Accord sur la Conservation des Cétacés de la mer Noire,
de la Méditerranée et de la zone Atlantique adjacente

Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea,
Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP SAFEGUARDING WHALES IN THE NORTHWESTERN MEDITERRANEAN PSSA

Marseille, France, 14 March 2025 | 09:00–14:00 CET (In-person & hybrid participation)



ShiPrint Shipping Sector Workshops Series – Cargo Shipping Sector Workshop

Organised by ACCOBAMS

In cooperation with ocean care

SINAY MARITIME DATA SOLUTION

initiative PELAGOS

The project benefits from the support of the Pelagos Initiative.

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REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP SAFEGUARDING WHALES IN THE NORTHWESTERN MEDITERRANEAN PSSA[1]

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. The workshop **Safeguarding Whales in the Northwestern Mediterranean PSSA** dedicated to the Cargo Shipping Sector took place on 14 March 2025 in Marseille, France. It was organized by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat in collaboration with OceanCare**,** Sinay**,** and We Are Méditerranée. This workshops is part of the ShiPrint project which benefits from the support of **The Pelagos initiative.** The primary aim of this project is to support the implementation of Associated Protective Measures (APMs) within the North-Western Mediterranean Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA).

2. In this context, the workshop was the first in a series designed to engage the shipping sector, foster dialogue, and enhance understanding of its impact on marine biodiversity within the Northwestern Mediterranean PSSA, while actively involving stakeholders in efforts to mitigate the risk of ship strikes on fin and sperm whales.

3. The event brought together around 30 participants, including key stakeholders of the cargo shipping sector**,** but also representatives from the range states, the Pelagos Scientific Committee**,** classification societies**,** scientists**,** and conservation organizations, with the objective to discuss strategies for reducing the environmental footprint of shipping and mitigating the risks of collisions with endangered whales, for better assessing and monitoring the efficacy of the APMs in the NW Mediterranean PSSA.

4. The complete list of participants is annexed to this report (see Annex I: List of Participants) and the agenda appears in Annex II.

II. OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP

5. Mrs. Maylis Salivas, ACCOBAMS Executive Secretary, opened the meeting by welcoming participants.

6. She gave a presentation that included an overview of the role of ACCOBAMS in addressing threats to cetaceans, highlighting its efforts to reduce the impacts of shipping on these species. This included references to resolutions adopted on ship strikes and anthropogenic noise, with an emphasis on strategies to mitigate their impact.

7. Mrs. Maylis Salivas further explored the designation process for Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs), outlining the criteria, scope, and the Associated Protection Measures (APMs) designed to enhance maritime safety and environmental protection.

8. The presentation highlighted practical strategies for minimizing risks associated with vessel traffic in ecologically significant regions providing valuable insights into the regulatory framework

[1] This document was produced with the financial assistance of the Pelagos Initiative. The contents of this report may not be considered as a reflection of the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation or the Pelagos Initiative's position

III. INTRODUCTION TO THE NW MEDITERRANEAN PSSA

9. Ms. Armelle Roudaut-Lafon, Director of Maritime Affairs in Monaco introduced the Northwest Mediterranean Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA), emphasizing its critical role in protecting marine biodiversity.

10. She highlighted how this designation helps safeguard vulnerable marine ecosystems from the impacts of maritime traffic.

11. A key aspect of the discussion focused on Associated Protection Measures (APMs), which serve as essential tools for navigators and provide vessel operators with a voluntary framework to implement protective measures for marine mammals. It was highlighted that by encouraging responsible navigation practices, the PSSA and its associated APMs contribute to the long-term conservation of the region's marine environment.

IV. IMPACT OF SHIPPING ON MARINE LIFE IN THE NW MEDITERRANEAN PSSA

12. M. Russell Leaper, member of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) gave a presentation on the impact of shipping on cetaceans in the Northwest Mediterranean PSSA, highlighting the significant threat ship strikes pose to especially endangered fin and sperm whales.

13. He discussed the habitat use and distribution of the species within the PSSA, emphasizing the need for protective measures in areas with high vessel traffic.

14. The presentation also examined the effectiveness of ship maneuvers in avoiding collisions with whales, the respective limitations of different measures, and evaluating current strategies and their potential improvements to enhance marine mammal safety.

V. NETCCOBAMS PLATFORM- DATA AGGREGATION FOR MARINE PROTECTION

15. M. Alessio Maglio from SINAY introduced the NETCCOBAMS platform, a data-driven tool designed to support marine conservation efforts.

16. He highlighted its role in zone-specific monitoring, particularly in assessing the compliance of individual vessel performance, as well as vessel sector specifics, with Associated Protection Measures (APMs) by setting speed limitation scenarios. The platform provides shipping companies and stakeholders with valuable insights to evaluate and improve their adherence to conservation guidelines.

17. Additionally, M. Maglio discussed the potential development of a "Whale Safe" Certificate, which could be awarded to companies demonstrating compliance with protective measures, promoting responsible maritime practices and enhancing marine biodiversity protection.

VI. EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF APMs IN THE NW MEDITERRANEAN PSSA

18. M. Xydias and M. Entrup from OceanCare gave a presentation focusing on assessing the effectiveness of Associated Protection Measures (APMs) in the Northwest Mediterranean PSSA, particularly in reducing ship strikes.

