

The ACCOBAMS Survey Initiatives



NEAMPAN

**Expert Group Meeting on Advancing Marine Mammal Conservation
in Northeast Asia**

11 September 2025

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Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic ACCOBAMS

A legally binding Agreement on regional cooperation

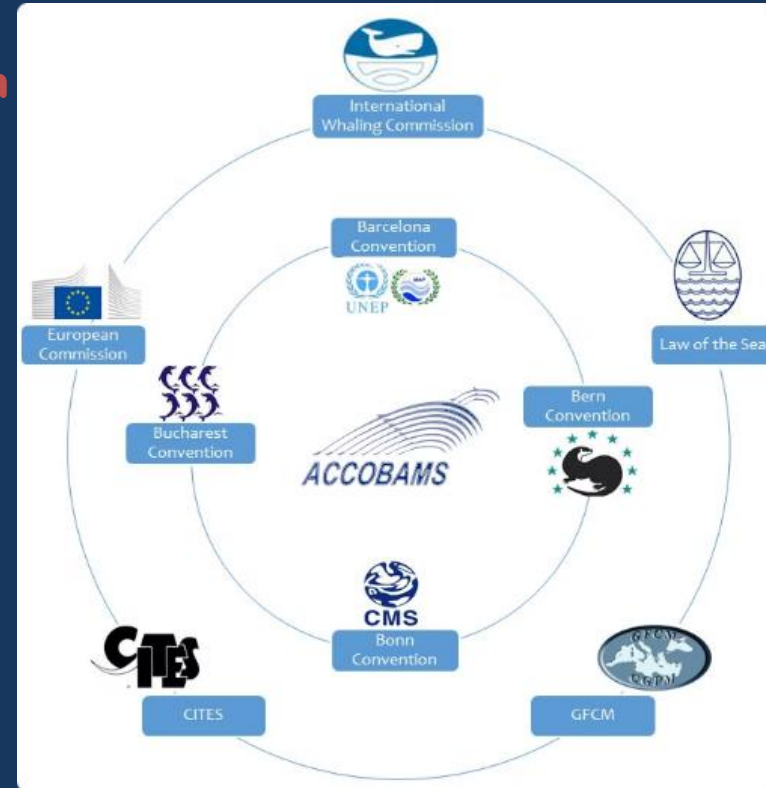
Adopts Resolutions aimed at conserving cetaceans

Provides best expertise and standards

Mission

- *increase knowledge & data*
- *understand threats*
- *improve conservation status*

Signed in Monaco in 1996. It came into force in June 2001.

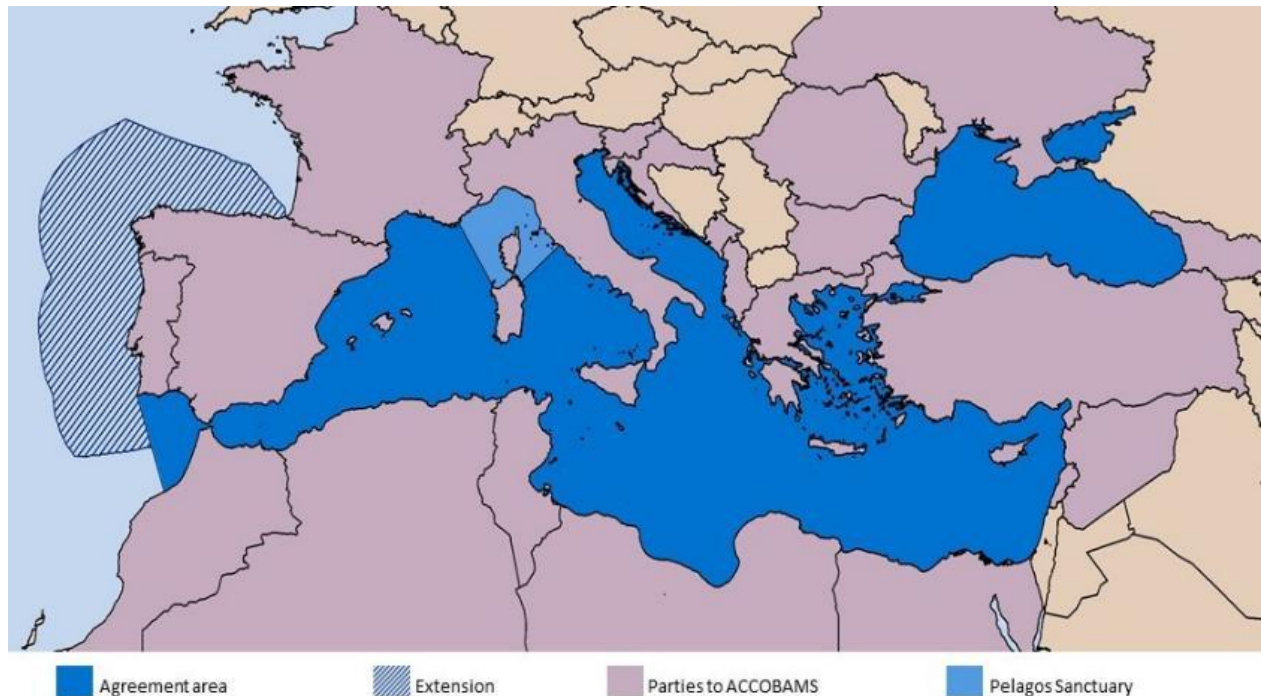


ACCOBAMS: an Intergovernmental Agreement

Key figures

- *24 Parties / 52 partners*
- *27 years of existence*
- *3 million km² of sea covered*
- *11 regular cetacean species*

