants	Germany, with support of France, the Netherlands, and United Kingdom and ICG-MPA
Plan:	This action is relevant for all OSPAR regions and refers to the following species: - Bowhead whale - Blue whale - Northern right whale - Harbour porpoise To accomplish Action 12, the following steps are envisaged: Step 1: Literature survey to compile knowledge and data on biological and ecological parameters of the species, such as distribution, abundance, life history, behavioural and physiological traits, and on methods of analysis, e.g. modelling approaches, statistics. Step 2: Check of data availability (e.g. distribution data) to select pilot species (i.e. species with the best available data) to start developing a methodological approach to model the pilot species' key areas. Step 3: Testing of different approaches to model the key areas of the pilot species. Depending on data availability and data needs of modelling approach, call for additional data sets on (all or specific) Action 12 species. Potentially establishment of a "network" of cetacean and modelling experts to discuss e.g. modelling approaches, data availability, knowledge gaps.

	Step 4: In close cooperation with supporting CPs and experts decide conclusively on the most suitable modelling approach to identify critical habitats of each Action 12 species in the OSPAR maritime area (NB: Depending on data availability, methods might differ between species). Step 5: Modelling of the key areas of all Action 12 species in the OSPAR maritime area (if possible, depending on data availability) and overlay with the OSPAR MPA network; regular updates (e.g. interim reports, presentations) of relevant fora, e.g. ICG-MPA, ICG-POSH, BDC, as appropriate. Step 6: Production of final report including description of methods, evaluation of results, conclusions and recommendations to OSPAR. Continuous process: Check of recently published relevant scientific papers/data sets.
Timeline	2018: Literature review, check of data availability, discussions with data holders and modelling experts for advice on how to solve problems of data deficiency and to close knowledge gaps e.g. habitat use. - *ongoing* 2018-19: Data call for all species to support selection of pilot species and development of modelling method, presentation of progress and preliminary results at ICG-MPA 2019 and ICG-POSH 2019. 2020-2022: Further development of modelling approach; data analyses; regular updates of relevant fora, e.g. ICG-MPA, ICG-POSH, BDC, as appropriate. Additional data call(s), if necessary. 2022: Preparation of final report.
Events	Yearly meetings of ICG-MPA and ICG-POSH, potentially also BDC; WebEx meetings as required; potentially also workshop(s) depending on the complexity of modelling approach and available funding.
Links to other actions	Link to Action 13 (similar methodological approach but different species) Possible link to Action 24: "Developing, within the competence of OSPAR, effective mitigation actions against further anthropogenic threats to whale populations and incorporate them into appropriate measures for the protection of these species (Blue whale, bowhead whale and Northern right whale)".
Added value of action by OSPAR	OSPAR will be informed about the potential of the current network of MPAs to contribute to the protection of specific OSPAR T & D species.
Resources	In addition to resources provided by DE and supporting CPs, the development of a sound scientific modelling approach will require input from modelling experts as well as from experts on Action 12 species.
Barriers to Progress	Possible barriers to progress include: - Data deficiencies for Action 12 species; - Time constraints of experts may lead to delayed method development and

	data analyses; - Constraints in availability of financial and human resources 2018 update: • Substantial data or knowledge gaps for some rare and/or unstudied species, such as deep-sea sharks and various whale species, exist. For example, the Northern right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) is almost extinct in the eastern North Atlantic and the current western population is of about 400–450 individuals off the east coast of North America. Thus, determination of key areas in the OSPAR maritime area, the goal of Action 12, is basically impossible. • Sophisticated modelling has to be conducted to analyze key areas and critical habitats as part of the tasks of Action 12 and 13. Thus, proven modelling experts and expertise are needed and tasks may need significantly more time than originally envisaged. In 2018, Germany has worked on possible solutions to circumvent these problems. Germany contacted various experts including modelling, elasmobranch and marine mammal experts to gather information about the biology of the animals, possible data sources not taken into account so far, such as historic fishing/whaling data sets, and the application of robust models to deal with limited data sets.
Stakeholders to engage	OSPAR CPs, experts on whales and habitat modelling, and depending on the species: ICES, ASCOBANS, WDC, etc.
Other Competent Authorities:	Depending on the species: NEAFC, NASCO, ICES, ASCOBANS as well as experts from research institutions like universities.
Product(s):	Report with quantitative analyses of the overlap of key areas of specific T & D species with the OSPAR MPA network; maps for visualisation; potentially recommendations for marine areas worth being selected as additional MPAs to improve OSPAR MPA coverage of key areas as a complementary measure to other conservation and management actions.

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