



Circular Communication to Members of the Scientific Committee
and identified holders of IWC catch data
IWC.SC.246

Catch and Infractions data sharing policies – update

The IWC Secretariat's Statistics and Modelling Department continues to review its data-sharing policies (see Circular IWC.ALL.450). This review has raised concerns that catch data are potentially sensitive data and should therefore be processed and shared in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). This is due to the location (spatial) information included in the data that – alone or if combined with other information - could be traced back to vessels and therefore individuals. As a result, the data can no longer be shared under the Creative Commons licences.

The nature of the whaling catch data makes them difficult to classify in a data group in terms of UK GDPR and the Secretariat is still reviewing the appropriate data policies, with the assistance of [IT Governance](#). Similar concerns have been raised with respect to the appropriate handling of the IWC infractions data. The IWC has also become aware of the different national legislations of our members regarding data sharing, and we will be addressing this issue in consultation with member countries. The goal of this review is to find a solution that will allow the Scientific Committee and other scientists to access these data and continue their research whilst fully complying with our legal obligations.

Until the data policies are finalised, the catch data will be treated as sensitive personal data. The IWC Secretariat therefore requests that scientists who have been given access to the data in the past refrain from any publication or sharing of the data in a disaggregated format that could result in the identification of individuals.

The Secretariat is working diligently to resolve this issue and to minimize any inconvenience to scientific research. If this issue applies to you and you have any concerns about publishing the catch data, please contact the Secretariat at statistics@iwc.int as soon as possible. Please send any other questions to the same email. We thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Dr Rebecca Lent
Executive Secretary