

REPORT OF THE STANDING WORKING GROUP ON CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANS

Submitted by the Government of Australia on behalf of the International Whaling Commission's
Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Conservation Committee note progress on the development and implementation of CMPs during the intersessional period, as reported here, and endorse the following recommendations for consideration by the Commission:

1. That the Commission **endorse** the revised Conservation Management Plan for Southeast Pacific Southern Right Whales, which welcomes Peru as a range state (SC/66b/BRG23).
2. That the Conservation Committee **note** the draft Eastern South Pacific Southern Right Whale Conservation Management Plan Implementation Strategy 2016-2018, prepared by Chile and Peru (Appendix 1), and that funds are being requested from the Voluntary Conservation Management Plans Fund for this strategy.
3. That the Conservation Committee **note** that a proposal is being prepared for a stakeholder workshop on the Conservation Management Plan for western gray whales and that funds will be requested from the Voluntary Conservation Management Plans Fund for this workshop.
4. That the Conservation Committee **agree** that the CMP Standing Working Group consider the two requests for funding noted above out of session, for final endorsement by the Chairs of the Conservation Management Plan Standing Working Group and Conservation Committee.
5. That the Commission **nominate and endorse** the Conservation Management Plan for the Franciscana (IWC/66/CC11).
6. That the Conservation Committee should continue to **highlight** to the Scientific Committee (though the Commission) the research actions detailed in recently revised and new Conservation Management Plans.
7. That the Conservation Committee **agree** to a proposed mid-term review of the Conservation Management Plan Work Plan 2014-2020, to be undertaken by the Conservation Management Plans Standing Working Group during the 2016-2018 intersessional period, with the Terms of Reference at Appendix 2.
8. That the Conservation Committee **agree** that the mid-term review include work to develop guidelines and principles for threat-based Conservation Management Plans, to be presented to the 2017 planning meeting of the Conservation Committee for consideration.
9. That the Conservation Committee **note** that further consideration of marine debris in Conservation Management Plans will be informed by discussions on bycatch and entanglement activities, as well as the proposed mid-term review and proposed guidelines and principles for development of threat-based Conservation Management Plans.
10. That the Scientific Committee be **requested** to continue to provide further information on bycatch, including advice on regions where bycatch is a major threat, as well as the populations of cetaceans most affected by bycatch in each region.
11. That the Commission **note** that Australia was elected to continue as Chair of the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans for a second term.
12. That the CMP Working Group meet during the intersessional period and report back to the Conservation Committee at IWC67.

OVERVIEW

Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) are an important conservation initiative of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) that aim to recover critically endangered whale populations and other cetaceans. Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) were introduced into the IWC in 2008 to provide the Commission with an adaptive, flexible, tailored management tool that can be applied to improve conservation outcomes for the most at-risk cetacean populations through the targeted management of human activities. Apart from setting zero catch limits, CMPs are currently the only management tools available to the IWC for whale conservation.

At its meeting in 2009, the Commission established the Small Advisory Group on CMPs within the Conservation Committee to provide advice and guidance to the Commission and proponents on CMP related issues, including the nomination, development, implementation, monitoring and review of CMPs. This group was reconstituted as the Standing Working Group on CMPs in 2012, recognising the important role it had played in supporting and guiding the CMP initiative in the Conservation Committee, and the benefits it would provide to CMP nominations received by the Commission and implemented by range states. Revised terms of reference for the Standing Working Group were agreed at IWC65 in 2014 (Appendix 1).

The Standing Working Group includes membership (as at October 2016) from IWC Contracting Governments (Australia, Argentina, Chile, Ghana, Italy, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States); Observers (Spain, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)); and representatives from the IWC Scientific Committee and Conservation Committee.

The Scientific Committee facilitates closer links between the two committees on CMPs and ensures that policy/management advice is underpinned by the best available science. The Conservation Committee provides management and policy advice and reports to the Commission on CMP implementation and development progress based on advice received from the Standing Working Group and CMP proponents. The Standing Working Group warmly welcomes any new members or interested parties.

At its September 2014 meeting (IWC65), the Commission endorsed all of the Standing Working Group's recommendations, including the adoption of revised terms of reference for the Standing Working Group and a [Conservation Management Plans Work Plan 2014-2020](#), agreement to consider the issue of marine debris in existing and future CMPs, and that research actions detailed in endorsed CMPs should be made a priority.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE IWC65

The Standing Working Group has continued to progress the development and implementation of conservation management plans during the intersessional period.

The most recent meeting of the Standing Working Group was held in Slovenia on 19 October 2016. The meeting discussed the key activities and achievements of current CMPs during the last intersessional period, work done to date on proposed and potential CMPs, the status

of CMP funding, and the strategic direction that the Standing Working Group wishes to take in the next intersessional period.

A summary of progress against recommendations from the September 2014 meeting is at Appendix 4.

CURRENT CMPS

Southeast Pacific Southern Right Whale CMP

The Southeast Pacific Southern Right Whales CMP was endorsed by the IWC in 2012. It aims to guide and encourage the recovery of the population to levels that will allow the species to withstand both environmental and anthropogenic impacts and ensure its long term survival. A Steering Committee coordinator (Chile) and national working groups have been established to progress implementation of the CMP. Peru was welcomed as a second range state for this CMP in 2016.

