

Update from the Joint CC/SC Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Debris

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INTRODUCTION

This intersessional group reports to both the Conservation and Scientific Committees.

The last report to CC ([CC/68/11/01](#)) was during IWC68 and a paper to SC69A ([SC/69A/E/09](#)) was presented to E sub-committee. A summary was also presented to the Joint CC/SC working group directly following SC69A ([CC-SC May 23 report](#)).

The correspondence group has continued its work and now this includes taking into account the marine plastics resolution, which was unanimously approved during IWC68. Recent activities reported to SC69A included analysing how the group can best provide support to the SC, CC and the Secretariat to implement this resolution. There was also discussion on ways to inform the Secretariat/IWC on relevant work from regional agreements (like OSPAR, HELCOM, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS).

PROGRESS UPDATES

The group met virtually on 1 September 2023 and reviewed its aims and work, taking note of the relevant Resolution from the last Commission meeting (available here: <https://iwc.int/management-and-conservation/environment/marine-debris>).

It will be meeting on a roughly two-monthly basis going forward and has formed three smaller working groups to focus on certain agreed key topics: - identifying hotspots, fishing gear tracking and strandings. These sub-groups will report back to the next full meeting of the group.

The Marine Debris ICG also continues to monitor the relevant literature and share information about this and other relevant developments. Several of the group members took part in the ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS marine debris workshop held in O'Grove in Spain in April. Its recommendations are now available on the ASCOBANS website here:

https://www.ascobans.org/sites/default/files/document/ascobans_ac28_inf8.5_marine-debris-ws-recommendations.pdf

WORKPLAN

The workplan for the Joint CC/SC Marine Debris Intersessional Group for 2022-2024 was endorsed at IWC68 (Annex 1 with progress).

As the workplan expires at the next Commission meeting (IWC69) a new draft plan will be presented at the Conservation Committee meeting in 2024.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

The CC is asked to note and provide any comments on intersessional progress made since the CC meeting in October 2022.

ANNEX 1**Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Debris - Workplan 2022-2024**

Activity	Progress
Monitoring the relevant literature on marine debris, with a particular focus on interactions with cetaceans and the effects of micro-debris	ICG continues to monitor the relevant literature and share information about this and other relevant developments
Following up on the recommendations of the IWC marine debris workshop	Ongoing
Working with the Secretariat to facilitate the collection and collation of relevant information	Ongoing
Monitoring international processes on this topic	Ongoing
Facilitating the interactions between the IWC and other international bodies and processes dealing with this topic	Ongoing
Reacting to any other instructions that may come from the Commission meeting	Responding to the 2022 Marine Plastic Resolution, ongoing

ANNEX 2

[From [IWC/67/CC/13 Rev01](#)]

Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Debris - Terms of Reference

1. Develop a costed programme of work on marine debris within the IWC to underpin delivery of the Conservation Committees Strategic Plan.
2. Elaborate and develop key themes and objectives for inclusion in the Conservation Committees Work Plan.
3. Ensure that advice from the Scientific Committee, and other IWC subsidiary bodies as appropriate, is incorporated into the considerations of the Conservation Committee.
4. Contribute to a workshop, to be held in December 2019 (subject to available funds).
5. Explore engagement with other international organisations to jointly advance this work such as the United Nations General Assembly, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its related bodies.