

**Analysis of Scientific Committee Recommendations of direct Relevance to the
Conservation Committee**

***United Kingdom with contributions from the Intersessional Preparatory Drafting
Group of the SC/CC Working Group and the IWC Secretariat***

Issue

In order to support the work of the Scientific Committee and delivery of conservation focussed Recommendations, an intersessional working group was established through Resolution 2014-4. During its first meeting in 2014, this group agreed to collate and analyse conservation-relevant Recommendations from the Scientific Committee and organise these Recommendations into key issues/areas highlighting those that feature regularly. This was completed through a preparatory drafting group and this paper summarises the findings of its analysis to date. It is stressed that this analysis is preliminary in the sense that the categorisation of recommendations was necessarily subjective. However, the broad recommendations and suggestions still remain valid.

The Conservation Committee is invited to:

- Consider the analysis of conservation Recommendations arising from the Scientific Committee as set out in this paper and provide views.
- Comment on the approach taken to compiling and categorising conservation Recommendations, including on any additional analyses of value and on the selection criteria used (Section 2).
- Consider and advise on the draft recommendations made in this paper for further work (Section 4).
- Agree to the next steps for the intersessional Working Group (as per its Terms of Reference) as outlined in Section 5.

1. Background

- 1.1 At the 2015 meeting of the Joint Scientific Committee/Conservation Committee (SC/CC) Working Group established under Recommendation 2014-4, an Intersessional Preparatory Drafting Group was established with the following terms of reference:
 - i. Using papers IWC/J15/ALL/2 and IWC/J15/ALL/3, collate and present in a revised document existing and relevant conservation Recommendations;
 - ii. Analyse these conservation Recommendations and organise into key issues/areas highlighting those that feature regularly;
 - iii. Identify any conservation Recommendations that may have been effectively addressed in order to help identify any lessons learnt.
- 1.2 A consideration of conservation Recommendations of direct relevance to the Conservation Committee from the previous 4 years (2013-2016) has been carried out intersessionally by the UK with assistance from the IWC Secretariat and members of the Intersessional Preparatory Drafting Group.
- 1.3 This document outlines the approach taken, provides a summary of observations and suggested actions, and makes recommendations for how this work should be continued.
- 1.4 The preliminary approach was presented to the joint meeting of the CC/SC at its meeting in June 2016 and subsequently circulated to the preparatory drafting group for further comment and advice. Feedback from both has been incorporated into the approach and reflected in this report.

2. Summary of the approach

- 2.1 Conservation Recommendations considered to be of direct relevance to the Conservation Committee were identified from the meeting reports of the Scientific Committee for 2013-2016. The full list can be found in paper IWC/66/CC24.
- 2.2 The following criteria were used for selecting conservation Recommendations for consideration:
 - i. Cover conservation-related topics including some not currently on the Conservation Committee agenda (and including issues which are cross cutting, e.g. fundraising, entanglement).
 - ii. Relate to management action, policy, cooperation, reporting, fundraising, communication, workshops and, if in cooperation with others, research.
 - iii. Directed at Governments and Governmental agencies, the Secretariat, IGOs and other external bodies.
 - iv. Arose from the Scientific Committee endorsing Recommendations from IWC expert workshops.

2.3 Conservation Recommendations were excluded if they:

- i. Were directed solely at the Scientific Committee to undertake more research or to amend existing Scientific Committee activities.
- ii. Were directed solely at other IWC Committees (e.g. the Aboriginal and Subsistence Whaling Committee) with the exception of those that were considered cross cutting conservation issues e.g. bycatch and entanglement.

2.4 Conservation Recommendations were then categorised according to the nearest conservation theme (or themes, for example population Conservation Management Plans often cover a several themes), category of action, and target (who they were aimed at) to provide an initial overview of the number and types of Recommendations being made. Recommendations that were relevant to multiple fields within a particular category were counted multiple times, for example, a Recommendation with a category of action relating to both 'Cooperation with other organisations' and 'Policy implementation' would have been included in both categories. Where similar recommendations are repeated in more than one year they are counted separately.

