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Circular Communication to Commissioners. Contracting Governments and  
Members of the Scientific Committee

**IWC.ALL.330**

**Food and Agriculture Organization Committee on Fisheries (FAO COFI)**

This Circular informs IWC Contracting Members, observers and members of the Scientific Committee of the participation of the IWC Executive Secretary and the IWC Bycatch Coordinator in the forthcoming [33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the FAO COFI](#) in Rome 9-13 July 2018. The IWC Secretariat is attending this meeting in order to present the IWC's Bycatch Mitigation Initiative and also to strengthen our collaboration with FAO, RFMOs, and other organisations, in accordance with requests from the Commission.

Marine mammal bycatch is on the agenda at COFI in the context of the [report](#) from the *Expert workshop on means and methods for reducing marine mammal mortality in fishing and aquaculture operations* held by FAO in March 2018. In addition to the COFI meeting itself, the IWC Secretariat will attend several pre- and post-COFI meetings including the Regional Fishery Body Secretariat's Network meeting, the GEF/FAO Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction [Common Oceans Project](#), and the Working Group on Requirements of Developing States under the [Agreement on Port State Measures](#).

The Secretariat will co-convene (with FAO, CMS, and WWF and World Animal Protection) a side event to highlight the challenges, approaches and solutions for bycatch (including presenting the work of the IWC on bycatch and entanglement) and the Global Ghost Fishing Gear Initiative. The event is officially hosted by FAO Vanuatu and the Governments of Samoa, Fiji and Palau and Belgium with participation of a number of governments, including Norway, the Netherlands, Panama and New Zealand. The side event is being held during the lunch break on Thursday 12 July at 12:30-14:15 in the 'Iran' room.

IWC Contracting Governments are invited to contact their head of delegation to COFI to inform them of the IWC's participation in the meeting, raise awareness of the expert workshop report detailed above, and to participate in the side event as schedules allow.

Rebecca Lent  
Executive Secretary

*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 Rebecca Lent