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## Suggested Changes to IWC Publications<sup>1</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

The current IWC publications are: *Reports of the International Whaling Commission (Rep. int. Whal. Commn* – hereafter RIWC) and its *Special Issue* series. The RIWC volumes contain five sections: General Administration (List of Commission Members, Annual Report, Accounts, Commission participants and Agenda, Chairman's Report); Report of the Scientific Committee incl. Annexes and occasionally special meeting reports; Progress Reports on Scientific Research; Scientific Papers; Résumés. Table 1 summarises the various extents of each section for the last 10 volumes.

The Special Issue series only contains scientific material on specific subjects and is similar to the final sections of RIWC in style.

### Some problems with RIWC

#### *Scientific recognition*

Over the years the scientific quality of RIWC has increased considerably. It has now become as rigorously reviewed as any quality journal. Amongst cetologists it has a high reputation. Unfortunately, and for no logical reason, the 'Scientific Establishment', particularly in some countries, refuses to recognise papers published in it as of the same quality as papers published in a journal. They are 'relegated' to the level of 'Proceedings' papers. However sympathetic ISI, the effective arbiters of this are in general, I have been told that unless it is published in a soft-bound volume, more than once a year, with the word 'Journal' in the title, it will only have the standing of a 'proceedings volume'. This has proved particularly problematic for some scientists as they receive little credit for papers published in RIWC when they are evaluated.

#### *Variable size/Timing*

One of the practical difficulties in the present system of RIWC is that the number of papers considered and accepted for publication varies considerably from year-to-year. For example the most recent volume is the largest ever, 1,032+pp. – in other years there can be half that. This, combined with the timing of meetings, and the need to produce *Special Issues*, makes the workload very difficult to manage (and of course, to budget). Given timing priorities in trying to ensure that RIWC is available for the next meeting, Special Issue timings suffer. A further problem is that the

'good' – in the sense of punctual – authors are penalised. The publication of the volume is effectively dictated by the speed of the slowest author. This is especially a problem if the later papers occur early in the volume – as Murphy's Law frequently dictates.

### Advantages of RIWC

There is a lot to be said for having all the papers from the Annual Meeting, plus the Scientific Committee's Report and the Chairman's Report, in a single hard-bound volume. It also allows the papers to be organised by subject in a logical way, making it easier to find them.

The *Special Issue* series is extremely successful both from the point of view of its scientific recognition and sales (many are being reprinted).

### A WAY FORWARD

The disadvantages noted above, unfortunately outweigh the advantages. I have therefore, tried to develop a strategy that provides an efficient way forward and makes the best use of the available scientific protocol!

### A new journal

The only way to satisfy the rigid but not scientific criteria of scientific 'acceptability', is to establish a new journal. In practical terms, this essentially means changing the timing and cover, while maintaining the high standards of refereeing. In recognition of the quality and quantity of scientific work that is carried out at Scientific Committee meetings, and the interest of the wider scientific community in our work, I propose that the Committee's report is published as a *supplement* to the new journal. This will also enable it to be published in a more timely manner.

The *Special Issue* series would continue as a special issue to the journal.

However, even if there are questions to be asked about the ISI criteria, there are a number of positive aspects to the above approach, in addition to achieving full scientific 'respectability'. For example, it will also make managing the workload and the budget much easier. This format will enable peaks and troughs in size to be managed more efficiently and the budget to be more predictable. It will also reward punctual authors.

**Working Title:** *[International] Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*  
**Abbreviation:** *[Int.] J. Cetacean Res. Manage.*

<sup>1</sup> This is a shortened version of SC/50/O10. It has been slightly revised to take into account discussion during the Scientific Committee meeting.