Integrated management
reconcile activities & cetaceans



The designations employed and the presentation of the information on this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of ACCOBAMS concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

A Threat-Based Conservation Approach for Cetaceans



1

Knowledge of Human Activities

Understanding human activities within the ACCOBAMS area is crucial for effective cetacean conservation.

2

Knowledge of Species Distribution

Combining knowledge of human activities with species distribution leads to leads to better management of threats to cetaceans.

3

Integrated Management

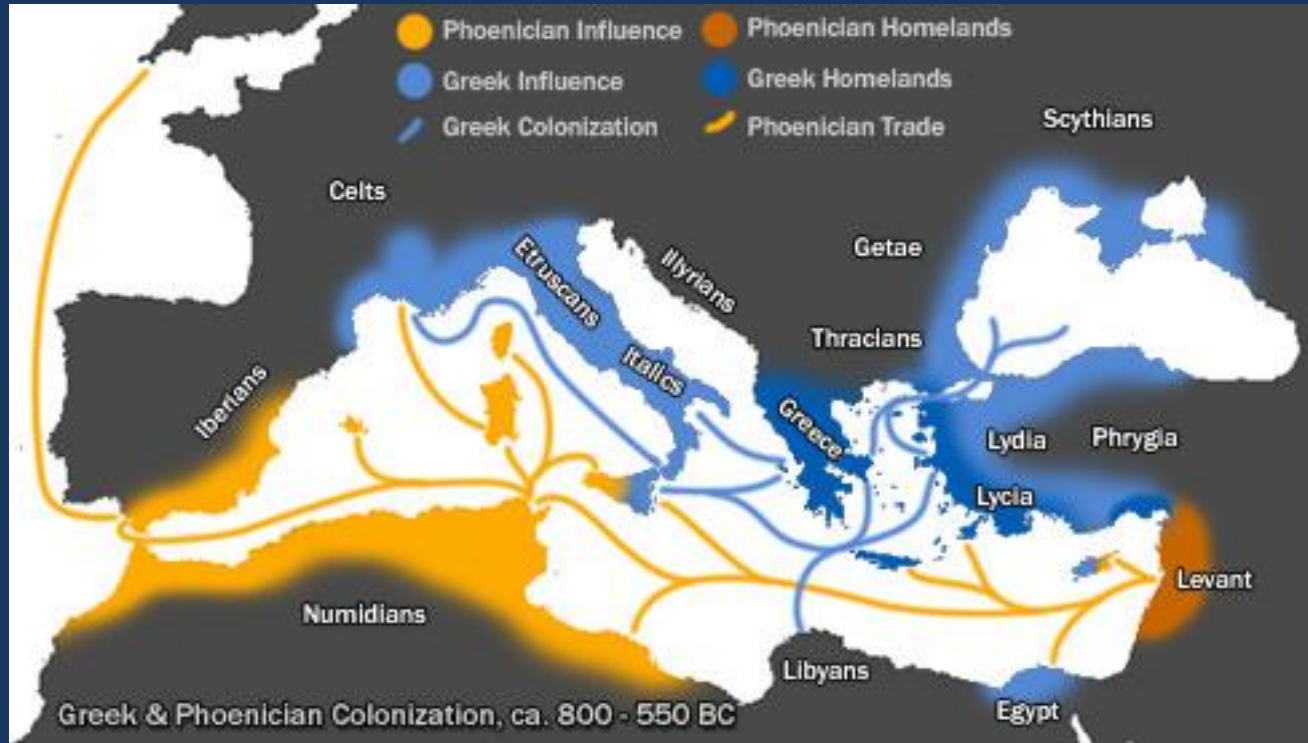
Implementing integrated management helps reconcile human activities with activities with cetacean conservation, finding sustainable solutions.

