

# **Report of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group**

**Monday 11 July 2022 (15:00-17:00 BST)**

**Virtual via Zoom**

## **1. Welcome and aims of the meeting**

The Chair of the Scientific Committee, Alex Zerbini (Brazil), and vice-Chair of the Conservation Committee, Cat Bell (UK) were selected as Co-chairs of this meeting of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group (CC-SC). Zerbini agreed to lead the meeting as Co-chair. The Secretariat were appointed as rapporteurs.

The Co-chair welcomed the participants to the sixth meeting of the joint CC-SC working group. He noted that IWC Resolution 2014-4 established this Working Group between the Conservation Committee and the Scientific Committee as a means to facilitate the implementation and follow-up of conservation recommendations. At its first meeting, on 4 June 2015, the Joint CC-SC WG adopted the current Terms of Reference, which were revised at the 2021 joint meeting. The current ToR are provided in Annex B and the Revised ToR from the 2021 meeting, which have not yet been adopted by the Commission, are in Annex C.

The Co-chair reminded the participants that four documents, including the agenda, were distributed prior to the meeting.

## **2. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted (Annex A). The list of documents available to the meeting is in Annex D and the list of participants is given in Annex E.

## **3. Review of Terms of Reference and future work plan of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group**

### *i. Evaluate and finalise the ToR*

The Chair recalled that at the last CC-SC meeting, the WG members were encouraged to provide comments on the Draft Revised Terms of Reference during the intersessional period and these would be reviewed at the next meeting in 2022. No new comments were received, nor were any comments raised at this meeting. Thus, the revised Terms of Reference as agreed at the last CC-SC will now go forward to the Commission meeting in October 2022 (IWC68).

### *ii. Update from small group on process for determining conservation priorities*

The Co-chair requested an update from a small group established at the 2021 meeting that has been developing a process for determining priorities for conservation issues. Staniland (Secretariat) reported that the small group had met and prepared a paper (CC-SC/JUL22/01) which was available for review and comment, and which served to inform the discussion at this CC-SC meeting.

A question was raised with regard to adding a category for the IUCN status as a way to inform the Commission about the status of the species or population. Another suggestion was to blend this spreadsheet with that already in the Database of Recommendations (DoR). Comments were welcomed and Staniland noted the need to keep the table as simple as possible. As there are many recommendations in the DoR, there may be merit to clustering these for a more concise approach.

Staniland recommended that the newly refreshed and expanded small group continue working on this process including running some tests, and that the goal should be to present something at IWC69. This

will allow sufficient time for developing the proposal for establishing priorities for the joint work. The Chair encouraged participants to put names forward for the small group. As possible, the small group can meet on the margins of SC meetings or IWC68.

#### **4. IWC Database of Recommendations**

The Co-chair reminded the meeting that at IWC66 in October 2016 the Commission approved a recommendation from the CC to establish a web-accessible database of recommendations. Following a generous voluntary contribution from the UK, the database was developed, and initial population of the database undertaken by the Secretariat.

##### *i. Update on database status and use*

Webster (Secretariat) reminded the CC-SC that the Database of Recommendations (DoR) is live and available on the IWC website. The IWC Secretariat can provide details for logging onto the system. The DoR contains over 2,000 recommendations, including resolutions since the year 2000, SC recommendations from 2017 to present, CC recommendations from the past three Commission meetings, and recommendations from ten workshops held since 2010. They noted that the farther back in history the more challenging it is to find and enter the recommendations into the database format due to changes in reporting structure. Bulk uploading has greatly facilitated the process of inputting recommendations. Keeping recommendations up to date takes time as the Secretariat relies on input from the sub-committees to provide progress. The next major upload will be the recommendations from the SC68D meeting whose report is about to be released.

The DoR is a critically important tool which took considerable time and effort to create; it must be used to fully realise its utility. This requires an increased awareness and use of the DoR, which is still lagging. Also, the Secretariat has been preparing extracts of relevant recommendations from the DoR prior to each SC and CC meeting so that topic leads are aware of the existing recommendations (and thus avoid duplication) and the progress made in their implementation. The CC-SC discussed how to ensure these are fully represented in the SC reports, such as through an annex or section in the SC report which facilitates tracking of the recommendations as the Chairs or topics evolve in the future.

##### *ii. Use by the Joint CC-SC WG*

The DoR is one of the tools being used to prepare a plan for establishing priorities for the CC-SC, as noted under agenda item 3 (ii) above. It is also a useful tool for the two Committees to track recommendations and actions taken under each in areas of common interest, such as bycatch, whale watching, and ship strikes.

