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Update to the CCPG on Co-operation with Other Organisations

IWC Secretariat



INTERNATIONAL
WHALING COMMISSION

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Introduction

This paper provides an update to the Conservation Committee Planning Group (CCPG) on engaging other organisations, for information and any comments. In particular, views are requested on three potential MOUs and IWC input to development of the Post-2020 Framework for Biodiversity.

Progress since IWC67

Document IWC/SC68B/O/12 is an update provided to the Scientific Committee on Secretariat engagement with other organisations since IWC67. Particular highlights relevant to Conservation Committee priorities include:

- Ongoing engagement with the Liaison Group of Biodiversity related Conventions and input to the post-2020 process
- Participation in CMS COP13 and continued co-operation with CMS and its daughter agreements ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS on several issues
- A body of work through the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative to engage FAO (including on development of bycatch technical guidelines) and substantive engagement with tuna RFMOs particularly IOTC
- Ongoing collaboration with IUCN including on the Gray Whale CMP and with the IMMAs process
- Potential development of three new co-operation agreements including with UNEP-CEP SPAW, CCAMLR and Marine Traffic.
- In addition the recent workshop on Marine Debris (3-5 December 2020) made several recommendations for engaging other IGOs on this topic and this will be another focus of Secretariat efforts in the coming year.

Items for discussion by the CCPG

1. MOUs

CCAMLR

Scientists at the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) approached the IWC Secretariat in spring 2019 to discuss a graduate student project on enhancing scientific cooperation between CCAMLR and the IWC. This study has now been completed and BAS and IWC staff members have reviewed the recommendations from the study and proposed a way forward to implement some of its recommendations, with initial focus on scientific collaboration. This revealed the potential benefit of some sort of MOU agreement. Informal contact has been made between the two Executive Secretaries who both agree there is a need to approach the leadership of the respective Commissions.

SPAW-UNEP CEP

The Secretariat presented a draft MOU with UNEP-CEP (Caribbean Environment Programme) at IWC67, raising queries on the dispute settlement mechanism included by UNEP-subsequently agreed to be inappropriate for the IWC. More recently the Secretariat was contacted by the new Programme Officer of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Sub-Programme (SPAW) of UNEP-CEP. They were able to offer a draft MOU which does not include the problematic dispute resolution mechanism. Some of the potential areas of collaboration include small-scale fishery bycatch, ship strikes, strandings response, entanglement response training, whale watching and swim-with programmes. The Secretariat hopes to seek Commission endorsement for this MOU.

Marine Traffic

The Human Induced Mortality (HIM) Sub-committee of the SC recommended that the Secretariat and HIM Convenor explore possibilities for developing an MOU between IWC and an Automatic Identification System (AIS) data provider. This would allow the IWC to pass on data requests in a standardised format, minimising work for the data provider. Marine Traffic, who have generously donated data for previous papers that have been discussed by the Committee were approached. An MOU is being developed to provide a framework for collaboration on projects aligned with the mission and vision of both organisations.

The CCPG is asked for any comments with regards to these three potential MOUs. These are also being brought to the attention of the Bureau to advise on any potential for intersessional endorsement of these agreement before the rescheduled IWC68 in Autumn 2021.

2. IWC input to development of the post 2020 biodiversity framework

As a member of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG), the IWC was invited to participate in discussions on the development of the post 2020 framework for biodiversity and associated targets and indicators (see <https://www.cbd.int/sp/default.shtml>). Several IWC Circulars (IWC.CCG.1353, IWC.CCG.1361 and IWC.CCG.1338) highlighted this activity and opportunities for the IWC to be engaged either through the Secretariat or through national efforts. The IWC Chair and Secretariat participated in a first ('Bern 1') workshop of the Secretariats of the Biodiversity-related Conventions and was scheduled to attend a follow up 'Bern 2' workshop which was postponed due to COVID-19. This CBD led post-2020 process has also included several thematic meetings, and the Commission was represented by the SC Vice-Chair Dr Alex Zerbini at a marine-themed meeting in November 2019.

The process, and preparatory meetings contributing to development of the post-2020 framework continue to be impacted by COVID 19—key preparatory meetings and the CBD COP scheduled for October 2020 will be rescheduled in due course. It remains likely that the CBD COP will endorse the 2020 framework before the in-person meeting of IWC68.

Next steps for IWC engagement

- The Secretariat will continue to engage with this process, including through the "Bern 2" workshop when it is rescheduled, and to keep the Commission informed.
- A new version of the post 2020 framework is due to be published on 25th May and the Secretariat will issue a Circular drawing it to the attention of the IWC community, inviting any comments and notifying our intentions to continue to engage in this process.
- When inputting further to this process, the Secretariat will continue to highlight issues most directly relevant to healthy cetacean populations. These include key threats to cetaceans and any opportunities for these to be addressed or strengthened in the framework and promoting opportunities to address these threats including through increased cooperation, capacity building, engagement of key sectors (e.g. shipping and fisheries) and data management and reporting. We will also further consider how the IWC could provide scientific information to support monitoring of progress in achieving the new framework of targets.
- IWC68 would bring an opportunity for the Commission to welcome the Post 2020 Framework for Biodiversity and to make any observations on the role of the IWC in delivering relevant objectives in the framework. The Secretariat will draw this opportunity to the attention of the Contracting Governments nearer the time, but proposes that the development of any proposals to the Commission should be led by contracting governments.

The Secretariat would welcome any comments on these proposed next steps.