

CIRCULAR COMMUNICATION TO MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
IWC.SC.140

**Climate Change Workshop (21-25 Feb 2009) and SOWER Abundance Estimates Workshop
(7-10 April 2009)**

Climate Change Workshop

The workshop is to be held at Certosa di Pontignano Congress Centre, Siena, Italy, 21-25 February 2009. The primary aim of the workshop is to determine how climate change is/may already be affecting cetaceans and how best to determine these effects. The Climate Change Workshop will bring together - and enhance collaborations amongst - experts in cetacean biology, modelling, marine ecosystems and climate change, as well as reviewing current understanding and seeking to improve conservation outcomes for cetaceans under climate change scenarios described in the IPCC 4th report. It will do this by:

1. identifying existing long term cetacean environmental data sets that can be analysed and included in models in relation to climate change variables;
2. considering other potential data sources;
3. determining patterns that may be attributable to climate change via analyses of these data sets;
4. modelling mechanisms to consider cause and effect relationships, provide predictions and identify data gaps that, if filled, would improve our understanding of the effects of climate change on cetaceans; and
5. providing timely scientific advice related to cetacean research, conservation and management via peer-reviewed publications.

Relevant documents will be posted on the IWC website (http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/workshops/CLIMATEworkshop.htm) and further items will be added as they become available.

SOWER Abundance Estimates Workshop

The workshop is to be held at St. Andrews University, Scotland 7-10 April 2009. In the last couple years, the Committee has been developing and testing new methods to estimate minke whale abundance in the Antarctic from IWC IDCR/SOWER cruises. One of the three new methods under development (the OK method) presented to SC/60 preliminary estimates of abundance for the CPII and CPIII surveys, a detailed set of diagnostics and results from simulation tests. In addition, another method under development (the BHWP method) presented a preliminary estimate of abundance for CPIII and some diagnostics. Such substantial progress was due to the hard work of the developers and was helped by the opportunity to meet and discuss technical details at the Seattle intersessional workshop in February 2008. The results of the diagnostics and simulation tests proved to be extremely valuable in assessing these methods. These results highlighted that some aspects of the OK model appear to have substantial lack of fit for some of the diagnostics. These issues must be resolved before the Committee can agree with reasonable confidence on a set of abundance estimates. As in many cases in science, an iterative process is necessary for complete success. Thus, to complete the development of these methods, a workshop is to be held to facilitate the completion of the evaluation of one or more of the methods under development. After the workshop (and some associated intersessional email correspondence), the Committee in 2009 should be able to come to an agreement on best available estimates.

Terms of reference

The general term of reference is to facilitate the completion of the abundance estimates of Antarctic minke whales using the IWC/SOWER data collected during CPI, CPII, and CPIII, with emphasis on the CPII and CPIII surveys.

Relevant documents will be posted on the IWC website (http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/workshops/SOWER_ABUNDANCEworkshop.htm) and further items will be added as they become available.

If you plan to attend either of these workshops please inform Jemma Miller (jemma.miller@iwcoffice.org) as soon as possible.

Dr. Nicky Grandy
Secretary to the Commission