

68th Meeting of the International Whaling Commission

REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

09.00-18.00 Hrs Saturday 15 October, Grand Hotel Bernardin, Portorož, Slovenia

SUMMARY OF MAIN OUTCOMES

<i>Issue and Agenda Item</i>	<i>Main Outcomes</i>
Strategic plan and workplan, Item 3	<p>The Conservation Committee endorsed the report for the mid-term review along with the suggested edits, which will be posted on the IWC website.</p> <p>The Conservation Committee accepted the draft Workplan and Working Methods, which will be uploaded to the IWC website and maintained as a living document.</p>
Strategic issues for the CC, Item 4	<p>The Chair thanked the UK, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, USA, Peru and Argentina for submitting their Voluntary Conservation Reports.</p> <p>The Conservation Committee agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Conservation Committee Planning Group will work with Australia to adapt the Scientific Committee process for National Progress Reports for the Conservation Committee.• Annual reminders would be issued for Voluntary Conservation Reports.• New Zealand, the UK and ASCOBANS will test the Conservation database.
Joint CC-SC working group, Item 5	<p>The Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Chairs noted that progress had been made to better understand how the two Committees interact and highlighted that there were new Terms of Reference for the Working Group.</p>
Whale Sanctuaries, Item 6	<p>The Conservation Committee Chair drew attention to the upcoming review of the Southern Ocean Sanctuary (SOS).</p>
Bycatch, Item 7	<p>The Conservation Committee noted the progress on the 4-year workplan, approved the updated Terms of Reference for the Bycatch Expert Panel and supported the engagement of the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative in the FAO-</p>

	Common Oceans Project with the various partners.
Whale watching, Item 8	<p>The Conservation Committee endorsed the Whale Watching Workplan and Editorial Protocol for the Whale Watching Handbook (Annexes 1 and 2, CC/68/8.1/01).</p> <p>The Conservation Committee endorsed the IWC Principles and Guidelines for Whale Watching (Annex 3, CC/68/8.1/01).</p>
CMPs, Item 9	<p>The Conservation Committee agreed that it would be helpful to nominate a Vice-Chair of the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans that would require amendments to the Working Methods.</p> <p>The Conservation Committee endorsed the 2022-2024 Conservation Management Plan Workplan (Annex 2, CC/68/9.1/01) and the 2022-2032 Strategic Plan (CC/68/9.1.2/01).</p> <p>The Conservation Committee agreed that the Western North Pacific gray whale CMP be updated using the outcomes of the Scientific Committee's five-year review and that the 'Memorandum of Cooperation concerning Conservation Measures for the Western Gray Whale' be revitalized.</p> <p>The Conservation Committee endorsed the 2023-2024 Implementation Strategy for the South-east Pacific Southern Right Whale CMP.</p> <p>The Conservation Committee endorsed the franciscana campaign.</p>
Ship strikes, Item 10	The Conservation Committee noted the intersessional progress made by the Working Group on Ship Strikes and the Scientific Committee, endorsed the new Ship Strikes Strategic Plan 2022-2032 and the proposed Workplan of the Working Group on Ship Strikes for 2022-2024, supported the establishment of an Expert Panel, and supported the funding application for the continuation of the Data Manager position.
Marine debris, Item 11	The Conservation Committee endorsed the workplan for the 2022-2024 period.

	The Conservation Committee endorsed the signing of the statement of support Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI).
Anthropogenic underwater noise, Item 12.1	The Conservation Committee endorsed the workplan for the 2022-2024 intersessional period and the use of the questionnaire on marine seismic surveys for hydrocarbon exploration with the additions proposed by the USA
Climate change, Item 12.2	The Conservation Committee endorsed the establishment of a new Intersessional Group on Climate Change to further develop this area, with the following Terms of Reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Take into account the latest information on cetacean populations; (2) Provide clear advice on tools to mitigate the negative impact of climate change and build resilience; (3) Seek to develop an IWC climate change response programme.
Chemical pollution, Item 12.3	The Chair reiterated the need to reinvigorate the working group on this issue and encouraged additional members to join. <p>The Conservation Committee welcomed the reports of the intersessional work on chemical pollution (CC/68/12.3/01) and of the Pollution 2025 IWC Intersessional Workshop (SC/68D/REP/02).</p>
Ecosystem functioning, Item 13	The Conservation Committee endorsed the report of the Workshop on Socio-economic Values of Cetaceans to Ecosystem Functioning in principle, but agreed that the proposed pilot project requires further discussion and development before the CC could recommend it is taken forward.
Species or populations of urgent or emerging concern, Item 15	The Conservation Committee agreed on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The endorsement of the Extinction Initiative with an amendment to the process to seek endorsement from the Commission at biennial meetings or, in urgent intersessional situations, <i>perhaps</i> through a silence procedure.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The endorsement for an intersessional group to develop recommendations for how challenges to Conservation efforts may be overcome and be made more effective.
Engagement with other organisations, Item 16	The Conservation Committee Chair commended the tremendous improvement in communication with other organisations and noted that IWC was now a key player in the international field.
Funding, Item 17	The CC endorsed the proposal to develop Terms of Reference for a new group with a mandate to advise the Secretariat in its increased focus on fundraising activities to present to F&A.
	<p>The Conservation Committee discussed the following roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair of the Conservation Committee: Catherine Bell (UK) was confirmed. Vice-Chair of the Conservation Committee: Miguel Iñiguez (Argentina) was confirmed. Chair of the Standing Working Group on Bycatch: Anne-Marie Svoboda (Netherlands) was confirmed. Chair of the Working Group on Ship Strikes: Sharon Livermore (IFAW) was confirmed. Chair of the Standing Working Group on Whale Watching: this position remains open. Co-Chair of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Debris: Jens Warrie (Belgium) was confirmed.

1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1.1 Appointment of Chair

Lorenzo Rojas-Bracho (Mexico) was appointed Conservation Committee (CC) Chair.

1.2 Appointment of Rapporteurs

Patricia Cremona, Frances Davis, Sarah Ferriss, Harriet Gillett and Rebecca Price were appointed rapporteurs.

1.3 Review of Documents

A list of documents can be found at Appendix 1. The report of the last CC meeting is available as IWC/68/REP/CC/01. CC Planning Group reports are available as CC/68/REP/CCPG/01, 02 and 03 for

2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively. Summaries of CC workshop reports can be found as IWC/68/CCWKSP/SUMMARY/EN / FR / ES.

1.4 Observer Participation

Rules of Procedure regarding observer participation can be found in Appendix 2. A full list of participants, including observers, is given in Appendix 3.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The adopted agenda is given in Appendix 2.

3. CONSERVATION COMMITTEE STRATEGIC PLAN AND WORKPLAN

3.1 The Mid-term review and updates to the Strategic Plan

The Chair noted that at IWC66 the Commission endorsed the Conservation Committee Strategic Plan 2016-2026 as a high-level outward facing document supported by separate, internal strategy documents for the CC and its Standing Working Groups complete with timelines. At the virtual meeting of the CC in 2020, the Committee agreed to a mid-term review of the Strategic Plan in response to recommendations of the Working Group on Operational Effectiveness (WGOE).

The CC Chair introduced this item, noting that a mid-term review was conducted during the last intersessional period with input from CC chairs, topic leads, CC focal points and observers. The process and results of this are given in document CC/68/3.1/01 (*Mid-term Review of the Conservation Committee Strategic Plan 2016-2026*). The review concluded that overall, there is no need to revise the Strategic Plan and that the CC recommendations, workplan and Strategic Plan are being satisfactorily progressed. He noted there was one slight edit to the wording proposed, and this was presented in Annex 2 of document CC/68/3.1/01.

The Secretariat provided a brief overview of the review process and noted that the greatest success was where there was active buy-in and engagement from governments and other stakeholders. It was further noted that government buy-in was also one of the greatest challenges, along with funding.

The CC Chair emphasised the importance of government engagement to ensure success of CC programmes of work and encouraged Contracting Governments to fully participate in the Committee, including coming forward when there are Committee positions open.

The Conservation Committee **endorsed** the report for the mid-term review along with the suggested edits and this will be posted on the IWC website.

3.2 Workplan for the 2022-2024 Biennium and beyond

The current CC workplan runs until the end of 2022. The draft workplan for 2022-2024 is available as CC/68/3.2/01.

The CC Chair introduced this item, noting that the three intersessional CC Planning Group (CCPG) meetings in 2019, 2020 and 2022 had been convened to discuss progress since IWC67 and identify priorities and deliverables in the lead up to IWC68. He noted that these meetings had been useful to ensure intersessional progress on the Committee's growing agenda. The draft workplan will be updated at the end of the CC and maintained as a living document and posted on the IWC website.

The Conservation Committee **accepted** the draft workplan, which will be uploaded to the IWC website and maintained as a living document.

4. STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

4.1 Working Methods of the Conservation Committee

The CC Chair introduced this item, noting that at its meeting in 2018 the CC agreed on the Conservation Committee Working Methods which were subsequently published on the IWC website. The Working Methods document was adopted as a living document subject to further change, as needed.

The latest version of the Working Methods is available as CC/68/4.1/01 (*Conservation Committee Working Methods Version IWC68*) and includes proposed text to reflect the change agreed in principle at the CC meeting in 2020 that the CC Vice Chair should succeed the CC Chair automatically after the Chair has served a set term. The document also suggests several other changes to increase clarity or reflect changes in the CC.

The Conservation Committee **recommended** that the Secretariat update the document with any suggestions from the CC and that the final document should be adopted for use and posted on the IWC website.

4.2 Voluntary Conservation Reports

Contracting Governments may submit Voluntary Conservation Reports (VCR) on cetacean conservation to the CC. The Committee welcomes these reports and has encouraged more countries to submit them.

