

Outcome and Follow-up to IWC/59

ARNE BJØRGE, CHAIR OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE PRIORITIES, STRUCTURE AND BUDGET

Scientific Committee Report

The complete Report and Annexes are now on the IWC website:

http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/screport.htm.

Items 21-23 of our report (IWC/59/Rep 1, pp 69-75) describe Committee priorities and initial agenda for the 2008 meeting, data processing and computing needs for 2007/2008, and funding requirements for 2007/2008 respectively. [Annex R](#) gives e-mail correspondence groups and their terms of reference. Please check it to make sure that your name is included under those Working Groups you wished to participate in - if you wish to join any of the Working Groups, please contact Jemma Miller directly (jemma.miller@iwcoffice.org). Remember, if your e-mail address changes, please let the Secretariat know. Convenors of all groups have been notified of their members and the e-mail addresses you used when you registered.

The Secretariat has pulled out all of the tasks identified in the Committee's report and who should complete them. This has been placed on the Scientific Committee website:

http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/sctasks.htm

Next year's meeting dates

The 2008 Annual Meeting of the Committee (SC60) will be in Santiago, Chile. The Scientific Committee meeting will last 13 days and will take place from Sunday 1 June to Friday 13 June. There will be two pre-meeting meetings (30-31 May) on issues related to AWMP and RMP. These pre-meetings are scheduled to facilitate the completion of RMP and AWMP agendas and any subject on their agenda can be discussed. In addition there will be a two-days pre-meeting workshop to review skin diseases in cetaceans of South America. The scheduled two-days pre-meeting workshop on strategic planning of large-scale whalewatching research will be expanded to a four-days workshop and convened in late March in Western Australia. Details on final dates and venue will follow later.

Initial agenda and sub-committees

At this year's Scientific Committee meeting, 14 sub-committees (including standing Working Groups and *ad hoc* Working Groups) were established. Six days were available for sub-committees, and the number of sessions for sub-committees was scheduled to 90 based on three concurrent sub-committee meetings for each of five work sessions per day, starting at approximately 08:30 and ending typically at 21:30. However, because of the inability to schedule certain sub-committees opposite other sub-committees, we could not reach 90 regular sessions. Thus, sessions were also scheduled during the dinner break.

At the Convenors Meeting on 19 May we discussed the workload of the Committee. The SC chair was advised to request an additional day for sub-committees at the SC60. The Commission approved our request and therefore 7 days are allocated to the work of sub-committees next year. The two main aims for the extra day are: (1) to avoid too many simultaneous sessions of sub-committees with overlapping membership, and (2) to allow more time for small break out groups to do simulation runs and testing during the annual meeting. The main aim of the extra day is therefore *not* primarily to schedule more sub-committee sessions!

As you will see from our approved work plan (see below and the IWC/59/Rep 1, Item 21, pp 69-71), the sub-committee and working group structure next year is similar to the structure used in Anchorage. The Sanctuaries working group (SAN) will only be established if there is a new formal proposal for sanctuaries submitted according to the guidelines for review by the Committee. The sub-committees and the respective Convenors are given in the table below.

Sub-Committee/WG	Convenor	Sub-Committee/WG	Convenor
RMP	Bannister	SM	Rogan
AWMP	Donovan	SD	Bravington
BRG	Walløe	SH	Zerbini
IA	Palka	Scientific Permits	DeMaster
BC	Perrin	DNA	Pastene
E	More	North Pacific Minke (NP)	Kitakado
WW	Kato	Ecosystem Modelling	Gales

Committee priorities for 2008

As in recent years and with the Committee's agreement, the Convenors met after the close of the Committee meeting and drew up the following basis of an initial agenda for the 2008 meeting. The same criteria as previous years were taken into account (e.g. IWC, 2004b, p. 51). The Committee recognised that these priorities may have to be reviewed in light of decisions made by the Commission and the priorities below have been modified slightly to take into account Commission discussions.

With current workload for sub-committees, items of lower priority on sub-committee agendas will only be discussed if time allows. When discussing its priorities, the Committee again stressed that papers considering anything other than priority topics will probably not be addressed at next year's meeting, and agreed that this information should be included on the website when the information about document submission is published next year.

There again will be an *ad hoc* Working Group established to consider North Pacific common minke whales and an *ad hoc* Working Group to handle discussions related to ecosystem modelling issues. In addition, the Committee proposed that AWMP and RMP will share two days for pre-meetings. The Committee stressed that these pre-meetings are part of the main sub-committee or SWG agendas: discussion will not be re-opened during the main sub-committee week and the agenda items to be discussed may vary from the expected depending on progress.