3. Analysis of Recommendations

3.1 Over 280 Recommendations from the 2013-2016 Scientific Committee reports were considered in this analysis as being of direct relevance to the Conservation Committee. Of these, around 120 are related to items included on the Conservation Committee's agenda as a standing item. The most common themes are highlighted in Table 1. It should be noted that Recommendations relating to specific threats e.g. pollution may also apply equally to small cetaceans or particular species. However, unless the Recommendation specifically references a species or small cetaceans generally they have not been included in that total. Whilst this may introduce some bias it should not significantly affect the conclusions

3.2 Conservation Recommendations relating to small cetaceans are most common (77), with the Vaquita featuring most often (14). This is followed by Recommendations relating to bycatch and entanglement (48), whale watching (36), Conservation Management Plans (26), and ship strikes (25). A full breakdown of the different themes can be found in Annex 1.

3.3 There are the number of themes that have not explicitly been covered by previous Conservation Committee agendas, in particular the two most common themes – small cetaceans and bycatch and entanglement¹. Bycatch has been added to the 2016 Conservation Committee agenda; however, this may not cover all aspects of bycatch and entanglement addressed through conservation Recommendations.

¹ An update on the Small Cetaceans Voluntary Fund is included on the Conservation Committee agenda.

Table 1 – Conservation Recommendations by theme and whether explicitly included on the Conservation Committees agenda

Theme	Currently on Conservation Committee Agenda	Number of Recommendations
Small cetaceans	No	77
<i>Vaquita</i>		14
<i>Amazon river dolphins</i>		8
<i>Finless porpoise</i>		8
<i>Maui Dolphin</i>		7
Bycatch and Entanglement	Yes ²	48
Whale watching	Yes	36
Conservation Management Plans	Yes	26
Ship strikes	Yes	25
Noise	No	21
Pollution ³	No	18
Marine debris	Yes	10
Oil spill	No	14
Climate Change	No	3
Communication of conservation issues	No	2
Southern Right Whales	Yes	11
Strandings	No	11
Arctic issues	No	9
Takes of small cetaceans	No	8
Habitat issues	No	4

3.4 A significant number of the conservation Recommendations related to cooperation (102) or research/monitoring (102). After these, the most common conservation Recommendations related to policy development and implementation (86). Table 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of the main objectives of the identified Recommendations.

² A new item for the 2016 Conservation Committees meeting agenda.

³ Includes oil spill but not marine litter

Table 2 – Objectives of the identified conservation Recommendations

Objective of Recommendation	Number of Recommendations
Cooperation	102
— Cooperation with other organisations	51
— Cooperation with governments	49
— Cooperation with industry	28
Research/Monitoring	102
Policy development/implementation	86
Reporting	65
Communication	23
Data collation	20
Training/capacity building	19
Hold meeting	11
Fundraising	10

3.5 Consideration was also given to identifying the target (actors) of the conservation Recommendations (Table 3). A significant majority of the Recommendations were aimed at Governments (177) or the Governments and/or other actors with the Scientific Committee offering support (102). In many cases, there were multiple targets e.g. Contracting Governments asked to take action and the Secretariat asked to follow up.

Table 3 – Main Actors (Recommendations aimed at)

Actor (aimed at)	Number of Recommendations
Government (contracting or specified)	177
Governments and/or other actors with the Scientific Committee offering support	102
Secretariat	77
Conservation Committee	34
Industry	10
Other organisations	3

4. Observations and suggested actions

4.1 A number of draft recommendations for the Conservation Committee to consider following the above analysis are included in this section. These are intended to help improve future collation, analysis, transmission and implementation of Recommendations and ultimately help improve the effectiveness of both Committees. The Conservation Committee is asked to consider these and provide guidance to the Commission and the Joint CC/SC Working Group.

- 4.2 It should be noted that this broad analysis is intended to provide an overview into the nature of Scientific Committee Recommendations with conservation aspects. In the past, Scientific Committee Recommendations were not been drafted with this (or any other particular type of categorisation in mind (other than agenda item) and therefore the numbers provided in this report should be used for guidance only.

