

Draft Scientific Committee Agenda

Santiago, Chile, 1 – 13 June 2008

[N] = CHAIR'S ANNOTATIONS

- 1 **INTRODUCTORY ITEMS [N]**
 - 1.1 **Chair's welcome and opening remarks**
 - 1.2 **Appointment of rapporteurs**
 - 1.3 **Meeting procedures and time schedule [N]**
 - 1.4 **Establishment of sub-committees and working groups [N]**
 - 1.5 **Computing arrangements**
- 2 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA [N]**
- 3 **REVIEW OF AVAILABLE DATA, DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS**
 - 3.1 **Documents submitted [N]**
 - 3.2 **National Progress Reports on research [N]**
 - 3.3 **Data collection, storage and manipulation**
 - 3.3.1 *Catch data and other statistical material*
 - 3.3.2 *Progress of data coding projects*
 - 3.3.3 *Progress on program verification projects*
 - 3.3.4 *Archiving of simulated datasets to test abundance estimation methods [N]*
- 4 **COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS [N]**
 - 4.1 **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS)**
 - 4.1.1 *Scientific Council*
 - 4.1.2 *Agreement on Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS)*
 - 4.1.3 *Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS)*
 - 4.2 **International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)**
 - 4.3 **Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)**
 - 4.4 **International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)**
 - 4.5 **Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)**
 - 4.6 **Southern Ocean GLOBEC**
 - 4.7 **North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO)**
 - 4.8 **World Conservation Union (IUCN)**
 - 4.9 **FAO – Committee on Fisheries (COFI)**
 - 4.10 **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)**
 - 4.11 **North Pacific Marine Science Organisation (PICES)**
 - 4.12 **Eastern Caribbean Cetacean Commission (ECCO)**
 - 4.13 **Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) of the Cartagena Convention for the Wider Caribbean**
 - 4.14 **Other**
- 5 **REVISED MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (RMP) – GENERAL ISSUES**
 - 5.1 **Review MSY rates, and if appropriate suggest changes to the plausible range [N]**
 - 5.2 **Finalise the process for reviewing proposals to amend the RMP [N]**
 - 5.3 **Consideration of the Norwegian proposal to amend the RMP [N]**
 - 5.4 **Work plan**
- 6 **RMP – PREPARATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**
 - 6.1 **Western North Pacific Bryde's whales**
 - 6.1.1 *Finalise abundance estimates for Western North Pacific Bryde's whales*
 - 6.1.2 *Review of proposed research plan*
 - 6.1.3 *Recommendations*
 - 6.2 **North Atlantic fin whales [N]**
 - 6.2.1 *Continue the Implementation process for North Atlantic fin whales*
 - 6.2.2 *Recommendations*

6.3 North Atlantic common minke whales

6.3.1 *Complete the Implementation Review for North Atlantic common minke whales*

6.3.2 *Recommendations*

6.4 North Pacific common minke whales (RMP/NPM) [N]

6.4.1 *Develop an inventory of the new data available and review progress*

6.4.2 *Recommendations*

6.5 Work plan

7 ESTIMATION OF BYCATCH AND OTHER HUMAN-INDUCED MORTALITY (BC)

7.1 Estimate anthropogenic mortality from:

7.1.1 *Bycatch in fishery operations*

7.1.2 *Entanglements*

7.1.3 *Ship strikes [N]*

7.1.4 *Marine debris*

7.1.5 *Acoustic noise*

7.2 Data collection, collation and sharing [N]

7.3 Other issues

7.3.1 *Bycatch in longline fisheries*

7.3.2 *Progress towards a second workshop on estimating bycatch through genetic markets sampling [N]*

7.4 Work plan

8 ABORIGINAL SUBSISTENCE WHALING MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (AWMP)

8.1 General issues

8.1.1 *Consider issues arising out of the bowhead whale Implementation Review with special reference to the Data Availability and the AWS*

8.1.2 *Validation and amendment of computer programmes associated with Implementations and assessment*

8.2 Issues related to the provision of *ad hoc* interim advice, particularly with respect to timeframes [N]

8.3 Develop long-term management advice for the Greenlandic fisheries [N]

8.4 Work plan

9 ABORIGINAL SUBSISTENCE WHALING MANAGEMENT ADVICE [N]

9.1 Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock of bowhead whales (BRG)