4.2.1 Contracting member reports

The CC Chair drew attention to documents IWC/68/CC/68/4.2.1/01, CC/68/4.2.1/02, CC/68/4.2.1/03, CC/68/4.2.1/04, C/68/4.2.1/05 and C/68/4.2.1/06 containing reports from the UK, New Zealand, USA, Argentina, Republic of Korea and Peru, respectively.

The CC Chair noted apologies from Mexico, Australia, Netherlands and Panama for not submitting a VCR to IWC68.

Argentina noted that a Federal Network for Assistance to Marine Fauna Strandings (RFAVFM) has been working since 2017 under the Ministry of Environment, formally established through a Resolution in 2021. The report outlines the objectives of this Network including the provision of assistance, training, and data collection. Argentina noted that a series of workshops are underway to implement the programme and hoped to provide further information in the future.

New Zealand noted that they have established nine sanctuaries to protect marine mammals around the coast of the country, contributing to the goal of establishing a comprehensive network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) through-out the country to ensure the long-term viability and conservation of marine ecosystems. The most recent marine mammal sanctuary was established in 2021 in the Bay of Islands to protect nationally endangered bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*).

Panama highlighted updates to their regulations for whale watching, improvements to management strategies for strandings and disentanglements and the implementation of the stranding care and response network. Panama also noted work to study noise in MPAs that are important for cetaceans within the Panama Marine Corridor and the mandatory use of traffic exclusion devices for large vessels in the Panama Canal.

USA noted its continuation of work and research on cetacean conservation such as on bycatch, effects of anthropogenic noise and ship strike reduction. It highlighted the NOAA Marine Debris Program which has led to the removal of thousands of tonnes of debris to date, including consumer debris, abandoned vessels and fishing gear. The USA noted that they are considering further modifications to

the vessel speed regulations to reduce the likelihood of mortality of North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*) from ship strikes.

The Republic of Korea highlighted its commitment to and, on bycatch reduction measures, including distributing fishing gear and escape devices and undertaking research. The Netherlands reported an update to the Harbour Porpoise Conservation Plan (*Phocoena phocoena*) as well as work on a large proposal to address bycatch issues with 12 other European countries.

Australia reported that in February 2022 the Australian government removed the humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) from its List of Threatened Species under Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. This delisting recognises the recovery of Australia's two humpback whale populations and is an example of what comprehensive protection and active conservation management can deliver.

Argentina, USA and the Republic of Korea encouraged other Contracting Governments to submit their VCRs in future years to facilitate sharing of information. The CC Chair thanked all the Contracting Governments who had submitted reports and encouraged those who had not, to submit reports next time.

4.2.2 Review of the prototype Conservation Database

The CC Chair recalled that at the CCPG meeting in 2018, New Zealand presented a proposal for a revision to the format of the VCRs. Email discussions were conducted during the virtual 2020 CC meeting to allow for further development. An update on the development of the database was presented at CCPG 2022 and input was sought.

The Secretariat presented an overview of the prototype Conservation Database as outlined in document CC/68/4.2.2/01 (*Update on the development of the IWC conservation database for voluntary conservation reporting*), which had been developed using information in previous VCRs. Without logging in, users can view the information provided by Contracting Governments. In addition to general country pages, the prototype includes profile pages for themes which have been identified as priority topics in the Conservation Committee Strategic Plan e.g., anthropogenic underwater noise, bycatch, and climate change. The Secretariat noted that there are two methods for data submission: 1) countries can log in and enter information through a stepwise process; or 2) countries can send information to the Secretariat in a .csv file to upload. In both options, all data are quarantined until the relevant approval process has been followed.

The Secretariat requested feedback from the CC, particularly on who submits data, who approves it, and whether or not submission reminders should be set up. The Secretariat also sought volunteers to test the prototype.

New Zealand, Dominican Republic, the Netherlands and the UK all congratulated the Secretariat on the database. New Zealand, UK and the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) volunteered to test the prototype.

The CC agreed that Contracting Governments, Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) and observers should be able to submit data to the database. The Secretariat noted that national reports required government approval to ensure information was accurate and up to date, and that may be an appropriate role for national focal points. However, a key question was who should be responsible for approving data submitted by non-government entities. The Secretariat noted that non-governmental organisations (NGOs), universities and others could provide valuable information but that it may not be easy for Contracting Governments to verify this information. Belgium agreed that it would be

appropriate for CC focal points or Commissioners to approve national information, and that Scientific Committee representatives may also have a role to play. Belgium, supported by the UK, believed it was important to include information from academics, NGOs and other organisations. Belgium noted that different countries may have different processes to approve information and flexibility was likely needed.

Australia, supported by the Dominican Republic and New Zealand, noted that the SC and Secretariat had considered this issue with respect to National Progress Reports and suggested that the SC model, which facilitates multiple levels of approval culminating in sign-off at the national level, could also be used for national reports on cetacean conservation.

The Dominican Republic noted that it has begun the development of a National Environment System and was working on a regional platform. In discussion, the Secretariat confirmed that it was possible to flag information that had been added by NGOs. The Secretariat is considering different levels of permissions for data input and a means of identifying where data had come from. The CC Chair noted that the CCPG would work jointly with Australia to consider this issue further. The CC agreed that an annual reminder would be useful.

The CC Chair noted that the decisions made by the CC on the prototype, including who may submit data and annual reminders, would be added to the Working Methods.

The Conservation Committee **agreed** that:

- The CCPG will work with Australia to adapt the SC process for Voluntary National Reports on cetacean conservation
- Annual reminders would be issued
- New Zealand, UK and ASCOBANS will test the database

4.4 IWC Governance Review

The Working Group on Operational Effectiveness (WGOE) was mandated (Resolution 2018-1 at IWC67) to further develop proposals for taking forward governance review recommendations. The Chair confirmed that the WGOE recommendations might require changes to the working methods of the CC, but there would be full discussion in Plenary.

4.4.1 Latest updates from the WG-OE process and recommendations relevant to the CC

The CC Vice-Chair noted that the WGOE had discussed the proposals at its meeting on Thursday 13 October 2022 and recommendations would be presented at the Finance and Administration meeting on Sunday 16 October 2022.

4.4.2 Discussion of findings and recommendations

No discussion was required.

5. JOINT CONSERVATION COMMITTEE AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP

The CC Chair noted that since IWC67 there have been two intersessional meetings of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group (CC-SC WG) in 2021 and 2022. Reports of the meetings are found in documents CC/68/REP/CCSC/01 and CC/68/REP/CCSC/02 (Reports of the Joint CC and SC Working Group 2021 and 2022).

The CC and SC Chairs noted that progress had been made to better understand how the two Committees interact and highlighted that there were new Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Working Group (WG).

5.1 Database of Recommendations

The CC Chair recalled that at IWC66 in October 2016, the Commission had endorsed a recommendation from the CC to establish an Intersessional Working Group to develop a web-accessible Database of Recommendations (DoR). In 2019, IWC67 endorsed the aims and principles of the DoR and instructed the Secretariat to populate the database and facilitate its work. The Commission had also requested the SC and CC to incorporate the database into their working practices and to report back to IWC68.

5.2 Review of implementation of recommendations

The Secretariat introduced agenda items 5.1 on the DoR and 5.2 on the Review of implementation of recommendations, providing an update on the development of the database development and its use. The Secretariat noted that the DoR is now live, and available at: <https://recommendations.iwc.int/>. Over 2,000 recommendations have been included in the database so far, including SC recommendations from 2017-2021 and those from SC68D are currently being uploaded. CC recommendations from the past three meetings, Resolutions since 2000 and recommendations from various workshops since 2010 have also been added. The Secretariat noted that it was more challenging to identify and enter older recommendations due to the reporting formats in earlier meetings. A bulk-upload facility has been developed making it quicker to add recommendations. Nonetheless, keeping the database up to date is time consuming and the Secretariat relies on input from the Committees, sub-committees and WGs to provide progress and support. Extracts from the database have helped with preparations for recent CC and SC meetings, and the Joint CC-SC WG have also used the database to prepare their workplan, identify priorities and to track progress. The Secretariat noted that increased awareness of the database and its availability was needed.

Italy congratulated the Secretariat on the database, noting that it was an important tool for the Commission. In discussion, the Secretariat explained that for older recommendation text, the “action to be taken” is not always clear so additional time is needed to interpret and update this field. The recent guidance on writing recommendations should remedy this.

6. WHALE SANCTUARIES

The CC Chair introduced this item noting that the Committee was asked for input on the Proposed Schedule Amendment on the creation of a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary (SAWS) ([IWC/68/7.1/01](#)) which has been proposed by Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. He noted that the CC reviewed the proposed management plan and proposal at IWC66, and although it was submitted again at IWC67, it was not discussed by the CC at the request of the proponents.

Brazil provided an update on the proposal for a SAWS noting previous discussions and review by the SC and CC. The proposal was endorsed by the Buenos Aires group in September 2022. Brazil suggested extensive support for the South Atlantic to remain free from whaling. They also noted that the proposed Sanctuary goes beyond whaling and would enhance regional co-operation on scientific research and whale watching opportunities, supporting job creation and economic development. Brazil stated that there were no immediate costs to implementing the proposal at this stage and that future workshops would be held subject to financial availability.

The Brazilian Humpback Whale Institute noted that since the first SAWS proposal, there have been developments in knowledge around the ecosystem services provided by whales, such as carbon sequestration and ocean fertilisation. These services are important for range countries with respect to climate change and fisheries sustainability. They also noted that new information has shown east-west movements of whales, as well as north-south migrations, highlighting the importance of an ocean basin management system.

The CC Chair drew attention to the upcoming review of the Southern Ocean Sanctuary (SOS), noting that the SC will issue a call for input to the review in 2023. The SC Chair added that the third decadal review will begin at the next SC meeting.

The CC Chair also noted a potential review of the Indian Ocean Sanctuary, and that the CC could be asked for assistance in the review. The SC Chair noted that according to the Schedule of the Convention, just one review was needed which was done in 2002, so advice from the Commission is needed on whether a further review should go ahead.

