

IWC69
Conservation Committee

Paper submitted by the IWC Secretariat

The Conservation Committee is requested to:

- *note and endorse the reports (2023 and 2024) of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group (CC-SC WG)*
- *agree and endorse the updated terms of reference for the CC-SC WG*
- *note and endorse the reports (2023 and 2024) of the Conservation Committee Planning Group*

IWC Resolution 2014-4 established the Joint Working Group (WG) between the Conservation Committee and the Scientific Committee as a means to facilitate the implementation and follow-up of conservation recommendations.

This document presents the reports from the 2023 and 2024 meetings. Action is required regarding revision of the Joint WG Terms of Reference to include timing and frequency of meetings due to changes in Scientific Committee meeting schedule.

The Conservation Committee Planning Group is tasked with helping set the agenda for the biennial Conservation Committee meeting and progression of the Conservation Committees work plan in the intersessional period.

This document presents the reports from the 2023 and 2024 meetings. Of note are discussions around IWC engagement with the international agreements of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Biodiversity Plan) and the International treaty on Sustainable use of Marine Biological diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).

Report of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group

Sunday 7 May 2023 (13:30-15:30 CET)

Arnold Room, Rikli Balance Hotel, Bled, Slovenia

1. Welcome and aims of the meeting

The Chair of the Scientific Committee (SC), Zerbini (Brazil), and Chair of the Conservation Committee (CC), Bell (UK) were selected as Co-chairs of this meeting of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group (CC-SC WG). Bell agreed to lead the meeting as Chair. The Secretariat were appointed as rapporteurs.

The Chair welcomed the participants to the seventh meeting of the Joint CC-SC Working Group. It was noted that IWC Resolution 2014-4 established this Working Group (WG) between the Conservation Committee and the Scientific Committee as a means to facilitate the implementation and follow-up of conservation recommendations. At its first meeting, on 4 June 2015, the Joint CC-SC WG adopted the original Terms of Reference (ToR). These were revised at the 2021 joint meeting and subsequently adopted at IWC68 in 2022. The 2022 ToR are provided in Annex B.

The Chair reminded the participants that six documents, including the agenda, were made available via SharePoint prior to the meeting.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted (Annex A). The list of documents available to the meeting is in Annex C and the list of participants is given in Annex D.

3. Future workplan of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group

i. Update from small group on process for determining conservation priorities

The Co-chair requested an update from a small group established at the 2021 meeting that has been developing a process for determining priorities for conservation issues. Staniland (Secretariat) reported that the small group had met virtually in 2022 and based on those discussions and the subsequent CC-SC meeting prepared a paper (CC-SC/May23/03), which was available for review and comment, and which served to inform the discussion at this CC-SC meeting.

Three criteria for scoring the importance of different topics were developed. These were:

- Most threatened – possible link to IUCN but challenge of different units used
- Related to Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling
- Likelihood of success or impact of IWC action

Ranking could simply be tagging with Low, Medium or High and could potentially be linked to IUCN categories.

Using the Database of Recommendations (DoR), a table was constructed to categorise recommendations into these criteria/themes (CC-SC/May23/04). If appropriate the species or the IUCN assessment could also be included. Comments were sought on the proposed table and also how

the ranking of Low, Medium or High would work. Simmonds (virtual) reminded the WG of a paper¹ prepared by a student on conservation priorities and presented to CC at IWC68. This could be useful to refer to during this work. Staniland agreed that this would be a very helpful guide when considering scores for categories.

The Chair asked whether the idea was to then communicate this to Commission. The Secretariat responded that this proposed system would need to go through Commission for approval as a first step. The main purpose would then be to aid communication between the two groups of CC and SC and help this WG do its work.

The group heard suggestions to add a column for details of discussions by theme from the Scientific Committee, whether stocks should also be included along with species and related to this separate IWC and IUCN status and setting the table by region to investigate species and threats within those areas. There was discussion of the unit to be considered (e.g. Species, Population, Stock) given levels of threat and conservation status can vary within a population's range. Staniland remarked that both the threat to the species and the threatened species need to be considered. It is possible to have multiple instances of the same recommendation as it covers several species.

Lundquist (NZ) and Double (Australia) requested clarification on the overall intent of this work, noting that the paper suggests that this is to be used to advise the Commission on priorities, however, the contents of the spreadsheet doesn't seem to list all the relevant topics. Staniland explained that the table is a means of developing the discussion, therefore it doesn't necessarily contain all topics of interest. The task was to help the SC convey its work to the CC and assist in prioritising work. Developing a method for this prioritisation is the overall objective. With limited time and resources this process is trying to make the most of what information is available. The Chair also pointed out that the CC Strategic plan will be informed by this process.

There was some discussion regarding the ranking of recommendations and it was explained that the ranking was for the prioritisation of work topics rather than prioritising the recommendations themselves. This table will identify how the Scientific and Conservation Committees can best work together and which actions are prioritised in CC.

Staniland suggested that the table be adjusted based on these discussions and then completed with an example to test and troubleshoot the layout and categories. In addition, the newly refreshed and expanded small group will continue working on this process including running some tests, and that the goal should be to present something at IWC69. This will allow sufficient time for developing the proposal for establishing priorities for the joint work. Cholewiak, Leaper, E. Bell, Double, Lundquist, Fyfe and Zerbini will be added to the small group.

The Chair summarised that the two key actions for the small group are to update the columns based on this discussion and then find a way to communicate more clearly the objectives of this process.

¹ Robinson, E. and Simmonds, M.P. Unpublished. Analysis of the Challenges Inherent in Cetacean Conservation and Recovery Through Expert Opinion. Available from the Lead author at: robinsoneliz1@gmail.com

ii. *Matters arising from IWC68*

a. Timing of CC/SC meetings once SC moves to biennial

The Chair explained that previously this meeting has been held back-to-back with the annual SC meeting. However, with the move to biennial the WG needs to consider how and when to meet starting in 2025 and thereby amend the WG's ToR accordingly. One option could be to have virtual meetings in years when there is no SC. The floor was opened for further thoughts and suggestions.

Staniland noted that this meeting has no budget which is the reason it is normally held in association with the SC when people are already available. There was support for a virtual meeting format due to the cost reductions for the SC budget. The Chair agreed and suggested a paper be drafted intersessionally by SC and CC leadership and the Secretariat to describe what changes need to be made to accommodate a move to virtual meetings.

iii. *Matters arising from SC69A*

a. An additional document with relevant Recommendations from SC69A will be available to review and assist discussion of priorities and actions

Webster (Secretariat) pointed to paper CC-SC/May23/05 which is an extraction of relevant recommendations from the SC69A meeting. The majority fall under topics covered in Item 4 however, there is one recommendation on Deep Sea mining which was discussed during an Environmental Concerns (E) sub-committee session. The CC currently does not have this topic on its agenda and considering the possible impacts of this activity the group was asked whether this should be considered by CC and if so how.

DeMaster provided a summary of the SC discussion and the recommendation, highlighting the suite of potential adverse impacts on cetaceans and their habitat, including noise. An SC intersessional correspondence group was established with an initial focus in the North Atlantic noting there are locations all over the globe where this activity has been proposed. This is an opportunity to provide guidance on the studies needed for primary evaluation and to subsequently propose monitoring. The ICG will report back to E and SC next year.

Renell (CMS) commented that the CMS will be bringing this topic to the next Scientific Council meeting in July and suggested having a representative from CMS on the ICG which was agreed.

Iñiguez (Argentina) agreed to join the ICG as the CC representative.

4. Topics of mutual interest between the CC and SC

CC-SC/May23/02 provides progress on all current topics that overlap the SC and CC. Discussion focused on updates and several specific topics contained therein. Relevant members of the SC, CC and the Secretariat provided additional input.

i. *Species of urgent and emerging concern*

The CC-SC had agreed during the 2022 meeting that this topic should be addressed by a joint group. Simmonds (UK) noted that the many species and populations of emerging concern raise questions about how the SC or CC might best take action. Discussions in SC led to the development of the

‘extinction initiative’, which is a communication tool. A *pro forma* was developed for this initiative which was approved by Commission at IWC68 with the example of the franciscana.

At the SC69A meeting the initiative was renamed the ‘Extinction Alert’. A draft was developed for the vaquita and presented to their Small Cetaceans sub-committee and subsequently endorsed by the SC.

The Secretariat Communications lead (Wilson) is assembling a package of photographs and video to go with the text in order to be ready to move this forward. The draft text will go to the Bureau meeting in June to document how the Commission want to handle this.

There are two further species that are proposed for this initiative, the franciscana which was used as the original example taken to the Commission at IWC68, and the Baltic harbour porpoise. These will likely be discussed at the next Scientific Committee meeting.

ii. *Anthropogenic Underwater Noise (AUN)*

The Convenor of the SC E Sub-committee noted that in anticipating a reduction in the number of sessions at the next SC meeting it will be prioritising work including on Strandings and related issues such as noise and plastics.

Iñiguez reported that the CC intersessional group on anthropogenic underwater noise had been working with Leaper, as SC representative, and the Secretariat, to assist an International Maritime Organization (IMO) correspondence group to review the Guidelines for Reducing Underwater Radiated Noise. This involved three rounds of questionnaires. At the IMO meeting in January 2023 revisions to the guidelines were agreed and will now be presented to the IMO’s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) in July 2023 for adoption.

Leaper (HIM Convenor) added that the IMO correspondence group looking at the reviewed IMO guidelines will continue their work over the next year to consider how these guidelines will be implemented and become effective. One component of this is the ‘GloNoise’ project which aims to encourage action on underwater noise from shipping in developing countries. Proposals were accepted from six countries (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, India, Trinidad and Tobago and South Africa). Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, India and South Africa are IWC members so there could be a role for the IWC via the SC and CC to ensure that there is good communication between the IWC and IMO delegates. This could be achieved via the Secretariat’s passing on information and some discussion has already happened.

The AUN-ICG has also been working on a seismic activity questionnaire. This was distributed to all members in February 2023 and 19 responses have been received so far. Iñiguez requested further help with gathering responses. It is hoped that results will be presented to the next SC meeting.

In discussion it was noted that the seismic questionnaire will be updated as one question needs to be refined. It was emphasised that all responses are confidential.

Double (Australia) explained that Australia would like to respond to this questionnaire however due to limits of legislative process it would have to be outside the current questionnaire framework. Once an Environmental Plan is approved (permitting of the activity) the details can be sent, which means information would be sent sporadically. Iñiguez thanked Australia for this positive response and confirmed that all information is welcome.

The point was raised of the need to target the appropriate agency in government when distributing the questionnaire. Iñiguez reiterated that the aim was to have the cooperation of the Commissioners and members to identify correct agencies.

Finally, an ICG was established at SC68C to look at impacts of noise on beaked whales and establish response protocols for strandings, however, there has been limited progress. They aim to have something to present at the next SC meeting and hopefully feed into the CC work after that. In this regard it was noted that many of the members in the SC ICG are also involved with the ASCOBANS group looking at the same issue.

iii. *Chemical pollution*

SC/69A/E/04 looked at recommendations on pollution since 2018. For each recommendation, published literature that was pertinent or responsive to that recommendation was reviewed. The paper's approach was very well received by the SC E sub-committee and is encouraged as an efficient way to track progress and previous work.

The Chair noted that CC has struggled to make progress on this topic so it is useful to hear what work is happening in the SC. Chemical Pollution is on the CC Strategic Plan so it will be kept on the agenda and any suggestions from SC on how this can be developed are welcome.

iv. *Ecosystem modelling/Ecosystem functioning*

The Secretariat gave an update from the SC Ecosystem Modelling (EM) Working Group. The meeting was reminded that the first Workshop held in April 2021 was virtual and conducted a gap analysis. From this the WG recommended a second workshop to look at the more quantifiable aspects. Planning has been ongoing during the intersessional period and a draft agenda developed at SC69A. These have been shared with CMS who have offered to host the three-day workshop, 14-16 November 2023 in Bonn. There is work planned during the run up to the workshop to ensure the most efficient use of the limited meeting time.