Background: motivation for the work

- **Lack of regional knowledge (early 1990s)**
 - Limited information on distribution
 - No information on abundance
- **Population context for the impact of human activities**
 - Ship strikes, by-catch, epizootics
 - Energy extraction and other sources of noise
- **Meeting policy requirements**
 - National legislation
 - EU Habitats Directive & Marine Strategy Framework Directive
 - Ecosystem Approach – Barcelona Convention
 - CBD Aichi Target 11 – UN SDG – GBF 30x30, 10x30
- **Primary aims**
 - Estimate absolute (unbiased) abundance
 - Place-based conservation efforts
 - Initiate a long-term time series



Challenging multi-cultural environment



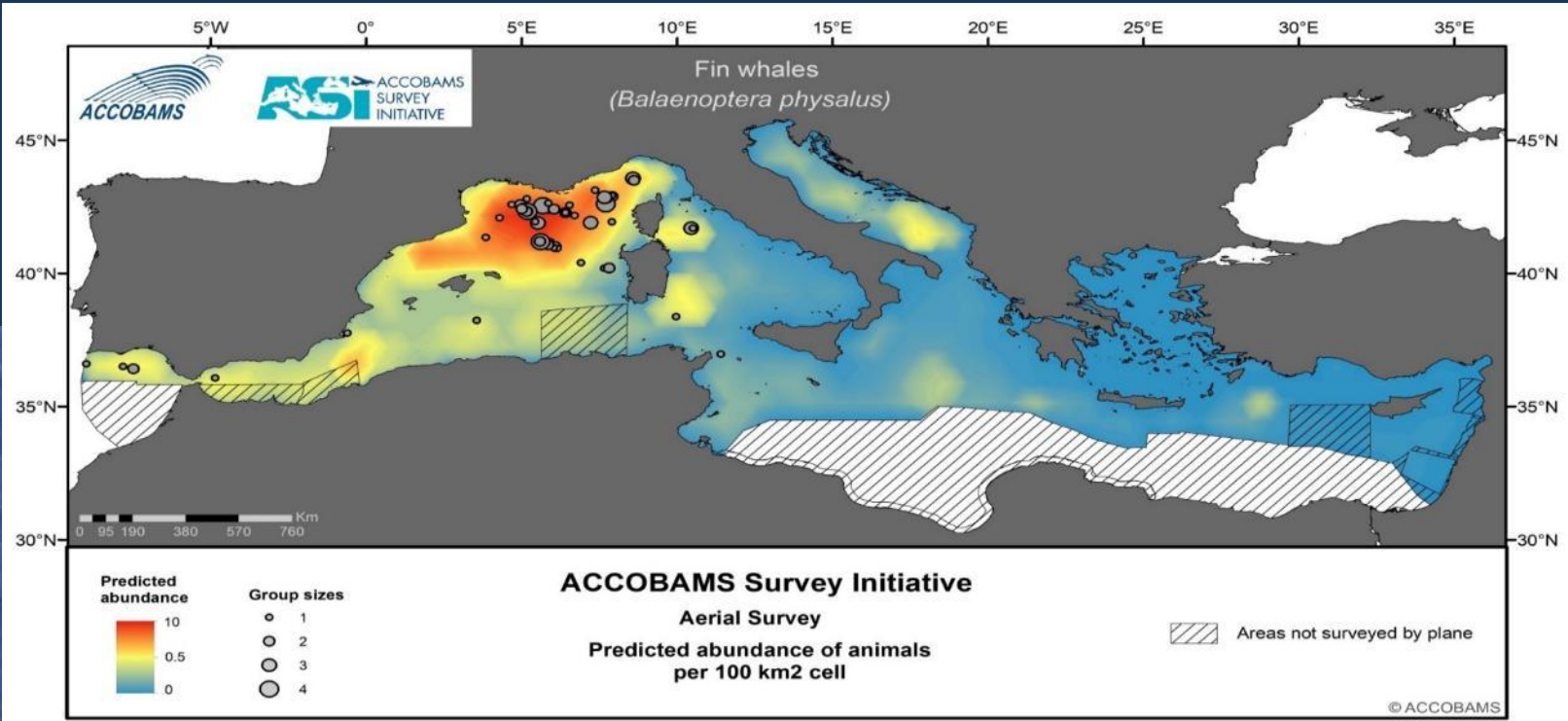
- Wide variety of cultures along the Med and Black Seas
- Many different languages spoken

Challenging funding scheme

- 3 years project
- >100 scientists involved
- 8 planes
- 3 research vessels
- Training workshops
- Data analysis workshops
- Strong capacity building component
- Almost 2 millions Km² to survey
- 55,500 Km of effort (1.4 times the length of the equator)



Fin whales - 1,700 (CV 28%)