Language

- 4.3 In some cases, the text of Recommendations appeared to lack a clear objective or target, potentially making it challenging for an outside person to categorise them or to identify the appropriate 'actors' to address them. As has been the longstanding approach of the Scientific Committee, the text of many of the Recommendations required reading the surrounding text of the Scientific Committee report – when the recommended text alone (i.e. the sentences where 'recommends' is included in bold type) is removed and tabulated, the context is often lost. Repeated Recommendations may also be made on specific issues but with varying degrees of uniformity in language – in some cases this appeared to be a result of the Committee noting that no action had taken place and trying to revise the language to make positive action more likely. This, however, makes it challenging for non-Scientific Committee members to pick out quickly any trends or repeated expressions of concern from the Scientific Committee. Given this and recent discussions, the Scientific Committee Chair and Head of Science took steps to identify Recommendations from the 2016 meeting more clearly (they were placed in a box), include the necessary context and objectives and identify the key actors (nine categories were used and recommendations could include several types of actor). These changes greatly improved the analysis of the 2016 Scientific Committee report.

Draft Recommendation 1

The Conservation Committee welcomes the work being undertaken by the Scientific Committee to improve its presentation of recommendations, noting that this will greatly assist the Conservation Committee (and indeed the Commission and other Commission sub-groups). A more consistent approach to drafting recommendations will also be valuable to the Conservation Committee. It therefore is recommended that:

The Commission requests that the joint SC/CC WG work with the existing Scientific Committee process (being undertaken by the SC chair, vice-chair, Head of Science and convenors) to develop guidelines for both reports on the drafting of clear and focussed stand-alone Recommendations that highlight rationale/context, objectives and actors. Unless necessarily general (e.g. addressed to the broad scientific community), the emphasis should be on specific topics and tasks. The guidelines should also consider the use of consistent language (e.g. when and if to use terms such as urge, endorse, agree, recommend and request).

Access to Recommendations

- 4.4 Recommendations from either Committee are not formally collated into a single source (although the Secretariat develop a Scientific Committee 'Task Table' based upon the

recommendations that is placed on the Scientific Committee's section of the website (<https://iwc.int/sctasks>). Similarly, a list of recommendations on small cetaceans has been compiled as part of the process for developing and evaluating projects for the Small Cetaceans Voluntary Fund which is also available on the website (https://iwc.int/document_3627.download). This analysis has required substantial time and effort by non-Scientific Committee members to identify conservation relevant Recommendations from the reports prior to 2016. The new processes introduced in the 2016 Scientific Committee report and ongoing efforts to improve clarity (and see Recommendation 1 above) are an important step forward. This will facilitate the extraction of summary tables of recommendations that will help improve this in the future. It is important that efforts are made to take further steps to improve accessibility, and reach of IWC Recommendations, and provide a more effective means of assessing progress with implementing Recommendations and analysing the broader work of the IWC.

- 4.5 In this context, it would also be useful to consider how the conservation-relevant Recommendations from across the Commission are compiled, managed and monitored. This would help to ensure that a consistent approach is taken by the IWC; avoid duplication of effort; and ensure that conservation Recommendations are not overlooked.
- 4.6 Carrying out this analysis more thoroughly for more years is unlikely to provide a more valuable insight. However, a more detailed consideration of progress made to deliver the identified Recommendations would help identify successes as well as where more effective action is needed. Further analysis would also help identify repeated Recommendations in order that the Scientific and Conservation Committee can better target efforts to address the concerns raised.

Draft Recommendation 2

In order to improve the accessibility, effectiveness and reach of IWC Recommendations, and provide a more effective means of assessing progress with implementing Recommendations and analysing the broader work of the IWC, it is recommended that the Commission:

Establishes an intersessional group to develop a draft structure and process for populating a web-accessible database of recommendations (and outcomes), not necessarily limited to conservation Recommendations or Recommendations of the Scientific Committee, taking into account initial considerations presented in Annex 2 of this document.

Consideration of issues by the Conservation Committee.

