Expert Group Meeting on
Advancing Marine Mammal Conservation in North-East Asia

11 September 2025
ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office, Incheon, Republic of Korea

REPORT OF THE MEETING

1. The ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office, serving as the secretariat for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), convened the Expert Group Meeting on Advancing Marine Mammal Conservation in North-East Asia on 11 September 2025. The meeting brought together government officials, academics, and representatives from research institutions and civil society to exchange knowledge on the status and conservation of cetaceans and pinnipeds in the subregion. The meeting aimed to identify gaps and opportunities for transboundary cooperation, discuss potential mechanisms for policy alignment, and develop preliminary recommendations for a collaborative action plan focusing on habitat protection, threat mitigation, and coordinated monitoring frameworks.

2. Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav, Head of the ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office, delivered the opening remarks. He described the region's marine mammals as fragile indicators of ecosystem health facing shared threats that demand a transboundary response. He emphasized that while national progress is significant, regional cooperation is essential, as no country can succeed alone. He highlighted the crucial role of the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) as a platform to connect efforts, share data, and foster dialogue. He noted that this would contribute to achieving global commitments, including the 30x30 target and Sustainable Development Goal 14.

3. Session 1 was moderated by Mr. Simon Gilby, Sustainable Development Officer at the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD). The session presented the national policies, legal instruments, and institutional arrangements from China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation for marine mammal conservation. Speakers also examined the role of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and identified areas for strategic cooperation.

4. Mr. Zhang Zhaohui, Research Professor at the First Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources of China, presented China's legal frameworks and priority actions. He noted that of the 43 marine mammal species in China's seas, 25 are found in the Yellow Sea Ecoregion. He identified key threats, including bycatch, transportation impacts, and pollution. He explained that the primary legal instrument is the Law on the Protection of Wildlife, which establishes a State Priority Conservation List, prohibits the hunting and trade of listed species, and requires monitoring of wildlife and habitats. He highlighted recent actions such as the 2021 Notice on Strengthening the Protection and Management of Marine Mammals and the China Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2023-2030). He suggested enhancing MPA capacities, strengthening protection of ecological corridors, and pursuing transboundary cooperation and networking.

5. Ms. Kobayashi Mari, Professor at Tokyo Agriculture and Life Science University, discussed the legal framework in Japan. She explained that different government agencies manage different species, with most laws falling under the Fisheries Agency and focusing on resource use or reducing fishery damage. She noted that protective laws from the Ministry of the Environment are limited to critically endangered or endangered species. She pointed out that for the finless porpoise, listed as Endangered (EN) on Japan's Red List, capture is prohibited, but no penalty is imposed for bycatch. She added that as the species is not designated as a "Domestic Endangered Species," conservation actions are mostly voluntary or research-based. She also explained that for spotted seals, listed as Vulnerable (VU), management falls under the Act on the Protection and Management of Wildlife, with Hokkaido implementing a plan to mitigate fishery damage through management capture and nuisance control while promoting coexistence.

6. Mr. Young Nam Kim, General Manager at the Korea Marine Environment and Management Corporation (KOEM), outlined the Republic of Korea's policies. He explained that marine mammals are managed under the Conservation and Management of Marine Ecosystems Act, which designates species such as the finless porpoise and spotted seal as protected marine organisms and prohibits their capture, trade, or intentional disturbance. He highlighted that conservation programmes include population surveys, rescue and treatment facilities, and habitat restoration. He reported that as of March 2025, the Republic of Korea has 39 MPAs, with a national target to protect 30% of its territorial waters by 2030 by designating at least one new

large-scale MPA annually. He also emphasized stakeholder participation in management systems and the sharing of data through national information platforms.

7. Mr. Aleksander Burdin, a leading scientist at the Kamchatka Branch of the Pacific Geographical Institute, Far East Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences, presented on the Russian Federation. He identified the primary agencies responsible for marine mammal protection, including the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology and the Federal Agency for Fishery. He explained that the main legal instruments are the Federal Law "On Wildlife" and the Federal Law "On Fishing and Conservation of Aquatic Biological Resources". He noted that many species are protected under the Red Data Book of Russia. He reported that while the Russian Federation has a network of marine and coastal protected areas, MPAs currently comprise only about 3% of the country's economic zone. He concluded by emphasizing that because marine mammals are highly migratory, their protection must be an international concern shared by all countries in their range.

