



# International Whaling Commission

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CIRCULAR COMMUNICATION TO MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE  
AND INVITED PARTICIPANTS  
IWC.SC.94

**Outcome and follow-up to the Annual Commission Meeting in Sorrento**

Doug DeMaster has requested that the attached information be circulated to the Scientific Committee.

Dr. Nicky Grandy  
Secretary to the Commission

# Outcome and Follow-up to IWC/56

DOUG DEMASTER, CHAIR OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE PRIORITIES, STRUCTURE AND BUDGET

### Scientific Committee Report

Many of you may not have seen Items 19-25 and Annex U of our report (IWC/56/Rep 1). These items describe Committee priorities and initial agenda for the 2005 meeting, data processing and computing needs for 2004/2005, and funding requirements for 2004/2005 respectively. The complete Report and Annexes are now on the IWC website: [http://www.iwcoffice.org/commission/sci\\_com/screport.htm](http://www.iwcoffice.org/commission/sci_com/screport.htm). Annex U gives e-mail correspondence groups and their terms of reference. Please check it to make sure that your name is included under those Working Groups you wished to participate in - if you wish to join any of the Working Groups, please contact Clare Last directly ([clast@iwcoffice.org](mailto:clast@iwcoffice.org)). Remember, if your e-mail address changes, please let the Secretariat know. Convenors of all groups have been notified of their members and the e-mail addresses you used when you registered.

The Secretariat has pulled out all of the tasks identified in the Committee's report and who should complete them. This has been placed on the Scientific Committee website:

[http://www.iwcoffice.org/commission/sci\\_com/scmain.htm](http://www.iwcoffice.org/commission/sci_com/scmain.htm)

### Next year's meeting dates

The 2005 SC meeting (SC57) will be in Ulsan, Korea. As was the case last year, the Committee meeting will last only 12 days and will take place from Monday 30 May to Friday 10 June. There will be a 3-day workshop (27-29 May) on the use of market sampling to estimate bycatch and a 2-day workshop (28-29 May) on sea-ice before the main meeting. The Commission meeting will take place between 20 – 24 June. The Commission's sub-groups will meet between 13 June and 19 June.

### Election of Officers

At our meeting next year we will have to elect officers. Our proposed revisions to the Rules of Procedure from SC/56 were forwarded to the Commission. The Commission adopted our proposed changes and they can be found on <http://www.iwcoffice.org/commission/procedure.htm#scientific>. With this in mind, I encourage all delegates to discuss with their Heads of Delegation potential candidates for Vice-Chair. As we agreed in Sorrento, the current Vice-Chair (Bjørge) will become the Chair after the Commission meeting in Ulsan.

### Initial agenda and sub-committees

As you will see from our approved work plan (see below and the IWC/56/Rep 1, Item 19), the sub-committee and working group structure is similar to the structure used in Italy, except that the SAN working group is expected to not have to meet. As was the case last year, with only 6 days for sub-committees and 12 sub-committees (and working groups) that need to meet, the Convenors and Chair have agreed a tentative number of sessions per sub-committee, where the total number of planned sessions is 90.

| Sub-Committee | Sessions | Sub-Committee      | Sessions |
|---------------|----------|--------------------|----------|
| RMP           | 11       | SM                 | 8        |
| AWMP          | 10       | SD                 | 5        |
| BRG           | 6        | SH                 | 7        |
| IA            | 14       | Scientific Permits | 5        |
| BC            | 7        | DNA                | 2        |
| E             | 9        | TOTAL SESSIONS     | 90       |
| WW            | 6        |                    |          |

The following priority topics were agreed by the Convenors for the 57<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee. The Commission approved the entire work plan with no changes.

