

Report of the Conservation Committee

Friday 12 September 2014, Portoroz, Slovenia

SUMMARY OF MAIN OUTCOMES

Item	Main outcomes
3. Investigation of inedible 'stinky' whales	The reason some gray whales in Chukotka are 'stinky' is unknown. In order to make progress on this issue the Committee recommended that the item be moved to the Scientific Committee agenda.
4. Ship strikes	<p>The Conservation and Scientific Committees endorsed the recommendations of the Ship Strikes Workshop held in Panama in 2014 (IWC/65/CCRep01):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the IWC should increase its engagement with the maritime sector; • IWC member countries should place greater emphasis on publicising the Ship Strikes Database and the need to report ship strikes; • the IWC should develop a long-term working relationship with IMO • legislation on ship strikes needs to be adopted both by relevant countries and by organisations such as IMO • member countries should submit relevant information to the Scientific Committee through National Progress Reports; • the IWC should continue to fund the ship strikes database co-ordinators; • the IWC should increase its efforts to publicise the database to other intergovernmental and regional organisations, as well as all parts of the maritime sector; • the Scientific Committee should continue to provide advice and collaborate with other organisations and research groups especially with a view to further explore and build upon existing modelling approaches; and • exploration of the relationship between use of presence/absence data and presence-only data for habitat modelling <p>The Conservation Committee also endorsed the following SC recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved reporting of ship strikes, especially by Contracting Governments; • working with NOAA on the use of AIS (automatic identification system) shipping data; • action on prevention of ship strikes on the small (<100) Magellan Straits population of humpback whales and the blue whale population off Sri Lanka; • co-operation with ACCOBAMS over shipping routes near the Hellenic Trench; and • extension of the seasonal management area approach for North Atlantic right whales.
5. Southern right whale population of Chile-Peru	The Conservation Committee noted that the population continues to be endangered and that the Scientific Committee has expressed concern regarding a wind farm project near this important habitat.
6. Whale-watching	<p>The Conservation Committee noted the following concerns reported by the Scientific Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tourism involving feeding dolphins may make the boto in Brazil more susceptible to hunting; and • the continuing poor management of whalewatching on the small resident bottlenose dolphin population in Bocas del Toro, Panama. <p>The Conservation Committee endorsed the recommendations from the SWG-WW to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reconsider the recommendations from the Brisbane whalewatching operators' workshop; • host a joint workshop with the Sub-Committee on Whalewatching prior to the next Scientific Committee to complete the outline of the handbook; and • complete the Capacity Building survey and provide suggestions for a suitable pilot area. <p>Two new <i>ex officio</i> industry members, one each from the USA and Argentina will join the SWG-WW from 2014-2016.</p>
7. Whale sanctuaries	<p>Decadal review of the Southern Ocean Sanctuary:</p> <p>It was proposed that the second decadal review of the Sanctuary be undertaken under the terms of reference given in IWC/65/CC05, Attachment A; that the objectives of the Sanctuary be refined as</p>

Item	Main outcomes
	<p>outlined in Attachment B; and that the Conservation Committee provide advice to the Commission that seeks to ensure that a key intent of the review process is to strengthen the conservation objectives of the Southern Ocean Sanctuary.</p> <p>The SC prepared IWC/65/CCRep08 which outlines previous discussions and recommendations from the Committee, summarises actual and potential threats within and outside the Sanctuary and presents species summary accounts.</p> <p>The CC Chair agreed to liaise with the SC to establish an intersessional group to oversee the process for southern ocean sanctuary review.</p> <p>Proposal to establish a South Atlantic Sanctuary: Argentine presented a proposal (IWC/65/08) for the establishment of the South Atlantic Sanctuary for whales.</p> <p>The SC sought clarification on the review process, noting that details of its review process could be finalised in 2015 and a review completed at the 2016 Annual Meeting.</p>
8. Conservation Management Plans	<p>Western Pacific gray whale CMP: The SC supported the work of the IUCN Western North Pacific Gray Whale Advisory Panel. It expressed concern over the use of trap net fishing and a proposed development project in the Sakhalin area, and urged the Russian Federation to ensure the maintenance of Piltun Lagoon. The SC recommends that oil and gas activities near gray whale feeding habitat only take place after careful planning for mitigation and monitoring and a rigorous environmental impact process.</p> <p>Southwest Atlantic southern right whale CMP: The SC expressed concern and the need for action with respect to the ongoing large annual mortality of calves at Península Valdés in Argentina.</p> <p>Southeast Pacific southern right whale CMP: The SC expressed concern over a proposed windfarm development at Isla del Chiloe. Conservation advances include maximum protection to whales when a sighting is recorded.</p> <p>Update on additional CMP proposals: The recommendations of the CMP SWG in IWC/65/CCRep05 Rev1 were endorsed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Commission endorse the revised Terms of Reference for the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans (Attachment A). 2. That the Scientific and Conservation Committees endorse the CMP-related recommendations from the two IWC workshops on marine debris and cetaceans (in 2013 and 2014), including that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The issue of marine debris is incorporated and addressed in existing (and future) CMPs. - Prior to developing a threat based marine debris CMP, if appropriate, the Working Group undertakes extensive consultation with relevant intergovernmental organisations, to consider how this fits best with existing initiatives. 3. That the Scientific Committee be invited to undertake further analysis on priority candidates of small cetaceans that would benefit from the implementation of a CMP. 4. That the Working Group collaborate with relevant Contracting Governments to develop an inventory of cetacean conservation measures in place in the Indian Ocean. 5. That the Scientific Committee be invited to review the Oceania Humpback Recovery Plan from a CMP perspective and make an assessment of whether there are gaps in the Plan that can be addressed by the Commission. 6. That the Commission endorse the draft CMPs Work Plan 2014-2020 at Attachment B. 7. That the CMP Working Group meet during the intersessional period and report back to the Conservation Committee at IWC66. <p>The SC identified the following candidate populations for CMPs: based on threats: northern Indian Ocean blue whales, Mediterranean fin and sperm whales; and based on population status: Arabian Sea humpback whales, and common minke whales in coastal waters of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.</p> <p>The CC agreed that new and existing CMPS should include an assessment of marine debris but noted that priority should be given to species-based CMPs</p>

