

**DRAFT REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE
SUB-COMMITTEE ON MARINE ENVIRONMENT
AND ECOSYSTEMS (SCMEE)**

SALAMMBÔ, TUNISIA, 11-12 JULY 2006

1. Opening of the session

The preparatory meeting for the Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE (SAC-GFCM)) held an unscheduled and informal session in the INSTM headquarters in Salammbô, Tunisia, from 11 to 12 July 2006. The session was attended by 18 participants (annex 1).

The coordinator of the SCMEE, Mr Mohamed Nejmeddine Bradai, welcomed the participants, and thanked the INSTM and GFCM for the facilities to hold this meeting. The Chairman of the SAC, Mr Corrado Piccinetti, presented the meeting, and briefly introduced the SAC and the main issues regarding the SCMEE.

The Chairman of the GFCM, Mr Mohamed Hadj Ali Salem, welcomed the participants to Tunisia and opened the session.

2. Adoption of the agenda

Mr Bradai introduced the priorities for the SCMEE established by the GFCM at its 30th session. The agenda was introduced and adopted (annex 2)

3. Designation of rapporteurs

Ms Roberta Mazzucco and Mr Jordi Lleonart were designated rapporteurs.

4. Matters relative to interaction fishing-cetaceans. State of the knowledge and actions to initiate (with ACCOBAMS)

The “Project for assessing and mitigating the adverse impacts on interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities in the ACCOBAMS area”, with acronym BYCBAMS, was presented by Ms Marie Christine van Klaveren and Mr Chedly Rais (annex 3).

ACCOBAMS wish to collaborate with GFCM (among other partners) to carry out this project, proposes to discuss the methodology in the next SCMEE meeting and that the SC would act as an expert group in support of the project.

The participants were informed that other organisms have shown interest in participating in such a project and are willing to fund some actions. On this purpose, the ACCOBAMS Secretariat informed that Italy expressed its interest in participating in some elements to be developed at national and international level and that two projects on interactions are receiving financial support from the Agreement (Tunisia and Romania).

The ACCOBAMS Secretariat also presented the “Survey project” on the abundance and distribution of cetaceans within the area, of high priority for the Agreement, and the planned meeting on organizational aspects of this survey to be held early 2007.

The participants agreed on the importance to conduct both BYCBAMS and the “Survey project”.

RAC/SPA is also ready to collaborate on the issues regarding the dynamics of cetacean populations, with this objective. The project has also been presented to the CS of the IWC. Genetic studies are also planned.

The participants underlined the importance of involving Romania, considering the interest of the GFCM to be present in the Black Sea.

The incidence of fishing activities on cetaceans and of cetaceans on fishing gears have been debated, i.e. in Corsica the artisanal fisheries seems to be heavily impacted by *Tursiops*, while in the Alboran sea, according to a WWF rapport, the driftnets cause a great mortality on dolphins. It has been discussed how to change the fishermen perception of the cetaceans to a positive, friendly, animal. Also impacts of activities other than fishing are important and should be taken into account (transport, tourism).

The standardisation of the data collection has been considered of paramount importance. ACCOBAMS will prepare a template to collect information on the interactions. These forms will be widely distributed to focal points, organisations and the SCMEE mailing list.

It was been proposed to hold a workshop during the first part of SCMEE meeting in September. The provisional agenda of this workshop has been prepared and approved by the participants and is presented in the annex 4.

5. The PELAGOS Sanctuary: Situation and actions to take

The PELAGOS Sanctuary was presented by Mr Philippe Robert (annex 5). This Sanctuary is an agreement between three countries: France, Monaco and Italy, and includes national waters as well as international waters with an extension of 87500 km². So far only actions at national level have been undertaken, but the international office has been operative as of 1 July 2006.

One of the major topics of the discussion was the use of the “thonaille”, a type of driftnet still used in France. The participants noted that GFCM cannot accept any regulatory measure of a forbidden gear.

The PELAGOS Secretariat was also asked to provide information about the fishing regulations to be implemented in the Sanctuary. These regulations must be more restrictive than the general GFCM regulations in order to classify the Sanctuary as a “fishing restricted area”. The Secretariat also expressed that the social and economic context of countries must be included in the political choice for all human activities.

Monaco presented a request to analyze the proposition of the Sanctuary to be recognized by the GFCM. This issue is included in the agenda for the next SCMEE meeting. The PELAGOS Secretariat will also present a more detailed proposal.