Two documents reporting progress on this CMP were submitted to the Scientific Committee in June 2016. One is the revised version of the CMP submitted by the governments of Chile and Peru (SC/66b/BRG23), and the other provides an overview of activities undertaken for the CMP between 2012 and 2016 (SC/66b/BRG24). This revised CMP was reviewed and has been endorsed by the Scientific Committee. As a next step, the Standing Working Group will seek endorsement of the revised CMP through the Joint Scientific Committee/Conservation Committee Working Group, the Conservation Committee and the Commission (Recommendation 1). The overview document (SC/66b/BRG24) found that most of the priorities identified in the CMP for short-term action have been implemented.

The capacity to respond to future entanglements is listed as a key priority in this CMP. In October 2014, an entangled adult southern right whale was reported off Pichilemu, central Chile. This was considered a 'complex' entanglement since it involved a pectoral flipper and the head. The National Fisheries Service, the Chilean Navy, the Chilean NGO Centro de Conservacion Cetacea and the IWC Global Whale Entanglement Response Network developed and implemented a strategy over two weeks to try to find and disentangle the whale, but were not successful in locating the whale. This event provided useful experience for the organisations involved. The Scientific Committee has noted that having a CMP in place may have helped to facilitate the support of the Chilean Navy in efforts to find and assess the whale. It also noted the synergy between the CMP and the IWC entanglement expert advisory group, as they assisted the disentanglement effort by providing advice in real time. Overall, this case highlighted the need for achieving a high degree of capacity in the range states countries to respond to future entanglements.

Key meetings and workshops

In November 2015, an Entanglement Response Training Workshop was held in conjunction with the IWC, Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chilean National Fisheries Service, Chilean Navy and the NGO Centro de Conservacion Cetacea. The workshop was led by Dr David Mattila, director of the Entanglement Response Program of the IWC, and Ricky Rebolledo, coordinator of the Mexican stranding and entanglement network. More than 50 national specialists attended from different regions of Chile and 25 participants were selected as potential rescuers, increasing local capacities along the Chilean coast to respond to future entanglement events. Two apprentices from the entanglement network in Chile received additional in-depth training in Massachusetts, USA in July 2016. Another Entanglement Response Training workshop was conducted in September 2016 in Peru.

National working groups of Chile met regularly during the intersessional period to review advances of the CMP, with particular emphasis on i) creating public awareness, ii) responding to entanglement events, iii) preventing the harassment of mother and calf pairs and iv) documenting and photographing whale sightings. Productive between the CMP coordinator and Peruvian authorities in January 2016 led to Peru agreeing to be a second range state for this CMP.

Key research and implementation activities

The most critical research outcome for this CMP during the intersessional period was the possible identification of a breeding area in southern Chile. In the light of the new information, the Scientific Committee supported an acoustic monitoring project to better assess possible breeding area.

From September 2012 until March 2016, at least 14 sightings of 23 animals, including six calves, have been positively documented as southern right whales. Of these sightings, only four individuals have been photo-identified. To ensure long-term monitoring of the species, it is critical to increase photo identification efforts, with the development of a web-based platform (COORD02 and RES01) being crucial to improve response time.

Funding

During the 2014–2016 intersessional period, the majority of funding to conduct the activities under this CMP was provided by the Government of Chile and the NGO Centro de Conservación Cetacea. The IWC also contributed funding to support the Entanglement Response Training Workshops, and the Scientific Committee approved funding for a research project on passive acoustic monitoring in June 2016.

A budget proposal to support the implementation of the draft Eastern South Pacific Southern Right Whale Conservation Management Plan Implementation Strategy 2016-2018 (Appendix 1) has been received and is under consideration (Recommendations 2, 4).

Priorities for the next intersessional period

One of the highest forward priorities of the revised CMP is to identify a breeding aggregate area for this population. This will allow a long-term dedicated monitoring program, rather than opportunistic sightings, which will greatly improve current knowledge of the species and trends. Until a breeding ground is found, identified priorities around monitoring activities on distribution, abundance and trends, potential threats and effectiveness of mitigation measures, and actions to monitor southern right whales are unlikely to be implemented. The Scientific Committee's approved a research project on passive acoustic monitoring will help identify a breeding area.

Other immediate priorities identified for future implementation include to conduct coordination meetings among new stakeholders, adding to further photo identification and genetic data, and capacity building activities. This capacity building will target additional entanglement response workshops in both countries, increasing species identification capacities along the coast of Chile and Peru, and provide advice on whale watching regulations for southern right whales.

Southwest Atlantic Southern Right Whale CMP

The Southwest Atlantic Southern Right Whales CMP was endorsed by the IWC in 2012. The overall objective of the CMP is to protect the southern right whale habitat and minimise anthropogenic threats to maximise the likelihood that southern right whales will recover to healthy levels and recolonise their historical range.

Key meetings and workshops

A number of important workshops have been held in the intersessional period to progress the implementation of this CMP. A workshop on identification of sensitivity areas in Argentine waters was hosted by the Argentinian Coast Guard from 18 to 19 June 2015. Information on Southern right whales sightings was submitted to the workshop to support the establishment of the sensitivity areas (i.e. El Rincón, Frente Península Valdés).

A workshop on disentanglement conducted by IWC expert David Mattila was hosted by the Brazilian government from 14 to 16 September 2016 at the APA Baleia Franca, Santa Catarina, Brazil. This workshop had 66 attendees from 25 different institutions and agencies. Awareness of entanglement is clearly growing in Brazil, and this was a positive first step towards better incorporation of the threat of marine debris into the CMP. A similar regional workshop is expected to be hosted by Argentina in 2017.

