
Introduction

Welcome to this the supplement to the twelfth volume of the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*.

This supplement to the Journal contains the Report of the Scientific Committee from its Annual Meeting held from 30 May-11 June 2010 in Agadir, Morocco. The meeting was attended by over 160 participants (including some 55 invited participants); 25 member nations were represented. It also contains the reports of five intersessional meetings:

- (1) the Southern Right Whale Die-Off Workshop held in March 2010 in Puerto Madryn, Argentina;
- (2) the Third Intersessional Workshop on the Review of MSYR for Baleen Whales held in April 2010 in Seattle, USA;
- (3) the Intersessional Meeting on the North Pacific Survey Programme held in September 2009 in Tokyo, Japan;
- (4) the IWC POLLUTION 2000+ Phase II Workshop held in February 2010 in Sausalito, CA, USA; and
- (5) the Third AWMP Workshop on Greenlandic Hunts held in December 2009 in Roskilde, Denmark.

Several major topics were discussed in Agadir. A brief summary of the work of the Committee in Agadir is given below.

Discussion of the Revised Management Procedure for baleen whales (RMP) centred on completing the *pre-Implementation assessment* for North Pacific common minke whales. This was achieved and the two-year *Implementation* process will now begin. The Committee also reviewed draft research programmes arising out of the completion of the *Implementation* for western North Pacific Bryde's whales in 2007 and North Atlantic fin whales in 2009, and continued its review of MSY rates.

The *Implementation* process takes into account other anthropogenic mortality such as bycatch and the Committee continued its general investigation of these issues, with focus on a Commission Workshop report on entanglements and further work on the issue of ship strikes and the development of a global database on ship strikes.

Work on the development of the aboriginal subsistence whaling procedure is continuing. A Workshop was held to discuss sex-ratio assessment for West Greenland common minke whales, and the major focus at the annual meeting was the *Implementation Review* of eastern North Pacific gray whales. This work will continue next year with a focus on the Pacific Coast feeding group. Advice on catch limits for subsistence hunts was provided.

As in previous years, the Committee continued to work on obtaining agreed abundance estimates for Antarctic minke whales. A work plan has been developed to provide a reasonable chance of resolving the differences and arriving at a final estimate at the 2011 meeting. Work continues on examining the causes for the appreciable decline in the estimates.

Work also continued on the in-depth assessment of Southern Hemisphere humpback whales. There are currently seven recognised breeding stocks of these whales, and this year work centred on BSB (western Africa); the final results will be available next year. The next breeding stocks to be examined will be BSE and BSF. Progress was also made with the in-depth assessment of Southern Hemisphere blue whales. Although the IWC's long programme of cruises in the Southern Ocean (IDCR and SOWER) cruises is now finished, plans are in hand for similar international cruises to be undertaken in the North Pacific. The Committee also reviewed the progress made with the Southern Ocean Research Partnership (SORP). Several draft projects have been put forward for consideration and the Committee is also considering the possibility for a major initiative for a 'Year of the Blue Whale' in 2013/14.

Although a number of whale populations are recovering from previous overexploitation, some remain in a critical state. The Committee again repeated its concerns over the status of populations of the North Atlantic right whale and the Western North Pacific gray whale. The Committee stressed the urgency of reducing anthropogenic mortality to zero in both these cases and approved the extensive draft recovery programme developed in conjunction with IUCN for the latter population. Although several southern right whale populations are increasing, including the South Atlantic population, the Committee reviewed the report of a workshop held to investigate the causes of the high mortality of particularly first year calves around Peninsula Valdes, Argentina. Three leading hypotheses emerged: (1) reduced food availability for adult females; (2) biotoxins; and (3) infectious disease.

In recent years, the Committee has paid increasing attention to the relationship between cetaceans and their environment. Work began on the planning for a new North Pacific survey programme. Progress was also made with regard to the second phase of the POLLUTION 2000+ programme. Other habitat-related discussions continued, with priority being given to the issues of anthropogenic sound and climate change.

A review of the taxonomy, population structure and status of small cetaceans off northwestern Africa and the Eastern Tropical Atlantic was carried out this year. At least 21 different species of small cetacean are known to inhabit this area, and they all face several anthropogenic threats. On reviewing progress on previous recommendations, the Committee reiterated its extreme concern about the vaquita and noted that the species was likely to become extinct if the present rate of bycatch continues. Other populations of small cetaceans continue to give cause for concern including franciscanas off the coast of South America and narwhals and white whales in West Greenland.

Whalewatching off North Africa was also reviewed this year. The Large-scale Whalewatching Experiment (LaWE) was further developed and will continue intersessionally.

The Agadir meeting represented the final meeting to be organised by Dr Nicky Grandy as Secretary to the Commission. The Scientific Committee rose in appreciation of her 10 years of service and thanked her for her hard work, good humour, charm and support over the period. The new Secretary to the Commission is Dr Simon Brockington.

Finally, with respect to the *Journal*, I would like to congratulate Jemma Jones, the assistant Editor on the birth of her first baby, Charlotte Rachel who was born on 7 November 2010, and Clare Addington (née Last) the previous assistant Editor who gave birth to her first baby, Evie, on 26 September 2010. I would also like to thank our new printing company, Cambridge University Press, for an excellent job in producing this large volume.

Greg Donovan
Editor

Cambridge, 17 March 2011

Supplement Contents

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