



# 2021 Progress report of the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin

December 2021

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## CCAHD structure and communication

The Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (CCAHD) is an informal network of scientists and other stakeholders collaborating with the shared mission of ‘working towards the long-term sustainability of Critically Endangered Atlantic humpback dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*/AHD) populations and their habitats through research, awareness, capacity-building and action’. The consortium aims to help implement recommendations made by the Convention on Migratory Species, the International Whaling Commission’s Scientific Committee, and the IUCN SSC Cetacean Specialist Group. This report is intended to provide a brief overview of activities conducted over the course of the 2021 calendar year.

### Participation/members

The CCAHD was initially formed through direct invitations to individuals who attended an in-person meeting during the December 2019 World Marine Mammal Conference in Barcelona, as well as a number of individuals known to be active in cetacean research and conservation in AHD range countries. Membership was consolidated in the autumn of 2020, and efforts were made to identify and recruit more members from additional AHD range countries. Current members/partners include 70 individuals from 15 of the 19 possible AHD range countries. Members represent local NGOs, International NGOs, academic institutions, government agencies, and independent scientists. A master list of CCAHD partners is maintained by the part-time CCAHD coordinator, and can be found [here](#).

### Leadership and coordination

In June 2021, the provisional coordinators of the CCAHD determined that there was sufficient AHD range country representation and involvement in the CCAHD to solicit applications for range state representatives to a CCAHD Steering Committee. Terms of reference for Steering Committee members were sent to all AHD range state members, with an invitation to apply. Four applications were received, and three candidates were chosen – one each from Gabon, Cameroon and Nigeria. The CCAHD Steering Committee, while informal and with no legal status, currently consists of six members – four of whom are based in AHD range countries. In July 2021, the ‘About’ section of the CCAHD website was revised to reflect this new leadership structure: <https://www.sousateuszii.org/about/who-we-are/>.

### Steering Committee members:



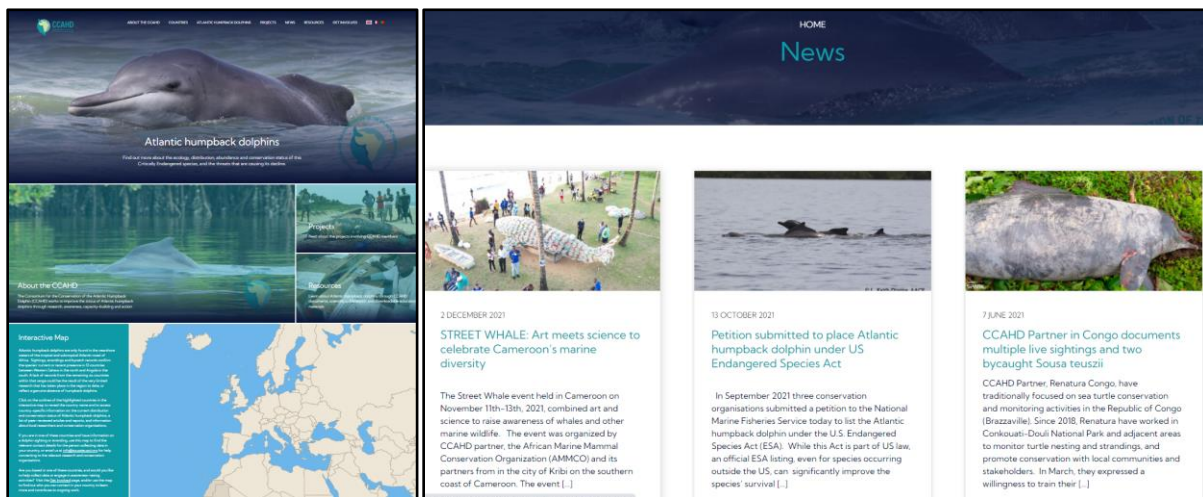
CCAHD Steering Committee members. From left to right: Aristide Takoukam Kamla, Caroline Weir, Edem Eniang, Judicael Regis Kema Kema, Lucy Keith-Diagne, and Tim Collins

