

## Interest and feasibility of a web-accessed database for marine mammals strandings and necropsy data in the ASCOBANS region

- What is the name of your network? Is it a national or regional network and is it recognized by your government? Please give details of a main point of contact for your network (email and URL of network if available)  
Marine Animals Research & Intervention Network MARIN  
National network, funded by the government  
Jan Haelters ([jan.haelters@mumm.ac.be](mailto:jan.haelters@mumm.ac.be))
- Is your network funded or voluntary in nature- if funded, who is/are the funder/s?  
MARIN is a joint venture of MUMM, department of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS), a federal scientific establishment funded Federal Science Policy and of the Department of Veterinary Pathology of the University of Liege
- What is the spatial extent/geographical range of the data you collect?  
Belgium coastline (on request northern France and southern Netherlands)
- What is the temporal range of the data you hold?  
1990-present
- Do you collect data on; cetaceans; seals, other species? How many species in total?  
Data on cetaceans (11 species, mostly harbour porpoise, white-beaked dolphins sperm whales and fin whales), seals (mostly 2 species, common and grey seals), marine turtle (1 species)
- Do you collect strandings data? What data are collected?  
Yes. Data collected includes; national reference number, species, date found and location, sex, length, stranding type and initial body condition.
- Do you collect data on by-caught animals? Are by-caught animals reported by fishermen? What data are collected?  
- direct reports by fishermen are rare, some bycaught marine mammals are entered into port for research purposes; all data cfr. stranded animals are collected; Most evidence of bycatch is from external signs and necropsy results on stranded animals.
- Do you conduct and collect necropsy data? If so, which protocol do you use and what data are collected?  
Yes. We use an adaptation of the methods described in Kuiken and Hartmann (Kuiken, T. and Garcia Hartmann, M. (eds.) (1991) Proceedings of the first European Cetacean Society workshop on cetacean pathology: dissection techniques and tissue sampling. ECS newsletter 17, Special issue: 39pp): Jauniaux T., Garcia Hartmann M., Haelters J., Tavernier J., Coignoul F. Echouage de mammifères marins : guide d'intervention et procédures d'autopsie. *Annales de Médecine Vétérinaire*, 2002, 146, 261-276

- Do you collect and archive samples for tissue banking and exchange? If so, how are samples made available to researchers and how are data on samples, results etc stored?  
Yes, samples are collected and stored for different collaborations and tissues exchange. Samples will be available on request via <http://www.marinemammals.be/Biobank.php> after acceptance of an agreement form. Relevant data, results (stranding, necropsy and other post mortem investigations) are also available on <http://www.marinemammals.be/> when registered as scientific collaborator.
- Do you also collect and hold data on sightings? If so is it integrated with the strandings dataset? What data are collected?  
Yes, data (species, data and location, ) also soon available on <http://www.marinemammals.be/>
- Who owns the data or has intellectual property rights?  
The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS) owns all the material. For research, scientist in charge of investigation is owner of the intellectual property rights. Research results should be communicated to RBINS and are included in <http://www.marinemammals.be/>
- Are you reporting data to national authorities, regional agreements etc? If yes which ones (e.g. ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, IWC)  
Yes. Data is made available national authorities and annual summary data is also provided for the UK national reports for ASCOBANS and IWC
- Is the data publicly available- if a proportion of the data you hold is publicly available, what proportion?  
Yes, data concerning species, date and location of strandings is available with pictures for some cases. reports to ASCOBANS and IWC publicly available
- If your data is publicly available, how often is it released into the public domain?  
Ad hoc, and immediately after the case: strandings and a selection of sightings  
Yearly: ASCOBANS, IWC  
Ad hoc: special cases
- Is your data available through a web accessed database? If so, what is the domain name?  
<http://www.marinemammals.be/> (previously: [http://www.mumm.ac.be/EN/Management/Nature/search\\_strandings.php](http://www.mumm.ac.be/EN/Management/Nature/search_strandings.php)) available in Dutch, English and French
- Do you store your data on a 'local' database- if so, what software package is used to store it (e.g. Access, Excel etc)?

Access was used for stranding and sighting, and Word and Excel for post mortem findings. Both are compiled for the moment on <http://www.marinemammals.be/>

- How much data do you hold (e.g. how many strandings, how many necropsies etc)?  
Almost stranded marine mammals are necropsied: from 1990 to end of 2010: 805 necropsies of cetaceans (Belgium, northern France and southern Netherlands) and 175 seals. Tissue samples: around 23.000 (including a number of samples not collected in Belgium)
- How are strandings reported? Are you able to control for effort in the collection of strandings data? How is data quality controlled?  
Well-know contact points at RBINS; all stranded animals collected, except for a small number of very decomposed animals, by qualified personnel of RBINS.
- Are you potentially willing to contribute your data to a proposed ASCOBANS region database?  
YES

Please add any notes or additional information below