8. Session 2 was moderated by Ms. Sunmin Kim, Assistant Professor at Jeju National University, Republic of Korea. She guided discussions on the scientific understanding of cetacean populations in the region, focusing on threats, data gaps, and opportunities for cross-border collaboration.

9. Mr. Kexiong Wang, Professor at the Institute of Hydrobiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, discussed the status of the East-Asian finless porpoise in China. He noted that important habitats have been identified in Laizhou Bay, the Changdao area, and Laoshan Bay. He reported that the population is estimated at 5,000 in Bohai Bay and 15,000 along the Shandong Peninsula coast. He identified bycatch as a major threat, with a 1994-1995 study that estimated hundreds or thousands of individuals were caught annually in fishing gear, primarily stow-nets and gillnets. He added that fishermen have reported population declines due to water pollution and lower food availability. He concluded by sharing official conservation recommendations from China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, which include strengthening scientific research, enhancing supervision of fishing vessels, and expanding international cooperation.

10. Ms. Yuko Tajima, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at the National Museum of Nature and Science, Japan, presented on Japan's stranding survey and museum activities. She reported that from

1993 to 2023, finless porpoises accounted for 36.5% of the 8,367 total reported stranding cases in Japan. She explained that the five distinct populations of narrow-ridged finless porpoises around Japan are all declining due to human activities. She noted that mortality peaks during three key life stages: nursing, weaning, and sexual maturity. She highlighted that threats identified from stranded animals include ship strikes, infectious diseases, and marine plastic debris. She proposed improving cross-border cooperation by standardizing protocols for necropsy and sampling, as well as for stranding and sighting databases, to address significant data gaps.

11. Ms. Youngran Lee, Founder and CEO of Plan Ocean, provided an overview of cetaceans in the Republic of Korea. Ms. Lee reported that 35 cetacean species have been recorded in Korean waters, although the Western Gray Whale has not been observed since the 1960s. She noted that the most frequently observed species is the East-Asian finless porpoise, which is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, with bycatch being its leading cause of death. She identified other major threats, including offshore construction, pollution, vessel strikes, and climate change. She called for collaborative research, the promotion of sustainable fisheries, and the establishment of a joint governance framework to protect marine mammals.

12. Mr. Aleksander Burdin, Leading Scientist at the Kamchatka Branch of the Pacific Geographical Institute, focused on the Western gray whale. He explained that this population is very small, with only about 250 individuals, and is listed as Critically Endangered in the Russian Red Data Book. He noted that their range spans the North Pacific, including the waters of the Russian Federation, Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and China. He identified major threats, including offshore oil production near their main feeding grounds off Sakhalin Island, entanglement in fishing gear, and vessel strikes. He emphasized that key data gaps remain regarding their migration routes and potential breeding sites in Asia. He proposed resuming satellite tagging programmes and fostering international collaboration to identify key habitats for the creation of new protected areas.

13. In the discussion that followed, Professor Wang clarified that while the government has implemented a 10-year fishing ban on the Yangtze River to protect the freshwater porpoise, it is difficult to introduce similar prohibitions in the Bohai and Yellow Seas due to the economic importance of fisheries. Participants from the Republic of Korea and China agreed on the need

to establish methodological consistency for population surveys in the Yellow Sea to ensure comparability, confirming that both sides use standard line-transect and passive acoustic monitoring methods. Dr. Tajima noted that the current abundance estimates for finless porpoises in Japan are outdated by about 20 years, underscoring a critical data gap. She further explained that Japan's stranding response relies heavily on local volunteer networks, as there is limited central government support for stranded animal research.

14. Session 3 was moderated by Mr. Young Nam Kim, General Manager at the Korea Marine Environment and Management Corporation (KOEM). He guided the discussion on the scientific understanding of pinniped populations, particularly the spotted seal, reviewing their status, threats, and data gaps to explore opportunities for cross-border research and conservation.

15. Mr. Hongfei Zhuang, Assistant Professor at the First Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources, China, presented on the distribution and conservation of spotted seals in the Yellow Sea Ecoregion. He explained that seals inhabit the Bohai Sea from December to May and the Yellow Sea, including the west coast of the Korean Peninsula, from June to September. He revealed a significant conservation gap, with over 70% of the species' priority conservation areas remaining unprotected. He noted that these areas are mainly in Liaodong Bay, the Bohai Strait, and along the Korean Peninsula's west coast. He also highlighted a project that used Participatory GIS with local fishers to identify 13 new rocky shore habitats, suggesting this as a valuable method for identifying key sites in other unprotected areas.

