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## DEMASK

# Newsletter

## July 2024

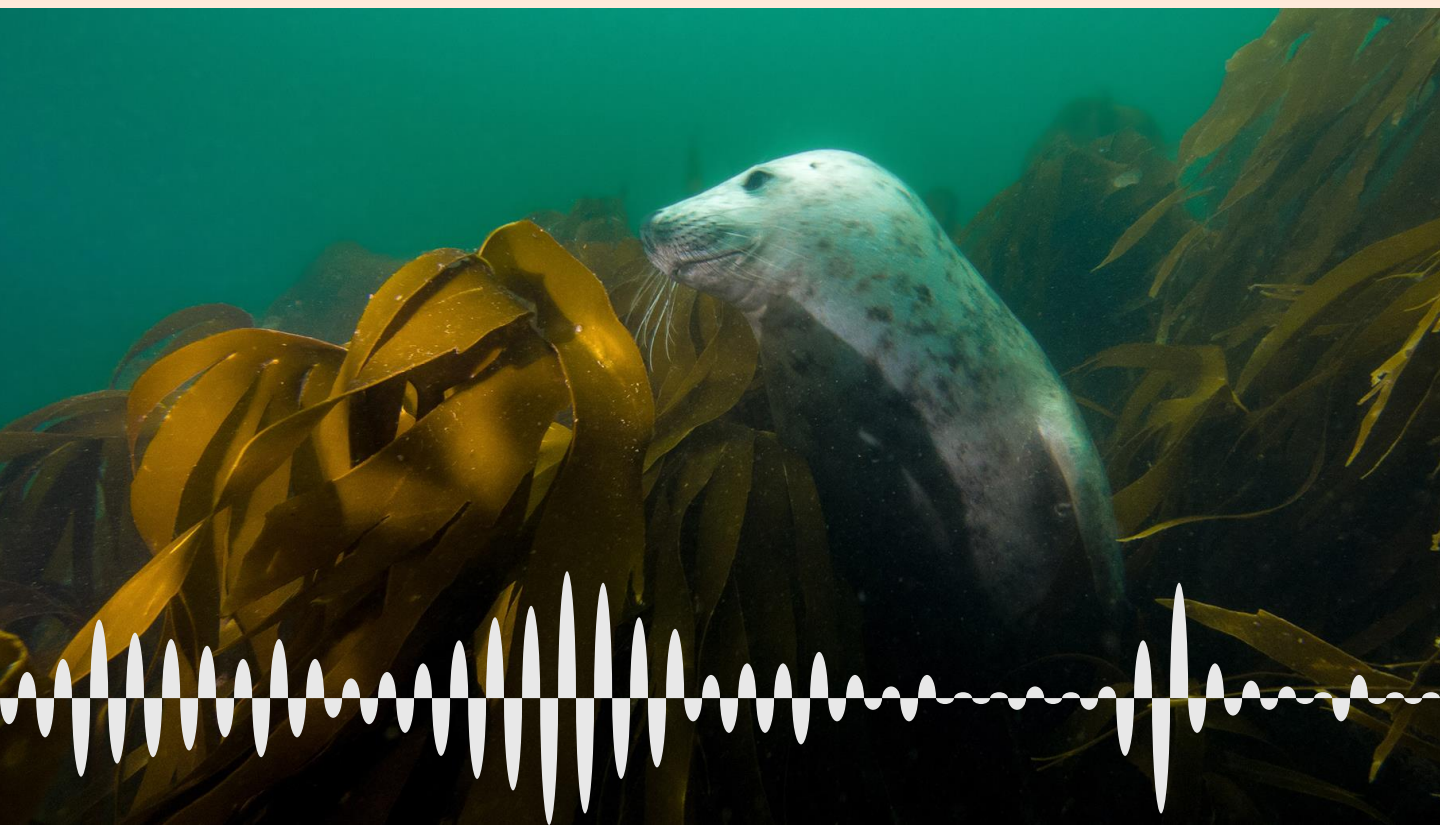
*DEMASK has made a flying start and a lot has happened in the project. As a project team we met for two days on the North Sea coast of Zandvoort, Netherlands. We discussed the project and how the three work packages should interact.*

*A large group of stakeholders joined the team to discuss their expectations and underwater noise in general. A summary of the follow-up can be found in this newsletter. In three sessions we discussed which scenarios should be analysed by DEMASK. During the summer we will develop and detail a number of scenarios to be analysed within the work packages 2 and 3.*

*I hope you will continue to follow us and share your ideas with us.*

*I wish you a nice summer.*

*Niels Kinneging  
Project manager*



# Focus groups

The DEMASK project organized three digital Focus Group sessions, which were held in May and June. The goal of these sessions was to bring together experts from a specific sector, in order to collect information, perspectives and expectations related to future developments on the North Sea. The collected information will mainly be used to define future scenarios (WP 2), which could include expected mitigation measures or expected relevant developments. In the DEMASK project, these scenarios will be tested to see what the impact would be on marine life (WP 3).

