



Circular Communication to Commissioners, Contracting Governments and
Members of the Scientific Committee
IWC.ALL.367

FAO Draft Technical Guidelines for Marine Mammal Bycatch

Review by 20 March 2020

This Circular is an update on progress made in implementing IWC recommendations on engagement with FAO on bycatch and entanglement and related developments in FAO.

At IWC67 in 2018 the Commission agreed that the Secretariat continue exploring and pursuing opportunities for collaboration with FAO on bycatch, including the development of technical guidelines, opportunities to collaboratively develop and deliver a capacity development programme on cetacean bycatch mitigation and other relevant opportunities; and to participate in relevant meetings including further meetings of FAO COFI.

The IWC Bycatch Coordinator has been involved in two FAO workshops ([2018](#) and 2019) to develop Technical Guidelines to reduce bycatch of marine mammals in capture fisheries. The FAO has subsequently published draft Technical Guidelines as an annex to the 2019 *Workshop Report of the Expert Meeting to Develop Technical Guidelines to Reduce Bycatch of Marine Mammals in Capture Fisheries*. The draft Technical Guidelines are available [here](#). The development of these Technical Guidelines (as Supplement No. 4 under Volume 1. Fishing Operations) is an important step towards addressing cetacean bycatch at national and international level. These guidelines will be globally promoted as a voluntary instrument and are intended to be applicable to capture fisheries in all regions where there are problems of marine mammal bycatch.

The FAO Secretariat has shared the draft Technical Guidelines with COFI Members for comment and feedback, with a deadline of the 20th March 2020. The IWC Bycatch Mitigation Initiative team will be submitting comments, with feedback from the members of the IWC Expert Panel on Bycatch and the Expert Advisory Panel on entanglement response. IWC representatives of Contracting Governments are invited to liaise with their national fisheries counterparts and take the opportunity to comment and IWC SC members are also encouraged to comment.

Feedback can be sent directly to the FAO Secretariat using the Mammal-Bycatch@fao.org email address, or alternatively you are invited to send to the IWC Secretariat for inclusion in our coordinated response. The word version of the document for comment is available [here](#).

A number of recommendations in the aforementioned 2019 FAO workshop report are particularly relevant for the development of collaborative work between the FAO and the IWC in relation to cetacean bycatch. The Opportunities for collaboration with the FAO on the Technical Guidelines and other bycatch work are currently being explored on

outreach, capacity building and technical input. IWC representation is planned for the [2020 FAO COFI meeting](#) in July in Rome, including the pre- and post- meeting of the [Regional Secretariats' Network](#). The Secretariat plans to intervene in support of the work planned under the new Responsible Fishing Operations Umbrella Programme and on the Technical Guidelines and their implementation, and to promote IWC/FAO collaboration.

Any further comments on this Circular are invited to secretariat@iwc.int

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Lent". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Rebecca Lent
Executive Secretary

c.c. Accredited observers to the IWC