OTHER VERTEBRATES

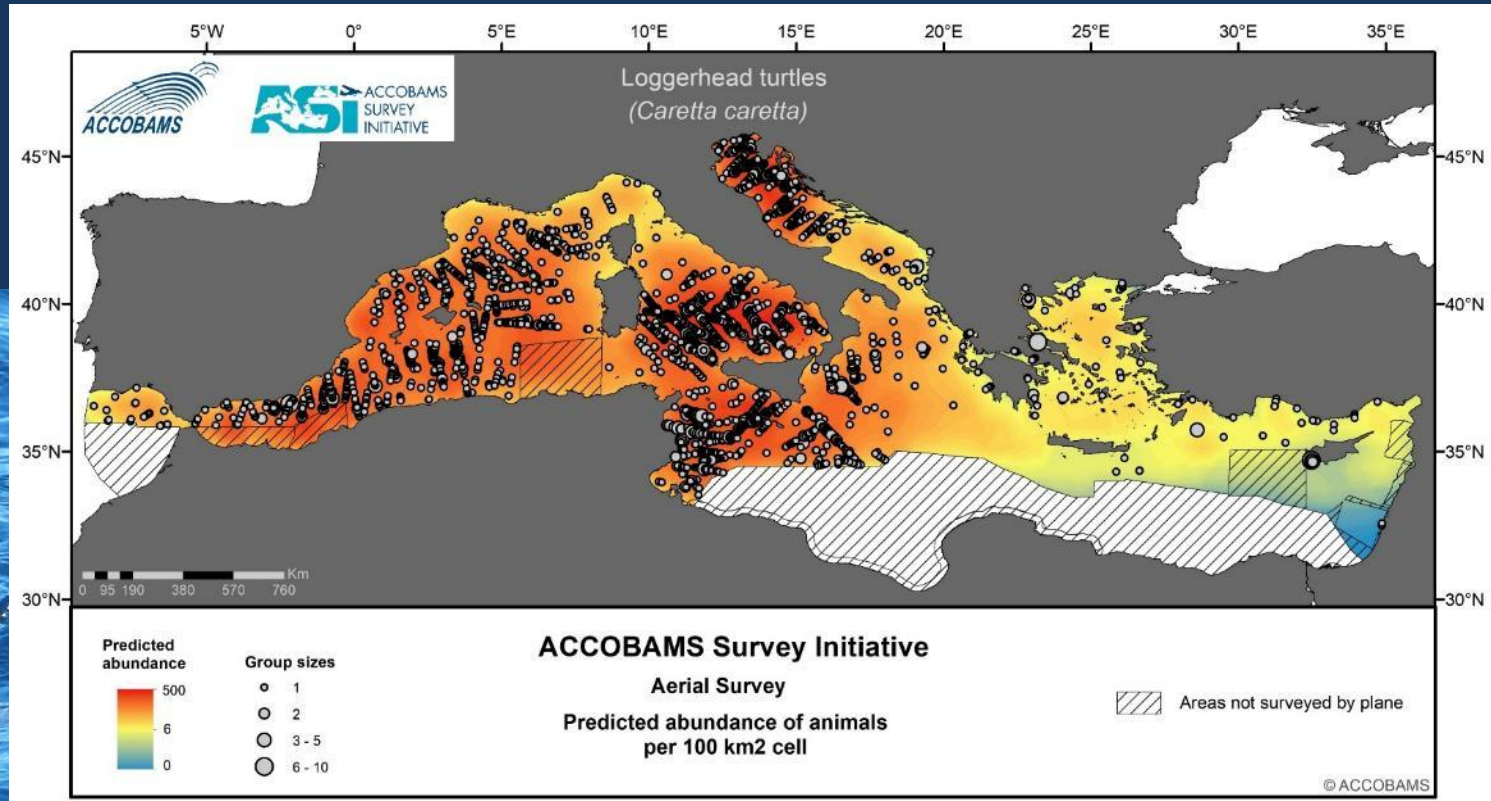


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