



INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

Report of the Conservation Committee

Held virtually 29 September-2 October 2020

Photo credit: Enrico Marcovaldi, Instituto Baleia Jubarte.
A humpback mother and calf in front of Vitória, Espírito Santo State, Brazil, a heavy ship traffic area.

Report of the Conservation Committee

Intersessional meeting Monday 28 September to Friday 2 October 2020

This meeting of the Conservation Committee (CC) was held virtually due to continuing COVID-19 restrictions, the postponement of IWC68 until Autumn 2021 and to allow the Committee to continue to progress its work. Only issues that needed to be progressed or for which decisions were required before the end of 2020 were discussed and others were deferred until the CC meeting in 2021, prior to IWC68. During this meeting, some agenda items were discussed in a virtual (Zoom) session, whilst others were addressed by email.

SUMMARY OF MAIN OUTCOMES

Agenda item	Main outcome
3. Conservation Committee Strategic Plan and Work Plan	<p>The CC agreed to undertake a mid-term review of the Conservation Committee Strategic Plan 2016-2026 and report to IWC68. The CC asked the Chair and Vice Chair of the CC to progress this review in liaison with Conservation Committee Standing Working Group (SWG) Chairs and topic leads.</p> <p>The CC discussed and endorsed an interim Conservation Committee Work Plan for 2020-21 (Appendix 4). The CC agreed to develop a new costed four-year Conservation Committee Work Plan intersessionally for discussion at IWC68 and asked the Chair and Vice Chair to develop this in liaison with CC SWG Chairs and topic leads.</p>
4.2 Voluntary Conservation Reports	<p>The CC welcomed the update on the IWC Conservation Database for Voluntary Reporting, thanked all who provided their comments on this during the meeting and encouraged the intersessional group to take these comments into account in the development of a prototype database by IWC68.</p>
4.3 IWC Governance Review	<p>The CC agreed to establish an ICG to develop draft CC comments on the questions posed by the WG-OE Co-Chairs at this CC meeting. It further agreed that comments would be circulated to the whole Committee (via the CC mailing list maintained by the Secretariat) for their review prior to their submission to the WG-OE.</p>
5.3 Guidance for Drafting Recommendations	<p>The CC adopted the <i>Guidance on Drafting Recommendations for the Conservation Committee</i> as a living document which will be further refined as use of the Database of Recommendations increases.</p>
6. Bycatch	<p>The CC endorsed the new, four-year BMI Work Plan (2021-2024) and thanked Belgium for their leadership on this issue. It re-affirmed the importance of addressing cetacean global bycatch and agreed that bycatch remains one of the priority issues for the IWC. It noted with concern, however the limited voluntary funds available and encouraged wider fundraising efforts to achieve all work plan activities.</p> <p>The CC endorsed the SWG-Bycatch proposal for the allocation of existing funds to support BMI Work Plan activities in 2021 and noted the intention for possible future submissions to the VCF for seed funding or co-funding of pilot projects (if needed).</p> <p>The CC endorsed the <i>Report of the IWC Workshop on Bycatch Mitigation Opportunities in the Western Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea</i> (CC/68A/REP/BMI/01) and all its recommendations.</p>

	<p>The CC endorsed the recommendations made within <i>A Review of Regional Fisheries Management Organization Efforts in Addressing Cetacean Bycatch: Report to the International Whaling Commission</i> (CC/68A/06.4.2/01) and the prioritisation of the RFMOs for BMI engagement, and commended the excellent work done in producing the review document.</p>
7. Whale Watching	<p>The CC welcomed the Report of the Whale Watching SWG and endorsed its Work Plan for 2020-21.</p> <p>The CC strongly welcomed progress on the IWC Whale Watching Handbook and encouraged its further development, including through further engagement with industry.</p> <p>The CC noted the importance of dissemination to ensure maximum effectiveness and impact of the Whale Watching Handbook, welcomed and endorsed plans for promotion of the Handbook and encouraged Contracting Governments and Observers to provide their assistance.</p> <p>The CC endorsed the Editorial Protocol for the Whale Watching Handbook and agreed to include this in its report to the Commission at IWC68.</p> <p>The CC noted the revisions to the IWC General Principles for Whale Watching proposed by the SC and the comments provided on them at this meeting. It agreed that changes to the Principles would need to be reviewed and adopted by the Commission and requested the SWG-WW to review the comments from this meeting and incorporate any further recommendations in the SWG-WW report to CC and the Commission at IWC68.</p>
8. Conservation Management Plans	<p>The CC endorsed the report of the SWG-CMP and thanked Australia and the range states for their continued commitment to the CMP Work Programme.</p> <p>The CC endorsed the CMP Nomination for a Conservation Management Plan for South American river dolphins (genus <i>Inia</i> and <i>Sotalia fluviatilis</i>) to proceed to a draft CMP and looked forward to the endorsement of the CMP at IWC68.</p> <p>The CC welcomed progress on the development of a CMP Handbook and Strategic Plan for CMPs and encouraged the presentation of these documents at IWC68.</p>
9. Ship Strikes	<p>The CC endorsed the new Ship Strikes Work Plan 2020-2022, on the understanding that it is a living document which will be subject to further refinement before IWC68, in particular after a new Ship Strikes Strategic Plan has been developed.</p> <p>The CC supported the proposed IWC Data Manager post to be included in the Ship Strikes Work Plan. Because of the postponement of the in-person Commission meeting until September 2021 the CC agreed that an initial one-year contract for this position will be included in the CC Work Plan 2020-21 to allow the work of the CC to advance under these unusual circumstances and extended intersessional period. The CC further agreed to seek advice from the Bureau on the process for seeking agreement of the Commission to this CC Work Plan including this proposal.</p> <p>The CC endorsed the IWC-IUCN-ACCOBAMS Workshop report and its recommendations. It welcomed the WWF-IUCN-IWC-Oceanmind IMMAS-AIS study and encouraged follow up work.</p>

11. Marine Debris	<p>The CC endorsed the report and recommendations of the IWC Workshop ‘Marine Debris: The Way Forward’ held in December 2019 and encouraged its further dissemination.</p> <p>The CC endorsed the marine debris work plan as proposed by the intersessional working group and asked that the intersessional processes, which will now take work on this topic forward, consider the issues raised in its discussions.</p>
12.1 Anthropogenic Underwater Noise	The CC endorsed the interim work plan and supported the proposal to change the name of the theme ‘Anthropogenic sound’ on the CC Strategic Plan to ‘Anthropogenic underwater noise’.
13. Ecosystem Functioning	The CC thanked Chile for its leadership on this issue and endorsed the proposed 2020-21 work plan for the intersessional group and the plan for the CC workshop to be held virtually before IWC68. It encouraged the intersessional group to further consider the views expressed at this meeting with regards to participation in the workshop.
14. Small Cetaceans	<p>The CC welcomed the work of the Small Cetaceans Fund and thanked donors for their contributions.</p> <p>The CC thanked the convenors of the Task Teams: Dipani Sutaria and Nachiket Kelkar (South Asian River Dolphins) and Pedro Fruet and Els Vermeulen (Lahille’s Bottlenose Dolphin) and the many active participants of the Africa-Focused Sousa Task Team, and recommended that the IWC website make Task Teams more prominent.</p>
15. Species or Populations of Urgent or Emerging Concern	<p>The CC agreed to establish a small working group convened by Mark Simmonds and comprising USA, the Chair of the CC, IUCN and other interested parties to further review how to improve IWC response where populations are in decline, especially small, threatened populations. This small working group would report to the next meeting of the CC in 2021.</p> <p>The CC acknowledged the work by the SC on the development of templates for statements on three scenarios of extinction and endorsed the proposal for a dedicated IWC webpage on extinctions.</p>
16. Engagement with Other Organisations	<p>The CC welcomed the development of the proposed new MOUs and agreed that these should be presented at IWC68 for Commission endorsement.</p> <p>The CC agreed with the next steps proposed by the Secretariat with regards to engagement in the process to develop the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, noting that the development of any proposals to IWC68 on the GBF should be led by Contracting Governments.</p>
17. Funding	<p>The CC thanked the Chair of the ICGSF for its report and thanked the Secretariat for its efforts on fundraising. It recognised the limited capacity of the Secretariat to bid for and manage large grants and recommended that this should be reviewed in the coming year such that proposals on how to increase IWC capacity in this area could be presented to IWC68.</p> <p>The CC thanked all of the Contracting Governments, Accredited Observers and other organisations that had provided donations to the VCF and encouraged further contributions to the fund.</p>
18. Conservation Committee Officers	The CC agreed in principle that the Vice Chair of the CC should succeed the Chair automatically after the Chair has served a set term and agreed to consider the appropriate changes to the CC Working Methods at its next meeting.

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1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

The list of participants is given as Appendix 1.

1.1 Appointment of Chair

Lorenzo Rojas-Bracho (Mexico) was appointed Chair.

1.2 Appointment of Rapporteurs

Cherry Allison, Andrea Cooke, Alisha Falberg, Rebecca Lent, Sarah Smith, Iain Staniland, Marguerite Tarzia and Imogen Webster of the Secretariat were appointed Rapporteurs.

1.3 Review of Documents

A list of documents is given as Appendix 2.

1.4 Observer Participation

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure and Rules of Debate, Accredited Observers were invited to speak after Contracting Governments in the virtual sessions.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The adopted agenda is given as Appendix 3.

3. CONSERVATION COMMITTEE STRATEGIC PLAN AND WORK PLAN

3.1 Updates to the Strategic Plan

At IWC66 the Commission endorsed the Conservation Committee Strategic Plan 2016-2026 (found on the CC [web page](#)). At this current meeting, a proposal for a mid-term review of the Plan was discussed.

Belgium expressed its support for the proposed mid-term review, noting it is good practice to review the implementation of the Strategic Plan and identify any changes needed, drawing on experience from the mid-term review of the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) Work Plan.

The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), American Cetacean Society (ACS), Centro de Conservación Cetacea (CCC), Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Fluke Foundation, Fundación Cethus, Humane Society International (HSI), Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas (ICB), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), OceanCare, ORCA, ProWildlife and Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC) made a joint intervention on the CC Strategic Plan and Work Plan. This highlighted the significant challenges of addressing human impacts on cetacean health and welcomed the evolution of the IWC to include a broader conservation and welfare agenda and the success of its threat mitigation initiatives such as the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI). The NGO group encouraged the IWC to continue to engage with other organisations and industries that are instrumental in implementing the IWC's recommendations and stressed the need for a solid financial basis for this work. It encouraged the development of a clearer vision for the IWC over the next 50 years and expressed its intention to develop a vision for presentation at a future IWC event.

The CC **agreed** to undertake a mid-term review of the Conservation Committee Strategic Plan 2016-2026 and report to IWC68. The CC asked the Chair and Vice Chair of the CC to progress this review in liaison with CC Standing Working Group (SWG) Chairs and topic leads.

3.2 Work Plan for the 2018-2020 Biennium and beyond

The CC noted the *Final Progress Report on the Conservation Committee Work Plan 2016-2020*, available as Document CC/68A/03.2/01. Belgium expressed its appreciation for all the work and progress the CC has made in the past few years and thanked all Chairs and topic leads (present and past) for their leadership.

Instituto Baleia Jubarte (IBJ), supported by Hungary proposed a new aim for the Whale Watching Work Plan on the engagement of stakeholders in the development, review and implementation of IWC guidelines and recommendations for whale watching. The CC asked the SWG on Whale Watching to consider this in its development of a new four-year costed work plan for Whale Watching to be presented at IWC68 (see also Item 7.1).

The CC discussed and **endorsed** an interim Conservation Committee Work Plan for 2020-21 (Appendix 4). The CC **agreed** to develop a new costed four-year Conservation Committee Work Plan intersessionally for discussion at IWC68 and asked the Chair and Vice Chair to develop this in liaison with SWG Chairs and topic leads.

4. STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

4.1 Working Methods of the Conservation Committee

The Conservation Committee Working Methods are published on the IWC website (see Conservation Committee [web page](#)). The CC was reminded that this is a living document, subject to further change as needed. Discussion on the Working Methods was deferred until IWC68.

4.2 Voluntary Conservation Reports

At its last meeting, the CC endorsed a proposal from New Zealand to replace the current system of voluntary reporting with an integrated database. The Secretariat is ready to move forward with development of a prototype database but requested further input from the CC including on the purpose of reporting and database fields. Questions for the CC to address were outlined in *IWC Conservation Database for Voluntary Conservation Reporting* (CC/68A/04.2/01).

Comments on the questions posed by the Secretariat were provided by Brazil, New Zealand, IFAW and AWI on behalf of AWI, CCC, EIA, Fundación Cethus, ICB, OceanCare and WDC. The Chair welcomed these comments, noting the value of this input for further development of the database. He thanked New Zealand for their leadership on this issue.

The CC welcomed the update on the IWC Conservation Database for Voluntary Reporting, thanked all who provided their comments on this during the meeting and **encouraged** the intersessional group to take these comments into account in the development of a prototype database by IWC68.

4.3 IWC Governance Review

Resolution 2016-1 adopted at IWC66 agreed to a comprehensive independent review of the Commission's Institutional and Governance arrangements to be conducted by a Panel of three independent reviewers. Following submission of the Panel's findings, the IWC's Working Group on Operational Effectiveness (WG-OE) was mandated (Resolution 2018-1 at IWC67) to further develop proposals for taking forward governance review recommendations.

4.3.1 Introduction to the WG-OE process and recommendations relevant to the CC

The Co-Chair of the WG-OE, Gemma Harper (UK), provided an overview and update on the work of WG-OE. The timeline has been expanded to allow for two more rounds of preparing proposals and seeking input prior to making the formal proposal to IWC68, at which the governance review will be a key agenda item. The four papers which the WG-OE are working on include a proposed new structure for the Commission in which the CC becomes one of four primary Committees. Specific proposals are advanced for how those four Committees will work (including Terms of Reference) and how they would cross-collaborate, such as on welfare issues. There are also proposals on strategic planning for the

Commission and budgetary reform. The WG-OE Co-Chair noted that their mandate includes seeking input from the Commission's committees and posed four specific questions to the CC:

- (1) Are there any concerns about how this structure could impact the work of the conservation committee?
- (2) Are there any suggestions/preferences for how Committees can work together?
- (3) Is there anything that has not been considered in the current proposals that should be considered from a CC perspective?
- (4) Are there any organisational changes needed to make the CC work more effective/efficient?

4.3.2 Discussion of findings and recommendations

The Chair suggested that the CC might proceed to provide input in one of two ways: (1) The CC establishes a process for developing collective responses to these questions; or (2) CC input is provided via the individual members of the CC (Commissioners and Accredited Observers) submitting their comments independently. After discussion, the CC agreed a process for providing collective comments on these four questions, based on the next version of the four WG-OE papers expected in mid-October. The work to develop CC comments will be led by the Chair of the CC with an intersessional correspondence group (ICG) composed of Contracting Governments and observer organisations, and in coordination with the WG-OE Co-chairs.

In addition to the Chair of CC, Argentina, Belgium, Costa Rica, and several observer organisations (AWI, EIA, IFAW, Paso Pacifico, Fundación Cethus and WDC) expressed an interest in joining the ICG. The CC agreed that it would be useful for SWG Chairs and CC topic leads to join this group and the Chair encouraged their participation. Luxembourg and the Alaskan Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC) expressed tentative interest in joining the group and would confirm after the meeting. The Chair of the SC offered his assistance to the group in discussing issues of mutual interest between the Committees. The CC noted that it would be important to ensure balance in the ICG between Contracting Governments and NGOs and that the focus will be on developing comments relative to the CC's work as a Committee. WDC, IFAW and Fundación Cethus indicated their willingness to step down from the ICG, if necessary, to ensure balance among Contracting Governments and accredited observer organisations.