For CC, there was a proposed pilot project put forward at IWC68. While not endorsed it was recommended a small group be established to develop the project further and discuss with EM what might be possible. Galletti (Chile) and the Advisory Group prepared a text which was discussed at SC69A. This included a list of candidate species and geographic areas. The SC decided that specific advice should wait until after the November workshop. The further development of the pilot project proposal will be informed by the workshop results and put to CC for endorsement.

v. *Climate change*

Simmonds reported on the side meeting of the joint CC/SC intersessional group held on the sides of SC69A. Three main points from that meeting will be the focus of intersessional work and include consideration of a future workshop, how to attract more information on climate change related issues into SC and how to fundraise. The joint intersessional group now includes 80 people from around the world. SC/69A/E/07 is a new synthesis of information with an associated Excel spreadsheet of publications. This will inform ICG discussions. One of the key items discussed in the ICG was how to focus climate change discussions so that they directly feed into the different sub-committees of the SC, for example, how we can incorporate climate scenarios into simulation trials.

Next year the SC E sub-committee plans to focus on plastics, noise and strandings, due to likely restrictions on the number of possible sessions at SC69B. That means in terms of ICG and reports, climate change would be scheduled for the 2026 meeting.

vi. *Marine debris and the Plastic Resolution*

The marine debris group is another Joint CC/SC intersessional group with Simmonds and Warrie (Belgium) as the co-convenors. Simmonds provided an update on the recent (April 2023) ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS workshop held prior to the European Cetacean Society conference (ECS) and briefly outlined the recommendations. The full workshop report will be available later.

Further to the Commission Resolution 2022-1 and discussion in SC, the ICG has some new requested activities which include identification of hotspots of exposure to plastics, synthesis of information on impacts, and a summary of approaches for regional and global assessments for SC to consider. Warrie (Belgium) added encouragement to all Contracting Parties for a good connection to the negotiation process (UN Plastics Treaty) in order to follow what is relevant and how the IWC can contribute.

The Convenor of SC E sub-committee thanked Simmonds for the summary of the expanded Terms of Reference for the ICG on marine debris. The ToR will look at some of the approaches that the SC should consider when tackling this issue. The WG was reminded of direction from the Commission, that any potential approaches put forward should include budget or cost implications. These options will be presented to the SC and Commission next year for their guidance and agreement on next steps.

It was emphasised that an important element of the marine debris/plastics component will be the Strandings Initiative. Information from necropsies will be a crucial part of responding to the Commission's request on risks of plastics/debris to cetaceans. The standardisation of stranding response and necropsy protocols is an important aspect of this piece of work that E recommended.

Staniland added that the Secretariat were also directed to track the negotiations of the Plastic Treaty which is ongoing.

vii. *Whale Sanctuaries*

The Chair noted that the Convenors of the SC working group on Sanctuaries (SAN) were not available for this meeting and only one SAN recommendation was agreed at SC69A, notably providing input to the review of the Southern Ocean Sanctuary and the contiguous Indian Ocean Sanctuary. Efforts were underway to assemble a paper on research to be considered during the review. An online form is available (hosted by the Secretariat) which will help with this process, and a quarterly circular will be distributed to encourage regular input before the next SC. See the SC69A report (Annex N) for full details of the review process. The CC can assist by contributing relevant data for the review.

viii. *Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI)*

Passadore (Secretariat) gave an overview of the work underway on bycatch summarising CC-SC/May23/02 as well as the report of the SWG to SC (SC/69A/HIM/13). The following key activities were highlighted:

- Expert Panel has been reviewed and the invitation for nominations to the Panel closing date is 15th May 2023.
- A Contract was signed earlier this year with FAO for the Common Oceans ABNJ Project addressing bycatch in tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean and Western Central Pacific Ocean. We

have been engaged with IOTC for this along with the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

- IWC is a partner in the CIBBRiNA project.
- A Cooperation Agreement has been signed with IOTC and the IWC are observers at WCPFC, both will assist with the Common Oceans work.
- From SC69A there are two ICGs important for the BMI work; the south pacific Island small cetacean group and Indian Ocean cetaceans monitoring group, ToR in development.

A question was raised on whether there were regional priorities or species stock priorities focusing this work. It was explained that the BMI focuses on gillnets and small-scale fisheries for pilot projects. Six countries were identified previously in the adopted workplan starting in Peru. Other areas are still in the development stage or on stand-by. Discussions about progressing these pilot projects took place in the margins of SC69A. Passadore noted that the ABNJ project has a broader focus of the two ocean basins and focusing on tuna fisheries and gears.

ix. *Ship Strikes*

The Ship Strike Data Manager (O'Loughlin) introduced herself and encouraged reporting of ship strikes information and/or details of known data sets that could potentially be incorporated into the database. In addition, the Secretariat would be happy to assist with data requests. Finally, the Ship Strikes Expert Panel has been selected and approved by the Ship Strikes WG with a membership of 21 people. Formal letters will be distributed shortly, and a meeting is planned for the summer 2023.

No new recommendations were made on ship strikes this year at SC69A, however, positive progress was noted on voluntary measures in some of the high-risk areas previously identified. Some previous recommendations were reiterated concerning implementation of routing measures through IMO.

The IMO will be discussing ship strike related issues in the navigational sub-committee on 10 May 2023 and will consider the associated protective measures in relation to the Northwestern Mediterranean Particularly Sensitive Sea area (PSSA). In addition, the Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) will meet in July 2023 and consider a re-routing proposal south of Sri Lanka to reduce the risk of ship strikes to blue whales.

The Secretariat welcomed the ship strikes data received from Australia and thanked them for the valuable contribution.

It was highlighted that the Strandings Initiative, to be one of the priorities in E for 2023/4, could also contribute information/data on ship strikes and bycatch mitigation.

x. *Whale Watching*

Suydam (SC) reported on two items of interest to CC, the discussion regarding the CMS guidance on recreational in-water interactions with marine wildlife and whether it could be incorporated into the WW Handbook, and also the discussion around the communications plan.

CMS (Renell) provided details on upcoming meetings and deadlines regarding the draft guidelines. They will be available online by the end of June (120 days before CMS COP) and there will be opportunity for final input at the CMS Scientific Council on 18th July 2023. Participation from IWC was welcomed.

During SC69A it was reported that IWC had worked with CMS by providing comments to the draft guidelines and also agreed that there should be discussion regarding how the recreational in-water interactions with cetaceans could be a joint product. The WG **agreed** that linking them to the IWC/CMS WW Handbook would be the best option. CMS would work with IWC to determine the form this would take.

Secondly the CC has developed a communication plan for distributing information on the endorsed WW guidelines as part of a long-term strategy to raise awareness of the WW Handbook and wider IWC work on whale watching. However, through a recommendation from SC68D, an SC communication plan has been developed in parallel (SC/69A/WW/05).

The Chair was conscious of the redundancy of having two communication plans for the same purpose and called for thoughts on how best to bring them together. Wilson (Secretariat) reiterated the logic of combining the plans, for consistency and efficiency, and because the SC plan outlines some actions which are already in progress. It was **agreed** that Wilson would work with the authors of SC/69A/WW/05 to select those new cost-neutral items in the SC plan which can be worked on together and incorporate them into the next version of the existing plan which is updated annually. This plan will be shared with both the SC and CC. Staniland recalled that each committee has a steering group for this issue and suggested combining both into a single Steering Group. This was **agreed** by both the CC and SC Chairs.

xi. Conservation Management Plans

The value of CMPs which have been endorsed by more than one intergovernmental body (e.g. IWC, ACCOBAMS, CMS) was highlighted (see SC69A Report, Annex F). It was suggested that the CC should work with these bodies to offer advice on efficient mechanisms for their development. The declining budget of the SC was noted and yet there will be more and more CMPs. WG members were encouraged to consider what was needed to continue progressing these CMPs.

The importance of prioritising work to ensure good use of funds was discussed. In the past this was done via recommendations, SC CMP sub-committee (CMP) would review and put forward proposals to the SC research fund to be ranked. The SC Chair added that in the last 2-3 years a prioritisation process has been developed for all projects in the SC for distribution of funds.

The Chair mentioned the use of the Voluntary Conservation Fund which is flagged for CMPs and also announced that Carolina Cassani has accepted to be co-chair of the CC CMP Standing Working Group with Anne Robinson.

xii. Small Cetaceans and Task Teams

There were no proposals this year for new Task Teams so the Steering Group has not convened. However, an update was received from the Lahille's dolphin task team which is making good progress. The Steering Group welcome new proposals for consideration.

5. IWC Database of Recommendations

The Chair reminded the meeting that at IWC66 in October 2016 the Commission approved a recommendation from the CC to establish a web-accessible database of recommendations. Following a generous voluntary contribution from the UK, the database was developed, and initial population of the database undertaken by the Secretariat.

i. Update on database status and use

The Secretariat (Webster) thanked everyone for reviewing the recommendations at SC69A. Thanks to the review by the Secretariat and Convenors, there are over 200 recommendations that can potentially be closed by the end of the SC69A report review period. The Secretariat welcomes any feedback on the closing recommendations process.

In terms of the CC, the same process could be implemented. This would need to be done every two years, in accordance with the CC meeting schedule. Therefore, a compiled list of recommendations will be presented later this year at Conservation Committee Planning Group (CCPG) to then go onto the agenda for the Conservation Committee the following year. There was support for this plan and for the database overall.

ii. *Use by the Joint CC-SC WG*

The DoR is one of the tools being used to prepare a plan for establishing priorities for the CC-SC, as noted under agenda Item 3(i) above. It is also a useful tool for the two Committees to track recommendations and actions taken under each in areas of common interest.

6. Matters to transmit to CCPG and next SC

The Chair reminded the participants that the process for this Joint WG is different to the SC where the report is endorsed by silent procedure. As per the WG's terms of reference, temporary groups can be established to address topics that need further and more detailed consideration intersessionally, from this meeting that includes working on timings of future CC/SC meetings. The steps involved for the report and recommendations from this WG are, discussion at CCPG, transmission to next SC before presentation to CC for endorsement and then Commission for adoption.

The next CCPG meeting is scheduled for September 2023, date to be confirmed.
Our discussions here will be transmitted to the CCPG and the CC.

7. Any other business

None

The meeting was adjourned at 15h26 CET.

Annex A Agenda

Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group 7 May 2023 (13:30-15:30 CET)

Location: Arnold Room, Rikli Balance Hotel, Bled, Slovenia

- 1. Welcome and aims of the meeting**
 - i. Appointment of Co-chairs [Cat Bell and Alex Zerbini are proposed]
 - ii. Appointment of Rapporteur [The Secretariat will offer to act as rapporteur]
 - iii. Terms of Reference and aims of the meeting (Annex 1)
 - iv. Review of documents available to the meeting
- 2. Adoption of the agenda**
- 3. Future work plan of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group**
 - i. Update from the small group on the process for determining conservation priorities.
 - ii. Matters arising from IWC68
 - a. Timing of CC/SC meetings once SC moves to biennial
 - iii. Matters arising from SC69A
 - a. An additional document with relevant Recommendations from SC69A will be available to review and assist discussion of priorities and actions
- 4. Topics of mutual interest between the CC and SC**
 - i. Species of urgent and emerging concern
 - ii. Anthropogenic Underwater Noise
 - iii. Chemical pollution
 - iv. Ecosystem modelling/Ecosystem functioning
 - v. Climate change
 - vi. Marine debris and the Plastics Resolution
 - vii. Whale Sanctuaries
 - viii. Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI)
 - ix. Ship Strikes
 - x. Whale watching
 - xi. Conservation Management Plans
 - xii. Small cetaceans and Task Teams
- 5. IWC database of recommendations**
 - i. Update on database status and use
 - ii. Use by the Joint CC-SC WG.
- 6. Matters to transmit to the CCPG and next SC meeting**
- 7. Any other business**

Annex B

Terms of Reference for the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group (endorsed IWC68)

The Joint Conservation Committee/Scientific Committee working group (CC-SC WG) is tasked with facilitating communication between the two Committees on matters related to the IWC's conservation priorities. The main benefit of the WG is to jointly discuss recommendations addressing those priority issues, and efforts to implement and track their progress by the Commission, relevant subsidiary bodies, Contracting Governments, intergovernmental organisations, accredited observers and other relevant organisations.