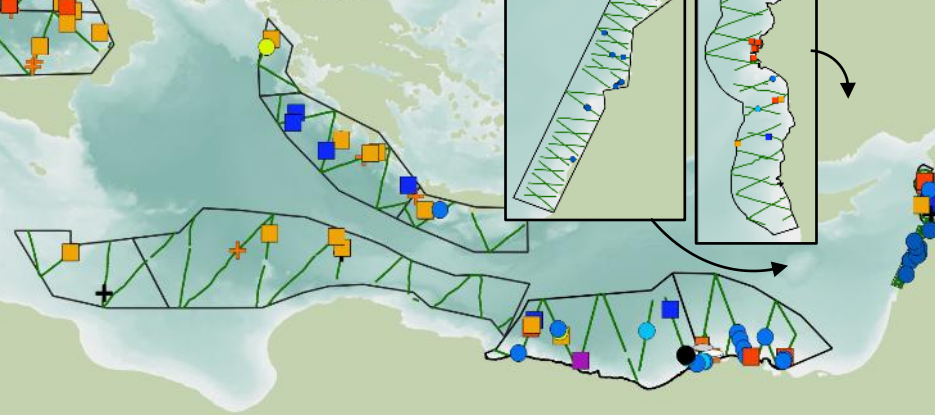
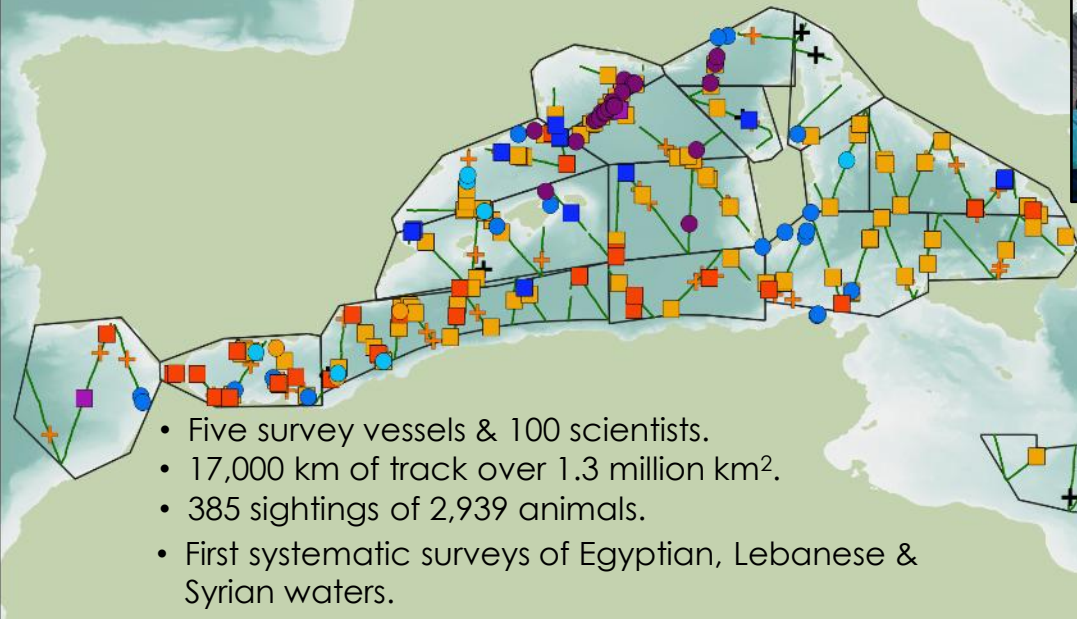