7. BYCATCH

The Chair **noted** that at IWC66 the Commission endorsed recommendations from the SC and CC on bycatch and agreed to establish a Bycatch Standing Working Group (SWG).

7.1 Report from the Bycatch Standing Working Group

7.1.1 Progress of the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative workplan

7.1.2 Conservation Committee role in workplan activities

The Chair of the Bycatch SWG presented CC/68/7.1/01 (*Report of the Bycatch Standing Working Group*), noting that, at IWC66 in 2016, the Commission established the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI), and at IWC67 in 2018, it had endorsed the BMI ten-year Strategic Plan (2018-2028). Updates on progress were presented to the virtual CC meeting in 2020 and the 2021-2024 workplan was endorsed. The Chair of the SWG thanked everyone involved in the work to date, especially during the difficult circumstances of recent years, including the Secretariat, the Expert Panel, SWG members, the SC and everyone involved in pilot projects.

The Chair of the SWG gave an update on progress on the first four strategic objectives in the Workplan: programme co-ordination, knowledge gathering, developing and testing bycatch mitigation and monitoring and bringing about a change in attitudes within the fishing community.

On programme co-ordination, the Chair of the SWG expressed wholehearted appreciation to Marguerite Tarzia, the IWC's previous Bycatch Co-ordinator until January 2021, for the extensive and valuable work she had undertaken in the role. Cecilia Passadore was welcomed into this position in June 2022. The Chair of the SWG noted that her term was coming to an end, so a successor needs to be appointed. Membership of the SWG is open and any interested Contracting Governments and observers are invited to join.

The Expert Panel, established in 2018, has been very active, including two in-person meetings in 2019, identifying priority locations for pilot projects and provision of technical input on several documents. Due to COVID-19, there have been challenges engaging with the entire panel and more thought is needed on how Panel members can join key collaborations and projects, such as the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (CCAHD) and the Common Oceans Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), as well as capacity building work. The ToR for the Expert Panel were updated, reviewed, and agreed by the SWG in September 2021. Expert Panel membership will be reviewed after IWC68 to fill expertise and geographical gaps (current membership is listed under Annex 4 of CC/68/7.1/01).

The Bycatch SWG Chair noted that full implementation of the BMI Workplan (2021-2024) will require external fundraising, particularly in relation to pilot projects, the capacity building programme and engagement of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). The Chair expressed thanks to all those who have contributed funds to this work (Annex 5 of IWC CC/68/7.1/01).

The BMI presented papers to the SC in 2021 and 2022, with a suggestion on activities that SC members could lead, with other engagement through the Expert Panel members and Bycatch Co-ordinator. The BMI requested that the SC encourage and welcome any input from researchers with relevant information regarding research on bycatch, mitigation techniques and interdisciplinary work with fisheries.

In terms of knowledge gathering, the BMI is designing a series of 'Pilot projects' which are to be locally-led and focused on small-scale fisheries in both marine and/or freshwater environments. Pilot projects will allow the BMI to apply multi-disciplinary, experimental approaches to bycatch mitigation, monitoring and management. Seven locations were prioritised for Pilot project development: Peru, Republic of Congo, Kenya, Pakistan, India, Thailand, and Malaysian and Indonesian Borneo. The IWC Secretariat began discussions with the Governments of Kenya, Peru and India in 2020 on the potential scope of Pilot projects. In addition, the IWC held a workshop on Bycatch Mitigation Opportunities in the Western Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea in May 2019 in Kenya.

The Bycatch Co-ordinator thanked Marguerite Tarzia, the outgoing SWG Chair Stephanie Langerock, and all members of the Bycatch Expert Panel and SWG for their work in establishing and developing the BMI.

It was highlighted that the BMI is developing its Capacity Building Programme. Expert Panel members have provided training through technical workshops on the Bycatch Risk Assessment (ByRA) tool in several countries and further sessions are planned. If feasible, these will be done in collaboration with the disentanglement response capacity building program. Some workshops were postponed due to the pandemic, but activities are now resuming for workshops in Vietnam and Colombia in 2023.

Anyone interested in discussing how the BMI could provide them with technical assistance are encouraged to contact the Secretariat to explore opportunities for future capacity building workshops and engaging with Pilot projects. This includes through links with the Small Cetacean Task Teams and the Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) where appropriate.

7.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

7.3 Engagement with RFMOs

The Bycatch Co-ordinator emphasised that to address bycatch, the IWC depends on collaboration with fisheries managers at the global, regional and national levels. Document IWC/68/14/01/REV1 (*Co-operation with other organisations*) details the meetings and involvement of the BMI with various RFMOs.

7.3.1 GEF/FAO Common Oceans project update

The Bycatch Co-ordinator noted that CC/68/7.1/01 (*Report of the Bycatch Standing Working Group*) includes an introduction to the FAO Common Oceans ABNJ tuna II project. The Co-ordinator drew attention to the draft contract between FAO and IWC and the Co-operation Agreement with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) related to the project (FA/68/3.4.4/01 and FA/68/3.4.3/01). The project aims to advance efforts to address cetacean bycatch in tuna fisheries of the Indian and the western Pacific Oceans. Over a 4.5-year period, the Secretariat is planning several activities in collaboration with Regional Organizations such as the IOTC, the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC); national governments; experts and the fishing industry.

Activities include:

- Assessing cetacean bycatch and gap analysis, to inform RFMOs on the scale and scope of cetacean bycatch issues in relevant tuna fisheries.

- Building regional capacity and awareness on cetacean bycatch and available solutions
- Collaboratively developing recommendations to address cetacean bycatch for consideration by multi-lateral environmental and fisheries agreements

The Secretariat welcomes governments and relevant stakeholders to support or engage with this project.

7.3.2 FAO Factsheets on Marine Mammal Bycatch Mitigation Techniques

BMI members participated in a workshop organized by FAO to develop Technical Guidelines to reduce and prevent bycatch of marine mammals in capture fisheries. The guidelines are on the FAO website ([here](#)).

In early 2022, FAO contracted the IWC Secretariat to produce text and illustrations for 15 factsheets to promote the guidelines. The draft factsheets will be reviewed by the BMI Expert Panel during a virtual workshop in the first week of November 2022, and the final versions will be submitted to FAO by the end of November 2022. They will then be published online as part of the FAO factsheet series.

The Netherlands, supported by Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, UK and USA thanked Tarzia, Langerock and Passadore for their work. They acknowledged the important work of the IWC to prevent bycatch of Vulnerable and Endangered species, such as franciscana (*Pontoporia blainvillei*) and humpback dolphin (*Steno lentiginosus*).

Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) also speaking on behalf of 12 other organisations, Animal Welfare Institute, Cetacean Society International, Fundacion Cethus, Humane Society International (HSI), Instituto de Conservacion de Ballenas, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), OceanCare, Pro Wildlife, Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), Whaleman Foundation, Whales Alive, and World Wildlife Fund also thanked Tarzia, Langerock and Passadore for their work.

They noted the Critically Endangered state of vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*) and Maui dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus hectori maui*) and stressed that current protections for vaquita and Maui dolphins are not preventing declines in these populations and there was an urgent need for countries to remove all gillnets.

The CC Chair noted the urgent need for action with regards the vaquita.

The SC Chair echoed comments on the importance of the BMI, thanked Tarzia and Langerock, and welcomed Passadore. He recalled that the BMI had been discussed by the SC for several years and that reports were on the IWC website. The need for funds was stressed and the SC Chair urged Contracting Governments to work with industry to address bycatch which he considered to be probably the greatest threat to cetaceans.

The CC **noted** the progress on the 4-year workplan, approved the updated Terms of Reference for the Bycatch Expert Panel and supported the engagement of the BMI in the Common Oceans Project with the various partners.

8. WHALE WATCHING

8.1 Report from the Conservation Committee's Standing Working Group on Whale Watching

The Standing Working Group on Whale Watching (SWG-WW) Chair introduced the report (CC/68/8.1/01). It was confirmed that the inclusion of SC members in the SWG-WW had been discussed in 2021 and it had been agreed that the Convenor of the WW Sub-Committee and either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the SC would participate. The Chair indicated that having served for a long period they would welcome a successor.

8.1.1 Update on the Whale Watching Handbook and Editorial Protocol

8.1.2 Workplan, particularly promotion and communication of the Whale Watching Handbook

The Chair and SWG-WW Chair acknowledged the work of Gianna Minton, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and other contributors to the Handbook as well as its funders (the UK, USA and CMS).

The SWG-WW Chair noted that since its launch in October 2018, work on the Handbook had focused on content consolidation, expansion and translation. It was indicated that the Handbook now included the details and abstracts of 501 reports and peer-reviewed journal articles on whale watching and, as of April 2022, thanks to generous support from the CMS, all existing content had been translated from English into French and Spanish. Future updates to the Handbook will be carried out in accordance with the Editorial Protocol (Annex 2 CC/68/8.1/01), which was discussed by the SC and for which the CC's endorsement was sought. It was noted that funding would be required to support further updates and translations, as well as promotion. There have been an average of 170 visits per day to the Handbook webpage from a total of 205 countries, however the French and Spanish versions have not received as many visitors as the English version and therefore promotion of the translated versions is a priority. Other opportunities to raise awareness of the Handbook within specific audiences are being sought and it will be promoted on social media.

The Secretariat noted that the promotional plan for the Handbook is scheduled to be updated annually and that the next update is due shortly. It was indicated that the key audiences targeted were tourism and whale watching operators, managers and regulators, and the general public. Recent promotional activities were summarised, and suggestions are welcomed for further promotion, noting that although use of the Handbook was growing, this had been slow. The SC discussions on the importance of increasing awareness of the Commission's work on whale watching were welcomed. These discussions had identified priority areas for promotion as South and Central America, Africa and Asia and had highlighted social media and podcasts as key tools. The CC and SC would be collaborating further with regard to promotion of the Handbook and wider work on whale watching.

