

Secretariat Progress Report on Co-operation with other Organisations

*IWC Secretariat
July 2019*

Action Requested

The Conservation Committee Planning Group (CCPG) is asked to note and provide any comments on progress made on co-operation with other organisations since IWC67 and future plans for this area of work. In particular, the CCPG is asked for any comments on IWC engagement with the process to develop the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework as outlined below.

1. Introduction

At IWC67 the Commission endorsed a number of recommendations for strengthening engagement with other organisations. This includes recommendations made by the Scientific Committee (SC), Conservation Committee (CC) and other subgroups as well as recommendations in an update paper from the Secretariat (IWC67/19). The IWC Secretariat, in collaboration with members of the CC and SC have been working to take forward these mandates in addition to exploring some newly emerging opportunities. When capacity has been limited then these activities have been prioritised and opportunities sought for engagement through other members of the IWC community.

The Secretariat will continue to keep Contracting Governments and observers updated on these and other activities, including by issuing Circulars when it plans to engage in a particular IGO meeting or event and to seek collaboration or input from the IWC community.

2. Progress report on co-operation with other organisations

2.1 Post 2020 framework on biodiversity

Through its membership of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (see below), the IWC was invited to participate in discussions on the development of the post 2020 framework for biodiversity and associated targets and indicators (information on the current Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Targets and indicators is at <https://www.cbd.int/sp/default.shtml>). Circular IWC.CCG.1353 highlighted the opportunity for the IWC to participate in this process.

This included an invitation to participate, along with other Secretariats of the Biodiversity-related Conventions, in a workshop (10-12 June, Bern, Switzerland) to input to early discussions of the new post 2020 framework and targets. On the advice of the Bureau, this meeting was attended by the Chair of the Commission and Secretariat Heads of Programme Development (Sarah Ferriss and Sarah Smith). They gave a presentation on the work of the IWC that is relevant to a post 2020 biodiversity framework, and participated in early-stage high level discussions on potential elements for the future framework– with all input based on existing work and mandates of the Commission. Circular CCG.1361 notified the Commission of this participation. The report of the meeting will be available in mid-July 2019.

The timetable of meetings for further development of the draft post 2020 framework, leading up to its agreement at the CBD CoP in October 2020, is now becoming clearer. This will include several meetings of an Open Ended Working Group (August 2019 and July 2020) which will commence political negotiations and a series of thematic consultations including one on Marine (November 2019). The IWC will be invited to input to and participate in these meetings and the Secretariat will consult the Chair and Bureau regarding these opportunities.

Regarding future participation in this process the Secretariat proposes continuing to input information on IWC work and priorities relevant to a post 2020 framework, based on existing IWC mandates. This could include highlighting key threats to cetaceans (e.g. those identified in the CC Strategic Plan) that could be addressed in the post 2020 framework and key approaches to addressing threats promoted by the IWC (including regional co-operation e.g. through CMPs; capacity building; engagement with key sectors such as fisheries and shipping; engagement of indigenous communities and co-operation with other IGOs). The Secretariat will continue to inform Contracting Governments of its participation (or the participation of other IWC officers) in this process through Circulars and to seek any comments from Contracting Members. It would also be useful for IWC Contracting Government representatives to consult with their counterparts for other biodiversity-related conventions on this issue. *The CCPG are invited to comment on this process and key messages that could be promoted.*

2.2 Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions

The Executive Secretary attended the IWC's first meeting of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity related Conventions in September 2018 and the Secretariat have since continued discussions and engagement with this group on topics of mutual interest. The next meeting of the BLG will be in September 2019. Though a primary focus of this meeting will likely be on the development of the post-2020 framework, there is an opportunity to suggest other topics for the agenda, based on areas where the IWC seeks co-operation with other organisations.

2.3 Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its daughter agreements

The Secretariat has continued ongoing co-operation with the CMS and its daughter agreements ASCOBANS¹ and ACCOBAMS² on a range of issues including bycatch; strandings; CMPs; ship strikes, ecosystem functioning (with respect to the organisation of a workshop in collaboration with the CMS) and whale watching. In June 2019 the acting Executive Secretary of the CMS, Amy Fraenkel visited the Red House for discussions with the IWC Executive Secretary and other members of the Secretariat on areas of mutual interest.

With regards to CMPs, the IWC is working collaboratively with ACCOBAMS on development of the proposed joint CMP for the Mediterranean Fin Whale and with CMS on the potential CMP for the Humpback Whale of the Arabian Sea.