A further workshop to review CMP progress was hosted by the Government of Argentina and the province of Chubut in September 2016 in Puerto Madryn, Argentina. This review workshop was supported by a small contribution (US\$2,500) from the CMP Voluntary Fund. A report of workshop outcomes was submitted to the Conservation Committee (IWC/66/CC12). At this workshop, the Centre for Research and Conservation of Aquatic Mammals (Brazil) was welcomed as the new Coordinator for this CMP, replacing M. Iníguez (Argentina) who was Coordinator from 2013 to 2016.

Key research and implementation activities

During the 2015–2016 intersessional period, two research projects on southern right whales have taken place in Argentina – one on Southern right whale health (Sironi and Crespo) and the other on aerial surveys in the Valdés Peninsula area (Zerbini). The results of these projects were submitted to the IWC Scientific Committee at its meeting in June 2016.

As part of the CMP, satellite telemetry to identify feeding areas has been identified as a high priority. This project began in 2014 and the results have been presented at the Scientific Committee. In addition, the development of a GIS database on information on human activities that might have an adverse impact on whales commenced in 2015. Approximately 50 per cent of the GIS data has been collected. At the CMP update workshop in Puerto Madryn in September 2016, the new CMP coordinator (Brazil) agreed to lead on development of this database in the next intersessional period.

Further progress on the kelp gulls and southern right whale interactions has also been submitted to the Scientific Committee. The results of the second Workshop on calf mortality held at the Centro Nacional Patagónico (CENPAT) in Puerto Madryn from 5-6 August 2014 were submitted to the SC66a (SC/66a/Rep09). During workshop discussions, the five main hypotheses for the high calf mortality identified by the first IWC Workshop were reviewed in the light of any new information. This Workshop concluded that good progress has been made since the 2010 Workshop in a number of areas. The Workshop also supported the strong recommendations made by the Scientific Committee that research and long-term monitoring of this stock should continue without interruption. The Workshop agreed to focus on three main issues: (1) kelp gull and southern right whale interactions and effects on whale behaviour and health; (2) density-dependent processes and effects on right whale population dynamics; and (3) a decline in food availability and effects on right whale body condition and health. Whilst recognising the progress made, the report stressed that further commitment is required to develop long-term actions to ensure the effective conservation of southern right whales and their habitat, in accordance with the objectives of the

IWC's Conservation Management Plan. The Scientific Committee endorsed the scientific and management recommendations in the Workshop report. It noted that while some priority actions have been taken, significant progress remains to be made on a number of key recommendations (SC/66a/Rep09, item 11).

Three vessels surveys were completed between Buenos Aires and Ushuaia on board of the Argentine Coast Guard vessel "Tango". Southern right whales were reported at the Patagonian shelf during summer months. This was also submitted to the Scientific Committee.

Funding

During the 2014–2016 intersessional period, the IWC (Scientific Committee) financially supported the two research projects related to this CMP on Southern right whale health, and £10,830 on aerial surveys in the Valdés Peninsula). Other than the small intersessional contribution (US\$2,500) from the CMP Voluntary Fund, other funding for implementation of the CMP, in addition to member country support, has been provided by NGOs or private donors.

Priorities for the next intersessional period

The September 2016 review of this CMP concluded that the same nine actions originally identified as priorities for this CMP will be considered over the next intersessional period. Of these priorities, the key focus will be to continue to work on the mitigation of kelp gull harassment on southern right whales in Peninsula Valdés, Argentina, and to improve the work on those actions identified for Brazil, southern Chile and Uruguay.

Western North Pacific Gray Whales CMP

The Western North Pacific Gray Whales CMP was approved by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and endorsed by the IWC in 2010. The overall goal of the CMP is to manage human activities that affect western gray whales and maximise the population's chances for recovery, based on the best available scientific knowledge. A Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Western Gray Whale Population was signed by the United States, Japan and the Russian Federation at IWC65 (September 2014). The Republic of Korea is anticipated to sign the MoU before the end of 2016. Japan will be taking over the coordination role for the MoU. Other range states identified as possible MoU members are China, Canada and Vietnam.

Key meetings and workshops

Two Scientific Committee intersessional workshops were convened in April 2015 and April 2016 on the "Rangewide review of the population structure and status of North Pacific gray whales". Reports of these workshops were submitted to IWCSC/66a and IWCSC/66b. In addition, five formal meetings of the IUCN Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel took place between June 2015 and May 2016.

Key research and implementation activities

Photo-identification, acoustic, behavioural, distribution, benthic and genetic studies by both industry-funded and independent research groups have continued, in full or in part, since IWC65 and are summarized in a number of BRG sub-committee papers and Scientific Committee reports from IWCSC/66a and IWCSC/66b.

As of 2015, a cumulative total of about 260 individual whales had been identified through photo identification methods and catalogued by the Institute of Marine Biology at the Russian Academy of Science and the Russian Gray Whale Project (formerly called the Russia-U.S. Program) at the Kamchatka Branch of Pacific Institute of Geography, Far East Branch - Russian Academy of Sciences.

In the intersessional period, the distribution of the Western Gray Whales and their food sources have been monitored through onshore and offshore surveys. The distribution or seasonal abundance of whales, and estimates of food source biomass have varied across years (with no apparent increase or decrease).

An updated population assessment using photo-identification data collected by the Russian Gray Whale Project between 1994-2005 estimates the 1+ population size to be 175 whales in 2016 (Bayesian 95 per cent Confidence Interval 158-193). The population has been growing over the previous ten years (2005-2015) at an average rate between two per cent and four per cent a year.