6. SCMEE work program and contribution of involved organisations

The organisations present at the meeting introduced the planned and ongoing activities in relation to the SCMEE objectives. These include IUCN (annex 6), WWF (annex 7) and RAC/SPA (annex 8).

The participants remarked the need for a better coordination of the activities in order to promote synergies and avoid duplications. In particular the following points were underlined:

- (i) Need of a greater involvement of GFCM with the Black Sea organisations and countries.
- (ii) Need for better information on project HERMES, focused on the study of deep sea, particularly on the Western Mediterranean canyons.
- (iii) Need to further develop collaboration with CIESM, in particular for EAF issues.

The agenda of the next SCMEE meeting (Rome, 11-14 September 2006) was discussed and approved (annex 9).

7. Other matters

It was noted that there is only one backstopping officer for two Sub-Committees, thus creating difficulties when both Sub-Committees meet at the same time.

8. Adoption of the conclusions

The following conclusions were adopted:

1. The agenda for the Workshop on fisheries – cetaceans interactions to be held during the first part of the SCMEE meeting, 11 September 2006 in Rome
2. The PELAGOS Sanctuary will present a detailed proposal in the framework of the collaboration GFCM/PELAGOS, to implement the Management Plan of the Sanctuary
3. Formal approach of the GFCM to CIESM. Establish contacts between the Chairman of the SAC and the Coordinator of the SCMEE with the officer responsible of the CIESM committees related to SCMEE interests.
4. ACCOBAMS will prepare a template for data collection on bycatch to be filled by experts and organisations.
5. Agreement on the SCMEE agenda.
6. The following points were also agreed upon:
 - a. To follow the approach to the Black Sea.
 - b. To develop a project for deep sea.
 - c. To develop actions for exotic species.

9. Closure

The Chairman of the SAC, Mr Piccinetti, closed the meeting, thanking the participants and the organisation.

ANNEX 1

Liste des participants

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ANNEX 2

Ordre du jour

1. Ouverture et organisation de la réunion.
2. Adoption de l'ordre du jour.
3. Désignation de rapporteur(s)
4. Questions relatives aux interactions pêche Cétacés: Etat des connaissances et actions à engager (conjointement avec ACCOBAMS)
5. Sanctuaire PELAGOS : Situation et actions à entreprendre
6. Programme de travail du SCMEE et contribution des organisations concernées
7. Autres questions
8. Adoption des conclusions
9. Clôture.

ANNEX 3

Project for assessing and mitigating the adverse impacts of interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities in the ACCOBAMS Area

Presentation by the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS of the ByCAMS Project

Rationale and project components

The interaction between fishing activities and cetaceans is a phenomenon that is well known and found in several parts of the world. In the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, numerous cases of cetacean mortality due to interaction with fishing have been reported; cetacean by-catch is one of the main problems of this interaction.

The first component of the project will be to assess the extent of the by-catch problem, by type of fishing, by concerned cetacean species, and by region. It will consist of data collection by observers on board of fishing boats and of a series of national workshops. Data collection will be done according to a standard procedure, which will be developed as part of the project. Right at the start of the project, a regional meeting will be held and observers trained with a view to data collection on conditions of interaction. The data collection procedure must be designed to also allow a better understanding of the by-catch phenomenon: age brackets that are most concerned, etc.

The second component of the project will be made of fishermen awareness campaigns, aiming both at drawing their attention to the need to mitigate the impact of fishing on cetaceans and at informing them about the practices and procedures to be followed to avoid by-catch and the behaviour to adopt if cetaceans are accidentally caught in their fishing gear. Awareness modules will be produced by the project and made available to countries participating in the project with a view to carrying out awareness actions. These will be in the form of awareness days in fishing ports, videos, commercials, posters and leaflets. Awareness material will be produced in several languages to reach the maximum number of fishermen.

The third component of the project will be devoted to pilot actions on the use of pingers and other ways of avoiding by-catch. In many countries there is a growing demand for the use of pingers. This element of the project aims at assessing the feasibility of the use of pingers and judging how far fishermen could adapt to using them. It is important to know whether the use of pingers involves considerable extra work for fishermen. It is, moreover, important to assess the environmental impact of pingers.

Objectives

The project's general objective is to assess and mitigate the adverse impacts of interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities in the project area. To this end the following specific objectives will be sought:

Specific objective 1: to collect historical data about the cetacean by-catch in the project area.