## **RMP**

As last year, this sub-committee will concentrate on general issues as well as preparations for Implementation. The priority topics will be:

### *General issues*

The Committee **agrees** on the following, in order of priority:

- (1) Finalise the guidelines and requirements for implementing the RMP;
  - (a) Develop the thresholds for defining ‘acceptable’, and ‘borderline’ performance for classifying the performance of RMP variants for *Implementation Simulation Trials*.
  - (b) Develop a list of agreed stock structure archetypes.
- (2) Further develop the ‘simple model filter’.
- (3) Finalise the issue of spatio-temporal considerations.
- (4) Finalise the issue of the CATCHLIMIT program for running it in a trials situation.

### *Implementation process*

The Committee agreed on the following, in priority order:

- (1) Conduct an intersessional workshop to be in a position to complete the *pre-implementation assessment* for western North Pacific Bryde’s whales.
- (2) Review progress on the development of stock structure hypotheses as part of the *pre-implementation assessment* for North Atlantic fin whales.

## **AWMP**

The Committee **agrees** that the highest priority for the SWG is the development of an *SLA* or *SLAs* for the Greenlandic fisheries. The priority topics are:

- (1) Greenland *SLA* development:
  - (a) the 2004 aerial survey;
  - (b) genetics simulation studies;
  - (c) *SLA* exploration and development.
- (2) Undertake annual review of catch data and management advice for minke and fin whales off Greenland.
- (3) Undertake annual review of catch data and management advice for humpback whales off St Vincent and The Grenadines.
- (4) Initiate planning for a bowhead whale *implementation Review*.

## **Bowhead, right and gray whales (BRG)**

In the Plenary meeting, the issue was raised as to whether to consider issues related to southern right whales as part of the responsibilities of SH. It was agreed this item would be discussed during the Convenors meeting following the Committee meeting. After discussion, the Convenors recommend that all right whale issues (i.e., northern and southern populations) continue to be considered under a single sub-committee. Given the workload of BRG anticipated during the 2005 meeting, a priority item was agreed concerning southern right whales (see below). Therefore, the Committee **agrees** that it will:

- (1) Review any new information on bowhead whale stock identity.
- (2) Undertake annual review of catch data and management advice for ENP gray whale.
- (3) Undertake annual review of catch data and management advice for BCB bowhead whale.
- (4) Sea Ice and whale habitat: a joint special pre-meeting session with E and IA.
- (5) Undertake annual review of the status of the western North Pacific stock of gray whale.
- (6) Undertake a review of new information on Southern right whales.
- (7) If there is time, it will: review new information on small stocks of bowhead and northern right whales.

### **In-depth Assessment (IA)**

The Committee **agrees** that obtaining Antarctic minke whale abundance estimates is its highest priority item for next year. Its topics will thus be in priority order:

- (1) Estimate abundance of Antarctic minke whales.
- (2) Sea Ice and whale habitat: a joint special pre-meeting session with E and BRG.
- (3) Review workshop report on SOWER cruise plans beyond 2004/05.
- (4) Begin work on an in-depth assessment of western North Pacific common minke whales, with a focus on J stock, assuming the availability of an abundance estimate for this stock.
- (5) Continue to examine reasons for differences between minke abundance estimates from CPII and CPIII.
- (6) Brief review of report from an anticipated non-IWC sponsored workshop on sperm whales.

### **Bycatches and other anthropogenic removals (BC)**

The Committee **agrees** that this sub-committee will, as its highest priority:

- (1) Further review methods to estimate bycatch based on fisheries data and observer programmes.
- (2) Further review methods to estimate bycatch based on genetic data, especially results from the workshop.
- (3) Empirical analysis of the functional relationship of bycatch levels to fishing effort and to population abundance.

It is intended that the following topics will be priority items in 2006 given work expected to be completed by then by other sub-committees; if there is time it may also briefly consider:

- (4) Information and methods on estimates of cetacean mortality caused by vessel strikes.
- (5) Information and methods on estimates of cetacean mortality caused by other human activities.