Item	Main outcomes
	Strategic planning: The working group recommended that a regional inventory for the Indian Ocean should be developed with range states.
9. Marine debris	The CC endorsed the recommendations from the Workshop (IWC/65/CCRep04) and in particular that: (1) the IWC and its Secretariat work together with the Secretariats of the other major IGOS and RMFOs relevant to this issue; and (2) the IWC Scientific Committee to explore ways of combining estimates of oceanic debris and information on cetaceans to identify priorities for mitigating and managing the impacts of marine debris on cetaceans. The Workshop endorsed the planned IWC workshop (anticipated March-April 2016) on prevention of the incidental capture of cetaceans. The CC also recommended that: the marine debris issue should be made a standing agenda item of the Scientific Committee; and that the potential for a CMP for marine debris should be explored.
10. Voluntary fund for small cetacean conservation research	Appreciation was expressed to countries and NGOs that have contributed to the Voluntary fund. A 'task team' approach was recommended by the Scientific Committee to respond to situations where urgent attention is required to protect small cetacean populations. The approach will allow the Small Cetacean Sub-committee to more swiftly evaluate a situation and provide advice and recommendations intersessionally

1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

A list of participants is given as Appendix 1.

1.1. Appointment of Chair

Lorenzo Rojas-Bracho (Mexico) was appointed Chair.

1.2. Appointment of Rapporteurs

Harriet Gillett, Andrea Cooke, Pablo Sinovas, Sarah Ferriss and Tim Inskipp were appointed as rapporteurs.

1.3. Review of documents

The list of documents is given as Appendix 2.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted unchanged, as given in Appendix 3.

3. INVESTIGATION OF INEDIBLE 'STINKY' GRAY WHALES

The Russian Federation provided an update on the incidence of 'stinky' gray whales in Chukotka. This has been an issue since the 1970s when hunters in the Chukchi Sea began to notice some whales had a chemical or medicinal smell. The meat was inedible and made some people ill if eaten. The hunters have observed that the number of 'stinky' whales is growing year on year, and recently other marine mammals and fish seemed to have the same medicinal smell, as well as some birds. By the early 2000s it was estimated that ~10% of whales were 'stinky', and each year ~2-7 are caught. Last year two were landed and so far this year a further two have been caught. Experienced hunters can tell if a whale is 'stinky' whilst at sea if they can smell the whale's blow, but this does not always identify a 'stinky' whale.

3.1. Report on Progress

The reason some whales are 'stinky' is not known. There is ongoing work on the issue at Moscow State University, where the smell has been found to be contained in the lymphatic inter-cellular liquid. The work is hampered by problems in transporting frozen tissue samples the long distance between Chukotka and Moscow, as the process seems to degrade the samples.

Russia stated that because the meat from 'stinky' whales is inedible, the hunters believe that they should not be included in the catch quotas, but should be recorded as struck and lost. Russia stated that the Commission has previously agreed to this.

3.2. Committee discussions and recommendations

Austria stated that there does not seem to have been recent progress in scientific research into this issue and suggested the issue would be better discussed in the Scientific Committee.

The Committee **recommended** that this item be moved to the Scientific Committee agenda.

4. SHIP STRIKES

4.1. Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the Scientific Committee summarised the recommendations on ship strikes from the last two Scientific Committee meetings. Further information can be found in Item 7.4 of IWC/65/Rep01(2013) and Item 7.2 of IWC/65/Rep01(2014).

The Scientific Committee expressed appreciation of the work of the two ship strike co-ordinators (Ritter and Panigada) and recommended continuation of this work. A large component of their work is to encourage the collection and organising verification of data through the IWC Global Ship Strikes Database which is important to understanding the problem and in assisting with mitigation approaches.

The Scientific Committee welcomed co-operation with the Conservation Committee's Ship Strike Working Group, endorsed the recommendations of the Panama Ship Strikes Workshop (IWC/65/CCRep01), and also recommended:

- improved reporting of ship strikes, especially by Contracting Governments;
- working with NOAA on the use of AIS (automatic identification system) shipping data;
- action on prevention of ship strikes on the small (<100) Magellan Straits population of humpback whales and the blue whale population off Sri Lanka;
- co-operation with ACCOBAMS over shipping routes near the Hellenic Trench; and
- extension of the seasonal management area approach for North Atlantic right whales.

4.2. Report from the Ship Strikes Working Group

Ship strikes workshop

Belgium summarised the Report of the Ship Strikes Workshop held in Panama in 2014 (IWC/65/CCRep01). The Workshop was attended by scientists from the Wider Caribbean region and representatives from the shipping industry as well as other local and regional organisations. The Workshop reviewed progress on the recommendations from the previous IWC Workshop on ship strikes held in Beaulieu in 2011, and reviewed the current global situation, with an emphasis on areas where there are data gaps.

Key recommendations were highlighted. The workshop considered the highest current priority for the IWC is to emphasise collection and reporting of data to the IWC Global Ship Strikes Database and assist in the development of mitigation measures. A variety of technological approaches were evaluated, but the general Workshop conclusion was that none of the solutions available at the moment are perfect or are applicable worldwide. Instead, a combination of complementary tools adapted to the characteristics of the concerned area, coupled with adequate education measures, is the best option to significantly reduce the risk of ship strikes. The Workshop agreed that measures that separate whales from vessels (or minimise co-occurrence) in space and time are the most effective, such as developing Traffic Separation Schemes (TSSs) and speed restrictions. The Workshop emphasised that the most effective method to ameliorate lethal strikes available at present is for ships to travel at reduced speed.