16. Ms. Kobayashi Mari, Professor at Tokyo Agriculture and Life Science University, discussed the changing status of spotted seals in Hokkaido, Japan. She explained that since the 1990s, the seal population visiting Hokkaido has increased, its distribution has expanded southward, and individuals are staying for longer periods, with some now remaining year-round. She noted that this has led to serious conflicts with local fisheries, causing significant economic damage. She explained that in response, Hokkaido implemented a management plan in 2013 to address the conflict, which includes examining capture and expulsion methods. She suggested that these ecological shifts may be linked to the decrease in sea ice, which is the seals' primary breeding habitat, due to global warming.

17. Mr. Gyeomjun Park, Senior Researcher at the National Institute of Fisheries Science (NIFS), Republic of Korea, provided an overview of pinniped research in Korean waters. He noted that spotted seals migrate from their breeding grounds in China and the Russian Federation to the coast of the Republic of Korea. He explained that key habitats in the Republic of Korea include Garorim Bay and Baengnyeong Island. He noted that NIFS conducts extensive monitoring using photo-identification, having identified over 2,100 individuals from 6,800 photos. He added that a re-identification ratio of 56% indicates high site fidelity for the seals visiting these areas. He also reported that from 2018 to 2024, 63 strandings were documented, with four animals successfully rehabilitated and released.

18. Mr. Alexey Trukhin, Leading Researcher at the V.I. Il'ichev Pacific Oceanological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, presented on the spotted seal population in Peter the Great Bay. He explained that this is one of the smallest populations but has increased four-fold over the past 40 years to approximately 4,000 individuals. He noted that their survival has been supported by the Far Eastern Marine Biosphere Reserve, which protects their unique coastal breeding grounds. He highlighted successful international cooperation with the Republic of Korea on satellite tagging to study migration and on analyzing tissue samples for persistent organic pollutants. He cautioned, however, that despite the population's growth, threats from fishing gear entanglement, pollution, and shipping outside the reserve remain significant.

19. During the subsequent discussion, Ms. Kobayashi stated that the spotted seal population in Hokkaido is now decreasing, and she expressed hope that the government will shift its management plan from a capture-based approach to a more conservation-oriented one. Mr. Zhuang noted that a key priority for future China-Korea cooperation should be studying and protecting rocky shore habitats, which serve as critical stepping stones for spotted seals. Dr. Park confirmed that while the Cetacean Research Institute (CRI) had active collaborations with China and the Russian Federation in the early 2000s, these connections have unfortunately lapsed, and the ROK scientists are eager to restart joint studies on spotted seals and other marine mammals. Mr. Trukhin added that the Russian Federation has a volunteer-run rescue center in Vladivostok that rehabilitates up to 10 injured or sick spotted seal pups annually.

20. Session 4 was moderated by Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Deputy Head of the ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office. He introduced regional and global initiatives in marine mammal conservation,

and speakers shared lessons learned, coordination mechanisms, and innovative practices from other regions that could serve as models for North-East Asia.

21. Ms. Gill Braulik, Deputy Chair of the IUCN Joint Special Survival Commission / World Commission on Protected Areas (SSC/WCPA) Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force, presented the Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) initiative. She described IMMAs as a science-based tool to identify discrete habitats important for marine mammals. She explained that the identification process is biocentric and not a political designation like an MPA. She reported that since 2016, the initiative has held 11 regional workshops covering nearly 80% of the world's oceans, identifying 323 IMMAs to date. She emphasized that these IMMAs support Maritime Spatial Planning, MPA establishment, and industry risk analysis. She announced that a workshop to identify IMMAs in the Northwest Pacific Region will be convened within the next five years and encouraged regional experts to prepare by publishing relevant data.

22. Ms. Gianna Minton, Co-Chair of the IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group, shared lessons on regional collaboration from other parts of the world, highlighting frameworks such as the International Whaling Commission (IWC), Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and IUCN that facilitate cooperation. She presented two case studies: the Arabian Sea Whale Network (ASWN), formed in 2015 to protect the endangered humpback whale population in that region, and the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (CCAHD), formed in 2020 to protect the critically endangered dolphin along the coast of Africa. She explained that both networks successfully brought together diverse partners to develop regional action plans and data-sharing platforms. She stressed that key lessons included the importance of trust among partners, sharing expertise, maintaining dedicated coordination, and utilizing in-person meetings to foster strong relationships.