Belgium, the Dominican Republic and New Zealand welcomed the Handbook and thanked those involved in its development. New Zealand noted that the Handbook had been particularly useful for communities dependent on whale watching as a source of income as they restarted their enterprises following the disruption caused by the pandemic. Belgium offered its support with regard to promotion of the Handbook, and Brazil indicated that it would be engaging with the other Portuguese-speaking Contracting Governments to translate the Handbook into Portuguese and promote it to operators in those countries.

The CC **endorsed** the Whale Watching Workplan and the Editorial Protocol for the Whale Watching Handbook (Annex 1 and 2 CC/68/8.1/01).

8.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

The SC Chair confirmed that funding from the SC research budget had been allocated to promotion of the Handbook pending approval by the Commission.

8.3 IWC Principles and Guidelines for Whale Watching

The IWC Principles and Guidelines for Whale Watching were introduced in 1996 in order to help guide the development of whale watching regulations around the world. At its meeting in 2018 (SC67B), the SC recognised that the Principles and Guidelines urgently needed updating including to address swim-with-cetacean operations and emerging technologies such as drones. The SC subsequently endorsed revisions to the Principles and Guidelines in 2019 at SC68A and commended these to the CC. The

principles were discussed at the 2020 meeting of the CC. Both the SC WW Sub-Committee and SWG-WW had further opportunity to review the Principles during 2021 and these were endorsed at SC68D (2022).

The SWG-WW Chair noted that proposed revisions to the Principles and Guidelines resulting from the consultations during the previous intersessional period are in Annex 3 (CC/68/8.1/01).

The Brazilian Humpback Whale Institute, while commending the Commission's work on whale watching, suggested that the Principles could be subject to consultation with whale watching operators around the world.

The Chair **confirmed** that good progress had been made on the Principles and Guidelines. The CC **endorsed** the IWC Principles and Guidelines for Whale Watching in Annex 3 (CC/68/8.1/01).

9. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANS

The IWC adopted CMPs in 2008 as an adaptive, flexible and tailored management tool to improve the conservation outcomes for the most at-risk cetacean populations. The two main bodies responsible for progressing the Commission's work on CMPs are the Conservation Committee's Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans (SWG-CMP) and the Scientific Committee's Sub-Committee on Cetacean Stocks That Are or Might Be the Subject of Conservation Management Plans (SC-CMP).

9.1 Progress Report by the SWG-CMP

The SWG-CMP Chair introduced document CC/68/9.1/01 reporting on progress made by the SWG-CMP. CMPs are in place for five vulnerable cetacean populations so far (see 9.2).

This includes a CMP for Amazon River dolphins-developed by governments of Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru- which was endorsed by the SC at SC68C and agreed by the Commission at the Virtual Special Meeting in September 2021. This is the first CMP for river dolphin species and the SWG-CMP Chair registered thanks to the range state governments for their efforts.

The SWG-CMP Chair also thanked all CMP range state governments and CMP coordinators for their leadership in progressing important CMP conservation projects, research and stakeholder engagement and for maintaining their efforts throughout the pandemic, the SC-CMP for its advice, and the IWC Secretariat's Lead for Programme Development for their support of this program.

9.1.1 CMP Workplan 2022-2024

9.1.2 Thematic Strategic Plan and Handbook for CMPs

The 2014-2020 CMP Workplan was extended to 2022 due to the postponement of IWC68 (Annex 1 CC/68/9.1/01). Progress against this extended Workplan was reported followed by a presentation of the draft 2022-2024 Workplan (Annex 2) and the draft Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (CC/68/9.1.2/01). The Strategic Plan is a living document that will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. The six priorities are set out in the document: programme leadership and management; reporting, monitoring and evaluation; programme design; partnerships; communications and visibility; and strengthening financing.

It was noted that the CMP Handbook was being developed to help countries navigate the CMP nomination and development process. The handbook would be published online when available and updated on an ongoing basis.

The CC **agreed** that it would be helpful to nominate a Vice-Chair of the SWG-CMP that would require amendments to the Working Methods. The CC **endorsed** the 2022-2024 CMP Workplan (Annex 2 CC/68/9.1/01) and the 2022-2032 Strategic Plan (CC/68/9.1.2/01).

9.2 Progress on current CMPs

9.2.1 Western North Pacific Gray Whale CMP

9.2.1.1 UPDATE FROM RANGE STATES

The USA noted that the CMP, originally drafted in 2010, was being updated and would take into account the outcomes of the postponed workshop, now tentatively planned for 2023. The Workshop will include stakeholders from NGOs, businesses and country representatives. The USA suggested that it would be valuable to update the Memorandum of Co-operation concerning the CMP, which was signed by IWC Commissioners from Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and the USA (five of the eight range states) in 2014.

9.2.1.2 SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SC Chair recognised the international co-operation effort that went into the CMP and commended all those countries involved.

The CC **agreed** that the Western North Pacific gray whale CMP be updated using the outcomes of the SC's five-year review and that the 'Memorandum of Cooperation concerning Conservation Measures for the Western Gray Whale' be revitalized.

9.2.2 Western South Atlantic Southern Right Whale CMP

9.2.2.1 UPDATE FROM RANGE STATES

Argentina, on behalf of the Co-ordinator of the CMP (Brazil), commented that it is in a process of revision, and that it was updated at a workshop held in Curitiba, Brazil in June 2022. The report of this workshop and the updated CMP will be presented to the next SC meeting for endorsement.

9.2.2.2 SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SC Chair recognised the international co-operation effort that goes into the CMP and research and commended all those countries involved.

9.2.3 Eastern South Pacific Southern Right Whale CMP

9.2.3.1 UPDATE FROM RANGE STATES

Chile provided an update on the work on the CMP since 2018. An MoU, signed by Chile and Peru has been translated into English and will be posted on the IWC website, reinforcing the work done by the two countries.

For the six-year review of the CMP, a virtual expert workshop reviewed data on the population and updated the scientific information (CC/68/REP/SRW/01) and an in-person coordination meeting was held in Lima, Peru (CC/68/REP/RWCMP/01). Another workshop also held in Lima, Peru shared experiences on whale watching and reviewed existing regulations. This latter workshop report will be submitted to the next SC meeting.

During the coordination meeting, an Implementation Strategy for 2023-2024 was also developed. Priority actions identified include completing the 6-year review, agreeing on an update of CMP actions, holding the 5th and 6th co-ordination meetings and continuing with the acoustic monitoring programme.

Other proposed actions include, *inter alia*, additional training sessions on entanglement response and the drafting of protocols concerning the collection of biopsies and samples for consideration by the SC.

The CC **endorsed** the 2023-2024 Implementation Strategy for the South-east Pacific Southern Right Whale CMP.

9.2.3.2 SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SC look forward to receiving an update at their next meeting.

9.2.4 Franciscana CMP

9.2.4.1 UPDATE FROM RANGE STATES

Argentina introduced this item and reported that, based on Commission requirements, the CMP is under review. Three meetings have taken place to progress this review; two of these were virtual and one was in-person in June 2022. The results of this process have been submitted to SC for review. An update on the CMP action to undertake a public awareness campaign was provided, and the video produced for this was presented. Argentina thanked the Secretariat and all those who helped with the CMP, and those who had worked on the campaign.

9.2.4.2 SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SC expect to finalise the review of the franciscana dolphin CMP at their next meeting.

The CC endorsed the franciscana campaign.

9.2.5 South American River Dolphins CMP

9.2.5.1 UPDATE FROM RANGE STATES

The SC Vice-Chair presented an update on behalf of the newly appointed co-ordinator noting the progress made on consolidating existing, and gathering new, information on habitat use and threats. The use of acoustic deterrent devices is being assessed to determine their effectiveness in reducing bycatch, and eight animals have been satellite tagged to better understand habitat use.

Brazil noted that they are involved in three of the five current CMPs and are working on a voluntary contribution supporting CMP work, which will be announced soon. Brazil encouraged other countries to support this important initiative.

9.2.5.2 SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SC Vice-Chair noted that the Brazil piracatinga fishery moratorium has now been lifted after seven years. The take of river dolphins, to use as bait in this fishery, is a cause for concern. The SC previously recommended that all efforts be made to reinstate the piracatinga fishery moratorium in Brazil. The SC commended the progress of the South American River Dolphins CMP to date and welcomed the appointment of the full-time Co-ordinator.

9.3 Priority species for future CMPs

The SWG-CMP Chair noted that the SC has recommended several species that would benefit from CMPs. The IWC process allows range states to proceed straight to CMP development, rather than requiring a nomination, if the CMP has been recommended by the SC. The SWG-CMP was encouraged by the progress for some of these species and populations, and thanked NGOs and other multilateral organisations, including CMS and Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) for their involvement in the CMP development.

9.3.1 Arabian Sea Humpback whales

The SWG-CMP Chair noted that the Environment Society of Oman and the Arabian Sea Network are continuing to engage with government and industry stakeholders.

Argentina reported that they, and the IWC Secretariat, have been invited to a workshop, in late November 2022, focussing on this species, which includes participation from government and industry stakeholders in Oman.

9.3.2 Mediterranean Fin whales

9.3.3 Mediterranean Sperm whales

The SWG-CMP Chair noted that the development of both the Mediterranean fin whale and Mediterranean sperm whale CMPs were being led by range states that are signatories of ACCOBAMS. ACCOBAMS is progressing development of both CMPs including organising stakeholder workshops.

9.3.4 Asian River dolphins

The SWG-CMP Chair noted the WWF's River Dolphin Initiative and South Asian River Dolphin Task Team considered the critically endangered small cetaceans that inhabit river estuaries and restricted coastal habitats of Asia as possible candidates for a CMP. In addition, the SC has expressed concerns about the threats facing these species.

The SC Vice-Chair noted that the South American River Dolphins CMP full time co-ordinator has been assisting range states of Asian river dolphins. At a meeting held in Pakistan in October 2022, Cambodia had agreed to champion the development of the CMP for this species, and it is hoped there will be progress soon.