9.1.1 *Review of recent catch information*

9.1.2 *Management advice*

9.2 Eastern stock of gray whales (BGR/AWMP)

9.2.1 *Preparations for Implementation Review in 2009*

9.2.2 *Review of recent catch information*

9.2.3 *Management advice*

9.3 Common minke whale stocks off Greenland (AWMP)

9.3.1 *New information*

9.3.2 *Sex-ratio based assessment of common minke whales*

9.3.3 *Management advice*

9.4 Fin whales off West Greenland (AWMP)

9.4.1 *New information*

9.4.2 *Updated assessment*

9.4.3 *Management advice*

9.5 Bowhead whales off West Greenland (BRG)

9.5.1 *Review of stock structure and abundance of Eastern Arctic bowhead whales*

9.5.2 *Assessment*

9.5.3 *Management advice*

9.6 Humpback whales off West Greenland (AWMP)

9.6.1 *New information and assessment*

9.6.2 *Management advice*

9.7 Humpback whales off St Vincent and The Grenadines (AWMP)

9.7.1 *New information*

9.7.2 *Management advice*

9.8 Work plan

10 WHALE STOCKS [N]

10.1 Antarctic minke whales (IA)

10.1.1 Abundance estimates of Antarctic minke whales using SOWER data [N]

10.1.2 Review reasons for (possibly area specific differences) between Antarctic minke whale abundance estimates from CPII and CPIII [N]

10.1.3 Other issues

10.1.3.1 REVIEW CATCH-AT-AGE ANALYSES OF ANTARCTIC MINKE WHALES

10.2 Southern Hemisphere humpback whales (SH) [N]

10.2.1 Breeding stocks B and C

10.2.2 Other

10.2.3 Work plan

10.3 Continue assessment of Southern Hemisphere blue whales (SH) [N]

10.3.1 New information

10.3.2 Workplan

10.4 Southern Hemisphere right whales (BRG) [N]

10.5 SOWER cruises (IA)

10.5.1 General review of 2007/08 cruise

10.5.2 Proposal for 2008/09 cruise and short-term objectives

10.5.3 Future of SOWER programme

10.6 Indepth assessment of the Western North Pacific common minke whales (NPM) [N]

10.6.1 Stock structure

10.6.2 Abundance

10.6.3 Other

10.6.3.1 CPUE SERIES

10.6.4 Work plan

10.7 Western North Pacific gray whales (BRG) [N]

10.8 Other

10.8.1 North Atlantic right whales (BRG)

10.8.2 North Pacific right whales (BRG)

11 STOCK DEFINITION (SD)

11.1 Statistical and genetic issues related to stock definition [N]

11.2 Progress on the TOSSM project [N]

11.3 Other issues

11.3.1 Definition of units to conserve

11.4 Work plan

12 ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS (E)

12.1 Review report of the pre-meeting on skin diseases in cetaceans in South America [N]

12.2 Planning for the climate change Workshop [N]

12.3 Planning for Phase II of POLLUTION 2000+ [N]

12.4 Review report from CERD working group

12.5 Receive the State of the Cetacean Environment Report, SOCER [N]

12.6 Other habitat related issues

12.6.1 Review available new information on anthropogenic noise and cetaceans

12.6.2 Review available new information on marine renewable energy and cetaceans

12.7 Work plan

13 ECOSYSTEM MODELLING (EM) [N]

13.1 Planning for the Joint CCAMLR/IWC Workshop on modelling Antarctic krill predators

13.2 Other issues

13.2.1 Review and update relevant models

13.2.2 Review and update model parameters

13.3 Work plan

14 SMALL CETACEANS (SM)

14.1 Review conservation issues regarding small cetaceans in the Southeast Pacific [N]

14.2 Review progress on previous recommendations [N]

14.3 Review takes of small cetaceans [N]

14.4 Work plan

- 15 WHALEWATCHING (WW)**
- 15.1 Review report of the Workshop on strategic planning of large-scale whalewatching research [N]**
- 15.2 Develop methodology for assessing the biological impacts of whalewatching on cetaceans**
- 15.3 Review whalewatching in South America [N]**
- 15.4 Review reports of intersessional working groups**
- 15.5 Other issues**
 - 15.5.1 Consider information from platforms of opportunity of potential value to the Scientific Committee*
 - 15.5.2 Review of whalewatching guidelines and regulations*
 - 15.5.3 Review risks to cetaceans from collisions with whalewatching vessels*
- 15.6 Work plan**

