



SAMBAH NEWS

June 2012

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 current status

SAMBAH has now completed the first of two years of field work. The overall retrieval rate of C-PODs has been high with about 80% of all C-PODs retrieved as planned. In addition to those, some C-PODs have been temporarily lost, but later handed back to the project by fishermen or by tourists who have found the detectors on the beach. About 10% of the C-PODs have been permanently lost, some presumed to have been hit by ships or trawlers in the hard wind and high waves this winter season, and others suffering from battery failure of the acoustic releasers due to longer-than-expected servicing intervals.



C-POD recovery in Sweden.

To gather as much data as possible during the second year of field work, the SAMBAH teams are working hard to replace lost equipment, recover lost devices and to limit future losses through communication with locals and adjustments of anchoring set-up.

In the collected C-POD data, there are clear records of echolocation click trains by harbour porpoises. However, before the number of porpoises can be calculated, yet another year of data collection is needed.

SAMBAH progress meeting

A SAMBAH progress meeting was held in conjunction with the European

Cetacean Society conference in Galway, Ireland in March 2012. Each country presented results from their field work and improvements of the common methodology were discussed. The second workshop on habitat modelling was also held in Galway, where methods and environmental variables were further discussed in preparation for the calculations that will start in fall 2013.

Celebrating LIFE and the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise

The third Sunday in May is announced by ASCOBANS as the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise. SAMBAH combined the celebration of the Baltic Sea porpoises with celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Habitat Directive and the LIFE programme. Activities



Information stand in Gdynia, Poland, during the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise.

were arranged by Hel Marine Station in Gdynia, Poland, at Aquaria Water Museum in Stockholm and at Särkänniemi Adventure Park in Finland. At the square in Gdynia, Hel Marine Station had information about porpoises, SAMBAH, ASCOBANS and LIFE+, and several activities for children. At Aquaria Water Museum, the Swedish SAMBAH crew attended the activities to talk to the visitors, and there were balloons and a porpoise quiz walk with nice prizes. At Särkänniemi the Finnish SAMBAH coordinator had a lecture about porpoises and SAMBAH, and there was a drawing contest for the kids.

SAMBAH in Russia - RUMBAH

We are currently cooperating with a team of colleagues in the Russian Federation, aiming to include the waters of the Russian Kaliningrad enclave in the last year of SAMBAH fieldwork. A small but welcome financial contribution has been granted by ASCOBANS, but more funding is needed to carry out fieldwork in Russian waters. The current aim is to deploy 10-12 C-PODs in Kaliningrad waters in August or September 2012, and further funding is being sought.

In summary, SAMBAH field work is going well, despite some C-POD losses, especially during the winter season. We have celebrated the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise, and we are working to include Russian waters in the last year of SAMBAH field work. Finally, and most importantly, we can conclude that we have detected porpoises in our data.