The CC-SC WG shall develop and promote a clear strategy and mechanism for:

- (a) review, collate, and suggest priorities to the Commission about conservation issues and associated recommendations made by the Scientific and Conservation committees, while respecting the direction provided by the Commission to both Committees;
- (b) the effective transmission of identified priority recommendations to the appropriate entities and stakeholders likely to implement the recommendations (e.g., Commission, its subsidiary bodies, Contracting Governments, and Intergovernmental organisations);
- (c) review and report progress to the Commission, through the CC and SC committees, including use of the database of recommendations

An important component of the CC-SC WG is the facilitation of communication between the Committees on proposed work required by each to address priority conservation issues, including the direct communication and collaboration between convenors and standing group chairs and topic leads, the identification of the need for further technical work and/or more clear advice on the practical implementation of priority recommendations (e.g. identifying resources required, key actors and any socio-economic implications and if needed, identify the obstacles to achieve these recommendations).

The CC-SC WG will comprise at least the Chairs and Vice-chairs of the Scientific and Conservation committees, with encouragement of SC convenors and leads of the CC SWGs to attend. Additional expertise (or requests for participation by specified Contracting Governments) may be included as appropriate at the discretion of the Chairs of the SC and CC. Temporary working groups may be established to address topics requiring consideration at a more detailed or focused level. The group will be supported by the Secretariat.

Annex C List of Documents

Document Number	Title	Authors
CC-SC/GEN/01	Draft Annotated Agenda Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group	IWC Secretariat
<i>Primary papers</i>		
CC-SC/MAY23/02	Update on Work Across Topics of Mutual Interest	IWC Secretariat
CC-SC/ MAY23/03	Report of the Joint CC-SC Small Group to Design a Process for Identifying Conservation Priorities	IWC Secretariat
CC-SC/MAY23/04	Proposed table for Identifying Conservation Priorities	IWC Secretariat
<i>Working papers</i>		
CC-SC/MAY23/05	Recommendations made at SC69A	IWC Secretariat
CC-SC/MAY23/06	CMP Summary	SC-CMP Convenor

Annex D List of Participants

ARGENTINA

Miguel Iñíguez

AUSTRALIA

Michael Double

Nat Kelly

BRAZIL

Ricardo Leal

Alex Zerbini – SC Chair

Artur Andriolo

Fabia Luna

Andre Barreto

GERMANY

Nicole Hielscher

NETHERLANDS

Anne-Marie Svoboda (V)

Jens Warrie (V)

NEW ZEALAND

Dave Lundquist

NORWAY

Lars Walløe

PANAMA

Lisette Trejos

SLOVENIA

Andrej Bibic

SPAIN

Elvira Garcia-Bellido

UK

Cat Bell – CC Chair

Lindsay Porter – SC Vice Chair

Murray Fyfe

USA

Ryan Wulff

Aimee Lang

Danielle Cholewiak

Madison Harris

Scientific Committee

Jorge Urban

Leslie New

Doug DeMaster

Elanor Bell

Russell Leaper

Robert Suydam

Bob Brownell

Gianna Minton (V)

Camila Domit

CMS

Jenny Renell (V)

Fundación Cethus

Carolina Cassini

Orca

Lucy Babey

OceanCare

Mark Simmonds (V)

Secretariat

Elizabeth Campbell

Mark Tandy

Rebecca Lent

Cecilia Passadore

Lydia O’Loughlin

David Mattila

Iain Staniland

Imogen Webster

Kate Wilson

Report of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group

Virtual meeting, Thursday 9 May 2024 (13:30-15:41 BST)

1. Welcome and aims of the meeting

The Chair of the Scientific Committee (SC), Zerbini (Brazil), and Chair of the Conservation Committee (CC), Collier (UK) were selected as Co-chairs of this meeting of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group (CC-SC WG). Collier agreed to lead the meeting as Chair. The Secretariat were appointed as rapporteurs.

The Chair welcomed the participants to the eighth meeting of the Joint CC-SC Working Group. It was noted that IWC Resolution 2014-4 established this Working Group (WG) between the Conservation Committee and the Scientific Committee as a means to facilitate the implementation and follow-up of conservation recommendations. At its first meeting, on 4 June 2015, the Joint CC-SC WG adopted the original Terms of Reference (ToR). These were revised at the 2021 joint meeting and subsequently adopted at IWC68 in 2022. The 2022 ToR are provided in Annex B.

The Chair reminded the participants that six documents, including the agenda, were made available via SharePoint prior to the meeting. In addition, 13 documents from the Scientific Committee meeting were available.

The Chair invited the Executive Secretary (ES, Rojas) to say a few words of welcome.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted (Annex A). The list of documents available to the meeting is in Annex C and the list of participants is given in Annex D.

3. Future workplan of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group

- i. *Update from small group on process for determining conservation priorities including use of the Database of Recommendations (DoR) by the Joint WG and IWC cooperation with other organisations.*

The Chair requested an update from a small group established at the 2021 meeting that has been developing a process for determining priorities for conservation issues. Secretariat (Staniland) gave some brief background to the work including that the small group had met virtually in 2022 and based on those discussions and the subsequent CC-SC, a paper was presented at the CC-SC WG meeting last year. Previous iterations of this work identified high priority areas such as those topics related to ASW, the likelihood that action would be successful and those related to threatened species. Discussions last year determined that a risk assessment process or assessment matrix of threats against species might be a better approach to look at priorities than solely considering recommendations in the Database of Recommendations (DoR).

The meeting reviewed paper (CC-SC/May24/03) and spreadsheet (CC-SC/May24/04) which included a draft conservation priorities matrix. Staniland asked the WG for feedback concerning this approach, emphasizing one of the key issues to be discussed and agreed on going forward is the list of

species/populations/stocks. Within the matrix species/populations are scored against different threats. These threats are listed as those on the CC strategic plan (bycatch/entanglement, ship strikes, marine debris, chemical pollution, noise). In addition, there is 'Health' which tries to capture the wide range of interrelated threats from habitat degradation and loss, loss of food and so on; this could be considered One Health approach that IWC has been discussing for some time. To prioritise IWC related issues these scores are subject to a multiplier where they are impacted by ASW activities, exploitation or direct takes, whether the species are subject to Task Team activities, priority for a CMP or already part of a CMP, and finally stakeholder engagement is used as an indication of where action might have the best chance of success.

One of the issues is to define a methodology to score priorities and threats against each other. One suggestion could be to use experts, for example the Ship Strikes Expert Panel and members of the BMI could review relevant scores. Scores could also be related to available information such as the ship strikes database or the IUCN Red List or IWC Assessments. Guidelines would need to be developed to inform scoring to ensure consistency.

The Chair opened the floor for questions and feedback on the described approach.

Andriolo (Brazil) queried how to account for cumulative effects, in response Staniland explained that the matrix tries to account for cumulative effects by summing values across the threats. A column could be added but it would be difficult to score. Svoboda (Netherlands) added that this will be very useful in helping the Commission identify priorities. There is difficulty in comparing the threats to each other and perhaps the previous suggestion of using experts in those threats could be useful in developing a mechanism for this.

Simmonds (OceanCare) supported the approach taken and asked about adding a threat for climate change as some populations seem to have some strong effects coming through. Staniland clarified that climate change was considered under the 'Health' category as an attempt to have a 'catch-all' for issues that occur in different ways in many environments.

The incorporation of a weighting mechanism to account for differences in vulnerability to different threats based on behaviour and size was discussed along with the possible addition of climate change and population size categories. Staniland explained that for issues such as the weighting mechanism it is hoped that expert input would capture these, but it could potentially be added. It was also suggested that there needs to be very clear guidance on what the numbers (scores) mean and how they should be used.

The Chair agreed that there would need to be a trade-off between how complicated the matrix was and usability. In summary there was no opposition to continuing with the small group to progress this matrix.

It was **agreed** that Staniland would continue to lead the group and more members would be invited to establish an ICG in order to make better progress. It was confirmed that the timeline would be longer than Commission later this year as it would need to be taken to the next SC.

Secretariat (Webster) briefly summarised the content of paper CC-SC/May2024/04 concerning cooperation with other organisations and specifically how IWC can engage further in contributing to the Biodiversity Plan (GBF) and the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Treaty (BBNJ). There was general support (SC Chair, Netherlands, Argentina) for engaging more with the Convention of

Biological Diversity (CBD) as they deal with such broad issues, having a highlight on cetaceans from IWC could be beneficial and is very relevant to IWC work, particularly within the Conservation Committee.

The ES agreed that it was very important to have a focus and clear guidance on this and to engage members on this work. IWC has a lot to contribute to the GBF and it is an excellent opportunity to not only contribute but position IWC as a key player within CBD.

Zerbini asked for clarification about the Red List Index around one of the indicators and whether this is the same as the IUCN Red List. The group was informed of the existence of an SC group which is supposed to liaise with the IUCN so this could be helpful and important to be involved. The Secretariat (Webster) responded that it was believed to be a separate list but based on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species¹. The ES noted that the Red List Index was developed by IUCN many years ago.

Regarding the BBNJ the Chair noted that he had been involved with those negotiations and it was emphasised that the agreement relied on collaboration with existing expert bodies.

The Chair summarised that there was unanimous agreement that IWC engage with the processes. It was **agreed** that the discussion will be brought to the attention of the CCPG to consider how to include it on the CC agenda.

ii. *Matters arising from IWC68*

a. Timing of CC-SC meetings once SC moves to biennial

Secretariat (Webster) provided a summary of paper CC-SC/May2024/05 which outlines the history of the WG and meetings since its establishment. Last year there was support to move to virtual meetings as there is no budget to support this group. However, the timing of meetings needs to be considered now that SC meetings are moving to biennial. It was highlighted that the current Terms of Reference do not indicate/stipulate the frequency or timing of Joint WG meetings, therefore the easiest option would be to add the necessary words. The paper suggests that CC-SC also moves to biennial meetings, and these correspond with the SC years, but with flexible wording so meetings can happen in off years if needed.

The Chair thanked the Secretariat and opened the floor for comments. Staniland agreed that wording such as 'at least biennial' could be beneficial and added that for timing, the confidentiality of SC meetings also needed to be considered. Details of the SC meeting should remain confidential until the report is published 21 days after the meeting has closed. SC Chair supported the need to consider both the confidentiality of SC and use of flexible wording in case meetings were necessary in off years. Suydam agreed it was beneficial to have a break between SC and the CC-SC meeting to allow for recovery but also overcome confidentiality concerns. There was support for intersessional meetings, but it should be clear what issues these would cover.

¹ The indicator "*Red List Index*" measures change in aggregate extinction risk across groups of species. It is based on genuine changes in the number of species in each category of extinction risk on The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and is expressed as changes in an index ranging from 0 to 1. See <https://gbf-indicators.org/metadata/headline/A-3>

The Secretariat clarified that holding the CC-SC meeting 21 days after the SC should, in theory, be fine as long as it allowed time for CCPG to also meet. As the CCPG sets the agenda for the CC and the draft agendas need to be circulated 100 days before the meeting this would be the main constraint. Belgium (Langerock) advised some caution as Commission dates are a moving target every two years. The Secretariat (Staniland) provided details on the deadlines for the various documents for the next Commission meeting. For IWC69 these included the 100-day deadline of 15th June for Draft Agendas, proposals to amend Schedule paragraph 13 (ASW) should be posted 90 days before the start of the meeting (25th June) and any Schedule Amendments and Resolutions have to be circulated 60 days in advance (although the Commission can decide (by consensus only) to adopt urgent Resolutions during the meeting) which is July 25th. However, the Secretariat requests all Schedule Amendments and Resolutions by 15 July to allow time for translation.