Ambient and anthropogenic noise has been monitored in the region since 2003, with 13 acoustic recorders used in surveys in 2015. Noise has generally not exceeded prescribed thresholds except for brief surges of up to a few hours. This systematic monitoring has allowed the Scientific Committee and the IUCN Advisory Panel to help commercial oil and gas operators in the area to better identify the sources of noise. This has in turn led to revised engineering specification and practices to minimise noise and mitigate disturbance.

Additionally, the CMP drafting group has made renewed progress with updating and finalizing the draft CMP from 2010.

Funding

A proposal is being prepared for a stakeholder workshop on this CMP (see below) and funds will be requested from the Voluntary Conservation Management Plans Fund to support this (Recommendations 3, 4).

Priorities for the next intersessional period

A fourth workshop on population structure and status of gray whales will be convened prior to the next Scientific Committee meeting. Results from this workshop will inform final drafting of a revised CMP, which is expected to be presented to IWC67.

CMP PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Franciscana dolphin

Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay have been working to nominate and develop a CMP on the Franciscana dolphin for endorsement at IWC66. Recommendations and actions to develop the CMP were provided by the VIII workshop on research and conservation of Franciscana held in October 2015 in Sao Francisco do Sul, Brazil (SC/66b/SM05). A further workshop was held in Puerto Madryn, Argentina 12-13 September 2016 as part of the Southwest Atlantic southern right whale workshop.

Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay have subsequently developed the final draft Franciscana CMP, and intend to seek the nomination and endorsement of this CMP at IWC66 (Recommendation 5, IWC/66/CC11). The draft CMP focuses on the following priority actions: (1) monitoring

abundance, trends and bycatch; (2) mitigating bycatch; (3) developing and implementing protected areas; (4) encouraging the adoption and implementation of a National Action Plan to Reduce the Interactions of Marine Mammals with Fisheries in Argentina; (5) developing a strategy to increase public awareness of the franciscana; and (6) including the franciscana in bilateral and multilateral discussions.

The Standing Working Group strongly supports the proposed CMP and welcomes its addition as the first CMP for a small cetacean under the IWC. The 2016 Scientific Committee endorsed the reporting provided to date on CMP development, and reiterated that it is a good candidate to be put forward for a CMP (IWC/66/Rep01(2016)).

Arabian Sea humpback whales

The Arabian Sea humpback population has been recognised by the CMPs Work Plan and the Scientific Committee as an ideal candidate for a CMP. During the intersessional period, some progress has been made to monitor this population and to encourage relevant range states to take a lead role in CMP development. An Arabian Sea Whale Network was formed during a workshop held in Dubai in January 2015 (SC/66b/SH14). This network has been used to exchange information and showcase research and conservation work in various Arabian Sea Humpback whale range states. Research has also continued on the status of this stock during the intersessional period, including acoustic monitoring (SC/66b/SH32) and three surveys sites off Oman between February 2014 and December 2015 (SC/66b/SH28). The Standing Working Group agreed that diplomatic outreach with key range States such as India and Oman may assist with progressing this work and that engagement with other relevant intergovernmental bodies such as the Convention on Migratory Species would be beneficial.

Threat-based CMPs

Bycatch

The Commission has long recognised the significant impact bycatch can have on cetaceans, particularly on threatened cetacean populations. At its meeting in June 2016, the Scientific Committee further stressed that bycatch is a serious and extensive issue that the IWC cannot fully address alone. The Committee noted that collaboration with other experts, individual nations and intergovernmental organisations was required to address the issue. As such, the Committee recommended that an intersessional correspondence group, to be led by Simmonds, be established to consider the potential development of a topic-based CMP on bycatch and entanglement. The Scientific Committee will consider the outputs from this group at its next meeting in 2017 (see IWC/66/Rep01(2016) Section 7.1).

Separately, the Conservation Committee planning meetings in 2015 and 2016 also tasked Simmonds to work with interested members and observers to develop suggestions for the Conservation Committee on advancing work to reduce cetacean bycatch (see IWC/66/CCRep05 Section 5e). In response to this request, a paper (IWC/66/CC05) was developed by Simmonds *et al* and submitted to the Conservation Committee for consideration at IWC66. The paper provides a number of options for addressing the issue of bycatch, including the development of the Commission's first threat-based bycatch CMP. The paper notes because the issue of bycatch is a global one, "a CMP may be the most appropriate mechanism within the IWC as it ensures a conservation strategy with accompanying dedicated resources and multi-lateral partnerships are identified and secured." The paper further proposes that "an alternative could be the development of regional bycatch CMPs or CMPs dedicated to small and large cetaceans separately".

The Standing Working Group considered the issue of bycatch at its meeting in October 2016 and reiterated the seriousness of the problem and its effect on cetaceans. The Standing Working Group further commended M. Simmonds for preparing the Bycatch Initiative paper. The Standing Working Group noted that further work is needed to clarify the parameters of a potential CMP on bycatch and requests the Scientific Committee provide further information in this respect, including advice on areas where bycatch is a major threat, as well as the populations of whales most affected by bycatch in each area (Recommendation 10). It was also agreed that consideration of possible 'threat-based' CMPs would be assisted by the development of guidelines and principles for threat-based CMPs. It was recommended that this be progressed as part of a proposed mid-term review of the CMPs work plan, and that a timeframe be set for this work so that it is progressed in a timely manner. (Recommendation 8).