23. Mr. Simone Panigada, Chair of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) Scientific Committee, presented the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative (ASI). She explained that ACCOBAMS is a legally binding intergovernmental agreement for cetacean conservation in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. He noted that the ASI was launched to fill significant data gaps on cetacean abundance and distribution across this vast, multi-cultural region. He reported that the initiative involved large-scale, coordinated aerial and vessel surveys with participation from over 100 scientists, and

included a strong capacity-building component. He highlighted that this effort produced the first basin-wide abundance estimates for many species, mapped marine debris, and provided a scientific baseline that has informed policy, including the designation of a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) to reduce ship strikes in the Mediterranean.

24. Ms. Andrea Michelson, Regional Coordinator of the Patagonian Forum, presented the work of her network, which consists of NGOs from Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. She explained that the Forum takes an ecosystem-based approach to tackle transboundary threats such as hydrocarbon development, plastic pollution, and unsustainable fisheries. She shared examples of their work, including mapping the migratory routes of southern elephant seals to guide policymakers, identifying 23 key biodiversity sites that are now mostly within MPAs, and conducting a gap analysis of Chile's MPA network. She highlighted current advocacy against a new port and gas facility that threatens southern right whales and described collaboration with the fishing industry to reduce bycatch through electronic monitoring and gear modification.

25. Ms. Huo Wang, Deputy Secretary General of the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation, presented lessons from the Yellow-Bohai Sea Spotted Seals Protected Areas Network Project. She explained that the project, part of the UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME) Phase II initiative, was catalyzed by a major poaching incident involving 100 seal pups in 2019. She highlighted that the project built a community-based conservation network through public awareness, education, and citizen participation. She described how the initiative engaged local communities and schools, organized multi-stakeholder dialogues with fishers, and successfully advocated for the upgrade of the spotted seal to a National First-Class Protected Species in 2021. She concluded by stressing the importance of community engagement, strong law enforcement, and multi-channel communication in achieving conservation outcomes.

26. In the discussion that followed, Ms. Michelson explained that the Patagonian Forum works closely with MPA managers by promoting MPA creation, delivering training through its "MPA School," and helping to develop management and monitoring plans. Ms. Puri Canals, Coordinator of the Global MPA Network and former President of the Mediterranean Network of Marine Protected Areas (MedPAN), highlighted that very few MPAs have management plans that specifically address marine mammals and offered to share a tool developed to help managers

incorporate targeted measures for these species. In response to a question about a recent mass mortality event of southern elephant seals, Ms. Michelson confirmed it was caused by avian influenza and observed that the seals fared better when resting in protected areas away from human disturbance.

27. Session 5 was a roundtable discussion moderated by Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, focusing on establishing concrete next steps for subregional cooperation. Participants agreed on the need to form a collaborative body, with Dr. Alexander Burdin suggesting the creation of a small, informal working group with representatives from each country as a pragmatic first step. He proposed that this group could begin by sharing information and developing a joint proposal for future actions. Dr. Young Nam Kim supported this idea, noting that a species-focused network under the NEAMPAN umbrella could be very effective and produce valuable outputs. Dr. Gianna Minton and Dr. Youngran Lee discussed how this new effort could align with and strengthen the existing expert network for finless porpoises in the Yellow Sea by including spotted seals, incorporating the Russian Federation, and engaging governments more directly. Dr. Burdin emphasized that official proposals from high-level international organizations such as the UN or IUCN often receive a stronger response from national ministries than requests from scientists alone, citing the success of the IUCN-supported Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel. Dr. Minton added that framing the working group's outputs as contributions to multilateral commitments, including the 30x30 target, could further encourage government engagement.

28. In his closing remarks, Mr. Riccardo Mesiano thanked all participants for their active engagement and valuable contributions. He concluded that the meeting marked the beginning of a new collaborative journey. He proposed that experts continue to work together through an informal network, which could later be institutionalized under NEASPEC. He also suggested a tangible medium-term goal: supporting the organization of a subregional IMMA identification workshop for the Northwest Pacific within the next few years.

Annex. Concept note and Programme

Concept Note

Background

The conservation of marine mammals, particularly spotted seals (*Phoca Largha*) and narrow-ridged finless porpoises (*Neophocaena asiaeorientalis*), is critical to maintaining marine ecosystem health and biodiversity in the Seas in North-East Asia and adjacent waters. These species are increasingly threatened by habitat degradation, bycatch, climate change, and pollution. While a range of national and regional efforts exists, there remains a lack of coordinated, science-based, and transboundary approach to effectively address these challenges.

