

Outcome and Follow-up to IWC/58

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SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE PRIORITIES, STRUCTURE AND BUDGET

Scientific Committee Report

Many of you may not have seen Items 19-25 of our report (IWC/58/Rep 1). These items describe Committee priorities and initial agenda for the 2007 meeting, data processing and computing needs for 2006/2007, and funding requirements for 2006/2007 respectively. The complete Report and Annexes are now on the IWC website: http://www.iwcoffice.org/commission/sci_com/screport.htm. Annex R gives e-mail correspondence groups and their terms of reference. Please check it to make sure that your name is included under those Working Groups you wished to participate in - if you wish to join any of the Working Groups, please contact Jemma Miller directly (Jemma.Miller@iwcoffice.org). Remember, if your e-mail address changes, please let the Secretariat know. Convenors of all groups have been notified of their members and the e-mail addresses you used when you registered.

The Secretariat has pulled out all of the tasks identified in the Committee's report and who should complete them. This has been placed on the Scientific Committee website:

http://www.iwcoffice.org/commission/sci_com/scmain.htm

Next year's meeting dates

The 2007 Annual Meeting of the Committee (SC59) will be in Anchorage, Alaska, USA. As was the case last year, the Committee meeting will last only 12 days and will take place from Monday 7 May to Friday 18 May. There will be two pre-meeting meetings (5-6 May) on issues related to AWMP and RMP. These pre-meetings are scheduled to facilitate the completion of RMP and AWMP agendas and any subject on their agenda can be discussed. In addition, there will be an IWC sponsored workshop on infectious and non-infectious diseases in marine mammals. The exact dates and venue for this workshop have not yet been decided but you will be informed of details as soon as they become available.

Initial agenda and sub-committees

At this year's Scientific Committee 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 therefore limited 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. At this year's meeting, because of the inability to schedule certain sub-committees opposite other sub-committees, only 85 sessions could be scheduled.

As you will see from our approved work plan (see below and the IWC/58/Rep 1, Item 19, pp 76-78), the sub-committee and working group structure next year is similar to the structure used in St. Kitts and Nevis. The Sanctuaries working group (SAN) will only be established if there is a new formal proposal for sanctuaries submitted according to the guidelines for review by the Committee. As was the case last year, with only six days for sub-committees and 14 sub-committees and working groups that need to meet, the Convenors and Chair have agreed a tentative number of sessions per sub-committee, where the total number of planned sessions is 90. The subcommittees and the respective convenors are given in the table below.

Sub-Committee/WG	Convenor	Sub-Committee/WG	Convenor
RMP	Bannister	SM	Rogan
AWMP	Donovan	SD	Bravington
BRG	Walløe	SH	Zerbini
IA	Palka	Scientific Permits	DeMaster
BC	Perrin	DNA	Pastene
E	Rojas-Bracho	North Pacific Minke (NP)	Kitakado
WW	Kato	Ecosystem Modelling	Gales

Committee priorities for 2007

As in recent years and with the Committee's agreement, the Convenors met after the close of the Committee meeting and drew up the following basis of an initial agenda for the 2007 meeting. The same criteria as previous years were taken into account (e.g. IWC, 2004b, p. 51). The Committee recognised that these priorities may have to be reviewed in light of decisions made by the Commission and the priorities below have been modified slightly to take into account Commission discussions.

With only six days for sub-committee meetings and a maximum of 90 sessions available, items of lower priority on sub-committee agendas will only be discussed if time allows. When discussing its priorities, the Committee stressed that **papers considering anything other than priority topics will probably not be addressed** at next year's meeting, and agreed that this information should be included on the website when the information about document submission is published next year.

There again will be an *ad hoc* Working Group established to consider North Pacific common minke whales and an *ad hoc* Working Group to handle discussions related to ecosystem modelling issues.

In addition, the Committee proposed that AWMP and RMP will share two days for pre-meetings. The Committee stressed that these pre-meetings are part of the main sub-committee or SWG agendas: discussion will not be re-opened during the main sub-committee week and the agenda items to be discussed may vary from the expected depending on progress.

Revised Management Procedure (RMP)

The following issues are all high priority topics and will be addressed:

- (1) General issues: further evaluate proposed 'threshold' levels for the Guidelines and Requirements for *Implementation*
- (2) General issues: procedures for amending the RMP - MSY rates
- (3) Complete western North Pacific Bryde's whale *Implementation* (1 intersessional workshop)
- (4) Plan for start of North Atlantic fin whale *Implementation*.

Aboriginal Whaling Management Procedure (AWMP)

The following issues are all high priority topics and will be addressed:

- (1) complete the bowhead Implementation Review; (2 intersessional workshops)
- (2) review progress on the Greenlandic Research programme and provide management advice;
- (3) advice on St Vincent and The Grenadines fishery;
- (4) preparations for the gray whale Implementation Review;

In response to a request from Denmark during the Commission meeting, the status of humpback whales will also be considered.

