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# Introduction

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This supplement to Volume 2 of the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management* contains the report of the 1999 Annual Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). The meeting was held in Grenada, West Indies, from 3-15 May 1999 and was attended by over 138 participants (including 33 invited participants); 23 member nations were represented. In addition, it contains the report of the SOWER (Southern Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research) 2000 Workshop held from 1-6 March 1999 in Edinburgh, Scotland, which concentrated on co-operation with CCAMLR (Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources) and Southern Ocean GLOBEC (Global Ocean Ecosystems Dynamics Programme) in the fields of climate change and habitat research in the Southern Ocean.

Several major topic areas were considered at the Annual Meeting in Grenada.

Discussion of the Revised Management Procedure for baleen whales (RMP) centred on: consideration of the software used; consideration of general issues related to abundance estimation and stock identity; preparation for implementation of the RMP for North Pacific minke whales, western North Pacific Bryde's whales and North Atlantic minke whales.

High priority has been placed on the development of a management procedure for aboriginal subsistence whaling (AWMP). The AWMP will comprise both generic and case-specific components and the Committee developed a proposed timetable for the development process. It is envisaged that the components relating to the bowhead whale and the gray whale will be completed first.

Current aboriginal subsistence whaling operations are reviewed annually and this year the review included the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas bowhead whales, the eastern North Pacific stock of gray whales and the humpback whales off St Vincent and The Grenadines. Work to develop a research programme for fin and minke whales off Greenland continued.

After a number of years of analyses of Southern Hemisphere minke whale data, the Committee agreed that parameters of potential importance for management can be estimated from age data, although some further work remains to be carried out, e.g. with respect to robustness. Work on the differentiation of blue whale sub-species continued as part of the SOWER programme south of 60°S. Preparations for a major review of the abundance estimates of minke whales in the Antarctic are underway.

The Committee continued its consideration of the status of North Atlantic right whales and a Workshop was held in October 1999. The report of that workshop will be reviewed by the Scientific Committee at its 2000 meeting. Similarly, work on the assessment of Southern Hemisphere humpback whales continues.

In recent years, the Committee has paid increasing attention to the relationship between cetaceans and their environment and developed two major initiatives, the SOWER 2000 programme referred to above and the POLLUTION 2000+ programme (see *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management (special issue 1) – Chemical Pollutants and Cetaceans*).

The special small cetacean topics considered in 1999 were the status of white whales and narwhals, the use of acoustic devices to reduce the incidental catch of small cetaceans in fishing gear and the results of a joint IWC/ASCOBANS working group on the status of harbour porpoises.

Other matters considered by the Scientific Committee included the review of scientific permits, consideration of aspects of whale sanctuaries, examination of scientific aspects of whalewatching (especially assessing short- and long-term effects on cetaceans) and research needs and priorities for future years.

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*Editor*

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*This supplement to the Journal contains the Report of the Scientific Committee from its Annual Meeting held from 3 – 15 May 1999 in Grenada and the Report of the SOWER 2000 Workshop held from 1 – 6 March 1999 in Edinburgh.*

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