- 16 DNA TESTING (DNA) [N]**
- 16.1 Review genetic methods for species, stock and individual identification [N]**
- 16.2 Conduct the first round of sequence validation and continue discussion of plans for sequence validation**
- 16.3 Collection and archiving of tissue samples from catches and bycatches**
- 16.4 Reference databases and standards for diagnostic DNA registries**
- 16.5 Work plan**

- 17 SCIENTIFIC PERMITS (SP)**
- 17.1 Review of results from existing permits [N]**
 - 17.1.1 Japan – Antarctic minke whales, fin whales*
 - 17.1.2 Japan – North Pacific common minke, Bryde’s, sei and sperm whales*
 - 17.1.3 Iceland – North Atlantic common minke whales*
- 17.2 Review of new or continuing proposals [N]**
 - 17.2.1 JARPA II*
 - 17.2.2 JARPN II*
- 17.3 Improving the Committee’s procedures for reviewing scientific permit proposals [N]**
- 17.4 Work plan**

- 18 WHALE SANCTUARIES (S) [N]**

- 19 RESEARCH AND WORKSHOP PROPOSALS AND RESULTS**
- 19.1 Review results from previously funded research proposals**
- 19.2 Review proposals for 2008/09 [N]**

- 20 COMMITTEE PRIORITIES AND INITIAL AGENDA FOR THE 2009 MEETING [N]**

- 21 DATA PROCESSING AND COMPUTING NEEDS FOR 2008/09 [N]**

- 22 FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR 2008/09 [N]**

- 23 WORKING METHODS OF THE COMMITTEE [N]**

- 24 ELECTION OF OFFICERS [N]**

- 25 PUBLICATIONS**

- 26 OTHER BUSINESS**

- 27 ADOPTION OF REPORT [N]**

CHAIR'S ANNOTATIONS [N]

ITEM 1: INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

The Scientific Committee (SC/60) will meet in Santiago, Chile, from Sunday 1st to Friday 13th June, 2008. It will be preceded on Friday and Saturday, 30th and 31st May, by a special meeting on skin diseases of cetacean of South America, and by pre-meetings of the AWMP and RMP sub-committees. As some scientists are involved in both AWMP and RMP, these sub-committees will not meet simultaneously. It is probable that the RMP pre-meeting will focus on the *Implementation Review* for common minke whales in the North Atlantic – this will be confirmed as soon as possible.

General information can be found at: (<http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/meeting2008.htm>).

The website contains a list of the work agreed to be attempted during the 2007/08 intersessional period (http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/sctasks.htm) and the list of intersessional correspondence groups and terms of reference (Annex R: http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/screport.htm).

I have referred to some, but not all of these intersessional groups in the notes to the Agenda.

Item 1.3: Meeting procedures and time schedule

Date	Items	Comments
Sunday, 1 st June, 9am	Plenary session, then read documents	Items 1-4
Monday, 2 nd June, 9am	Initial meetings of sub-committees and working groups (max 15 minutes each)	To elect Chairs, review draft Agenda, identify documents, etc.
Tuesday 3 rd June – Monday 9 th June	Predominantly sub-committees (possibly some plenary sessions)	Complete Agenda and agree reports
Tuesday 10 th June	<i>Tentative</i> rest day!	Subject to cancellation if insufficient progress is made....
Wednesday 11 th – Friday 13 th June	Plenary sessions. Intention to finish no later than 5pm on Friday.	Complete Agenda and agree report, including draft initial Agenda for 2009
Saturday 14 th June	09:00 Convenors to complete editorial work on sub-committee and plenary reports; 12:00 Convenors meeting to, if necessary, consider refinements of this Agenda, priorities, and changes in organisational structure implied by the Agenda or by discussions during the meeting.	

