SAMBAH – Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise

The harbour porpoise (Phocoena phocoena) in the Baltic Sea is listed as critically endangered. SAMBAH will bring new knowledge about the species, estimate the density by new methods and provide information on important areas for harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea.

The five-year project is coordinated by Kolmårdens Wildlife Park in Sweden and all the partners are located in the coastal states of the Baltic Sea.

Underwater monitoring devices

In SAMBAH, 300 static acoustic monitoring devices (SAMs) will be used to record the natural underwater echolocation sounds emitted by harbour porpoises. The distribution of the 300 SAMs will be statistically randomised in areas of 5 to 50 metres water depth. The devices will be anchored two meters off the sea floor. The estimated densities of harbour porpoises will be calculated by developing adaptations of current point distance sampling methods. The habitat use will be analysed by a spatial modelling of density variation of harbour porpoises in relation to quantified environmental variables.

To secure the conservation of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise

The gathered and analysed information will be disseminated to policymakers, managers, stakeholders, users of the marine environment and the public. The goal is that the improved awareness and knowledge of the state of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise will lead up to a proper, ecosystem-based management of the species.

Cooperation

In addition to the project partners, the Baltic states will be included in the project through subcontractors. They will deploy and service click detectors in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian waters.

Germany will join forces with SAMBAH. The German Oceanographic Museum in Stralsund will host the project.

Other collaborators are AquaBiota Water Research, CREEM and Chelonia Limited.