It was further agreed that the draft document developed by the ICG should be sent to the entire CC membership for comments prior to submission of a final document to the WG-OE. These comments from the CC would be based on the next version of the WG-OE papers that is expected in mid-October. However, the CC would also have the opportunity at its meeting just prior to IWC68 to review and provide comments on the final version of the papers coming out after the May 2021 WG-OE meeting, which will be the WG-OE proposal to the Commission at IWC68.

The CC **agreed** to establish an ICG to develop draft CC comments on the questions posed by the WG-OE Co-Chairs at this CC meeting. It further **agreed** that comments would be circulated to the whole Committee (via the CC mailing list maintained by the Secretariat) for their review prior to their submission to the WG-OE.

5. JOINT WORKING GROUP OF THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE AND THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

5.1 Database of recommendations

At IWC67 in September 2018, the Commission endorsed the aims and principles of the IWC Database of Recommendations (DoR), instructed the Secretariat to populate the database and facilitate its use and requested the SC and CC to incorporate it into their working practices. Since then the Secretariat has populated the DoR with all the recommendations from IWC67, including those of the 2017 and 2018 Scientific Committee (SC) meetings, 2019 and 2020 meetings of the SC, CC and Whale Killing Methods and Welfare Issues Working Group (WKMW&WI) recommendations endorsed at IWC66 and

the recommendations of several workshops. The SC has started using outputs from the DoR to review implementation of its own recommendations. The Secretariat provided an Excel file of *Database of Recommendations outputs of CC recommendations 2016-2020* to this CC meeting. Further work on the DoR will continue intersessionally and be reported at IWC68.

5.2 Review of implementation of recommendations

Discussion under this item was deferred until the next CC meeting at IWC68.

5.3 Guidance for drafting recommendations

At IWC66 the Commission asked the Joint CC-SC Working Group work to develop guidelines for SC and CC meeting reports on the drafting of clear and focussed stand-alone recommendations that highlight rationale/context, objectives and actors. Guidance for drafting SC recommendations has been operational for its last three meetings.

The CC considered *Guidance on Drafting Recommendations for the Conservation Committee* (CC/68A/05.3/01) submitted by the Secretariat. Belgium welcomed the ongoing work on the DoR and stated that the proposed guidelines were clear and straight-forward. It suggested the CC consider how it would like to raise awareness for people to implement the guidelines.

The CC **adopted** the *Guidance on Drafting Recommendations for the Conservation Committee* as a living document which will be further refined as use of the DoR increases.

6. BYCATCH

At IWC67 in 2018 the Commission endorsed the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI) 10-year Strategic Plan (2018-2028) and a two-year work plan (2018-2020) (found in IWC67/CC/01 and IWC67/CC/02).

6.1 Report from the Bycatch Standing Working Group

The *Report of the Standing Working Group on Bycatch* was presented as CC/68A/06.1/01 and included a summary of progress for the BMI in 2018-2020, a proposed new costed work plan for 2021-2024 and allocations from existing bycatch funds for activities during 2021.

6.1.1 Progress of the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative on 2018-2020 Work Plan

The CC welcomed the Report of the Standing Working Group on Bycatch and the summary of progress in the BMI Work Plan for the period 2018-2020. It strongly commended the progress of the BMI during this period.

The CC thanked the Standing Working Group on Bycatch, and its Chair, Stephanie Langerock (Belgium), Marguerite Tarzia (IWC Bycatch Coordinator), Gianna Minton (who covered Coordinator maternity leave), Sarah Smith (Head of Programme Development) and others in the IWC Secretariat and the Expert Panel on Bycatch for their work on this initiative.

6.1.2 Bycatch Mitigation Initiative Work Plan 2021-2024 and Conservation Committee role in work plan activities

The SWG-Bycatch Chair presented CC/68A/06.1.2/01 (*Bycatch Mitigation Initiative Workplan, 2021-2024*). This four-year work plan includes activities under each of the six high-level objectives in the BMI's ten-year Strategic Plan (2018-2028) endorsed by the Commission at IWC67. The focus of the BMI during this period (2021-2024) will be on securing funding for pilot projects; evaluating results from pilot project trials; driving innovation of mitigation measures; promoting BMI technical advice and capacity building opportunities; promoting best practice; and improving and streamlining bycatch reporting to IWC and other processes.

Argentina, Costa Rica, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and the USA supported the work plan and expressed thanks to the SWG-Bycatch Chair, the Bycatch Coordinator and all involved in the successful work of the BMI.

The CC discussed the ambitious nature of the BMI Work Plan, noting the challenges in securing sufficient voluntary contributions for some of the planned activities and the BMI's plans to secure additional external funding. Several countries and Accredited Observers emphasised the need to develop sustainable funding models for the initiative and supported the BMI plans to continue to actively seek external funding. The USA noted that the implementation of some of the activities included in the BMI's new work plan have implications for Secretariat staff resources (in addition to the Bycatch Coordinator) and encouraged the consideration of staffing needs in the development of all CC work plans.

The CC noted the opportunities to develop stronger linkages between the BMI and the CMP Programme. The Governments of the Netherlands and the UK also noted synergies with national bycatch programmes and welcomed opportunities to collaborate with or inform the BMI.

In response to a question from Costa Rica regarding scope of BMI capacity building efforts and the process for requesting assistance or collaboration, the Bycatch Coordinator explained that the capacity building work of the BMI was country and context-specific, and could be developed with the expertise of the multi-disciplinary expert panel. National governments interested in discussing capacity building opportunities were invited to contact the Bycatch Coordinator. The Chair noted the need for further discussion at future CC meetings in relation to the CC role in delivering the BMI Work Plan.

AWI, CCC, Cetacean Society International (CSI), EIA, Fluke Foundation, Fundación Cethus, HSI, ICB, IFAW, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), OceanCare, WDC and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) strongly supported the work of the BMI and reiterated that the IWC is uniquely placed to play a major role in addressing the increasing threat to cetaceans posed by bycatch. It urged Contracting Governments to agree the proposed BMI Work Plan for 2021-2024 and to support the ongoing efforts to secure additional funding.

The Chair expressed his gratitude for the generous donations pledged to the VCF for work in support of the BMI during the meeting, including from the Netherlands (€10,000), New Zealand (NZ\$20,000 – for BMI Work Plan activity; see Item 6.3 on RFMO engagement), the UK (£40,000 for bycatch and ship strikes) and the Government of Belgium (to be confirmed). Funding to the BMI from Austria (€20,000) in advance of the meeting was also gratefully acknowledged. The Chair also expressed his gratitude to the NGO community for their generous donation of £5,180 to support the ongoing work of the BMI (from AWI, CSI, NRDC, OceanCare, SeaLegacy, VIVA Instituto and WWF).

The Chair of the IWC, Andrej Bibič, thanked the Chair and Vice Chair of the CC, the Chair of the SWG-Bycatch and the IWC Secretariat, noting the particular challenges of holding online meetings. He reiterated his thanks to all involved in the development of the BMI Work Plan and to the governments and NGOs providing generous donations.

The CC **endorsed** the new, four-year BMI Work Plan (2021-2024) and thanked Belgium for their leadership on this issue. It re-affirmed the importance of addressing cetacean global bycatch and **agreed** that bycatch remains one of the priority issues for the IWC. It noted with concern, however the limited voluntary funds available and encouraged wider fundraising efforts to achieve all work plan activities.

The CC **endorsed** the SWG-Bycatch proposal for the allocation of existing funds to support BMI Work Plan activities in 2021 and noted the intention for possible future submissions to the VCF for seed funding or co-funding of pilot projects (if needed).

6.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

The Vice Chair of the SC (Alex Zerbini) reported on SC discussions and recommendations on bycatch contained in items 13 and 12 of the 2019 (SC68A) and 2020 SC (SC68B) reports, respectively.

The SC had reviewed the BMI's progress, strongly endorsed the work of the BMI and recommended continuation of this work. The SC agreed to further support the BMI by including specific BMI Work

Plan activities for 2021-2024 in the SC Work Plan. The SC encouraged funding to be made available to support bycatch research. The Convenor of the SC Non-Deliberate Human Induced Mortality (HIM) Sub-committee (Russell Leaper) emphasised the need for enhanced information on cetaceans and cetacean bycatch in the locations prioritised for BMI pilot projects. The SC had recommended that NGOs and researchers should inform the BMI of relevant research, and submit this information in papers to the SC.

The Vice Chair of the SC summarised the SC discussions on research on cetacean bycatch in the Indian Ocean, highlighting the limited data available for assessing bycatch across the region, opportunities for the BMI to contribute towards mitigation trials and potential for further collaboration with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) (Item 6.3). The SC had also discussed the engagement of the IWC's BMI with Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and made recommendations for prioritisation of engagement with RFMOs (Item 6.4.2). It recommended continuing the IWC collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and RFMOs to build awareness and capacity to implement the future FAO Technical Guidelines to reduce and prevent bycatch of marine mammals in capture fisheries.

6.3 Report from the Indian Ocean Bycatch workshop

The Bycatch Coordinator presented CC/68A/REP/BMI/01 (*The Report of the IWC Workshop on Bycatch Mitigation Opportunities in the Western Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea*). This inter-disciplinary workshop (held in Kenya in May 2019) was attended by 50 participants working in 17 different countries, with half of the participants coming from within the Indian Ocean region. The focal region of the workshop extended from South Africa, north to the Arabian Sea and east to Sri Lanka, including both national waters and high seas. The primary objectives of the workshop were to develop a broad-scale picture of cetacean bycatch across the region in both artisanal and commercial fisheries; explore the challenges and opportunities in monitoring and mitigating threats; identify key gaps in knowledge and capacity within the region and tools needed to address these gaps; and introduce the BMI to Indian Ocean stakeholders, build collaborations and assess how the initiative can contribute to addressing bycatch threats, including through BMI pilot projects. The SC reviewed the report of this workshop at SC68B and endorsed recommendations therein, particularly highlighting the need for integration of social-economic information and multi-disciplinary approaches to reduce bycatch.

6.3.1 Review of report and recommendations

The workshop recognised bycatch as one of the most significant threats to cetacean species and populations in the Indian Ocean region and concluded that there was an urgent need to raise awareness at local, national, regional and international levels. Within the Indian Ocean region there was a need to focus on gillnets (set and drifting) as the fishing gear most likely to be causing the highest and most significant bycatch of cetaceans, and for which few effective solutions currently exist. The workshop concluded that a more systematic assessment of bycatch is critical, particularly for small-scale and medium-scale fisheries.

The Chair of the CC noted the applicability of such a focused regional approach to understanding and addressing cetacean bycatch in other parts of the world.

The CC **endorsed** the *Report of the IWC Workshop on Bycatch Mitigation Opportunities in the Western Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea* and all its recommendations.

6.3.2 Conservation Committee role in addressing workshop recommendations

The Bycatch Coordinator described some of the recommendations from the Indian Ocean bycatch workshop of particular relevance to the CC, including: the development and communication of recommendations and scientific and conservation advice by the IWC to national governments within the region; and a call for IWC Contracting Governments to undertake further efforts to improve the quality and quantity of cetacean bycatch data reported to the IOTC and to other bodies (including the IWC national reports), particularly for small-scale fisheries; and for the BMI to explore its potential to

assist countries in fulfilling their reporting requirements under IOTC, as well as the potential for greater sharing of information on bycatch between the IWC, FAO and the RFMOs.

The Chair noted that further discussion on this item at future CC meetings should include government representatives of countries bordering the Indian Ocean region. The SWG-Bycatch Chair invited all CC members to contact the BMI Coordinator with any ideas to progress this work, including with the IOTC, and welcomed the opportunity to discuss this issue with the CC at the IWC68 meeting.

6.4 Engagement with RFMOs

6.4.1 Progress report

The BMI has made significant progress in engaging with the FAO and RFMOs in relation to collaboration on cetacean bycatch. Further details are available in CC/68A/06.1/01 and in *Report: Meeting on collaborative activities for cetacean bycatch, IOTC-IWC, September 2020* (available [here](#)) which outlines discussions with the IOTC on potential joint actions to address cetacean bycatch.

6.4.2 Review of RFMO Efforts in Addressing Cetacean Bycatch

The Committee received a report commissioned by the IWC Secretariat and produced by Brianna Elliot (Duke University), *A Review of Regional Fisheries Management Organization Efforts in Addressing Cetacean Bycatch: Report to the International Whaling Commission* (CC/68A/06.4.2/01).

The report was intended to summarise initiatives within RFMOs related to cetacean bycatch reduction and to assist the BMI in prioritising which RFMOs would be most suited for IWC engagement. Sixteen RFMOs were surveyed, regardless of cetacean bycatch levels, in order to better understand the overall policy landscape of RFMOs and cetacean bycatch. In addition to an overview of conservation management measures, an index was calculated for each RFMO to compare overall performance in relation to cetacean bycatch. The study found that RFMOs vary in their performance in addressing cetacean bycatch. In addition, cetaceans appear to be underrepresented as compared to other taxa in RFMO efforts, and the IWC could play an important role in bringing awareness and expertise on cetacean bycatch to RFMO meetings. The report includes a number of recommendations for the IWC BMI with regards to collaboration priorities with RFMOs.

The SC had discussed an earlier version of this report at SC68B and recommended that the BMI: (1) prioritise collaboration with IOTC, International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), and the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA), with further scoping of work plan activities; (2) work alongside other RFMOs, in collaboration with FAO, to develop baseline cetacean bycatch related requirements; and (3) further develop collaboration with the Bycatch Management Information System (BMIS) to review existing information, provide new information on mitigation and other relevant materials.

The UK offered assistance in facilitating internal discussions with their national RFMO counterparts who lead the UK's representation at specific RFMOs (ICCAT and the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources – CCAMLR - in particular) to encourage them to raise bycatch issues in RFMO meetings. The SWG-Bycatch Chair thanked the UK for this offer, and extended the invitation to other Contracting Governments in the CC to follow a similar approach, facilitating the discussion between RFMO and IWC counterparts on cetacean bycatch and reinforcing the collaboration between the BMI and RFMOs.

HSI and AWI highlighted major gaps in many RFMOs in relation to addressing cetacean bycatch and expressed support for the BMI to continue these efforts, noting the importance of engaging with IOTC in particular. This included the need for quantitative bycatch assessments within RFMOs and for further work to understand the extent, type and outcome of cetacean interactions with longline fishing gear.

The Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) highlighted their continued interest in collaborating with the BMI on engagement with RFMOs, noting that their plan for review of cetacean populations and sub-populations (life history, distribution, abundance) that interact with fisheries covered under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). It suggested that if relevant documents and tools were being produced for the prioritised RFMOs then it would be beneficial to consider sharing these with other RFMOs, where appropriate.

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) announced their recent collaboration with the IWC and WWF on the development of the CMS's Guidelines for the Safe and Humane Handling and Release of Bycaught Small Cetaceans from Fishing Gear - CMS Technical Series No.43 (CC/68A/17.2/01) and that a joint submission (CMS, IWC, WWF) was made to the IOTC's Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch.

The CC **endorsed** the recommendations made within *A Review of Regional Fisheries Management Organization Efforts in Addressing Cetacean Bycatch: Report to the International Whaling Commission* (CC/68A/06.4.2/01) and the prioritisation of the RFMOs for BMI engagement, and commended the excellent work done in producing the review document.