Item 1.4: Establishment of sub-committees and working groups

The following groups were identified by the Convenors immediately after SC/59. Although each group has a tentative annex number, some reports may be incorporated directly into the Scientific Committee's report. PLEASE NOTE: that this year you will again be asked to sign up for sub-committees and working groups in advance. Details will be given in a circular. It is important that you consult the registration and document submission details that will be found on the website (http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/2008categories.htm).

Convenor	Title	Annex
RMP: Bannister	Revised Management Procedure	D
AWMP: Donovan	Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Management Procedure	E
BRG: Walløe	Bowhead, Right and Gray Whales	F
IA: Palka	In-depth Assessments	G
IA NP common minke: Kitakado	Working group on North Pacific common minke whales	G1
SH: Zerbini	Southern Hemisphere whale stocks other than minke and right whales	H
SD: Bravington	Stock Definition	I
BC: Perrin	Estimation of bycatch and other human-induced mortality	J
E: Moore	Environmental Concerns	K
EE: Ecosystem modelling: Gales	WG to address multispecies and ecosystem modelling approaches	K1
SM: Rogan	Small Cetaceans	L
WW: Kato	Whalewatching	M
DNA: Pastene	DNA	N
SP: DeMaster	Scientific Permits	O

At last year's meeting, 14 sub-committees (including standing Working Groups and *ad hoc* Working Groups) were established. Six days were available for sub-committees, and the number of sessions for sub-committees was scheduled to 90 based on three concurrent sub-committee meetings for each of five work sessions per day, starting at approximately 08:30 and ending typically at 21:30. However, because of the inability to schedule certain sub-committees opposite other sub-committees, we could not reach 90 regular sessions. Thus, sessions were also scheduled during the dinner break. At the Convenors Meeting on 19th May 2007, we discussed the workload of the Committee. The SC chair was advised to request an additional day for sub-committees at SC/60. The Commission approved our request and therefore 7 days are allocated to the work of sub-committees this year. The two main aims for the extra day are: (1) to avoid too many simultaneous sessions of sub-committees with overlapping membership, and (2) to allow more time for small break out groups (e.g. to do simulation runs and testing) during the annual meeting.

The draft Agenda developed by the Convenors at last year's meeting (IWC/59/Rep1, Item 21.1) identified priority items for each sub-committee and items that would only be discussed if time is available. Chairs will adhere closely to this. I have included items in the latter category as sub-items under the heading 'Other issues' where appropriate, to emphasise this.

ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The order of the Agenda is based on that of last year, but amended *inter alia* to take account of our work plan and Commission mandates. The Commission accepted our priorities and initial Agenda, and adopted the reduced budget as given under Items 21 and 23 of the last year's report.

I again recognise that some Contracting Governments do not believe that certain topics should be on the Commission and/or Scientific Committee Agendas. The appropriate forum to discuss such views is in the Commission. It is not within my mandate as Chair to exclude items specifically requested for inclusion by the Commission (e.g. by Resolution). To facilitate plenary and sub-committee discussions, I will follow the practise of past years and **strongly request** that any objections to specific items or particular topics on the Agenda be raised briefly under this Agenda Item and then provided in writing to the rapporteur for inclusion in our report. It is not acceptable for these objections to be repeated during discussions of the items themselves in the plenary sessions or during sub-committee meetings. A written reference in the relevant reports to the statements made here under Item 2 will be sufficient.

ITEM 3: REVIEW OF AVAILABLE DATA, DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

Item 3.1: Documents submitted

PLEASE NOTE: the system we used last year will again be used this year for document distribution, in order to save both paper and energy. The details can be found on the IWC website (http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/2008categories.htm#advance) and in a forthcoming circular.

Item 3.2: National Progress Reports on research

The template for National Progress Reports has been updated and the **latest version must be used**. It can be downloaded from the website: http://www.iwcoffice.org/commission/sci_com/scprogress.htm

Item 3.3.4: Archiving of simulated datasets to test abundance estimation methods

It had been agreed in 2002 that such datasets be archived with the Secretariat (JCRM 5 (suppl): 5) and relevant members are asked to ensure that the most recent updates have been provided to the Secretariat.