In April 2019 the IWC jointly convened a workshop with the IUCN and ACCOBAMS that aimed to investigate the utility and process of using IMMAs to help identify areas of high risk for ship strikes, using the Mediterranean Sea as a test case. The report was presented to the recent SC meeting and follow up will be reported to the next meeting of the CC.

In June 2019 the Strandings Coordinator attended the Joint ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS workshop on harmonisation of the best practices for necropsy of cetaceans and for the development of diagnostic frameworks. The IWC Head of Science and the Bycatch Coordinator are both members of the joint ASCOBAMS/ACCOBAMS working group on bycatch.

The Secretariat participated in the ASCOBANS advisory Committee in October 2019 and plans to participate in forthcoming meetings of the ASCOBANS advisory committee (September 2019), ACCOBAMS Meeting of Parties (November 2019) and the CMS Conference of Parties (February 2020).

¹ Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas

² Agreement for the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area

2.4 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The Secretariat participated in the most recent CBD Conference of Parties in November 2018, contributing an opening statement and several interventions to highlight IWC recommendations and IWC work on topics of mutual interest with the CBD (e.g. capacity building, indigenous peoples, underwater noise, bycatch). In follow up to this meeting Circular IWC.CCG.1355 alerted IWC members and observers to opportunities to engage in CBD work on its Article 8J (traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples).

2.5 Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs).

We are continuing work to strengthen our collaboration with FAO and the RFMOs particularly on bycatch. This includes engagement with FAO on the development of draft Technical Guidelines for reducing bycatch of marine mammals in fisheries, on which the IWC Bycatch Coordinator will attend an Expert Workshop in September 2019; engagement on marine debris and the potential for collaboration on improvements and streamlining in reporting and data management. The IWC Secretariat is exploring opportunities to collaborate on Phase 2 of the FAO/GEF Common Oceans (ABNJ) project.

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch were a co-collaborator in the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative's Workshop on Bycatch Mitigation Opportunities in the Western Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea (8-9 June) held prior to SC68B. This provided further opportunity to discuss opportunities for IWC/IOTC collaboration and the workshop made a number of recommendations on this.

The Secretariat plans to attend the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) meeting and associated Regional Secretariats' Network (RSN) meeting in 2020 to take forward further collaboration.

2.6 Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

Earlier this year, the Secretariat held a teleconference with the Executive Secretary and Science Manager at CCAMLR at which a number of opportunities for collaboration were discussed including on the proposed joint IWC SC/CCAMLR workshop on ecosystem modelling. A number of actions for follow up were agreed including potential IWC input to the next CCAMLR meeting in October. The IWC will also input to a University of Cambridge MPhil internship hosted by the British Antarctic Survey, to conduct a review of collaboration between IWC and CCAMLR on scientific work.

2.7 International Maritime Organization (IMO)

The Secretariat has continued engagement with the International Maritime Organization on the issue of noise and ship strikes. The Secretariat attended a workshop on underwater noise at the IMO Headquarters in January 2019 which focused on technologies to quiet ships and attended a follow up session in May 2019, convened by Canada to discuss next steps. The Secretariat also attended part of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee meeting in May 2019, and participated in a meeting, convened by Canada, in the margins of MEPC74 to discuss next steps on underwater noise, including the development of a new IMO work output proposal. The Secretariat will continue to engage in these discussions as they develop.

On the issue of ship strikes, the convenor of the SC Human Induced Mortality Subcommittee represented the IWC at an IMO meeting in Sri Lanka to discuss the issue of ship strikes to blue whales and a meeting of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee.

2.8 North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO)

The Executive Secretary attended the 27th NAMMCO council meeting on behalf of the IWC. The IWC's Opening Statement and interventions emphasised the benefits already realised from collaboration on science, and opportunities to collaborate on new NAMMCO work programmes on strandings, entanglement response, and bycatch.

2.9 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

The Secretariat Head of Science has been re-appointed as co-chair of the IUCN Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel (WGWAP) and chair of the WGWAP Noise Task Force. The WGWAP met in November 2018 in Moscow and topics included the updating of the IUCN-IWC CMP on western gray whales and a joint stakeholder workshop.

As noted above, the IWC jointly convened a workshop with the IUCN and ACCOBAMS on using the IUCN Important Marine Mammal Areas to identify areas of high risk for ship strikes.

The Secretariat is currently considering the opportunity to participate in or input to the IUCN Congress in June 2020.