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Circular Communication to Commissioners, Contracting Governments
and Members of the Scientific Committee
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Marking a milestone: 75 years of the IWC

There has been very little to celebrate in recent months and I hope this Circular provides a small piece of positivity as we begin 2021. This is the year of the IWC's 75th anniversary, and I am pleased to be the first to use our new commemorative logo. The logo will be in use throughout the year.

What makes IWC's 75th anniversary particularly important is not our longevity, but our evolution. The IWC is as important and relevant today as it was in 1946 because it has managed to evolve in response to an ever-changing environment.

Of course, our mandate stands unchanged: regulation of whaling and conservation of whale stocks. What has changed are the threats to whale stocks. Today, bycatch is widely considered to be the biggest threat to cetacean populations. Whales must also contend with ship strikes, ocean noise, marine debris, entanglement, chemical pollution and of course, climate change. These threats were largely non-existent when the IWC was formed, and it is thanks to the flexibility and resilience of all those involved that the IWC continues to set the global standard for cetacean science and stewardship.

The IWC has not followed an easy path and the difficulties are well-documented. In fact, they are far better documented than the significant areas of collaboration and progress. My sincere hope is that we can come together once more in Slovenia this September, to reflect on our past and plan for our future. In the meantime, we will make best use of this anniversary year to increase awareness of the wide range of programmes, priorities and collaborations that define the IWC today.

I wish everyone in our community a safe and productive 2021.



Andrej Bibic
Chair, IWC

c.c. Accredited observers to the IWC