



International Whaling Commission

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CIRCULAR COMMUNICATION TO COMMISSIONERS, CONTRACTING GOVERNMENTS
AND MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
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North Atlantic Humpback Comprehensive Assessment : Request for Information

Last year, the IWC Scientific Committee agreed to conduct an in-depth assessment of the status of North Atlantic humpback whales at its Annual Meeting in London in July 2001.

At a meeting held in December 2000 in Woods Hole in preparation for the Comprehensive Assessment, a number of items that would benefit from additional information were identified and suggestions made as to the most appropriate way to resolve them. These are given below.

Results of sightings surveys

Members of the Scientific Committee and other scientists are requested to prepare and make available maps of humpback whale sightings and survey effort from surveys in the North Atlantic. Such surveys include those conducted by the USA off the north-east coast of North America, the NASS surveys in 1987, 1989 and 1995, the NILS survey in 1995, and Norwegian surveys from 1996 onwards. The assistance of NAMMCO would be helpful in regard to the NASS surveys. Maps from other surveys in the region, for example around the United Kingdom and Ireland, would also be valuable.

Incidental takes

Summaries of known or estimated incidental takes from countries bordering the North Atlantic are known to exist in some countries, such as the USA and Canada. These and summaries from other North Atlantic countries are requested to be made available to the Comprehensive Assessment meeting. To provide as complete information as possible, anecdotal information on entanglements would also be valuable, for example from Canada in the offshore Newfoundland crab pot fishery.

Environmental Concerns

Members of the SC and other scientists are requested to make available to the Comprehensive Assessment meeting in July any relevant information on the effects of noise, industrial activity, including some reports of the effects of underwater explosions, on humpback whales in the North Atlantic.

Your help is requested to enable the information outlined above to be presented to the IWC Scientific Committee meeting in London in July. It would be most helpful if you could send information you have to me by 1 June 2001.

Dr. Nicky Grandy
Secretary to the Commission