The IUCN Red List currently categorizes the spotted seal as Least Concern (LC), while the narrow-ridged finless porpoise is listed as Endangered (EN), primarily due to habitat degradation, high mortality from fisheries bycatch, and pollution. These designations highlight the urgency for enhanced conservation efforts to prevent further population decline.

At the global level, SDG 14 (Life Below Water) calls for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems, urging actions to reduce marine pollution and protect marine biodiversity. The Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) also sets Target 3, the "30x30" conservation goal, to protect 30% of the world's land and marine areas by 2030, a critical milestone for scaling up marine protected areas (MPAs) and ensuring the conservation of migratory species.[1]

At the subregional level, Chinese and Korean researchers have conducted research on spotted seals under the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSMLE) II project in the late 2010s,

[1] Under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the narrow-ridged finless porpoise is listed in Appendix II, recognizing it as a species that would benefit from international cooperative conservation actions. Additionally, CMS Resolution 11.22 advocates for prohibiting the live capture of cetaceans for commercial purposes. While no specific CMS resolutions address spotted seals, these broader policies emphasize the need for international collaboration in marine mammal conservation. The IUCN's WCC-2020-Rec-094 recommendation further reinforces the necessity of conservation actions to mitigate threats and strengthen transboundary cooperation.

contributing to improved understanding of the species' ecology and informing conservation strategies. National laws, such as the Wildlife Protection Law (China), the Marine Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (Japan), and the Marine Environment Management Act (Republic of Korea), provide legal frameworks for marine mammal protection.[2]

Despite these efforts, key challenges remain. National policies and legal frameworks remain fragmented, making it difficult to align conservation approaches across borders. Transboundary data sharing is still limited, and stakeholders exhibit uneven capacity in research, monitoring, and management. In addition, conflicts with development activities, such as fisheries operations and coastal infrastructure projects, complicate efforts. Most importantly, the lack of a structured regional cooperation mechanism for marine mammals constrains progress.

Given the migratory nature of these species, coordinated efforts across borders are essential. Against this background, this Expert Group Meeting (EGM) aims to provide a starting point for dialogue, exploring how subregional cooperation can align with global conservation targets and agreements, and laying the groundwork for potential future collaboration through NEAMPAN. The meeting will bring together key stakeholders to encourage information exchange, identify potential synergies among NEAMPAN member countries, and help build a shared vision for marine mammal conservation in the subregion.

Objectives

- Facilitate knowledge exchange on the status, threats, and conservation measures related to spotted seals and finless porpoises

[2] Several designated protected areas exist for the conservation of spotted seals and finless porpoises:

- **China:** The spotted seal breeds in Liaodong Bay, Bohai Gulf, with conservation stations monitoring breeding grounds and compensating fishermen for live seal releases. The finless porpoise is classified as a national first-level protected species, with reserves like the Tian-e-Zhou Oxbow Nature Reserve ensuring habitat protection.
- **Japan:** Conservation efforts for finless porpoises include studies on population trends in the inland Sea, with discussions on protected area establishments.
- **Republic of Korea:** Marine species protected areas have been designated for spotted seals in Garorim Bay and for finless porpoises in Goseong Haimyeon.
- **Russian Federation:** Spotted seals inhabit the Sea of Japan/East Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk, though specific protected areas remain unclear.

- Identify gaps and opportunities for transboundary cooperation
- Discuss possible approaches and mechanisms for regional cooperation and policy alignment
- Explore possibilities for research collaboration and data sharing
- Develop preliminary recommendations for an action plan, focusing on habitat protection, threat mitigation, and monitoring frameworks

Target groups

- Government officials, academia, research institutions, civil society organizations, international and regional organizations, and local communities

Expected Outcomes

- A shared understanding of conservation challenges and research findings on spotted seals and finless porpoises
- Identification of key gaps in policy, monitoring, and data sharing
- Initial recommendations and ideas for follow-up actions, such as exploring capacity-building opportunities, joint monitoring, data-sharing approaches, policy coordination, or collaborative outreach and advocacy initiatives

Programme

11 September 2025	
08:30-09:00	Registration
09:00-09:20	**Opening** • Opening remarks: Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav, Head, ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office • Tour de Table • Objectives and expected outcomes • Group photo

09:20-10:40	**Session 1. National Policies and Legal Frameworks for Marine Mammal Conservation**
	
	The session will present national policies, legal instruments, and institutional arrangements from China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation related to the conservation of marine mammals. It will also examine how marine protected areas (MPAs) are utilized to safeguard marine mammals and identify potential areas for strategic alignment and cooperation.
	