Marine debris

At IWC65, the Commission endorsed the issue of marine debris being incorporated and addressed in existing (and future) CMPs, and that the Conservation Committee further discuss, and consider referring to the Scientific Committee for discussion, the concept of a threat-based marine debris CMP. The Scientific Committee subsequently recommended that a broader threat-based CMP on non-deliberate human impacts should be considered instead of a marine debris specific CMP.

The Standing Working Group reiterates the high priority accorded to the issue of marine debris and its potential and actual threats to cetaceans. The Standing Working Group noted that further work on marine debris will be informed by discussions on bycatch and entanglement activities, as well as the proposed mid-term review and proposed guidelines and principles for development of threat-based Conservation Management Plans (Recommendation 9). It was also recognised that threats to cetaceans from marine debris arise do not only come from entanglements, for example ingestion of plastics. It was also noted that there are a large number organisations considering the issue of marine debris and any work of the IWC on this issue should coordinate with these efforts.

FUNDING FOR CMPS

Between 2014 and 2016, the CMP voluntary fund has supported steering committee travel (£6,000 in 2015), the Southwest Atlantic southern right whale CMP coordinator (£22,000 in 2014), the Northwest Atlantic gray whale CMP coordinator (£7,309 in 2014), and the September workshop on the Southwest Atlantic southern right whale CMP and the Franciscana (US\$2,500 in 2016). There was GBP £192,8453 remaining in the fund as at the beginning of 2016.

Expected funding priorities in the next intersessional period include support for the coordination of the Southeast Pacific southern right whale CMP, support for the coordination of the proposed CMP on Franciscana, and a workshop on the western north Pacific gray whale CMP.

Further voluntary contributions to the CMP fund are encouraged. The Standing Working Group Chair is also calling for effective utilisation of remaining CMP funding, and has proposed that this issue be investigated as part of a proposed mid-term review of the CMPs Work Plan (Recommendation 7). The review should also consider effective coordination between use of the Voluntary Fund and the Scientific Committee budget, for activities relevant to CMPs and CMP species.

PROPOSED MID-TERM REVIEW

At its meeting in September 2014, the Commission endorsed the [Conservation Management Plans Work Plan 2014-2020](#). The work plan sets out the objectives and actions designed to facilitate the development and implementation of CMPs in a manner that is consistent with national best practice. It also outlines priorities for existing CMPs; future CMPs, including priority species, threats and habitats; and the development of regional inventories and areas for further research. The Work Plan also highlights the need for continuous improvement of the CMP guidelines, templates, funding principles and overall development process; as well as considering potential avenues for strengthening funding for CMPs.

As noted in the Work Plan, it was designed as a living document, subject to active review and readjustment in line with the principles of adaptive management. The Work Plan has now been in place for a period of two years and it is now timely for a mid-term review to be undertaken. A mid-term review of the Work Plan would provide an opportunity to identify and focus priorities, improve processes and increase visibility of CMP achievements. It is proposed that the mid-term review be undertaken during the next intersessional period and a revised Work Plan be submitted to the Conservation Committee and Commission for endorsement at the next Commission meeting in 2018.

It is proposed that the mid-term review be undertaken by members of the Standing Working Group and will consider achievements of CMPs against their objectives to date, the process for developing CMPs, the process for funding CMP activities, cross-committee engagement and communication, identifying priority work areas for new population and/or threat-based CMPs, the ongoing role of the Standing Working Group in providing advice on CMP process and reporting requirements, and guidelines and principles for threat-based CMPs (Recommendation 7). This work would also inform the development of a costed work program for the CMP SWG.

ELECTION OF STANDING WORKING GROUP CHAIR

The Terms of Reference for the Standing Working Group state that “the Chair will be elected from Group members and may hold the position for a period of up to four years”. Since the Small Advisory Group on CMPs was reconstituted as a Working Group in 2012 and Ms Christine Schweizer (Australia) served as the inaugural chair. Ms Deb Callister (Australia) took over this role in March 2016.

The Working Group has given consideration to this matter and agreed to endorse Ms Deb Callister (Australia) to continue in the chair’s role for the next four years (2016-2020).

LIST OF APPENDICES

1. Eastern South Pacific Southern Right Whale Conservation Management Plan Draft Implementation Strategy 2016-2018
2. Mid-term review of the Conservation Management Plans Work Plan 2014-2020 – draft Terms of Reference
3. Terms of Reference: Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans
4. Summary of progress against recommendations from the last Standing Working Group meeting.

Eastern South Pacific Southern Right Whale Conservation Management Plan Draft Implementation Strategy 2016-2018

With less than 50 mature individuals, eastern South Pacific southern right whales population found off Chile and Peru is one of the most threatened whale populations worldwide.

The eastern South Pacific Southern Right Whales CMP submitted by Chile was endorsed by IWC in 2012. In 2016, Peru was welcomed as second range state and a revised CMP has been submitted by Chile and Peru.

According to Guidelines for Cetacean CMP funding support may be available from IWC. The revised CMP considered bi-national steering committee meetings and appointment of coordinator as priorities, and it has identified priority actions and processes for its implementation. Most of what is expressed in this CMP implementation strategy has been expressed in the revised CMP and is only intended to provide more insights on the short-term actions (2016-2018).

Summary of priority actions

In the light of the new information on distribution and the progress made on different CMP activities, some key actions have been identified and should be address in the short term (two years).