Bowhead right and gray whales (BRG)

The following issues are high priority topics and will be addressed:

- (1) review of new information on the B-C-B Seas stock of bowhead whales; and
- (2) based on advice from AWMP, undertaking of the annual review of catch information and new scientific information for the B-C-B Seas stock of bowhead and ENP gray whales in order to advise the Commission as request in Schedules 13(b)(1) and (2).

It will also:

- (3) review new information on western North Pacific stock of gray whales,
- (4) review new information on the Eastern Arctic bowhead whales and in particular the status of bowhead whales off West Greenland in response to a request from Denmark during the Commission meeting.

To the extent that time permits it may also consider:

- (5) right whales and other small stocks of bowhead whales.

In-depth assessment (IA)

The following issues are high priority topics and will be addressed:

- (1) production of agreed abundance estimates of Antarctic minke whales;
- (2) further examination and agreement on possible reasons for differences between Antarctic minke whale abundance estimates from CPII and CPIII;
- (3) continued development of the catch-at-age analyses of the Antarctic minke whales;
- (4) develop recommendations for future SOWER cruises, both for the short- and long-term.

It will also:

- (5) consider beginning a North Pacific sei whale in-depth assessment.

In-depth assessment of Western North Pacific common minke whales with a focus on J-stock (IANP)

The following issues are high priority topics and will be addressed:

- (1) continued investigation of stock structure;
- (2) continue work on distribution and abundance; and ,if documentation is available:
- (3) development of a standard CPUE series.

Bycatches and other anthropogenic removals (BC)

The following issues are high priority topics and will be addressed:

- (1) Further review of information and methods to estimate bycatch based on fisheries data and observer programmes, including
 - (a) collaboration with FAO on collation of relevant fisheries data
 - (b) progress on joining the Fishery Resource Monitoring System (FIRMS) partnership
 - (c) review of modelling approaches to determining appropriate levels of observer coverage
 - (d) report back on EU bycatch monitoring schemes
 - (e) review report from NOAA Workshop on the bases for determining serious injuries in whales
 - (f) review other methods of determining survival of previously entangled whales.
- (2) Further consider methods to estimate bycatch based on genetic data
 - (a) review progress on intersessional work related to market sampling
- (3) Further review of information and methods to estimate mortality from ship strikes
 - (a) review results of data collected on vessels relevant to ship strikes

If time and documentation allows, it may also:

- (4) Consider methods for estimating additional human induced mortalities e.g from acoustic sources and marine debris.

Southern Hemisphere whales other than Antarctic minke whales (SH)

The following issues are high priority topics and will be addressed:

- (1) Completion of assessment of humpback whale Breeding Stocks B and C including
 - (a) review of abundance estimates;
 - (b) potential to estimate trends from mark-recapture analysis;
 - (c) progress on stock structure hypothesis in the breeding grounds;
 - (d) feeding ground/breeding ground differentiation and connectivity (for catch allocation);
 - (e) stock structure of feeding grounds;
 - (f) stock structure hypotheses, catch allocation, abundance estimates and trends in abundance;
 - (g) completion of assessment for Breeding Stocks B and C.
- (2) Finalisation of the Soviet catch data series;
- (3) Progress the blue whale Comprehensive Assessment
 - (a) updated catch series
 - (b) review progress of the intersessional working group
 - (c) complete work identified in last year's work plan (IWC, 2006; p. 162)
 - (d) review genetic, telemetry, photo-identification and acoustics information on migration and distribution;
 - (e) review photo-identification data and possibility of mark-recapture approaches.

It will also:

- (4) examine historic catch data and the JSV data to improve knowledge of humpback whale distribution at mid-latitudes;
- (5) further examine issues of N_{min} and depensation for population modelling of humpback whales.

If time and documentation allows, it may also:

- (6) Consider information for other humpback whale breeding stocks.

Environmental concerns (E)

The following issues are high priority topics and will be addressed:

- (1) review of report of symposium on infectious and non-infectious diseases of marine mammals and impacts on cetaceans;
- (2) review of report of intersessional workshop on POLLUTION 2000+;
- (3) review progress under SOC;
- (4) review planning and coordination of IWC's participation in the CCAMLR International Polar Year survey in 2008;
- (5) review progress with respect to the Commission request on entanglement;

It will also:

- (6) review progress on a possible climate change workshop;
- (7) receive the SOCER report (focus: Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean and Black Seas)

If time and documentation allow it may consider:

- (8) progress on acoustics.

Ecosystem modelling (EE)

The following issues are high priority topics and will be addressed:

- (1) Review progress on joint CCAMLR/IWC workshop on modelling Antarctic krill predators;
- (2) Review collaboration with FAO.

