



STATIC ACOUSTIC MONITORING OF THE
BAL TIC SEA HARBOUR PORPOISE
SAMBAH

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SAMBAH is an international LIFE+ funded project involving all EU countries around the Baltic Sea, with the ultimate goal to secure the conservation of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise.

SAMBAH springs to LIFE

In January 2010 SAMBAH was finally up and running! The project is funded by LIFE+ and will receive 50% of the 4.24 million € budget from the EU Commission. The remaining 50% will be co-financed by project partners and other national organizations.

SAMBAH is an international project involving all EU countries around the Baltic Sea, with the ultimate goal to secure the conservation of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise.

To achieve this, SAMBAH aims to increase the knowledge about the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise, estimating densities and total abundance. The project will also produce distribution maps of harbour porpoises and identify possible hotspots, habitat preferences and areas of higher risk of conflict with human activities.

The new knowledge will be spread among policymakers, managers, stakeholders and the public, to make possible a management of the population based on sound knowledge about its size and distribution.

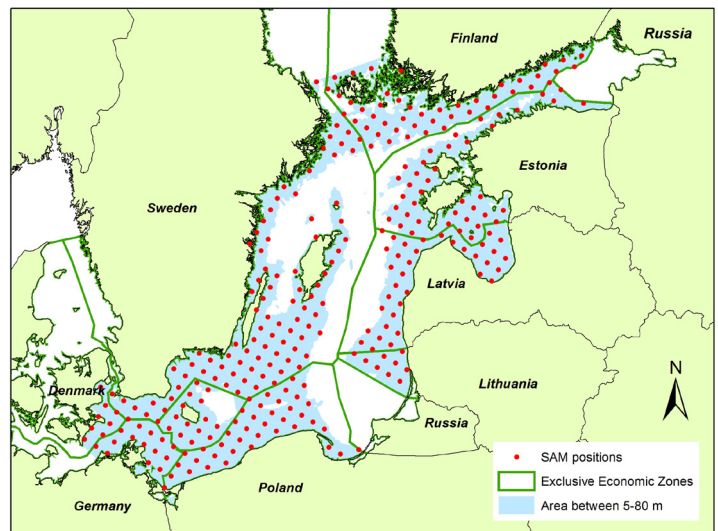
The SAMBAH study area stretches from the Darss- and Limhamn underwater ridges in the southwest to the northern border of the Åland archipelago in the north. Here, approximately 300 porpoise click detectors will be deployed for two years between January 2011 and December 2012, and the collected data will be used in analyses mainly carried out during 2013 and 2014. The first year will be used for field work preparations, development of analytical methods and to spread the word about the project.

SAMBAH kick-off meeting

The project started with a kick-off meeting for all beneficiaries in Hel, Poland in February 2010. The meeting was held in conjunction with the ASCOBANS Jastarnia group meeting in February 2010 in Hel, Poland (www.ascobans.org).

SAMBAH workshop at the ECS conference

In March 2010, SAMBAH arranged a public workshop at the European Cetaceans Society's conference in Stralsund, Germany. There were presentations and discussions on different aspects of the project; anchoring of porpoise click detectors, satellite and acoustic tagging of harbour porpoises in Danish waters for collection of auxiliary data, density and abundance estimation of harbour porpoises based on click detector data, and habitat modelling of harbour porpoises. The workshop was attended by 55 persons, of which many had experience of static acoustic monitoring and/or habitat modelling.





Sea safety course

In May 2010 a sea security course was arranged for sea-going SAMBAH personnel. The course was given by the Öckerö Maritime Center on the Swedish west coast, with participants from Denmark, Finland and Sweden. The course included emergency radio communication, emergency flares, first aid, ship fire extinguishing, and in-sea testing of life rafts and survival suits. The course was aimed at preparing the teams for work on board a variety of vessels, such as coast guard ships, fishing boats and research vessels. Among the teachers were a professional fireman, and an ambulance nurse, ensuring a high quality of the teaching.

SAMBAH Anchoring Workshop

In August 2010 a 2-day anchoring workshop was held at Kolmården, Sweden. SAMBAH personnel from Sweden, Denmark, Poland and Estonia met for development, construction and testing of anchoring systems for the porpoise click detectors used in the project.

Five different systems were tested and evaluated at sea during a whole day session at Nävekvärn, just outside of Kolmården at depths around 40 m. The systems were of two types; with no surface markings and with visible surface markings. All systems were successfully tested and evaluated with mixed results.



The systems had been individually developed by each research group and based on different coastal and off-shore prerequisites for each country including maintenance issues, previously used setups, rules and regulations for sea surface markings and of course budget. Other issues as the hazards with buoys or equipment near or in trawling areas, different weather conditions, material corrosion and fatigue, and the risk of potential theft and vandalism were discussed.

Altogether the workshop was a success with valuable discussions and practical experience of deploying and retrieving porpoise click detectors.

Developing methods for density estimation

Several meetings have been held to identify the specifications needed for the harbour porpoise click detectors to be used in the project, evaluating bids for different click detector makes and developing the statistical methods for harbour porpoise density estimation based on click detector data. The click detector chosen for the SAMBAH project is the C-POD manufactured by Chelonia Ltd, UK.

SAMBAH invited to the BS RAC

In May 2010, Mats Amundin and Daniel Wennerberg from Kolmården were invited to attend a Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council Executive Committee meeting in Klaipeda, Lithuania, to present the SAMBAH project. Reassuringly, SAMBAH was very positively received.

The BS RAC (www.bsrac.org) is established by the European Council to increase stakeholder involvement in the development of a successful Common Fisheries Policy. Hence it is a very good forum for SAMBAH to establish and maintain contact with the Baltic fishermen, whose support is vitally important for the success of the project.

In summary, all preparations for the deployment of porpoise click detectors in the Baltic Sea are on track. Until our next newsletter, stay updated at

www.sambah.org

