

REPORT OF THE BLACK SEA SUB-REGIONAL COORDINATION UNIT INCLUDING ACTIVITIES FROM NON-PARTIES



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Report on the cooperation with ACCOBAMS Agreement Secretariat performing the functions of ACCOBAMS sub-regional Coordinating Unit for the Black Sea in 2023-2025

Since 2002, in line with Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Black Sea Commission and ACCOBAMS (revised in 2012), the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission (BSC PS) exercises its role of the Black Sea Sub Regional Coordination Unit for ACCOBAMS in regard to the conservation of the cetaceans of the Black Sea.

During the past triennium the following main activities were implemented:

- participation in relevant BSC-ACCOBAMS meetings, regular inter-secretarial meetings, *inter alia*, provided feedback during 15-16th ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee meetings and Sixth Meeting of the Extended Bureau of the Parties to ACCOBAMS, as well as all relevant meetings of the ASI Project and ACCOBAMS Webinar – Regional Training on genetic data collection and analysis;
- Cetacean conservation activities are included in all relevant regional strategic documents for the Black Sea (draft BSIMAP 2023-2027), draft BS SoE Report, revised annual reporting format, Black Sea Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter etc.);
- Item “Specimens of Black Sea bottlenose dolphins in captivity” was introduced into the BSIMAP for 2023-2027, as well as list of fisheries indicators for annual reporting to the Black Sea Commission, regularly collected by the BSC PS;
- The elaboration of Chapter “Conservation of Cetaceans” of the State of Black Sea Environment Report (BS SoE Report) is being supported by ACCOBAMS Secretariat; new publications on cetaceans in Black Sea are published;
- BSC PS participated in Joint initiatives with GFCM (High-level meeting on Black Sea fisheries, BlackSea4Fish Project), CBD Convention (Joint RSCs & RFOs meetings under Sustainable Ocean Initiative, EBSA workshops etc.), EC (projects, ocean governance, MSFD directive, UNEP (SDG 14) etc.), co-organized a joint side event with ACCOBAMS during UNOC 2025 in Nice, France in June 2025;
- Participated as partners in call of proposals lead by ACCOBAMS for implementation of MSFD for cetaceans and contributed to the activities under ABBIOMED Project;
- Supported efforts of the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat in implementing the ASI Project “ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative”, an unprecedented large-scale activity coordinated by ACCOBAMS and involving Black Sea countries to estimate cetacean populations abundance and distribution in the Black Sea and contributed to dissemination of its results;
- Based on the joint initiative with ACCOBAMS Secretariat, on 6-7th March, 2024, BSC PS hosted in its premises in Istanbul a jointly organized meeting to discuss common subjects in relation to the Black Sea. It was attended by representatives from the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, the Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat, the EU/DG Mare, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (GFCM). Representatives from Black Sea ACCOBAMS Parties and some Members of the Scientific Committee also participated in the meeting;

- During meeting participants agreed to consider creation of a collaborative network between the EU/DGMARE, GFCM, ACCOBAMS, and the Black Sea Commission aimed to facilitate the joint response to the objective of addressing the critical high-rates of harbour porpoise bycatch in the Black Sea region” through coordinated efforts, data sharing, research, and policy implementation, within the ultimate goal of reducing and mitigating by-catches during fishing activities;
- Specific Black Sea Sub Task composed by experts from Black Sea Countries was created to provide annual summary information to ACCOBAMS Emergency Task Force to monitor strandings and bycatch; to implement postmortem investigations to preserve and store samples of bycaught animals for future analyses;
- Close work on biodiversity and cetaceans with dedicated regional projects, such as EU4EMBLAS, CENOBIS, Black Sea BRIDGE, Black Sea DOORS, BS CONNECT etc. Currently continue coordination of joint efforts with three new projects recently launched in Black Sea region, such as: GEF UNDP/UNESCO Black Sea LME Project dealing with biodiversity and MPAs; World Bank Blueing the Black Sea Project dealing with pollution and FAO GFCM Project on Fisheries; the first project includes a component on cetaceans;
- Work on impact of marine litter on cetaceans is being carried out within collaboration with UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Secretariat under EU-funded project MarineLitterMED Project: including elaboration of ML monitoring guidelines (baselines), Black Sea ML assessment and “adopt-the-beach” measures in eligible countries;
- Overall, BSC PS is sharing the same objective with ACCOBAMS on improving the availability and quality of data on the biological status of the Black Sea and improve the countries’ ability to perform marine environmental monitoring, in line with expected MSFD and Black Sea Strategic Action Plan needs.