### **Southern Hemisphere whales other than Antarctic minke whales (SH)**

The Committee **agrees** that the priority items in order will be:

- (1) Complete in-depth assessment of Southern Hemisphere humpback whales with a focus on the C, D, and E stocks -
  - (a) Investigate the distribution and allocation of historic catches to (a) proposed sub areas of breeding grounds and (b) from the Antarctic Peninsula to Stocks A and G,
  - (b) Update the tables summarising the present state of knowledge and work required to continue a Comprehensive Assessment of Southern Hemisphere humpback whales (intersessional working group to be chaired by Bannister),
  - (c) Further investigation and clarification of proposed sub areas for stocks on the breeding grounds.
- (2) Preparation for assessment of blue whales in 2006 (intersessional working group chaired by Bannister).

### **Environmental concerns (E)**

The Committee **agrees** that the priority items will be:

- (1) Sea Ice and whale habitat: a joint special pre-meeting session with IA and BRG.
- (2) Review of the report of the Habitat Degradation Workshop.

It will also receive progress reports on:

- (3) POLLUTION 2000+: finalise Phase 1 and prepare for Phase 2.
- (4) Southern Ocean collaboration: planning and coordination of IWC participation and report back.
- (5) SOCER: review of Arctic and Antarctic.
- (6) Arctic issues: report on potential for future collaboration.
- (7) Issues related to impacts of anthropogenic noise on cetaceans.
- (8) Issues related to habitat concerns.

**Stock definition (SD)**

The Committee **agrees** that the priority items will be:

- (1) Review progress on the TOSSM project.
- (2) Continue review of statistical and genetic issues related to population structure (including DNA quality issues).
- (3) Possible definitions of unit to conserve and the implications for management.
- (4) Progress on use of tagging data in studying population structure.
- (5) Review list of stock structure archetypes provided by RMP.

**Whalewatching (WW)**

The Committee **agrees** that the two major priority items will be:

- (1) Assessing the possible population level impacts of whalewatching on whales.
- (2) Development of the scientific foundation of whalewatching guidelines.

In addition, the following lesser priority items in order will be:

- (3) Review of published whalewatching guidelines and regulations.
- (4) Reports of the Intersessional Working Groups.
- (5) Review of risks to cetaceans from whalewatching vessels (high-speed and others).
- (6) Review of potential impacts of swim-with programmes.

**Small cetaceans (SM)**

The Committee **agrees** that the priority items will be:

- (1) Review of status of the finless porpoise.
- (2) Review progress on previous recommendations.
- (3) Review incidental catches and takes of small cetaceans by country.

**Scientific Permits (P)**

The Committee **agrees** that the priority items will be:

- (1) Review research results from existing permits (including plans for a major review of the JARPA programme).
- (2) Review plans for new and continuing permit proposals.

**DNA**

The Committee **agrees** that the priority items will be:

- (1) Review genetic methods for species, stock, and individual identification.
- (2) Collect and archive tissue samples from catches and bycatch.
- (3) Reference databases and standards for diagnostic DNA registries.

## BUDGET

Table 5 under Item 21 (SC Report, page 63) gives the reduced budget of £240,850 agreed by the Committee in plenary discussions. Fortunately for the Committee, the Commission adopted this budget. We owe special thanks to Nicky Grandy and Sean Moran for their help in supporting our request.