7. WHALE WATCHING

At IWC67 in 2018 the Commission endorsed an updated Whale Watching Strategic Plan (2018-2024). The scientific aspects of whale watching are discussed by the SC in response to a request in Resolution 1994-14 for the SC to provide advice relating to whale watching.

7.1 Report from the Conservation Committee's Standing Working Group on Whale Watching

The *Report of the Standing Working Group on Whale Watching* (CC/68A/07.1/01) gave an update on intersessional work and proposed an interim 2020-21 Work Plan on Whale Watching, focused on consolidation and maintenance of the Handbook and promotion of the Handbook to ensure its wide use. The SWG proposed allocating existing earmarked funding in the VCF to support this work and thanked CMS for its significant in-kind contribution for translation of Handbook content. The SWG will develop a new four-year costed Work Plan for Whale Watching for discussion at IWC68.

Argentina supported by Hungary, thanked the USA for its leadership, and Gianna Minton (contractor) and the Secretariat for their work on the Handbook and supported the proposed work plan.

Noting that many of the marine sites listed by UNESCO World Heritage Convention have eco-tourism components, AWI suggested reaching out to the relevant Marine Site managers as a potential means of promoting the Handbook. It added that the upcoming UNEP SPAW Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network (CARI'MAM) meetings would be an opportunity to publicise the Handbook.

The Committee welcomed the report of the Whale Watching SWG and **endorsed** its work plan for 2020-21.

7.1.1 Progress with the online Whale Watching Handbook

A presentation on new content in the Handbook (<https://iwc.int/whale-watching-handbook>) was made by Minton who has undertaken two consultancy contracts with the IWC to develop the Handbook. She noted that the Handbook was intended to be an evolving resource to be updated as needed. Since IWC67, six new country profiles and three new case studies have been added, inspired by recommendations from the SC Whale Watching sub-committee and from IWC and CMS Contracting Governments. All case studies and country profiles were developed in close collaboration with national and local authorities. Two new species accounts have been included, for harbour porpoise and bowhead whales. Links to additional external websites and other resources relevant to whale watching operators were added, along with customer-friendly fact sheets, which operators felt would be a useful addition for educational purposes. The searchable table of scientific literature was updated with approximately 100 new references published since the initial launch in 2018. With the support of CMS,

the Handbook is available in three languages (English, French and Spanish) and the translation of new content is underway.

The CC Vice Chair (Rosie Carpenter), Costa Rica, USA, New Zealand, and Hungary also expressed their thanks and congratulations to Minton and the Secretariat on the updates to the Handbook, which will enhance its effectiveness in promoting safe and sustainable whale watching. Costa Rica noted the importance of monitoring user traffic on the website to evaluate its effectiveness particularly after the updates with the new material. Costa Rica further suggested that member parties and collaborators can be very effective vehicles to encourage operators to access, explore and effectively use the Handbook and should be encouraged to do so.

New Zealand suggested that the Handbook might be a tool to support operators currently facing a decline in business due to lack of tourism. It further noted the fact sheet series was an excellent and timely addition in an era of remote learning that has emerged under the pandemic.

ICB, CCC and other Accredited Observers provided positive feedback on the Handbook updates and encouraged strengthening engagement with stakeholders, particularly from the whale watching industry. The Chair of the Whale Watching SWG (Ryan Wulff, USA) supported more engagement with industry, including by the SWG.

Work on the Handbook during 2020-21 will focus on promotion, translation of content and planning for more substantive development in future years. Nevertheless, countries with an interest in submitting profiles, case studies or other input were encouraged to contact the Secretariat. Suggestions were also welcomed for links to downloadable resources.

The Committee **strongly welcomed** progress on the IWC Whale Watching Handbook and **encouraged** its further development, including through further engagement with industry

PROMOTION OF THE WHALE WATCHING HANDBOOK

The Secretariat's Communications Officer (Kate Wilson) presented plans for enhancing outreach on the Handbook (*Communications Plan for the Whale Watching Handbook* in CC/68A/07.1/01 Annex 1). The Communications Plan has four specific aims: building better awareness of the Handbook with particular target audiences, regular use of social media with information on the Handbook, increase the hits to the French and Spanish pages for which uptake has been lower, and ensure Search Engine Optimisation (SEO). Support was needed from IWC members in promotion of the Handbook through their own networks in industry, government, and the general public, including through social media. This support could be particularly helpful in boosting the use of the French and Spanish versions of the Handbook.

Wilson asked for support in three specific areas. She encouraged governments and other stakeholders to disseminate information on the new Handbook that would shortly be provided via Circular, and to provide the Secretariat with information on national/regional documents that publish whale watching regulations and might carry information about the Handbook. Other suggestions and contributions, particularly ideas with a more regional focus, were also sought from the global network of IWC stakeholders to help ensure the success of this Communications Plan.

There were several offers of support from Contracting Government and NGO representatives and the Chair encouraged them to contact the Secretariat to follow up on their offers of assistance.

The Committee noted the importance of dissemination to ensure maximum effectiveness and impact of the Whale Watching Handbook, **welcomed and endorsed** plans for promotion of the Handbook and encouraged Contracting Governments and Observers to provide their assistance.

DRAFT EDITORIAL PROTOCOL FOR THE WHALE WATCHING HANDBOOK

The Committee discussed a *Draft Editorial Protocol for updating the Whale Watching Handbook* (CC/68A/07.1.1/01), which sets out the process and responsibilities for identifying, developing and obtaining sign-off of new content and other updates, including for input by the SC. This draft editing

protocol was used to guide the drafting of the latest new content for the Handbook, which was reviewed and approved according to the proposed protocol. At its meeting in May 2020 (SC68B) the SC endorsed this Editorial Protocol. In doing so, it highlighted the need for discussion and compromise between the Commissioners, SC, and regional experts when drafting and approving content for the Handbook in order for it to remain neutral and unbiased and recommended that this continue to be taken into account in the application of the Protocol.

Argentina, supported by Hungary, endorsed the editorial protocol for the Handbook.

The CC **endorsed** the Editorial Protocol for the Whale Watching Handbook and agreed to include this in its report to the Commission at IWC68.

7.1.2 Engagement with the Indian Ocean Rim Association

The first newsletter of the whale watching network of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), circulated in 2019, featured an article on the IWC Whale Watching Handbook. The SC WW sub-committee has established an intersessional correspondence group for co-operation with IORA which has been inactive to date, but progress will be reviewed at SC68C.

7.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the SC reported on SC discussions and recommendations on whale watching in Item 18 and Item 17 in the 2019 (SC68a) and 2020 (SC68b) SC reports, respectively, including ongoing promotion of scientific models to assess the impacts of whale watching on baleen whales and regional reviews of whale watching in various locations. The SC had endorsed revisions to the IWC General Principles for Whale Watching and recommended that the CC and Commission review and adopt the revised principles (Item 7.3). The SC expressed concerns on the growing number of illegal or unregulated whale watching operations in some locations. It also recognised the need to enhance SC interactions with the CC SWG-WW.

7.3 IWC General Principles for Whale Watching

The IWC General Principles for Whale Watching were introduced in 1996 in order to help guide the development of whale watching regulations around the world. At its meeting in 2018 (SC67B) the SC recognised that the IWC General Principles (not updated since 1996) urgently needed updating including to address swim-with-cetacean operations and emerging technologies such as drones. The SC endorsed revisions to the IWC General Principles and commended these to the CC and Commission. The proposed revisions were available to this meeting as *Draft revisions of IWC General Principles for Whale Watching* (CC/68A/07.3/01).

IFAW, supported by AWI, ACS, Fundación Cethus, HSI, ICB, WDC, and CCC suggested some amendments to the sections on 'swim with' encouraging phasing out such operations, not just regulating them. They also suggested amendments to ensure consistency of terminology on underwater noise, noting that 'noise' and 'sound' are used interchangeably throughout the document.

IBJ supported by Brazil noted that the Principles are good precautionary advice but that additional restrictions should be avoided on whale watching, as an activity that does not impose major harm on whale populations, promotes conservation awareness and that has been increasing in developing countries.

The CC noted the revisions to the IWC General Principles for Whale Watching proposed by the SC and the comments provided on them at this meeting. It agreed that changes to the Principles would need to be reviewed and adopted by the Commission and **requested** the SWG-WW to review the comments from this meeting and incorporate any further recommendations in the SWG-WW report to CC and the Commission at IWC68.

8. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANS

8.1 Progress Report by the SWG-CMP

At IWC67 the CC adopted the revised CMP Work Plan 2014-2020 and agreed to develop a thematic strategic plan for CMPs for endorsement at IWC68.

The CC discussed the progress report from the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans (SWG-CMP) (CC/68A/08.1/01). Belgium and Argentina thanked Australia for their continued leadership on CMPs. Belgium reiterated the importance of achieving self-sufficiency of CMPs to ensure their long-term sustainability through fundraising efforts. It welcomed the positive collaboration between the CMP program and BMI and encouraged further work to identify linkages between the BMI and individual SWGs. Belgium expressed its intent to join the SWG-CMP.

The CC **endorsed** the report of the SWG-CMP and thanked Australia and the range states for their continued commitment to the CMP Work Programme.

8.1.1 Progress on current CMPs

A full discussion on current CMPs was deferred until IWC. Brief updates were included in the SWG report and summaries from the SC provided in CC/68A/05.00/01.

8.1.1.1 WESTERN PACIFIC GRAY WHALE CMP

UPDATE FROM RANGE STATES

The workshop to finalise range-wide population modelling and the associated small scientific drafting group meeting to finalise the scientific aspects of the updated draft CMP were postponed due to COVID-19 but it is hoped that the meeting could be held later in the year. This update would then be brought to SC68C and the Memorandum of Co-operation countries in 2021, with the aim of presenting the revised CMP to IWC69. IUCN has indicated its willingness to help organise a stakeholder meeting as part of this process.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SC reiterated the importance of long-term monitoring of gray whales and their habitats across their range. It welcomed new information, especially the continued work of the range-wide assessment. Concern was expressed about the increase in strandings, poor body condition, and reduced numbers of calves in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

8.1.1.2 SOUTHWEST ATLANTIC SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE CMP

UPDATE FROM RANGE STATES

In January 2020, work on this CMP resumed under the coordination of Juan Pablo Torres-Florez (Brazil). This CMP has been dormant since 2017, requiring meetings and significant travel to re-establish interest and commitment from range states, however COVID-19 has made this difficult. The Ministries of the Environment and Foreign Affairs of Brazil have commenced dialogue with Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, to identify sub-coordinators in each range state to work together to establish work plans and budgets for CMP actions. Meetings with researchers from Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina have been held to coordinate possible satellite tagging in Uruguay, Brazil and Chile. Researchers are collating information to update their understanding of the population and priority actions to be carried out in each range state.

Argentina noted that it has submitted details of its work to implement this CMP in annual progress reports to the CC and SC (SC/67B/CMP/14 and SC/68A/CMP/18).

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SC reiterated the importance of the CMP for SW Atlantic southern right whales and encouraged continuation of the collaborative research by range states. It reiterated the importance of long-term monitoring and encouraged satellite tagging, research on stress hormones measurable in baleen, and comparisons among photos held in catalogues.

8.1.1.3 SOUTH-EAST PACIFIC SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE CMP

Significant advances of this CMP have included the Passive Acoustic Monitoring project, the obtention of photo-IDs, new insights into the genetic identity of the population, educational lectures and workshops, and a media outreach program. Chile and Peru are planning a joint workshop for regional and international whale watching experts to exchange experiences on whale watching regulation and research permit systems. The SC has allocated funding for the continuation of the Passive Acoustic Monitoring project work in 2021, analysis of acoustic data and the participation of experts in the joint workshop. AWI has also contributed funding. Work is also underway on a bi-national poster to raise public awareness.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SC reiterated the importance of the CMP for this critically endangered population and welcomed the progress made since the initial implementation of the CMP, but drew attention to the need for funding. Chile and Peru were commended for advancing the CMP and encouraged to continue co-operation on the Passive Acoustic Monitoring project.

8.1.1.4 FRANCISCANA CMP

UPDATE FROM RANGE STATES

Work over the past year has focused on preparing the review of the status of franciscana by the SC, which will guide future conservation efforts under the CMP. A preparatory workshop took place from 12-14 February 2020 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, on abundance and trends, threats, and national management and conservation initiatives. A second workshop is planned for February 2021 in Santos, Brazil to complete the review of the CMP. A public awareness campaign focused on the challenges to conservation of franciscana will be launched in all range states. Argentina noted that the Municipality of Viedma, province of Río Negro, is working on the promulgation of a decree by which emblematic species will be protected, including franciscana and the Lahille's bottlenose dolphins.

Brazil noted that October 1 was Franciscana Day in Brazil, chosen because this is the beginning of the reproductive season of the franciscana. The goal of the Franciscana Day is to raise awareness of the problems faced by the species throughout its range and to promote its conservation. As part of the celebrations, outreach events were held throughout the day with the participation of government organisations, the university research community and the general public.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SC stressed the value of the actions included in the CMP towards future assessments and recommended efforts to estimate range-wide abundance and bycatch and collection of genetic samples for addressing stock status.

8.2 Future CMPS

8.2.1 Arabian Sea Humpback whales

The SC-CMP has recommended that the Arabian Sea humpback whale (ASHW) be treated as a priority population for CMP development. Work towards the development of a CMP is being led by researchers in the region, including through the Arabian Sea Whale Network and Environment Society of Oman (ESO).

In February 2020, the CMS COP13 approved the extension of the Concerted Action Plan for this population into the next triennium (2020-2023). This proposal includes several activities common to IWC CMPs, which include addressing knowledge gaps, information sharing and awareness raising, capacity building and development and implementation of mitigation strategies. Collaboration in these activities could lead to a joint IWC-CMS CMP with active support and participation from government stakeholders. However, given COVID-19, the timing is uncertain. Once India's new IWC Commissioner has been appointed, discussions can continue with the Commissioners of India and Oman. The IWC Secretariat and SWG-CMP will work with ESO and the CMS to continue outreach efforts with Oman and India towards development of a CMP.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SC reiterated that ASHW is a priority candidate for a CMP. It recommended continued research on this group of whales using Passive Acoustic Monitoring, uncrewed aerial systems and other photographic methods. The SC noted concern about entanglement in fishing gear, recommended mapping of fishing effort, and expanded collaboration between Pakistan's fishery observer programme and the IWC BMI.

8.2.2 Mediterranean Fin Whales

The SC has recommended the Mediterranean fin whale sub-population be treated as a priority population for CMP development. An updated draft of the Mediterranean Fin Whale CMP was endorsed at the Agreement for the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) SC in February 2020. Relevant IWC and ACCOBAMS range states are working towards finalising a draft CMP for Mediterranean fin whales for presentation at SC68C.

8.2.3 Mediterranean Sperm Whales

The SC has recommended the Mediterranean sperm whale population be treated as a priority population for CMP development. This recommendation was reiterated at SC68B. ACCOBAMS is considering leading the development of a joint ACCOBAMS/IWC CMP that will address the key threats for this population including ship strikes and bycatch.

8.2.4 South American River Dolphins

Colombia (Ramírez) presented the *CMP Nomination for a Conservation Management Plan for Amazon, Orinoco and Tocantins-Araguaia river dolphins (Inia geoffrensis, Inia boliviensis, Inia araguaiaensis and Sotalia fluviatilis)* (Document CC/68A/08.2.4/01) on behalf of the Governments of Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru.

