
Editorial

Welcome to this the second issue of the eleventh volume of the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*. Unfortunately, the problems with our printers referred to in the last issue continued with the new company but we have now begun to work with Cambridge University Press. We hope that, despite the present economic climate, this will form a lasting and stable partnership.

This issue includes 11 papers covering a range of issues from those related to aboriginal subsistence whaling through ship strikes to whalewatching.

A key component of determining safe, sustainable catch limits for subsistence whaling is the estimation of reliable estimates of abundance. This volume includes new estimates of abundance from aerial surveys of common minke whales from West Greenland in 2007 (22,952, 95% CI 7,815–67,403) and fin whales (4,468, 95% CI 1,343–14,871) in papers by Heide-Jørgensen and colleagues, and a new mark-recapture estimate (from photo-identification studies) for 2004 of 12,631 (95% bootstrap percentile CI 7,900–19,700) for the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock of bowhead whales in a paper by Koski and colleagues.

Knowledge of current abundance is important for determining the status of all populations and assessing the need for conservation measures, not just those subject to direct exploitation; in this issue, Speakman and colleagues present mark-recapture estimates of seasonal abundance and survivorship of bottlenose dolphins off South Carolina.

Beekmans and colleagues highlight the impact of the environment on minke whale density in the Southern Ocean with regard to population modelling.

Another key component of effective conservation and management strategies is an understanding of population structure. Genetic data play an important role in this but, as Archer and colleagues illustrate, the standard null models of panmixia are based on a number of assumptions that can, and probably are, violated. Using the available information from the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock of bowhead whales, the authors develop an individual-based model of whale dynamics, genetics and whaling. They demonstrate that by failing to account for the unique features of particular situations, use of standard methods may lead to misleading results.

A good understanding of catch history is also an important component of assessing the status of a population against conservation objectives. For those species where the primary

exploitation occurred long in the past, before reliable records were kept, this is particularly difficult. Fortunately, many historical records remain (e.g. logbooks, production records) that allow a reconstruction of past removals (both catches and animals struck-and-lost). In his paper, Higdon develops a catch history (and explains the inevitable uncertainties in the record) for the commercial and subsistence harvests of bowhead whales in eastern Canada and West Greenland. Commercial whaling began around 1530AD while subsistence whaling has an even longer history dating back at least to 1200AD. He estimates that during the main period of commercial whaling (1530–1915), whalers took around 61,500 animals, resulting in overexploitation that negatively impacted on subsistence harvests.

As noted in the last issue, there is an increasing awareness that ship strikes can be a problem for both cetaceans and humans. Two papers, one by Carrillo and Ritter and one by Ritter, address this issue for the Canary Islands where there have been increasing numbers of reported collisions and where there has also been a rapid expansion of fast ferry traffic. Both papers highlight the need for mitigation measures to be developed and implemented.

Information on ship strikes and other causes of death often come from the examination of stranded carcasses. In this issue, Danil and colleagues summarise an extremely long series (1851–2008) of strandings data for San Diego County, California. Whilst recognising the limitations of such data, the authors show that they can provide valuable information on distribution, mortality (natural and due to anthropogenic causes) and other biological information such as calving seasons.

The potential of apparently benevolent activities such as whalewatching to negatively affect populations has been gaining increasing attention. In this issue, Schaffar and colleagues examine the exposure of humpback whales to unregulated whalewatching activities in a reproductive area in New Caledonia, where unregulated growth in whalewatching has occurred since 1995. In particular, the authors raise concern over the cumulative exposure of mothers and calves to whalewatching vessels and suggest that management measures should be introduced for whalewatching on this small population.

G. P. DONOVAN
Editor