The Chair proposed the amended ToR be circulated for consideration and then submitted to CC and Commission. It was **agreed** that wording should be "at least biennially" to allow flexibility. When outlining the timing of meetings wording such as "where possible" or similar, should be used to allow for flexibility while also covering the 21-day SC confidentiality concern. Some details should be included on what intersessional meetings would cover.

It was **agreed** the text would be drafted by the Secretariat and circulated to participants of this meeting for comment.

4. Topics of mutual interest between the CC and SC

CC-SC/May2024/06 provides Highlights on progress on all current topics that overlap the SC and CC. Full progress reports to SC are given in Annex C document list. Discussion focused on updates and several specific topics contained therein. Relevant members of the SC, CC and the Secretariat provided additional input.

i. Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI)

The Co-Convenor of HIM (Leaper) noted that the list in the highlights paper summarised key points well and added that guidelines for disentanglement of small cetaceans was endorsed by SC. The Chair of the SWG on Bycatch (Svoboda) also added that, with regards to the pilot projects, the first stage of Peru project was complete and the second underway. The BMI were looking at the potential of a pilot project in Congo and how that might proceed. The Vice Chair of SC and Co-convenor of SM reported that SM would like to work with the BMI over the next 4 years as five species they are working on have bycatch as a main threat.

The ES commented that the FAO-Committee of Fisheries meeting is coming up in July and the agenda seems to be very weak on bycatch. It would be appreciated if members could inform the Secretariat if they intend to participate/attend. Langerock (Belgium) reminded the group that the BMI had been working on an information sheet for delegates going to such meetings.

Finally, the Bycatch Coordinator (Passadore) advised that there will be workshops happening this year and one is related to river dolphins.

The Chair thanked everyone for their updates and suggested the information sheet could be discussed at CCPG.

ii. Conservation Management Plans (CMPs)

Co-Chair of the SWG CMP (Cassani) highlighted the presentation of the CMP Handbook to SC which was reviewed and endorsed and invited all to review it. This will be presented at CC and Commission.

SC Chair (Zerbini) reminded everyone that those CMP proposals which were endorsed or endorsed with a caveat at SC will need to be presented to CC for endorsement before adoption by the Commission.

iii. *Ship Strikes*

Chair of the SS WG (Livermore) noted that the SC had been asked to review and endorse the updated ship strikes workplan, reviewed a list of recommendations to be closed and requested funding to support the continuation of the Data Manager role.

Co-Convenor of HIM (Leaper) mentioned discussions around providing support and guidance on ship strikes to sailing races and fast ferries.

iv. *Whale Watching*

Co-convenor of WW (Suydam) noted that, in addition to points in the highlights paper, the subcommittee talked about communication and capacity building and the need to expand both of those topics. Funding is needed to do this, and people are encouraged to donate to existing voluntary funds held under CC for whale watching. Research issues were also discussed as there haven't been many papers in the last few years so some suggestions were made to try to improve this and focus the agenda to be able to cover topics more thoroughly. WW's new workplan and strategic plan were reviewed and recommendations were made for how to proceed. Recommendations are in the SC report.

Secretariat (Webster) thanked Cat Bell who agreed to take over as Chair of SWG for Whale Watching and highlighted the positive engagement with IORA which has taken big steps forward over the past year.

v. *Anthropogenic Underwater Noise (AUN)*

Iñiguez Bessega (Chair AUN ICG) pointed to another paper (SC/69B/E/07Rev1) that was presented at SC69B and contains an analysis of documents presented to the IWC Scientific Committee in 2022 and 2023, focusing on acoustics and underwater noise.

Parsons reported that wind energy and the noise produced (from turbines etc) was an issue raised in the subcommittee on Environmental Concerns. Staniland added that noise also came up in relation to deep sea mining with discussion on monitoring and investigating the characteristics of the noise that could be produced during operations.

While disease is not covered in this agenda, Parsons noted that highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) was also a significant topic of conversation at SC and should be highlighted.

vi. *Marine debris and the Plastics Resolution*

Simmonds as Co-chair of the Joint CC-SC marine debris group directed members to Paper SC/69B/E/16 which captures the progression of work by the ICG. A costed workplan will be developed and brought to CC and then Commission.

In response to the Resolution, the SC Chair explained that a small group was formed to further discuss how to address the SC's proposal (and potentially others), develop costs and prepare a plan for the Commission's consideration. It is necessary to provide costs related to the scientific work but also costs from other areas such as those related to the Secretariat. These will be developed in liaison with appropriate groups so a full costed plan can be presented to Commission.

It was also noted that the Plastics Treaty is still being developed in the background and one specific aspect is now focusing on fisheries related plastic waste which could be important for IWC to be involved with.

Warrie (Belgium) asked for clarification on proposals to Commission given the SC budget is already set. The SC Chair explained that in the SC report, in the proposals table, it was agreed to mention those that would be developed related to the marine plastics resolution. Should funds be needed from SC budget, the Commission would need to consider the ranking of proposals that are in the budget. To be clear, if costs are presented for activities which need to be done within the next biennium and Commission says funds will need to be used from the SC meeting budget then SC will need to prioritise that proposal and Commission will have to think about what will not be funded. Staniland reiterated that the Commission requested a costed budget and so Commission will decide ultimately what work comes next.

vii. Ecosystem modelling/Ecosystem functioning

Schubert gave a brief report of the outcomes of the successful second workshop (with The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)) on ecosystem functioning. The report was submitted to Ecosystem Modelling (EM) and endorsed by SC. Based on the report, there is further work to be done and an ICG was established to develop a prioritized list of research projects consistent with the knowledge gaps that need to be filled regarding ecosystem modelling for both large and small cetaceans. Schubert will lead the ICG and invited others to join if interested.

viii. Chemical pollution

Staniland presented some key points from chemical pollution discussion at SC, these included the contaminant mapping database tool which is being supported by IWC. It was recognised that there is a need for capacity building to assist countries with meeting targets of international conventions both in terms of monitoring but also management and disposal of chemicals. There was a call to look for synergies with plastics work and overlap especially regarding microplastics as carriers for chemicals but also breakdown of plastics and the resultant chemical pollution.

Simmonds recalled that a large blue box of recommendations came out of SC principally focused at country level calling for action. It would therefore be worth bringing forward those recommendations to CC for their attention. Staniland reminded members that there is currently no operational working group on this topic within CC as no one has come forward to lead it. However, where time and resources allow, the Secretariat will continue to engage with the other agreements as we've been directed.

The Chair summarised that it would be good for the CCPG to consider this issue in terms of how to reflect that strategic consideration within the Conservation Committee agenda. Noting that there is a substantial, substantive body of recommendations now from SC, and what does that mean for work on this topic within the conservation committee.

ix. Climate change

Simmonds as Chair of the joint CC-SC ICG on climate change noted that in addition to items in the highlights paper there are good opportunities for future work with CMS, particularly if they decide to hold a workshop, and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). The relationship with the latter is developing and IWC participated in their first climate change workshop.

x. *Species of urgent and emerging concern*

Simmonds reported on the impact of the first Extinction Alert for the vaquita which was reviewed at SC. There was evidence that it had been effective in generating a lot of media attention but also had some political effect within Mexico. There was discussion within SC about other species which might come forward but the focus was on developing some further guidance about how to take future alerts forward.

Wilson (Secretariat) added that a small group had been formed to meet intersessionally to look at how to prioritise the large number of species which might meet the selection criteria. Also, a paper will be developed for presentation to Commission to update them on what was agreed and discussed, lessons learned while also explaining criteria and outlining next steps.

Slooten (Luxemburg) recalled that the SC discussion included the possibilities of Rice's whale and Maui dolphin for alerts and presumably the small group will look at those as well as other proposals. Lundquist (NZ) noted that it was worth considering in the small group, but also more widely, that there are lots of efforts within IWC that feel a bit parallel looking at prioritising species and perhaps there is an opportunity for us to consider how we might reconcile those various efforts.

xi. *Whale Sanctuaries*

Co-chair of Sanctuaries (Parsons) reported that the portal created to receive information relevant to the Southern Ocean Sanctuary (SOS) review will remain open to continue to collect information. The third decadal review of the SOS was conducted and it was concluded that it meets its objectives. The Sanctuary serves as an incentive for cutting edge polar research, and also provides a focus for collaboration with other international treaty organizations. However, it was concluded that the criteria for reviewing sanctuaries needs updating and this will be the advice to Commission.

xii. *Small cetaceans and Task Teams*

Porter as Co-chair of SM reported that there are now no open Task Teams as Lahille's and Asian river dolphins are now closed due to CMP proposals being endorsed by SC. These will now be presented for consideration at CC and Commission.

5. IWC Database of Recommendations

The Chair reminded the meeting that at IWC66 in October 2016 the Commission approved a recommendation from the CC to establish a web-accessible database of recommendations. Following a generous voluntary contribution from the UK, the database was developed, and initial population of the database was undertaken by the Secretariat.

i. *Update on database status and use*

The Secretariat (Campbell) provided an update on the database and review of recommendations. This involved a similar system to last year for review of recommendations and for the majority of the subcommittees a working paper was developed that listed recommendations which could be closed due to them being superseded, completed, or drawn attention to. Subcommittees could add or remove from the list during the meeting, based on discussions or the papers that were presented. All involved with the review and updating of recommendations were thanked.

It was explained that the same process could be conducted for CC recommendations. The Secretariat will work with topic leads and CC members to complete updates and generate a list of recommendations that then can be presented to the CC in September. If time and resources allow, it is hoped that recommendations from other committees, such as Welfare and ASW will also be reviewed, so that they can be presented at commission, too.

Porter (SC Vice Chair/SM Co-convenor) noted that it was really helpful the way that information on the recommendations was prepared by the Secretariat. There was still work needed with the subcommittees on how to write appropriate/useable recommendations.

6. Matters to transmit to CCPG and next SC

The Chair reminded the participants that the process for this Joint WG is different to the SC. As per the WG's terms of reference, temporary groups can be established to address topics that need further and more detailed consideration intersessionally, from this meeting that includes enlarging and continuing the small group established to develop a process for determining priorities for conservation issues.

CC-SC would like the CCPG to consider adding the involvement of IWC in the Biodiversity Plan, and more generally engage further with CBD processes as well as the BBNJ, CCAMLR, CMS and others, to the CC agenda for discussion.

The participants of this meeting agreed to review draft text to update the terms of reference to include meeting timings and frequency as discussed in Item 3.ii. Other items to be discussed both intersessionally and during CC included the Marine Debris proposal and costing of associated marine plastics resolution work, the outcomes and guidelines for the Extinction Alerts and possibilities of how this could be tied in with the process for identifying conservation priorities and, finally, the CC to review progress against previous recommendations and look at how recommendations are captured.

The steps involved for the report and recommendations from this WG are, discussion at CCPG, before presentation to CC in September for endorsement and then Commission (IWC69) for adoption.

The next CCPG meeting is scheduled for 22 May 2024 and the Conservation Committee is due to start September 5th. Meeting registration is required for CCPG.

7. Any other business

None

The meeting was adjourned at 15h41 BST.

Annex A Agenda

Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group Online, 9 May 2024 (13:30-15:30 BST)

- 1. Welcome and aims of the meeting**
 - i. Appointment of Co-chairs
 - ii. Appointment of Rapporteur
 - iii. Terms of Reference and aims of the meeting (Annex 1)
 - iv. Review of documents available to the meeting
- 2. Adoption of the agenda**
- 3. Future work plan of the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group**
 - i. Update from the small group on the process for determining conservation priorities including use of the Database of Recommendations (DoR) by the Joint WG and IWC cooperation with other organisations.
 - ii. Matters arising from IWC68
 - a. Timing of CC/SC meetings once SC moves to biennial
- 4. Topics of mutual interest between the CC and SC**
 - i. Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI)
 - ii. Conservation Management Plans
 - iii. Ship Strikes
 - iv. Whale watching
 - v. Anthropogenic Underwater Noise
 - vi. Marine debris and the Plastics Resolution
 - vii. Ecosystem modelling/Ecosystem functioning
 - viii. Chemical pollution
 - ix. Climate change
 - x. Species of urgent and emerging concern
 - xi. Whale Sanctuaries
 - xii. Small cetaceans and Task Teams
- 5. IWC database of recommendations**
 - i. Update on database status and use
- 6. Matters to transmit to the CCPG and next SC meeting**
- 7. Any other business**

Annex B

Terms of Reference for the Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group (endorsed IWC68)

The Joint Conservation Committee/Scientific Committee working group (CC-SC WG) is tasked with facilitating communication between the two Committees on matters related to the IWC's conservation priorities. The main benefit of the WG is to jointly discuss recommendations addressing those priority issues, and efforts to implement and track their progress by the Commission, relevant subsidiary bodies, Contracting Governments, intergovernmental organisations, accredited observers and other relevant organisations.