9.3.5 Central American Humpback whales

The SWG-CMP noted that Panama and Mexico, along with other range states were making progress through expert workshops.

Panama provided an update on the development of the Central American Humpback whale CMP. A workshop took place in March 2020 in Panama, with both Contracting Governments and non-Contracting Governments invited. As part of this, a list of the available scientific information was created and a draft CMP proposal for SC was completed. Countries continue to work virtually to complete all required information. A subsequent workshop was held on management governance, co-ordination and legislation. This initiative was presented to the SWG-CMP and supported by the SC in 2021. A third workshop is proposed following IWC68 to analyse new data obtained over the last two years and consider monitoring methods and management tools to implement the CMP.

Panama thanked the Secretariat for supporting the workshop and the SC and all relevant Contracting and non-Contracting Governments for their commitment.

The SC welcomed progress on the Central American Humpback whale CMP as it was a priority, and clarified the process for SC endorsement, noting that there was still further work to do before this stage.

9.3.6 Populations requiring further research

No updates on populations requiring further research were presented.

9.4 CMP financial update

The SWG-CMP Chair noted that during the intersessional period between 2019 and 2022, four funding requests for CMPs from the Commission's Voluntary Conservation Fund were approved. These were:

- In 2019 and 2020, £8,000 pounds for Co-ordinator funding for the Eastern South Pacific southern right whale CMP
- In 2020, £9,600 for co-ordinator funding for the Western South Atlantic southern right whale CMP
- In 2021, £5,600 for a public awareness campaign for the franciscana dolphin CMP

It was highlighted that £76,186 pounds remains available for CMPs in the Voluntary Conservation Fund.

10. SHIP STRIKES

The Chair recalled that at IWC57 in 2005, the CC agreed to address whales being killed or seriously injured by ship strikes, recognising that the issue is also considered by the SC through its Non-Deliberate Human Induced Mortality Sub-committee. The CC established the Working Group on Ship Strikes (WG-SS) which has reported progress regularly since 2006.

10.1 Report from the Working group on Ship Strikes

10.1.1 Ship strikes strategic plan and workplan

Introducing this item, the CC Chair thanked Dave Weller (USA) who stepped down as Chair of the WG-SS in 2020, Russell Leaper who stepped in as temporary Chair of this group until a new Chair was found, and Sharon Livermore (IFAW) who volunteered to take on the Chair's role, which had been agreed intersessionally by the WG.

On behalf of the Chair of the WG-SS, the Secretariat introduced document CC/68/10.1/01. A new draft Strategic Plan for the 2022-2032 period has been developed (SC/68D/HIM/03) updating the original plan in terms of both high-risk populations and areas. The next intersessional workplan outlines priority activities, timetables, proposed roles and duties, and delegates authority as appropriate.

The Secretariat explained that the establishment of a new Expert Panel is proposed to provide scientific and technical advice to the Data Manager and WG-SS in support of the Ship Strikes Workplan. The CC is requested to support the request from VCF funding for the Data Manager position so that the work on ship strikes and strandings can continue.

The WG-SS previously shared the draft Strategic Plan and workplan with the SC at SC68D and the CCPG in July 2022 for assessment and input. Both will be presented to the Commission for endorsement at IWC68.

10.1.2 Engagement with IMO

The Secretariat noted that it, and members of the Committee, have continued to work with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on ship strike related issues. In 2021 (MEPC 77), this included discussion of the creation of a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) in the North Western Mediterranean Sea. As part of the PSSA proposal, associated measures could be included to regulate shipping in a way to reduce the risk of collisions between ships and large cetaceans in this area.

10.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

The SC Chair expressed appreciation to the Secretariat and others for their work liaising with the IMO and maintaining the ship strikes database which is an important tool for the SC.

10.3 Committee discussions and recommendations

The USA, supported by Belgium expressed their support for the IWC's work on ship strikes and thanked Dave Weller, Russell Leaper and Sharon Livermore for their leadership of the WG-SS.

IFAW, also speaking on behalf of OceanCare, noted their support for the WG-SS and the significant progress made in achieving measurable reduction in strikes on the east coast of the US and the Hauraki Gulf in New Zealand. They drew attention to recent announcements by major shipping companies including MSC which is re-routing vessel traffic in the Hellenic Trench and off Sri Lanka, important marine mammal areas for sperm and blue whales respectively, as well as similar recommendations by the German Shipowners Associations towards its Members, and the previous day from the International Chamber of Shipping. They suggested that the CC advises the Commission to recommend Contracting Governments support action to mitigate ship strikes within the IMO and encourage their national shipping associations to adopt ship strike mitigation measures.

The CC **noted** the intersessional progress made by the WG-SS and the SC, **endorsed** the new Ship Strikes Strategic Plan 2022-2032 and the proposed workplan of the WG-SS for 2022-2024, **supported** the establishment of an Expert Panel, and **supported** the funding application for the continuation of the Data Manager position.

11. MARINE DEBRIS

The Chair noted that at IWC63 in 2011 the Commission endorsed a CC recommendation to include a standing agenda item on marine debris. A workshop "Marine Debris: The Way Forward" was held from 3-5 December 2019 in La Garriga, Catalonia, Spain and its recommendations were endorsed by the CC in 2020.

The IWC's work programme on responding to entangled whales is reported separately through the Whale Killing Methods and Welfare Issues Working Group (WKM&WI).

11.1 Future work by the Conservation Committee

The Co-Chair of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Debris (ICG-MD) introduced document CC/68/11/01 (*Report of the CC work on marine debris*), which included a detailed workplan for the intersessional period 2022-2024 and drew attention to the draft Resolution that had been submitted to the Commission on this issue. It was stated that there were growing concerns about an increase in waste related to COVID-19. He thanked everyone who had engaged in the work of the group including the Netherlands (Svoboda) as the Co-Chair of the ICG-MD who would be stepping down from the position.

Argentina, Australia and Austria thanked everyone involved in the work on marine debris, including the ICG-MD Co-Chairs. Australia, Austria, the Dominican Republic and the SC Chair emphasised that marine debris was a critical threat. The SC Chair noted that the SC had made recommendations on this issue, including requesting the Commission support the development of an international legally binding instrument and the Secretariat engage with the work of the intergovernmental committee convened by the UNEP Executive Director. The Dominican Republic noted that it had engaged in global and regional platforms dealing with plastic pollution and had adapted its regulations to respond to plastic pollution and to debris in general.

The Czech Republic, on behalf of the EU Member States Party to the Convention, had submitted a *Draft Resolution on Marine Plastic Pollution (IWC/68/8.1/01)*, which acknowledged the importance of plastic pollution as a priority global concern. It saw an opportunity for the IWC to contribute to the efforts already being made in many other forums by taking a lead in addressing the negative impacts of marine plastic pollution on cetaceans. It noted that some of the main actions proposed were directly linked to the CC, particularly the request to consider facilitating pilot projects on gear marking

in hotspot areas of cetacean entanglement. It stated that it was fully aware that any new requests directed at the IWC Secretariat or Committees would have budget implications and therefore the Resolution focused on linking with other ongoing processes as much as possible. It acknowledged that any additional requests to the SC or the Secretariat should be considered in light of the necessary savings and in the context of other priorities as directed by the Commission.

The CC **endorsed** the workplan for intersessional period 2022-2024.

The CC Chair introduced document CC/68/11/02 (*Proposal to join the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI)*).

The CC **endorsed** the signing by the IWC of the statement of support for the GGGI.

11.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

No further comments required.

12. NEW WORK PROGRAMMES FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

12.1 Anthropogenic underwater noise

The Chair recalled that at IWC67 in 2018, the CC endorsed proposals for further work on anthropogenic underwater noise, including establishment of an ICG to further scope this work and engagement with other organisations. An IWC Resolution on Underwater Noise (Resolution 2018-4) was adopted at IWC67. In 2020 the CC endorsed the interim Workplan of the ICG.

12.1.1 Update from the ICG

12.1.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

12.1.3 Discussion of future work

The Chair of the Anthropogenic Underwater Noise ICG (AUN-ICG) introduced documents CC/68/12.1.1/01 (*Report of the intersessional work on anthropogenic underwater noise*) and CC/68/12.1.1/02 (*Report of the meeting of the AUNWG to develop the workplan*), providing an update on intersessional work such as a virtual meeting in 2020, and a proposed workplan for the 2022-2024 intersessional period.

The Chair of the AUN-ICG noted that six topics of interest had been identified: seismic exploration, vessel noise (from shipping, whale watching and recreational vessels), military sonar, underwater construction (offshore renewables), operational activities (oil platforms and wind turbines), and destruction of ammunition. Two small working groups were established: one to review the activities conducted on anthropogenic underwater noise and another to review existing IWC recommendations and those from other international organisations on the issue of seismic exploration. The group met in April 2021 to examine progress made on seismic exploration, and again in September 2022 to develop the AUN Workplan for the period 2022-2024 (CC/68/12.1/02). A questionnaire to compile global information on marine seismic surveys for hydrocarbon exploration was also developed and approved by the SC, and endorsement from the CC was sought.

The SC Chair noted that the Secretariat and SC have continued to work with the IMO on this issue and the SC has established an intersessional group to assess beaked whales (*Ziphiidae*), which tendered to be more vulnerable to underwater noise.

The SC Chair, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the USA, thanked the AUN-ICG for its work on this topic and the Netherlands expressed its willingness to continue involvement. The USA voiced support for the proposed Workplan and suggested that the questionnaire refer to cetaceans and to specify that the request is regarding seismic surveys for hydrocarbon exploration specifically, and to explain how

the information would be used when it was circulated. The AUN-ICG Chair noted that these suggestions would be incorporated into the questionnaire.

OceanCare, speaking also on behalf of IFAW, thanked and voiced support to the AUN-ICG and reminded the CC that according to the first European Maritime Transport Environmental Report (EMTER) by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) released in September 2021, underwater noise levels had doubled due to shipping in European waters between 2014 and 2019. It stressed the importance of the IWC continuing to work closely with the IMO, in particular on the revision process of the IMO Guidelines to reduce underwater noise emissions generated from shipping. It encouraged the submission of responses to the questionnaire developed by the AUN-ICG.