Table 5  
Summary of budget requests for the coming year

|   | Reference     | Budget          |                 |
|---|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|   |               | Recommended     | Reduced         |
| <b>RMP (Annex D)</b>  |               |                 |                 |
| Intersessional Workshop on North Pacific Bryde's whales.                    | Item 6.1      | £10,000         | £8,000          |
| <b>AWMP (Annex E)</b>   |               |                 |                 |
| AWMP developers fund  | Item 8.4      | £10,000         | £8,500          |
| Genetic simulation studies  | Item 8.3.1    | £12,000         | £10,000         |
| Intersessional workshop on Greenlandic issues                               | Item 8.3, 8.4 | £10,000         | £10,000         |
| <b>IA (Annex G)</b>   |               |                 |                 |
| SOWER 2004/5.   | Item 10.3     | £88,500         | £66,000         |
| Beyond SOWER 2004/5.  | Item 10.3     | £9,000          | £0              |
| Estimating abundance of Antarctic minke whales – new methods and standard   | Item 10.2.3   | £3,000          | £3,000          |
| Estimating abundance of Antarctic minke whales - DESS                       | Item 10.2.3   | £20,100         | £12,100         |
| Estimating trend in abundance of Antarctic minke whales – VPA analysis      | Item 10.2.3   | £20,000         | £18,000         |
| <b>E/IA/BRG (Annexes F, G and K)</b>  |               |                 |                 |
| Sea-Ice and Whale Habitat   | Item 12.3     | £4,050          | £4,050          |
| <b>E (Annex K)</b>  |               |                 |                 |
| Porphyrin analyses POLLUTION 2000+, Phase I                                 |               | £4,500          | £0              |
| SO-collaboration field work   | Item 7.3      | £22,000         | £45,000         |
| SO-collaboration, data validation, analysis, preparation of grant proposals | Item 7.3      | £25,000         |                 |
| SO-collaboration, spatial modelling development, data analysis              | Item 7.3      | £30,000         |                 |
| Training scholarship, integrated data                                       | Item 7.3      | £22,000         | £0              |
| SOCER. Coordination, literature search and editing                          | Item 6        | £3,000          | £0              |
| <b>SH (Annex H)</b>   |               |                 |                 |
| Antarctic humpback whale photo catalogue.                                   | Item 10.3.4   | £5,200          | £5,200          |
| <b>BC (Annex J)</b>   |               |                 |                 |
| Co-ordination with FAO  | Item 7.1.1    | £1,500          | £1,500          |
| Workshop on the use of market sampling to estimate bycatch.                 | Item 7.2.1    | £14,500         | £14,500         |
| <b>SM/BC (Annexes J and L)</b>  |               |                 |                 |
| Workshop on mitigation of franciscana bycatches, Buenos Aires, 2005**       | Item 13.4     | £20,000         | £0              |
| <b>ALL</b>  |               |                 |                 |
| Invited participants  |               | £40,000         | £35,000         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  |               | <b>£374,350</b> | <b>£240,850</b> |

\*\* this money is to come out of the Small Cetaceans Fund

## COMMISSION DECISIONS

The Commission made no specific requests to the Scientific Committee for analyses during their meeting. The Commission did pass seven resolutions (<http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/resolution2004.htm>). The resolutions that directly affect our work include: (1) Resolution 2004-1 on western North Pacific gray whale, which endorses the conclusions and recommendations from IWC/56/Rep 1 and which requests all range states to develop, begin or continue scientific research programmes; (2) Resolution 2004-5 on possible synergies with the global environment facility (GEF), which directs the Secretariat to 'explore possible synergies and the possible utility of the GEF to the IWC with specific regard to assistance for developing countries for scientific research and policies for scientific research, as directed by the IWC'; and (3) Resolution 2004-7 on the frequency of meeting of the IWC, which establishes a working group to investigate and make recommendations on the implications of less frequent meetings of the IWC. The working group will report back to the Commission at its meeting next year in Ulsan.

In the remainder of this note, other Commission decisions relevant to our work are outlined based on the relevant parts of the IWC Press Release. The full press release (<http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/meeting2004.htm>) provides further details on the Commission meeting.

### Sanctuaries

Proposals for sanctuaries in the South Pacific (26 for, 21 against, 4 abstentions) and South Atlantic (26 for, 22 against, 4 abstentions) failed to gain the necessary three-quarters majorities to be adopted. Similarly a proposal to delete the provision for the Southern Ocean Sanctuary and to include a catch limit of 2,914 Antarctic minke whales was not adopted (19 for, 30 against, 2 abstentions).

### RMS

Although the Commission has accepted and endorsed the Revised Management Procedure (RMP) for commercial whaling, it has noted that work on a number of issues, including specification of an inspection and observer system must be completed (called the Revised Management Scheme) before the Commission will consider establishing catch limits other than zero. A proposal to take the RMS process forward was developed intersessionally by the Chair of the Commission. A Resolution (2004-6) aimed at trying to have draft text ready for consideration and possible adoption and/or to identify any outstanding policy and technical issues next year was passed by consensus.

