

CA1A – CETACEAN POPULATION ESTIMATES AND DISTRIBUTION UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN AFTER SC 15

Issue: cetacean population estimates and distribution

1. Action requested

The Scientific Committee is invited to:

- a. **consider** the updates on the activities undertaken after SC15,
- b. **provide recommendations** to the Parties on this issue.

2. Background

The Scientific Committee Task Managers, Vice Task Managers and Support Group of “CA1a- Cetacean population estimates and distribution” for the 2023-2025 period provide general new information related to cetacean population estimates and distribution that may be relevant for informing the Scientific Committee on the status of cetacean conservation in the ACCOBAMS area and progressing the Scientific Committee's work plan.

**CA1A – CETACEAN POPULATION ESTIMATES AND DISTRIBUTION
UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN AFTER SC 15**

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This update aims to provide general new information related to cetacean population estimates and distribution that may be relevant for informing the Scientific Committee on the status of cetacean conservation in the ACCOBAMS area and progressing the Scientific Committee's work plan.

In summer 2023, the Task Group worked on the revision of the project proposal for the synoptic basin-wide survey in the ACCOBAMS area during the period 2024-2027. This document can now be found in Annex 2 of the document ACCOBAMS-SC16/2024/Doc08.

In 2023, several scientific papers were published in a special issue *Frontiers of Marine Science*, presenting the results from the ASI/CeNoBS, as outlined in document ACCOBAMS-SC16/2024/Inf06. The papers cover aerial surveys and boat-based visual surveys, as well as boat-based acoustic surveys, and provide baseline information for a number of cetacean species in the ACCOBAMS area.

A visual boat-based line-transect distance sampling survey between 2018 and 2023 within the Eastern Mediterranean Sea of Türkiye provided an abundance estimate for common bottlenose dolphins. The corrected abundance estimate was 2037 individuals (CV = 0.25, 95% CI = 1095 –3141).

During 2023, aerial line-transect distance sampling surveys covered the Tyrrhenian Sea, the Ligurian Sea and waters west of Sardinia. Two replicate surveys were carried out, one during summer and one during autumn, with an additional coastal survey focusing specifically on common bottlenose dolphins during autumn. Analyses are ongoing.

A number of local studies investigating local abundance, distribution and other aspects of cetacean ecology and conservation are ongoing across the ACCOBAMS area, but these are not specifically reported on here.

Additional updates may be provided during the meeting.