In 2020, the Friends of Nuremberg Zoo provided a grant to hire a part-time coordinator, build a trilingual website, and coordinate the drafting of a report to distill priorities for conservation for the species. This support was continued in 2021 and the part-time coordinator was compensated for an average of one day per week throughout 2021 to carry out the following tasks:

- coordinate membership and the central CCAHD google group mailing list;
- support members in their efforts to fund raise, document AHD sightings and strandings and conduct research and awareness raising activities;
- maintain and update the CCAHD [website](#), including posting news items and revising text and pages as and when required;
- send emails to members regarding funding opportunities, updates on the consortium's activities, and to solicit their input to CCAHD documents;
- coordinate and assist with the preparation of funding applications;
- coordinate and assist collaboration between the CCAHD and other international stakeholders, such as the IWC, CMS and IUCN; and
- coordinate the efforts to establish the CCAHD as a legal entity under Dutch law (see below).

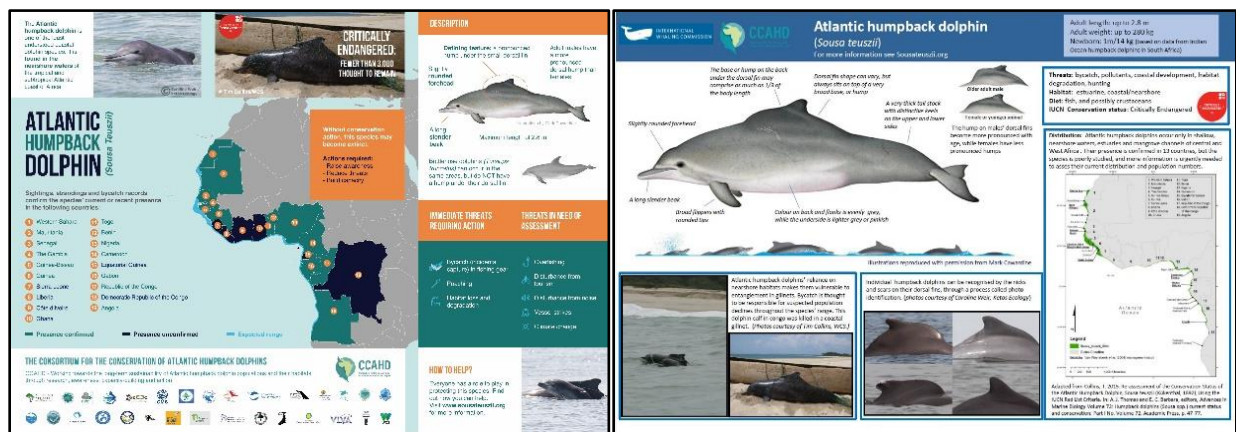
## External communication - CCAHD website and social media

The CCAHD website - <https://www.sousateuszii.org/> - was formally launched in January 2021. The website was developed by Chameleon Studios, UK, who worked closely with CCAHD members to design a trilingual (English, [French](#) and [Portuguese](#)) site that could grow with the organisation as new members and projects develop. An emphasis was placed on being able to highlight the work of partners in AHD range countries, and direct visitors to their websites and their achievements through an [interactive map](#), and sections on [projects](#), and [news](#). The site is also designed to provide [downloadable resources](#) for members in the three target languages. These resources include an [infographic](#) that captures some of the most salient points about AHD distribution, status and threats, as well as a [marine mammal identification card](#), factsheets for [AHD](#) and [bottlenose dolphins](#), and [colouring sheets](#) that can be used with school children.