With respect to IMO, the Workshop recommended that the IWC builds a long-term working relationship with this body and that IWC representatives should routinely attend relevant sessions of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee, MEPC. More particularly, the Workshop recommended the submission of a 'Substantive Document' to MEPC 68 in May 2015.

Priority actions for the IWC are:

- the IWC should increase its engagement with the maritime sector;
- IWC member countries should place greater emphasis on publicising the Ship Strikes Database and the need to report ship strikes;
- member countries should submit relevant information to the Scientific Committee through National Progress Reports;
- the IWC should continue to fund the ship strikes database co-ordinators;
- the IWC should increase its efforts to publicise the database to other intergovernmental and regional organisations, as well as all parts of the maritime sector;
- the Scientific Committee should continue to provide advice and collaborate with other organisations and research groups especially with a view to further explore and build upon existing modelling approaches; and
- exploration of the relationship between use of presence/absence data and presence-only data for habitat modelling.

Ship Strikes Working Group

Belgium summarised the other work of the Ship Strikes Working Group (SSWG) reported in IWC/65/CC/Rep07.

There had been no report from this group for three years due to the sad loss of its founder, Alexandre de Lichtervelde, but the work has continued. Many of the recommendations from this group are in common with the Workshop recommendations above, for example that the IWC should develop cooperation with IMO, and that Contracting Governments should promote and make greater use of the Ship Strikes Database.

The database has now received approximately 1,200 reports of ship strikes, both current and historical. New information on ship strikes related work by Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, Italy, New Zealand, Spain (including the Canary Islands), UK and the US is summarised and also given in Voluntary Conservation Reports from several countries. Non-members including Sri Lanka and Canada have submitted information on their work on ship strikes. The IWC website is being used to increase general awareness of the Commission's work on ship strikes. The work of the ship strike coordinators was key to data gathering and populating the global IWC ship strikes database, outreach and communication, and database management.

The SSWG made several other recommendations. Legislation on ship strikes needs to be adopted both by relevant countries and by organisations such as the IMO. The group is working with several IGOs, for example The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), ACCOBAMS¹, ASCOBANS², as well as NGOs such as WWF and Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC). Two shipping guidance documents have been developed with the Scientific Committee.

Finally Belgium noted that several governments and groups have made financial contributions to the SSWG – the Netherlands, USA and SPAW-RAC jointly funded the Panama Workshop.

4.3. Committee discussions and recommendations

Several countries commended Belgium and the Chair of the SSWG, Frederic Chemay, for their valuable work on ship strikes. Belgium emphasised that it is willing to continue to take the lead on this issue in the future.

The IWC Secretariat provided a statement from the Secretariat of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS) that was relevant to the priority actions in the Panama workshop report. Following on from recent cooperative work with the IWC, CPPS will support workshops on ship strikes and entanglement in Cartagena, Colombia 1-5 December 2014, in conjunction with meetings of the Sociedad Latinoamericana de Especialistas de Mamíferos Acuáticos (SOLAMAC-SOMEMA), and have invited the IWC Secretariat to participate. CPPS have recently published the *Atlas on the Distribution, Migratory Routes, Critical Habitats and Threats for large Whales in the Eastern Pacific*, containing maps on whale distribution and habitat modelling exercises for five species³. The Commission will send a representative to these meetings if possible.

Denmark noted that the IWC has a dual mandate: management and conservation. Denmark did not originally support establishment of the Conservation Committee but commended it for its positive achievements. The recent Arctic workshop is a good example of how the IWC works well, as well as the ongoing work on entanglement.

The UK said that it continued to support the SSWG, recognised the importance of the Ship Strikes Database, and noted that the Scientific Committee's work on ship strikes should continue. It re-emphasised the recommendations for the IWC to discuss mitigation measures with other bodies. The UK noted that UK scientists have been closely involved in assessing the potential for impacts on blue whale populations in the area and that they would be fully supportive of the IWC reaching out to the Sri Lankan government to offer its assistance and support. The Scientific Committee has also contacted Sri Lanka on this matter and the Secretary of the Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Co-operative has visited the Secretariat.

The USA considered the workshops to be well-attended and the ship strikes work in the Commission to be positive. The USA supported the recommendations of the Scientific Committee and the SSWG.

Belgium mentioned the 5-year strategic plan on ship strikes, and said that work on this would continue in the SSWG. The recommendations detailed here are essential for the 5-year strategic plan. Once they have been endorsed, a timeline can be developed, bringing together the work of the Scientific Committee, ship strikes coordinators, etc. The 5-year plan will be ready for consideration at IWC/66. Austria thanked Belgium for taking the lead on the 5-year plan.

Argentina noted in its Voluntary Report (IWC/65/CC11) that since 2009, during the right whale season from June to November, a 10 knot speed limit has been imposed in the migration corridor. Research is ongoing on the southern

¹ Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Black Sea Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area

² Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas

³ The document is available at: <http://cpps.dyndns.info/cpps-docs-web/planaccion/docs2014/publicaciones/serie-estudios-regionales/SER1.pdf>

right whale population, with a programme to tag whales to log movement patterns. Two of 116 dead whales examined by the Southern Right Whale Health Monitoring Program in 2012 had evidence of ship strike trauma.

The USA added that two new IMO-approved TSS measures have been implemented in the Santa Barbara Channel to reduce ship strikes to blue whales. The USA has also developed a 'whale alert' app, which can now be used on both east and west coasts to track whale movements.

The Conservation Committee **endorsed** the recommendations of the Scientific Committee and Ship Strikes Working Group.

5. SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE POPULATION OF CHILE-PERU

This issue has been a priority since 2008.

5.1. Report of the Scientific Committee on Chile-Peru right whales

The Chair of the Scientific Committee noted that the population continues to be endangered. He was pleased to report information on the southernmost sighting of a mother and calf and documentation of reproductive behaviour near Isla del Chiloe. The Scientific Committee was expressed concern and noted the need for action regarding information received on a wind farm project near this important habitat. See also Item 8.