According to the revised CMP, these include at least to: conduct coordination meetings among stakeholders (COORD-01); increase survey efforts on possible breeding ground (RES-05), photo ID (RES-02) and genetic data (RES-03); build and strengthen capacities, including additional entanglement response workshops in both countries (PACB-02) increase species identification capacities along the coast of Chile and Peru (PACB-03); and provide advice on whale watching regulations for the species (MIT-03).

This prioritization doesn't preclude that further work on other priority actions identified are also advanced. The revised CMP is clear in stating that the most important initial stages are:

- (1) appointment of a bi-national Steering Group and co-ordinator;
- (2) development of the actions outlined, including all aspects of funding and, as appropriate, contracts to undertake actions.

Contributions from Range States and other funding sources in support of all the activities described below may be estimated on GBP 200,000.

Coordination meetings among stakeholders (COORD 01)

Guidelines for cetacean CMPs suggest that sufficient funds must be made available for the appointment of a co-ordinator and the functioning of the Steering Group. Serious consideration should be given also, early in the development process, to the involvement of stakeholders, and this may include IWC Range States, non-member Range States, non-government organisations, scientists, industries, communities and civil society more generally.

The highest priority identified for 2016-2018 under the revised CMP will be to appoint a bi-national Steering Group and contract a part time co-ordinator for the next two years period. Meetings will include members of Range States, the Chair of the Scientific Committee and the Chair of the Conservation Committee Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plan. They will review, inter alia, advances of the CMP and report to IWC Scientific Committee, Conservation Committee and the Commission.

An initial meeting is planned to establish the Steering Group and appoint a co-ordinator. Two additional meetings of the Steering Group are planned prior to IWC Scientific Committee meetings. The Steering Group may also seek to involve additional experts and NGOs among others, at the earlier stage possible.

Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders is critical for this CMP. There is no identified aggregation area of eastern South Pacific southern right whales and monitoring is currently based on opportunistic sightings that rely in the engagement of several scientists, communities, NGOs, etc., along their distribution range.

Funding from IWC CMP fund is sought exclusively for coordination and meetings of the Steering Group and is estimated on 60,000 GBP. Details are given below.

Increase survey effort on possible breeding ground (RES-05)

One of the highest priorities in the short-term of the revised CMP is also to identify a breeding aggregation area for this population (RES-05). This will allow the implementation of a long-term dedicated monitoring

program, rather than from opportunistic sightings, greatly improving current knowledge on the species. Until a breeding ground is identified, priorities such as monitoring on distribution, abundance and trends (MON-01), potential threats, effectiveness of mitigation measures (MON-02) and actions to monitor the southern right whales are unlikely to be properly implemented.

In June 2016, the Scientific Committee approved - from the IWC research fund - a research proposal on passive acoustic monitoring that will help in identifying a breeding area and the CMP goals. Passive acoustic monitoring at possible hotspots of the species range is likely the most cost-effective way to investigate the seasonal distribution of southern right whales along the coast of Chile and Peru.

Data analysis will be in-kind. Ship time to deploy and retrieve devices will also be in-kind. Collaboration will be sought to attach the acoustic devices to existing moorings. IWC research fund will contribute with the acquisition and import of acoustic devices as well as travel costs for researchers to deploy and retrieve the devices.

Increase efforts to collect photo ID and genetic data (RES-02 and RES-03)

Although reported sightings document the species with photographs, most of the time it is not possible to get adequate individual photo-identifications. Most of the sightings are just recorded on one day, making it difficult to follow the whales and get photo-identifications and/or biopsy samples.

From September 2012 to March 2016, at least 14 sightings of 23 animals, including six calves, have been positively documented as southern right whales. Of these sightings, only four individuals were photo-identified, representing about 18% of animals sighted. Furthermore, there was no collection of genetic samples (RES-03).

It is extremely important to increase effort to collect photoID and genetic data necessary to monitor the population. However, until a breeding area is identified, these activities will have to continue to rely on opportunistic sightings.

Although not identified as a priority in the short-term (next two years), the Steering Group may consider to also advance in setting -up a web-base platform to facilitate a rapid response of expert teams (COORD-02) and to report southern right whale sightings (RES-01). This great tool will improve communication and coordination under the Eastern South Pacific SRW CMP

Strengthen capacities on entanglement response in both countries (PACB-02)

During the IWC southern right whale assessment workshop in 2011, it was noted that two mortality events was very high compared to mortality events from South Africa and other regions where the populations are much larger. Furthermore, an entangled southern right whale was reported on October 2014 in central Chile.

Mitigating large whale mortality from entanglements is most efficiently implemented by establishing 'disentanglement networks' and therefore the revised CMP identified the need to establish emergency disentanglement teams (PACB-02).

In this sense, IWC entanglement response training workshops were conducted in Chile on November 2015 and in Peru on September 2016.

Periodical development of such training workshops is required to increase the number of people that can assist entangled whales and facilitate the development of national entanglement response networks on both countries.

An additional IWC entanglement response training workshop, with participants from Chile and Peru may also be envisaged, at the discretion of the Steering Group.

Increase species identification capacities along the coast of Chile and Peru (PACB-03)

Population range extends more than 4,000km near the coastline and sightings are difficult to document. It is extremely important to strengthen public participation in the reporting of sightings.

Sighting networks have already revealed to be a cost-effective tool in increasing sighting records of the species. The strengthening of sighting networks and capacity building in species identification and sighting reporting are the initial step of this process.