Colombia provided background on the development of the proposal, including an initial technical workshop (*Challenges and Conservation Management Proposals June 2019, Bogota, Colombia*) and the agreement of the Terms of Reference in 2019. A virtual workshop was held 29-30 April 2020 to finalise coordination for the IWC SC meeting. At SC68B in May 2020 the proposal was presented and endorsed, and an ICG established to further discuss the proposal. The governments are now awaiting the outcomes of these discussions.

The proposed CMP has nine different action plans for different regions and involves Bolivia in addition to the sponsoring countries. The main objective of the proposal is to promote the conservation of South American river dolphins in the Amazon, Orinoco and Tocantins/Araguaia basins through a regional concerted strategy. Sub-objectives are: (1) to reduce conflict between river dolphins and fishing activities; (2) to mitigate effects of human activities, especially illegal hunting and incidental capture of river dolphins; (3) to improve habitat connectivity and conservation; (4) to improve knowledge on population trend, taxonomy, genetics, ecology and health of river dolphins; and (5) to engage governments, private sector and society in the conservation of river dolphins in South America. Delivery partners include national governments and NGOs including Fundación Omacha, Instituto Mamirau, Aqualie Institute, Instituto Nacional de Pesca y Agricultura (INPA), Faunagua Institute, Pro Delphinus, WWF, as well as universities, research institutes, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation, the IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group, the CMS and the South American River Dolphin Initiative (SARDI).

Scientists continue to investigate population structure, monitor abundance, trends, bycatch, habitat loss, public awareness and governance (coordinating with the IWC's Bycatch Mitigation Initiative). A Coordinator is proposed to oversee the work and manage funding, along with a Steering Committee representing the range states and stakeholders, with engagement of the IWC Secretariat. The proponents will incorporate CC and SC recommendations and present the final proposal at SC68C and IWC68.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SC Vice Chair reported that the SC had strongly endorsed the scientific components of the South American river dolphin CMP nomination and planned a more thorough review of the proposal at SC68C. The SC made several recommendations to proponents and established an ICG to advance discussions about the scientific matters and priorities to be included in a draft CMP.

DISCUSSION

Australia, supported by Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Belgium and Hungary, thanked Colombia and the other governments for the presentation and the document. These Contracting Governments strongly supported the endorsement of the CMP nomination and looked forward to seeing the final draft CMP. The Chair of the SWG-CMP confirmed that following SC and CC endorsement the CMP can be submitted to IWC68 for endorsement.

CCC, IBJ, and WDC spoke in support of this proposed CMP. HSI noted that the CMP proposal is a highly significant step forward for the Commission, reflecting a real engagement in conservation of small cetaceans. Attention was drawn to the importance of involving communities and stakeholders in the sub-national meetings. Colombia agreed and hoped to have input from the regions before the next SC meeting, but recognised that COVID-19 is hindering the process of holding local meetings.

The CC **endorsed** the CMP Nomination for a Conservation Management Plan for South American river dolphins (genus *Inia* and *Sotalia fluviatilis*) to proceed to a draft CMP and looked forward to the endorsement of the CMP at IWC68.

8.2.5 Asian River Dolphins

WWF submitted a paper to SC68B seeking advice on whether three threatened species of Asian freshwater cetaceans (South Asian river dolphin, Irrawaddy dolphin and the narrow ridged finless porpoise (also known as Yangtze finless porpoise)) should be treated as 'priority species/populations' for the purpose of the CMP development process. The proposal requires further consideration and may be revisited at SC68C. There are strong synergies with the two other CMS Concerted Actions relating to Asian river dolphins (Ganges river dolphin and Irrawaddy dolphin) adopted at CMS COP13.

The IWC Secretariat is in discussions with India on how the IWC and BMI could assist with its river dolphin research and conservation efforts.

8.2.6 Central American Humpback Whales

The SC has recommended the Central American Humpback whale population be proposed as a priority population for CMP development. A workshop took place from 9-10 March 2020 in Panama City, Panama, to discuss the development of this CMP, including biological and ecological aspects, threats, mitigation and monitoring. The proponents will prepare a draft CMP for SC68C.

CCC cited the importance of Colombian EEZ waters for the Central American Humpback Whales, Southeast Pacific Humpback Whales, and Northeast Pacific Humpback Whales, recommending that the CMP consider and address new information on the role of Colombian waters in humpback breeding, particularly given the potential risks posed by development projects in the region.

8.3 Thematic Strategic Plan for CMPs

Australia provided an update on the development of a CMP Handbook and strategic plan for 2021-2030 (CC/68A/08.3/01 & CC/68A/08.3/02). They sought views on a draft Handbook and strategic plan with a range of questions for discussion. The Handbook will function as the primary source of information on the CMP programme and takes a flexible approach to CMP development. This represents a change in program definition/scope and requires consultation with the CC, SC and endorsement by the Commission. Three strategic objectives have been put forward for consideration, covering financial self-sufficiency of CMPs, strengthening CMP partnerships and improvements to monitoring and evaluation of the CMP program.

The Chair of the CC, Costa Rica, Argentina and Belgium all thanked Australia for their work and expressed support for the ideas presented. Argentina offered its assistance with further work and the Chair invited others to follow suit.

IFAW and WWF expressed their support and highlighted appreciation for the new flexible approach to address multispecies and multiple threats. WWF drew attention to the potential for this new flexible approach to assist in developing the proposed Asian river dolphins CMP.

The CC **welcomed** progress on the development of a CMP Handbook and Strategic Plan for CMPs and encouraged the presentation of these documents at IWC68.

8.4 CMP financial update

See Item 17.2 on funding and Progress under the Voluntary Conservation Fund.

9. SHIP STRIKES

At IWC57 in 2005 the CC agreed to address whales being killed or seriously injured by ship strikes, recognising that the issue is also considered by the SC through its HIM Sub-committee. The CC established a Ship Strikes Working Group which has reported progress regularly since 2006.

9.1 Report from the Scientific Committee

The SC Chair summarised SC progress on ship strikes in item 14 and item 13 in the SC 2019 and 2020 reports, respectively, including ongoing work on the ship strikes database which now holds nearly 1,000 separate cases. The SC recognised the potential to detect overlap in vessel movements based on Automatic Identification System (AIS) data with Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), and thus identify high risk areas. To this end the Secretariat and the HIM Convenor recently met with MarineTraffic in with regards to a potential MOU for improving access to AIS data. They agreed to review methods of estimating vessel traffic for vessels without AIS and for reducing ship strike risks for specific shipping sectors such as fast ferries.

9.2 Report from the Ship Strikes Working Group and 9.3 Ship Strikes Work Plan and staffing arrangements

Dave Weller (USA), Chair of the Working Group on Ship Strikes (WG-SS) presented the *Report of the Ship Strikes Working Group* (CC/68A/09.2/01) together with the new *Ship Strikes Work Plan 2020-2022* (CC/68A/09.3/01 (Excel file)).

Since IWC67, intersessional activities have focused on engagement with other organisations including, ACCOBAMS, IUCN, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and MarineTraffic.

The 2017-2020 *Strategic Plan to mitigate the impacts of ship strikes in cetacean populations* expires this year and a revised plan will be presented to IWC68. A new Ship Strikes Work Plan for 2020-2022 has been developed by the WG-SS and was proposed for endorsement by the CC as a living document, subject to further refinements before IWC68. The WG-SS also proposed to establish: (i) a Ship Strikes Expert Panel to provide scientific and technical advice to the Secretariat, CC, SC and, where requested, to IWC Contracting Governments and other stakeholders in support of the SS Strategic Plan and work plan; and (ii) an IWC Data Manager (initially on a 2-year fixed-term contract) to develop and deliver work on the ship strikes database and other IWC programmes with objectives relating to collation and dissemination of data, including strandings. The SC, at SC68B and the Conservation Committee Planning Group (CCPG) held shortly thereafter had both considered an initial proposal for a ship strikes coordinator. Both noted strong synergies between ship strikes and other priority topics including strandings and underwater noise and therefore proposed a possible combined post. The proposal for an IWC Data Manager reflects these comments.

The WG-SS Chair outlined the costs of appointing an IWC Data Manager, noting that this could be met in part with the SC allocation in its 2021 budget for work on the ship strikes database. In addition, there are existing funds currently earmarked in the VCF for ship strikes work (with the agreement of the

stranding expert panel and steering group) and underspends due to the strandings coordinator vacancy. As needed, funding could also be requested from the VCF and voluntary funding earmarked for welfare as well as through additional voluntary contributions.

The Chair of the Working Group concluded by thanking Smith and Webster of the Secretariat and Leaper, Chair of the SC HIM sub-committee, for their support and major contributions to this work.

Committee discussions and recommendations

Discussion on the proposed 2020-21 work plan

Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK, Costa Rica and the USA all thanked the SS-WG Chair, Convenor of SC HIM subcommittee (Leaper) and the Secretariat for efforts to move the important work on ship strikes forward and supported development of the new work plan.

Belgium welcomed development of the new Strategic Plan to be endorsed by IWC68, as well as the ambitious work plan. It suggested that, given the postponement of IWC68, the WG-SS might consider extending the term of the work plan and encouraged further refinement. It further noted that recruitment of the Expert Panel could draw on the process used for the BMI Expert Panel. Belgium, supported by the Chair of the CC also agreed with the need to secure wider sources of funding for the ship strikes work plan and endorsed the proposal to further consider a dedicated fundraiser post.

Costa Rica suggested dividing the ship strikes database into high seas and coastal records, noting that collisions in coastal areas may be resolved through actions of a specific government with local researchers and stakeholders while high seas cases involve more international co-operation. The WG-SS chair noted that research on gray whales and shipping traffic across the Pacific showed a natural break between coastal hubs of shipping activity and high seas activity. He suggested the WG-SS consider this matter further.

IBJ supported the continued review of global mitigation measures to ensure incorporation of real-world experiences into the programmes. He recalled previous discussions on efforts to prevent ship strikes in Brazil and reported that no further ship strikes have been reported in the humpback whale breeding area of the Abrolhos Bank region (an area of previous concern). IBJ urged Contracting Governments to invest in conservation programmes to address ship strikes. Brazil emphasised the importance of the successful agreement with the private sector to protect both vessels and whales off the coast of Brazil and expressed support and appreciation for the work of IBJ and the Ship Strikes Working Group.

CCC drew attention to a mega infrastructure project in the Tribuga Gulf (Colombia) which is an important breeding ground for the humpback whale G stock. They requested the CC and WG-SS monitor this issue and consider including it in the work plan 2020-2022 under sections on high risk areas and/or at-risk populations.

IFAW welcomed the progress made with the review process for ship strike reports and noted that increased reporting of ship strike incidents for entry into the database is needed. IFAW offered to assist in collecting ship strike information and to increase reporting to the IWC ship strike database through outreach to the research community, governments and relevant agencies, in addition to its ongoing efforts to raise public awareness of the issue.

The CC **endorsed** the new Ship Strikes Work Plan on the understanding that it is a living document which will be subject to further refinement before IWC68, in particular after a new Ship Strikes Strategic Plan has been developed.

Discussion on SS staffing arrangements

Belgium, supported by the Netherlands and the UK suggested that the Data Manager should be recruited initially for a period of only one year, to allow continuation of the ship strikes work, but to also allow flexibility to review needs related to the revised Strategic Plan and final version of the work plan submitted to IWC68.

In response to a query from the Netherlands, the Secretariat noted the intention for the work of the Data Manager to link closely to existing work in the Secretariat to improve reporting of data on ship strikes and other data such as the National Progress Reports, the Conservation Database and the IWC DoR.

There was discussion on the procedural question of whether the Commission would need to endorse the proposed IWC Data Manager, with the USA, Mexico, the UK and Belgium expressing the need for Commission endorsement. On further discussion and clarification that the post was not proposed as a permanent position, these Contracting Governments agreed that the CC could support a one-year contract to facilitate progress on the SS database and similar priorities on other topics during this extra one-year intersessional period, subject to extension should this staffing arrangement be endorsed as part of the SS Work Plan at IWC68. The report should clearly reflect that initial appointment would be for 2021 only. The Secretariat noted that funding for a one-year contract was already available.

The SC Chair confirmed that there is £10,000 in the 2021 SC budget to contribute to this position. He suggested that this funding could still be available after the Commission meets in IWC68 but that it would be preferable to ensure progress proceeds on the database during 2020. Therefore, should the appointment of a Data Manager recruitment be delayed, other arrangements for procuring work on the ship strikes database could be considered.

The CC further discussed how the intention to recruit to this position for one year should be communicated to and agreed by the Commission. It was agreed that this proposal could be included in the CC Work Plan 2020-21 which the CC would endorse at this meeting. Given the unprecedented circumstances surrounding this virtual CC meeting, it was further confirmed that the Bureau would give advice on the mechanism for seeking approval of the CC Work Plan 2020-21 from the Commission.

IFAW, supported by AWI, CCC, COMARINO, EIA, HSI, ICB and ORCA noted that the suggested staffing arrangements to deliver the future Ship Strike Work Plan is similar to the successful model currently employed by the BMI. They acknowledged the value of an IWC Data Manager, whilst also noting that more could be achieved for ship strikes with a broader co-ordinator role. Therefore, they urged the CC to endorse the recruitment of a Data Manager in the short-term and to reconsider wider staffing needs on ship strikes in the longer term. Lastly, they noted that critical initiatives, such as on Ship Strikes and Strandings, currently receive no core funding and therefore agree that the proposed dedicated fundraiser post to work across these and other IWC topics is urgently needed and well justified. They encouraged the CC to support this proposal and make this recommendation to IWC68.

The CC supported the proposed IWC Data Manager post to be included in the Ship Strikes Work Plan. Because of the postponement of the in-person Commission meeting until September 2021 the CC **agreed** that an initial one-year contract for this position will be included in the CC Work Plan 2020-21 to allow the work of the CC to advance under these unusual circumstances and extended intersessional period. The CC further **agreed** to seek advice from the Bureau on the process for seeking agreement of the Commission to this CC Work Plan including this proposal.

9.4 Ship Strikes and IMMAs

9.4.1 Report of the Joint IWC-IUCN-ACCOBAMS workshop to evaluate how the data and process used to identify Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) can assist the IWC to identify areas of high risk for ship strike

David Mattila (Secretariat) presented a summary of the joint IWC-IUCN-ACCOBAMS workshop ([SC/68/HIM/07](#)) which took place in Greece in April 2019. The report of this workshop was presented to the SC as SC/68A/HIM/07 and endorsed at SC68A. The workshop's primary findings were that co-occurrence of marine traffic with an IMMA is not enough on its own to understand and determine the best mitigation (e.g. type of traffic, species/population information and local mitigation options), rather further investigation is needed. The workshop agreed that IMMAs represent a systematic biocentric approach to identifying important habitats and can be helpful in identifying potential high risk areas for ship strikes. There were specific recommendations to the Government of Greece and for

the continuation of work on a possible Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) proposal for the North West Mediterranean Sea, Slope and Canyon IMMA, plus potentially to the Spanish corridor. Further work was recommended to review shipping and existing IMMAs, gather case studies on costs and benefits of mitigation, review the use of historical data in validating areas of interest, consider the use of IMMAs for mitigating other harmful human activities and to expand co-operation between relevant organisations and stakeholders.