5.2. Update on Contracting Government Progress

Updates were given under Item 8.3.

5.3. Committee discussions and action arising

There was no discussion under this item.

6. WHALEWATCHING

In 2011 the Commission reviewed and updated the terms of reference for the Conservation Committee's Standing Working Group on Whalewatching (SWG-WW) and expanded its membership to include two members of the Scientific Committee. In 2012 the Commission adopted a Five Year Strategic Plan for Whalewatching and the WG has made progress against the objectives in this plan. Scientific aspects of whalewatching are discussed by the Scientific Committee in response to a request in Resolution 1994-14.

6.1. Report from the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the Scientific Committee introduced Item 15 of IWC/65/Rep01(2014). He noted the following main points:

With regard to assessments of the effect of whalewatching on cetaceans, there is concern that tourism involving feeding dolphins may make the boto in Brazil more susceptible to hunting.

There is continued serious concern regarding the poor management of whalewatching on the small resident bottlenose dolphin population in Bocas del Toro, Panama. With respect to for extreme situations such as Bocas del Toro, the Scientific Committee suggested that a more focussed mechanism is needed to bring recommendations to the attention of the relevant governments and the Conservation Committee besides a simple presentation of its report.

The Scientific Committee recommended consideration of the IWC guiding principles if swim-with whales is to be considered for Hervey Bay in Australia; and the monitoring of swim-with activities in Japan

With respect to the process to "Review of whalewatching in the regions near to the location of the Scientific Committee meeting", it was agreed that more effort to obtain information is required. To highlight the need for information a mechanism was developed in 2014 to improve this with advance circulation of an initial review document for comment. It was suggested that the Conservation Committee could assist in its distribution.

In 2013 the Scientific Committee reviewed the Commission's five-year strategic plan for whalewatching and in 2014 it considered a draft outline of the Plan with more details of what it should contain and where and how the Scientific Committee can complete its contribution.

In order to clarify the relationship between the Scientific Committee and the Commission over the development of the Handbook, it was agreed that the two whalewatching sub-committee convenors and the Conservation Committee chair, should work together. It was also agreed that a budget request should be developed and forwarded to the SWG-WW for submission to the Commission.

The Scientific Committee discussed emerging whalewatching industries of concern, and focused on whalewatching

in Oman particularly with respect to the humpback whale population of the Arabian Sea and local populations of *Sousa*. It welcomed an initiative to guide and regulate the industry and hold associated workshops and recommended continuation of these efforts.

Chile noted that recommendations from previous years to improve management of the whalewatching industry had not all been fully carried out and considered that these should be discussed at this meeting.

6.2. Report from the Conservation Committee's Standing Working Group on Whalewatching

The Chair of the SWG-WW presented the group's report, IWC/65/CCRep06. It has developed the outlines of a Web-based Living Handbook and will continue to develop these during the next intersessional period.

The SWG-WW has agreed a draft *Survey for Capacity Building* and recommends that, once completed, it should be distributed to an initial pilot region for feedback.

The Chair noted the document produced by the Secretariat, and attached as Appendix 2 to the report, providing thoughts on conservation objectives in the context of whalewatching and the five-year plan, and including costs for uploading the handbook on the website.

For the next period the SWG-WW will reconsider the recommendations from the Brisbane whalewatching operators' workshop and will host a joint workshop with the Sub-Committee on Whalewatching prior to the next Scientific Committee to complete the outline of the handbook. The SWG-WW will also complete the Capacity Building survey and provide suggestions for a suitable pilot area. Two new *ex officio* industry members, one each from the USA and Argentina will join the SWG-WW from 2014-2016.

6.3. Committee discussions and recommendations

Belgium supported the work of the SWG-WW and the handbook and noted that whalewatching provides income and social benefits to coastal communities throughout the world and thus contributes to development, and has wide ranging socio-economic implications. To be sustainable whalewatching should be managed wisely from the beginning and the handbook will be a valuable tool to bring expertise to local communities.

Argentina observed the SWG-WW had made great progress. It was pleased to be one of the pioneers of the whalewatching industry and looked forward to continued collaboration with the SWG-WW.

The Chair thanked the SWG-WW and the Chair of the group, Ryan Wulff, for his leadership and commitment.

The Conservation Committee **endorsed** the recommendations of the Scientific Committee and the SWG-WW.

7. WHALE SANCTUARIES

7.1. Decadal review of the Southern Ocean Sanctuary

The Southern Ocean Sanctuary was established in 1994 through paragraph 7b of the Schedule to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. This paragraph states that the Sanctuary shall be reviewed ten years after its initial adoption and at succeeding ten year intervals. The first review was undertaken in 2004 and a second review is due in 2014.

Australia presented document IWC/65/CC05, which provides background information on the establishment and first decadal review of the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary and proposes a way forward for the 2014 review.

The first review of the Sanctuary took place in 2004 and agreed that:

- Whales are not effectively protected from whaling in the Sanctuary, because such Sanctuaries only apply to commercial whaling, and because (apart from stocks that migrate to the Indian Ocean Sanctuary) whales also migrate out of the Sanctuary boundaries.
- The boundaries of the Sanctuary were appropriately established for some, but not for all, stocks.
- It was not possible to completely evaluate the effectiveness of the Sanctuary because the scientific objectives are not clear and are not associated with quantifiable performance measures.
- The Commission noted the report of the Scientific Committee and further endorsed seven recommendations of the 2004 review that would improve future review processes and help incorporate marine protected area concepts into IWC Sanctuaries. During the intervening decade since the review, no action was undertaken by the Commission to follow up on review recommendations.

This poses a number of challenges for the 2014 review as it creates uncertainty in regards to the appropriate terms of

reference and evaluation criteria that should be used. A number of the recommendations place a greater emphasis on management approaches, some of which fall outside the powers of the IWC, rather than evaluation criteria for existing sanctuaries. Furthermore, conducting the 2014 review exclusively from Resolution 2002-1 guidance would not utilise modern conservation concepts and approaches for IWC sanctuaries. Taking either of these approaches is unlikely to provide insight beyond the 2004 review's findings or strengthen the purpose of the sanctuary as a conservation measure to protect whales.