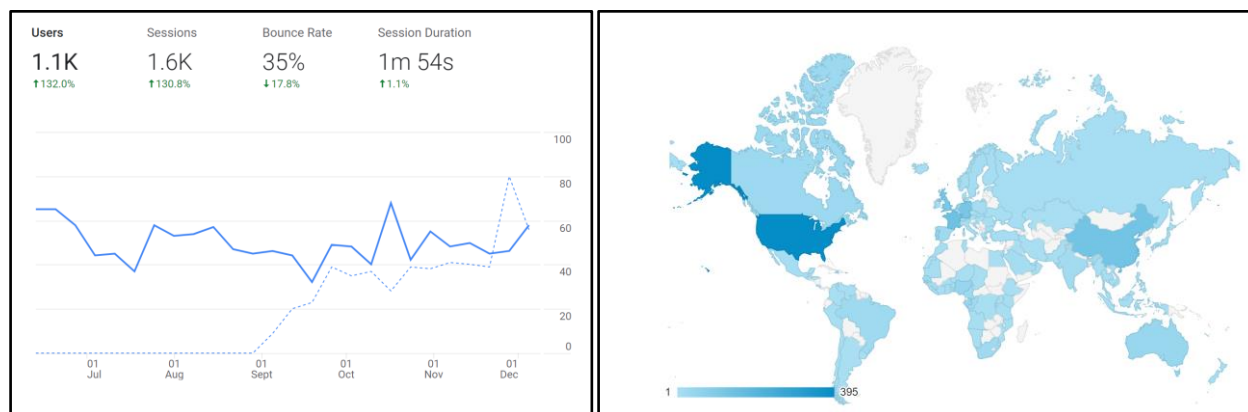
CCAHD website home page (left) and news page (right).





Downloadable infographic (left) and factsheet (right). See [Sousateuszii.org](https://sousateuszii.org) for more details.

Over the six months that website use has been tracked, the site has received over 1,600 visits by 1,100 users, from all over the world, including every AHD range country.



Google Analytics charts and maps for the CCAHD website: [sousateuszii.org](https://sousateuszii.org).

The CCAHD also has a [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) account. Updates are posted on these accounts from time to time, but if additional funding can be secured, this communication tool could be used more regularly and effectively to raise awareness of the CCAHD and partners' work.

## CCAHD Activities in 2021

### Systematic identification of conservation and funding priorities

In February 2021, the CCAHD finalized and disseminated its [report focusing on the priority conservation actions](#) for the species. This report synthesised the results of the CCAHD's systematic analysis of knowledge, capacity and resource gaps that were preventing effective conservation action. This analysis was undertaken by nine working groups that focused on different aspects of AHD research and conservation including: outreach and capacity building, field surveys; genetics; documenting and sampling of strandings and bycatch; interview surveys; health assessments; acoustic monitoring; bycatch mitigation;

and threats from coastal development. The report was professionally translated into [French](#), and is now being used to guide fund-raising efforts.

## Fundraising

Throughout 2021, an emphasis has been placed on fund-raising in order to begin implementing the priority actions identified in the CCAHD report. Table 1 below provides a summary of grants applications that were prepared and submitted by the CCAHD through partner organisations in late 2020 and 2021. In each case, proposals were based on the [Priorities Report](#), and the relevant Working Group was consulted to help draft the proposal. Working Group members and additional AHD range country representatives were invited to act as partners and/or host the proposed project.

Application month	Funding body	Amount requested in Euros	Amount secured	Status	Host organisation	Proposed activities
Sep-20	Friends of Nuremberg Zoo	25,000.00 €	25,000.00 €	Secured	Friends of Nuremberg	Coordination, production of priorities report, and development of website
Jan-21	Friends of Nuremberg Zoo	25,000.00 €	25,000.00 €	Secured	Friends of Nuremberg	Coordination, participation of additional range states in Senegal fieldwork
Sep-20	Loro Parque Foundation	40,696.60 €	40,696.60 €	Secured	AACF	Field surveys in the Saloum Delta, Senegal
Nov-20	IUCN SSC EDGE Grant	7,527.60 €	7,527.60 €	Secured	AACF	Engagement of AHD Range state government stakeholders
Apr-21	US Marine Mammal Commission	28,700.00 €	0.00 €	Unsuccessful	Bayworld	Development of stranding response manuals, fostering reporting network and stranding response training for AHD range countries
Mar-21	IWC Small Cetacean Voluntary Fund	23,400.00 €	0.00 €	Unsuccessful	N/A	Printing of stranding response manuals and provision of stranding response kits for AHD range countries
Jul-21	Society for Marine Mammalogy	20,500.00 €	20,500.00 €	secured	AMMCO	Development and Implementation of interview surveys in 6 AHD range countries
Jul-21	Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation fund	410,000.00 €	410,000.00 €	secured	Biotope, Guinea office	Three-year project to conduct boat surveys, interview surveys, capacity building and awareness-raising in Guinea
<b>Total secured as of 12/2021</b>			<b>557,424.20 €</b>			