The CC-SC WG shall develop and promote a clear strategy and mechanism for:

- (a) review, collate, and suggest priorities to the Commission about conservation issues and associated recommendations made by the Scientific and Conservation committees, while respecting the direction provided by the Commission to both Committees;
- (b) the effective transmission of identified priority recommendations to the appropriate entities and stakeholders likely to implement the recommendations (e.g., Commission, its subsidiary bodies, Contracting Governments, and Intergovernmental organisations);
- (c) review and report progress to the Commission, through the CC and SC committees, including use of the database of recommendations

An important component of the CC-SC WG is the facilitation of communication between the Committees on proposed work required by each to address priority conservation issues, including the direct communication and collaboration between convenors and standing group chairs and topic leads, the identification of the need for further technical work and/or more clear advice on the practical implementation of priority recommendations (e.g. identifying resources required, key actors and any socio-economic implications and if needed, identify the obstacles to achieve these recommendations).

The CC-SC WG will comprise at least the Chairs and Vice-chairs of the Scientific and Conservation committees, with encouragement of SC convenors and leads of the CC SWGs to attend. Additional expertise (or requests for participation by specified Contracting Governments) may be included as appropriate at the discretion of the Chairs of the SC and CC. Temporary working groups may be established to address topics requiring consideration at a more detailed or focused level. The group will be supported by the Secretariat.

Annex C List of Documents

Document Number	Title	Authors
CC-SC/May2024/01	Draft Annotated Agenda Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group	IWC Secretariat
Primary papers		
CC-SC/MAY2024/04	Background document on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and relevance to IWC	IWC Secretariat
CC-SC/ MAY2024/05	Future CC-SC meetings once SC goes to biennial meetings	IWC Secretariat
CC-SC/MAY2024/06	Update on Work Across Topics of Mutual Interest	IWC Secretariat
Working papers		
CC-SC/MAY2024/02	Report of the Joint CC-SC Small Group to Design a Process for Identifying Conservation Priorities	IWC Secretariat
CC-SC/MAY2024/03	Proposed table for Identifying Conservation Priorities	IWC Secretariat
Other		
SC_69B_HIM_20	Update from the Ship Strikes Standing Working Group	S. Livermore, I. Webster, L. O'Loughlin
SC_69B_HIM_22	Bycatch Mitigation Initiative – 2024 Update on progress	Bycatch Coordinator; IWC Secretariat; SWG Chair
SC_69B_E_09	Report from the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Climate Change	M. Simmonds And Members of the ICG
SC_69B_E_16	Report of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Debris	M. Simmonds, J. Warrie and Members of the ICG
SC_69B_E_21	Report of the intersessional work on Anthropogenic Underwater Noise	AUN ICG
SC_69B_E_07Rev1	Review and analysis of the documents of acoustic research presented at the 2022-2023 International Whaling Commission Scientific and Conservation Committees.	A. Landine, M. I. Bessega, and A. Andriolo
SC_69B_CMP_06 Attachment A CMP Handbook	Report of the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans - SC69B	SWG-CMP Members And CMP Coordinators
SC_69B_WW_04Rev1	Update from the Whale Watching Standing Working Group	SWG on WW
SC_69B_WW_06	Review of the Whale Watching Strategic Plan Output	SWG on WW
SC_69B_EM_1	Update from the Conservation Committee Working Group on Cetaceans and Ecosystem Functioning – March 2024	B. Galletti Vernazzani
SC_69B_O_1	Extinction Alert Summary	M. Simmonds, M. Stachowitsch, K. Wilson
SC_69B_O_06Rev2	Cooperation with other Organisations and Observer Reports	IWC Secretariat
Plenary WP08	Considerations on Issuing an Extinction Alert	

Annex D List of Participants

ARGENTINA

Miguel Iñíguez Bessega - CC Vice Chair

AUSTRALIA

Emma Day
Nat Kelly

BELGIUM

Stephanie Langerock
Jens Warrie

BRAZIL

Ricardo Leal
Alex Zerbini – SC Chair
Artur Andriolo
Fabia Luna

GERMANY

Nicole Hielscher

HUNGARY

Eva Fejes
Benedek Baltay
Rita Varga-Turos
Stephanie Orf

LUXEMBOURG

Elisabeth Slooten

NETHERLANDS

Anne-Marie Svoboda
Verna de Groes

NEW ZEALAND

Dave Lundquist

PANAMA

Lisette Trejos

PERU

Regina Aquilar
Jennifer Chauca

SPAIN

Elvira Garcia-Bellido

UK

Jack Collier – CC Chair
Lindsay Porter – SC Vice Chair

Murray Fyfe

URUGUAY

Mariana Rios

USA

Mi Ae Kim
Danielle Cholewiak
Sarah Mesnick

Scientific Committee

Elanor Bell
Naomi Brannan
Helena Herr
Russell Leaper
Sarah Mallette
Debra Palka
Chris Parsons
Teri Rowles
Robert Suydam
Fernando Trujillo
Els Vermeulen
Dave Weller

Animal Welfare Institute

Sue Fisher
DJ Schubert

Balena

Kate O'Connell

Convention of Migratory Species

Jenny Renell

EIA

Sarah Dolman

Fundación Cethus

Carolina Cassani

IFAW

Sharon Livermore

Orca

Lucy Babey

OceanCare

Mark Simmonds

Secretariat

Elizabeth Campbell

Julie Creek

Moussa Ki Sow

Emma Neave-Webb

Lydia O'Loughlin

Cecilia Passadore

Iain Staniland

Martha Rojas Urrego

Imogen Webster

Kate Wilson

Report of the Conservation Committee Planning Group (CCPG)

Thursday 5 October 2023

Held virtually, 10:00 BST (UK time)

1. Welcome and aims of the meeting

The Chair of the Conservation Committee (CC) Catherine Bell opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. Members of the Secretariat were appointed as rapporteurs.

The Chair drew attention to the Terms of Reference (Annex A) for annual Conservation Committee Planning Group (CCPG) meetings, which were endorsed at IWC66 in 2016. The Chair recalled that this is the first meeting of this group since the Conservation Committee at IWC68 (2022). This meeting would provide updates and discuss progress from the intersessional period and then focus on planning the agenda for the Conservation Committee meeting in September 2024 and developing a new workplan for beyond IWC69.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda (Annex B) was adopted. The list of participants is given at Annex C and a list of documents available to the meeting is at Annex D.

3. Progress Updates from Intersessional Working Groups since IWC68

a) Update from Standing Working Groups

Standing Working Group (SWG) Chairs were invited to give brief updates on their topics, and comments from participants were provided. Further details of the discussions can be found in the reports and are summarised below.

i. Bycatch Mitigation Initiative

The Bycatch SWG Chair (Svoboda, Netherlands) thanked the Secretariat's Bycatch Coordinator (Passadore) for the extensive work and provided a few highlights of the BMI's recent work detailed in the update report CCPG_OCT23_02. A lot of progress has been made on the implementation of the 2021–2024 work plan, which is now on the last year of work. The IWC's FAO/GEF tuna II Capsule Project is underway, and the Secretariat attended the inception and 6-month Project Steering group meetings. There has also been important engagement with regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), including the Scientific Committee meeting of WCPFC, and the IOTC's Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch meetings. Since 2022, the Secretariat has been focussing on developing the Peruvian Pilot Project. The team of experts chosen as consultants signed the contract in September 2023. The final product will be presented to the Secretariat and the Peruvian government in December 2023. Additionally, the Bycatch Coordinator attended the kick-off meeting in Amsterdam in September 2023 for the LIFE-Coordinated Development and Implementation of Best Practice in Bycatch Reduction in the North Atlantic, Baltic and Mediterranean Regions (CIBBRiNA) project.

In 2023- 2024, the focus will be on the implementation of pilot projects, progress the IWC's capsule in the Common Oceans ABNJ Program -Tuna project and organise capacity building trainings as requested. A new workplan will be developed for presentation to the next CC meeting in 2024. The Chair thanked the Bycatch SWG for their work and invited CCPG participants to reflect on emerging issues related to BMI that could be included in the future workplan of the Bycatch SWG.

ii. Conservation Management Plans

Griffin (Australia) introduced himself as the new co-Chair for the CMP programme. Griffin presented the report CCPG_OCT23_03, where updates are provided for all CMPs and priority populations. Further details can be found in the reports that were presented at SC69A and referenced in the CCPG progress report. Two funding proposals are under review for the CMP Programme, firstly for entanglement response capacity building to be held in Tierra del Fuego for the southeastern Pacific and southwest Atlantic right whale CMPs and secondly for coordination and activities of the southeastern Pacific CMP. Griffin stated that the focus for the SWG in the next year will be to review the group's membership, develop the new workplan, as well as implement the activities remaining for the last year of our current workplan. These activities include talking to CMP coordinators to develop the CMP newsletter and look at possible avenues for fundraising.

Staniland (Secretariat) inquired about the CMP Handbook, to which Griffin responded that they have a version that will be worked on in the coming year, and that the topic leadership expects to present at the IWC69 CC meeting. The Handbook captures all useful, relevant information in one document. This will be made available to all governments with the aim to increase awareness and understanding of the CMP Programme while also strengthening the communication and cooperation between CC and SC CMP groups regarding the CMP development process.

iii. Ship Strikes

Livermore (Chair, and IFAW) provided an outline for the Ship Strikes SWG composition. It has a newly formed Expert Panel; a wider correspondence group and the ship strike data review and ship routing groups that have now been merged. The Expert Panel met for the first time in July 2023 and hope to meet quarterly. A few key points from the report were highlighted, including the high priority areas (Northwest Mediterranean, Balearics and Canary Islands). The global ship strikes database has approximately 87 reports that need reviewing. Additionally, reports from strike incidents from sailing vessels have been shared with IWC. These reports will be reviewed and included in the database. Livermore thanked Australia for submitting their ship strikes database and asks other member countries to consider doing the same. A new workplan will be developed for the 2025-2028 period, they will present it and ask for endorsement at CC next year.

Staniland intervened to thank Fortuna for reviewing and correcting Italian and Pelagos Sanctuary records included in the ship strikes database.

iv. Whale Watching

Given that the Whale Watching SWG Chair (Wulff, USA) was unable to attend the meeting, the Secretariat (Webster) provided a few highlights of the WW SWG recent work. Details can be found in the progress report (CCPG_OCT_23_05). The Secretariat is interested in growing the content of the WW handbook. Any additional case studies, updates, or publications to add to the literature area are welcomed. The Secretariat has reconnected with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). This was mainly concerning the WW Network that was established as a product from the [2016 WW workshop](#). The Secretariat is in discussion to see how to move forward in a way that is beneficial to both organisations. The IORA-WW network will now be led by France and an NGO based in Reunion Island, IWC will contribute to the newsletter later this year with an article. Depending on how the discussions go, a webpage on the IORA-WW Network could be added to the WW Handbook. Additionally, to increase the use of the WW Handbook, Porter (SC Vice Chair) has assembled a team of volunteers to translate the handbook for SE Asia.

