

## PRESS RELEASE DAY 2

The Commission began the morning by resuming its discussions of aboriginal subsistence whaling. The initial focus was on a proposal for renewed limits at the same level as before for the hunts of Bering-Chukchi- Beaufort Seas bowhead whales (by the USA and Russian Federation), eastern North Pacific gray whales (by the Russian Federation and the USA) and western North Atlantic humpback whales (St Vincent and The Grenadines). Given the proposed move to biennial meetings, the quota block had been extended to six years. The full text of the proposal can be found in [IWC/64/10](#).

After considerable discussion focussing on the St Vincent and The Grenadines hunt, the proposal, which required a three-quarters majority as it was an amendment to the Commission's Schedule was adopted by 48 votes to 10. Voting details can be found [HERE](#).

The Commission then heard a presentation and had an initial discussion of the proposal by Denmark/Greenland for its hunts of common minke whales, fin whales, humpback whales and bowhead whales. The presentation summarised information it had provided in [IWC/64/ASW7](#) and [IWC/64/ASW8](#). Greenland's proposal for limits are given in [IWC/64/12](#). The limits are the same for common minke whales and bowhead whales. They involve an increase of 1 humpback whale and 9 fin whales per year compared to the previous block limits.

There was considerable discussion over the presentation and the proposal. The Chair noted that given the differing views expressed, he would hold the agenda item over to allow for further discussions amongst parties.

The Commission therefore moved to Item 8, the report of the Conservation Committee. The report is given as [IWC/64/Rep5](#). The Scientific Committee had reported on its progress on several of the items on the Conservation Committee's agenda.

Before discussing its agenda, the Conservation Committee had remembered the Commissioner for Belgium, Alexandre de Lichtervelde, who died in 2011. His enthusiasm and contribution to the Commission's work, especially but not exclusively related to his leadership of the Ship Strikes Working Group, was a great inspiration and he will be greatly missed by the Commission.

The Conservation Committee had an extensive agenda this year. The first item was to review progress in trying to determine the cause of the 'stinky' inedible gray whales that affects up to 10% of the Chukotkan aboriginal subsistence hunt in the Russian Federation. The cause remains unknown but the Commission supports continued work on this issue.

The next topic addressed was that of ship strikes. This has been discussed for a number of years and the Commission has established a [global database on ship strikes](#). The Scientific Committee reviewed new information on this topic from the Arabian Sea and Sri Lanka. In order to further the database it recommended the appointment of a ship strike data co-ordinator. The Commission was pleased to hear of progress on mitigation measures from a number of countries, including the introduction of traffic separation schemes by the USA and Panama. It also welcomed information on an international workshop in Spain on maritime biodiversity and maritime transport ([IWC/64/CC18](#)). The Commission also agreed to hold joint workshops with UNEP and SPAW-RAC on disentanglement and ship strikes in the wider Caribbean ([IWC/64/WKM&AW12rev1](#)).

The next topic reported by the Conservation Committee in fact related to Commission Item 10, Whalewatching.

The Scientific Committee has been examining scientific issues around whalewatching for a number of years. It continues to assess potential and actual impacts of whalewatching operations and encourages research on this. This year the Conservation Committee finalised its 5-year strategic plan which was endorsed by the Commission.

The Commission was pleased to receive additional information on the endangered Chile-Peru population of southern right whales which was also considered under the Item 9, Conservation Management Plans (CMPs). CMPs are a valuable conservation tool agreed by the Commission. This year, the Commission endorsed two draft CMPs – one on right whales in the Southwest Atlantic ([IWC/64/CC7 rev 1](#)) and one on right whales in the Southeast Pacific ([IWC/64/CC9](#)). It has previously endorsed a draft Conservation Management Plan on western North Pacific gray whales. Initial scientific work is being undertaken on a possible future CMP for humpback whales in the Arabian Sea.

The Commission was pleased to receive national reports on conservation from nine member countries (see [IWC/64/Rep5](#)).

The Commission also noted the potential and actual threats to cetaceans from marine debris. It has endorsed a joint Scientific Committee and the Conservation Committee workshop on this topic.

Finally, the Commission welcomed the information from nine research and conservation programmes that had been funded from the IWC's Voluntary Fund for Small Cetacean Conservation Research. These projects all have strong conservation and capacity building components. The Commission also greatly welcomed announcement of new donations totalling over £30,000 from Italy, Netherlands and the UK, as well as some non-governmental organisations.

The Commission then adjourned for the day.