#### **5. Topics of mutual interest between the CC and SC**

The Co-chair referred to the paper (CC-SC/JUL22/02) available on the SharePoint which provides progress on all current topics that overlap the SC and CC. This paper was briefly introduced, followed by updates and discussion on several specific topics contained therein. Relevant members of the SC, CC and the Secretariat provided additional input.

The Secretariat explained that, due to time constraints, the work areas listed on the agenda for this item were not exhaustive, but only those thought to have issues which needed discussion. All topics of mutual interest are given in the update paper. A tenth topic was added to the list for discussion, notably Whale Watching. These topics were reviewed in turn:

i. *Species of urgent and emerging concern*

The CC-SC agreed last year that this topic should be addressed by a joint group. Simmonds (UK) noted that the many species and populations of emerging concern raise questions about how the SC or CC might best take action. Discussions in the SC had led to the development of the 'extinction initiative', which is a communication tool. A *pro forma* is being developed for this new initiative which will need to be approved by the Commission. He emphasised that this is about making a statement not a policy. The franciscana will be provided as a case study in the proposal and, once the initiative is approved, a statement is planned for the vaquita.

Simmonds thanked Wilson (Secretariat) for her guidance and support in developing this initiative.

ii. *Anthropogenic Underwater Noise (AUN)*

Iñiguez (Argentina) provided an update on AUN, and specifically the work with Leaper (UK) and Webster (Secretariat) to respond to requests for information from the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The CC established an AUN Intersessional Working Group to implement priority actions, of which one action is the distribution of a questionnaire with regards to seismic exploration. This questionnaire is ready for distribution by the IWC Secretariat via circular to the member countries and also to other relevant international organisations.

Voluntary guidelines have been adopted by the IMO to reduce AUN, however the uptake is not extensive. New designs are underway in the USA which hopefully will accelerate adoption of noise-reduction approaches to extraction.

In the absence of the Convenor of Non-deliberate human induced mortality (HIM) Staniland (Secretariat) noted that the SC68D report includes details of the discussion concerning underwater noise under the Sub-committee on Environmental Concerns (E).

iii. *Chemical pollution*

The Chair invited the Convenor of the Sub-committee on Environmental Concerns (E), Holm (Switzerland), to summarise the work of the SC on this topic. Holm noted that the background document was a very accurate summary of what has been accomplished in E. It is hoped that the small group, formed under Pierce to consider chemical pollution at the 2020 CC meeting, will be able to develop this topic by considering the recommendations from the E workshop.

iv. *Ecosystem modelling/Ecosystem functioning*

Staniland noted a further in-person meeting to cover modelling aspects of the work had been planned to follow on from the virtual meeting held in April 2021. Given SC68D was also virtual, this had been delayed and was now planned as a premeeting to the next full SC meeting. The April 2021 workshop conducted a gap analysis and there was agreement on the need for pre-exploitation abundance estimates as a key starting point.

The CC held a workshop in April 2022, on the socio-economic aspects of the contributions of cetaceans to ecosystem functioning. Starting with input from the SC workshop results, this CC workshop included a review of market and non-market valuation techniques, considered cetaceans in relation to traits of other marine megafauna, and built a solution framework. The work faces a number of challenges, some of which could benefit from partnering with institutions which conduct multidisciplinary work.

v. *Climate change*

Simmonds reported on the joint virtual workshop on Climate Change held in late 2021, whose report was released early 2022. The SC took note of the report but due to time constraints the discussion had to be limited. The report included a recommendation that there be a follow-up in-person workshop. A funding request was submitted for this in-person workshop but was not granted. The SC did call for efforts to continue to progress this work.

vi. *Marine debris*

The Co-chair noted that there is now a IWC Roster of experts on marine debris (one of the deliverables for the workplan) which can be consulted for advice and facilitate input to other related expert processes. The Secretariat thanked those who are on the roster of experts and there was a call for suggestions on other meetings at which IWC representation might be useful.

Simmonds stated that the joint CC-SC marine debris group is working on emerging issues, including micro debris, and provides regular updates to SC and CC. A recent paper was presented at SC which views the latest information about interactions amongst cetaceans and marine debris, including the effects of pandemic-derived wastes. He noted that collecting and collating information about ingested and entangled marine debris was a potentially important area where the IWC could make a contribution.

vii. *Whale Sanctuaries*

Parsons (SC) provided an overview of upcoming work on reviews of the IWC Southern Ocean and Indian Ocean sanctuaries, in which both the SC and CC will be engaged. The Southern Ocean review is due in 2024 (every ten years) and the review process and a Steering Group have been approved by the SC, along with funding. The Terms of Reference for reviewers will be the same as those for previous reviews, and the review will address ecosystem modeling and climate change. The CC can assist by supporting the development of a *pro forma* and also contributing relevant data for the review.

