

### IWC WHALE WATCHING WORKPLAN 2022-2024

The Whale Watching Strategic Plan provides the overarching vision for the period 2018-2024. High level objectives presented in the workplan below directly correspond to the three objectives identified as the key components of the Strategic Plan. There is a suite of short-, medium-, and long-term actions associated with each objective. Short-term actions are taken to be those which can be delivered within two years of the adoption of the Strategic Plan, with medium-term actions delivered over five years. Two long-term actions are identified in this iteration of the Strategic Plan: (1) Continued development of the digital Whale Watching Handbook, and (2) Development of an integrated research plan.

The Whale Watching Handbook (Handbook), the SC Sub-committee on Whale Watching, and the Standing Working Group on Whale Watching will be important mechanisms through which these objectives can be achieved.

High level objective & Description of activity	Timeframe			Lead	IWC community involved	Budget per year/total budget	Potential funding source(s)	Priority Core=essential Top High Medium
	2022	2023	2024					
<b>Objective 1: Information Sharing</b> Identify methods to facilitate cooperation and information/expertise-sharing between Contracting Parties and others to support the development of a responsible whale-watching sector, including the provision of benefits to local communities.								
1.1 Use the Handbook to continue to improve industry and public access to data, information, and research results	x	x	x	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching	SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching, Secretariat			
1.2 Ongoing maintenance of the IWC WW Handbook including: -Scoping of new content	x	x	x	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching, Secretariat	SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching			

-Regular updating the searchable table of literature -Modest updates to existing content requested by countries/data providers								
1.3 Further development of IWC WW Handbook including: - development of new content		x	x	Secretariat	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching, SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching			
1.4 Promotion of the WW Handbook and related resources (communication strategy) - Researchers - Whale watching managers - Naturalists - Operators - Public	x	x	x	Secretariat, Standing Working Group on Whale Watching,	SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching, IWC community			Top
1.5 Review of implementation of the IWC Strategic Plan to date to help identify priorities. * Within two years of commencing work on the actions outlined, this Working Group aims to undertake a comprehensive review of outputs to allow activities to be refocused, if required.	x			Standing Working Group on Whale Watching,	SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching, Secretariat			
1.6 Draft new Strategic Plan 2025-2035 (10year)			x	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching,	SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching, Secretariat			Medium
<b>Objective 2: Capacity Building and International Collaboration</b> Support the development of a responsible whale watching sector and								

the provision of benefits to local communities.								
2.1 Identify, on a regional basis, specific capacity building, research and development needs. In particular, those (or including those) providing long-term benefits for the livelihood of local communities.	x	x	x	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching	BMI (Secretariat), SC Sub-committee on WW			
2.2 Continue to Support the IORA Network on Sustainable Whale Watching	x	x	x	SC Sub-committee on WW, intersessional correspondence group for cooperation with IORA	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching			High
2.3 Identify and list in the Handbook, funding and development organisations able to offer assistance relevant to the establishment and maintenance of whale watching operations at varying scales.	x	x	x	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching	Secretariat, SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching, IWC community			
2.4 Work with relevant international bodies, industry associations and outside expertise, to develop guidance and training tools in the Handbook that address occupational health and safety aspects of whale watching operations.	x	x	x	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching	Secretariat, SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching, IWC community			
2.5 Investigate and promote best practices on cost-effective monitoring and compliance regimes and alternative strategies to promote environmentally responsible whale watching.	x	x	x	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching, Secretariat	SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching, IWC community			
2.6 Identify and work with key partners and priority organizations who might	x	x	x	Secretariat, Standing Working Group on Whale Watching	SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching, IWC community			

contribute to the vision and objectives/goals.								
<b>Objective 3: Research and Data Collection</b> Continue to develop the necessary research principles and tools to assist the collection of data important to ensuring that whale watching (1) does not significantly and adversely affect the behaviours and fitness of individual cetaceans or populations or their habitats and (2) realizes its potential benefits, e.g., educating the public, positively affecting attitudes toward conservation, improving local economies								
3.1 Continue the Modelling and Assessment of Whale Watching Impacts (MAWI) initiative, to develop tools and methodologies to assist researchers and managers in their efforts to assess potential impacts of whale watching on cetaceans and to mitigate them. This initiative is ongoing and could focus on: x <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigating modelling methods to link short- (e.g., behavioural reactions) and medium-term (e.g., changes in population distribution) responses with potential impacts from whale watching to long-term (i.e., &gt;10 to 20 years) consequences (e.g., vital rates).</li> </ul>				SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching, MAWI	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing standard data collection methodologies, including from platforms of opportunity.</li> <li>Identifying key locations for whale watching research projects and programmes, taking into consideration logistics, capacity and management urgency;</li> </ul>								
<p>3.2 Develop a long-term integrated research programme to better understand the potential impacts of whale watching on the demographic parameters of cetacean populations. Seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate whether there is a causal relationship between whale watching exposure and the survival and vital rates of exposed cetacean individuals and populations;</li> <li>Understand the mechanisms involved in causal effects, if they exist, in order to define a framework for improved management</li> </ul>	x	x	x	SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching			
<p>3.3 Develop processes and mechanisms for whale watching activities to collect and provide scientifically robust and useful data to researchers and research programmes</p>	x	x	x	SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching			
<p>3.4 Develop an approach (e.g., hold an intersessional workshop; establish a joint intersessional working group) to integrate social and ecological scientific research within the IWC to inform whale</p>	x	x	x	Standing Working Group on Whale Watching	SC Sub-Committee on Whale Watching			

watching management and promote potential benefits.								
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