The Revised Management Procedure (RMP)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) complete audit of the survey data and agree abundance estimates for Western North Pacific Bryde's whales;
- (2) start the *Implementation* process for North Atlantic fin whales (including holding an intersessional workshop);
- (3) review MSY rates and if appropriate suggest changes to the plausible range (in an RMP context (including holding an intersessional workshop).
- (4) complete the *Implementation review* for North Atlantic common minke whales;
- (5) develop an inventory of the new data available and review progress (in the spirit of a *pre-Implementation assessment*) for West Pacific common minke whales.

Aboriginal Whaling Management Procedure (AWMP)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) work on developing appropriate long-term management advice for the Greenlandic fisheries (including an intersessional Workshop) with the primary focus of:
 - (a) completing work on a sex-ratio based assessment of common minke whales off West Greenland;
 - (b) further consideration of the assessment of humpback whales off West Greenland;
 - (c) beginning work on developing *SLAs* for Greenlandic fisheries with an initial focus on fin whales and noting the multispecies nature of Greenlandic fisheries;
- (2) further consider issues arising out of the *Implementation Review* with special reference to the Data Availability Agreement and the AWS;
- (3) further consider issues related to the provision of *ad hoc* interim advice, particularly with respect to timeframes; and
- (4) validate and amend computer programmes associated with *Implementations* and assessments.

Bowhead right and gray whales (BRG)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) review new information on Western North Pacific gray whales;
- (2) prepare for the *Implementation Review* of Eastern North Pacific gray whales in 2009;
- (3) review stock structure and abundance for Eastern Arctic bowhead whales; and
- (4) review new information on right whales;

The following will be discussed only if there is time available::

- (5) perform the annual review of catch information for the B-C-B bowhead and Eastern North Pacific gray whales;

In-depth assessment (IA)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) produce agreed abundance estimates of Antarctic minke whales using SOWER data (JARPA data will be considered in 2009);
- (2) review reasons for (possibly area specific differences) between Antarctic minke whale abundance estimates from CPII and CPIII;
- (3) develop recommendations for future SOWER cruises, both for the short- and long-term;

The following will be discussed only if there is time and documentation available:

- (1) review catch-at-age analyses of the Antarctic minke whales.

In-depth assessment of western North Pacific common minke whales with a focus on J-stock (NPM)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) stock structure in Sea of Japan;
 - (a) increase data available and update knowledge on stock structure;
 - (b) investigate plausible hypotheses on stock structure for J Stock;
- (2) continue work on distribution and abundance;
 - (a) explore the possibility of surveys in unsurveyed areas;
 - (b) integrate abundance estimates with the assumption of $g(0)=1$ in surveyed areas; and
 - (c) update $g(0)$ estimates by taking covariates into account.

The following will be discussed only if there is time and documentation available:

- (1) work towards developing a standard CPUE series for population assessments.

Bycatch and other anthropogenic removals (BC)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) estimating mortality from:
 - (a) bycatch;
 - (b) entanglement;
 - (c) ship strikes;
 - (d) marine debris;
 - (e) acoustic noise
- (2) data collection, collation and sharing (IWC and IGOs).

The following will be discussed only if there is time and documentation available:

- (1) bycatch in longline fisheries; and
- (2) progress towards second Workshop on estimating bycatch through genetic market sampling.

Southern Hemisphere whales other than Antarctic minke whales (SH)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) assessment of Southern Hemisphere humpback whales, Breeding Stocks B and C:
 - (a) abundance from populations B1 and C3 using photographic and genetic data;
 - (b) relationship between areas B1 and B2 and C1 and C3;
 - (c) estimate proportional representation of B and C stocks on the feeding grounds; and
 - (d) population assessment modelling.

The following will be discussed only if there is time and documentation available:

- (1) continue assessment of Antarctic blue whales;
 - (a) results from contract study.

Environmental concerns (E)

High priority will be given to the following:

- (1) plans for climate change workshop (including review report from scoping group);
- (2) plans for Phase II of POLLUTION 2000+ (including review report from scoping group);
- (3) report from CERD (cetacean emerging and resurging diseases) working group;
- (4) SOCER report;

The following will be discussed only if there is time and documentation available:

- (1) anthropogenic noise and cetaceans; and
- (2) marine renewable energy and cetaceans.

Ecosystem modelling (EM)

High priority will be given to the following:

- (1) planning for the Joint IWC/CCAMLR workshop on modelling Antarctic krill predators.

The following will be discussed only if there is time and documentation available:

- (1) review and update relevant models; and
- (2) review and update model parameters.

Stock definition (SD)

High priority will be given to the following:

- (1) statistical and genetic issues relating to stock definition; including further discussion of DNA data quality;
- (2) progress on TOSSM;

The following will be discussed only if there is time and documentation available:

- (1) criteria for unit-to-conserve.

Whalewatching (WW)

High priority will be given to the following:

- (1) review the report of the workshop on strategic planning of large-scale whalewatching research;
- (2) develop methodology of and assessing the biological impacts of whalewatching on cetaceans;
- (3) review whalewatching in South America;
- (4) review reports of intersessional Working Groups.