In view of this, Australia proposes that: That clear terms of reference for conducting the review be established as part of the second decadal review process; Refined objectives be developed that better articulate the purpose of the Sanctuary (as recommended in the 2004 review); and Draft terms of reference for conducting the 2014 review of the Sanctuary, and draft refined objectives to articulate the purpose of the Sanctuary, are at Attachments A and B respectively IWC/65/CC05. Australia welcomes the Committee's views on the review of the Sanctuary

7.1.1. Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the Scientific Committee drew attention to Item 18.1 of IWC/65/Rep01(2014) and highlighted that the Terms of Reference for the review process can be found in Annex R to the report. In 2014, the Scientific Committee agreed that the review process needed to be considered further at its 2015 annual meeting. Working intersessionally, the Scientific Committee prepared IWC/65/CCRep08, which outlines previous discussions and recommendations from the Committee, summarises actual and potential threats within and outside the Sanctuary and presents species summary accounts.

7.1.2. Committee discussions and recommendations

France, the USA, Belgium, New Zealand and Argentina expressed support for the proposal submitted by Australia.

The Chair noted that, as one of the recommendations was to establish a joint meeting of the Scientific and Conservation Committees, the Chair of the Conservation Committee would liaise with the Scientific Committee to establish the membership.

Australia, France, the UK and the USA expressed an interest in being members of the joint Steering Committee. The Chair of the Conservation Committee agreed to chair the joint Committee.

7.2. Proposal to establish a South Atlantic Sanctuary

7.2.1. Introduction of proposal

Argentina presented a proposal for the establishment of a South Atlantic Sanctuary for Whales, IWC/65/08, prepared by Argentina, Brazil, South Africa and Uruguay. Argentina noted that suggestions made on previous versions of the proposal had been incorporated and that the proposal addresses the various threats faced by whales in the South Atlantic. It drew attention to the Montevideo Declaration, in which several countries supported a proposal for the creation of the South Atlantic Sanctuary and noted that the proposal is in accordance with the ICRW. Argentina highlighted the benefits of the proposed Sanctuary to coastal communities in the region and as a platform to promote non-lethal uses of cetaceans such as whalewatching. Argentina further noted that the proposal has gained increased support each time it has been presented.

7.2.2. Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the Scientific Committee drew attention to Item 18.2 of IWC/65/Rep01(2014) and highlighted the Committee's request for clarification on the appropriate review process and the role of outside experts. On receipt of advice from the Commission, the Scientific Committee could finalise details of its review process at the 2015 Annual Meeting and complete its review at the 2016 Annual Meeting.

7.2.3. Committee discussions and recommendations

Uruguay, Australia, Panama, Mexico, Chile, Spain, Peru, USA, Germany, UK, France, New Zealand, Belgium, Monaco, South Africa, Sweden, Finland and Slovenia expressed their full support of the South Atlantic Sanctuary proposal, with Australia, Panama, UK, Germany and New Zealand stressing the benefits that would be derived from the establishment of the Sanctuary.

Uruguay highlighted the Montevideo Declaration (IWC/65/23) which details the countries which support the creation of a Sanctuary in the South Atlantic (including several African countries: Angola, Benin, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Congo, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, DR Congo, Senegal, South Africa, Togo). Uruguay noted that a sanctuary was approved in Uruguayan waters. Mexico noted that all of their territorial waters are already a whale sanctuary.

The Russian Federation noted that it could not support the proposal, as it did not consider that the Sanctuary is needed

when there is already a moratorium on whaling in place. Also, it did not believe that whales were threatened in the region or that the Sanctuary would benefit them. Furthermore, the proposal indicates that the Soviet Union had been involved in illegal or 'pirate' whaling in the South Atlantic. The Russian Federation considered these allegations to be based on unreliable data.

8. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANS

In 2008, the IWC adopted Conservation Management Plans as an adaptive, flexible and tailored management tool to improve the conservation outcomes for the most at risk cetacean populations.

Work is progressed through the Conservation Committee's Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans and through the Scientific Committee's work on whale stocks. The reports of the Standing Working Group meetings from 2013 and 2014 (IWC/65/CCRep03 and IWC/65/CCRep05) were discussed, in addition to the reports of the Scientific Committee (IWC/65/Rep01). Countries receiving funding for CMPs have been asked to provide an estimate of funds required to further work relating to CMPs to aid in the budgeting process for the next four years.

8.1. Western Pacific Gray Whale CMP

8.1.1. Scientific Committee update

The Chair of the Scientific Committee presented an update on the Scientific Committee's discussions on western gray whales, as found under Item 10.6 of IWC/65/Rep01(2013) and Items 9.2 and 10.6 of IWC/65/Rep01(2014).

In the light of recent information on movements of gray whales known to feed off Sakhalin Island to the eastern North Pacific (it had been thought that they only migrated down the western North Pacific past Japan, Korea and China), the Scientific Committee has begun to examine the rangewide status of gray whales throughout the whole North Pacific. A workshop was held in April 2014, and a work plan to complete the assessment has been developed. The importance of sharing data (including photographs and genetic samples) as part of this assessment was recommended.

With respect to the western North Pacific, the Scientific Committee welcomed the conservation and research efforts of Japan and encouraged its continuation. It reiterated its support for the work of the IUCN Western North Pacific Gray Whale Advisory Panel. However, the Committee expressed concern over the use of trap net fishing in the Sakhalin area and recommended that the appropriate authorities prohibit their use on these sensitive feeding and nursery grounds. The Committee also expressed serious concern over a proposed development project on the eastern shore of Sakhalin Island by Exxon Neftegaz Limited, requested additional information and urged the Russian Federation to ensure the maintenance of Piltun Lagoon.