Specific objective 2: to establish an official scheme for independent observers on fishing boats, including data collection procedure.

Specific objective 3: to collect data about the present cetacean by-catch in the project area.

Specific objective 4: to assess the actual efficiency of pingers (and other ways of mitigating by-catch) and the associated environmental impacts of their use at large scale.

Specific objective 5: to raise fisherman awareness on the need to mitigate the impact of fishing on cetacean populations.

Specific objective 6: to enhance fisherman capability in handling cetaceans incidentally caught in their fishing gears.

Specific objective 7: to investigate the efficiency of AHDs (Acoustic Harassment Devices) in reducing nets depredation and interaction with purse seine fishing.

Geographical coverage

The project will be implemented in the area covered by the ACCOBAMS Agreement by the national authorities of each country participating in the project. A project coordinating unit will be placed with the ACCOBAMS Agreement Secretariat.

The following countries will be invited to define their needs and interest in the project: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Egypt, France, Georgia, Greece, Israel, Italy, Libya, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia & Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine. Taking into account the expressed needs and interest, a punctual selection of the participating countries will be done for each action, with particular attention to ACCOBAMS Members.

Partners:

The Secretariat of ACCOBAMS collaborated with RAC/SPA, the GFCM Secretariat and ICRAM to develop the project document. It is also planning to contact other possible partners (FAO Adriamed/Medsumed/EastMed/Copemed, IFREMER, Medisamak, WWF).

ANNEX 4

Workshop on fisheries – cetaceans interactions

11 September 2006, Rome

Objective: to analyze the work already done, data available, work planned for the immediate future and how to reduce interactions as a response to the second bullet of the Second Priority for the SCMEE “*addressing together with ACCOBAMS the issue of the interactions between cetaceans species in fishery activities, including in the PELAGO Sanctuary, through possibly convening a joint workshop on the subject.*”

Provisional Agenda:

1. State of the art
 - a. On going and already done Projects
 - b. Data available (fulfilled templates)
 - c. Papers published
2. New planned activities
 - a. Projects (BYCBAMS, GEF, others)
 - b. Coordination of projects
 - c. Obtaining new information
3. Impact reduction and proposal of measures
4. Conclusions and recommendations

ANNEX 5

Activities of the PELAGOS Sanctuary

A la suite de propositions élaborées par la communauté scientifique et associative, les trois Etats, l'Italie, Monaco et la France, ont signé en 1999 un Accord pour la protection des mammifères marins en Méditerranée, entré en vigueur en 2002. Pour ce vaste périmètre de 87 500 km², étendu en mer Ligure jusqu'au nord de la Sardaigne, un plan de gestion est validé en 2004 par les trois parties contractantes.

Le sanctuaire PELAGOS est inscrit sur la liste des Aires Spécialement Protégées d'Importance Méditerranéenne (ASPIM), ce qui lui confère une reconnaissance des autres pays non signataires à l'Accord et lui impose la mise en œuvre du plan de gestion.

En 2006, un secrétariat exécutif est nommé et rendu opérationnel pour harmoniser les programmes de recherche et ainsi que pour formuler des propositions pour la mise en œuvre de mesures de l'approche écosystémique.

Le thème de la pêche professionnelle est considéré comme majeur et le sanctuaire PELAGOS souhaite la collaboration de la CGPM sur deux axes particuliers :

- Enrichissement des connaissances à travers les données existantes ou celles à développer par un programme de recherche sur les thèmes suivants :
 - o Impacts des différents types de pêche sur les populations de cétacés
 - o Réglementations internationales dans le domaine de la pêche
 - o Gestion des eaux profondes (- 1000 m et + 1000 m)
- Propositions de mesures pour l'annulation ou la réduction des impacts de la pêche avec d'éventuelles mesures d'accompagnement socio-économiques.

ANNEX 6

IUCN-Med programme of work

1. Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries.

According to the conclusions of the working group meeting in September 2005 in Tunis, IUCN is willing to develop a programme of work for the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to fisheries in the Mediterranean region.

This programme of work would include:

- Methodology
- Selection of implementation fisheries / ecosystems
- Conducting of case studies
- Setting of guidelines for further implementation of EAF (IUCN-Med François Simard, IUCN-SSC Despina Symons)

2. Representative network of Marine Protected Areas

In the framework of the action plan of the IUCN World Commission of Protected Areas / Mediterranean working group, we are developing a multi-year project on setting a representative network of protected areas in the Mediterranean.