9.4.2 Report of the WWF-IUCN-IWC-Oceanmind IMMAs-AIS study

The WWF-IUCN-IWC-Oceanmind IMMAs-AIS study and case studies are available [here](#). Minton (on behalf of the MMPA Task Force and WWF) summarised the context and contents of the report of the WWF-IUCN-IWC-Oceanmind IMMAs-AIS study, which was conducted to address one of the main recommendations of the Joint IWC-IUCN-ACCOBAMS Ship Strike Workshop. WWF sub-contracted Oceanmind, a consulting company with expertise in analysis of AIS data in relation to fisheries compliance, to conduct the analysis that overlaid a full year of vessel traffic data with the boundaries of the 114 IMMAs that had been identified as of September 2019. The report features detailed information for each IMMA, including tables and a graph breaking down monthly densities of vessel traffic, per vessel category, based on unique vessels in each IMMA, and 'heat maps' for each IMMA based on the density of AIS signals transmitted by all vessels in the specific IMMA over the course of the year. At SC68B the SC pointed out that these approaches introduce potential biases, and that future studies should use a metric of 'kilometres transited per square kilometre' to more accurately assess vessel traffic density in relation to ship strike risk.

Despite these potential biases, the data and maps provide valuable insight into vessel traffic density, particularly in some areas that have not previously been highlighted in the IWC Ship Strikes Strategic Plan. These include the two IMMAs featured in the report's in-depth case studies; the Mascarene Islands IMMA - which includes Mauritius and Réunion, and the Savu Sea and Surrounding Areas IMMA in Indonesia. Both areas ranked in the study's top 10 IMMAs where co-occurrence of ship-strike-vulnerable species and high densities of vessel traffic present a potential ship-strike risk. The study can be used by NGOs, government, industry and any other stakeholders interested in management of the risks posed by vessel traffic to marine mammals to highlight areas that merit more in-depth investigation and management measures. It is hoped that a new study using the SC-recommended metric can be conducted to include the newly identified IMMAs in the Australia-New Zealand and Extended Southern Ocean region.

OceanCare, AWI, EIA, Fundación Cethus, HSI, ICB, IFAW and WDC commended this important work ship strikes and IMMAs. They highlighted that the Recommendations from the IMMAs workshop have been endorsed by the Parties to the ACCOBAMS Agreement and therefore play a major role in efforts to reduce pressure in certain hot spots. In this context they also highlighted the valuable data-driven and interdisciplinary work carried out by the IUCN Joint Species Survival Commission/World Commission on Protected Areas (SSC/WCPA) Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force who contributed to this successful output due to the work they had already completed identifying IMMAs in the Mediterranean. They drew attention to the ongoing work of this Task Force, and the recent approval of thirteen new IMMAs in the Extended Southern Ocean Region.

Finally, they encouraged Parties to establish a working group, perhaps under its sanctuaries work stream, to consider the development of guidance related to the management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for cetacean conservation.

The CC **endorsed** the IWC-IUCN-ACCOBAMS workshop report and its recommendations. It **welcomed** the WWF-IUCN-IWC-Oceanmind IMMAs-AIS study and encouraged follow up work.

10. WHALE SANCTUARIES

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

11. MARINE DEBRIS

At IWC63 in 2011 the Commission endorsed a CC recommendation to include a standing agenda item on marine debris. Two joint SC and CC workshops on marine debris held in May 2013 and August 2014 produced a range of recommendations that were endorsed by the Commission. A further workshop was held in December 2019. The IWC's work programme on responding to entangled whales is reported separately through the Working Group on Whale Killing Methods and Welfare Issues.

11.1 Report from IWC Workshop on Marine Debris

An IWC workshop 'Marine Debris: The Way Forward' was held from 3-5 December 2019 in La Garriga, Catalonia, Spain. The report of the workshop was presented to the SC at SC68B as [SC/68B/REP/03](#).

Austria, Argentina, The Netherlands, Hungary and Chile all expressed support for endorsement of the workshop report and its recommendations. It was similarly supported by a number of Accredited Observers (WDC, ICB, AWI, CCC, OceanCare and EIA).

Austria noted the early recognition by the IWC of the gravity of the marine debris issue and that the IWC had held a series of key workshops. In light of the threat posed by marine debris to a wide range of marine organisms, as well as the financial and health threats to fishers and coastal communities, it hoped that the IWC would continue this leading role and seek to promote marine debris recovery and prevention programs. The Netherlands noted that the workshop report had been used in the new Dutch harbour porpoise conservation plan which will be issued in November.

The Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, Northeast Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) drew attention to its [Resolution 9.3](#) 'Marine Debris' which includes operative paragraphs reflecting the recommendations given by the 2019 IWC Workshop.

SPREP endorsed the workshop report, noting that marine plastic pollution is an issue of high concern to Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), many of which have made substantial progress on banning single use plastics. It provided information on the SPREP Pacific Marine Litter Action Plan 2018-2025 ([link to plan here](#)), as well as the Conservation Management Measure (CMM) on Marine Pollution ([link to CMM here](#)), highlighting an opportunity for IWC to engage in this work to provide specialist advice on cetaceans.

ICB encouraged Contracting Governments to disseminate the report to the relevant authorities in their country, take note of the recommendations to evaluate impacts of marine debris through investigation of strandings events and contribute to existing databases on marine debris to facilitate global assessment.

AWI, supported by OceanCare, welcomed the workshop's recommendation that the Secretariat adds marine debris mapping to its engagement with the IMMA process. With reference to the workshop's recommendations on fisheries and Abandoned, Lost or Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG), it encouraged participation of ALDFG experts in the Fisheries Standard Review underway in the Marine Stewardship Council. OceanCare further emphasised the value of a global risk assessment identifying 'hot spots' and suggested that the IWC SC be encouraged to engage in such a global risk assessment.

The CC **endorsed** the report and recommendations of the IWC Workshop 'Marine Debris: The Way Forward' held in December 2019 and encouraged its further dissemination.

11.2 Report from the Scientific Committee

The Environmental Concerns sub-committee addresses marine debris within the SC. Additional details of SC progress on this topic can be found in items 15 and 14 of the 2019 and 2020 SC reports, respectively. The SC reiterated the threat to cetaceans from marine debris. They welcomed and endorsed the recommendations from the IWC Workshop on Marine Debris and encouraged the communication and implementation of the workshop recommendations to all relevant stakeholders.

The SC also recognised the need for standardised data collection, including for post-mortem examinations of marine mammals, and will continue to advance efforts in this regard.

11.3 Future work by the Conservation Committee

The ICG on marine debris submitted an *Update on Conservation Committee work on Marine Debris* (CC/68A/11.3/01) and proposed a work plan for 2020/20201. Two papers on increased plastic use due to COVID-19 were brought to the attention of the Committee ([Silva et al. 2020 \(a\)](#) and [Silva et al. 2020 \(b\)](#)).

The work plan was endorsed by Argentina, Hungary, the Netherlands and Chile. Belgium commented on the importance of this threat and the need for IWC, as the specialised organisation for cetacean conservation and management, to be involved in tackling this issue. It advocated strongly for co-operation with other relevant organisations.

A number of Accredited Observers also expressed their support for the work plan and added further observations, including on the troubling information about the dramatic increase in plastic debris due to COVID-19. AWI offered £1,300 to be held in the VCF to be used as pilot projects to address ALDFG are developed.

ICB emphasised that the many information gaps cause an underestimate in the threat posed to marine life including cetaceans and noted their commitment to finding positive solutions in particular to plastic fishing waste and end-of-life nets, working in partnership with the fishing industry in Argentina.

OceanCare noted that an estimated 5-13 million tonnes of plastics leak into our oceans annually and that the plastic industry is planning to expand plastic production by at least 40% in the next 5 years. They reiterated their call for a global risk assessment to help find hotspots for ingestion and entanglement and stressed the importance of behavioural change. It also drew attention to the high relevance of the book 'The Beachcomber's Guide to Marine Debris' by Michael Stachowitsch, a long time SC and Commission meeting participant.

EIA drew attention to the issue of microplastics and particularly welcomed the work plan activity to promoting leadership by the IWC in eliminating single use plastics including in its day to day operations, COVID-19 response and at IWC meetings

The CC **endorsed** the Marine Debris Work Plan 2020-2021 as proposed by the intersessional working group and asked that the intersessional processes, which will now take work on this topic forward, consider the issues raised in its discussions.

12. NEW WORK PROGRAMMES FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

A brief update was given on progress in developing work areas. Detailed discussions were deferred until next year.

12.1 Anthropogenic underwater noise

At IWC67 in 2018 the CC endorsed proposals for further work on anthropogenic underwater noise, including establishment of an ICG to further scope this work and engagement with other organisations. An IWC Resolution on Underwater Noise (Resolution 2018-4) was adopted at IWC67.

Update from the Scientific Committee

The SC Chair reported SC progress on this topic in items 15 and 14 of the 2019 and 2020 SC reports, respectively. The SC has recognised the threats posed to cetaceans and other marine animals for decades, encouraging activity exclusion zones as an effective mitigation approach, and endorsed the IMO goal of reducing underwater shipping noise by 3dB per decade. A 3-hour online pre-meeting to SC68B discussed advancing efforts to address underwater noise from shipping, with talks focused on ambient sound, noise budgets and indicators (SC/68B/REP/06). The establishment of a database of ship source levels and intersessional work to further collaborate with the CC was encouraged.

Conservation Committee Work Plan 2020-21

Argentina (Miguel Iñíguez) presented document CC/68A/12.1/01 (*Update on Anthropogenic Underwater Noise*) on behalf of Argentina and Brazil (Artur Andriolo) which proposed additions to the CC Work Plan, including for a virtual meeting to further scope the noise Work Plan for the CC and provide specific recommendations to IWC68. The proposed work plan includes a review of management recommendations from other IGOs, e.g. CMS and the UN, as there is a need to look at recently published and unpublished literature on this topic, as well as developing a strategy for working with these organisations. It further proposed to change the name of the theme 'Anthropogenic Sound' in the CC Strategic Plan to 'Anthropogenic Underwater Noise'. In addition, nominations of additional members to the ICG are requested.

Costa Rica, UK and Belgium supported this new work plan, agreed with the change of name for this threat in the Strategic Plan and encouraged collaboration with other organisations. Belgium, Netherlands, CMS, IFAW, and Fundación Cethus nominated representatives to the ICG.

IFAW on behalf of AWI, EIA, Fundación Cethus, ICB, OceanCare and WDC also supported the proposed changes to the work plan. OceanCare supported the intention to collaborate with other organisations on this issue. It drew attention to CMS Decision [13.59/60] to review the report on Best Available Technology (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP). OceanCare suggested an agenda item for the proposed CC workshop on evaluating the effectiveness of different mitigation measures for reducing anthropogenic underwater noise. It also proposed that special attention be given to an important new treaty that has been subject to international negotiations for the past decade, the Treaty to Conserve the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), in the High Seas. UNEP/CMS thanked Argentina and Brazil for their strong focus on collaboration with other organisations.

The CC **endorsed** the interim work plan and **supported** the proposal to change the name of the theme 'Anthropogenic sound' on the CC strategic plan to 'Anthropogenic Underwater Noise'.

12.2 Climate Change

Update from the Scientific Committee

The SC Chair reported progress on this topic in item 15 of the 2019 SC report (at SC68B in 2020 this was only discussed in the context of the SC Work Plan). The SC agreed the effects of climate change are one of the greatest impacts on cetaceans and life on earth, that management of the effects of climate change needs to be swifter and more precautionary, and that climate change was recognised to potentially interact with almost all the stressors of concern to the SC. At SC68B the SC approved support for an intersessional workshop on climate change to focus on improved integration of the issue into the work of the IWC, identify research priorities to fill knowledge gaps and priority areas for mitigation and management.

Future CC work on Climate Change

Mark Simmonds (HSI), speaking as the CC lead for climate change noted there had been three IWC workshops (1995-2010) on climate change and an SC steering committee meeting in 2014 but no significant focused work since then. The proposed SC workshop for 2021 was supported by £20,000 from the SC and was originally planned to be in-person (now under review). The CC was asked if it wished to hold a joint workshop, provide funding, and/or appoint people to the steering group.

The Chair expressed a preference for a joint workshop, with a joint steering committee which he offered to join. Belgium also supported a joint workshop and stated a preference for a virtual meeting with further discussions in the margins of the Commission meeting.

Simmonds (HSI) noted that it would be appropriate to allow the steering committee to take note of opinions and look at the alternative formats when planning. An in-person meeting could take place immediately before or after an SC meeting to reduce the carbon footprint of the workshop. An application to the voluntary conservation fund to support the workshop was suggested if funding were needed.

12.3 Chemical pollution

The CC Chair asked for volunteers to join a small group considering the CC Work Plan for Chemical Pollution. Simmonds volunteered to join this group in his capacity as the CMS COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution.

The SC Chair reported progress on this topic in Item 15 and Item 14 of the 2019 and 2020 SC reports, respectively. The SC has been working on chemical pollution for several years, with POLLUTION 2000 and POLLUTION 2020. The new program, POLLUTION 2025, will look at multiple stressors and contaminants, using a One Health approach. It is hoped that this will be useful to the CC.

OceanCare stated that this is crucial work, referring to the recent atypical strandings of melon-headed whales in Mauritius following an oil spill from the bulk carrier *MV Wakashio* which grounded on an atoll. It enquired about the IWC's response to this event. The Secretariat replied that the Chair of the Strandings Expert Panel and the Executive Secretary had both written to the Government of Mauritius offering help and provided advice to NGOs on the ground for sample collection and storage, which was successful and is ongoing.

Marine Megafauna Conservation Organisation (MMCO) spoke to thank the IWC for this support, saying that it was much appreciated on the ground in Mauritius, and that they are waiting for the results of analysis of these collected samples as the whales had died at sea of unknown causes.

13. CETACEANS AND ECOSYSTEM FUNCTIONING

At IWC67 the CC endorsed in principle proposals for future work on cetaceans and ecosystem functioning subject to consideration of budget implications.

The CC received the *Report of the Intersessional Working Group on Cetaceans and Ecosystem Functioning* (CC/68A/13.00/01) containing an update on progress and in particular a proposal to hold a virtual workshop on this topic in 2021.

Hungary, Costa Rica, Argentina and Belgium expressed support for the proposed 2020-21 work plan and the workshop being held virtually. Costa Rica re-iterated its long-term support for this work programme and made some additional suggestions for participants in the workshop. Belgium expressed the view that this workshop take place before IWC68 and that decisions on participation take into account gender and geographical balance, as well as greater participation of social science and science-policy experts.

CCC on behalf of CCC, AWI, COMARINO, EIA, HSI, IFAW, ICB, ProWildlife and ORCA fully supported the proposed way forward on this topic, drew attention to the growing scientific evidence on the contributions of cetaceans to the ecosystem and encouraged the IWC to take a leading role in studying and promoting the ecosystem services provided by cetaceans.

The CC thanked Chile for its leadership on this issue and **endorsed** the proposed 2020-21 work plan for the intersessional group and the plan for the CC workshop to be held virtually before IWC68. It **encouraged** the intersessional group to further consider the views expressed at this meeting with regards to participation in the workshop.

14. SMALL CETACEANS

14.1 Progress under the voluntary fund for small cetacean conservation research

The Co-Convenor of the Small Cetacean sub-committee of the Scientific Committee (Lindsay Porter) presented on the progress of work under the small cetacean voluntary fund. In the last 10 years the fund has supported 19 projects. In the period 2018-2019 contributions of £30,869 had been received, the main donors being Italy, Netherlands, UK and NGOs.

The funds are used for invited participant (IP) attendance at SC meetings and supporting projects that focus on SC recommendations, include an aspect of capacity building and stakeholder involvement,

are in co-operation with governments and NGOs, and have the potential to catalyse longer term conservation research, management and conservation goals.

In its most recent round of funding, support was provided for the first region-wide estimates of population size and status of endemic Chilean dolphins (*Cephalorhynchus eutropia*) in southern Chile, current population estimates of the Indus River dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) in Pakistan, a business model to save the vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*) from extinction and keep fishermen employed in Upper Gulf of California, and an assessment of online information as a tool to improve documentation of availability of marine mammals for consumption and other uses in China and South Vietnam.