19. Key topics included the Safe Speed Concept, which is, in essence, a paramount obligation inherent in the APMs for mandatory speed reduction which coexist with the voluntary speed reduction limits incorporated into APMs that are more speed specific.

20. In that regard the speakers highlighted challenges in timely speed reduction due to ship handling restrictions, especially when vessels operate at business-as-usual speeds.

21. M. Xydias and M. Entrup also emphasized the difficulty of spotting whales during navigation watch, including during nighttime, reinforcing the need for proactive mitigation strategies for the whole duration of transit within the PSSA through speed limitation.

22. The discussion covered the implementation of speed reduction-speed limit measures as a means to minimize ship strikes, in line with the APMs and the established recommendations to prevent ship strikes along with insights from vessel traffic analysis that OceanCare conducted for the NW PSSA and assess the entire vessel traffic in the respective region for 2023 as baseline for future assessments.

23. Additionally, a proposal was presented to establish a Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) or a recommended route for cargo ships, allowing vessels to operate at reduced speeds while overarching speed limits will be implemented in the wider area of the NW Med PSSA. This initiative would be complemented by innovative measures within the TSS to better regulate traffic and reduce the risk of collisions with whales.

VII. DISCUSSION REMARKS

24. The presentations were consequently followed by an open discussion and dialogue taking note of opinions from different stakeholders participating, including concerns and considerations regarding speed limitations for cargo operators in the Northwest Mediterranean PSSA.

25. A major concern was that restricting vessel speeds could lead to breaches of the due dispatch clause in shipping contracts, highlighting the need to consider mandatory measures.

26. Participants emphasized that speed limitations must be assessed holistically, taking also into account potential adverse effects on ship stability, such as parametric rolling in container ships. Given that vessels cannot maintain speeds above 20 knots and still reduce speed in time, a more practical approach could involve setting relative speed limits, for example, capping transit speeds at 15 knots to allow further reduction to 10 knots when whales are spotted or recorded.

27. The discussion also underscored the importance of data availability and accessibility, as comprehensive analysis is necessary before imposing mandatory measures and assessing the effectiveness of current regulations.

28. Additionally, concerns were raised regarding the ambiguous language of the APMs, calling for further clarification by states to ensure clear guidance for vessel operators.

29. Lastly, the potential establishment of a Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) within the PSSA was identified as a beneficial development, as it could integrate speed limitations with innovative protective measures to enhance maritime safety and marine conservation.

VIII. DISCUSSION REMARKS

30. Looking ahead, the next steps include continuing the monitoring of shipping traffic to assess adherence to the Associated Protection Measures (APMs) and evaluating their effectiveness in minimizing the risk of ship strikes.

31. Efforts will also involve ongoing collaboration with states and participation in working groups to enhance the implementation of APMs and address any challenges in their enforcement.

32. Additionally, engagement with other sectors of the shipping industry, such as passenger shipping, will be pursued in future workshops to ensure a broader assessment of the protective measures. Further data collection will be prioritized, particularly obtaining density data related to whale distribution in the region and conduct shipping traffic analysis, to refine conservation strategies and strengthen evidence-based decision-making for marine protection.

IX. CONCLUSION

33. The first ShiPrint Workshop successfully fostered dialogue among shipping stakeholders, regulators, and environmental organizations. It reinforced the importance of monitoring and implementing APMs to mitigate shipping's impact on marine biodiversity. The workshop laid a strong foundation for continued collaboration and produced tangible policy recommendations.

ANNEX I – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANTS	PARTICIPATION
BAUDIN Eric Bureau Veritas Marine & Offshore	In-Person
BLAZY Christophe Office Français de la Biodiversité	Hybrid
BOUDRY Anaelle European Shipowners (ECSA)	Hybrid
CITORES Antidia Green Maritime Europe	In-Person
DAVID Léa Eco-Océan	In-Person
DOUVENOU Céline MARFRET	Hybrid
ENTRUP Nicolas OceanCare	In-Person
GUICHARD Benjamin Office Français de la Biodiversité	In-Person
GOUNOT Laurine MIRACETI	Hybrid
GROSSET André Préfecture Maritime de la Méditerranée	In-Person
GUNTERMANN Wolfram Hapag-Lloyd AG	In-Person
KLYVER Zack Blue Green Future	Hybrid
KUKRETI Deepak MAERSK	In-Person
LABROUSSE Marion CMA-CGM	In-Person
LEAPER Russell IWC	In-Person
LECOEUR Greg	In-Person
LORIDON Louis CMA-CGM	In-Person
MAGLIO Alessio SINAY	In-Person
MASSE Robert MSC MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY SA	In-Person
MORIN Aurore IFAW	In-Person
MOULINS Aurélie CIMA Research Foundation	Hybrid
MUN Wei-Jun World Shipping Council	In-Person
PACE Federica JASCO Applied Science	In-Person
ROUDAUT-LAFON Armelle Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Monaco	In-Person
SALIVAS Maylis Executive Secretary of ACCOBAMS	In-Person
SARATZIS Nikolaos Cargill	In-Person

STEVENS Gregor International Chamber of Shipping	Hybrid
SWYNGHEDAUW Noé MedPAN	In-Person
TALLEU Violaine DIRM Méditerrannée	In-Person
TEPSICH Paola CIMA Research Foundation	Hybrid
XYDIAS Alexandros OceanCare	In-Person

ANNEX II – AGENDA

