



KIMO RESOLUTION 2/10

Presented by KIMO UK

Inputs of Underwater Noise

Sound travels in water about 4.5 times faster than in air and absorption is less compared to air, sound is an important sense for many marine organisms, especially since other senses such as vision, touch, smell or taste are limited in range and / or speed of signal transmission. Anthropogenic sound emitted to the marine environment can potentially affect marine organisms in various ways. It can mask biologically relevant signals; it can lead to a variety of behavioural reactions; hearing organs can be affected in form of hearing loss, and sound can injure or kill marine life.

Frequencies emitted by manmade sources can range from low frequency engine noise (several Hz) to very high frequency echo sounders (several hundred kHz), the activity is highest in the busiest seas such as the North Sea area with levels forecast to increase as more offshore developments are planned.

Manmade sound sources of concern are explosions, shipping, seismic surveys, offshore construction and offshore industrial activities such as dredging and drilling, sonar, and acoustic deterrent devices. All factors effecting marine animal populations are cumulative and must be assessed together. There is currently no information available on the cumulative effects of the factors listed above

The most effective mitigation measures are geographical and seasonal restrictions to avoid impacts on sensitive species and habitats. Sound-producing activities may be designed to avoid areas and/or times where/when sensitive marine mammals and other species are usually engaged in susceptible activities such as mating, breeding, feeding, or migration.

KIMO urges all European Governments and industries to ensure that:

1) Offshore construction (such as renewable energy developments) and sonar surveys are timed to minimise their impact on the breeding and migration activities of marine wildlife.

2) Best practice is employed for mitigating underwater noise throughout all phases of marine industrial operations.

3) All member states adopt a strong standard for achieving Descriptor 11 of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive's Good Environmental Status.

4) Anthropogenic background noise is reduced by encouraging new technologies to reduce noise emissions particularly from shipping.

KIMO members:

Agree to submit this Resolution to all National Governments, the European Commission and other relevant organisations.