The Fund has further supported three regional workshops focusing on the South American river dolphin, coastal small cetaceans in Africa, and work on aquatic wildmeat, as well as establishment of the South Asian Task Team for South Asian river dolphins. The Fund currently has £67,512 of unallocated funds and is working with the Secretariat to develop means of distributing funds should urgent actions be needed.

Hungary noted the importance of the work on aquatic wildmeat consumption and recommended sharing this information with other IGOs. Netherlands and Switzerland thanked the sub-committee for this work and recognised its importance.

HSI, COMARINO, ICB, EIA, AWI, CCC, OceanCare, ProWildlife, IFAW, WDC, Fundación Cethus and WWF, called on the IWC to increase its efforts to work expeditiously to ensure improved protection of small cetaceans, noting that many threats that affect the larger cetaceans also affect the small species. HSI announced a contribution of a £4,900 to the fund from AWI, OceanCare, CSI, Whaleman Foundation, Dolphin Connection, SeaLegacy and Campaign Whale and encouraged Contracting Governments to also contribute funding.

The CC welcomed the work of the Small Cetaceans Fund and thanked donors for their contributions.

14.2 Small Cetaceans Task Team

At its 2015 meeting, the SC developed the Terms of Reference for a Small Cetaceans Task Team Initiative to assist the SC in providing timely and effective advice on situations in which a population of cetaceans is in danger of a significant decline that may eventually lead to its extinction. The ultimate aim is to ensure that extinction does not occur. The Co-Convenor of the SC Small Cetaceans sub-committee introduced the paper CC/68A/14.2/01 (*Progress on Small Cetacean Sub-Committee Task Teams 2019-2020*) with updates on the current Task Teams.

The South Asian River Dolphin Task Team held a workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in July 2019 to identify: (1) information gaps and research priorities for *Platanista* populations; (2) research projects that require coordinated effort and sharing of expertise and develop a transnational plan for coordinated research efforts; and (3) key threats across the entire range of the species and any region- or country-specific threats. The workshop formulated nine recommendations, which the Task Team will work to fulfil.

The Africa-Focused *Sousa* Task Team was established this year with 35 members from 14 countries. Intersessional work is looking at how best to manage this group to cover the large area and the number of threats identified.

The Lahille's Dolphin Task Team is seeking ways to work cooperatively with fishing communities and fisheries authorities to reduce bycatch. This Task Team will report to the Task Team Chair intersessionally and provide a detailed work plan to the SC in 2021.

The Chair of the Task Teams Steering Group of the SC (Simmonds) presented a description of SC Small Cetacean Task Teams, highlighting the structure and purpose of the Task Teams, noting that the convenors of the Task Teams are voluntary positions and suggesting that Task Teams should feature more prominently on the IWC website.

HSI announced a contribution of US\$1,000 to the voluntary conservation fund specifically for the Task Teams initiative.

The CC thanked the convenors of the Task Teams: Dipani Sutaria and Nachiket Kelkar (South Asian River Dolphins) and Pedro Fruet and Els Vermeulen (Lahille's Bottlenose Dolphin) and the many active participants of the Africa-Focused Sousa Task Team, and **recommended** that the IWC website make Task Teams more prominent.

14.3 Review of Scientific Committee recommendations

The SC Vice Chair noted progress in items 17 and 16 in the 2019 and 2020 SC reports respectively, including SC discussions on Iberian harbour porpoise, vaquita, Lahille's bottlenose dolphin, Guiana dolphins, four species of threatened Indian Ocean humpback dolphins and the work of the three current Task Teams.

15. SPECIES OR POPULATIONS OF URGENT OR EMERGING CONCERN

The CC has previously discussed potential ways in which it could help with species or populations of critical conservation concern for which urgent action was required. At IWC67 the CC agreed to add species or populations of emergent and urgent concern as a new standing item on the Committee's agenda.

At the meeting of the CCPG in 2018, Simmonds was requested to consider and report back to the CC on the issue of how to improve the response from the IWC to situations in which cetacean populations were in decline, especially concerning small or very threatened populations. The document CC/68A/15.00/01 (*Assessing Cetacean Conservation Trends and Related Issues*) was submitted to the CC in response to that request.

Simmonds presented CC/68A/15.00/01 which provides background on the issue of species, subspecies and populations of cetaceans believed to be at risk of extinction, including a table that summarises the status of the ninety currently recognised cetacean species and 73 other distinct taxonomic units and subpopulations, including regional (European and Mediterranean) assessments, according to the IUCN. He drew attention to a recent statement by over 300 scientists from across the world highlighting the plight of cetaceans and calling for improved, swifter and more precautionary action, acknowledging the IWC's important role in this and the significance for many populations of incidental take in fisheries. Simmonds also noted that there was further research in progress that he would be pleased to report on in due course relating to a survey of experts in the field of cetacean conservation.

The authors discussed the role of the IWC in monitoring the status of cetaceans and addressing threats, and provided three recommendations to the CC: (1) that the CC engage in the process of regular monitoring of cetacean status working with the IUCN and other international assessments; (2) that effort should be made to identify regional hot spots of concern where multiple taxa are at risk; and (3) that to address the cetacean conservation crisis, the IWC needs to build its conservation work programs, and should tap into external funding sources, noting a dedicated fundraiser might help accelerate efforts.

Austria, UK and Hungary all thanked Simmonds and expressed support for this work. Austria noted the importance of co-operation with IUCN and supported further expanding this work to include information and data from other assessments to keep the status of species up to date. It also supported the idea of a dedicated fundraiser to secure funding for the IWC's important conservation work. The USA, supported by the UK, thanked Simmonds for his work but noted the need to avoid duplication of efforts and make best use of limited funding.

The IUCN expressed gratitude that its Red List data were being used and its willingness to work with the CC on this project, noting that its Red List project relies almost entirely on the voluntary work of a diverse network of experts. It noted a caveat to using regional assessments since these may overlap with biological assessments. It was emphasised that the sample of global subspecies and

subpopulations assessed by IUCN is significantly biased by the fact that no attempt is made to assess all of them but rather prioritising those known or suspected to be at high risk.

SPREP suggested that the next iteration of this document might usefully present information on the trend in conservation status over time as a potential mechanism to monitor effectiveness of conservation action and also highlight where it is not being effective. It also underscored concern about the status of deep diving species and asked how the CC could address this decline.

Simmonds thanked the participants for their support. He responded to USA and UK concerns on funding, noting that this work would call for and draw on wider research efforts and that there were no immediate costs associated with it for the Commission. He looked forward to working with the IUCN and others to develop the future version of the status table for the CC.

The CC **agreed** to establish a small working group convened by Simmonds and comprising USA, the Chair of the CC, IUCN and other interested parties to further review how to improve IWC response where populations are in decline, especially small, threatened populations. This small working group would report to the next meeting of the CC in 2021.

Update on Scientific Committee discussions

Austria presented CC/68A/15.00/02 (*Update on the Scientific Committee's Initiative to highlight cetacean extinction*). This document was created with assistance from the Secretariat and presented two tools to provide a mechanism for the IWC to make information on extinction more publicly available: (i) a template for formal statements for three scenarios of extinction of a species, disappearance from a region of a species, and serious concern of extinction raised; and (ii) an outline for an IWC webpage on extinction. It was noted that the website page does not need Commission endorsement because it falls under established IWC website guidelines, although the use of the proposed statement template will need Commission endorsement. Assistance from CC members in further developing this work was welcomed.

Argentina volunteered to test the template to highlight the threat of extinction at its franciscana workshop in 2021. HSI and Dolphin Connection thanked the CC and Secretariat for this work and HSI pledged NGO assistance.

The CC acknowledged the work by the SC on the development of templates for statements on three scenarios of extinction and **endorsed** the proposal for a dedicated webpage on extinctions.

16. ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The CC received *Update to the Conservation Committee on Co-operation with other Organisations* (CC/68A/16.00/01) from the Secretariat. Of particular interest were proposals for several MoUs and the need for IWC input into the development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

Belgium thanked the Secretariat for their continuous engagement with other organisations, noting the threats facing cetaceans are so vast they need a coordinated and coherent approach. It welcomed the progress on the MoUs mentioned in the report and agreed that endorsement for these potential MoUs should be sought by the Commission during IWC68. It welcomed IWC input to the development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), supported the next steps proposed by the Secretariat and agreed that the development of any proposals related to the GBF put forward to the Commission should be led by Contracting Governments. Engagement in the Post-2020 GBF was also supported by several Accredited Observers.

IFAW expressed its support for the proposed MoU with MarineTraffic to provide a regular way to obtain shipping movement data. OceanCare highlighted the importance of the IMMAs work and encouraged IWC engagement in ongoing discussions on a new treaty to protect biodiversity in the High Seas (known as the BBNJ international legally binding instrument, ILBI) in collaboration with CMS.

AWI on behalf of IBJ, COMARINO, CCC, EIA, Fundación Cethus, HSI, ICB, ORCA, WDC and WWF thanked the Secretariat for its efforts on co-operation with other organisations noting in particular co-operation with CMS, participation in the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) and the collaboration of the Bycatch Coordinator with the regional and global bodies for fisheries management. It further welcomed the proposal to increase co-operation and knowledge sharing with CCAMLR. WWF offered funding to organise a collaborative workshop between IWC and CCAMLR in the near future. It encouraged further offers of practical and in-kind support to increase the Secretariat's capacity to engage with other organisations.

The CC welcomed the development of the proposed new MOUs and **agreed** that these should be presented at IWC68 for Commission endorsement.

The CC **agreed** with the next steps proposed by the Secretariat with regards to engagement in the process to develop the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, noting that the development of any proposals to IWC68 on the GBF should be led by Contracting Governments.

17. FUNDING

17.1 Funding opportunities

The CC received an *Update on Fundraising and the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Strengthening IWC Finance (CC/68A/17.1/01)*, including on the work of the Secretariat in continuing to support development of costed work programmes, ongoing review of external fundraising opportunities and outreach to potential donors, and the development of concept notes on priority topics to support fundraising. The Secretariat worked with the relevant Standing Working Groups and Chair of the ICGSF to identify and compile information for a Circular on voluntary funding needs for the Committee's work during the next biennium (IWC.CCG.1411). Though the Secretariat continues to actively progress fundraising, including some potential grant applications in 2021, it has limited capacity to bid for and manage large grants. The ICGSF proposed to review this further in the coming year and present proposals at IWC68 on how IWC capacity could be increased in this area.

AWI, supported by HSI and IFAW noted that the IWC cannot continue to rely on voluntary sources of funding for its important conservation agenda and needs long-term, sustainable sources of funding for its threat research and mitigation work. It suggested the IWC consider engaging (e.g. through a secondment) a fundraising professional to assist with this work (e.g. a professional development expert, grant-writer or other fundraising professional), and urged Contracting Governments and NGOs to support this recommendation.

The CC thanked the Chair of the ICGSF for its report and thanked the Secretariat for its efforts on fundraising. It recognised the limited capacity of the Secretariat to bid for and manage large grants and **recommended** that this should be reviewed in the coming year such that proposals on how to increase IWC capacity in this area could be presented to IWC68.

17.2 Progress under the Voluntary Conservation Fund

The CC received an *Update on the Voluntary Conservation Fund (CC/68A/17.2/01)* which had continued to provide important support in the last intersessional period to implement CC work programmes including Whale Watching, Marine Debris, CMPs, Ship Strikes, and the BMI.

The CC thanked all of the Contracting Governments, Accredited Observers and other organisations that had provided donations to the VCF and **encouraged** further contributions to the fund.

18. CONSERVATION COMMITTEE OFFICERS

The CC was reminded that the terms of several Conservation Committee officers will expire at IWC68 and that some positions are at present vacant. The Chair noted that the WG-SS Chair post was now vacant, thanked Dave Weller, USA, for his service and asked that the Secretariat seek nominations to

this position via a circular. A further circular at an appropriate time before IWC68 would draw attention to posts for which terms will expire and seek nominations.

The CC considered a proposal from the Chair and Vice Chair of the CC that, as is currently the case for both the Chair of the SC and Chair of Commission, the Vice Chair of the CC should succeed the Chair automatically after the Chair has served a set term, thus allowing continuity and a smooth transition of leadership. Given the cycle of CC meetings it was proposed that this term could be set at 2 or 4 years and that this new provision would first apply to the new officers taking up these roles after IWC68. Argentina and Belgium both expressed support for this proposal.

The CC **agreed** in principle that the Vice Chair of the CC should succeed the Chair automatically after the Chair has served a set term and **agreed** to consider the appropriate changes to the CC Working Methods at its next meeting.

19. ADOPTION OF REPORT

The Chair informed participants that the report of this CC meeting will be shared with the Bureau, which will advise the CC Chair and Vice Chair on a process to seek Commission endorsement on the proposed Conservation Committee 2020-21 Work Plan.

The Chair thanked the Secretariat for their support during the meeting, all the SWG Chairs and topic leads for their contribution and all of the participants for ensuring such a successful meeting. Several Contracting Governments and Accredited Observers intervened to thank the Chair and Vice Chair and Secretariat for their work to prepare for and conduct this first-ever virtual CC meeting.

Fundación Cethus, on behalf of a group of Accredited Observers thanked the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretariat and participants and noted that whilst the benefits of in-person meetings were missed this year, there are significant environmental benefits of virtual meetings. It called for the IWC to consider using modern technology when feasible and appropriate, to conduct future meetings or alternatively to evaluate a hybrid model that permits equitable access for governments and Accredited Observers to participate in the important deliberations of the IWC.

The meeting closed at 23:30 on Friday 2 October 2020. The report was adopted by correspondence.

