

**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN IWC EXPERT WORKSHOP ON THE EUTHANASIA OF STRANDED
CETACEANS
THE INSTITUTE OF ZOOLOGY, LONDON, UK, 11-13 SEPTEMBER 2013**

Dear Commissioner

At the 2012 IWC Annual Meeting in Panama there was agreement to hold a specialist IWC workshop on the euthanasia of stranded cetaceans in order to improve our understanding of how to deal with these common events.

Live strandings of cetaceans occur worldwide. Euthanasia is not the aim but often a welfare decision is taken and is the outcome of such events. Current techniques available for euthanasia of stranded whales differ according to region, species, size of the animals, and environmental conditions.

In the UK, as in many countries, numbers of large whale strandings are increasing and it is timely to pool international experience and expertise to agree methods for euthanasia, taking into account the different economic and logistical challenges faced around the world. For example, some 'traditional' methods of euthanasia - such as the use of potent opioid-type drugs - are becoming less accessible in some parts of the world. It is therefore hoped that such a workshop will facilitate knowledge exchange between countries/stranding networks so that guidelines can be established for methods of euthanasia (both chemical and physical).

This 3-day workshop will be held at the Institute of Zoology in London from the 11-13 September 2013. I am writing to extend our invitation to any national experts you may recommend that could contribute to the success of the Workshop. **Please send any nominations (with a short indication of their area(s) of expertise) to us via the IWC Secretariat by Friday 3 May 2013 (secretariat@iwc.int).**

Even if no experts from your country are able to participate, one of the proposed outcomes is to collate, exchange, and evaluate information on this issue. **We would therefore also invite you to submit any information, national guidelines, case studies, or issues you would like the workshop to consider by 01 July to the IWC Secretariat (secretariat@iwc.int) who will circulate it to the Steering Committee. Any information provided before the workshop will not be included in the final report without your permission.**

Terms of Reference

The Workshop will compare and contrast the various euthanasia methods used worldwide and look at ways of improving efficiency, safety of personnel, when or if to intervene (including, potentially, a decision tree and reviewing triage techniques), and what lessons can be learned through the IWC's work on entanglements and make recommendations as appropriate.

The workshop will bring together international experts to inform guidelines on the best welfare outcome when cetaceans strand.

The purposes of the workshop are to:

- 1) Improve the evidence base for future assessments of when and how to euthanize stranded cetaceans to optimise animal welfare, using the most effective technologies available to the IWC community and taking into account difference circumstances (e.g. economic, logistical and available expertise)
- 2) Identify how to improve the efficiency and quality of information/data generated by these events, including lessons we can learn from them.
- 3) Focus on biological considerations and technological measurements taking into account the decisions that need to be considered such as health and safety, logistics, physical - both location and species, triage at Mass Stranding Events, existing protocols/guidelines.

- 4) Generate a list of techniques (established protocols) for each method of euthanasia (chemical, ballistics, explosives, etc.) – possibly as a list of Appendices.
- 5) Provide advice on how to manage different situations in the context of the media and the general public.

Limited funding support is available for some experts whose institutions, agencies and/or governments cannot provide it. Please note that the Secretariat will write to any experts that you wish to nominate to ask them to indicate the extent of funding they may require. Flight costs will be based upon participants arriving on 10 September and departing 13 (late) or 14 September 2013. Further information on the workshop, including the agenda, will be placed on the IWC meetings portal (<http://events.iwc.int/index.php/workshops/>) in due course.

Please note that whilst the invitations we send out to experts will be firm, we will only be able to inform potential attendees with respect to funding after receiving replies from all of the potentially supported participants. No bookings or reservations should be made on the assumption that funding is guaranteed. Experts will be informed as early as possible if they are to receive funding support.

I look forward to your early response.



Dr Paul Jepson/Rob Deaville
Workshop Convenors

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www.ukstrandings.org