The following will be discussed only if there is time and documentation available:

- (1) consider information from platforms of opportunity of potential value to the Scientific Committee;
- (2) review whalewatching guidelines and regulations; and
- (3) review risks to cetaceans from collisions with whalewatching vessels.

Small cetaceans (SM)

High priority will be given to the following:

- (1) review conservation issues regarding small cetaceans in the SE Pacific;
- (2) review progress on previous recommendations; and
- (3) review takes of small cetaceans.

DNA (DNA)

High priority will be given to the following:

- (1) review genetic methods for species, stock and individual identification;
- (2) conduct the first round of sequence validation and continue discussion of plans for sequence validation;
- (3) collection and archiving of tissue samples from catches and bycatches; and
- (4) reference databases and standard for diagnostic DNA registries.

BUDGET

Table 6 under Item 23 (SC Report, pp 71-75) gives the funding requirements of £293,350 requested by the Committee for the 2007/2008 intersessional activity and for Invited Participants to the SC60. This figure represents a £ 14,350 (5%) increase over the approved Committee budget last year. We owe special thanks to Nicky Grandy and Sean Moran for their help in supporting our request.

The Commission approved the requested budget. A summary of the approved budget is shown at the end of this document.

COMMISSION DECISIONS

The Commission passed 5 [Resolutions](#) but these were not directly related to the work plan of the Scientific Committee for the 2007/2008 period.

In the remainder of this note, other Commission decisions and discussions relevant to our work are outlined mainly based on the relevant parts of the IWC Press Release. The full press release provides further details on the Commission meeting (<http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/meeting2007.htm>). The Chair's Summary Report of the Commission Meeting is also available on the website (<http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/meeting2007.htm>).

Whale stocks

When receiving the Scientific Committee's progress on whale stocks, the Commission paid special attention to the status of the endangered western North Pacific gray whale, whose feeding grounds coincide with oil and gas operations off Sakhalin Island, Russian Federation. The population numbers only about 120 animals and although there is evidence that it has been increasing at perhaps 3% per year over the last decade, any additional deaths, for example in fishing gear as has recently occurred, put the survival of the population in doubt. The Commission agreed to work together to try to mitigate anthropogenic threats to this endangered population.

The Commission also noted that ship strikes and entanglements are also a threat to the endangered western North Atlantic right whale population, which numbers around 300, and agreed again that anthropogenic mortality should be reduced to zero as soon as possible.

Sanctuaries

A [proposal to establish a South Atlantic Sanctuary](#) within whose waters commercial whaling would not be allowed, was again submitted by Brazil. Since opinion was divided on the merits or otherwise of the proposal, the matter was put to a vote. Such a proposal requires a three-quarters majority, which was not achieved.

Revised Management Scheme

The Commission kept open the agenda item on the [Revised Management Scheme](#) and moved to an item entitled 'Future of the IWC'. Three non-IWC meetings of relevance were referred to, one held in Tokyo organized by the [Government of Japan](#), one held in New York organized by the [Pew Foundation](#) and one in Buenos Aires held by [Latin American countries](#). The difficulties in reaching consensus when views within the Commission are so polarized were recognized. However, many countries noted that there was positive overlap in some of the suggestions made at the three meetings. It was agreed that there was merit in pursuing intersessional work.

Aboriginal subsistence whaling

This year is the end of the current five-year period for aboriginal subsistence whaling catch limits, and the Commission was scheduled to consider catch limits for the next five-year period. Taking into account the advice from the Scientific Committee the Commission agreed to renew the following catch limits for the period 2008-2012.

Bowhead whales of the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas Stock (taken by native people of Alaska and Chukotka) - A total of up to 280 bowhead whales can be landed in the period 2008 - 2012, with no more than 67 strikes in any year. Up to 15 unused strikes may be carried over each year.

Eastern North Pacific gray whales

A total catch of 620 whales is allowed for the years 2008 - 2012 with a maximum of 140 in any one year.

Humpback whales taken by St Vincent and The Grenadines

For the seasons 2008-2012 the number of humpback whales to be taken shall not exceed 20.

Following an extensive discussion of a request from Denmark for an increased harvest to meet the native people of Greenland's demand for traditional meat, and considering the advice from the Scientific Committee, the Commission adopted the following catch limits for Greenland by three-quarters majority:

West Greenland fin whales (taken by Greenlanders) - The number of strikes from the West Greenland stock shall not exceed 19 in each of the years 2008- 2012.

West Greenland common minke whales (taken by Greenlanders) - The number of strikes from the West Greenland stock shall not exceed 200 in each of the years 2008-2012, except that any unused portion of the quota for each year shall be carried forward from that year and added to the strike quota of any of the subsequent years, provided that no more than 15 strikes shall be added to the strike quota for any one year. This provision will be reviewed annually by the Commission, according to the findings and recommendations by the Scientific Committee, which shall be binding.