Appendix 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ARGENTINA

Miguel Iñíguez
Lucia Scheinkman

AUSTRALIA

Annie Robinson
Adam Clark
Michael Double

AUSTRIA

Andrea Nouak
Michael Stachowitsch

BELGIUM

Stephanie Langerock
Jan Haelters

BRAZIL

Marco Farani
Artur Andriolo
Ana Maria Bierrenbach
Inez Varoto Corrêa
Wagner Fischer
Thomaz Guedes
Fabia Luna
Carlos Hugo Suarez Sampaio
Alex Zerbini (SC Vice-Chair)

BULGARIA

Yana Velina

CHILE

Barbara Galletti

COLOMBIA

Andrea Ramirez
Ana Maria González-Delgadillo
Kelly Moreno
Julio Andres Quintero Gil

COSTA RICA

Eugenia Arguedas Montezuma
Javier Rodríguez-Fonseca

DENMARK

Anne Birgitte Hansen
Nanna Dybdal
Amalie Jessen

FRANCE

Clément Payeur

GERMANY

Nicole Hielscher
Carina Kaschner

GUINEA, REP. OF

Samba Diallo

HUNGARY

Zoltan Czirak

LUXEMBOURG

Pierre Gallego
Liz Slooten

MEXICO

Lorenzo Rojas Bracho (Chair)
Jorge Urbán Ramírez

NETHERLANDS

Anne-Marie Svoboda

NEW ZEALAND

Jan Henderson
Kristina Hillock
Dave Lundquist
Jonathan Martin
Danica Stent

NICARGUA

Renaldy Barnutty

PANAMA

Lisette Trejos Lasso

PERU

Andrés Garrido Sánchez
Regina Aguilar Arakaki
Cosette Campos Nieto

Jennifer Chaucha Huánuco
Rossy Yesenia Chumbe Cedeño
Sharon Dale González
Sara Dueñas Enríquez
Eric Camilo Gutiérrez Sáez
Miguel Ángel LLeellish Juscamayta
Eduardo Lopez Tolentinto
Carlos Marcial Perea-Sicchar
María Andrea Meza Torres
Rosa Edith Ñahui Saccaco
Nery Yanet Oblitas Sánchez
Javier Quiñones Dávila
Sofía Rivadeneyra Villafuerte
Frida Rodríguez Pachero
Cynthia Romero Moreno
Albina Ruiz Ríos
Rosa Francisca Zavala Correa

PORTUGAL

Luis Freitas

SLOVENIA

Andrej Bibic

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Rosalie Masu

SPAIN

Elvira Garcia Bellido

SWITZERLAND

Bruno Mainini

TOGO

Ali Domtani

UK

Gemma Harper
Cat Bell
Rosie Carpenter
Russell Leaper

USA

Ryan Wulff
Roger Eckert
Tom Gleason
Madison Harris
Dennis Heineman
Marian Howe
Lisa Phelps
Randall Reeves
Krissy Rusello
Robert Suydam (SC Chair)

Peter Thomas
Michael Tillman
Dave Weller

INVITED EXPERTS

Gianna Minton
Lindsay Porter

ACCREDITED OBSERVERS

ACCOBAMS

Susana Salvador

Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC)

Jessica Lefevre
Dawn Winalski

American Cetacean Society

Sabena Siddiqui

Animal Welfare Institute (AWI)

Sue Fisher
Susan Millward
Kate O'Connell
DJ Schubert

Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (UNEP/ASCOBANS)

Jenny Renell

Centro de Conservacion Cetacea (CCC)

Elsa Cabrera
Maria Jimenez

COMHAFAT/ATLAFCO

Abdelouahed Benabbou
Abdennaji Laamrich

Conservación de Mamíferos Marinos de Mexico (COMARINO)

Yolanda Alaniz
Mercedes Anzures

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (UNEP/CMS)

Heidrun Frisch Nwakanma

Dolphin Connection

Paul Spong
Helena Symonds

Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)

Celeste Bollini
Danielle Gabriel
Jennifer Lonsdale

Fluke Foundation

Mary Whitney

Fundación Cethus

Carolina Cassani

Humane Society International (HSI)

Grettel Delgadillo

Rebecca Regnery

Mark Simmonds

Bernard Unti

Instituto de Conservacion de Ballenas (ICB)

Candelaria Piemonte

Roxana Schteinbarg

Instituto Baleia Jubarte/Humpback Whale Institute (IBJ)

Luena Fernandes

José Truda Palazzo

International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)

Matthew Collis

Sharon Livermore

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Justin Cooke

Marine Megafauna Conservation Organisation (MMCO)

Svetlana Barteneva

NAMMCO

Charlotte Winsnes

OceanCare

Nicolas Entrup

Fabienne McLellan

ORCA

Lucy Babey

Paso Pacifico Nicaragua

Osmar Benito Sandino

Sarah Otterstrom

SeaLegacy

Candace Crespi

Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Karen Baird

Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC)

Vanessa Tossenberger

World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

Colman O Criodain (Kenya)

Leigh Henry (USA)

Thea Jacob (France)

Chris Johnson (Australia)

Uzma Khan (Pakistan)

Daphne Willems (Netherlands)

IWC Secretariat

Rebecca Lent

Sarah Smith

Marguerite Tarzia

Imogen Webster

Cherry Allison

Sue Burkett

Andrea Cooke

Julie Creek

Stella Duff

Alisha Falberg

David Mattila

Katie Penfold

Moussa Sow

Iain Staniland

Mark Tandy

Stewart Thomas

Kate Wilson

Appendix 2

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Document reference	Title	Agenda item
GENERAL DOCUMENTS		
CC/68A/GEN/01Rev1/En	Provisional Agenda and Annotations	
CC/68A/GEN/01Rev1/Sp	Provisional Agenda and Annotations – Spanish	
CC/68A/GEN/01/Fr	Provisional Agenda and Annotations – French	
MEETING DOCUMENTS		
CC/68A/03.2/01	Final progress report on Conservation Committee Work Plan 2016-2020	3.2
CC/68A/04.2/01	IWC Conservation Database for Voluntary Conservation Reporting	4.2
CC/68A/05.00/01	Comments from the Scientific Committee regarding selected agenda items	5
CC/68A/05.3/01	Guidance for drafting of CC Recommendations	5.3
CC/68A/06.1/01	Report of the Standing Working Group on Bycatch	6.1
CC/68A/06.1.2/01	Bycatch Mitigation Initiative Work plan, 2021-2024	6.2.1
CC/68A/06.4.2/01	A Review of Regional Fisheries Management Organization Efforts in Addressing Cetacean Bycatch: Report to the International Whaling Commission	6.4.2
CC/68A/07.1/01	Report of the Standing Working Group on Whale Watching	7.1
CC/68A/07.1.1/01	Draft Editorial Protocol for updating the Whale Watching Handbook	7.1.1
CC/68A/07.3/01	Draft revisions of IWC general principles for whale watching	7.3
CC/68A/08.1/01	Progress report from the SWG on Conservation Management Plans	8.1
CC/68A/08.2.4/01	Nomination CMP South America River Dolphins	8.2.4
CC/68A/08.3/01	Developing a handbook and a strategic plan for the CMP Program	8.3
CC/68A/08.3/02	Draft CMP Handbook and Strategic Plan - for consultation	8.3
CC/68A/09.2/01	Report of the Ship Strikes Working Group	9.2
CC/68A/09.3/01	Ship Strikes Work plan 2020-2022	9.3
CC/68A/11.3/01	Update on Conservations Committee work on marine debris	11.3
CC/68A/12.1/01	Update on Anthropogenic Underwater Noise	12.1
CC/68A/13.00/01	Report of the intersessional working group on Ecosystem Functioning	13
CC/68A/14.2/01	Progress on Small Cetacean Sub-Committee Task Teams 2019-2020	14.2
CC/68A/15.00/01	Assessing Cetacean Conservation Trends and Related Issues	15
CC/68A/15.00/02	Update on the Scientific Committee's initiative to highlight cetacean extinction	15
CC/68A/16.00.01	Update to the Conservation Committee on Co-operation with other Organisations	16
CC/68A/17.1/01	Update on Fundraising and the ICGSF	17.1
CC/68A/17.2/01	Update on the Voluntary Conservation Fund	17.2
CC/68A/REP/BMI/01	Report of the IWC Workshop on Bycatch Mitigation Opportunities in the Western Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea	6.3
IWC/CC recommendations 2016-2020	DOR outputs of CC recommendations 2016-2020	5.1
FORINFO PAPERS		
CC/68A/INFO/01	Conservation Committee: Strategic plan 2016-2026	3.1
CC/68A/INFO/02	IWC-IUCN-ACCOBAMS workshop	9.4.1
CC/68A/INFO/03	Report of IWC Workshop on Marine Debris	11.1
CC/68A/INFO/04	Description of the Small Cetacean Task Team	14.2
CC/68A/INFO/05	IWC Voluntary Conservation Reports refresh	4.2

CC/68A/INFO/06	National Legislation Supplied to IWC up to 2015	4.2
CC/68A/INFO/07	Information papers on increased plastic use due to COVID-19	11.3
CC/68A/INFO/08	Information papers on increased plastic use due to COVID-19	11.3
CC/68A/INFO/09	Report: Meeting on collaborative activities for cetacean bycatch, IOTC-IWC, September 2020	6.4
CC/68A/INFO/10	Guidelines for the Safe and Humane Handling and Release of Bycaught Small Cetaceans from Fishing Gear - CMS Technical Series No. 43	16

Appendix 3

AGENDA

1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS
 - 1.1 Appointment of Chair
 - 1.2 Appointment of Rapporteurs
 - 1.3 Review of Documents
 - 1.4 Observer Participation
2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
3. CONSERVATION COMMITTEE STRATEGIC PLAN AND WORK PLAN
 - 3.1 Updates to the Strategic Plan
 - 3.2 Workplan for the 2018-2020 Biennium and beyond
4. STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
 - 4.1 Working Methods of the Conservation Committee
 - 4.2 Voluntary Conservation Reports
 - 4.3 IWC Governance Review
 - 4.3.1 Introduction to the WGOE process and recommendations relevant to the CC
 - 4.3.2 Initial exchange of views and development of CC comments
5. JOINT WORKING GROUP OF THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE AND THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
 - 5.1 Database of recommendations
 - 5.2 Review of implementation of recommendations
 - 5.3 Guidance for drafting recommendations
6. BYCATCH
 - 6.1 Report from the Bycatch Standing Working Group
 - 6.1.1 Progress of the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative on 2018-2020 work plan
 - 6.1.2 Bycatch Mitigation Initiative workplan 2021-2024 and Conservation Committee role in work plan activities
 - 6.2 Report from the Scientific Committee
 - 6.3 Report from the Indian Ocean Bycatch workshop
 - 6.3.1 Review of report and recommendations
 - 6.3.2 Conservation Committee role
 - 6.4 Engagement with RFMOs
 - 6.4.1 Progress report
 - 6.4.2 Review of RFMO Efforts in Addressing Cetacean Bycatch
7. WHALE WATCHING
 - 7.1 Report from the Conservation Committee's Standing Working Group on Whale Watching
 - 7.1.1 Progress with the online Whale Watching Handbook
 - 7.1.2 Engagement with the Indian Ocean Rim Association
 - 7.2 Report from the Scientific Committee
 - 7.3 IWC Principles for Whale Watching
8. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN
 - 8.1 Progress Report by the SWG-CMP
 - 8.1.1 Progress on current CMPs
 - 8.1.1.1 Western Pacific Gray Whale CMP
 - 8.1.1.2 Southwest Atlantic Southern Right Whale CMP
 - 8.1.1.3 South-east Pacific Southern Right Whale CMP
 - 8.1.1.4 Franciscana CMP

- 8.2 Future CMPS
 - 8.2.1 Arabian Sea Humpback whales
 - 8.2.2 Mediterranean Fin whales
 - 8.2.3 Mediterranean Sperm whales
 - 8.2.4 South American River dolphins
 - 8.2.5 Asian River dolphins
 - 8.2.6 Central American Humpback whales
- 8.3 Thematic Strategic Plan for CMPs
- 8.4 CMP financial update

9. SHIP STRIKES

- 9.1 Report from the Scientific Committee
- 9.2 Report from the Ship Strikes Working Group
- 9.3 Ship strikes workplan and staffing arrangements
- 9.4 Ship Strikes and IMMAs
 - 9.4.1 Report of the Joint IWC-IUCN-ACCOBAMS workshop to evaluate how the data and process used to identify Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) can assist the IWC to identify areas of high risk for ship strike.
 - 9.4.2 Report of the WWF-IUCN-IWC-Oceanmind IMMAs-AIS study

10. WHALE SANCTUARIES

11. MARINE DEBRIS

- 11.1 Report from IWC Workshop on Marine Debris
- 11.2 Report from the Scientific Committee
- 11.3 Future work by the Conservation Committee

12. NEW WORK PROGRAMMES FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

- 12.1 Anthropogenic underwater noise
- 12.2 Climate Change
- 12.3 Chemical pollution

13. CETACEANS AND ECOSYSTEM FUNCTIONING

14. SMALL CETACEANS

- 14.1 Progress under the voluntary fund for small cetacean conservation research
- 14.2 Small Cetaceans Task Team
- 14.3 Review of Scientific Committee recommendations

15. SPECIES OR POPULATIONS OF URGENT OR EMERGING CONCERN

16. ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

17. FUNDING

- 17.1 Funding opportunities
- 17.2 Progress under the Voluntary Conservation Fund

18. CONSERVATION COMMITTEE OFFICERS

19. ADOPTION OF REPORT

ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

Rule of Procedure C.2

2. Observers accredited in accordance with Rule [of procedure] C.1.(a) and (b) are admitted to all meetings of the Commission and the Technical Committee, and to any meetings of Committees and all subsidiary groups of the Commission and the Technical Committee, except the Commissioners-only meetings, meetings of the Bureau and closed meetings of the Finance and Administration Committee.

SPEAKING RIGHTS FOR OBSERVERS

Rule of Procedure C.3

3. Observers accredited in accordance with rule C.1.(a) and (b) will have speaking rights during Plenary sessions and sessions of Commission subsidiary groups and Committees to which they are admitted to under C.2, in accordance with the Rules of Debate of the Commission. Observers might also submit documents for information to the delegations and observers participating in such sessions, provided these are submitted through the Secretariat at least 48 hours before the session in which they are intended to be made available, and are duly authored or endorsed by the accredited organisation making the submission, which is to be held responsible for its contents.

Rules of Debate Paragraph A

A. Right to Speak

1. The Chair shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak, with the exception of accredited Observers, which should be allowed to speak only after all Commissioners desiring to speak do so. As a general rule, Observers will only be allowed to speak once at each Agenda item under discussion, and at the discretion of the Chair.

Appendix 4
CONSERVATION COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2020/21
October 2020

Aim	Deliverable/Action	Progress	Responsibility	Timescale	Costs (If applicable)
Strategic Planning and Reporting					
Develop a coherent strategy to aid work planning and raise awareness of the work of the Conservation Committee (CC).	Undertake a mid-term review of the Conservation Committee Strategic Plan and report to IWC68.		Conservation Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, with relevant SWG Chairs and topic leads	By IWC68	
	Draft and agree thematic strategic plans for the priority areas of work identified in the outward facing Strategic Plan.	A strategic plan for Bycatch was endorsed by the CC at IWC67. Revisions to the ship strikes strategic plan will be proposed to the CC at IWC68. A thematic strategic plan for CMPs will be proposed to the CC at IWC68.	Relevant Standing Working Groups and other working groups	By IWC68	
	Progress efforts to identify wider sources of funding for the work of the Committee. Consider means to increase Secretariat capacity for fundraising.	Ongoing	Secretariat in partnership with Chairs and topic leads	Ongoing Report on progress to IWC68	
	Develop a coherent work plan with resources identified where possible.	A new costed work plan for the CC 2020-2024 will be presented to the CC at IWC68.	Conservation Committee Chair and Vice-Chair		
Ensure effective implementation of Conservation Committee recommendations and cross-fertilisation with the Scientific Committee.	At IWC66, the Commission endorsed Terms of Reference for annual Conservation Committee Planning Group (CCPG) meetings. The CCPG will continue to help set the agenda for the biennial CC meeting and ensure progression of the CC work plan in the intersessional period.	Ongoing	Conservation Committee Chair Secretariat	One CCPG meeting (virtual if necessary) prior to IWC68	
	Meetings of the Joint Conservation Committee-Scientific Committee Working Group (CC/SC WG) were held immediately after SC meetings in 2015-2018. The CC will continue to participate in this WG and to propose items for its agenda.	Ongoing Work of the joint CC/SC WG has included the development of a database of recommendations endorsed by the Commission at IWC67.	Conservation Committee Chair Scientific Committee Chair	One joint CC/SC WG meeting (virtually if necessary) prior to IWC68	
	Undertake ongoing analysis of Conservation Committee recommendations, using outputs from the IWC database of recommendations, including providing a consideration of successes and barriers to effective implementation. Provide relevant reports to Commission.	Ongoing	Conservation Committee Secretariat	Ongoing	
Ensure effective reporting to and from the Conservation Committee.	(As endorsed by the Commission at IWC67). Review the current CC country reporting template and progress development of a 'Conservation Database' to facilitate online reporting by countries.	Underway	Secretariat Contracting Governments as pilot countries for database	Prototype database to be developed by IWC68	£10,000 allocated from existing earmarked funding for this project in the VCF
	Review means to increase the number of country reports provided to the Conservation Committee.	Underway	Secretariat Contracting Governments	By IWC68	

