



5th Conference on Cetacean Conservation in South Mediterranean Countries

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Host Country : Lebanon

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

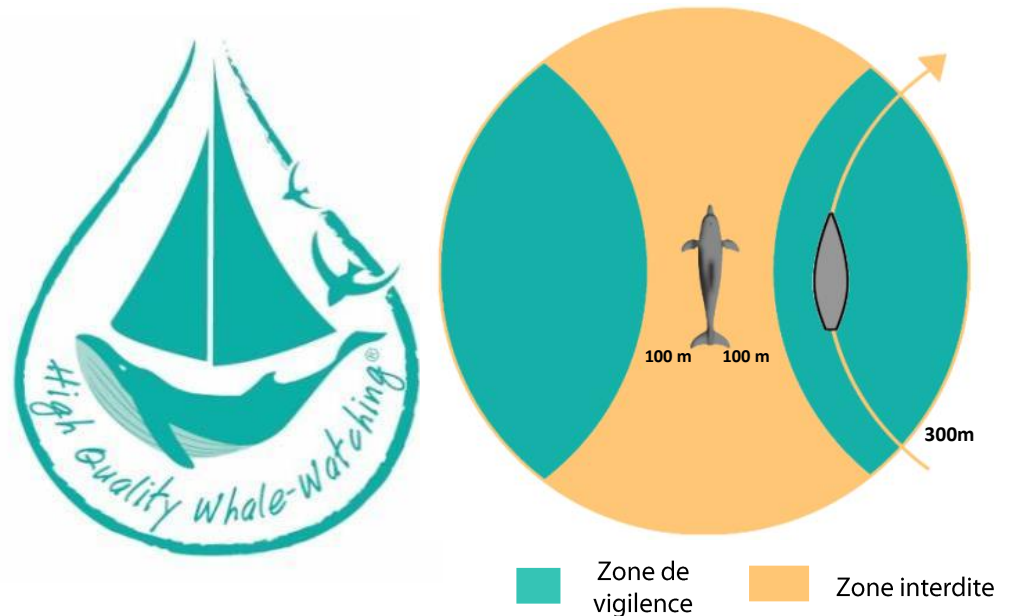
The "High Quality Whale Watching" certificate

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



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

International Treaties dealing with marine mammal conservation and/or noise mitigation

European Marine Strategy Framework Directive

- 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



Mediterranean
Action Plan
Barcelona
Convention



The Mediterranean
Biodiversity
Centre



Studies on the impacts of
noise in the ACCOBAMS Area

UNDERSTAND
(1) To propose



**RELEVANT
TRAININGS**



RELEVANT MITIGATION MEASURES



Guides
Guidelines

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



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UNDERSTAND

(2) To actively participate

REGIONAL STRATEGY

**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