



July 2015

Introduction

Welcome to the July edition of the IWC News Bulletin. Traditionally things are a little quieter at this time of year, but there still seems to be a lot happening around the IWC.

The Scientific Committee have once more produced an excellent and comprehensive report of the recent meeting in San Diego. I was very pleased to attend and observe first-hand some of the committed and high quality discussion. I'd like to repeat my thanks to the Chair, Vice Chair and all members of the Committee, and commend their report to anyone interested in IWC issues.

I'd like to repeat something else I said at the Scientific Committee, and so apologies to those who will be hearing this a second time: recently I was interviewed by a student who asked why the IWC needed a Scientific Committee. My reply to him was that, in order to decide, you have to know. The Scientific Committee gives knowledge to the Commission to help us do a better job.

This principle is demonstrated very clearly in planning for the Expert Workshop on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling which will take place in September. As you will read below, the aim is to gather relevant and objective expertise, much of it from outside the IWC, and use this knowledge as the basis for improved decision-making processes in Commission. All IWC workshops are important, but this one has the potential to help the Commission discharge one of its core responsibilities. I wish a productive and fruitful event to all involved, and urge all those interested in this issue to be engaged, whether in person or through the wealth of information that will be made available via the IWC website in due course.

Bruno Mainini

IWC Chair

Upcoming Event

14-18 Sept, Maniitsoq, Greenland
Expert Workshop on
Aboriginal Subsistence
Whaling

21-23 Sept, Bern, Switzerland
Meeting of the IWC Bureau

7-10 Oct, Tokyo, Japan
IWC-POWER Planning &
Technical Advisory Group
meetings

Nov, Oman (details tbc)
Entanglement response
workshop

News & Updates

...Scientific Committee Report is published...

The 2015 Scientific Committee report is published and records the very full and diverse programme of Scientific Committee work. Recovery of humpbacks in the Southern Hemisphere and progress in the management of aboriginal whaling were two of many developments reported to the meeting.

This was the final year of office for the Chair, Toshi Kitakado of Japan, who is

succeeded by Vice Chair, Caterina Fortuna of Italy. The Scientific Committee recorded their thanks to Toshi for wise, fair and good-humoured chairing over the past three years, and the USA's Robert Suydam was elected by consensus as the new Vice Chair.



[find out more](#)

...IWC-POWER research cruise sets sail...

The sixth annual IWC-POWER cruise left Shiogama at the beginning of July, for a 60 day survey of cetaceans in an area of the North Pacific which has not been studied for decades. This year's cruise will focus primarily on distribution, stock structure and abundance of Bryde's whales. It will also seek to establish baseline information on other species in the region.

Collaboration is fundamental and the field programme this year involves scientists from the USA and Britain as well as Japan, whose contribution also includes the vessel and crew each year. In past years, scientists from Mexico and the Republic of Korea have also participated in the fieldwork, and scientists from Australia and Europe are members of a specialist IWC-POWER steering group.

The overall objectives of this long-term programme are to provide information which will enable scientists to determine the status of large whale populations in the North Pacific, and identify the need for any conservation actions.



[find out more](#)

...Extending the Entanglement Response Network...

The initiative to build global entanglement response capability continues to expand and develop. A workshop in Japan has recently introduced entanglement response training to Asia, and the eastern Indian Ocean will follow in the Autumn with a workshop in Oman. Over the Summer, Mexico will also work with the IWC, on the ongoing RABEN programme to build response capacity along the extensive Mexican coastline. Two new apprentices will work alongside David Mattila, IWC Human Impacts Advisor, and the wider CCS team in Provincetown, to consolidate earlier training and develop their skills.



[find out more](#)

...CIRVA's sixth meeting - grave concern over the survival of the vaquita...

The International Committee for the Recovery of the Vaquita (CIRVA) met recently, ahead of the IWC Scientific Committee in San Diego. Whilst the Government of Mexico was commended for its high level support for Mexico's porpoise in an economically challenging time, information from acoustic surveys provided new evidence of a dramatic population decline, including an apparent 42% fall from 2013 to 2014. A number of urgent recommendations were made by CIRVA and endorsed by the Scientific Committee. Central to these were the extension of a two year gillnet ban into a permanent measure, and increased enforcement of the ban. The Scientific Committee also urged collaboration with the USA, China and CITES to stop the illicit trade in totoaba, the endangered fish targeted by an illegal fishery whose gillnets accidentally catch the vaquita. The

swimbladder of the totoaba is smuggled out through the USA to fetch extremely high prices in China. In addition, the Mexican government is funding an important research cruise and acoustic monitoring programme between September and December 2015. IWC scientists are collaborating with Mexican and other scientists in this effort.

[find out more](#)

...Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling workshop...

Preparations are well underway for the Expert Workshop on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling which will take place in Maniitsoq, Greenland in September. Experts have been invited from a wide range of relevant fields including social anthropology, subsistence economics and nutrition. The aim is to increase understanding of some of the concepts and issues related to indigenous whaling, and help introduce greater clarity to the process of managing ASW, particularly consideration of the Statement of Need.

[find out more](#)



Thank you for reading. If you have any material for the next IWC Bulletin, please e-mail it to [Kate Wilson](#).

To stop receiving these emails please contact [Kate Wilson](#).

Copyright © International Whaling Commission 2012, The Red House, 135 Station Road, Impington, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB24 9NP, UK. All rights reserved © International Whaling Commission are trademarks of International Whaling Commission. All other marks are the property of their respective owners