



**HARBOUR SEALS**  
*in the*  
**NORTH ATLANTIC**  
*and the*  
**BALTIC**

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# Preface

**T**he North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission is proud to present Harbour Seals in the North Atlantic and the Baltic, the eighth volume in the series NAMMCO Scientific Publications. This volume is edited by: Geneviève Desportes, Arne Bjørge, Aqqalu Rosing-Asvid and Gordon Waring.

The NAMMCO Scientific Publications series was established to make available in published, peer-reviewed form, scientific papers that have contributed to the work carried out by the NAMMCO Scientific Committee. The NAMMCO Scientific Committee provides scientific advice on marine mammal species and stocks in the North Atlantic in response to requests forwarded to it by the Council of NAMMCO. Each volume therefore has a theme, reflecting the nature of the original request for advice. Further information on the series can be found on the NAMMCO web site ([www.nammco.no](http://www.nammco.no)).

In October 2006, the NAMMCO Scientific Committee organised a meeting of its Harbour Seals Working Group, which was attended by 20 specialists of this species from a broad geographical spectrum. A further 4 scientists contributed to the meeting but unfortunately it was not possible for them to attend. The group presented and examined 25 original contributions and 15 “for information” published papers. The backbone of this volume originates from those original contributions complemented by a few additional original papers that the Editors specifically requested in order to present a better overview of the state of knowledge of this species.

The material in this volume supports the recommendations for future research that the NAMMCO Scientific Committee listed as priorities upon examining the report from the 2006 meeting. These are mainly in the areas of stock delineation, assessment and monitoring, but also on by-catch monitoring and reporting. Furthermore, the NAMMCO Scientific Committee advocated the establishment of clear objectives by all governments committed to management of harbour seal populations.

Although four years passed since the 2006 meeting before this volume could see the light, it is still very relevant. Progress in acquiring, elaborating and communicating new knowledge on harbour seals has been slow and in proportion to the research investments. Therefore, I am convinced that the reader, as for the NAMMCO Scientific Publications Volume 5 on Harbour Porpoises, will find this volume both relevant and useful for many years to come.

Lastly, I would like to thank the editors, contributing authors, reviewers and other helpers for making the publication of this volume possible. Further information on this and other volumes in the NAMMCO Scientific Publications series is available from the NAMMCO Secretariat.

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