The Indian Ocean sanctuary should have been reviewed this year and guidance is needed on when another review is needed.

viii. *Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI)- Collaboration with other organisations and regional efforts to address bycatch (Indian and Western Pacific Ocean basins)*

Passadore (Secretariat) is introduced as the new Bycatch Coordinator at the IWC Secretariat. An overview of the work underway on bycatch is provided in the report to this meeting. Key activities include:

- Common Oceans Project addressing bycatch in tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean and Western Central Pacific Ocean.
- Ongoing promotion of the FAO Technical Guidelines, including a contract to develop FAO Fact Sheets for bycatch.
- Continued work on identifying pilot projects for the BMI, which may include the fisheries under the Common Oceans project.

Porter (SC vice-chair) notes that bycatch is an issue across all SC sub-committees, with a particular focus in the Human-Induced Mortality (HIM) Sub-Committee. There has been some progress on bycatch (Peru and Yellow Sea) and the BMI may want to consider creating a 'repository of information'

for successful adaptations to gear types. There is continued concern for a number of fisheries with significant bycatch, although some bycatch measures have been established:

- Entanglement in Scottish pot and trap fishery
- Maui dolphins
- Baltic Harbour porpoise
- Bay of Biscay common dolphins
- Vaquita bycatch in totoaba illegal gillnets, with the added concern over CITES approval of international trade of farmed totoaba fish.
- Large whale entanglement in krill fishery in CCAMLR (three cases reported to SC this year)

ix. *Directed Take of Small Cetaceans (Caribbean, northern Europe/Arctic and Micronesia)*

Porter noted progress with data collection which will help assess the impact of direct takes on small cetaceans in these regions. An intern is collecting data from a number of sources and will investigate this with the help of the Statistics team at the Secretariat. Work is underway in the Solomon Islands, as well as in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

x. *Whale Watching*

Parsons (SC) reported that the background documents shared for this meeting provide an excellent update of work underway. General principles for whale watching need to be a priority since the last review was conducted in 1996. Once the CC receives the final version of these General Principles from the SC, it will be posted on the IWC website and on the Whale Watching Handbook.

Parsons referred to SC68D discussions concerning the development of a communications strategy for whale watching as there is an ongoing challenge to ensure that the Handbook is accessible – and accessed – by those who would benefit from its use.

## **6. Matters to transmit to IWC68**

The Co-chair noted that the revised Terms of Reference for the Joint CC-SC Working Group will be submitted to the Commission for endorsement at IWC68 in October 2022. This will be completed by including the adoption of these revised ToR (as submitted by the Joint SC-CC Working Group) in the pre-meeting of the CC, which will then be submitted to the full Commission for adoption.

## **7. Any other business**

Webster (Secretariat) introduced Emma Neave-Webb, the new Strandings Coordinator at the IWC Secretariat. Based in Orkney, Neave-Webb has considerable experience working on strandings around the UK and looks forward to future work with IWC and its partners around the world.

**The meeting was adjourned at 17h00 UK**

**Annex A**  
**Agenda**

**Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group**

**Monday 11 July 2022 (15-17h)**

**1. Welcome and aims of the meeting**

- i. Appointment of Co-chairs [Cat Bell and Alex Zerbini are proposed]
- ii. Appointment of Rapporteur [The Secretariat will offer to act as rapporteur]
- iii. Terms of Reference and aims of the meeting
- iv. Review of documents available to the meeting

**2. Adoption of the agenda**

**3. Review of Terms of Reference and future work plan of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group**

- i. Evaluate and finalise the ToR
- ii. Update from small group on process for determining conservation priorities

**4. IWC database of recommendations**

- iii. Update on database status and use
- iv. Use by the Joint CC-SC WG.

**5. Topics of mutual interest between the CC and SC**

An update paper with a brief summary on topics of overlap between the SC and CC will be provided. This paper will be briefly introduced, followed by discussion on the specific topics below.

- i. Species of urgent and emerging concern
- ii. Anthropogenic Underwater Noise
- iii. Chemical pollution
- iv. Ecosystem modelling/Ecosystem functioning
- v. Climate change
- vi. Marine debris
- vii. Whale Sanctuaries
- viii. Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI)- Collaboration with other organisations and regional efforts to address bycatch (Indian and Western Pacific Ocean basins)
- ix. Directed Take of Small Cetaceans (Caribbean, northern Europe/Arctic and Micronesia)

**6. Matters to transmit to IWC68**

**7. Any other business**

## **Annex B          Current Terms of Reference**

The Joint CC-SC working group (CC-SC WG) is tasked with facilitating the communication, implementation, and follow-up of conservation recommendations.