ITEM 4: COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Most of the organisations on this list are ones that have met since our last meeting and with which we have a formal exchange of observers. Observers' reports should therefore be available. **Observers please send your reports to the Secretariat no later than 15th May**. I would like to be able to discuss these on Day 1. In order to save time, there will be no presentation of observer's reports. I will assume that Committee members have read these, and I will ask members whether there are any questions that should be addressed under this Agenda Item.

ITEMS: 5-16

These items have been prepared in consultation with the Convenors to take specifically into account relevant Commission resolutions and Agenda Items. Note that the Committee Agenda here does not repeat the detailed sub-committee Agenda Items, but only highlights the major areas of discussion. Sub-items can more appropriately be added later (as is our usual practice).

ITEM 5: REVISED MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (RMP) – GENERAL ISSUES

Item 5.1: Review MSY rates, and if appropriate suggest changes to the plausible range

Based on the preparatory intersessional work (Annex R7) and an intersessional Workshop, the Committee will this year consider and possibly revise the range of plausible MSY rates for use in RMP *Implementation Simulation Trials*.

Item 5.2: Finalise the process for reviewing proposals to amend the RMP

One of the reasons for undertaking the MSYR review was to assist in finalising the trial structure for the consideration of proposals to amend the RMP. It is hoped that this can be achieved at this meeting

Item 5.3 Consideration of the Norwegian proposal to amend the RMP

You will recall that at SC/56, the Committee was informed that Norway intended to propose changes to the CLA for baleen whales on their feeding grounds. The scientific reasons for this proposal are given in *J. Cetacean Res. Manage.* 7 (SUPPL.): 79-80. Depending on the outcome of discussions under Item 5.2, the Committee may be able to finalise the discussion of this proposal.

ITEM 6: RMP – PREPARATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Item 6.2: North Atlantic fin whales

The Committee will continue the *Implementation* initiated at SC/59, taking into consideration the outcome of the 1st Intersessional Workshop.

Item 6.4: North Pacific common minke whales

The Committee will start to develop an inventory of new data available and review progress for western North Pacific common minke whales. This may require a joint session of RMP and NPM.

ITEM 7: ESTIMATION OF BYCATCH AND OTHER HUMAN-INDUCED MORTALITY

Item 7.1.3: Ship strikes

I again draw your attention to the activity of the Conservation Committee and its intersessional working group (SSWG/CC). One of the recommendations from the CC Ship Strikes Working Group was the development of a single international database of collisions between whales and vessels. The SC established an intersessional group (Annex R31) to develop a process by which data provided from a range of sources could be stored in a database in a standardised way that clearly identified the level of uncertainty in the data. We will review progress made by this group.

Item 7. 2: Data collection, collation and sharing

In 2005, the Committee recommended that the collaboration with FAO be formalised and that IWC should join the Fishery Resource Monitoring System (FIRMS). It was noted that the information flow should be a two-way process, with bycatch records held by the IWC being provided to the FAO, and FAO should provide detailed information on the nature and scale of fisheries in areas where large whale bycatch might be an issue of concern. We will review progress of this collaboration.

Item 7.3.2: Progress towards a second workshop on estimating bycatch through genetic markets sampling

The Committee has recommended that considerable new data will need to be available before holding a 2nd stage Workshop on market sampling. The Committee will review progress on the work by an intersessional working group (Annex R12).

ITEM 8: ABORIGINAL SUBSISTENCE WHALING MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

Item 8.2: Consider issues related to the provision of ad hoc interim advice, particularly with respect to timeframes

The Committee will review intersessional progress and the outcome of a Workshop on Greenlandic Fisheries as the basis for its further work.

Item 8.3: Develop long-term management advice for the Greenlandic fisheries

The Committee will review intersessional progress and the outcome of a Workshop on Greenlandic Fisheries as the basis for its further work.

ITEM 9: ABORIGINAL SUBSISTENCE WHALING MANAGEMENT ADVICE

In 2007 the Commission adopted new catch limits for aboriginal subsistence whaling that in several cases requires annual review. You will see that, in particular, the Commission anticipates revised management advice from SC/60 on common minke whales and bowhead whales off West Greenland be made available at the Commission meeting in 2008.

