INTERACTIONS BETWEEN CETACEANS AND HUMAN ACTIVITIES: WHALE WATCHING AND NOISE

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WHALE-WATCHING Background

COMMERCIAL CETACEAN-WATCHING ACTIVITIES in the ACCOBAMS area

If well managed and within a suitable management framework
= valuable educational tool, create direct and indirect economic benefits for many communities and can promote research on cetaceans and their conservation

Potential negative impacts:
- changes in cetaceans swimming behaviour,
- fast changes in direction,
- decrease in population size
- movements of cetaceans away from the area targeted for tourism

Need of framework at regional level for effective management strategies
The "High Quality Whale Watching" certificate

2007: decision of ACCOBAMS Parties to implement, in collaboration with the Pelagos Sanctuary, a HQWW® Certificate for ACCOBAMS through Resolution 3.23.

2014: registration of the HQWW® trademark at the World Intellectual Property Organization

2016: HQWW® Certificate launched - ACCOBAMS Resolution 6.20

The "High Quality Whale Watching" certificate aims to encourage the implementation of good practices and sustainable know-how by whale watching operators involved in quality and ecological responsibility initiatives.
Whale Watching Working Group (WWWG)

- test the proposed common procedure (developed in 2015) for whale watching vessels in pilot areas and a variety of operation types;

- revise the Guidelines for commercial cetacean-watching in the ACCOBAMS Area

An external ACCOBAMS Expert

- prepare a regional study on the hotspots of WW activities in the ACCOBAMS Area, based on an inventory of operators in the ACCOBAMS Area

- Revise the Guidelines for monitoring programs to assess potential adverse impacts of whale watching activities on individual cetaceans and on populations
NOISE is a pollution

« Noise is one of the most important environmental risks to health and continues to be a growing concern among policy-makers and the public alike. »

WHO report: Environmental noise guidelines for European region, 2018

Underwater anthropogenic noise = major threat in the conservation of marine wildlife.

Wide variety of scientific, political and technical effort has been undertaken

Several international bodies have responsibilities for the protection of the marine environment, including from the negative impacts of anthropogenic noise
International Treaties dealing with marine mammal conservation and/or noise mitigation


- Descriptor 11: underwater noise
- the EU technical subgroup on underwater noise (TSG-Noise) provides technical guidance

The Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean

- Ecosystem Approach (EcAp): management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment => 11 Ecological Objectives whose achievement should help attaining a Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast.
- ACCOBAMS is working in close cooperation with the Barcelona Convention on the EO 11 (anthropogenic noise)
 ROLE OF ACCOBAMS AND SPA/RAC

Sudies on the impacts of noise in the ACCOBAMS Area

UNDERSTAND
(1) To propose

RELEVANT MITIGATION MEASURES
Guides
Guidelines

RELEVANT TRAININGS

Resolution 6.18 - Implementation of an ACCOBAMS Certification for Highly Qualified Marine Mammals Observers

Resolution 7.13 - Guidelines to address the impact of anthropogenic noise on cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area

5th Conference on Cetacean Conservation in South Mediterranean Countries, 13 - 15 April 2021, Online
R**OLE OF ACCOBAMS AND SPA/RAC**

**REGIONAL STRATEGY**

Studies on the impacts of noise in the ACCOBAMS Area

**UNDERSTAND**

(2) To actively participate

**REGIONAL PROJECTS**

Definition of thresholds, proposed guidance on methodologies and recommendations

Establishment of common tools (such as national & regional noise registers)

= to coordinate the level of implementation of MSFD and EcAp processes regarding Ecological Descriptor 11 and Objective 11 to ensure the coherence and the long-term viability of actions

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