The Scientific Committee recommends that oil and gas activities near gray whale feeding habitat only take place after careful planning for mitigation and monitoring and a rigorous environmental impact process.

8.1.2. Co-ordinator's update

The Russian Federation noted that it fully supported, and had participated in, the work of the IUCN Western North Pacific Gray Whale Advisory Panel. It highlighted a Memorandum of Cooperation that it hopes the range States will sign during the current session of IWC.

8.1.3. Committee discussions and action arising

The UK noted with concern the Critically Endangered status of the population and welcomed range states and companies continuing to engage with the Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel and the IWC Scientific Committee. However, it expressed concern regarding the development of the salmon set-net fishery in the feeding areas off Sakhalin and the proposed development of a temporary facility on the eastern shore of Sakhalin Island. It urged the relevant authorities to take all possible steps to ensure this does not result in any additional declines in the gray whale population.

8.2. Southwest Atlantic Southern Right Whale CMP

8.2.1. Scientific Committee update

The Chair of the Scientific Committee presented an update on the committee's discussions on southwest Atlantic southern right whales, as found at Item 10.6.2 of IWC/65/Rep01(2013) and Item 10.7.1.2 of IWC/65/Rep01(2014).

The Scientific Committee completed its assessment of southern right whales in 2012. It subsequently received new information in 2013 and 2014 from research efforts in the Southern Hemisphere including valuable results from long-term monitoring projects.

The Scientific Committee expressed continued concern and the need for action with respect to the ongoing large annual mortality of calves at Península Valdés in Argentina. It supported the holding of a workshop on gull harassment

and commended the work of a dedicated research group addressing mortality which will support the work of the CMP.

The Scientific Committee supports the work of the CMP working group and its coordinator.

8.2.2. Co-ordinator's update

Argentina noted that the southwest southern right whale CMP was endorsed by the IWC in 2012. Many activities have been undertaken to implement the CMP, which were presented to the Scientific Committee in 2014.

Argentina highlighted the workshop held in August 2014 on kelp gull harassment of southern right whales. The workshop reviewed new information on mortality and re-analysed previous hypotheses. It included discussion of a new hypothesis that the Valdés Peninsula population has reached its carrying capacity. The report of the workshop will be presented to the Scientific Committee in 2015. Argentina suggested that the relevant expert Dr Enrique Crespo should be invited to participate.

8.2.3. Committee discussions and action arising

The Conservation Committee **recommend** that the Scientific Committee review the new hypothesis and invite the expert to attend a future meeting.

8.3. Southeast Pacific Southern Right Whale CMP

8.3.1. Scientific Committee update

The Chair of the Scientific Committee noted that his update had been presented under Item 5.1.

8.3.2. CMP working group update

Chile summarised the activities undertaken to implement the management plan, including scientific research undertaken.

Conservation advances include a contingency plan involving the Navy to afford maximum protection to the whales when a sighting is recorded. Fishing activities are prohibited while whales are crossing the area. Chile noted that they are preparing for a workshop next year on entanglement.

8.3.3. Committee discussions and action arising

No further comments on this CMP were made.

8.4. Update on additional CMP proposals

Australia reported on the work of the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans (SWG-CMPs) as outlined in IWC/65/CCRep03 and IWC/65/CCRep05. The recommendations from the latter report are:

- That the Commission **endorse** the revised Terms of Reference for the SWG-CMPs.
- That the Scientific and Conservation Committees **endorse** the CMP-related recommendations from the two IWC workshops on marine debris and cetaceans (in 2013 and 2014), including that:- The issue of marine debris is incorporated and addressed in existing (and future) CMPs. - Prior to developing a threat based marine debris CMP, if appropriate, the Working Group undertakes extensive consultation with relevant intergovernmental organisations, to consider how this fits best with existing initiatives.
- That the Scientific Committee be **invited** to undertake further analysis on priority candidates of small cetaceans that would benefit from the implementation of a CMP.
- That the SWG-CMPs **collaborate** with relevant Contracting Governments to develop an inventory of cetacean conservation measures in place in the Indian Ocean.
- That the Scientific Committee be **invited** to review the Oceania Humpback Recovery Plan from a CMP perspective and make an assessment of whether there are gaps in the Plan that can be addressed by the Commission.
- That the Commission **endorse** the draft Conservation Management Plans Work Plan 2014-2020.
- That the SWG-CMPs **meet** during the intersessional period and report back to the Conservation Committee at IWC66.

8.4.1. Developing a list of priority species for CMPs – SWG-CMP update

The SWG-CMPs considered the priority list of cetaceans compiled by the Scientific Committee and hoped that range states of the Arabian Sea humpback whale would prepare a CMP. The SWG-CMPs also recommended that the Scientific Committee undertake further analysis on which species of small cetaceans would benefit from CMPs.

8.4.2. Development of threat-based CMPs – Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the Scientific Committee presented an update on the Scientific Committee's discussions as summarised at Item 21 of IWC/65/Rep01(2013) and Item 21 of IWC/65/Rep1(2014).

Regarding population based CMPs, the Scientific Committee had agreed for the focus in the 2013 discussion to be on large whales. The task is much larger and more complex for small cetaceans and the Scientific Committee requests guidance from the Commission as to whether or not it should develop a priority list of populations of small cetaceans for which CMPs might be of value. At the 2014 Scientific Committee meeting it was noted that the boto and franciscana might be suitable candidates.

In addition to the previous three populations for which CMPs are already in place, the Scientific Committee identified populations that could be considered for a CMP if supported by the range states. The first group is based on population status: (1) Arabian Sea humpback whales; (2) common minke whales in the coastal waters of China, Japan (especially the west coast) and Republic of Korea; (3) North Atlantic right whales; and (4) North Pacific right whales. The second group is based on knowledge of threats: (1) blue whales in the northern Indian Ocean; (2) fin whales in the Mediterranean; and (3) sperm whales in the Mediterranean. There are other candidate populations, which will be re-evaluated for priority listing as additional information becomes available.