Prior to the sessions, invited stakeholders received a few questions that helped them to prepare for the topics discussed during the meeting. After the sessions, all participants and those who were not able to participate received the notes of the meeting, the slides of the presentations and a questionnaire which could be filled out in order to deliver additional information to the project partners after the meeting had ended.

All Focus Group sessions started with an introduction to the DEMASK project and a presentation of the concept 'scenarios' with some examples. Most valuable were the discussions afterwards, in which participants shared their knowledge, perspectives and expectations.

## First Focus Group session for the policy sector (May 23<sup>rd</sup>): other initiatives, developments and mitigation measures.

Important information that was shared are the recommendations to connect to the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), but also to regional sea conventions like OSPAR. And although DEMASK is focusing on the North Sea, the project might make its results applicable to other regions. The Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI) was mentioned, as well as the project Norsaic. Mitigation measures for ships were discussed, such as slow steaming, rerouting and the outcomes that new regulations for greenhouse gas reductions could have for the reduction of underwater noise. Furthermore, the development of offshore wind was discussed, which leads to additional noise by e.g. service vessels and the inclusion of the recreational boating sector was stressed. A relatively new antifouling technique for ship hulls, ultrasonic antifouling, creates additional underwater noise and is therefore a technique that should be assessed in more detail in order to be sure about its potentially negative consequences on marine life.



# Shipping and ports

Second Focus Group session for the shipping and port sector (June 25th): cooperation, expected changes and operational measures.

In addition to the before mentioned introductory presentations, the NAVISON project has been presented. This project aims to generate ship sound maps (soundscapes) for European seas: Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, North Sea, and North-east Atlantic Ocean. Both hindcast maps, based on ship Automatic Identification System (AIS) records, and forecast maps, based on projected future shipping densities and mitigation scenarios, are being produced. DEMASK intends to cooperate closely with the NAVISON project in order to complete and not to duplicate the work. Subsequently, various perspectives were shared, for example related to expected increasing shipping volumes, whereby it remained unclear whether the amount of ships and/or the sizes of ships will grow. Regarding shipping routes no major changes are expected, but it could always be a possibility that rerouting based on planned new wind farms will be proposed as an option. Regarding vessels themselves, there are various technologies that lead to less underwater noise. An operational measure that can be introduced immediately is the previously mentioned slow steaming, although the shipping industry prefers global measures over regional measures to ensure a level playing field. Speed reductions have symbiotic effects on the reduction of underwater noise and greenhouse gas emissions and are therefore prioritized by the shipping industry.

Besides just limitations to speed, a lot of progress can also be made by optimising routes, by the “just-in-time arrival” principle and the optimization of port capacity. Finally, it was shared that there are other projects besides NAVISON ongoing, with which we could engage to learn and to prevent double work. Unfortunately, there were no representatives from the Fishery sector present during this meeting.



# Offshore wind energy

Third Focus Group session for the offshore wind energy sector (June 27th): maintenance, crew transport and noisy turbines.

During the last Focus Group session the emphasis was on noise effects of wind turbines and service activities within the wind farms. Since the objective of the project is on continuous, long-term noise sources, the noise emitted by the pile driving during the construction phase will not be addressed. In an operating windfarm the turbines create noise and the size of the wind turbines is expected to increase. The other major noise source is the service traffic created by maintenance activities. These service activities are of course dependent on the amount and type of wind turbines. The noise is thereby created by service operation vessels and crew transport vessels. Some valuable information on the logistics of these operations and what aspects are to consider was given by the stakeholders in the meeting. In these areas, worker safety is the most important aspect and speed is important to reduce transport time from the coast. Therefore, there are other aspects to deal with if reducing speed is proposed as a potential mitigation measure. The same aspect has to be considered when discussing measures like re-routing around marine protected areas. For the windfarms further out on the sea the service operations differ from those close to shore, since workers cannot be brought in for each day but rather stay on hotel ships. The seasonality of operations will probably change due to the increasing number of windfarms. Safety concerns are also preventing the use of mooring buoys in windfarms. New and emerging technologies are expected to introduce changes to the underwater radiated noise from service traffic, for example through different propulsion systems for ships. Another outcome of the session was that it may be beneficial to get in contact with the industry producing turbines or providing ships to get more detailed information on current technology and future developments.



The information gathered during these Focus Group sessions will help to define the scenarios in the DEMASK project. DEMASK will continue to expand its list of stakeholders and will organise meetings with representatives from the fisheries sector as well as recreational boating. DEMASK will also stay in contact with our colleagues from NGOs and from the scientific community.

In addition to these Focus Group sessions, national round table meetings are planned per project country including stakeholders from various sectors. In Germany, a national round table on underwater noise and shipping has been organized in November 2023 and due to the high level of participation and the desire for more frequent meetings on specific topics, another intersessional meeting focusing on incentives was organized in June 2024. The next round table underwater noise and shipping will take place in September 2024 and will also address the DEMASK project. Information obtained in these round table meetings will also be used to further define the scenarios that the project partners will work with in the next parts of the DEMASK project.



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