

Austria – Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report, 2024

Country: Austria

National Governmental Authority submitting the Report (full contact information):

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1. Legal developments (laws, regulations and other regulatory measures related to cetaceans). *no new developments*

2. Information on whale watching operations (scale, target species/populations and relevant management issues). *none*

3. Current Government programs related to cetacean conservation. *none*

4. Current threats to cetacean conservation and management measures taken/proposed. *none*

5. Reporting systems for cetacean injuries/mortality/strandings. *not applicable*

6. International cooperation activities (includes bilateral or multilateral cooperation, assistance and funding programs and appropriate contact information, and other international activities of the Country submitting the Report).

Austria is an active, of course EU-MS coordinated, participant in the negotiations towards an "UN Plastic Treaty" <https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution>

7. Other (at the discretion of the Authority submitting the Report).

<https://www.umweltbundesamt.at/umweltthemen/stoffradar/mikroplastik>

There is increasing awareness that the natural environment is polluted with plastic and microplastic, much of which ultimately finds its way into the oceans.

Regarding one of the anthropogenic threats to cetaceans identified by the IWC Scientific Committee, namely marine debris, the Austrian Alternate Commissioner has written a landmark book "The Beachcomber's Guide to Marine Debris". It is currently available in an English, German and Korean edition and also addresses IWC's 2022 Resolution on Marine Plastic Pollution by highlighting that plastic pollution is one of the only forms of marine pollution that the average citizen can actually do something about.