The CCAHD also provides support to members who apply for grants at their own regional/country level, by disseminating news about grant opportunities, helping to draft/review proposals, and writing letters of recommendation. The Fundraising Working Group is preparing a 5-year master fundraising plan, which builds on the [Priorities Report](#), and can be used to approach potential donors.

## Incorporation as a Foundation

The CCAHD currently has no formal legal status and to date grants are all hosted by partner organisations. While this formula had been successful so far, the CCAHD would like to be able to raise funds more centrally and on a larger scale. This necessitates some form of legal status, and research by the Fundraising Working Group revealed that the Netherlands is one of the countries in which establishing a foundation (*'stichting'*) is most straight forward from a legal and tax perspective. For this reason, the CCAHD Steering Committee and Fundraising Working Group have been working with the Notary firm, [De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek](#), who are donating their time and expertise on a *pro bono* basis to prepare the necessary paperwork and protocols to establish the CCAHD as a Foundation under Dutch law. Draft Articles of Association have been prepared and Board members have been identified. It is anticipated that the CCAHD will be formally established by the end of January 2022.

## Project implementation

CCAHD members are all active in their own locations, helping to promote awareness and conservation of AHD and other coastal and marine Species. Here we highlight a few activities that have had the most direct support or involvement of the CCAHD 'umbrella':

- **Support to partner organisations to collect and archive data on AHD sightings and strandings:** The CCAHD website features downloadable resources like [species ID guides](#) and [factsheets](#), as well as stranding protocols that partners can use to identify marine mammal species and document stranding or bycatch events. Further to these, CCAHD steering committee members and coordinators have worked with partners in [Congo](#) and [Nigeria](#) to provide more tailored protocols and Excel database templates that can be used to archive and map sightings and strandings over time.
- **Surveys in the Saloum Delta, Senegal:** Research conducted prior to 2021 indicated that the Saloum Delta in Senegal hosts one of the potentially most robust and numerous AHD populations in the species' range. The CCAHD priorities report highlighted the importance of continued monitoring of this population, as well as the opportunities that surveys there could provide for training of researchers from other AHD range countries. Thanks to funding from the Loro Parque Foundation, the African Aquatic Conservation Fund ([AACE](#)) in Senegal hosts a collaborative project to study the distribution, habitat use, and abundance of AHD in the Saloum Delta. In July 2021, a [2.5-week long survey](#) was completed that involved training Senegalese and Gambian researchers, as well as local MPA managers and rangers. The survey deployed two acoustic monitoring devices, documented 13 AHD encounters of multiple individuals and collected photos that are currently being analysed for individual identification and comparison to those collected during a [2015 survey](#). Acoustic units were retrieved in December 2021, and the data is currently being analysed.



In July 2021, a research team including CCAHD international partners, trainee scientists from Senegal and the Gambia, and staff from local MPAs deployed acoustic recorders and documented AHD distribution in the Saloum Delta, Senegal. Two trainee scientists learned how to collect, download, and archive GPS, photo-identification, and water parameter data. Follow-up training will include data analysis.