The SWG membership was reviewed and refreshed, and now includes members from South America and Industry representatives. The SWG needs a new Chair, if interested please let the Secretariat know. Over the rest of the intersessional period, in response to an SC recommendation, the SWG will

conduct a comprehensive review of the outputs of the current Strategic Plan. The outputs of the review will then be used in the development and drafting of the new 10-year Strategic Plan.

b) Reports from Intersessional Correspondence Groups (ICGs)

i. *Anthropogenic Underwater Noise*

There was no verbal update at the meeting; details can be found in the report (CCPG_OCT23_06).

ii. *Joint SC-CC Marine Debris*

Simmonds (co-lead with Warrie, Belgium) noted that the document provided for the meeting (CCPG_OCT23_07) has an excellent summary of the marine debris work. The ICG had a formal virtual meeting in September. It was suggested that the ICG be divided into three smaller groups looking at specific topics, including hotspots, fisheries, and strandings related information, in the context of the Marine Plastics Resolution. These groups will report back to the joint ICG and results will be shared with the SC and CC. The ICG is also looking at how to collaborate and relate to work with other organisations (i.e. ASCOBANS), which was directed as part of the Resolution.

iii. *Cetaceans and Ecosystem functioning*

Galletti (Topic lead, Chile) shared results from the Advisory Group (AG) that was established in January, composed of ecologists and economists to develop the draft tender for the Pilot Project. Galletti highlighted the detailed reports that have been presented to SC, and those that were shared for this meeting (CCPG_OCT23_08, CCPG_OCT23_15). It was emphasised that this has been a difficult process, particularly distinguishing between ecosystem functioning and services and deciding whether to value them as part of the pilot project or instead focus on establishing a framework to be utilised as a valuation approach. The AG has a list of potential species for the pilot project, but this and the draft tender will be revisited after the IWC SC-CMS Workshop on Ecosystem modelling, happening in Bonn in November 2023.

The Chair thanked the Topic Lead for their perseverance in the subject, acknowledging how difficult this area of work is.

iv. *Joint SC-CC Climate Change*

Simmonds (Topic lead) introduced paper CCPG_OCT23_09. Key points included attending the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) Climate Change workshop with Staniland and the ICG plans to meet at the end of 2023 to discuss new literature, and proposals that members might want to bring forward. There are also possibilities of collaborating with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), who will be considering climate change at its next Meeting of the Parties (Feb 2024).

Rennel (CMS) confirmed that CMS is looking to reestablish the Climate Change working group if agreed by their Parties. There is the possibility of working with IWC on this topic if it is reestablished. The Chair notes that the IWC is keen to collaborate with CMS.

v. *Chemical Pollution*

The Chemical Pollution ICG did not present a report to the CCPG or to SC69A. The Chair asked the CCPG for their thoughts on the future of this ICG, specifically whether it should remain open given the lack of activity in recent years. Simmonds expressed concern over closing the ICG and recommends asking the SC for recommendations on what the CC- Chemical Pollution ICG should do. Staniland notes

that the SC has not recently made any recommendations to the CC regarding chemical pollution. He suggests disbanding the ICG while maintaining Chemical Pollution as a component of the CC Strategic Plan. The ICG may reconvene if the SC makes a recommendation. The ICG might shift to focus on a more specific topic, such as One Health. Simmonds suggests sending a request to the SC for details on what the CC can do in response to their results. The Chair concurs and suggests that the matter be discussed at the next CC-SC meeting in 2024.

4. Preparation for IWC69

a) Draft Conservation Committee agenda (CCPG_OCT23_10)

The Chair noted that in accordance with what was agreed in IWC68, the upcoming CC meeting will be virtual and approximately two weeks before the Commission meeting. Dates have not been finalised for IWC69 but will be held in Lima, Peru towards the end of September. Therefore, the CC meeting will be held approximately two weeks before the Commission meeting to give participants enough time for their travel arrangements. The Chair asks the Planning Group to consider the virtual format, number of sessions, time zones that will be needed when organising and developing the CC agenda and format.

Rennel mentions that the CMS MOP is also planned for September, therefore asks to consider other intergovernmental organisations (IGOs)/ Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) meetings to avoid overlap in dates. Webster reminds participants that the CC met virtually in 2020, for a week in two-hour sessions every day. With a considerably cut agenda, most of the discussion was done in comment sheets shared online beforehand. Certain topics were discussed virtually only if needed. Langerock (Belgium) notes that the CC will not be the only IWC committee meeting virtually, therefore the CC must align with the rest of the IWC Committees to avoid overlap. However, if possible, Belgium would prefer to have the meeting format reflect a traditional in-person meeting. This could mean having it split into two or three days and encourage engagement by having most discussions online instead of on comment sheets (this avoids potential discussions happening at Commission).

The Chair thanked those that intervened and noted that more thought is needed before deciding on the final format.

i. Sanctuary review

Staniland reminded participants that the Southern Ocean Sanctuary was established in 1994. The Schedule states that it should be reviewed every ten years. Therefore, 2024 will be the third decadal review. Most of the review will be carried out at SC69B. The review process requires the collation of relevant documents. Two Circulars have been sent out soliciting information via an online form (<https://forms.office.com/e/qWDVfn2xf0>).

The form will remain open during the remainder of the intersessional period until March 2024, to be included in the final paper submitted to the Southern Ocean Sanctuary Review Panel. The Panel encourages CCPG members to spread the word and to submit relevant information through the form. Additionally, the form also requests information about research in the Indian Ocean Sanctuary that will be reviewed if the Commission requests it.

ii. BBNJ (CCPG_OCT23_11)

Webster summarised the Secretariat's paper, which contained information on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the High Seas Treaty. The aim of the paper is to provide background information on both treaties and ways in which the IWC could contribute. The paper includes activities under the IWC that already contribute, directly or indirectly, to the treaty's

objectives. Webster then asked the CCPG to consider if and how the CC should engage with the treaties.

The Chair commented on how useful the paper was, particularly the tables highlighting how different agreements and organisations can work together to reach targets, specifically from the perspective of Contracting Governments and supported bringing this topic to the CC. Staniland agreed and added that it does not have to be a difficult task because the CC Strategic Plan may contain areas of overlap that can already be considered. It could also help the standing of the CC as Contracting Governments can see how their work in IWC also helps achieve other international agreements. The Chair finalises the section by agreeing to discuss this at CC, with a similar report to help support the discussion.

iii. Dates for virtual Conservation Committee meeting

The Chair reiterated that IWC69 will most likely take place in the last week of September. The Secretariat will check for other environmental organisations meetings to avoid overlap of dates. Staniland requests that if CCPG members know of other meetings, please let the Secretariat know.

b) Conservation Committee Strategic Plan and workplan

i. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Conservation Committee (CCPG_OCT23_11)

This discussion was closely linked to the previous section about the GBF. The Secretariat (Webster) suggested presenting the paper at Bern III. The focus of the meeting will be identifying areas that MEAs can work together and develop cooperations and collaborations to implement the framework more effectively. The IWC could potentially look at other organisations to collaborate with, similar to the agreements with CMS or the BLG. The Chair agrees and adds that, in addition to collaborating, the IWC could identify internal activities that help other organisations achieve their goals.

ii. Standardising CC topic Terms of Reference

The Chair reminded CCPG members that all SWG and ICGs should have standardised Terms of Reference (ToR) as part of the Working Group of Operational Effectiveness (WGOE) process. To ensure consistency, they should be presented at CC in 2024. As a result, the Chair suggested that the Chairs and Topic Leads of the SWGs and ICGs review their ToRs to ensure that all information outlined in the CC working methods is included. Particularly in light of the new joint CC-SC ICGs.

The Secretariat added that if any group requires their most recent ToRs or any other assistance, they should contact the Secretariat.

c) Database of recommendations

The Secretariat prepared two documents (CCPG_OCT23_12 and CCPG_OCT23_16) that show the proposed process on when and how to close recommendations in the Database of Recommendations. This process has already been implemented and shared at SC69A and the CC-SC meeting earlier this year. During the intersessional period before the CC meeting, the Secretariat will prepare spreadsheets for each SWG and ICG with their recommendations so that leads and group members can review progress. If the progress is marked as completed, superseded by another recommendation, or draw attention (i.e. no particular action) they will be included in a list to be closed. After leads have reviewed which recommendations can be closed, these will be presented to the CC and Commission in 2024 for endorsement.

Document CCPG_OCT_12 is a spreadsheet of CC recommendations since 2016. Most of these were reviewed as part of the Midterm Review of the Conservation Committee Strategic Plan conducted in

2022, and progress is marked. Therefore, it's mainly the recommendations from 2022 that need to be checked and updated with progress. The Secretariat will be in touch with the topic chairs and leads over the next few months to begin the process.

d) Conservation Database update

The Secretariat has been progressing the Conservation Database. The focus for the next year will be to advance what was agreed at CC at IWC68. This involves working with Australia to adopt the SC process for the National Progress reports for the CC and also test the existing conservation database prototype with volunteers that include New Zealand, the UK and ASCOBANS. The Secretariat encourages any other country to volunteer if they are interested.

5. Conservation Committee Finance

a) Finance updates

The Secretariat (Bartmeier) presented paper CCPG_OCT23_13 which summarised the current status of the Voluntary Conservation Fund (VCF). The IWC received £227k in contributions, mainly for the CMP and Bycatch programmes. Expenditure has been on travel arrangements for the ship strikes Database Manager to attend SC69A, bycatch risk assessment training in Colombia, and southwest Atlantic right whale CMP project funding.

Staniland thanks countries for donating to the Voluntary Conservation Fund and reminds CCPG participants that the CC runs solely on voluntary contributions as it has no core funding.

b) Upcoming funding proposals

The Chair stated that there are two funding proposals for the CMP programme, one for the southwest Atlantic and one for the southeast Pacific right whale CMPs. There may also be a proposal for funding the Data Manager position presented at CC. There are no other current or upcoming funding proposals.

6. Engagement with other organisations

Staniland notes that there are numerous resolutions and recommendations to strengthen IWC's engagement with other organisations, and the CCPG_OCT23_14 paper summarises the cooperation related to themes within the CC Strategic Plan. Staniland thanks the Programme Development team within the Secretariat for their hard work.

Some of the activities that were highlighted were the FAO- factsheets that support the technical guidelines to reduce marine mammal bycatch, the GEF/FAO tuna II project, CAMAC capacity building in the Caribbean for marine mammals strandings, revision of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)- 2014 Underwater Radiated Noise Guidelines and the proposal for a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) in the northwest Mediterranean. The Secretariat and other members of the IWC have participated in meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It is challenging, given the IWC's limited resources, but the Secretariat will continue to work on ways to maximise impact by seeking collaboration wherever possible. There's been a great deal of work with CMS and its daughter agreements. Additionally, there have been several recommendations in the past from the CC and the SC concerning engagement with IORA, and after several attempts at contact, the Secretariat arranged a call to make introductions and start discussions.

Staniland notes that the Secretariat has also been working with RFMOs, and any suggestions on how to improve engagement with them would be welcomed. Langerock remembers that the Bycatch SWG

discussed this at a meeting in September 2021 and there was a lot of good suggestions. The Chair also suggested discussing this at CC as there might be Contracting Governments that can speak in support of IWC at RFMO meetings.

O'Connell (AWI) asks about IWC's work with CCAMLR. Staniland provided a summary on their work regarding humpback whale bycatch in krill fisheries. Belgium will be joining CCAMLR meeting later this year and volunteers to report on IWC there and back.

7. Conservation Committee positions

The Chair noted that the Conservation Committee's work is dependent on the SWG and ICG chairs and topic leads and expresses gratitude to everyone for all that has been done and continues to be done intersessionally. The Chair also asks to please let the CC leadership and the Secretariat know if any positions will become vacant. Currently the WW SWG Chair position is looking for a replacement.

The Chair also informed the CCPG that the CC leadership will be transferred to Collier (UK) as she is no longer working as a government official and therefore will be stepping down. Collier introduced himself and shared his enthusiasm for working with the IWC.

CCPG and the Secretariat thanked Bell for her enthusiastic work in the CC and IWC, first as the CC Vice Chair followed by her work as CC Chair.

8. Any other business

There were no further comments, and the Chair thanked all those who joined and participated in the meeting and closed the meeting at 11:35.

