
Editorial

Welcome to this the first issue of the ninth volume of the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*. I would like to apologise that certain unforeseen logistical problems have delayed production of this issue. These have now been addressed and the year's remaining issues will be available in October and December as scheduled. This volume contains nine papers covering a range of conservation and management issues.

Any conservation and management strategy requires certain basic information and one of the most fundamental parameters is population abundance. There are a number of papers dealing with this topic in this issue. Thomas *et al.* provide a valuable exposition and review of the principles involved in good survey design, particularly with respect to line transect surveys in waters with complex coastlines. A companion paper by Williams and Thomas puts these principles into effect with surveys in British Columbian waters. Melnikov and Zeh provide the first abundance estimates of bowhead whales in the waters of Chukotka, Russian Federation. Bowhead whales of the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock are hunted under International Whaling Commission rules using the *Bowhead Strike Limit Algorithm* – the animals seen off Chukotka at the time of the survey would not have been observed during the census at Point Barrow, Alaska.

The *Journal* is always pleased to publish results relevant to the conservation and management of cetaceans from areas previously little studied. This issue is no exception and the paper from Acebes *et al.* presents information on humpback whales from northern Luzon in the Philippines. Photo-identification studies have shown links to Ogasawara in Japan and the animals appear to be part of a larger western North Pacific population. Costa *et al.* examine the distribution and habitat use of southern right whales off the coast of Uruguay. The area seems to be important in terms

of social activity with probable courtship and mating behaviour being observed. Melnikov *et al.* present new information on the occurrence of killer whales off the coast of Chukotka. This study is the result of a long-term (10 year) collaborative effort with hunters and provides valuable new information on these animals in a previously poorly studied area.

The paper by Yates and Brickle provides valuable information on the relative abundance and distribution of sperm and killer whales in the Falkland Islands longline fishery. Interactions with fishermen have the potential to impact on both the livelihoods of fishermen and the conservation of cetaceans and it is important to collect solid scientific data to examine potential interactions if wise management actions are to occur.

Conservation and management also requires information on stock structure to enable proper interpretation of *inter alia* abundance data and removals. The paper by LeDuc *et al.* is an excellent review of the genetic variation in blue whales in the Southern Hemisphere and the use of assignment tests to detect mixing on the feeding grounds.

The final paper in the volume concerns an unusual but important aspect of management – evaluation of the effectiveness of a method used to euthanase whales – in this case the use of rifles as a secondary killing method in the Norwegian hunt for common minke whales.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the *Guide for Authors* included at the end of this issue. Please read these carefully before submitting manuscripts. Not following the guidelines may result in considerable delay in the consideration of your manuscript!

G.P. DONOVAN
Editor