Stock definition (SD)

The following issues are high priority topics and will be addressed:

- (1) Statistical and genetic issues relating to stock definition;
- (2) Review progress with TOSSM (in particular with respect to STRUCTURE);
- (3) Consider issues of data quality.

If time and documentation allow it may consider:

- (4) Unit to conserve.

Whalewatching (WW)

The following issues are high priority topics and will be addressed:

- (1) assessing the biological impacts of whalewatching on cetaceans;
- (2) identifying data sources from platforms of opportunity of potential value to the SC.

It will also consider, as time and documentation allow:

- (3) whalewatching in Alaska
- (4) discuss and organise a workshop on the strategic planning of large-scale whalewatching research;
- (5) reports from intersessional Working Groups: (i) identifying data sources from platforms of opportunity of potential value to the Scientific Committee; (ii) further development of a questionnaire and improved methodologies to assess the extent and potential impact of swim-with-whale operations; (iii) improvement of data collection from whalewatching operations including further development of the DRS; and (iv) strategic planning of large-scale whalewatching research.
- (6) review of whalewatching guidelines and regulations;
- (7) review of risks to cetaceans from whalewatching vessel collisions.

Small Cetaceans (SM)

The following work plan was proposed for the coming year. Highest priority was given to

- (1) Population structure, systematics and status of killer whales

It will also consider

- (2) joint session with E on infectious and non-infectious diseases workshop review
- (3) Review of catches
- (4) Progress on previous recommendations.

Scientific Permits (SP)

The following work plan was proposed for the coming year:

- (1) review the report of the intersessional JARPA review workshop;
- (2) review of results from existing permits;
- (3) review new or continuing permits;
- (4) continue to discuss process for reviewing permits.

DNA

The following work plan was proposed for the coming year:

- (1) review genetic methods for species, stock and individual identification;
- (2) continue discussion of plans for sequence validation;
- (3) collection and archiving of tissue samples from catches and bycatches;
- (4) reference databases and standards for diagnostic DNA registries.

BUDGET

Table 6 under Item 21 (SC Report, pp 79-83) gives the funding requirements of £279,000 requested by the Committee for the 2006/2007 intersessional activity and for Invited Participants to the SC59. This figure represents a £ 13,000 (4%) increase over the approved Committee budget last year. We owe special thanks to Nicky Grandy and Sean Moran for their help in supporting our request.

The Commission approved the requested budget with exception of the requested £5,000 to finalise Soviet catch data series. However, a budget for this work will be made available through the voluntary contributions to be donated by the USA and Australia. The approved budget is shown on the next page.

COMMISSION DECISIONS

The Commission passed 3 [Resolutions](#), but these were not directly related to the work plan of the Scientific Committee for the 2006/2007 period. However, resolution 2006-1 (The St. Kitts and Nevis Declaration) is briefly mentioned below.

In the remainder of this note, other Commission decisions and discussions relevant to our work are outlined based on the relevant parts of the IWC Press Release. The full press release provides further details on the Commission meeting (<http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/meeting2006.htm>).

Sanctuaries

A proposal by Brazil and Argentina for a South Atlantic Sanctuary was again presented to the Commission. Such a proposal would have required a three-quarters majority to have been adopted. In the event, after considerable discussion, the matter was not put to the vote. A proposal to abolish the Southern Ocean Sanctuary was presented to the Commission by Japan. It would also have required a three-quarters majority to pass but was defeated by 28 votes to 33 with 4 abstentions.

Revised Management Scheme

This year there had been an intersessional [working group](#) meeting in Cambridge and a follow up session prior to the Annual Meeting to further the progress with the [Revised Management Scheme](#). Despite considerable discussion, it was agreed that talks had reached an impasse. While individual governments or groups of governments may work together on ways forward, there is no formal Commission activity identified for the coming year.

Summary of budget for the Scientific Committee approved by the Commission for the coming year.