Annex A. Terms of Reference for annual Conservation Committee Planning Group meeting

The Conservation Committee Planning Group is tasked with helping set the agenda for the biennial Conservation Committee meeting and progression of the Conservation Committees work plan in the intersessional period.

It will:

- Consider the Committee's progress since the last meeting of the Committee, in particular with regards to intersessional work, and support continued effective delivery of its work.
- Identify key discussions, priorities and deliverables for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee.
- Support the Chair in preparing for Conservation Committee meetings.
- Provide an additional opportunity for discussing the strategic development of the Conservation Committee, particularly with regards its outward facing strategic plan, strategic development of priorities, engagement with other organisations, and funding.

Membership

The group is intended to be small and focused and does not replace a full meeting of the Conservation Committee. Attendance is not restricted but may be limited by available space. It will primarily be composed of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Conservation Committee, Chairs of the Committee's standing working groups, and nominees from contracted governments. Additional expertise will be invited as appropriate to the agenda by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Conservation Committee. The meeting will be Chaired by the Chair of the Conservation Committee.

Timings

The Conservation Committee planning meeting should meet at least annually and where possible in conjunction with meetings of the Scientific and/or Conservation Committee to ensure best use of resources.

Annex B Agenda

Draft Annotated Agenda Conservation Committee Planning Group Online, 5 Oct 2023, 10:00- 12:00 BST

- 1. Welcome and aims of the meeting**
 - a. Appointment of Chair [Cat Bell is proposed]
 - b. Appointment of Rapporteur [The Secretariat will offer to act as rapporteur]
 - c. Terms of Reference and aims of the meeting
 - d. Review of documents available to the meeting
- 2. Adoption of the agenda**
- 3. Progress Updates from Intersessional Working Groups since IWC68**
 - a. Reports from SWGs
 - i. Bycatch Mitigation Initiative
 - ii. Conservation Management Plans
 - iii. Ship Strikes
 - iv. Whale watching
 - b. Reports from ICGs
 - i. Anthropogenic Underwater Noise
 - ii. Marine Debris
 - iii. Socio-economic value of the roles of cetaceans
 - iv. Chemical pollution
 - v. Climate change
- 4. Preparation for IWC69**
 - a. Draft Conservation Committee agenda
 - i. Sanctuary review
 - ii. BBNJ
 - iii. Dates for virtual Conservation Committee meeting
 - b. Conservation Committee Strategic Plan and workplan
 - i. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Conservation Committee
 - ii. Standardising CC topic Terms of Reference
 - c. Database of recommendations
 - d. Conservation Database update
- 5. Finance**
 - a. Finance Updates
 - b. Upcoming funding proposals
- 6. Engagement with other organisations**
- 7. Conservation Committee positions**
- 8. Any other business**

Annex C List of participants

Argentina

Miguel Iñíguez Bessega (CC- Vice Chair)

Australia

Chris Griffin

Belgium

Stephanie Langerock

Chile

Barbara Galletti

Netherlands

Anne-Marie Svoboda

Verna de Groes

UK

Cat Bell (CC-Chair)

Jack Collier

Animal Welfare Institute (AWI)

Kate O’Connell

Centro de Conservacion Cetacea (CCC)

Elsa Cabrera

CMS/ASCOBANS

Jenny Renell

Fundación Cethus

Carolina Cassani

International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)

Sharon Livermore

OceanCare

Mark Simmonds

World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

Colman O Criodain

IWC Secretariat

Elizabeth Campbell

Iain Staniland

Imogen Webster

Moussa Ki Sow

Nikki Bartmeier

Cecilia Passadore

Kate Wilson

Annex D List of documents

Document Number	Title	Authors
CCPG_OCT_23_01	Draft Annotated Agenda	
Primary papers		
CCPG_OCT_23_02	Update from the Bycatch Standing Working Group	Bycatch Standing Working Group
CCPG_OCT_23_03	Update from the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans (CMPs)	Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans
CCPG_OCT_23_04	Update from the Ship Strikes Standing Working Group	S Livermore (Chair), L O'Loughlin (Data Manager)
CCPG_OCT_23_05	Update from the Whale Watching Standing Working Group	Whale Watching Standing Working Group
CCPG_OCT_23_06	Report of the intersessional work on Anthropogenic Underwater Noise	AUNICG
CCPG_OCT_23_07	Update from the Joint CC/SC Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Debris	M Simmonds and J Warrie
CCPG_OCT_23_08	Chair's Notes on the Draft Tender	B Galletti
CCPG_OCT_23_09	Update from the Joint CC/SC Intersessional Correspondence Group on Climate Change	M Simmonds
CCPG_OCT_23_10	Draft Conservation Committee agenda for September 2024	
CCPG_OCT_23_13	Update on Conservation Committee Finance	IWC Secretariat
CCPG_OCT_23_14	Update to the CCPG on the Cooperation with other Organisations	IWC Secretariat
CCPG_OCT_23_15	Draft Invitation to Tender Contracted Expert/Team/Organization to conduct the pilot project to assess the socioeconomic value of the ecosystem services provided by cetaceans	
CCPG_OCT_23_16	Examples of how to present Recommendations to be closed	IWC Secretariat
Working papers		
CCPG_OCT_23_11	Background document on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the International treaty on Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction	IWC Secretariat
CCPG_OCT_23_12	Conservation Committee Recommendations (extracted from the Database of Recommendations)	
For INFO papers		
SC_69A_EM_02_rev2	Progress report on the work of the Advisory Group of the Conservation Committee Cetacean and Ecosystem Functioning Working Group	

Report of the Conservation Committee Planning Group (CCPG)

Wednesday, May 22, 2024

Held virtually, 10:00 BST (UK time)

1. Welcome and aims of the meeting

The Chair of the Conservation Committee (CC) Collier (UK) opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. Members of the Secretariat were appointed as rapporteurs.

The Chair drew attention to the Terms of Reference (Annex A) for annual Conservation Committee Planning Group (CCPG) meetings, which were endorsed at IWC66 in 2016. The Chair recalled that many participants of this group had also participated in the CC-SC meeting, held two weeks prior. This CCPG meeting would provide updates and discuss progress from the intersessional period and then focus on planning the agenda for the Conservation Committee meeting in September 2024 and developing a new workplan for beyond IWC69.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda (Annex B) was adopted. The list of participants is given at Annex C and a list of documents available to the meeting is at Annex D.

3. Progress Updates from Intersessional Working Groups since IWC68

a) Update from Standing Working Groups

The Chair reminded CCPG members that all Standing Working Groups (SWG) and Intersessional Correspondence Groups (ICGs) should have standardised Terms of Reference (ToR) as part of the Working Group of Operational Effectiveness (WGOE) process. To ensure consistency, they should be presented at CC in 2024. As a result, the Chair suggested that the Chairs and Topic Leads of the SWGs and ICGs review their ToRs to ensure that all information outlined in the CC working methods is included. The SWG Chairs were then invited to give brief updates on their topics, and comments from participants were provided. Further details can be found in the reports as well as the highlights paper, CC-SC_May2024_06, and discussion is summarised below.

i. Bycatch Mitigation Initiative

The Bycatch SWG Chair (Svoboda, Netherlands) provided a few highlights of the BMI's recent work detailed in the update report SC_69B_HIM_22. A lot of progress has been made on the implementation of the 2021–2024 work plan, and a new workplan will be presented for endorsement at CC and IWC69, after review by the expert panel and the SWG.

The Bycatch Coordinator added that there has been progress in two of the six regions identified for pilot projects, and that if there were more areas that could be considered for pilot projects, the presentation of the new workplan at the CC meeting in September would be the place to give that input. The Chair thanked the Bycatch SWG for their work and invited CCPG participants to reflect on emerging issues related to BMI that could be included in the future workplan of the Bycatch SWG.

ii. Conservation Management Plans

Cassani (SWG Co-Chair, NGO Cethus) presented the report SC_69B_CMP_06, where updates are provided for all Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) and priority populations. The scientific and technical aspects of four proposed CMPs were endorsed at SC69B, the Central American humpback whale, Lahille's dolphin, Guiana dolphin, and the Irrawaddy dolphin (provisionally, if more than one

country presents the proposal). The CMP Handbook was also presented, it captures all useful, relevant information in one document and will be made available to all governments with the aim of increasing awareness and understanding of the CMP Programme while also strengthening the communication and cooperation between CC and SC CMP groups regarding the CMP development process.

iii. Ship Strikes

Livermore (SWG Chair, IFAW) provided an update (SC_69B_HIM_20) and highlighted that at SC69B, the SC had provided comments to the draft workplan, specifically, that the workplan should include an action to update the yacht racing guide. In addition, a representative of the ferry industry should be invited to join the Expert Panel. The funding proposal for the Data Manager position at the Secretariat was also presented.

iv. Whale Watching

Bell (SWG Chair, IFAW) was introduced as the new Chair of the Whale Watching SWG. The paper (SC_69B_WW_04Rev1) includes the new Strategic plan covering 2025-2034, workplan 2024-2026 and possible new content and case study for the Whale Watching Handbook. Webster (Secretariat) added that both the strategic plan and workplan have received comments from the SC Subcommittee on Whale Watching.

b) Reports from Intersessional Correspondence Groups (ICGs)

i. Anthropogenic Underwater Noise

Besega (ICG Co-lead, Argentina) referred to the paper presented at SC (SC_69B_E_21) with the progress of the ICG and a secondary paper (SC_69B_E_07Rev1) that reviewed all papers submitted to the SC related to underwater noise. The ICG will continue to develop the workplan, after receiving comments from SC, and continue their engagement with IMO.

ii. Joint SC-CC Marine Debris

Simmonds (ICG Co-lead, OceanCare) noted that the document provided for the meeting (SC_69B_E_16) has a summary of the marine debris work. Simmonds asked for some clarity from the CCPG on whether the CC should prepare something for the Marine Plastics Resolution proposal as the SC is doing. The Chair confirmed that there should be an aspect of the CC's work considered in the proposal. The ICG should participate in this process.

iii. Cetaceans and Ecosystem functioning

Galletti (Topic lead, Chile) shared results (SC_69B_EM_01) from the Advisory Group (AG) that was established in January 2023, composed of ecologists and economists to develop the draft tender for the Pilot Project. The AG has a list of five potential species for the pilot project but given the outcomes of the IWC SC-CMS Workshop on Ecosystem modelling (held November 2023) presented at SC69B, the AG has now decided that it is more effective to first develop a framework as part of the draft tender and then test it with one of these proposed species. The draft tender will be revisited and will be presented at IWC69.

Galletti also inquired about the possibility of one of the economists who is a member of the AG speaking at IWC69 as a plenary speaker. Staniland mentioned that there is interest for this, though timing at the IWC69 will be tight.

iv. Joint SC-CC Climate Change

Simmonds noted that the document provided for the meeting (SC_69B_E_09) has an excellent summary of the work of the joint group. Simmonds mentioned that there would possibly be a meeting in the coming months to discuss the outcomes of SC and prepare for IWC69.

v. Chemical Pollution

The Chemical Pollution ICG did not present a report to the CCPG or to SC69B. Simmonds expressed concern about the lack of progress this topic has made under CC, citing a lack of a leader to move this theme forward and the significant work done on this topic by SC. Staniland proposed that a joint CC-SC group be formed to advance work. In the absence of a lead within CC, it was proposed that Holm (SC) could be approached to present on the SC's work on pollution and provide some ideas for discussion and possible next steps.

c) Update from Joint Conservation Committee- Scientific Committee Working Group

The Chair gave a brief update on the mutual topics of interest arising from SC69B and the CC-SC meeting on May 9th, 2024, and summarised a few points that are relevant to the CCPG.

- Discussion on the timing, frequency and criteria to propose a species for an Extinction Alert. Modified criteria will be presented at IWC69.
- A costed SC workplan for the Marine Plastics resolution will be prepared for IWC69.
- There is a recommendation from the SC regarding deep sea mining that could involve work in the CC SWGs and ICGs.
- The CC-SC joint working group also discussed the timing of the CC-SC meetings now that SC is going biennial (CCPG_May2024_02 for more information). It was **agreed** that wording should be "at least biennially" to allow flexibility.
- The CC-SC received an update from the small group developing a process for determining conservation priorities. A draft matrix was presented to prioritise species needing assistance from the SC and CC. This will be developed intersessionally and an update will be provided at the next CC-SC meeting.