This programme of work includes:

- Identification of gaps in the actual system
- Identification of missing habitats (e.g. deep sea habitats, pelagic habitats)
- Drafting of proposals for designation of new protected areas (IUCN-Med François Simard, Ameer Abdulla, IUCN-WCPA Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciarra, Chedly Rais)

3. Evaluation of the Red List of Marine Fishes for the Mediterranean

IUCN Med and IUCN SSC have been conducting the red list assessment for Sharks and Cetaceans recently. This year, we will begin the assessment of marine fishes and marine invertebrates. The first phase of this programme is the set the list of organisms which are documented enough to be assessed. (IUCN Med Annabelle Cutellod, IUCN-SSC Kent Carpenter).

4. Others

Other IUCN programmes of work are related with GFCM work, but not directly with the SCME:

Sustainable aquaculture:

Preparation of guidelines on interactions between aquaculture and environment

Definition of indicators for aquaculture sustainable development (IUCN-Med / IUCN Global Marine Programme François Simard)

High sea Governance:

Organization of an informal process for the exchange of views regarding the governance of the Western basin of the Mediterranean Sea.(IUCN-Med François Simard, IUCN-Commission on Environmental Law).

Risks from maritime traffic to biodiversity:

Identification of issues, discussion on available tools at the regional level, proposals of national action plans (IUCN-Med Ameer Abdulla, Rami Salman, François Simard).

ANNEX 7

WWF programme of work of relevance to the SCMEE of SAC/GFCM (as of July 2006)

1. Development of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries in the Mediterranean

WWF has been deeply involved in the development of the EAF concept at both global and Mediterranean level, contributing to the original inception of this concept in the expert meeting held by FAO in Iceland that originated the FAO Guidelines on EAF. WWF also published in 2001 an earlier proposal of Guidelines for Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management.

WWF is currently working with partners around the Mediterranean region, including EAF experts from academic institutions and fisheries stakeholders to produce an EAF toolkit tailor-made for the Mediterranean. This work will include successful case studies related to different EAF components. Also, scientific research is being made by WWF on the development of ecosystem-based indicators for fisheries management that are being applied to Mediterranean fisheries.

2. Establishment of a network of deep-sea protected areas in the Mediterranean High Seas covering particularly sensitive habitats.

Following the pioneering creation by GFCM of 3 “Deep Sea Fisheries Restricted Areas” in 2006, WWF is currently working with scientists from the Mediterranean on new proposals addressing the protection of particularly valuable deep-sea sites.

3. Protection of particularly sensitive bottom habitats.

WWF is working with scientists and national administrations from the region to set the basis for the protection of maërl and coralligenous habitats from harmful fishing practices.

4. Marine Protected Areas

WWF is involved in initiatives to improve the management and efficacy of MPAs in the region (MedPan project) as well as to increase the area covered by MPAs in the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem (GEF Med LME initiative project).

5. By-catch

WWF is strongly involved in pilot projects in Spain aiming at the reduction of turtle by-catch in longlines (trials using different hook modifications). It is also working for the implementation of GFCM, ICCAT and UN legislation banning driftnets.

Others

Jointly with the Italian authorities and fisheries associations, WWF is currently developing an initiative to reduce the incidence of illegal trawling practices on sensitive coastal habitats.

ANNEX 8

RAC/SPA Programme of work

1. Action plans adopted within MAP for threatened species and species management

According to the protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) and in accordance with the recommendations of the last meeting of the Contracting Parties (Portoroz, 8-11 November 2005) collaboration must be strengthened with relevant bodies and in particular with FAO/GFCM in order to address effectively the problem of the interactions between fisheries and endangered species like monk seal, cetaceans, sea turtles, birds, cartilaginous fishes, marine vegetation and/or aliens species.

In the framework of these action plans, several activities are in progress:

