

Species or populations of Conservation Concern

Presented by the UK

Background

Many cetacean species and populations are facing significant threats that the Conservation Committee are working to address, to support the long-term vision of healthy, well-managed and recovered cetacean populations (as set out in the [strategic plan](#)). One of the ways the Conservation Committee could achieve this would be to consider how best it could support efforts to address the biggest challenges to conservation action.

A paper by Robinson and Simmonds (unpublished)¹ details the results made of a survey of the opinions of experts from all around the world, carried out with the aim of understanding the biggest challenges to cetacean conservation. The results suggest that conservation efforts face challenges that vary related to geography and focal species or population. Human impact was confirmed as the biggest challenge in cetacean conservation and the two most commonly recurring challenges were insufficient funding and problems in achieving government/stakeholder involvement. Additionally, support from and collaboration with local communities and non-governmental organisations was noted as highly impactful in positive outcomes of conservation efforts. Further details can be found in the paper.

The question for the Conservation Committee is whether there's more we can do to support governments to overcome some of these challenges to implement effective conservation action. Some possible recommendations are below for consideration.

Recommendations for discussion

1. Establish a group to consider intersessionally how conservation efforts may be made more effective using the paper as a starting point for discussion. This group might consider the following issues:

- Work with governments and stakeholders to better understand the barriers to involvement in conservation initiatives and develop recommendations for how Conservation Committee might help to overcome those.
- Consider how there could be greater involvement of local communities and NGOs in conservation initiatives.
- Work with other intersessional groups to identify high risk populations/species to develop recommendations on potential actions to protect them as well as timeframes and mechanisms for how this could be achieved.
- Develop recommendations on how best to engage/support the development of sustainable whale-watching business opportunities.
- Consider if/how the IWC and NGOs might play a more supportive role in providing advice and expertise to focus efforts.
- Determine how to work best alongside the relevant conservation work of other bodies including CMS and IUCN.

2. Raise awareness of the Voluntary Conservation Fund in supporting projects and governments to deliver conservation research and action.

¹ Robinson, E. and Simmonds, M.P. Unpublished. Analysis of the Challenges Inherent in Cetacean Conservation and Recovery Through Expert Opinion. Available from the Lead author at: zu19084@alumni.bristol.ac.uk