- Government Stakeholder Engagement meetings in AHD range countries:** In November 2020, the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Cetacean Specialist Group was awarded an IUCN SSC EDGE grant to support the development of tools to engage government stakeholders in Atlantic humpback dolphin (AHD) range countries. The CCAHD developed two new communication tools to support these meetings: 1) an infographic to highlight the most salient aspects of the species' conservation status and needs, available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Portuguese](#) from the [CCAHD website](#); and 2) a power point presentation that covers basic aspects of the species' ecology and conservation status, current conservation frameworks, and recommended conservation actions based on the CCAHD priorities report. This presentation was shared by email with all CCAHD members. In June 2021, the first meeting was hosted by Gabon's Ministry of Water and Forests' '*Direction Générale des Ecosystèmes Aquatiques*' with support from our CCAHD member at the Gabon National Parks Agency. The meeting involved 25 representatives from relevant government agencies and NGOs. A smaller, more targeted meeting was jointly hosted by the [AACF](#) and the regional IUCN office in Dakar, Senegal a few weeks later and was followed with direct engagement of national parks and MPA managers in the field. The meeting in Cameroon was co-hosted by the African Marine Mammal Conservation Organisation ([AMMCO](#)) and the Association Camerounaise de Biologie Marine (ACBM), and involved 18 participants, of which 4 participated virtually. In all three countries, the meetings acted as a catalyst for collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders, and pledges to implement recommended priority actions. The CCAHD plans to host a Webinar in January 2022 during which the organisers of these meetings will share their experiences, and other CCAHD members will have an opportunity to explore possibilities for organising similar meetings.





Photos of the government engagement meeting hosted by Gabon's Ministry of Water and Forests' '*Direction Générale des Ecosystèmes Aquatiques*'. This meeting, and similar meetings in Senegal and Cameroon stimulated discussions of how the conservation needs of AHD can be more adequately addressed in coastal and marine planning.

- Collaboration with relevant Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs):** In order to ensure that CCAHD activities are complementary to, and in line with the activities and priorities of the IGOs that have identified this species as a priority for conservation efforts, CCAHD members liaise closely with the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the IUCN SSC Cetacean Specialist Group, and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The CCAHD priorities report was formally presented to the IWC Scientific Committee meeting in May 2021, and CCAHD work is now featured as a Conservation focus on [the IUCN SSC CSG website](#). The CCAHD is also collaborating with CMS to draft the Conservation Action Plan for the Atlantic Humpback dolphin, as defined within the Concerted Action for the species (UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.28.1.3), which will be coordinated by the CCAHD coordinator in a consulting capacity.

## Plans for 2022 and Beyond

In 2022 the CCAHD will focus on the following activities, many of which are already underway, and others which may be dependent on the success of fund-raising efforts and the progression of the global COVID pandemic:

- Incorporation as a Foundation:** Once the CCAHD is incorporated as a Foundation, it will have a Management Board (which will include current steering committee members, plus a financial director and Chairperson), a Supervisory Board, and a Secretariat. The existing Working Groups will continue to function to guide different aspects of the Foundation's planning, fundraising and field activities, and the CCAHD will continue to welcome increased participation from AHD range countries.

- **Fundraising:** The Fund Raising working group will work closely with the new Board to develop a fund-raising strategy and a 'glossy' proposal that can be shared with potential donors.
- **Continuation of fieldwork in Senegal.** Funding has been secured to host community engagement meetings in February, and to conduct two more field surveys in the Saloum Delta in March/April and October of 2022. These will provide training opportunities for CCAHD partners from Cameroon, Nigeria, and Mauritania, as well as consolidation of skills for the Senegalese partners who participated in the 2021 survey. Acoustic units will be redeployed, and data will be analysed to provide preliminary insights into distribution, habitat preferences, and any seasonal shifts or changes.
- **Implementation of interview surveys in six AHD range countries:** Funding has been secured for a collaborative project in which CCAHD members with extensive experience in the use of interview surveys to learn about species distribution and threats will work with CCAHD members in Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, the Gambia, Senegal and Liberia to develop and trial a standardized questionnaire focused on AHD distribution and threats in each of the six target countries. The questionnaire and methodology will be available to partners in other CCAHD countries, and fundraising efforts will continue with the aim of expanding the scope of the project as soon as possible.
- **AHD research and conservation in Guinea.** The CCAHD has been invited by the [Mohamed bin Zayed Conservation Fund](#) to collaborate with the Guinean office of Biotopé to implement a three-year long research and conservation project for AHD. Biotopé will host and administer the project, and the CCAHD will provide scientific expertise and personnel. The project has been designed with an emphasis on building the research and conservation capacity of Guinean partners, ranging from members of coastal communities, to trainee scientists and government and industry stakeholders.