In terms of threat-based CMPs i.e. CMPs that apply to a single threat requiring international collaboration that may affect multiple species or large habitats, the Scientific Committee recommended a review of the template and criteria to enable better consideration of options for a threat-based approach. Furthermore it agreed that the issue of marine debris is appropriate for consideration as a first threat-based CMP.

8.4.3. Committee discussions and action arising

Chile emphasised that it supports CMPs for small populations and resident stocks, even if they have only one range State.

The Chair of the SWG-CMP outlined that considerable discussion had taken place with regard to the development of a threats based CMP for marine debris. As outlined in SWG-CMP's report (IWC/65/CCRep05/Rev1) it is recommended that all future CMPs include dedicated sections on marine debris. Further discussion is required as to the merits of a threat based CMP for marine debris and it recommended that this be referred to the Scientific Committee

The Conservation Committee **agreed** that work on new and existing CMPS should include an assessment of marine debris as a potential future CMP but noted that immediate priority should be given to species-based CMPs since resources are limited.

8.5. Strategic planning

8.5.1. Regional Cetacean Conservation Measures

The SWG-CMPs **recommended** that a regional inventory for the Indian Ocean should be developed with range states.

8.5.1.1. WORKING WITH IGOS, NGOS AND OTHERS TO DEVELOP AND DELIVER CMPS

No comments were made under this item.

8.5.1.2. CMP STRATEGIC PLAN

No comments were made under this item.

8.6. Progress Report by the Standing Working Group on CMPs

The SWG-CMPs noted that, as a priority, funding should be given to actions and research priorities already identified in CMPs; these should be a priority for Scientific Committee funding.

Australia noted that the voluntary fund contained £157,947 at the end of August 2014. The funding of CMP activities must be on a solid financial basis and the work cannot rely on voluntary contributions, which may become depleted.

The Chair stated that the budget would require further discussions.

The Conservation Committee **endorsed** the recommendations of the SWG-CMPs in IWC/65/CCRep05 Rev1.

9. MARINE DEBRIS

9.1. Report from the Scientific Committee

The discussions of the Scientific Committee are reported in p. 18 of *J. Cetacean Manage.* 15 (Suppl.), 2014 and Item 12.6 of IWC/65/Rep01 (2014). The issue was addressed by a two-phase workshop approach.

The first, primarily scientific workshop had been completed. Subsequently, the Scientific Committee agreed that (1) legacy and contemporary marine debris have the potential to be persistent and lethal to cetaceans and represent a

global management challenge; and (2) entanglement in and intake of active and derelict fishing gear and other marine debris may have lethal and sub-lethal effects of cetaceans. The Scientific Committee endorsed a number of recommendations on this topic which were forwarded to the second workshop which was held recently in Honolulu, (see Item 9.2).

The Scientific Committee also recommended discussions with the *ad hoc* Progress Report group and the Secretariat with the aim of adding agreed fields for inclusion of records on marine debris in the online submissions portal.

9.2. Committee discussion and recommendations

The UK introduced the report on the second workshop (IWC/65/CCRep04) in Honolulu, which was attended by experts from 10 countries and other relevant bodies and organisations. The workshop reviewed initiatives to address marine debris practically, particularly entanglement. The issue of marine debris is the subject of several important international and national initiatives, which would benefit from improved co-ordination. Although the effects on some cetacean species are not known, that should not preclude efforts to remove existing debris and prevent future accumulation.

It was also agreed that the recorded level of cetacean entanglements were unacceptable from an animal welfare perspective.

The Workshop further agreed that the IWC's primary contribution should be to ensure that cetacean-related issues are adequately represented within existing initiatives and that its strong scientific and other expertise is made available in collaborative efforts.

The Workshop made a number of recommendations including that, as a priority, the IWC and its Secretariat work together with the Secretariats of the other major IGOS and RMFOs relevant to this issue. It called on the IWC Scientific Committee to explore ways of combining estimates of oceanic debris and information on cetaceans to identify priorities for mitigating and managing the impacts of marine debris on cetaceans. The workshop also looked at how outreach can be improved including highlighting the IWC's own work and potential in this. Finally, the Workshop endorsed the planned IWC workshop (anticipated March-April 2016) on prevention of the incidental capture of cetaceans.

The excellent progress made by the IWC's disentanglement programme was highlighted and all members and non-members of the IWC were encouraged to take advantage of the IWC disentanglement network especially in those regions where entanglement represents a threat at the population level (e.g. Western Pacific, Eastern South Atlantic, and Arabian Sea).

The Conservation Committee was urged to endorse the recommendations facilitating implementation of the actions that were identified. There was also the option to explore whether a threat-based Marine Debris Conservation Management Plan would help to consolidate and direct this work.

The USA suggested the Conservation Committee recommend that marine debris be included as a standing item on the Scientific Committee agenda in future.

Austria offered to host a small workshop to progress the issue of marine debris including of a threat-based CMP.

Belgium recommended that a CMP for marine debris be developed and encouraged the Secretariat to maintain communications with other organisations on this matter. The UK encouraged the SWG-CMPs to establish a Marine Debris sub-group intersessionally, to further consider this issue. It suggested ensuring appropriate engagement from scientists, managers, and decision makers to take forward the workshop recommendations

France referred to SC/65b/HIM02, reporting a calf and a female entangled in fishing gear, which appeared to be local artisanal Fish Aggregating Devices (FAD) that are generally constituted of a variety of second use materials, including discard nets and ropes and a variety of plastic floats. If true, this would represent the first record of large whale entanglement in this type of fishing gear. The case re-emphasises the importance of the large whale disentanglement workshops organised by IWC; the issue of entanglement in either ghost (marine debris) or active (by-catch) fishing gears for sperm whales; and the rapidly expanding FADs as a potential source of cetacean entanglement, possibly underreported in the past.

The Secretariat thanked France for allowing it to highlight this entanglement case at the recent (June 2014, Rome) meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN). It played a significant role in opening channels of communication for future engagement, working toward prevention.