Short title	SC58 Agenda Item	Budget (£)
RMP (Annex D)		
North Pacific Bryde's whales <i>Implementation</i> – second intersessional workshop	6.1	7,500
AWMP (Annex E)		
AWMP Developer's fund	8	9,000
Greenland common minke whales: use of sex ratio data in assessments	8.1.3, 9.4	3,500
Two intersessional workshops to allow completion of the <i>Implementation Review</i> in 2007	8.2	16,000
IA (Annex G)		
SOWER circumpolar cruise 2006/2007	10.6.2.1	76,000
Investigation of likely precision of future abundance estimates using a single SOWER vessel	10.6.2.1	4,000
Incorporation of 2005/2006 data into IWC-DESS	10.6.2.1	2,000
Analysis of previous data (BT mode) to <i>inter alia</i> allow finalisation of cruise planning	10.6.2.1	6,000
Maintenance of IWC-DESS	10.6.2	2,000
Further development of hazard probability method to estimate abundance of Antarctic minke whales	10.1.1.2	1,700
Investigation of the relationship between minke whales and sea ice	10.1.3	700
Antarctic minke whales: continuation of previous catch-at-age analysis study	10.1.2	20,000
Digitise, catalogue and analyse blue whale photographs from the IWC IDCR and SOWER cruises	10.6.1, 10.4	8,500
SH (Annex H)		
Antarctic catalogue	10.3.2	6,600
Humpback whale population dynamics model	10.3.2	2,000
Forwarding the in-depth assessment of southern blue whales	10.4	6,000
SD (Annex I)		
TOSSM development: generation of datasets	11.2	16,000
BC (Annex J)		
Further simulations to investigate the performance of various sampling designs	7.2.1	2,000
Development of standardised reporting of collisions between whales and vessels	7.3.1	1,000
E (Annex K)		
CCAMLR-IWC steering group for joint workshop on the Antarctic ecosystem and krill predators	12.2	3,000
FAO expert consultation on modelling ecosystem interactions	12.2	1,500
Completion of The Southern Ocean Collaboration database	12.3.2	15,000
Continuation of analyses of high priority projects identified last year	12.3.2	12,000
Possible collaboration with CCAMLR for a joint cruise in 2008	12.3.2	1,000
SO CER report	12.3.3	0*
SP (Annex O)		
JARPA review workshop	16.2.4	13,000
Scientific Committee general		
Invited participants fund		38,000
TOTAL		274,000

* Money from the voluntary contributions fund (Austria) has been generously donated

Aboriginal subsistence whaling

The Commission was pleased to receive new abundance estimates for the common minke whale (3,500, 95%CI 1,500-7,700) and fin whale (1,700 95%CI 840-3,500) off West Greenland, an area where recent estimates had been lacking. After reviewing the available information on these and other stocks subject to aboriginal subsistence whaling, the Commission agreed to retain the present catch limits. The catch limits presently in force are:

Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock of bowhead whales (taken by Alaskan Eskimos and native peoples of Chukotka): A total of up to 280 bowhead whales can be landed in the period 2003 - 2007, with no more than 67 whales struck in any year (and up to 15 unused strikes may be carried over each year).

Eastern North Pacific gray whales (taken by those whose "traditional, aboriginal and subsistence needs have been recognised"): - A total catch of 620 whales is allowed for the years 2003 - 2007 with a maximum of 140 in any one year.

Humpback whales taken by St Vincent and The Grenadines - For the seasons 2003-2007 the number of humpback whales to be taken by the Bequians of St. Vincent and the Grenadines shall not exceed 20. The meat and products of such whales are to be used exclusively for local consumption in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

East Greenland minke whales (taken by Greenlanders) - An annual catch of 12 whales is allowed for the years 2003 - 2007 (up to 3 unused strikes may be carried over each year).

West Greenland fin whales (taken by Greenlanders) - An annual catch of 19 whales is allowed for the years 2003 - 2007.

West Greenland common minke whales (taken by Greenlanders) - The annual number of whales struck for the years 2003-2007, shall not exceed 175 (up to 15 unused strikes may be carried over each year).

Scientific Permits

The issue of special permit whaling is controversial within the Commission and, as in previous years, strong statements were made both for and against special permit whaling.

You will recall that the Scientific Committee this year agreed that there is a need to improve on the process currently in use to review special permit proposals and a suggested ([Annex P](#)) way forward for a new process formed the basis of its discussions. When reviewing and adopting the SC report, the Commission gave no instructions or guidelines to the Committee regarding its discussion on a future review process.

Resolution 2006-1. The St. Kitts and Nevis Declaration

The Commission had considerable discussions regarding a document called the 'St Kitts and Nevis Declaration'. The document declared a commitment to '*normalising the functions of the IWC based on: the terms of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling and other relevant international law; respect for cultural diversity and traditions of coastal peoples and the fundamental principles of sustainable use of resources; and the need for science-based policy and rulemaking that are accepted as the world standard for the management of marine resources.*' After a ruling from the Chair, the document was voted upon as a draft Resolution. It was accepted by 33 votes to 32 with 1 abstention ([Resolution 2006-1](#)). Several of the countries voting 'no' formally disassociated themselves from the declaration after the result was declared.

Conservation Committee

When the discussing the [Report of the Conservation Committee](#) the Commission agreed that the Committee had made good progress in addressing issues surrounding whales being killed or seriously injured by ship strikes. The Conservation Committee had agreed that Belgium would submit documents relevant to these issues to the IMO on behalf of the Conservation Committee. The Conservation Committee also agreed that the Secretariat should be invited to look into a possible Memorandum of Understanding with the IMO.