CMS offered their continued involvement in the ongoing work, noting that it had been working with ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS through their Joint Noise Working Group on a review of the report on best available technology and best environmental practices. A second review was underway following comments from the affiliated industry advisory group.

The Conservation Committee **endorsed** the workplan for the 2022-2024 intersessional period and the use of the questionnaire on marine seismic surveys for hydrocarbon exploration with the additions proposed by the USA.

12.2 Climate Change

Resolution 2009-1 on climate change was adopted at IWC63. This Resolution directs the SC to continue its work on studies of climate change and the impacts of other environmental changes on cetaceans (CO0904). The Commission has noted the importance of collaborating with other relevant international bodies on this topic and initiating specific activities in the future (CO0902). Climate change is identified as a priority area in the CC Strategic Plan. A combined CC/SC virtual workshop on Climate Change was held November/December 2021.

12.2.1 Report of the joint CC/SC workshop on Climate Change

The Chair of the joint CC/SC Intersessional Group on Climate Change introduced document CC/68/12.2.1/01, which reports on progress made by the Intersessional Group, and referenced the summary of the Joint CC/SC Climate Change Workshop (SC/68D/REP/01) (30 November - 3 December 2021, held virtually). The workshop was attended by 66 participants from 21 countries. Although the workshop proceedings would help the Commission to understand this important threat to cetaceans, it was highlighted that the science was developing rapidly, and the workshop had recommended various areas of further research.

Austria, Belgium and New Zealand thanked the Intersessional Group for its work and stated their support for ongoing work, noting the seriousness of the issue and the important role the Commission could play. Austria drew attention to the references to climate change in the IWC's annual State of the Cetacean Environment Report (SOCER). New Zealand noted that a rise in water temperature was arguably the greatest threat faced by the baleen whales in New Zealand waters and voiced their strong support for the IWC-sponsored whale research programmes in the Antarctic Ocean.

CMS thanked the Intersessional Group, noted that they are happy to continue being involved in the work on climate change, and referenced its Resolution 12.21 on Climate Change and Migratory Species, which *inter alia* requests the CMS Secretariat to strengthen synergies with other international organisations including the IWC on climate change issues.

OceanCare (speaking also on behalf of Animal Welfare International, EIA, HSI, IFAW, WDC and WWF International) highlighted the vulnerability of cetaceans to climate change impacts, noting that certain

Antarctic populations were projected to suffer dramatic declines, and called for an urgent response from the IWC.

12.2.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

The SC Chair thanked the Chair of the joint CC/SC Intersessional Group on Climate Change and noted that the SC had endorsed the workshop recommendations, stressing the importance of better understanding the impact of climate change on cetaceans.

12.2.3 Discussion of future work

The Chair of the joint CC/SC Intersessional Group on Climate Change reiterated the need for strong action on climate change, and proposed the establishment of a new Intersessional Group on Climate Change to further develop this area, with the following ToR:

- (1) Take into account the latest information on cetacean populations;
- (2) Provide clear advice on tools to mitigate the negative impact of climate change and build resilience;
- (3) Seek to develop an IWC climate change response programme.

The CC **endorsed** the establishment of this group with the ToR outlined above.

12.3 Chemical pollution

The current SC program, POLLUTION 2025, focuses on multiple stressors and contaminants, using a One Health approach. There was a SC pre-meeting in April 2021, and a workshop was conducted in November 2021.

12.3.1 Report from the Pollution 2025 workshop

12.3.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

12.3.3 Discussion of future work

The Secretariat introduced documents CC/68/12.3/01 (*Report of the intersessional work on Chemical Pollution*) and SC/68D/REP/02 (*Report of the Pollution 2025 IWC Intersessional Workshop*).

It noted that chemical pollution was identified as a priority threat in the CC Strategic Plan and was addressed within the SC Sub-Committee on Environmental Concerns.

The Secretariat referenced several SC recommendations that were relevant for the development of a CC workplan on this issue, referring to:

- (i) monitoring and mitigation of chemical pollution and its effects on cetaceans;
- (ii) effects of other stressors which may be exacerbated by exposure to chemical pollution; or
- (iii) actions which could provide new data on exposure to chemical pollution.

In addition, five tasks were proposed:

1. Review published effects of pollution on cetaceans
2. Investigate geographical distribution and identify hotspots of threats due to chemical pollution
3. Identify species and populations most at risk
4. Review information on existing protection
5. Define the role of the CC in addressing chemical pollution

The Secretariat stated that a small group was formed at the virtual CC meeting in 2020 to further develop this priority area, and additional members were invited to join this group. It noted that a review of literature on exposure, impacts, and mitigation approaches was in its final stages, and it was

hoped a paper would be presented to the SC at its next meeting; this paper along with the report and recommendations from the workshop would assist in developing how the CC could engage with this topic.

The Chair **reiterated** the need to reinvigorate the working group on this issue and encouraged additional members to join.

The CC **welcomed** the reports of the intersessional work on chemical pollution (CC/68/12.3/01) and of the Pollution 2025 IWC Intersessional Workshop (SC/68D/REP/02).

13. CETACEANS AND ECOSYSTEM FUNCTIONING

At its 2018 meeting the CCPG Planning Group considered how the CC could address Resolution 2016-3 related to Cetaceans and their Contribution to Ecosystem Functioning. At the CC meeting in 2020 the Committee agreed to a proposal to hold a workshop on the socio-economic value of cetaceans to ecosystem functioning.

13.1 Report of the Workshop on Socio-economic value of cetaceans to ecosystem functioning

The Chair of the Working Group on Cetaceans and Ecosystem Functioning introduced documents CC/68/13/01, which summarises the activity of the WG, and CC/68/REP/SEVCEF/01, reporting on the CC Workshop on Socio-economic Values of Cetaceans to Ecosystem Functioning. The workshop was held virtually in April 2022 and attended by ten speakers and 69 participants, who expressed a broad range of views on the topic. A small working group was established to consider how particular cetacean traits relate to ecosystem functioning and, in turn, their socioeconomic value. The Chair reflected that more research was needed to better establish these links and to understand how they might be impacted by threats such as climate change.

The workshop proposed in the short-term the development of a pilot project to assess the socio-economic values of a single species to simplify the number of services to be valued.

In the medium to long term, the workshop proposed

- to associate valuation methods to specific ecosystem services and assess socio-economic potential (starting with the pilot project);
- to consider the impacts of climate change and any other threat that may affect the role that cetaceans play in ecosystem functioning and model potential socio-economic impacts on different scenarios (through time); and
- start a discussion on the development of financial and institutional frameworks (e.g. Common Asset Trusts) to integrate socio-economic valuation into the cetacean decision-making process and advance proposals to create conservation funding sources that benefit from the ecosystem services provided by cetaceans.

13.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

The SC Chair noted that a joint SC and CMS workshop on the role of cetaceans in ecosystem functioning had been held virtually in April 2021, which focused on more general aspects of ecosystem functioning. A follow-up workshop is planned to consider more specific issues using modelling. The SC Chair thanked the Chair of the Working Group on Cetaceans and Ecosystem Functioning for her work and those in the SC involved with this topic.

During discussions Australia and the Netherlands thanked the WG for its efforts. The Dominican Republic indicated their interest in strengthening understanding of this issue and their support for future work in this area. CMS noted that they were happy to remain involved, and offered a venue for the proposed workshop, although were unsure if this would be possible in April 2023 so would discuss

further with the SC. WDC noted the work they were undertaking with multiple partners to advance knowledge gaps in this area and supported the work proposed by the WG.

13.3 Discussion of future work

The Chair stated that the WG had proposed developing a pilot project to assess the potential contribution of a single cetacean species or population to ecosystem functioning and its socioeconomic value (CC/68/13.3/01), through a workshop prior to IWC69. The proposal suggested an advisory group be formed to develop ToR for a consultancy to conduct the work. The proposal also included a final workshop to present findings of the pilot project and proposed, depending on the timing, that it take place alongside the modelling workshop planned by the SC. The pilot project was expected to cost around £100,000 and this could either come from the VCF or from external sources.

Belgium thanked the Chair of the WG and noted that while it was supportive of the continuation of this work, it did not feel it had sufficient information to be able to endorse the pilot project proposal and would like further clarification of what the consultancy would entail and its financial implications.

The CC **endorsed** the report of the Workshop on Socio-economic Values of Cetaceans to Ecosystem Functioning in principle, but agreed that the proposed pilot project requires further discussion and development before the CC could recommend it is taken forward.

14. SMALL CETACEANS

14.1 Progress under the voluntary fund for small cetacean conservation research

The Commission operates a Voluntary Fund for Small Cetacean Conservation Research. At IWC66, the Commission endorsed the proposal to fund seven new projects and a further was endorsed at IWC67. In 2022, funding was provided for five projects.

Document CC/68/14.1/01 (*An update on the work of the Small Cetacean Voluntary Fund*) is available for this item.

The Convenor of the SC Sub-Committee on Small Cetaceans (SM) gave an update on progress under the Voluntary Fund for Small Cetacean Conservation Research noting that the fund calls for proposals only when there is a certain amount of money in the fund. A call was announced in 2021 and 56 proposals were received, of which only five were funded. These five proposals covered species, areas or issues of particular concern for the SM. Most of the projects have started with one starting next year - they are Ganges river dolphins (*Platanista gangetica*) in India and Nepal, Guiana dolphins (*Sotalia guianensis*) in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, Lahille's bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus gephyreus*) in Argentina, Guiana dolphins in Venezuela and Burmeister's porpoises (*Phocoena spinipinnis*) in Peru.

