

**Secretariat Updates Paper**  
Bureau Meeting - 4 March 2024

1. **Status of Financial contributions – Bureau Agenda Item 4 – see document [BUR/2403/04/01 - Update on Contributions](#)**
2. **IWC69 Preparations – Bureau Agenda Item 6**

### Key dates

100-day deadline is 15 June 2024 - The Draft Provisional Agendas are sent out for comments, to be received within 30 days (15 July) plus a call for proposed Schedule Amendments and Resolutions.

60-day deadline is 25 July 2024 - Schedule Amendments and Resolutions have to be circulated 60 days in advance of the meeting. The Secretariat normally requests documents 10 days in advance of this date (15 July) in order to have them translated and formatted in good time.

### Virtual Sub Committees

The dates for the virtual sub committees have been circulated to the Commission to allow for participants to hold availability (IWC.CCG.1585). A proposal on the timetable for these meetings has been drafted in consultation with the Bureau for discussion at the March Bureau meeting. The proposed timeline is as follows:

Day	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<b>Date</b>	28-Aug-24	29-Aug-24	30-Aug-24	02-Sep-24	03-Sep-24	04-Sep-24	05-Sep-24
<b>Session 1</b>	14:00-15:30	14:00-15:30	14:00-15:30	14:00-15:30	14:00-15:30	14:00-15:30	14:00-15:30
	WG0E1	BSC1	F&A1	WKM&WI	CC2	CC4	CC6
<b>Session 2</b>	16:00-17:30	16:00-17:30	16:00-17:30	16:00-17:30	16:00-17:30	16:00-17:30	16:00-17:30
	WG0E2	BSC2	F&A2	CC1	CC3	CC5	F&A3

### IWC69 In-person Meeting Arrangements

There will be an in-person meeting of the Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-Committee on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, followed by a week of plenary and other Commission meetings (Private Commissioners etc.) from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> to Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September. These will be held at the Hotel Los Delfines, Lima, Peru.

The Secretariat is working with the hosts to clarify the visa application process and details of this and hotel booking will be communicated to the Commission in the week commencing 26/02/24.

### Secretariat suggestions to maximise effectiveness at future Commission Meetings

IWC69 will be the first full Commission meeting to hold virtual sub-committees and a reduced, four day plenary. To best facilitate this new format and maximise the effectiveness of the biennial meeting, the Secretariat has analysed past practice at the IWC and best practice in other fora. The Bureau may wish to consider the following suggestions:

- I. Document production and presentation: 148 documents were presented to IWC68. To reduce the number of documents presented at both sub-committee and plenary meetings, the Secretariat could cease automatic rollover of documents which have been presented at previous meetings and make a fresh assessment of which documents are relevant to progress the agenda for IWC69. It may also assist delegates if documents are clearly divided into those directly prepared for decision making on specific items in the agenda and those which are provided for background information.
- II. Recording decisions and main outcomes: it is routine practice at several IGOs to prepare daily reports recording main outcomes at the end of each day's plenary session, and making these available the following day. There is still likely to be a number of outcomes that are not agreed until the final day, but a daily report would allow us to track and report progress, including decisions taken, to Commissioners in a clearer way. These daily reports would be approved at the end of the meeting by the Commission. For the report of the last day, the Commission could either delegate approval by the Chair or to approve it via email after the meeting.
- III. Private Commissioners Meeting: this meeting fulfils a vital function, however decisions reached in PComms have no record and have led to confusion in the past. We propose that any official decisions reached at PComms are brought forward to Plenary by the Chair so they can be formally recorded in the meeting report. To better support the Chair and facilitate the PComms meeting, a rapporteur or Secretariat support in addition to the Executive Secretary could be provided when needed. In both cases the rapporteur or additional staff would be bound by the same code of confidentiality.
- IV. Executive Secretary Presentation: in common with other IGOs and in order to maximise Secretariat accountability and transparency, a report and a short presentation to plenary is proposed, to be delivered by the Executive Secretary, summarising the support provided during the intersessional period and progress against implementation of the Commission's decisions, mandate and recommendations.


### **3. Other Secretariat updates – Bureau Agenda Item 7**

#### **Update on the sale of the Red House**

- I. With great disappointment the Secretariat heard on 13 February that the buyer for the Red House has withdrawn their offer. This was primarily due to objections on planning applications but also due to some financial challenges.
- II. The Secretariat has taken immediate actions to re-market the Red House with another agent and to enter into discussion with the local planning authorities to understand what types of renovation work would be acceptable for them to approve.
- III. During the time the Secretariat were waiting for the completion of the sale to happen, we found an appropriate lease office, with a few hundred yards of the Red House. This is on the first floor of a multi-office building.

- IV. The Secretariat is pursuing the lease on the office space and to make arrangements to vacate the Red House. Unfortunately, the Red House requires considerable improvements and maintenance work and in its present state does not provide suitable conditions for the Secretariat to support the important work of the Commission.
- V. The Secretariat are also in discussion with DEFRA to receive confirmation that their £70k rent support will continue in the future.

#### **Personnel update**

- I. The Secretariat is pleased to inform that the new Executive Secretary, Martha Rojas Urrego, started on 30 October 2023.
- II. We also said farewell to Rebecca Lent as she handed over the keys to Martha Rojas on 10 November 2023.
- III. Camille Cube finished the second part of her Summer internship at the end of December 2023, this role was covered by voluntary funds from a NOAA Co-operative Agreement.
- IV. 2-week Winter intern from Crankstart, Rowan Dennett, worked with external affairs and communications helping to audit the 365 groups metadata.
- V. 

#### **External engagement**

Following the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), the IWC engaged in the Bern III Conference on Cooperation among Biodiversity-related Conventions for the Implementation of the KMGBF, held in Bern on 23-25 January 2024. After consultation with the Bureau, the IWC was represented by Bureau members and Commissioners from Ghana, Argentina, the Netherlands and Switzerland, and by the Secretariat. The aim was to ensure that the science and stewardship of the IWC contributes to and is supported in the implementation and monitoring of the framework.

The Secretariat also participated in the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Migratory Species, held in Uzbekistan on 12-17 February 2024, further building collaboration with our long-standing partner on issues of common interest related to assessments, conservation and sustainable management of cetaceans and their habitat.