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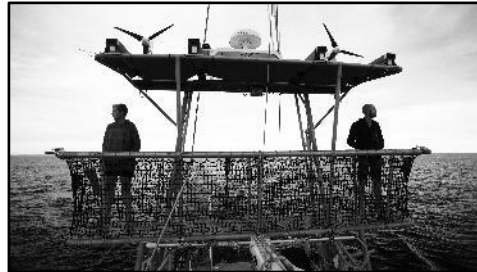
Loggerhead turtles - 313,500 (CV 5%)



0 100 200 300 NM

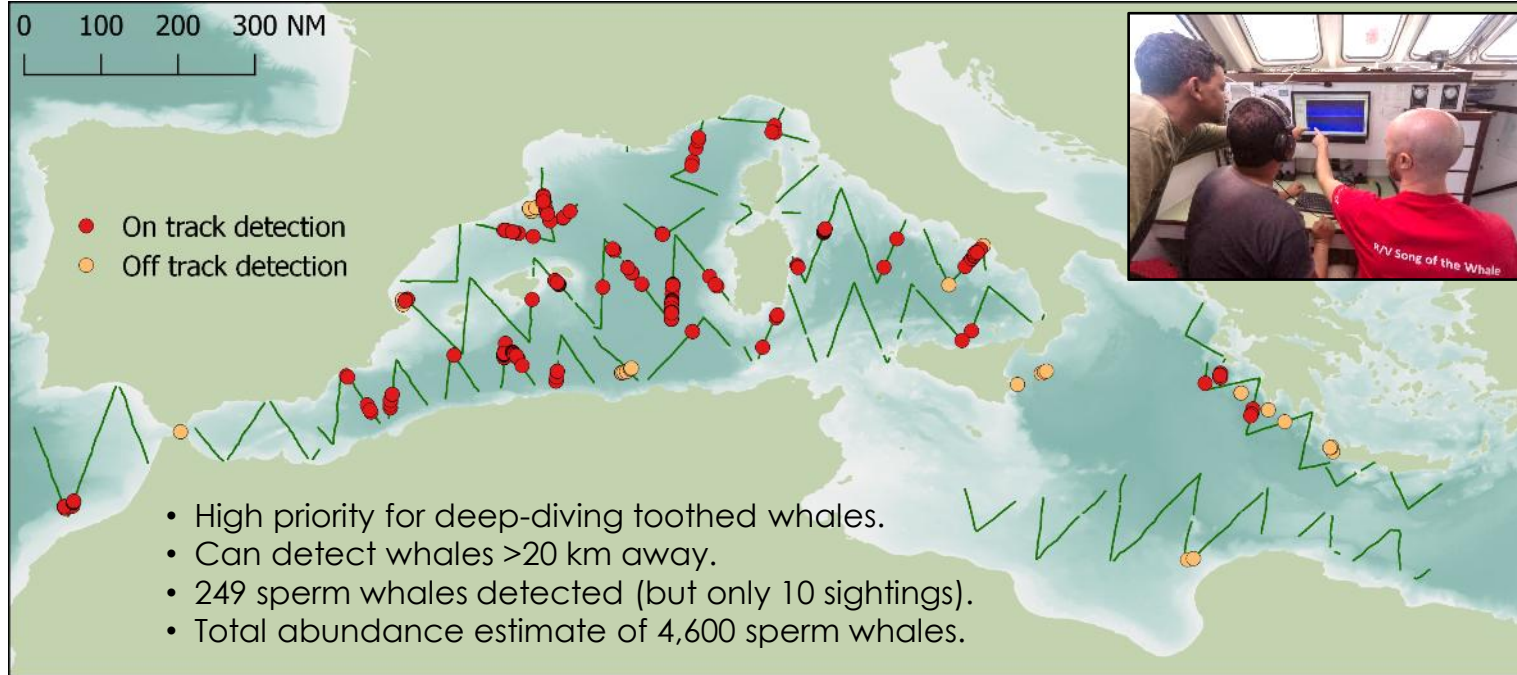


ASI VESSEL SURVEYS





ACOUSTIC SURVEYS



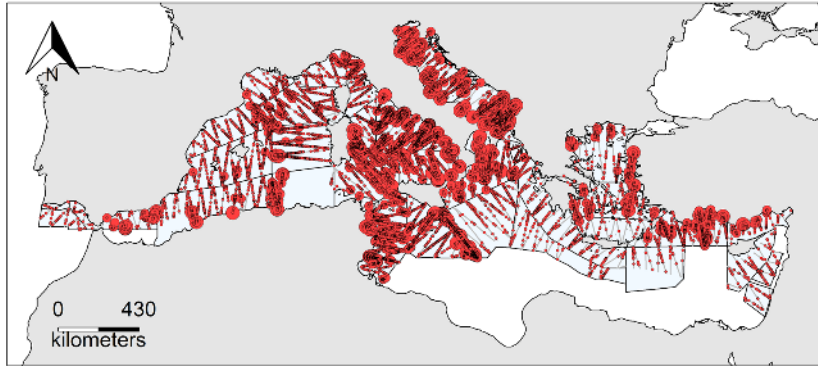
HUMAN
IMPACT...



MARINE LITTER DISTRIBUTION



ASI ACCOBAMS
SURVEY
INITIATIVE



**> 50 000
sampled km**

**> 41 000 sighted
macro-debris**



68.5%



1.7%

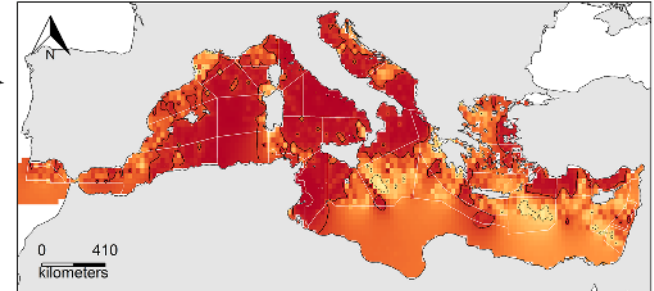


1.9%

Bayesian Hierarchical
Species Distribution Model



Macro-debris presence probability map



0.0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1.0
Mean estimated presence probability

