
Editorial

Welcome to the final issue of the fifth volume of the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*. This has been another good year for the Journal. A total of 32 papers have been published involving some 120 authors from 24 countries (including from Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia, North America and South America). I am particularly pleased at the wide geographic spread and range of disciplines included. The published papers once again serve to illustrate that the *Journal* is fulfilling its aim of improving conservation science in general and in particular the conservation and management of cetaceans throughout the world. An author and keyword index to Volume 5 appears at the end of this issue.

The present issue again covers a broad range of subjects, areas and species; I am particularly pleased that we have received another contribution to our occasional series on early descriptions of whales.

Any effective conservation and management strategy requires knowledge of the stock structure, distribution and movements of the animals concerned. Despite (and indeed perhaps because of) advances in genetic techniques, this remains one of the most complex and difficult issues facing cetacean biologists. There are several interesting papers on this subject in the present issue, ranging from the general issue of the use of hypothesis testing (Martien and Taylor), case studies of single species/areas (the bowhead whale, Rugh *et al.*; the sperm whale in the Faroe Shetland Channel, Hastie, Swift *et al.*), to the use of satellite telemetry to study movements (Heide-Jørgensen *et al.*). The paper by Hastie, Barton *et al.* links the study of distribution and stock structure to the problems of managing and determining

special areas of conservation. Two of the papers in this issue advance our knowledge of previously little studied areas; Frantzis *et al.* review what is known about the cetaceans of the Greek Seas and Best *et al.* provide the first abundance estimate for blue whales on the Madagascar Plateau. The eastern gray whale represents one of the success stories of cetacean conservation, with its population estimated to be at or near its pre-exploitation levels despite heavy over-harvesting in the 19th century. Under such circumstances it is particularly interesting to study reproductive behaviour and the paper by Urbán *et al.* looks at this aspect of gray whales in Mexican waters. Continuing the reproductive theme, the paper by Kjeld *et al.* shows that measurements of the sex hormone levels in the blood of sei whales provides a powerful tool for examining both pregnancy and the seasonal changes in the male reproductive cycle.

The quality of any Journal is a reflection of the quality and dedication of its reviewers. I would like to thank publicly here all those scientists who dedicate a considerable period of time to offering constructive and valuable criticism and advice on submitted manuscripts. This not only ensures the high quality of published papers but also serves to improve the quality of cetacean management science throughout the world. An updated list of referees can be found on the journal website (<http://www.iwcoffice.org/Publications/reviewers.htm>).

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Editor