Aim	Deliverable/Action	Progress	Responsibility	Timescale	Costs (If applicable)
Sustainable Management of Whale and Dolphin Watching					
Consider and act upon, as appropriate, the advice and recommendations from the SC on the impacts of whale watching operations on cetaceans. Establish linkages between the IWC and other relevant bodies to ensure the dissemination of IWC advice on whale watching.	Consolidation and maintenance of the IWC online Whale Watching Handbook, seeking input from the Scientific Committee as appropriate. In the coming year this will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with CMS to finalise and upload translations for all existing and new content; modest updates to existing content requested by countries/data providers; and updating the searchable table of literature following the SC68C. 		IWC Secretariat Standing Working Group on Whale Watching (SWG-WW) Chair	By IWC68 and ongoing	£9,500 to be allocated from existing funds earmarked for whale watching in the VCF.
	Promotion of the IWC online Whale Watching Handbook.		IWC Secretariat with assistance from Contracting Governments and Observers	Report on progress to IWC68	
	Engage with appropriate regional and inter-national bodies addressing whale watching and progress any opportunities for capacity building. This year the SWG will focus in particular on means to strengthen engagement with industry.	Ongoing	Conservation Committee Chair Secretariat SWG-WW Chair		
	Development of a new four-year costed work plan for Whale Watching.		SWG-WW in liaison with SC	To be presented at IWC68	
Conservation Management Plans					
Further the development and implementation of conservation management plans (CMPs).	Review the usefulness of the Pacific inventory and refine as necessary. This may include requesting that the Scientific Committee review the Oceania Humpback Recovery Plan. Evaluate whether the development of additional regional inventories, including for the Arctic and Indian Oceans would be valuable.	Recommendations on the Pacific inventory and future inventories will be provided to the CC at IWC68.	Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans (SWG-CMP)	Intersessionally	
	Maintain CMP guidelines, templates and funding principles on the IWC website for use by members wishing to undertake a CMP.	These were reviewed and updated, as necessary, as part of the mid-term review of the CMP Work Plan. They will remain under biennial review as needed.	Secretariat	Biennial	N/A
	Support the development of CMPs for priority species.	The Scientific Committee has advised that several species/populations should be considered priorities for CMP development. This means that range states can progress straight to the CMP drafting stage (rather than first preparing a nomination). A list of priority species is included in CMP Work Plan. It will be updated annually based on advice from the SC-CMPs group.	Scientific Committee SWG-CMP	Ongoing	N/A
	Support discussions between scientists and relevant range state governments to continue to further progress development of an Arabian Sea humpback whale CMP.	The Arabian Sea humpback whale has been recommended as a priority population for CMP development by the Scientific Committee. The IWC continues to actively engage with Countries and stakeholders in the region regarding the opportunity for a CMP on this population.	SWG-CMP	Ongoing	TBC

Aim	Deliverable/Action	Progress	Responsibility	Timescale	Costs (If applicable)
	Implement the nine high priority actions that were identified in the Southwest Atlantic Southern right whale CMP.	CMP is in place and being implemented. Progress will be reported to the CC at IWC68.	SWG-CMP CMP Coordinator (Brazil)	Ongoing	
	Implement the Southeast Pacific Southern right whale CMP, focusing on the short-term objectives in the early implementation stages.	CMP is in place and being implemented. Progress will be reported to the CC at IWC68.	SWG-CMP CMP Coordinator (Chile)	Ongoing	
	Implement the Northwest Pacific Gray Whale CMP, focusing on CMP review and operationalising the MoU.	CMP is in place and is being implemented. Progress will be reported to the CC at IWC68.	SWG-CMP CMP Coordinator (Japan)	Ongoing	
	Implement the Franciscana dolphin CMP, focusing on establishing coordination and monitoring processes.	CMP is in place and is being implemented. Progress will be reported to the CC at IWC68.	SWG-CMP CMP Coordinator (Argentina)	Ongoing	
	Develop a 10-year framework for CMPs to guide the work of the SWG.	New CMPs thematic strategic plan and CMP Handbook to be developed for IWC68.	SWG-CMP	To be presented at IWC68	
Whale Sanctuaries and Protected Areas					
Provide conservation and management input into reviews of proposed and existing whale sanctuaries as appropriate.	Work with the Scientific Committee to ensure the Conservation Committee contributes to any review of existing sanctuaries and to the review of any new proposals.		Conservation Committee Chair		
Ship Strikes					
<p>Implement the Ship Strikes Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Consider and act upon, as appropriate, the advice and recommendations from the SC on the impacts of ship strikes on cetaceans at a population and individual level.</p> <p>Establish linkages between the IWC and other relevant bodies to progress IWC priorities and ensure the dissemination of IWC advice on ship strikes.</p>	Implement Ship Strikes Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and the Ship Strikes Work Plan 2020-2022.	Costed Work Plan 2020-2022 endorsed by the CC as a living document to be refined as needed before IWC68.	Ship Strikes Working Group (SS-WG) Data Manager Secretariat Ship Strikes Expert Panel Scientific Committee	Ongoing	
	Develop a new Ship Strikes Strategic Plan for endorsement at IWC68.				
	Continue work to: (i) identify high risk populations and areas and to develop proposals for appropriate mitigation measures; (ii) increase the application of measures that reduce collision probability such as speed reduction and re-routeing limits; and (iii) increase development and use of avoidance technologies (Objectives 1, 2 and 4 in work plan).	Ongoing	Conservation Committee SS-WG Scientific Committee SS Expert panel Data Manager Contracting Governments		
	Ongoing development and maintenance of the ship strikes database including to improve reporting of incidents into the database through systematic outreach to data providers, review and provision of data, increasing accessibility of database and promoting its use.		Data Manager Secretariat SS Expert Panel Contracting Governments		Data Manager (Approx. £35,000 for 1-year contract). To be met with SC funding for database, existing earmarked funding for SS in VCF and other vol funds.

Aim	Deliverable/Action	Progress	Responsibility	Timescale	Costs (If applicable)
	Engage with regional and international bodies addressing ship strikes to further improve collaboration internationally and progress any opportunities for capacity building. Priorities for 2021 include ongoing engagement with IMO, IUCN Protected Areas Task Force and work on IMMAs, ACCOBAMS and developing an MOU with MarineTraffic - an AIS data provider.	Ongoing	Conservation Committee Chair Secretariat SS-WG		
	Refine plans for further outreach to increase public and industry awareness on the ship strikes issue and measures that can be taken to reduce this threat including consideration of tailored advice to different sectors.		SS-WG Secretariat with assistance from Contracting Governments and Observers	Develop an outreach plan for IWC68	
Marine Debris					
Consider and act upon, as appropriate, the advice and recommendations from the SC on the impacts of marine debris on cetaceans at a population and individual level. Establish linkages between the IWC and other relevant bodies to ensure the dissemination of IWC advice on marine debris.	Dissemination of the IWC workshop report (<i>Marine Debris: The Way Forward</i> , Dec. 2019) and recommendations and ensuring recommendations are taken into account in other IWC work programmes particularly those of the Scientific Committee, Strandings Initiative and GWERN in addition to BMI and CMPs.		Secretariat, with relevant CC SWG Chairs and topic leads and SC intersessional group for marine debris	By IWC68	
	Further consideration of the development of a Marine Debris Database in liaison with Strandings Expert Panel and Ad Hoc Group on Databases and Related Issues.		Secretariat, with SC intersessional group for marine debris, SC Ad Hoc Group on Databases and Strandings Expert Panel	Further consideration at SC68C and IWC68	
	Engage with appropriate regional and international bodies addressing marine debris including (in the coming year) IUCN, UNE, WHO, FAO, and the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI).	Ongoing	Secretariat	Ongoing	
	Establish an IWC roster of experts to provide advice and facilitate input to other expert processes.		Secretariat in liaison with CC and SC Experts	By IWC68	
	Exploring potential for pilot projects to address ALDFG, including gear removal in collaboration with the GWERN/BMI and potentially with the Global Ghost Gear Initiative.		Secretariat including Entanglement Coordinator in liaison with relevant members of the Commission and SC		Costed projects to be developed
	Identify and implement ways to obtain information on ALDFG and its mitigation from contracting governments and other stakeholders including through Voluntary Conservation Reports through the new Conservation Database.	Ongoing	Secretariat	Ongoing, with proposals integrated into Conservation Database by IWC68	
	Promote leadership by the IWC in eliminating single use plastics including in its day to day operations, COVID-19 response and at IWC meetings.	Ongoing	Secretariat Conservation Committee	Ongoing. Report on progress to future CC meeting	

Aim	Deliverable/Action	Progress	Responsibility	Timescale	Costs (If applicable)
Bycatch					
Implement the work of the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative.	Implement 2021-2024 Costed Work Plan see here for full work plan and Strategic Plan for the initiative.	Costed Work Plan (2021-2024) endorsed by Conservation Committee in 2020	Bycatch coordinator Standing Working Group (SWG-Bycatch) Bycatch Expert Panel Conservation Committee Scientific Committee	Ongoing implementation of work plan and strategic plan	See costed work plan here
	Provide technical advice and capacity building to contracting and non-contracting governments in tackling bycatch, through experience gained in pilot projects, affiliated projects etc. Provide advice in response to direct requests for assistance and a dedicated capacity/training programme in collaboration with external partners and existing IWC programmes (e.g. CMPs, GWERN etc).		Bycatch Coordinator Bycatch Expert Panel SWG-Bycatch Conservation Committee Secretariat including IWC entanglement adviser/ Human Impact Reduction	2020-ongoing	
	Engagement with relevant IGOs (including FAO, Regional Fisheries Management Organisations & Bodies, CMS and daughter agreements, NAMMCO, SPREP, SPAW etc), international bodies (e.g. World Bank, MSC, ICES), industry groups (ISSF etc) and research bodies and NGOS to strengthen collaboration and coordination in relation to bycatch work.		Bycatch Coordinator Conservation Committee SWG- Bycatch Expert Panel	Ongoing	
	Report to the Commission on progress in addressing IWC Recommendations on the mitigation and management of bycatch through the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative.		SWG-Bycatch Conservation Committee Secretariat Bycatch Coordinator		
	Develop recommendations based on the findings and outputs arising from the BMI, including pilot studies, affiliated projects and engagement with IGOs and relevant workshops and publications. Monitor progress in implementing recommendations.		Conservation Committee SWG- Bycatch Bycatch Coordinator	Ongoing	
	Support the BMI as appropriate according to national circumstances including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the development of appropriate national legislation and plans to tackle bycatch. Reporting of experiences and plans on bycatch into the BMI and through Conservation Committee Reports. Assistance in identifying potential funding sources to support the BMI (pilot projects/ capacity development), and work with the Bycatch Coordinator to develop collaborative joint proposals. 		Conservation Committee SWG-Bycatch	Ongoing	

Aim	Deliverable/Action	Progress	Responsibility	Timescale	Costs (If applicable)
Anthropogenic Underwater Noise					
Consider and act upon, as appropriate, the advice and recommendations from the SC on the impacts of anthropogenic noise on cetaceans. Establish linkages between the IWC and other relevant bodies to ensure the dissemination of IWC advice on anthropogenic noise.	Further identify and engage with appropriate regional and international bodies addressing anthropogenic noise and progress any opportunities for capacity building, in particular with regards the IMO (<i>IWC/64/Rep5</i> ; <i>IWC/64/Rep1</i>). Following recommendations from the 68B IWC SC meeting, coordinate with SC on the scoping of the CC work plan on underwater noise. Review management recommendations from other IGOs on this topic.	Provision of a paper to the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), providing an update of recent information on underwater noise from shipping. Since then the IWC has continued engagement with the International Maritime Organization on this issue, including attendance at a workshop on 'Quieting Ships to Protect the Marine Environment: Technical Workshop' organised jointly by the IMO and Canada. Engagement with the UN including contribution to the report of the UN Secretary General on Anthropogenic Underwater noise to the Open Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and Law of the Sea (18-22 June 2018) and Executive Secretary participation as a panellist at this meeting.	Conservation Committee Secretariat Intersessional Group on Anthropogenic Underwater Noise	2020-ongoing	
	Review progress of outreach activities and information flow, specifically providing advice on how the IWC could further enhance its outreach and capacity building activities. Seismic exploration: (1) Review the existing recommendations coming previously from the IWC, and any need for update. (2) Compile published and unpublished literature on this issue. (3) Engage with appropriate regional and international bodies addressing seismic exploration (i.e. CMS) to scope further work on dissemination of guidelines related to Anthropogenic Underwater noise. (4) A report will be submitted to the 69A IWC SC and the CC. Coordinate with other existing initiatives or groups within the IWC (i.e. ship strike, WW, stranding, etc.) to identify other important issues and synergies related to anthropogenic underwater noise (i.e. vessel noise).		Conservation Committee Secretariat Intersessional Group on Anthropogenic Underwater Noise	2020-2022 2020-2024	
	Provide a report to the Commission synthesising progress in addressing IWC Recommendations on the mitigation and management of anthropogenic noise.	Can be undertaken using outputs from the database of recommendations. To be considered for IWC68.	Conservation Committee Chair Secretariat		
	Consider recommendations arising from relevant workshops and publications including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased Marine Activities on Cetaceans in the Arctic (<i>IWC/65/Rep07 Rev1</i>; and planned workshop on the evaluation of stress and sound (<i>IWC/66/Rep1 (2015) 12.4.3</i>). 	SC and CC workshops on underwater noise will be held during this intersessional period and, amongst other objectives will consider recommendations arising from other relevant workshops and publications. The reports of these workshops will be presented to IWC68.			Depending on format of workshop a funding request may be submitted to the VCF

Aim	Deliverable/Action	Progress	Responsibility	Timescale	Costs (If applicable)
Cetaceans and Ecosystem Functioning					
Consider and act upon, as appropriate, the advice and recommendations from the SC on cetaceans an ecosystem functioning. Establish linkages between the IWC and other relevant bodies to ensure the dissemination of IWC advice on cetaceans and ecosystem functioning	Develop plans for a Virtual Workshop on socio-economic values of the contribution of cetaceans to ecosystem functioning. Contact the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and UN Framework Convention for Climate Change, as well as the UNEP Finance Initiative to inform them about the work the IWC is conducting and invite these organisations to coordinate actions on this topic. Contact other key organisations and initiatives previously identified by IWC67 (IPBES, ecological economics associations, etc.), to communicate the advances on this topic and evaluate their interest in collaborating.	Workshop will be held during this intersessional period and will consider recommendations arising from parallel SC workshop and recent publications. The report of the workshop will be presented to IWC68.	CC Intersessional Group on Cetaceans and Ecosystem Functioning Conservation Committee Chair Secretariat	2020-ongoing	
Other Threats					
Consider and act upon, as appropriate, the advice and recommendations from the SC on the impacts of chemical pollution on cetaceans.	Recruit additional members to join the CC intersessional group for development of a CC work plan on chemical pollution group, in liaison with the SC.	Intersessional work ongoing and progress will be reported to IWC68.	Conservation Committee Scientific Committee		
Consider and act upon, as appropriate, the advice and recommendations from the SC on the impacts of climate change on cetaceans.	Develop plans for a joint CC-SC workshop on climate change around SC68C. Appoint CC representatives to the Steering Group.	Intersessional work ongoing and progress will be reported to IWC68.	Conservation Committee Secretariat Scientific Committee		SC has allocated £20,000. Further funding needs will depend on format of workshop.



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