



Circular Communication to Commissioners, Contracting Governments and
Members of the Scientific Committee
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Dr Sidney Holt, 1926-2019

We are saddened to learn that Dr Sidney Holt passed away in his adoptive home of Umbria, Italy on 22nd December 2019.

Dr Holt was born in 1926 in the UK, and educated at the University of Reading, England. He began his career at the Fisheries Laboratory in Lowestoft (UK), and it was during this period that he produced with Ray Beverton one of the most influential books in Fisheries Science: [*On the dynamics of exploited fish populations \(1957\)*](#). Dr Holt spent the following 25 years employed in UN organisations, having been appointed at various times Director of the Fisheries Resources and Operations Division of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO, in Rome), Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and Director of UNESCO's Marine Sciences Division in Paris. After retiring from the UN in 1979, Dr Holt addressed the status of whales, serving on the International Whaling Commission's (IWC) 'Committee of Three (subsequently four with the addition of Dr John Gulland) scientists', whose final report was instrumental in achieving recognition of the severe overexploitation of Antarctic baleen whales at the time. The report helped to ensure that sufficient residual populations of species such as blue and humpback remained to seed their subsequent recovery. Dr Holt participated in various capacities for forty years in the Scientific Committee, as well as in the Commission itself, from 1959 to 2002.

Dr Holt received the Gold Medal of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Royal Netherlands Golden Ark, the Global 500 Award of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and The Blue Planet Award of IFAW, for contributions to the protection of marine mammals, to animal welfare and to fisheries science. Dr Holt's scientific papers, chapters of books, letters to Editors of scholarly journals, magazines and newspapers, and working briefs for a number of organizations on a variety of subjects reflect the breadth of his scientific achievements as well as his efforts to convey scientific and political ideas to a wider audience.

Sidney will be remembered by his fellow scientists as a persistent, often challenging, debating partner and an enduringly influential colleague.

Dr Robert Suydam
SC Chair

Greg Donovan
Head of Science

c.c. Accredited observers to the IWC

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