

Annex O

Report of the *Adhoc* Working Group on Progress Reports and the Online Data Portal

Members: Double (Chair; Australia), An (Korea), Bell (Australia), Bjørge (Norway), Chilvers (New Zealand), Donovan (IWC Secretariat), Fortuna (Italy), Hughes (IWC Secretariat), Iñíguez (Argentina), Leaper (UK), Mattila (IWC Secretariat), Marzari (Argentina), Miyashita (Japan), Øien (Norway), Ridoux (France), Ritter (Belgium), Roel (UK), Rojas-Bracho (Mexico), Rowles (USA), Santos (Spain), Scheidat (Netherlands), Stachowitsch (Austria), Víkingsson (Iceland).

Comments and recommendations on the new online National Progress Report Portal

Brendan Miller of the IWC Secretariat was commended for the significant progress in the development of the online Portal and for supporting national coordinators in the submission of data. Working Group (WG) members welcomed that the layout of the Portal is now similar to the layout of the Microsoft Word template used previously to collate data as this is familiar to those who provide data.

Donovan provided a summary of the original intent of National Progress Reports and the changes in scope and content over time (see Donovan *et al.*, 2011; IWC, 1989; 1998; 2012).

The WG agreed that the National Progress Reports were designed to deliver metadata summaries that direct interested parties to the source of the detailed primary data sources. Dedicated databases (e.g. IWC Ship Strike Database, IWC Catch Database) should be used if detailed quantitative information is required. Currently the IWC Secretariat manages two databases pertinent to the metadata captured by Progress Reports - the Individual Catch Database and the Ship Strike Database. The development of an Entanglement Database is being considered.

The WG discussed improvements to the current Portal and suggested the following changes (in priority order).

- (1) The data in extracted reports or reported onscreen must be identical to data known to be in the database Portal. Some participants reported inconsistencies. The Portal should save all data entered or provide notification of failures.
- (2) National coordinators should be able to edit all fields in each record before submission to the IWC and should be able to enter data on behalf of another party
- (3) Individual users should be able to edit all fields before the record has been submitted to the national coordinator.
- (4) The collation of data related to human impacts on cetaceans is the highest priority for Progress Reports and the sections within the Portal should be reordered to reflect this.
- (5) The online reports produced by the Portal need to be reformatted ensure the data are presented clearly onscreen and in print form.
- (6) It should be possible to create separate records when the 'Large Area' and 'Species' are the same but the 'Local area' differs or when the 'Large Area' and 'Species' are the same but the source of the information differs.
- (7) Section names should be as clear as possible but with definition where needed (avoid terms such as 'non-anthropogenic mortality'). Ideally state specifically the nature of the data required (bycatch, ship strike, entanglement and so on).

Ongoing modifications to the Portal

Donovan reported that Miller is exploring the options for a 'country administer tool' that would avoid the need to create a new user for every large area, species and source. This was welcomed by participants because designated country administrators are often required to enter data on behalf of someone else.

Number of occurrences within records

Participants expressed concern that in many cases the number of occurrences, especially those related to human-induced impacts, could be misleading because the submitted records only capture reported cases. It was agreed that any report from the Portal clearly states that the record represents *the minimum number of occurrences and the true number could be much higher*. To ensure users are fully aware of the quality and limitations of the data a disclaimer must be read and acknowledged before reports can be generated. An intersessional review group will review field and categories within the Portal to ensure data and associated caveats are captured appropriately.

Suggested modifications to fields and categories

Several modifications to fields and categories were suggested by participants and it was agreed that intersessional groups will be established to review the current fields and categories within each section of the Portal – see below for group coordinators and Terms of Reference.

Data outputs

The WG and review groups will encourage sub-committee Conveners to consider the data output and format required for their work so suitable queries can be developed for the Portal.

Ship strike, bycatch, entanglement and other in-depth databases

The National Progress Report Portal is strictly a metadata data collection tool but in future the Scientific Committee may wish to develop more detailed, individual databases for issues such as bycatch and entanglement. The National Progress Report Portal may assist in identifying sources of data for such databases but should not be the method by which such data are collated.

Intersessional work

An intersessional correspondence group composed of the meeting participants will be established to provide advice and test modifications to the Portal. Any comments sent to the Secretariat related to the Portal can be circulated to this group. The group will be encouraged to provide rapid feedback to the Portal developer.

Rowles will explore how the Portal could capture metadata on the ingestion of marine debris as requested by the sub-committee on environmental concerns.

The groups reviewing the field and categories for each section of the online Portal (see below) will liaise with sub-committee Conveners on the design of database queries and report formats.

Terms of reference for the groups reviewing the fields and categories of the Progress Report schema

Members of the intersessional review groups are to:

- (1) review existing fields;
- (2) determine if the existing fields and categories within fields meet the needs of the Scientific Committee;
- (3) suggest edits/new headings/categories/fields to suit identified critical needs (*nb*: it is important to provide strong justification for any amendments and clearly define what is meant by the amendments suggested);
- (4) identify how primary sources can be referenced;
- (5) ensure back-compatibility with earlier Progress Reports is not affected; and
- (6) report back to the intersessional correspondence group for further feedback once their review has been completed.

Review group Conveners and current members are (others will be co-opted)

- Sightings: Bell.
- Natural marking: TBA.
- Telemetry and artificial marking: Double.
- Tissue and biological samples: Rowles.
- Direct catches of large whales: TBA.
- Bycatch and entanglement of large whales: Ritter, Mattila, Leaper, Rojas-Bracho.
- Direct catches of small cetaceans: TBA.
- Bycatch and entanglement of small cetaceans: Fortuna.
- Strandings: Santos, Ridoux, Rowles.

REFERENCES

- Donovan, G., Fortuna, C., Gedamke, J., Leaper, R., Perrin, W., Tandy, M. and Jones, J. 2011. Report of the Scientific Committee. Annex P. Online Submission of Progress Report Data and Proposed Changes to the Progress Report Template. *J. Cetacean Res. Manage. (Suppl.)* 12: 347-50.
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