Providing groups, organizations, governments and societies with suitable access to information and knowledge regarding the status of southern right whales in the eastern South Pacific is essential for achieving the conservation objectives.

The development and distribution of an informative poster on coastal communities is a useful tool, not only to increase species identification capacities along the coast of Chile and Peru (PACB-03) but also to improve sighting reporting (RES-02) and create public awareness (PACB-01).

Additionally, the Steering Group may consider developing capacity building workshops on species identification to train observers on board fishing and/or research vessels.

Provide advice on whale watching regulations for the species (MIT-03)

Unregulated approaches to mothers and calves may seriously disrupt nursing behavior and could result in negative impacts. These include, among others, displacement of mother-calf pairs and increase of swimming behaviour thereby altering the energetic expenditure of the animals. In extreme situations, they may even cause the death of the animals.

The revised CMP identified as a priority action the development and implementation of a contingency plan to afford maximum protection when a sighting is recorded (MIT-03). A whale watching regulation and enforcement should be considered for the species.

In Chile, only land-based whale watching of the species is permitted under national whale watching regulations adopted by the Ministry of Economy in 2012 (MFA, 2014). In Peru a working group was established with several governmental institutions to develop whale watching regulations .

The adoption and enforcement of whale watching regulations in Range States may greatly benefit from the advice of the IWC whale watching working group.

Deliverables and Reporting

It is the responsibility of the appointed coordinator and Steering Group to provide annual progress reports to the IWC about the work undertaken under the CMP, specifically to its Scientific and Conservation Committees. A major review of work, including the possibility of updating the CMP should occur every four-six years (depending on the timetable of actions within the plan).

Each coordination meeting will provide a report of the meeting with its outcomes, review process and modification of strategy if applicable. The report will be submitted to the IWC Scientific Committee as well as to the IWC Conservation Committee and to the Commission.

Scientific papers of the passive acoustic monitoring project will be submitted to the Scientific Committee in 2017 and 2018, in accordance to the IWC Scientific Committee procedures. It is expected to increase the likelihood to identify a breeding area where more dedicated research can increase data collection (photo-ID and genetics) and long-term monitoring of the population.

Media releases and use of social network are also considered to promote the implementation of the passive acoustics project, training workshops and any opportunistic sighting. It will also help to amplify public awareness on the critical conservation status of this population and the importance of the proper implementation of the CMP.

Budget Proposal for IWC CMP Fund

The following budget considers an exchange rate of US\$1.2 per one GBP.

ITEM	TOTAL GBP
Airflight tickets (four people from Range States, Chair of Scientific Committee and Chair of CC/SWG-CMP)	18,000
Lodging (six persons, three nights)	6,000
Per Diem (thirteen persons, two days)	4,000
Coordinator Compensation (1,333GBP per month, 24 months) ¹	32,000
TOTAL	60,000

¹ Estimated in 40% time dedicated, using as basis the South West Atlantic Southern Right Whale CMP.

Proposed Timeline

	2016		2017												2018								
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Coordination meetings	■					■												■					
Increase survey efforts on possible breeding ground				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Increase efforts to collect photo ID and genetic data								■	■	■	■	■	■								■	■	■
Strengthen capacities on entanglement response										■	■												
Increase species identification capacities						■	■	■	■												■	■	
Provide advice on whale watching regulations for the species				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

MID-TERM REVIEW

Conservation Management Plans Work Plan 2014-2020

Draft Terms of Reference

A mid-term review of the [Conservation Management Plans Work Plan 2014-2020](#) will be undertaken during the 2016-2018 intersessional period. The review will be led by a correspondence group of the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans, under the direction of the CMP SWG chair.

The mid-term review will consider:

1. The process for developing CMPs. Currently it takes a minimum of three years from CMP nomination to endorsement from the Commission.
2. Funding for CMP activities, including intersessional funding approval processes, use of funds (for nomination, development and/or implementation), better utilisation of remaining funding in the CMP Voluntary Fund, and potential funding streams to support CMPs (eg Voluntary Fund, Scientific Committee, range states). This theme would need to be consistent with related work being undertaken by the Working Group on Operational Effectiveness and Cost Savings Measures under the Finance and Administration Committee, and the proposed objective in the draft Conservation Committee Strategic Plan on effective financing.
3. Cross-committee engagement and communication on work activities and budget/funding.
4. Identifying priority work areas for new population and/or threat-based CMPs, including actions proposed by the Scientific Committee and common barriers and buy-in for CMP development.
5. Lessons learned to date on the role and operation of CMP coordinators.
6. Development of guidelines and principles for threat-based CMPs.
7. The ongoing role of the Standing Working Group in providing advice on the CMP process, including reporting requirements.

A report summarising the outcomes of the review and a costed and revised (if required) CMP Work Plan will be submitted to the Conservation Committee at its 2018 meeting. An update report, including draft guidelines and principles for threat-based CMPs, should be presented to the Conservation Committee planning meeting in 2017.

Terms of Reference - Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans

The Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans (the CMP Working Group) is responsible for the provision of advice on the nomination, development and implementation of CMPs endorsed by the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

The CMP Working Group will be comprised primarily of members of the Conservation Committee, but will also include members from the Scientific Committee and members from other IWC bodies as appropriate, Commission members from range states and interested observers. The Chair will be elected from Group members and may hold the position for a period of up to four years.