The CC-SC WG shall:

- review, collate and prioritise conservation recommendations made by the Scientific and Conservation Committees where further efforts/actions are needed, in the first instance focussing on those from 2010 onwards;
- report, as appropriate, to the Commission on progress in delivering conservation recommendations;
- develop clear procedures/strategies for effectively transmitting and facilitating the implementation of conservation recommendations to and from the SC-CC WG to the appropriate Committees and sub-committees/working groups, including for further technical work;
- provide advice to the Conservation Committee on those priority conservation recommendations it could assist in implementing;
- provide feedback to the Scientific Committee on further advice and/or actions to assist in the implementation of conservation recommendations;
- respond to specific requests for support in facilitating the implementation of conservation recommendations from the Scientific and/or Conservation Committees.

The CC-SC WG will be comprised of nominees from the Scientific Committee, Conservation Committee and Contracting Governments. Additional expertise may be included as appropriate at the discretion of the Scientific Committee and Conservation Committee Chairs.

## **Annex C            DRAFT Revised Terms of Reference for the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group**

The Joint Conservation Committee/Scientific Committee working group (CC-SC WG) is tasked with facilitating communication between the two Committees on matters related to the IWC's conservation priorities. The main benefit of the WG is to jointly discuss recommendations addressing those priority issues, and efforts to implement and track their progress by the Commission, relevant subsidiary bodies, Contracting Governments, intergovernmental organisations, accredited observers and other relevant organizations.

The CC-SC WG shall develop and promote a clear strategy and mechanism for:

- (a) review, collate, and suggest priorities to the Commission about conservation issues and associated recommendations made by the Scientific and Conservation committees, while respecting the direction provided by the Commission to both Committees;
- (b) the effective transmission of identified priority recommendations to the appropriate entities and stakeholders likely to implement the recommendations (e.g., Commission, its subsidiary bodies, Contracting Governments, and Intergovernmental organisations);
- (c) review and report progress to the Commission, through the CC and SC committees, including use of the database of recommendations

An important component of the CC-SC WG is the facilitation of communication between the Committees on proposed work required by each to address priority conservation issues, including the direct communication and collaboration between convenors and standing group chairs and topic leads, the identification of the need for further technical work and/or more clear advice on the practical implementation of priority recommendations (e.g. identifying resources required, key actors and any socio-economic implications and if needed, identify the obstacles to achieve these recommendations).

The CC-SC WG will comprise at least the Chairs and Vice-chairs of the Scientific and Conservation committees, with encouragement of SC convenors and leads of the CC SWGs to attend. Additional expertise (or requests for participation by specified Contracting Governments) may be included as appropriate at the discretion of the Chairs of the SC and CC. Temporary working groups may be established to address topics requiring consideration at a more detailed or focused level. The group will be supported by the Secretariat.



## **Annex D      List of Participants**

### **ARGENTINA**

Miguel Iñíguez

### **BRAZIL**

Alex Zerbini- SC Chair  
Artur Andriolo

### **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

Nina Lysenko

### **GERMANY**

Nicole Hielscher

### **NETHERLANDS**

Meike Scheidat

### **NEW ZEALAND**

Tom Butler

### **NORWAY**

Lars Walløe

### **SWITZERLAND**

Patricia Holm

### **UK**

Cat Bell – CC Vice Chair  
Lindsay Porter – SC Vice Chair  
Murray Fyfe

### **USA**

Bob Brownell  
Danielle Cholewiak  
Dave Weller  
Madison Harris  
Mi Ae Kim

### **Scientific Committee**

Chris Parsons  
Jennifer Jackson  
Jooke Robbins  
Jorge Urban  
Juan Pablo Torres-Florez  
Leslie New

### **Animal Welfare Institute**

Kate O'Connell

### **Fundación Cethus**

Carolina Cassini

### **IFAW**

Sharon Livermore

### **OceanCare**

Mark Simmonds

### **WDC**

Vanessa Tossenberger

### ***Secretariat***

Elizabeth Campbell  
Stella Duff  
Moussa Ki Sow  
Rebecca Lent  
Emma Neave-Webb  
Lydia O'Loughlin  
David Mattila  
Iain Staniland  
Imogen Webster  
Kate Wilson

**Annex E      List of Documents**

<b>Document Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Authors</b>
CCPG/GEN/01	Draft Annotated Agenda Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group	IWC Secretariat
<b>Primary papers</b>		
CC-SC/JUL22/01	Report of the Joint CC-SC Small Group to Design a Process for Identifying Conservation Priorities	IWC Secretariat
CC-SC/JUL22/02	Update on Work Across Topics of Mutual Interest	IWC Secretariat
<b>For INFO papers</b>		
CC-SC/JUL22/For Info 01	Revised Terms of Reference for the Joint Working Group of the Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee	Lorenzo Rojas Bracho (CC Chair), Robert Suydam (SC Chair), Catherine Bell (CC Vice-chair), Alex Zerbini (SC Vice-chair)