### Catch limits for commercial whaling

In 1982, the Commission took a decision, which came into force from the 1986 and 1985/86 seasons, that catch limits for all commercial whaling would be set to zero. Norway has lodged objections to the ban and has exercised its right to set national catch limits for its coastal whaling operations for minke whales. The Commission did not adopt proposals by Japan for catch limits of 100 minke whales (24 for, 28 against, 1 abstention) and 150 Bryde's whales (22 for, 29 against, 2 abstentions) to be taken by coastal community-based whaling. However, the Commission passed a Resolution (2004-2) by consensus to work to resolve this issue.

### Aboriginal subsistence whaling

The Commission endorsed and adopted the *Gray Whale SLA*, a new long-term scientific approach to providing advice on strike limits for gray whales; this follows on from the similar approach adopted for bowhead whales two years ago. The Scientific Committee will now work to produce a similar approach for the Greenlandic aboriginal subsistence whaling fisheries, where to date, the Committee is concerned that it has never been able to provide management advice.

The present catch limits are in force for aboriginal subsistence whaling and no changes were made to these this year. Bowhead whales - up to 280 whales may be landed in the period 2003 - 2007, with no more than 67 whales struck in any year (and up to 15 unused strikes may be carried over each year).

*Eastern North Pacific gray whales* - A total catch of 620 whales is allowed for the years 2003 - 2007 with a maximum of 140 in any one year.

*West Greenland fin whales* - An annual catch of 19 whales is allowed for the years 2003 - 2007.

*West Greenland minke whales* - The annual number of whales struck for the years 2003-2007, shall not exceed 175 (up to 15 unused strikes may be carried over each year).

*East Greenland minke whales* - An annual catch of 12 whales is allowed for the years 2003 - 2007 (up to 3 unused strikes may be carried over each year).

*Western North Atlantic Humpback whales* - For the seasons 2003-2007 the number of humpback whales to be taken by the Bequians of St. Vincent and the Grenadines shall not exceed 20.

The Schedule language was consolidated and harmonised.

### **Scientific Permits**

Two proposed permits by Japan were considered. One is an extension of its continuing programme in the Southern Hemisphere (now 400±10% minke whales from the Antarctic). The second is for a long-term research programme primarily aimed at feeding ecology in the context of contributing to the 'conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources in the western North Pacific, especially within Japan's EEZ.' The programme proposes the taking of 220 common minke whales (100 from the offshore survey and 120 from the coastal survey), 50 Bryde's whales, 100 sei whales (offshore survey) and 10 sperm whales (offshore survey) in the western North Pacific. A proposed permit by Iceland, primarily for feeding ecology studies for 100 common minke whales, 100 fin whales and 50 sei whales in each of two years was presented last year; only a permit for 39 common minke whales was issued. Again, different views on the value of this research were expressed in the Scientific Committee. Last year the Commission passed a Resolution urging countries to terminate or not to commence special permit catches (24 in favour, 21 against and 1 abstention). It also passed a Resolution asking Japan not to continue its special permit catches of Antarctic minke whales (24 in favour, 21 against, 1 abstention). As this resolution is still in force and in order to save time, Australia and other co-sponsors withdrew a similar proposed Resolution this year.

### **Conservation Committee**

Last year, the Commission passed a Resolution to establish a Conservation Committee, comprising of all members of the Commission. This year, the Conservation Committee met to try to determine its terms of reference and *modus operandi*, including its relationship with the Scientific Committee. The Conservation Committee had "agreed that interactions with the Scientific Committee would occur in the same way that the Scientific Committee interacts with other subsidiary bodies already established by the Commission. As with the Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Subcommittee and the first meeting of the Conservation Committee, the Chair of the Scientific Committee would attend and provide information on scientific matters that are germane to that body's work." The Conservation Committee report is on <http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/reports2004.htm>.