West Greenland bowhead whales (taken by Greenlanders) – The number of bowhead whales struck off West Greenland shall not exceed 2 in each of the years 2008-2012, except that any unused portion of the quota for each year shall be carried forward from that year and added to the quota of any subsequent years, provided that no more than 2 shall be added to the quota for any one year. Furthermore, the quota for each year shall only become operative when the Commission has received advice from the Scientific Committee that the take is unlikely to endanger the stock.

East Greenland minke whales (taken by Greenlanders) - The annual strike from the Central stock shall not exceed 12 whales in each of the years 2008 – 2012. Any unused portion of the quota for each year shall be carried forward from that year and added to the quota of any subsequent years, provided that no more than 3 shall be added to the quota for any one year.

Small-scale community based whaling

The Commission then considered matters related to socio-economic implications and small-type whaling. As in previous years, Japan gave a presentation on the hardship suffered by its four community-based whaling communities in Japan (Abashiri, Ayukawa, Wadoura and Taiji) as a result of the moratorium. It had developed a proposal to allow a catch for these communities. After an extensive discussion it was clear that there was no consensus on this issue.

Scientific Permits

The issue of special permit whaling is controversial within the Commission and, as in previous years, strong statements were made both for and against special permit whaling.

You will recall that the Scientific Committee this year made substantial progress on improving the procedure for reviewing scientific permit proposals. The Commission adopted the revised procedure proposed by the Scientific Committee applicable to reviewing new permit proposals and, in principle, to periodic and final reviews of data from existing permits.

Environmental issues

The Commission welcomed the outcome of the workshop on infectious and non-infectious diseases of marine mammals and impact on cetaceans. The Commission also welcomed plans for a second phase of the POLLUTION 2000+, the IWC sponsored international research programme to examine possible cause-effect relationships between chemical pollutants and cetaceans, and a major workshop on climate change to be held in 2009.

Small Cetaceans

The Commission noted with regret that the Chinese river dolphin is probably extinct, and went on to discuss possible actions to enhance the protection of the vaquita, the critically endangered porpoise of the upper Gulf of California in Mexico. The Commission adopted by consensus a [Resolution](#) on the vaquita (see Resolutions for details).

Conservation Committee

When discussing the [Report of the Conservation Committee](#) the Commission agreed that the Committee had continued to make good progress in addressing issues surrounding whales being killed or seriously injured by ship strikes.

Summary of budget for the Scientific Committee approved by the Commission for the coming year.

Short title	SC59 Agenda Item	Budget (£)
RMP (Annex D)		
Audit western NP Bryde's whale survey data North Pacific Bryde's whales	6.1	2,000
Computing support for <i>Implementations</i>	6	20,000
NA Fin Whale <i>Implementation</i> technical meeting	6.2	5,000
1 st Intersessional Workshop for the NA Fin Whale <i>Implementation</i>	6.2	10,000
Workshop to review MSY rates	5.2	6,000
AWMP (Annex E)		
Assistance for <i>SLA</i> developers	8, 9.4, 9.6	10,000
Workshop on Greenland fisheries	8, 9.4, 9.6	10,000
BRG (Annex F)		
North Pacific gray whale telemetry	10.7	2,000
IA (Annex G)		
SOWER 2007/08 cruise and planning meeting	10. 2, 10.11	66,750
SOWER abundance estimate workshop	10. 2.1	4,000
Travel for earplug ageing expert in calibration experiment	10.6.2.3	2,000
Analysis of the BT mode data and importation of 2006/07 SOWER data into DESS	10.2, 10.11	10,000
Continue development of statistical catch-at-age estimators for Antarctic minke whales	10.2.3	6,000
SH (Annex H)		
Finalise assessment of humpback whale Breeding Stocks C and D.	10.5	23,000
Antarctic humpback whale photo-identification catalogue maintenance	10.5	6,600
Initiate assessment of Antarctic blue whales	10.6	3,300
SD (Annex I)		
TOSSM development – programming assistance	11.2	9,000
E (Annex K)		
Scoping meeting for POLLUTION 2000+ Workshop 5,000	12.2	5,000
Scoping meeting for Climate Change Workshop	12.6.1	6,000
Workshop to review of skin diseases in cetaceans of South America.	12.1	2,000
EM (Annex K1)		
CCAMLR/IWC Workshop in July 2008 36,000	13.1	36,000
WW (Annex M)		
Workshop for strategic planning of large-scale whalewatching research	15.3.2	6,000
DNA (Annex N)		
Validate mtDNA control-region sequences in GenBank for large baleen whales	16.1	2,700
Scientific Committee general		
Invited participants fund		40,000
TOTAL		293,350