West Greenland common minke whales (taken by Greenlanders) - The number of strikes from the West Greenland stock shall not exceed 200 in each of the years 2008-2012, except that any unused portion of the quota for each year shall be

carried forward from that year and added to the strike quota of any of the subsequent years, provided that no more than 15 strikes shall be added to the strike quota for any one year. This provision will be reviewed annually by the Commission, according to the findings and recommendations by the Scientific Committee, which shall be binding.

West Greenland bowhead whales (taken by Greenlanders) – The number of bowhead whales struck off West Greenland shall not exceed 2 in each of the years 2008-2012, except that any unused portion of the quota for each year shall be carried forward from that year and added to the quota of any subsequent years, provided that no more than 2 shall be added to the quota for any one year. Furthermore, the quota for each year shall only become operative when the Commission has received advice from the Scientific Committee that the take is unlikely to endanger the stock.

ITEM 10: WHALE STOCKS

The title of this item now corresponds to that in the Commission's draft Agenda. Individual items will be dealt with by appropriate sub-committees, as indicated in the Draft Agenda.

Item 10.1.1: Produce agreed abundance estimates of Antarctic minke whales using SOWER data

The data from JARPA will be considered at SC/61.

Item 10.1.2: Review reasons for (possibly area specific differences) between Antarctic minke whale abundance estimates from CPII and CPIII

Reasons for the observed differences in abundance estimated from CPII and CPIII are not yet fully understood. Three groups have been working intersessionally towards the completion of this long standing task. The intersessional work has addressed: continuation of the work on catch at age data (Annex R16); further develop analysis methods (Annex R17); and a collaboration between the sea ice experts and abundance analysts to: (1) obtain abundance estimates by 10° longitudinal slices for the new abundance estimation, (2) provide information about sea ice extent so it could be included as a covariate in abundance estimation, (3) examine hypotheses that could explain if, and how, a change in sea ice extent might be related to the abundance estimates (Annex R18). The Committee will review intersessional progress as basis for its continued work.

Item 10.2: Southern Hemisphere humpback whales

The relations between areas B1 and B2, C1 and C2 will be addressed using both photographic and genetic data and the proportional representation of B and C stocks at the feeding grounds. The Committee will review progress of an intersessional group (Annex R26) and aims at completion of the assessment of B and C stocks at SC/60.

Item 10.3: Continue assessment of Southern Hemisphere blue whales

If time allows the Committee will review results from a contract study.

Item 10.4: Review new information on right whales

At this meeting we will give high priority to review any new relevant information on right whales, including the report from a Chilean workshop on the Chile-Peru southern right whale population. At the Conservation Committee meeting in Anchorage, Chile announced (Report of the Conservation Committee, IWC/59/Rep5, Appendix 5) that an independent workshop on the status of the Chile-Peru southern right whale population will be convened. This workshop may be organised before the beginning of the IWC Scientific Committee meeting in 2008, so as to facilitate participation of interested researchers and parties. The Committee will review any new information from this workshop made available to the SC.

Item 10.6: Western North Pacific common minke whales

There is yet no abundance estimate available for the whole distribution area. The Committee will review intersessional work (Annex R8) on the development of an inventory of new data available and progress against the criteria for a *pre-Implementation Assessment*. At SC/60 the work on abundance estimation will continue. In addition, focus will be on stock structure in the Sea of Japan with the aim of investigating plausible hypotheses on stock structure of the J stock (see Item 6.4).

Item 10.7: Review new information on western North Pacific gray whales

In 2007, the Commission paid special attention to the status of the endangered western North Pacific gray whale, whose feeding grounds coincide with oil and gas operations off Sakhalin Island, Russian Federation. The population numbers only about 120 animals and although there is evidence that it has been increasing at perhaps 3% per year over the last decade, any additional deaths, for example in fishing gear as has recently occurred, put the survival of the population in doubt. The Commission agreed to work together to try to mitigate anthropogenic threats to this endangered population. The Committee will review new information, e.g. on bycatch mortality and any mitigation measures to reduce risk of bycatches.

ITEM 11: STOCK DEFINITION

Item 11.1: Statistical and genetic issues related to stock definition

There will be further discussion of DNA data quality; to facilitate this, the DNA Data Quality group will prepare a detailed paper expanding the preliminary suggestions developed during the 2007 meeting.