The CMP Working Group will report annually to the IWC through the Conservation Committee. Conservation Management Plans are intended to be a practical and flexible management tool for the IWC to manage human and cetacean interactions for those populations, threats or habitats of greatest conservation concern and where there is a reasonable expectation that the plan will deliver real conservation gains. The CMP Working Group will support development of comprehensive plans tailored to address the species, habitat or threats of the most pressing need and with the greatest likelihood of success.

Duties of the CMP Working Group may include, but are not limited to:

Recommending priority cetacean populations, threats or habitats suitable for the preparation of a CMP.

Providing up-to-date guidelines and templates to support the nomination, development, implementation and monitoring of CMPs.

Establishing appropriate criteria to assess the merits of proposed CMPs.

Providing appropriate guidance to proponents of CMPs to support best practice nomination, development and implementation.

Facilitating provision of data and expert advice from relevant IWC Committees and sub-committees, as appropriate.

Reporting to the Conservation Committee on the status of existing CMPs.

Advising the Commission, through the Conservation Committee, on funds or other resources requested to support the nomination, development, or implementation of a CMP.

Undertaking other activities as directed by the Commission or Conservation Committee.

Review of Action Items from IWC65

No.	Action item (IWC65)	Progress
1	That the Commission endorse the revised Terms of Reference for the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans.	Completed.
2	That the Commission endorse the draft <i>Conservation Management Plans Work Plan 2014-2020</i> at Attachment B .	Completed. Work Plan being implemented and will be updated as part of a proposed mid-term review.
3	That the Scientific and Conservation Committees endorse the CMP-related recommendation from the two IWC workshops on marine debris and cetaceans (in 2013 and 2014) that the issue of marine debris is incorporated and addressed in existing (and future) CMPs.	Overtaken by events. See report above.
4	That the Conservation Committee further discuss , and consider referring to the Scientific Committee for discussion, the concept of a threat based marine debris CMP.	Completed. At its meeting in 2015, the Scientific Committee reported (IWC/66/Rep01(2015)) “The Committee recommends that instead of a CMP on marine debris, the possibility of a broader threats-based CMP should be considered at the Joint Meeting of the Conservation and Scientific Committees that follows SC/66a. Consideration could be given to bycatch and other entanglement as a focus.”
5	That all CMPs include an assessment of impacts of marine debris.	Ongoing – see report above
6	That the Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee be urged to undertake further analysis on priority candidates of cetaceans, including small cetaceans, that would benefit from the implementation of a CMP, as a matter of high priority.	Ongoing. A preliminary list of small cetacean populations that might require special attention and high priority was developed (SC/66a/SM22). A ‘small cetacean task team,’ was established under the Scientific to

		<p>Committee to allow for swift intersessional action for particularly threatened small cetacean populations.</p> <p>At its meeting in 2015, the Scientific Committee agreed to establish a Small Cetacean Task Team on franciscana (see Annex L, item 10.1).</p> <p>In 2016, the Fransiscana Task Team concluded that priority tasks are needed to improve conservation of the species in Franciscana Management Area I: (1) monitor the fisheries and estimate bycatch; (2) assess areas at risk from coastal and offshore development; (3) estimate abundance and trends; and (4) plan for long-term conservation efforts. A draft CMP has been developed for this population for consideration by the Commission in 2016.</p> <p>In 2016, the Scientific Committee noted that the South Asian river dolphin is a candidate for development of a Task Team, given the ongoing and new threats to the survival of the species.</p>
7	That the Conservation Committee recommend that the Scientific Committee discuss the issue of carrying capacity for South West Atlantic Right Whales as a matter of priority; and that the scientists associated with the recent research be included as invited participants to SC66a.	Unclear. The 2015 and 2016 Scientific Committee reports update on research undertaken on this population, but do not specifically mention carrying capacity studies.
8	That the Working Group collaborate with relevant Contracting Governments to develop an inventory of cetacean conservation measures in place in the Indian Ocean.	<p>Engagement in the region is ongoing. As a first step, in February 2016, a workshop was held in Sri Lanka for Indian Ocean Rim Association member states to build sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism in the Indian Ocean region. It is expected that this will lead to the establishment of an IORA sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism network, to be endorsed by the IORA Council of Ministers at its meeting in October 2016. It is hoped that this network can promote conservation measures in the region.</p> <p>The potential to develop an inventory of cetacean conservation measures in the region will be explored further in the next intersessional period.</p>

9	That the Scientific Committee be invited to review the Oceania Humpback Recovery Plan from a CMP perspective and make an assessment of whether there are gaps in the Plan that can be addressed by the Commission.	Unclear. The 2015 and 2016 Scientific Committee reports update on research undertaken on this population, but do not specifically mention the Oceania Humpback Recovery Plan. Propose this recommendation be revisited as part of the mid-term review of the CMPs work plan.
10	That the Working Group on Conservation Financing should add to their work programme the consideration of the provision of dedicated funds to be made available for CMP related work.	Completed. CMPs are being considered by this group as part of wider conservation financing.
11	Countries receiving funding for CMPs should provide an estimate of funds required to further work relating to CMPs to aid in the budgeting process for the next four years.	Ongoing.
12	That the Conservation Committee should highlight to the Scientific Committee (though the Commission) that research actions detailed in endorsed CMPs should be made a priority.	Ongoing.
13	That the CMP Working Group meet during the intersessional period and report back to the Conservation Committee at IWC66.	Completed. The Standing Working Group worked electronically during the intersessional period and met on 19 October 2016. The work of the SWG-CMPs was also discussed at Conservation Committee meetings in 2015 and 2016.