	• Moderator: Mr. Simon Gilby, Sustainable Development Officer, United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD)
	
	• Speakers:
	  ○ Mr. Zhang Zhaohui, Research Professor, First Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources of China, and Deputy Director, China-PEMSEA Center
	  ○ Ms. Kobayashi Mari, Professor, Tokyo Agriculture and Life Science University at Abashiri, Hokkaido, Japan
	  ○ Mr. Young Nam Kim, General Manager, Marine Protection and Restoration Department, Korea Marine Environment and Management Corporation (KOEM)
	  ○ Mr. Aleksander Burdin, Leading scientist, Kamchatka Branch of Pacific Geographical Institute, Far East Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences

10:40-11:00	break
11:00-12:20	**Session 2. Cetaceans: Status, Threats, and Data Gaps for Cross-Border Cooperation in North-East Asia** This session will examine the current scientific understanding of cetacean populations (e.g., finless porpoise) in North-East Asia, including major threats, ecological characteristics, and broader environmental pressures. Experts will

	highlight recent national and regional findings, identifying key data and knowledge gaps, such as species-specific information, monitoring limitations, and habitat connectivity that hinder effective conservation. The session will also explore opportunities to strengthen cross-border research collaboration and improve data sharing and coordination across countries.
	
	• Moderator: Ms. Sunmin Kim, Assistant Professor, College of Veterinary Medicine, Jeju National University, Republic of Korea
	
	• Speakers:
	  ○ Mr. Kexiong Wang, Professor, Institute of Hydrobiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences
	  ○ Ms. Yuko Tajima, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, National Museum of Nature and Science, Japan
	  ○ Ms. Young Ran Lee, Founder and CEO, Plan Ocean, Republic of Korea
	  ○ Mr. Aleksander Burdin, Leading scientist, Kamchatka Branch of Pacific Geographical Institute, Far East Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences

12:20-13:40	Lunch

13:40-15:00	**Session 3. Pinnipeds: Status, Threats, and Data Gaps for Cross-Border Cooperation in North-East Asia**
	
	This session will review the current scientific understanding of pinniped populations (e.g., spotted seals) in North-East Asia, focusing on major threats, ecological traits, and broader environmental pressures. Experts will share recent national and regional findings, identifying key data and knowledge gaps, including species-specific information, monitoring limitations, and habitat connectivity that hinder effective conservation. The session will also explore opportunities to enhance cross-border research collaboration and improve data sharing and coordination across countries.
	
	• Moderator: Mr. Young Nam Kim, General Manager, Marine Protection and Restoration Department, Korea Marine Environment and Management Corporation (KOEM)
	
	• Speakers:
	  ○ Mr. Hongfei Zhuang, Assistant Professor, First Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources, China
	  Ms. Kobayashi Mari, Professor, Tokyo Agriculture and Life Science University at Abashiri, Hokkaido, Japan
	  ○ Mr. Gyeomjun Park, Senior Researcher, National Institute of Fisheries Science, Republic of Korea

	○ Mr. Alexey Trukhin, Leading Researcher and Associate Professor, V.I.Il'ichev Pacific Oceanological Institute, Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences
15:00-15:20	Break
15:20-16:40	**Session 4. Learning from Other Regions and MPA Networks** The session will introduce regional and global initiatives focused on marine mammal conservation. It will explore lessons learned, coordination mechanisms, and innovative practices from other regions that may offer insights and replicable models for North-East Asia. • Moderator: Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Deputy Head, ESCAP East and North-East Asia • Speakers: ○ Ms. Gill Braulik, Deputy Chair, IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force ○ Ms. Gianna Minton, Co-Chair, IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group ○ Mr. Simone Panigada, Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) ○ Ms. Andrea Michelson, Regional Coordinator, Patagonian Forum ○ Ms. Huo Wang, Deputy Secretary General, China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation, Chief Editor of Marine Biodiversity, and Visiting Professor at Tianjin Foreign Studies University
16:40-17:20	**Session 5: Pathways to Subregional Cooperation** This session will aim to explore practical steps to enhance subregional cooperation on marine mammals, such as joint research, harmonized monitoring, data and information sharing, policy dialogue, and NEAMPAN's potential role in supporting subregional collaboration. • Moderator: Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Deputy Head, ESCAP East and North-East Asia
17:20-17:30	**Closing** • Closing remarks: Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Deputy Head, ESCAP East and North-East Asia
18:00-19:30	**Dinner**