
Editorial

Welcome to this the first issue of the sixth volume of the Journal of Cetacean Research and Management. This volume contains thirteen papers covering a wide range of management issues. One of the most important threats to cetacean populations is their incidental capture in fisheries. There are two papers looking at this matter for the harbour porpoises in the North Atlantic, one (Neimanis *et al*) examines entrapment in herring weirs in Canadian waters, whilst the other (Vinther and Larsen) provides updated estimates of the bycatch in Danish bottom-set gillnets.

An important contribution the *Journal* makes is to publish papers on species and areas for which there is relatively little information. Such baseline data are important in determining what, if any, management and conservation actions are necessary. In this issue, information is provided on humpback whales and sperm whales from the Mediterranean Sea (Frantzis *et al.*, Druout *et al.*), Irrawaddy dolphins from the Philippines (Smith *et al.*) and humpback whales from northeastern Brazil (Zerbini *et al.*), as well as the first abundance estimate of Atlantic white-sided dolphins from northwest Scotland (MacLeod).

Although such data need to be interpreted carefully, strandings information can provide valuable information on the biology of species and provide insights into when conservation and management actions are necessary. The value of such data increases greatly with increased periods of time. This issue contains two papers that analyse lengthy time series of strandings data from the UK and Ireland (MacLeod *et al.*) and from the northwestern USA (Norman

et al.). Another important and sometimes underutilised source of information on whale biology, distribution and status comes from whaling logbooks. This issue contains a fascinating paper on the distribution of the endangered North Pacific right whale based on such records from the 19th and 20th centuries (Clapham *et al.*).

There are a number of major research techniques that, whilst they provide important information, have the potential to adversely affect the animals that we are interested in. It is essential that we continue to review these approaches to ensure that the benefits gained are not outweighed by the damage that may be caused and so that we can constantly improve field techniques to minimise any risk. This issue contains a valuable review of capture-release, handling and tagging of odontocetes (Norman *et al.*).

Similarly, uncontrolled tourist activities can have an adverse effect on cetaceans. This is a difficult issue to address as it often requires extrapolating short-term reactions to long-term effects, but given the expansion of such activities around the world it is extremely important. Two papers in this volume address such issues, one (Scheidat *et al.*) examines the response of humpback whales to whalewatching boats off Ecuador, whilst the other (Samuels and Bejder) looks at the effects of interactions between humans and bottlenose dolphins off Florida.

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