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# 24.2.2 Marine Noise

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- COP9 in 2008 and COP10 in 2011 adopted Resolutions on Underwater Noise, recognizing it as a serious threat to marine species
- Affects CMS-listed species, species covered by CMS Agreements and MOUs, and prey species



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- Resolutions of ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS and CMS call for noise-related considerations to be taken into account as early as the planning stages of activities, especially by making effective use of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)
- But:
  - National and regional operational guidelines focus mostly on the impacts to be avoided and mitigation measures to be taken during proposed operations
  - Most operational guidelines focus on cetaceans, few cover other species



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- Almost none cover the specific content that should be provided in (EIAs) before approvals and permits are granted
  - Consequently submitted EIAs are often poorly developed or provide limited explanation about the source of data or the level of uncertainty inherent in the documentation
  - Subsequent decisions are being made on the basis of erroneous information and are vulnerable to criticism



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- Development of draft guidelines on using EIAs to assess the impacts of anthropogenic marine noise on CMS-listed species and their prey
  - Consultancy advertised in October 2015
  - Draft sent out for consultations with CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS constituency in April 2016, deadline June
  - Revised draft published in July 2016, discussed at ASCOBANS MOP in September
  - Technical Support Information separated
  - Second consultation round launched in November 2016, deadline February 2017
  - Revised draft presented in this document



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- Understanding the impacts of any proposed activity by itself, and the cumulative effects of many parallel noise-generating activities, is a challenge for managers
- Guidelines are designed to provide regulators with tailored advice presenting Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP) to apply in domestic jurisdictions
- Provided in module format to enable regulators to apply specific information of relevance to their jurisdiction
- Aim: ensure that decision-makers are presented with sufficient information to make an informed decision about impacts



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- The CMS COP adopted two resolutions on underwater noise over the years
- These were consolidated in Doc.21.2.3
- In order to adopt the guidelines and simplify this very complex consolidation and incorporate recent developments, Doc.24.2.2 proposes revisions to the consolidated version (Annex 1)
- Proposed new text is underlined
- Text to be deleted is ~~crossed-out~~
- Existing, already adopted, text should not be renegotiated



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- Guidelines (Annex 2) not just for CMS, but relevant for many Agreements and MOUs
- Contain:
  - Introduction and link to detailed Technical Support Information (Inf.11), which include species-specific information
  - Technical Advisory Notes
  - Separate modules for different industries



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- Industries/noise sources addressed:
  - Military and civil high-powered sonar
  - Shipping and vessel traffic
  - Seismic surveys (air gun and alternative technologies)
  - Construction works
  - Offshore platforms
  - Playback and sound exposure experiments
  - Pingers (acoustic deterrent/harassment devices, navigation)
  - Other noise-generating activities (acoustic data transmission; wind, tidal and wave turbines, future technologies)



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- Draft Decisions (Annex 3):
  - Secretariat to disseminate resolution to other organizations
  - Council to assess the need for, and if required develop, subject to the availability of resources, voluntary guidelines on activities of concern



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