- Involvement in the project BYCAMS, headed by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, aiming at the assessment and mitigation of the adverse impacts of interactions between cetaceans and fishing activities in the project area (Contact: Lobna Ben Nakhla).
- Support study on dolphin – fisheries interactions on the Amvrakikos Gulf carried out by Tethys Research Institute (Contact: Lobna Ben Nakhla).
- Identification of marine areas of conservation interest for cetaceans in the Mediterranean region, with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat. This activity is based on bibliography from National reports, FSD and studies available. Some countries were called upon to create marine protected areas for cetaceans (Contact: Lobna Ben Nakhla).
- Elaboration of a training and information/awareness module and tools, addressed to fishermen, to reduce the mortality of marine turtles incidentally caught in fishing gear. The module includes a manual for fishermen and a manual for teachers. The manual for fishermen, available in various languages, was disseminated in a few harbours (Contact: Atef Ouerghi).
- Elaboration of guidelines to design legislation and regulations relative to the conservation and management of marine turtle populations and their habitats (Contact: Atef Ouerghi).
- Finalisation of a Draft Guide for Risk Analysis and Impact Assessment as regards the introduction of non-indigenous species. In addition RAC/SPA is elaborating a Draft Guidelines for controlling the vectors of introduction into the Mediterranean of non-indigenous species and invasive marine species. One of the three chapters of these draft guidelines deals with aquaculture (i.e.: cultured marine organisms for human consumption and ornamental purposes), so even if it is not directly connected with the SCMEE, it concerns GFCM. Both tools are expected to be presented to the next meeting of Contracting Parties for endorsement (Contact: Souha El Asmi).

2. Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO ; Contact : Daniel Cebrian)

Within the framework of the GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine ecosystem, which includes the launching of actions to address SAP BIO priorities on fisheries and protected areas, RAC/SPA and FAO-GFCM are working together to develop activities as part of a GEF full-sized project regarding the following topics:

- a. Addressing the problem of vulnerable fish and invertebrates by-catch, including elasmobranchs considered within the IPOA sharks and the RAC/SPA action plan for those taxa.
- b. Idem regarding lung-breathing vertebrates covered by RAC/SPA action plans (Turtles, marine birds, monk seal, cetaceans), previewing specific collaboration with ACCOBAMS for the cetaceans (see above).

- c. Collaborating to promote the creation of new ASPIM in international waters, starting by the three Mediterranean areas restricted to trawling between 800 and 1000 m depth.

3. Others

RAC/SPA is elaborating a Programme of Work for the Protection of the Coralligenous, other Calcareous Bio-Concretions and Corals. This programme of work should be presented at the next meeting of Focal Points for SPAs.

Further axes of cooperation with the SCMEE for the near future may be:

- A GFCM contribution to applying the Ecosystem Approach within MAP activities, where the Adriatic and the Alboran Seas are initially being considered by MAP as testing sub-regional areas.
- GFCM collaboration to the process of favouring contacts among concerned neighbouring countries, regarding the further protection of the Alboran Sea habitats – as aroused during the recent study and information day on SPAMIs organised by RAC/SPA (Alicante, Spain, 11 May 2006).
- The contribution by GFCM to the quantification of the by-catch problem regarding sensitive species in the Mediterranean, by facilitating inputs from the FAO Fisheries Statistics, to help the identification of hot spots regarding Mediterranean fleets and areas.

ANNEX 9

Commission générale des pêches pour la Méditerranée (CGPM) Comité scientifique consultatif (CSC)

Réunion du

Sous-comité de l'environnement et des écosystèmes marins (SCEEM)

FAO, Rome, 11-14 septembre 2006

Agenda provisoire

1. Ouverture et organisation de la réunion
2. Adoption de l'ordre du jour
3. Rapport du coordinateur
4. Atelier sur les interactions cétacés-pêche dont programme ci-joint
5. Etudes pilotes interdisciplinaires en vue de définir et d'appliquer les principes de l'approche écosystémique à la gestion des stocks partagés à l'échelle sous-régionale, et tests parallèles des indicateurs écologiques relatifs au suivi spatio-temporel de l'effort de pêche
6. Suivi et contrôle de l'incidence de la pêche sur les espèces protégées ou menacées d'extinction
7. Suivi des recherches et élaboration d'un programme structuré relatif aux espèces vivant à des profondeurs supérieures à 1 000 mètres
8. Les interactions entre cétacés et activités de pêche, y compris dans le sanctuaire PELAGOS. Actions à mener conjointement par ACCOBAMS, la CGPM et les autres organisations régionales concernées
9. Examen des propositions faites par la délégation de Monaco concernant le sanctuaire PELAGOS
10. Harmonisation des activités du SCMEEM avec les programmes relatifs aux écosystèmes marins menés dans la région par les organisations internationales partenaires, en particulier dans les domaines concernant l'identification des zones sensibles et la mise en œuvre de l'approche écosystémique (sujets de coopération à proposer par les organisations)
11. Nouvelles zones de restriction de pêche dans les eaux internationales
12. Autres questions
13. Clôture de la réunion