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Circular Communication to Members of the Scientific Committee  
**IWC.SC.208**

**IWC Scientific Committee Pre-Meeting on Model Based  
Abundance Estimation and Training**  
Bled, 7-8 May 2017

The above meeting will first provide an explanation of where conventional design based (Horvitz-Thompson-type) methods to estimate abundance from sighting surveys will be problematic. An R package will then be introduced to assist in the diagnosis of some of these deficiencies. This will include a demonstration of this software with existing line transect data, and participants will be able to try out this package on their own data. This will be followed by a brief introduction to one approach to spatial modelling of line transect data (Density Surface Models). That will highlight the advantages and disadvantages of model based abundance estimation, as well as give an overview of more complex 'add-ons' to these models and outline appropriate model checking. The meeting will conclude with a discussion to provide inputs to the formulation of IWC SC guidelines for the what is required for a model based abundance estimate from a survey to be acceptable. A brief outline of the intended meeting schedule is attached.

The meeting is open to all members of the Scientific Committee; however, given the capacity of the meeting rooms, it is important to contact the convenor, Doug Butterworth ([doug.butterworth@uct.ac.za](mailto:doug.butterworth@uct.ac.za)), before making travel arrangements and to **register** on the IWC portal (see link from <https://iwc.int/sc67a>).

Caterina Fortuna  
SC Chair

*c.c. Accredited observers to the IWC*

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*Chair:* Dr Joji Morishita (Japan)  
*Vice-Chair:* Mr Andrej Bibic (Slovenia)  
*Executive Secretary:* Dr Simon Brockington