14.2 Small Cetaceans Task Teams

At its 2014 meeting, the SC agreed to trial a new intersessional approach for situations that are considered a high conservation priority and especially where time is short, and no mitigation actions are in place. Consequently, at its 2015 meeting, the SC developed the ToR for a Small Cetaceans Task Team Initiative to assist the SC in providing timely and effective advice on situations where a population of cetaceans is in danger of a significant decline that may eventually lead to its extinction; the ultimate aim being to ensure that extinction does not occur. In 2020, the CC recommended that Task Teams are made more prominent on the IWC website.

Document CC/68/14.2/01 (*An update on the work of the Task Team Initiative*) is available for this item.

The SM Chair noted that there are two active Task Teams. A third Task Team for the South Asian river dolphin had successfully completed its work, as a CMP is now being developed and these species are also being considered under the CMS Concerted Action Plan. One new Task Team on Lahille's bottlenose dolphin has been established and is expected to make progress over the next 3-5 years. The SM was supportive of the development of an independent consortium which was using recommendations from the African Sousa Task Team to continue work on Atlantic humpback dolphins (*Sousa teuszii*) in West Africa.

Netherlands and Switzerland thanked the SM Chair for her work and emphasized support for the workstream, noting the importance of this work in the SC.

Switzerland, supported by Brazil, considered small cetaceans to be of high importance and that many agenda items could be relevant to these species. Switzerland commended the progress made over the last few years but noted that more progress was needed at the national and regional levels. Switzerland stated that, while small cetaceans are not officially the responsibility of the IWC, it should take responsibility and encouraged work on this to continue.

15. SPECIES OR POPULATIONS OF URGENT OR EMERGING CONCERN

The CC Chair introduced this item, noting that at previous meetings the CCPG and the CC-SC WG have discussed potential ways in which the CC could help with species or populations of critical conservation concern for which urgent action was required, including the vaquita and other species. The groups agreed to develop proposals to be considered by the CC regarding species of critical concern and actions that might be taken.

At IWC67, the CC considered initial proposals to be developed intersessionally and further agreed to add species and populations of emergent and urgent concern as a new standing item on the Commission agenda. There has also been discussion in the SC and in 2020, the CC acknowledged the work to develop templates for statements on three scenarios of extinction and endorsed the proposal for a dedicated IWC webpage on extinctions. The CC has established a small working group to improve IWC response where populations are in decline, especially small, threatened populations.

15.1 Report from the Intersessional working group

15.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

The UK introduced CC/68/15/01 (*The IWC Extinction Initiative*), a joint paper from the CC and SC to ensure proper conservation of whale stocks. Forty-five cetacean species or distinct populations are currently considered to be Critically Endangered or Endangered, due to a variety of factors including bycatch, pollution, climate change, increased shipping and coastal development. IWC faces a greater mandate than any time in the last 75 years. Public engagement is essential to address these challenges. The Extinction Initiative aims to explain clearly, factually and publicly why the SC is concerned about the extinction of a particular species or population. A section of the IWC website has been developed to explain extinction in general terms and actions that the Commission has endorsed in response to each major threat.

A template (Annex A), with pre-agreed sections, has been developed to enable the SC to create a mechanism to issue statements intersessionally on extinction concern for particular species. They would not include calls for specific actions. An example of use of the template is given in Annex B.

The USA and the SC Chair thanked the UK for the report. The USA understood the intent of the work and thought it important to communicate where it seems a population is going extinct. However, it considered that to amplify any message of concern, the message should come from the Commission, rather than a subgroup of it. Australia agreed with the USA summary and thanked the UK and the SC

for their work. It recognised the importance for SC advice to have a strong impact and shared concerns that statements from subsidiary bodies would be interpreted as coming from the Commission.

Austria noted a major task of IWC is to prevent extinction of any cetacean, and that this is an outreach issue. Many SC recommendations have become increasingly urgent, yet these do not reach the general public. This initiative would address that problem. It would also increase IWC visibility and stop IWC being wrong footed if a species becomes extinct, with IWC only able to issue a statement months later.

Argentina noted that some years ago there was an emergency with regards to the vaquita and the Bureau was in the same position of being unable to speed up the communication process. It suggested endorsement of the initial Extinction Initiative process. The UK noted that the IWC had looked previously at how to issue a statement on behalf of a subsidiary body and suggested that the proposal should be endorsed as it stands with a caveat on looking at ways the Commission could release such a statement.

The Conservation Committee **agreed** on:

- The **endorsement** of the Extinction Initiative (with an amendment to the process to seek endorsement from the Commission at biennial meetings or, in urgent intersessional situations, perhaps through a silence procedure).

15.3 Discussion of future work

The CC Vice-Chair introduced CC/68/15.3/01 (*Species or populations of conservation concern*) which considers how the CC can best support efforts to address the biggest challenges to cetacean conservation action. The document references a paper by Robinson and Simmonds (unpublished), and Mark Simmonds, co-author of the paper, summarised the findings.

A survey of worldwide experts concluded conservation challenges vary depending on geography and the species involved. Human impacts were the biggest challenge to cetacean conservation, and insufficient funding and problems in achieving government/stakeholder involvement were the main challenges to solutions. Support from, and collaboration with, local communities and NGOs was noted as highly impactful in positive outcomes of conservation efforts. Cetacean conservation needed to move up the political agenda to make an impact. The question for the CC is whether it can do more to support governments to overcome some of the challenges to implement effective conservation action. Simmonds suggested setting up a working group to address cetacean conservation actions. A list of issues that the working group could consider is included in the document.

The CC Chair noted that participation of local communities is essential to the success of conservation efforts. The SC Chair noted the SC has links with multiple conservation groups.

The CC **endorsed** the establishment of an intersessional group to develop recommendations for how conservation efforts may be made more effective.

16. ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The Executive Secretary introduced IWC/68/14/01/REV1 (*Co-operation with other Organisations*) which provides an update on the Secretariat's engagement with other organisations on issues of mutual interest and highlighted a number of future opportunities.

The Executive Secretary noted that the Commission, SC and CC have adopted numerous recommendations over the years for strengthening engagement with other organisations, which reflects the expanding range of human activities that have an impact on cetacean populations. The IWC is seeking potential solutions to monitor and mitigate population-level impacts of these activities.

The Secretariat, in collaboration with members of the SC, CC and SWGs have been working to carry out these mandates, in addition to exploring newly emerging opportunities.

Five examples were highlighted:

- For shipping impacts, work with the International Maritime Organization on ship strikes and underwater noise.
- For bycatch, work with the Committee on Fisheries of the FAO, including the Regional Secretariat Network, several Regional Fishery Management Organisations and Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).
- For overall ecosystem and environmental issues, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the CMS and its daughter agreements ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS, and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- A growing collaboration with Conférence Ministérielle sur la Coopération Halieutique entre les Etats Africains Riverains de l'Océan Atlantique / The Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT/ATLAFCO) including a pilot internship programme and planning capacity building for at-sea surveys and data analyses. As a result of this programme two interns have now been appointed.

Three formal agreements have been proposed to provide a framework for this work, and two agreements that are in fact contracts for collaborative activities.

The CC Chair **commended** the tremendous improvement in communication with other organisations and noted that IWC was now a key player in the international field. Australia supported by Brazil thanked the Executive Secretary for the hard work in making these links.

17. FUNDING

17.1 Funding opportunities

At IWC65, the Commission endorsed a series of recommendations from the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Strengthening IWC Financing (ICG-SF). These recommendations included, *inter alia*, a proposal for working groups wishing to resource projects to establish budgeted Workplans, and if possible, to identify funding partners. At IWC66, the ICG-SF agreed its Workplan for the intersessional period. At CC 2020 the committee heard a report of the ICG-SF which recommended a review on how to increase IWC capacity for fundraising.

17.1.1 Report on IWC fundraising

The ICG-SF Chair introduced Document CC/68/17.1.1/01 (*Update on Fundraising and the Intersessional Group on Strengthening IWC Finance*). It was noted that an important step in the past year was the recruitment of a fund-raising staff member. This has helped the Secretariat to identify funding opportunities for work endorsed by the Commission including the Scientific Committee Research Fund. It was also noted that the original mandate of the Group was complete and that multiple tools have been developed, including the Code for Ethical Fundraising. It was proposed to transform the ICG-SF into a new group with a mandate to advise the Secretariat in its increased focus on fundraising activities, working in close collaboration with the Budgetary Sub-committee (BSC). The Group should include experts on fund-raising. If the meeting approved this suggestion this should then go to the Finance and Administration Committee(F&A). Following that, the mandate and ToR should be drafted.

The CC **endorsed** the proposal to develop ToR for a new group with a mandate to advise the Secretariat in its increased focus on fundraising activities to present to F&A.

17.2 Progress under the Voluntary Conservation Fund

At IWC65 in 2014 the Commission established a VCF. At IWC67 the Commission agreed a process for allocation of funding and eligibility criteria.

17.2.1 Update on contributions and funding

The Chair of the Steering Group of the Voluntary Conservation Fund (SG-VCF) introduced document CC/68/17.2.1/01 (*Update on Voluntary Conservation Funds*) and noted that, at IWC67, the Commission endorsed changes to the Commission's Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations. This included an update to the project categories, eligibility criteria, evaluation criteria, and allocation process for the VCF and revised ToR for the SG-VCF.

The SG-VCF Chair noted that in 2021, contributions of £119,434 were contributed to the VCF and in 2022, contributions of £13,242 were received. Since IWC67, the main expenditure from the VCF relates to the Whale Watching Handbook, FAO Factsheets and the Ship Strikes Database Co-ordinator. Bycatch costs were reduced due to the impacts of the pandemic, but work is now progressing.

The SG-VCF Chair welcomed further contributions to the VCF.

18. CONSERVATION COMMITTEE OFFICERS

In line with the Conservation Committee Working Methods, the terms of several CC officers will expire at IWC68. In 2020, the CC discussed the process for replacement or reappointment of these officers and agreed in principle that the CC Vice Chair should succeed the CC Chair automatically after the CC Chair has served a set term.

