

Extension of the ASW Strike/Catch Limits at IWC69

Submitted by USA

Background

At IWC67 in 2018, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) adopted sub-paragraph 13(a)(6) of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) Schedule, which states (Chair's Report of the 67th Meeting at p. 17):

Commencing in 2026, and provided the appropriate Strike Limit Algorithm has been developed by then, strike/catch limits (including any carry forward provisions) for each stock identified in sub-paragraph 13(b) shall be extended every six years, provided:

- (a) the Scientific Committee advises in 2024, and every six years thereafter, that such limits will not harm that stock;**
- (b) the Commission does not receive a request from an ASW country relying on the stock ('relevant ASW country'), for a change in the relevant catch limits based on need; and**
- (c) the Commission determines that the relevant ASW country has complied with the approved timeline and that the information provided represents a status quo continuation of the hunt.**

The IWC made an affirmative decision at that time to automatically extend the existing strike/catch limits into the future if the specified conditions are met and the appropriate Strike Limit Algorithms (SLAs) have been developed.

Provided such conditions are met and the SLAs have been developed, the Commission will need a process to extend the ASW catch/strike limits at IWC69 (and future meetings) to apply the strike/catch limits in paragraph 13(b) to the 2026 through 2031 six-year block and future periods.

Proposed Steps

Late March: The IWC Chair and Vice Chair, together with the ASW Sub-Committee Chair, will issue a circular to all Commissioners, Contracting Governments, and accredited Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organization observers setting forth and outlining the process leading up to and during IWC69 for the extension of ASW catch/strike limits pursuant to Paragraph 13(a)(6) of the Schedule. The circular would outline the proposed process for the first use of the automatic extension in paragraph 13(a)(6) of the Schedule. The circular would outline how each of conditions (a), (b), and (c) have been or will be met and that the Commission determination for subparagraph (c) would occur as its own agenda item at IWC69.

The circular would notify the Commission that no ASW contracting government so far has submitted a request to change the relevant catch limits based on need (for meeting condition (b)). It would also note

that any ASW contracting government proposing to change the strike/catch limit must do so at least two weeks prior to the upcoming Scientific Committee meeting (**by April 7**), in accordance with the *Revised Timeline to Assist in the Process to Agree any Requested Changes to ASW Strike/Catch Limits* ([ASW/68/04/01](#)).

In the event that an ASW contracting government proposes changes to the relevant ASW strike/catch limits, the Scientific Committee, Secretariat, and ASW Contracting Government will follow steps outlined in the Revised Timeline ([ASW/68/04/01](#)). Those steps are not repeated here.

April 22 to May 3: The Scientific Committee will hold its meeting (SC69B). Relevant to the ASW catch/strike limits, it may advise that the strike/catch limits will not harm the stock (for meeting condition (a)). Its determination will be published in the Scientific Committee meeting SC69B report made available on the IWC website by 27 May 2024.

Before July 24 - at least 60 days before IWC69: The IWC Chair and Vice-Chair, together with the ASW Sub-Committee Chair will issue another circular to Commissioners, Contracting Governments, and accredited Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organization observers, containing:

- Confirmation that conditions (a) and (b) have been met (if that is the case)
- Description of the determination to be made by the Commission at IWC69, pursuant to Paragraph 13(a)(6)(c) of the Schedule.
- The approved timeline (ASW/68/04/01) for use in the determination
- Update text of the Schedule reflecting the extension of the catch/strike limits for the 2026 through 2031 period, should a positive determination be made by the Commission. The update text of the Schedule would reflect the updated years and a one-time change in catch limits to reflect the change from a seven-year block to a six-year block, with no change in the intensity and number of whales taken per season.

September 22: The ASW Sub-Committee will meet in person in advance of IWC69 to review ASW countries' compliance with the approved timeline and that the information provided represents a status quo continuation of the hunt (for meeting condition (c)), and provide such advice to the Commission.

September 23-27: During IWC69 plenary, extension of the ASW catch/strike limits would be a standalone agenda item, prior to consideration of other proposals or Schedule amendments. If the Commission determines the relevant ASW countries have complied with the approved timeline and that the information provided represents a status quo continuation of the hunt, it directs the Secretariat to issue an updated Schedule reflecting the automatic extension for the 2026-2031 block, from 1st January 2026 to 31st Dec 2031.