Argentina presented IWC/65/WKM&AWI12 which notes the case of a southern right whale interacting with a huge plastic burlap bag in Puerto Madryn that could have been dangerous for the animal and was eventually removed. The case was extensively covered by the national media and helped raise awareness of marine plastic pollution.

The Conservation Committee **endorsed** the recommendations of the Workshop (IWC/65/CCRep04) and in addition **recommended** that the marine debris issue be made a standing agenda item of the Scientific Committee; and that work should be initiated to explore how a CMP might best be developed for marine debris.

10. PROGRESS UNDER THE VOLUNTARY FUND FOR SMALL CETACEAN CONSERVATION RESEARCH

The vice chair of the Scientific Committee made a presentation on this subject. Australia initiated the IWC Small Cetacean Conservation Research Fund with a donation of £250,000 in 2009. Subsequently, contributions have been made by France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the UK and the USA. Up to 2013 a total of 15 projects have been approved for full or partial funding, in Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Congo and Gabon, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Solomon Islands, Taiwan, North Pacific and Southeast Asia.

The Scientific Committee proposed that the evaluation process be changed so that from 2014 onwards emphasis will be given to projects that show clear potential for effective conservation outcomes in areas of particular need e.g. where a critical conservation problem is known or suspected, but is not likely to be addressed without support.

The Chair thanked all countries and NGOs that have contributed to the fund. The UK encouraged the provision of further contributions to ensure the work continues.

The UK recognised Mexico's efforts in protecting the critically endangered vaquita in particular through the establishment of the new Advisory Commission of the Presidency of Mexico for the Recovery of the vaquita (CAP). The UK urged every effort be made in combating the illegal totoaba trade and where possible support be sought within other international agreements such as CITES. Mexico summarised the status of the vaquita in their country, noting it has identified appropriate actions for further protection of the species, which would be implemented in the near future.

The UK also noted the concern raised by the Scientific Committee regarding Maui's dolphins in New Zealand, and welcomed the continued efforts of the New Zealand government to put in place protective measures to reduce the impacts of bycatch. The UK urged all involved to work together to find and implement practical solutions to this urgent problem.

The UK noted its continued opposition to the hunting of small cetaceans and welcomed the renewed efforts within the Scientific Committee to hold an IWC workshop to help define, explore, and assess the use of cetaceans in marine bushmeat. The UK noted that this was an important and emerging issue with clear lessons to be learnt from terrestrial bushmeat initiatives.

Finally, the UK noted the new approach recommended in 2014 by the Scientific Committee to respond to situations where urgent attention is required to protect small cetacean populations. It was considered that this 'task team' approach will allow the Small Cetacean Sub-committee to more swiftly evaluate a situation and provide advice and recommendations intersessionally, which is important not only because of the Commission's biennial meeting cycle, but also the imperilled nature of many populations.

The Chair noted that the suggestion for a 'task team' approach would be brought to the Plenary.

11. NATIONAL REPORTS ON CETACEAN CONSERVATION

Several countries had submitted voluntary national cetacean conservation reports: Argentina (IWC/65/CC11), Australia (IWC/65/CC04), Chile (IWC/65/CC09), France (IWC/65/CC08), Mexico (IWC/65/CC10), New Zealand (IWC/65/CC06), UK (IWC/65/CC07) and the USA (IWC/65/CC03). The Committee welcomed these reports but did not have time to discuss them in detail.

12. OTHER

Chile proposed that meetings of the Conservation Committee be held annually, noting the reduced time currently available for Committee discussions and the increasing areas of work undertaken. It suggested that in years between IWC Plenary meetings, the Committee could be held back to back with the Scientific Committee. Argentina, Panama, Uruguay, Mexico, Peru and Australia supported this proposal. Australia suggested that this proposal should be addressed by the Finance and Administration Committee so that any financial implications are included in the budget process.

The Conservation Committee **endorsed** the work undertaken by David Mattila on ship strikes and entanglement in

fishing gear and marine debris and supported the continuation of this work. Supporting interventions were made by Argentina, Australia, Belgium, the UK and the USA.

13. ADOPTION OF REPORT

The report was adopted on 15 September 2014.

Appendix 1

List of Participants

ARGENTINA

Miguel Iñíguez
Juan Pablo Paniego

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Donna Petrachenko
Yvette Blackman
Matthew Collis
William de la Mare
Pam Eiser

AUSTRIA

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BELGIUM

Frederic Chemay
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Erin Morriss
Anita Perkins
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Lisa Phelps
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DJ Schubert
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CHAIR OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Toshihide Kitakado

Secretariat

Simon Brockington
Gregory Donovan
David Mattila
Kate Wilson
Harriet Gillett
Andrea Cooke
Sarah Ferriss
Pablo Sinovas

Appendix 2

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	04 Australia: Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report	11.1
	05 International Whaling Commission (IWC) - the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary: proposed way forward for the second decadal review (Submitted by Australia)	7.1
	06 New Zealand: Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report	11.1
	07 United Kingdom: Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report	11.1
	08 France: Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report	11.1
	09 Chile: Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report	11.1
	10 Mexico: Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report	11.1
	11 Argentina: Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report	11.1
	12 Report on the International Workshop on the South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary	7
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	02 Report of the IWC Whale Watch Operators Workshop	6
	03 Report of the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans 2013	
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	08 Report of the Scientific Committee Intersessional E-mail Group on Sanctuary and Sanctuary Proposals	7
Documents from previous meetings		
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Appendix 3

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 - 8.3. South-east Pacific Southern Right Whale CMP
 - 8.3.1. Scientific Committee update
 - 8.3.2. CMP working group update
 - 8.3.3. Committee discussions and action arising
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 - 8.4.1. Developing a list of priority species for CMPs – CMP working group update
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- 8.5. Strategic planning
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- 8.6. Progress Report by the CMP Standing Working Group
- 9. MARINE DEBRIS
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