The CC **discussed** the following roles:

- Chair of the Conservation Committee: Catherine Bell (UK) was confirmed.
- Vice-Chair of the Conservation Committee: Miguel Iñiguez (Argentina) was confirmed.
- Chair of the SWG-Bycatch: Anne-Marie Svoboda (Netherlands) was confirmed.
- Chair of the WG-Ship Strikes: Sharon Livermore (IFAW) was confirmed.
- Chair of the SWG-WW: this position remains open.
- Co-Chair of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Debris: Jens Warrie (Belgium) was confirmed.

The CC Chair thanked outgoing chairs for their hard work. Argentina, Belgium, Netherlands, UK and the SC Chair thanked Lorenzo Rojas-Bracho for his work as Chair of the Conservation Committee and welcomed Catherine Bell (UK) as the new Chair and Miguel Iñiguez (Argentina) as the new Vice-Chair. The UK added that the work of the CC significantly contributes to conservation of cetaceans, and while there are currently some critical decisions to take on the budget at IWC68, it might want to revisit the issue of annual meetings in the future.

19. ADOPTION OF REPORT

The report was adopted by correspondence on 18 October 2022.

Appendix 1

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

CC/68/3.1/01	Mid-term Review of the Conservation Committee Strategic Plan 2016-2026
CC/68/3.2/01	Conservation Committee Workplan for 2022-2026
UK CC/68/4.2.1/01 NZ CC/68/4.2.1/02 USA CC/68/4.2.1/03 ARG CC/68/4.2.1/04 KOR CC/68/4.2.1/05	Contracting Government Voluntary Conservation Reports
CC/68/4.2.2/01	Update on the development of the IWC Conservation Database for Voluntary Conservation Reporting
CC/68/5.2/01	Conservation Committee recommendations 2016-2020 with progress
CC/68/7.1/01	Report of the Bycatch Standing Working Group
CC/68/8.1/01	Report of the Standing Working Group on Whale Watching
CC/68/9.1/01	Report of the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans (CMPs)
CC/68/9.1.2/01	Strategic plan for the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) program, 2022 – 2032
CC/68/10.1/01	Report of the Working Group on Ship Strikes
CC/68/10.1/02	Draft Terms of Reference for the Ship Strikes Expert Panel
CC/68/11/01	Report of the Conservation Committees Work on Marine Debris
CC/68/11/02	Proposal to Join the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI)
CC/68/12.1.1/01	Report of the intersessional work on Anthropogenic Underwater Noise
CC/68/12.1.1/02	Report of the meeting of the Anthropogenic Underwater Noise working group (AUNWG) to develop the Workplan (2022-2024), September 2022 Anthropogenic Underwater Noise Working Group (AUNWG)
CC/68/12.2.1/01	Report of the Joint CC/SC Intersessional Group on Climate Change
CC/68/12.3/01	Report of the Intersessional Work on Chemical Pollution
CC/68/13/01	Report of the Working Group on Cetaceans and Ecosystem Functioning
CC/68/13.3/01	Template for Project Proposal and Budget
CC/68/14.1/01	An update on the work of the Small Cetacean Voluntary Fund, 2018-22
CC/68/14.2/01	An update on the work of the Task Team Initiative, 2018-22
CC/68/15/01	A Joint Paper from the Conservation and Scientific Committees
CC/68/15.3/01	Species or populations of Conservation Concern
CC/68/17.1.1/01	Update on Fundraising and the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Strengthening IWC Finance
CC/68/17.2.1/01	Update on Voluntary Conservation Funds
CC/68A/06.4.2/01Rev1	A Review of Regional Fisheries Management Organization Efforts in Addressing Cetacean Bycatch: Report to the International Whaling Commission

CC/68A/INFO/02	A Joint IWC-IUCN-ACCOBAMS workshop to evaluate how the data and process used to identify Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) can assist the IWC to identify areas of high risk for ship strike, April 2019
IWC/68/14/01/REV1	Cooperation with other Organisations
IWC/68/CCWKSP/SUMMARY/EN FR ES	Summaries of Conservation Committee Workshop Reports 2019-2022
IWC/68/REP/CC/01	Report of the Conservation Committee CC68A 2020
SC/68D/HIM/02	Draft Strategic Plan to Mitigate the Impacts of Ship Strikes on Cetacean Populations: 2022-2032
SC/68D/REP/01	Report of the IWC Climate Change Workshop 2021
SC/68D/REP/02	Pollution 2025 IWC Intersessional Workshop, 1-4 November 2021
SC/68B/REP/03	Report of the IWC Workshop on Marine Debris: The Way Forward, December 2019
CC/68/REP/CCSC/01	Report of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group 2021
CC/68/REP/CCSC/02	Report of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group 2022
CC/68/REP/CCPG/01	Report of the Conservation Committee Planning Group 2019
CC/68/REP/CCPG/02	Report of the Conservation Committee Planning Group 2020
CC/68/REP/CCPG/03	Report of the Conservation Committee Planning Group 2022
CC/68/REP/RWCMP/01	Fourth International Coordination Meeting of the Eastern South Pacific Southern Right Whale Conservation Management Plan, Lima, Peru, 5 October 2022
CC/68/REP/SEVCEF/01	Report of the Conservation Committee Workshop on Socio-Economic Values of the Contribution of Cetaceans to the Ecosystem Functioning
CC/68/REP/SRW/01	Report of the Expert Workshop on the Six-Year Review of the Eastern South Pacific Southern Right Whale Conservation Management Plan, September 2022

Appendix 2

AGENDA

1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

- 1.1 Appointment of Chair
- 1.2 Appointment of Rapporteurs
- 1.3 Review of Documents
- 1.4 Observer Participation

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3. CONSERVATION COMMITTEE STRATEGIC PLAN AND WORKPLAN

- 3.1 The Mid-term review and updates to the Strategic Plan
- 3.2 Workplan for the 2022-2024 Biennium and beyond

4. STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

- 4.1 Working Methods of the Conservation Committee
- 4.2 Voluntary Conservation Reports
 - 4.2.1 Contracting member reports
 - 4.2.2 Review of the prototype Conservation Database
- 4.4 WC Governance Review
 - 4.4.1 Latest updates from the WGOE process and recommendations relevant to the CC
 - 4.4.2 Discussion of findings and recommendations

5. JOINT WORKING GROUP OF THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE AND THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Database of Recommendations
- 5.2 Review of implementation of recommendations

6. WHALE SANCTUARIES

7. BYCATCH

- 7.1 Report from the Bycatch Standing Working Group
 - 7.1.1 Progress of the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative workplan
 - 7.1.2 Conservation Committee role in workplan activities
- 7.2 Report from the Scientific Committee
- 7.3 Engagement with RFMOs
 - 7.3.1 GEF/FAO Common Oceans project update
 - 7.3.2 FAO Factsheets on Marine Mammal Bycatch Mitigation Techniques

8. WHALE WATCHING

- 8.1 Report from the Conservation Committee's Standing Working Group on Whale Watching
 - 8.1.1 Update on the Whale Watching Handbook and Editorial Protocol
 - 8.1.2 Workplan, particularly promotion and communication of the Whale Watching Handbook
- 8.2 Report from the Scientific Committee
- 8.3 IWC Principles and Guidelines for Whale Watching

9. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANS

9.1 Progress Report by the SWG-CMP

9.1.1 CMP Work Plan 2022-2024

9.1.2 Thematic Strategic Plan and Handbook for CMPs

9.2 Progress on current CMPs

9.2.1 Western Pacific Gray Whale CMP

9.2.1.1 Update from range States

9.2.1.2 Scientific Committee update

9.2.2 Southwest Atlantic Southern Right Whale CMP

9.2.2.1 Update from range States

9.2.2.2 Scientific Committee update

9.2.3 South-east Pacific Southern Right Whale CMP

9.2.3.1 Update from range States

9.2.3.2 Scientific Committee update

9.2.4 Franciscana CMP

9.2.4.1 Update from range States

9.2.4.2 Scientific Committee update

9.2.5 South American River Dolphins CMP

9.2.5.1 Update from range states

9.2.5.2 Scientific Committee update

9.3 Priority species for future CMPS

9.3.1 Arabian Sea Humpback whales

9.3.2 Mediterranean Fin whales

9.3.3 Mediterranean Sperm whales

9.3.4 Asian River dolphins

9.3.5 Central American Humpback whales

9.3.6 Populations requiring further research

9.4 CMP financial update

10. SHIP STRIKES

10.1 Report from the Ship Strikes Working Group

10.1.1 Ship strikes strategic plan and workplan

10.1.2 Engagement with IMO

10.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

10.3 Committee discussions and recommendations

11. MARINE DEBRIS

11.1 Future work by the Conservation Committee

11.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

12. NEW WORK PROGRAMMES FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

12.1 Anthropogenic underwater noise

12.1.1 Update from the ICG

12.1.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

12.1.3 Discussion of future work

12.2 Climate Change

12.2.1 Report of the joint CC/SC workshop on Climate Change

12.2.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

12.2.3 Discussion of future work

12.3 Chemical pollution

12.3.1 Report from the Pollution 2025 workshop

12.3.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

12.3.3 Discussion of future work

13. CETACEANS AND ECOSYSTEM FUNCTIONING

13.1 Report of the Workshop on Socio-economic value of cetaceans to ecosystem functioning

13.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

13.3 Discussion of future work

14.. SMALL CETACEANS

14.1 Progress under the voluntary fund for small cetacean conservation research

14.2 Small Cetaceans Task Teams

15. SPECIES OR POPULATIONS OF URGENT OR EMERGING CONCERN

15.1 Report from the Intersessional working group

15.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

15.3 Discussion of future work

16. ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

17. FUNDING

17.1 Funding opportunities

17.1.1 Report on IWC fundraising

17.2 Progress under the Voluntary Conservation Fund

17.2.1 Update on contributions and funding

18. CONSERVATION COMMITTEE OFFICERS

19. ADOPTION OF REPORT

Appendix 3

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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