**Abundance of macro-debris floating in
the Mediterranean basin**

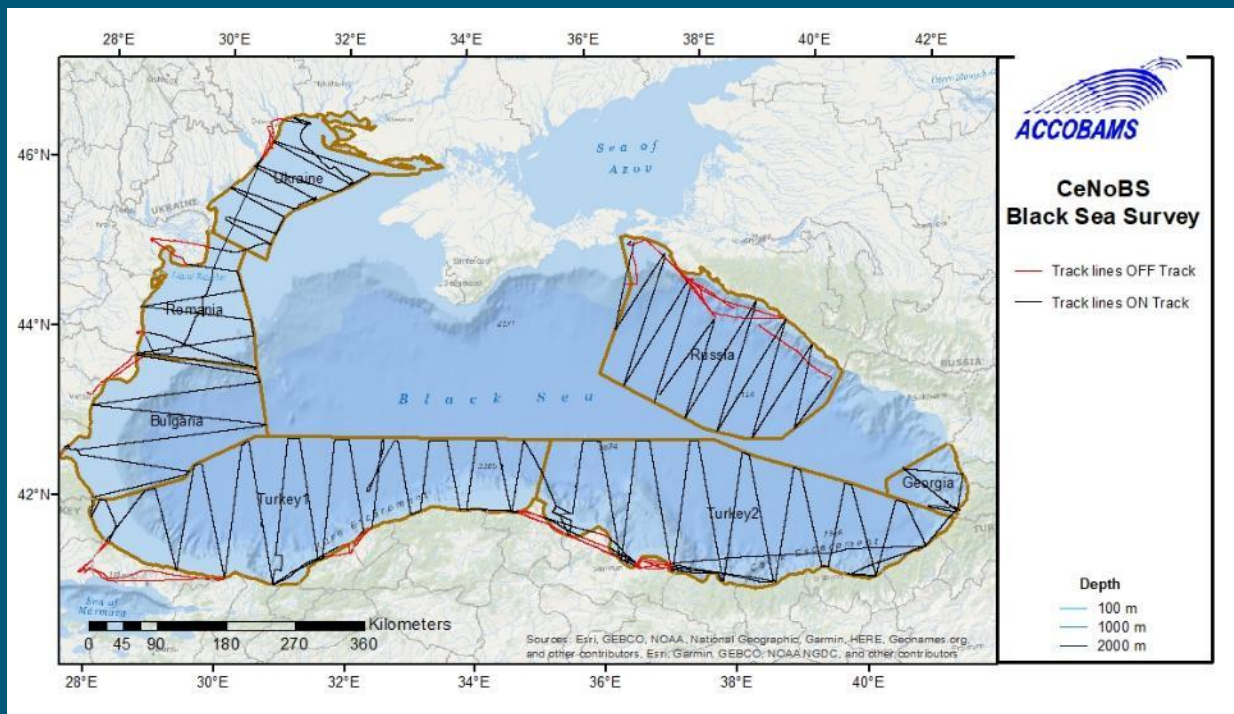
**2.9 million debris
size > 30 cm**

**11.5 million debris
size > 2 cm**

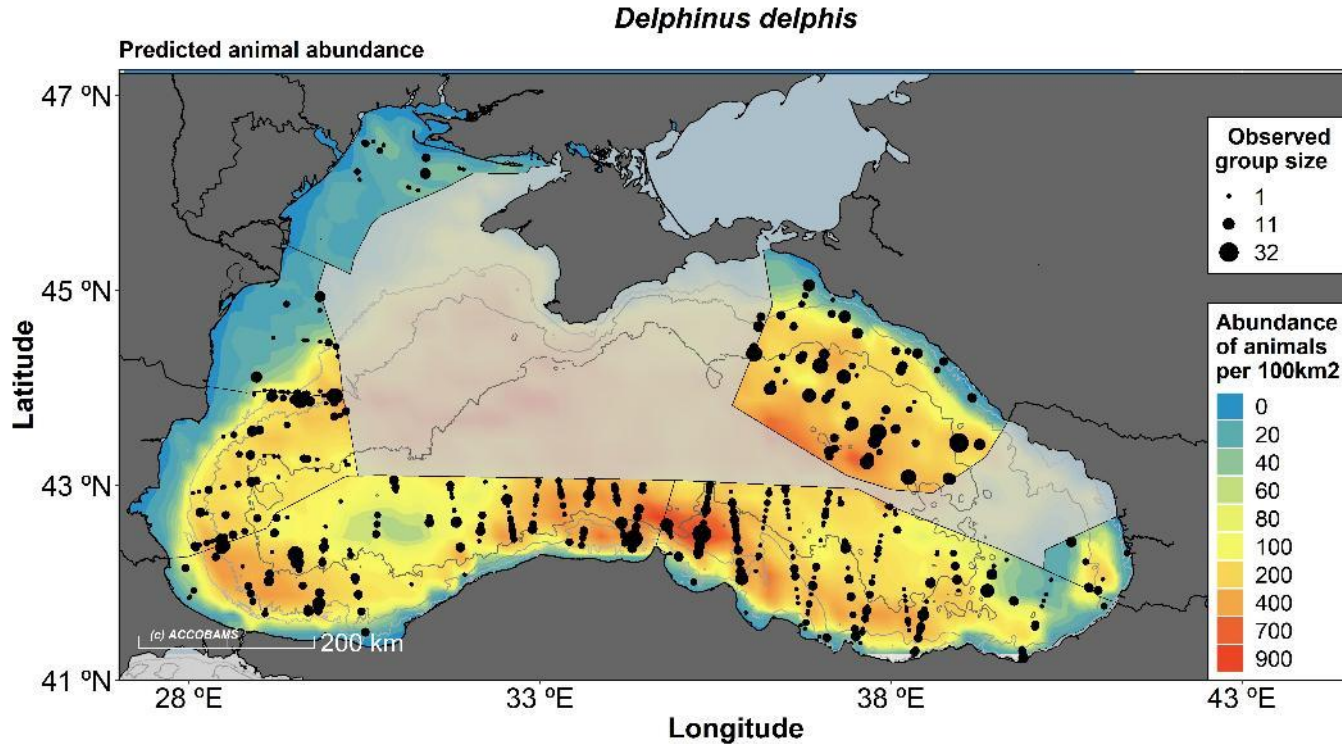
TOTAL AERIAL EFFORT

Total effort

9,354.40 km surveyed
5,892.55 km of effort



Black Sea common dolphins





THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF CETACEANS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Trends and changes after a decade
of conservation efforts



MEDITERRANEAN
SEA

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™



red eléctrica
Una empresa de Redeia

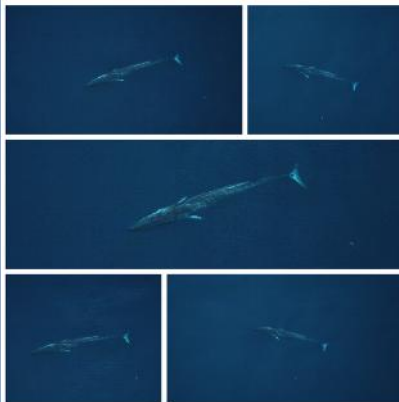


The ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative (ASI): Implementing Large Scale Surveys for Marine Megafauna in the Mediterranean and Black Seas