Item 11.2: Progress on the TOSSM project

The main aim is to develop simulation tools that can be used to examine the performance of current and future genetic population structure techniques. Since several sub-committees are currently trying to evaluate results from the application of STRUCTURE and BayesAss, it is appropriate to give priority to obtaining results from these methods.

ITEM 12: ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Item 12.1: Review report of the pre-meeting on skin diseases in cetaceans of South America

At last year's Committee meeting, it was agreed to convene a pre-meeting on skin diseases of cetaceans in South America. The meeting will be held in Santiago, Chile on 30 and 31 May. The Environmental Concerns group will review the report of the pre-meeting.

Item 12.2: Planning for the climate change Workshop

A steering group (Annex R19) is set up to further develop the Agenda and investigate arrangements for an intersessional Workshop. The Committee will review progress in this work.

Item 12.3: Planning for Phase II of POLLUTION 2000+

A steering group (Annex R22) was set up to (1) produce a framework for modelling the effects of pollutants on cetacean populations; (2) identify cetacean populations to be studied under Phase II; and (3) develop a protocol for validating biopsy samples and applying this protocol to any large whale species selected for Phase II studies. The Committee will review progress in this work.

Item 12.5: Receive the State of Cetacean Environment Report, SOCER

Committee members are encouraged to make submissions to the co-Convenors of the intersessional working group (Annex R21). Use the standardised form for data entry, which can be downloaded from (http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/socer2008.htm).

ITEM 13: ECOSYSTEM MODELLING

Ecosystem modelling has been subject to discussion in several of the sub-committees in recent years. To further this topic, we have established a separate working group under E as a forum for this discussion. At SC/60 the working group will *inter alia* review progress on a joint CCAMLR/IWC Workshop on modelling Antarctic krill predators.

ITEM 14: SMALL CETACEANS

Item 14.1: Review conservation issues regarding small cetaceans in the Southeast Pacific

The Committee has a long-standing precedent of regional reviews of small cetaceans. These reviews have contributed significantly to new information on species and populations that have been poorly known. I encourage scientists involved in research on small cetaceans in the Southeast Pacific to submit documents to the regional review this year.

Item 14.2: Review progress on previous recommendations

IWC Resolution 2001-13 urges contracting governments to respond to Scientific Committee requests for information and recommendations for action regarding conservation of small cetaceans. This resolution also instructs the Committee to continue to review progress on previous recommendations on a regular basis.

Item 14.3: Review takes of small cetaceans

As in previous years, I request Heads of Delegation to arrange for such information to be included in the national progress reports (re. Annotations to Item 3.2).

ITEM 15: WHALEWATCHING

Item 15.1: Review of the Workshop on strategic planning of large-scale whalewatching research

The Workshop is scheduled to be held in Bunbury, Australia, 30 March – 3 April. The Committee will review the report and recommendations from this Workshop.

Item 15.3: Whalewatching in South America

Whalewatching is a growing industry in South America. The Committee will allocate time for discussion of case studies in this region, and possible applications of recommendations from the whalewatching Workshop.

ITEM 16: DNA TESTING

Under this Agenda Item, we will provide the report to the Commission required by IWC Resolution 1999-8.

Item 16.1: Genetic methods for species, stock and individual identification

I will again refer you to the SC recommendation that sequences to be used in published reports should be deposited in GenBank, and that the GenBank accession number is included in the publication, whether or not this is required by the journal. This is incorporated in the policy of the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*, and its guide for authors. The Committee recommended that similar practices be established for public archiving of non-sequence genetic data, where feasible.

ITEM 17: SCIENTIFIC PERMITS

Item 17.1: Review of results from existing permits

Last year we reviewed results from the JARPA. This year, I expect only short reports from existing permits on the activities undertaken during the recent field season. Scientific results will be dealt with in the respective sub-committees and groups (*inter alia* IA, SH and NPM).

Item 17.2: Review of new or continuing proposals

I am not informed about any new proposal, and I do not anticipate any lengthy discussion under this heading at SC/60.