4. Preparation for IWC69

a) Draft Conservation Committee agenda

The Chair noted that in accordance with what was agreed in IWC68, the upcoming CC meeting will be virtual and approximately two weeks before the Commission meeting. Meetings will be held from September 2 to 5, in 1.5-hour sessions at 14:00-15:30 BST and/or 16:00-17:30 BST. IWC69 will be held from September 22 to 28, 2024. The Chair asked the Planning Group to consider the proposed agenda in document CCPG_MAY24_03, the virtual format, and number of sessions, that will be needed when organising and developing the CC agenda and format.

Webster mentioned that the 2020 CC meeting was also virtual so a similar structure could be adopted. Staniland agreed and recollected that the use of comment sheets was an improvement on email chains for topics that required less discussion. Perhaps people could flag topics which may require more discussion so the Secretariat can consider this when planning the sessions. Livermore asked that the final dates be circulated soon, as other IGOs also have meetings in September. The Chair thanked those that intervened and noted that more thought is needed before deciding on the final format.

i. Sanctuary review

Staniland reminded participants that the Southern Ocean Sanctuary (SOS) was established in 1994. The Schedule states that it should be reviewed every ten years. Therefore, 2024 will be the third decadal review. The review was completed at SC69B and the online form that was used to collect resources will remain open. Staniland mentioned that recommendations from the SOS review will be presented at IWC69, and any update of the Sanctuary review process will require input from the CC.

b) Conservation Committee Strategic Plan and workplan

The Conservation Committee Strategic Plan and workplan expire in 2026. The workplan was made available as document CCPG_May2024_04.

i. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Conservation Committee (CC-SC_MAY24_04)

ii. BBNJ (CC-SC_MAY24_04)

Webster summarised the Secretariat's paper, which contained information on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GFB) and the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ). The aim of the paper was to provide background information on both treaties and ways in which the IWC could contribute. The paper includes activities under the IWC that already contribute, directly or indirectly, to the objectives of both. Webster then asked the CCPG to consider if and how the CC should engage with these agreements.

There was a general **agreement** that the GBF and the BBNJ should be considered in the CC agenda. Svoboda asked how the CC could consider this issue if there were a resolution presented at IWC69. The Chair asked any national delegates to please discuss this with the CC leadership to avoid duplication of the topic at CC and IWC69.

c) Database of recommendations

The Secretariat summarised the proposed process on when and how to close recommendations in the Database of Recommendations. This process has already been implemented and shared at SC69A (2023) and the SC69B meeting earlier this year. During the intersessional period before the CC meeting, the Secretariat will prepare spreadsheets for each SWG and ICG with their recommendations so that leads and group members can review progress. If the progress is marked as completed, superseded by another recommendation, or draw attention (i.e. no particular action) they will be included in a list to be closed. After leads have reviewed which recommendations can be closed, these will be presented to the CC and Commission in 2024 for endorsement.

The Chair and Staniland both agreed that the process was helpful in evaluating how effective the IWC was and there was agreement with the proposed process. The Secretariat will be in touch with the topic chairs and leads over the next few months to begin the process.

d) Conservation Database update

Campbell (Secretariat) reported that the database is still in development. Paper CCPG_May2024_05 provided a summary of feedback from New Zealand and the United Kingdom, primarily concerning the website's aesthetics, content, and link usability, among other things. Considering that the Conservation Database will not be usable for IWC69, the question was made as to whether there should be a call for Voluntary Conservation Reports. The return rate of these have been low in the previous years. Bell proposed that a shorter template could be considered to avoid repetition of

information. Another possibility is having a point of contact to increase return on these as well as National Reports for the SC.

5. Conservation Committee Finance

a) Finance updates

The Secretariat (Bartmeier) presented paper CCPG_MAY24_06 which summarised the status of the Voluntary Conservation Fund (VCF). The IWC received £15,781.46 in Voluntary Contributions until April 2024, mainly for the CMP and Bycatch programmes. Expenditure has been on CMP related workshops; the ship strikes Database Manager position among other projects. Bartmeier thanked countries for donating to the Voluntary Conservation Fund and reminded CCPG participants that the CC runs solely on voluntary contributions as it has no core funding.

2. Upcoming funding proposals

The Chair asked the CCPG if they were aware of any proposals that will be presented later this year at CC and IWC69. Iñiguez mentioned that there will be a proposal for a workshop to further develop the Arabian Sea humpback whale CMP proposal. Day (Australia) noted that the Budgetary Sub-Committee is looking at various additional needs that could be integrated into the core budget proposal presented to IWC69, including a new position at the Secretariat to work on the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative. However, given the core budget will be tight, it is likely that conservation-related items including this additional bycatch position would need to be funded from voluntary funds rather than core funds if it is deemed a priority for the Conservation Committee. Simmonds reminded the CCPG members that the marine plastics proposal is still under development.

6. Engagement with other organisations

Paper SC_69B_O_06Rev2 outlines the Secretariat engagement with other organisations and includes Observer Reports. Campbell added that since April 2024, there have been two updates. The Secretariat participated in the Convention of Biological Diversity - Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (CBD SBSTTA26) meeting in Nairobi, on the monitoring framework for the KMGBF and, the Workshop 'The Future of Shipping at the biodiversity-climate nexus' held at the World Maritime University in Malmo, Sweden. Both events happened 13-17 May 2024. In the coming months, the Secretariat will send out a list of events it plans to attend during the second half of 2024 and would appreciate support at these events. Likewise, if CCPG members are participating in events and could represent IWC please let the Secretariat know.

7. Conservation Committee positions

The Chair noted that there are no vacant positions in CC.

8. Any other business

Wilson (Secretariat) stated that the original Extinction Alert paper presented at IWC68 was a collaboration between CC and SC. Another joint paper should be presented at IWC69, covering the new criteria, a list of intersessional group members, and a request for input from the Commission. This process was generally **agreed** upon.

The Chair thanked all those who joined and participated in the meeting and closed the meeting at 11:30 BST. The report was adopted by correspondence.

Annex A. Terms of Reference for annual Conservation Committee Planning Group meeting

The Conservation Committee Planning Group is tasked with helping set the agenda for the biennial Conservation Committee meeting and progression of the Conservation Committees work plan in the intersessional period.

It will:

- Consider the Committee's progress since the last meeting of the Committee, in particular with regards to intersessional work, and support continued effective delivery of its work.
- Identify key discussions, priorities and deliverables for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee.
- Support the Chair in preparing for Conservation Committee meetings.
- Provide an additional opportunity for discussing the strategic development of the Conservation Committee, particularly with regards its outward facing strategic plan, strategic development of priorities, engagement with other organisations, and funding.

Membership

The group is intended to be small and focused and does not replace a full meeting of the Conservation Committee. Attendance is not restricted but may be limited by available space. It will primarily be composed of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Conservation Committee, Chairs of the Committee's standing working groups, and nominees from contracted governments. Additional expertise will be invited as appropriate to the agenda by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Conservation Committee. The meeting will be Chaired by the Chair of the Conservation Committee.

Timings

The Conservation Committee planning meeting should meet at least annually and where possible in conjunction with meetings of the Scientific and/or Conservation Committee to ensure best use of resources.

Annex B. Agenda

1. **Welcome and aims of the meeting**
 - a. Appointment of Chair
 - b. Appointment of Rapporteur
 - c. Terms of Reference and aims of the meeting
 - d. Review of documents available to the meeting
2. **Adoption of the agenda**
3. **Progress Updates from Intersessional Working Groups**
 - a. Reports from SWGs
 - ii. Bycatch Mitigation Initiative
 - iii. Conservation Management Plans
 - iv. Ship Strikes
 - iv. Whale watching
 - b. Reports from ICGs
 - i. Anthropogenic Underwater Noise
 - ii. Marine Debris
 - iii. Socio-economic value of the roles of cetaceans
 - iv. Chemical pollution
 - v. Climate change
 - c. Update from Joint Conservation Committee- Scientific Committee Working Group
4. **Preparation for IWC69**
 - a. Draft Conservation Committee agenda
 - i. Sanctuary review
 - b. Conservation Committee Strategic Plan and workplan
 - i. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Conservation Committee
 - ii. High Seas Treaty (BBNJ)
 - c. Database of recommendations
 - d. Conservation Database update
5. **Finance**
 - a. Finance Updates
 - b. Upcoming funding proposals
6. **Engagement with other organisations**
7. **Conservation Committee positions**
8. **Any other business**

Annex C. Participants

Argentina

Miguel Iñíguez Bessega (CC- Vice Chair)

Australia

Emma Day

Belgium

Stephanie Langerock

Jens Warrie

Brazil

Ricardo Leal

Artur Andriolo

Chile

Barbara Galletti

Germany

Nicole Hielscher

Hungary

Eva Fejes

Benedek Baltay

Rita Varga-Turos

Netherlands

Anne-Marie Svoboda

New Zealand

Dave Lundquist

UK

Jack Collier (CC-Chair)

Murray Fyfe

Fundación Cethus

Carolina Cassani

SC

Lindsay Porter (Vice- Chair)

International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)

Sharon Livermore

Cat Bell

OceanCare

Mark Simmonds

World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

Colman O Criodain

IWC Secretariat

Martha Rojas Urrego

Elizabeth Campbell

Iain Staniland

Imogen Webster

Moussa Ki Sow

Nikki Bartmeier

Cecilia Passadore

Kate Wilson

Annex D. List of documents

Document Number	Title	Authors
CCPG_MAY24_01	Draft Annotated Agenda	IWC Secretariat
Primary papers		
CCPG_MAY24_02	Update of Terms of Reference for the Joint Conservation Committee-Scientific Committee Working group as SC moves to biennial meetings	IWC Secretariat
CCPG_MAY24_03	Draft IWC69 Conservation Committee Agenda	IWC Secretariat
CCPG_MAY24_04	Conservation Committee Workplan for 2022-2026	IWC Secretariat
CCPG_MAY24_05	Update on the development of the IWC Conservation Database for Voluntary Conservation Reporting	IWC Secretariat
CCPG_MAY24_06	Update on Conservation Committee Finance	IWC Secretariat
For INFO papers		
CC-SC_MAY2024_04	Background document on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and relevance to IWC	IWC Secretariat
CC-SC_MAY2024_05	Future CC-SC meetings once SC goes to biennial meetings	IWC Secretariat
CC-SC_MAY2024_06	Update on Work Across Topics of Mutual Interest	IWC Secretariat
SC_69B_HIM_20	Update from the Ship Strikes Standing Working Group	Sharon Livermore, Imogen Webster, Lydia O'Loughlin
SC_69B_HIM_22	Bycatch Mitigation Initiative – 2024 Update on progress	Bycatch Coordinator; IWC Secretariat; SWG Chair
SC_69B_E_09	Report from the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Climate Change	Simmonds And Members of the ICG
SC_69B_E_16	Report of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Debris	Simmonds, Warrie and Members of the ICG
SC_69B_E_21	Report of the intersessional work on Anthropogenic Underwater Noise	AUN ICG
SC_69B_CMP_06 Attachment A CMP Handbook	Report of the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans - SC69B	SWG-CMP Members And CMP Coordinators
SC_69B_WW_04Rev1	Update from the Whale Watching Standing Working Group	SWG on WW
SC_69B_WW_06	Review of the Whale Watching Strategic Plan Output	SWG on WW
SC_69B_EM_1	Update from the Conservation Committee Working Group on Cetaceans and Ecosystem Functioning – March 2024	Barbara Galletti Vernazzani
SC_69B_O_1	Extinction Alert Summary	M. Simmonds, M. Stachowitsch, K. Wilson
SC_69B_O_06Rev2	Cooperation with other Organisations and Observer Reports	IWC Secretariat
Working papers		
Plenary WP08	Considerations for Issuing an Extinction Alert	