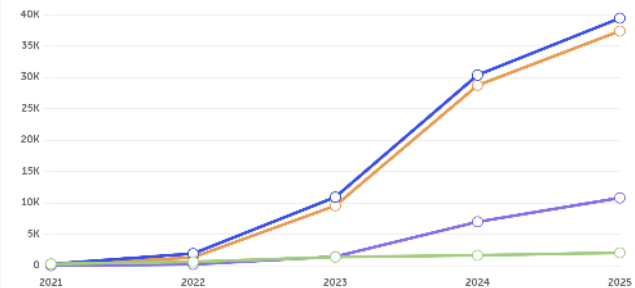
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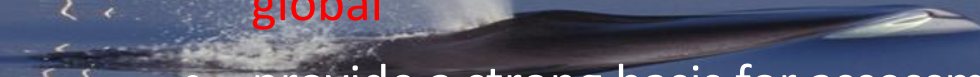


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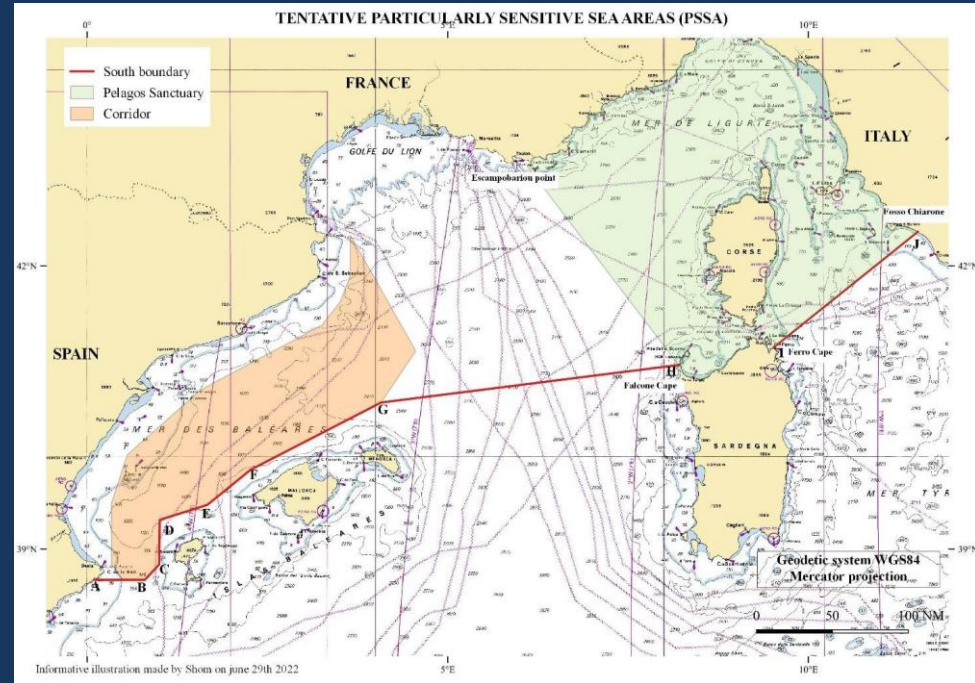
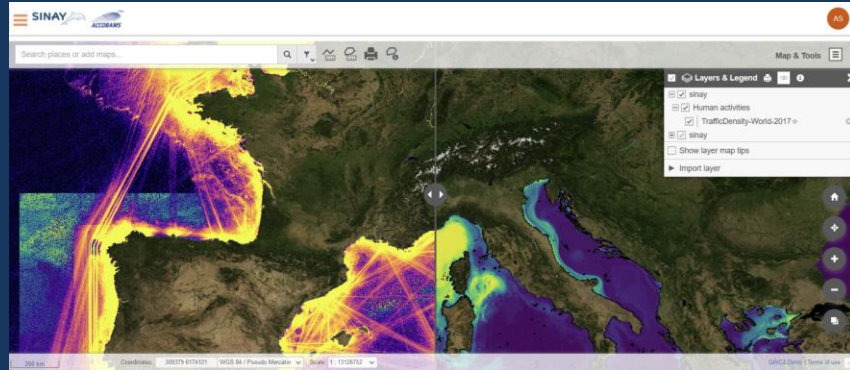
The ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative(s):

- greatly expand our knowledge of **distribution, density and abundance**
- enable **anthropogenic stressors** such as ship strikes, fisheries bycatch and others to be placed in a population context
- provide comparable results at a variety of scales, **from local to global**
- provide a strong basis for assessments of **conservation status** in the long term (IUCN **Red List**; **CMPs**)
- contribute to **place-based conservation** (CCHs, IMMAs, PSSA, EBSA)

- facilitate **training and capacity building** throughout the entire Area
- set the basis to evaluate trends in density and abundance over time and space at **appropriate management scales**



NW Mediterranean PSSA



In July 2023, the IMO's MEPC designated the NW Mediterranean Sea as a particularly sensitive sea area (PSSA) with the aim of reducing the risk of collisions between ships and endangered whales.

Thank you for your attention



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