Item 17.3: Improving the Committee's procedures for reviewing scientific permit proposals

You will recall that the Scientific Committee last year made substantial progress on improving the procedure for reviewing scientific permit proposals. The Committee recommended the adoption of the revised process detailed in Annex P as it applies to new proposals and in principle to periodic and final reviews. It was recognised that additional work was needed to implement this new process for the review of research results associated with Special Permits (i.e., periodic and final reviews). The Committee anticipated that this work would result in formal revisions to Annex P. An intersessional working group (Annex R13) was established to *inter alia* provide suggestions on a set of issues that yet has not been adopted with respect to periodic and final reviews in particular, but also the overall process (e.g., identification of members of the SSG).

The Commission adopted the revised procedure proposed by the Scientific Committee applicable to reviewing new permit proposals and, in principle, to periodic and final reviews of data from existing permits. I expect that the remaining issues will be resolved at SC/60 as basis for formal revisions of Annex P.

ITEM 18: SANCTUARIES

In the major discussion about sanctuaries in 2004, the Committee recommended procedures to facilitate the review of future proposals and future sanctuary reviews (J. Cetacean Res. Manage. 7 (Suppl.):50-1). I have not been informed about any new proposals for Sanctuaries that we have not already thoroughly reviewed. Therefore, I do not foresee any major discussion regarding this Agenda Item. Nonetheless, I have left the item on our draft Agenda for final consideration at the time of our meeting.

ITEM 19: RESEARCH AND WORKSHOP PROPOSALS AND RESULTS

Item 19.2: Review proposals for 2008/09

This item will be handled, as usual, by a review group chaired by the Vice Chair and appointed from the sub-committee chairs. However, we have been informed by the Secretariat that it is unlikely that we will be able to support any outside proposals and none have been received thus far. I also draw your attention to the discussion of appropriate procedures for funding research discussed under Item 22 of last year's Committee report (IWC/58/Rep1).

ITEM 20: COMMITTEE PRIORITIES AND INITIAL AGENDA FOR THE 2009 MEETING

Our priorities are largely determined by the Commission and should not require a great deal of discussion. The work plan specified by each sub-committee/working group will provide a basis for the draft Agenda for the next meeting. I will prepare a draft initial Agenda for review before the end of the meeting so that it can appear in our report and will reflect our view of priorities for 2008/09. This Agenda will, of course, be subject to revision as a result of Commission decisions. Any

revisions will be sent to you in an Outcome Report shortly after the Commission meeting.

ITEM 21: DATA PROCESSING AND COMPUTING NEEDS FOR 2008/09

To facilitate discussion of this item, which necessarily occurs relatively late in the meeting, sub-committee chairs will, as usual, be asked to keep a running tally of needs arising in their sub-committee deliberations.

ITEM 22: FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR 2008/09

To facilitate discussion of this item, which necessarily occurs relatively late in the meeting, sub-committee Convenors will, as usual, be asked to keep a running tally of requirements arising in their sub-committee deliberations. Sub-committee chairs will try to ensure that a summary document is available as soon as possible after the sub-committees have completed their business. Where necessary, small groups will be appointed by sub-committee chairs to work out details for presentation in the plenary sessions under this item. As was done last year, we will use a standard form that should help in ensuring that the appropriate information is easily available.

ITEM 23: WORKING METHODS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee has agreed to keep this item on the Agenda to allow for discussion of possible proposals to improve the working methods of the Committee.

At last years meeting the Commission agreed changes to the Rules of Procedure regarding observers from international organisations. I will point you to the subsequent changes in the SC Rules of Procedure.

ITEM 24: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

This year is the final year of three years terms of the elected officers (Chair Bjørge and Vice Chair Palka) of the SC. Unless the Vice Chair decides otherwise, she will replace the current SC Chair after the closure of the 2008 Commission meeting. Therefore, the SC is scheduled to elect a new Vice Chair this year. Rules of Procedure can be found on the website (<http://www.iwcoffice.org/commission/procedure.htm#scientific>). I will call upon the Heads of Delegations for a meeting during the first part of the SC meeting to initiate this process.

ITEM 27: ADOPTION OF REPORT

I will do my best to ensure that we finish before 5pm on the final day with a completed report.