- 4.7 Several of the themes in the identified Recommendations are not explicitly covered by the current Conservation Committee agenda, potentially hindering the Committee in helping progress action identified by the Scientific Committee. However, the Conservation Committee agenda is already substantive and biennial meetings may limit its ability to effectively move issues forward. This could be addressed through clearly defined intersessional activities taken forward by working groups with formalised ToRs and meetings.

Draft Recommendation 3

Noting that some conservation themes identified by the Scientific Committee do not appear on the Conservation Committee agenda, the Conservation Committee should consider:

- (1) The need to amend its agenda to reflect additional themes identified from this analysis (i.e. conservation aspects of small cetaceans and of bycatch and entanglement) and the value of establishing intersessional working groups for priority areas to further the Committee's workplan; and***
- (2) the need to recommend to the Commission an annual Conservation Committee meeting (whilst this would have cost and logistical implications it would allow the Committee additional time to consider in more detail the progress made intersessionally to deliver on key conservation issues).***

Annex 1 – full breakdown of the themes identified from the Recommendations

Theme	Number of Recommendations
Amazon River dolphins	8
Arabian Sea Humpback Whales	3
Arctic issues	9
Bottlenose dolphin	3
Bycatch & Entanglement	48
Climate Change	3
Communication of conservation issues	2
Conservation Management Plans	26
Disease	2
Finless porpoise	8
Franciscana	3
Habitat issues	4
Harbour porpoise	2
Hector's dolphin	1
Humpback dolphins	1
Irrawaddy dolphin	3
Killer whales	1
Marine debris	10
Maui's dolphin	7
Noise	21
North Atlantic Bowhead whales	2
North Pacific Gray Whales	1
Oil spill	14
Pollution	18
River dolphins of India	1
Ship strikes	25
Small cetaceans	77
Sousa	1
South Asian river dolphins	2
South Atlantic Sanctuary	1
Southern Hemisphere Right Whales	11
Southern Hemisphere Whale Stocks	2
Southern Ocean Sanctuary	2
Southern Right Whales	11
Strandings and mortality events	11
Takes of Small cetaceans	8
Tursiops spp. for the North Atlantic & South Atlantic	1
Vaquita	14
Voluntary fund	1
Whalewatching	36
Yangtze finless porpoise	1

Annex 2 Initial thoughts on a database of conservation Recommendations

In considering the development of a database of conservation Recommendations, it would be useful to reflect on:

- The process for identifying how/when Recommendations are complete e.g. will countries be asked to submit information when they have taken steps to implement?
- Quality Assurance – how will data be entered in the database, including agreement on when a Recommendation is considered complete?
- Most appropriate fields to include in the database to allow for effective searching and categorisation e.g. species, regions, range states, standardised threats/issues, linked Recommendations, relevant international bodies, progress, contacts etc.
- Recommendations to include i.e. Scientific Committee, Conservation Committee, more broadly across the IWC?
- Development of plan for delivering and funding a database, including a proposed budget.

Table 1 provides some example fields for possible inclusion in a database.

Table 1. Proposed data fields for database

Data fields in database	Notes
Scientific Committee Year	
Workshop name	If relevant
Conservation theme	See list developed for the analysis of Conservation Recommendations.
Theme on Conservation Committee agenda?	Currently refers to 2016 agenda
Context	Includes background information on the Recommendation, where it is not standalone
Recommendation	
Category of action	See list developed for the analysis of Conservation Recommendations.
Initial action	<i>Not yet populated</i>
Aimed at	See list developed for the analysis of Conservation Recommendations.
Section SC report	
<i>Actions taken</i>	<i>Summary of actions to date</i>
<i>Status of implementation</i>	<i>Not yet populated</i> <i>Categories such as Not started, Underway, Complete</i> <i>This field will require the development of a process to a) identify when a Recommendation is complete and b) a sign-off process</i>
<i>Linked to previous Recommendation?</i>	<i>Not yet populated.</i> <i>Example 1: a Recommendation may suggest further work which is completed and leads onto a subsequent Recommendation.</i> <i>Example 2: a Recommendation is repeated in multiple years</i>