

Terms of Reference - Policy and Technical Workshops to help progress the International Whaling Commission (IWC) Welfare Action Plan - Non-hunting threats to cetacean welfare.

1. Overview

Two back to back workshops are proposed to 1) consider the state of current knowledge of welfare aspects of non-hunting threats to cetaceans and identify priority issues for management advice and further research and 2) to develop a practical framework for the handling of cetacean stranding events. These will contribute to the delivery of the following aspects of the IWC Welfare Action Plan:

- *Action 2.1.1 - Identify and agree upon priority areas of work, where welfare issues are considered most relevant. Agree a detailed Action Plan and update over time as appropriate.*
- *Action 2.1.2 - Identify and quantify (where possible) the nature and extent of threats to cetacean welfare, gaps in our understanding, and specific data needs. Where appropriate, propose possible mitigation measures for consideration by the Commission.*
- *Action 2.4.1 - Organise a mass strandings workshop to progress the development of shared best practice and guidance in responding to such events (linked with Action 7).*

2. Workshop 1 - Policy workshop (1.5 days) - Non-hunting threats to cetacean welfare: identifying priority issues and addressing knowledge gaps.

Aim

Facilitate coherent discussion of the welfare aspects of non-hunting threats to cetacean welfare within the IWC (Commission and the Scientific Committee) by synthesising the state of current knowledge and identifying priority issues on which the IWC should work to develop management advice on and/or work to address knowledge gaps in order to provide management advice at a later stage. Provide clarity on the role of the IWC and other organisations in addressing non-hunting threats to cetacean welfare and support the IWC in becoming a leading body for the provision of advice on this issue.

The workshop will achieve this by:

- Drawing on existing information to highlight the primary non-hunting threats to cetacean welfare that should be considered a priority for discussion within and outside of the IWC.
- Providing a summary of the current state of knowledge with regards the identified welfare threats (i.e. to what extent do we understand the welfare issues arising from a particular threat? How severe is a particular welfare threat, taking into account both duration and severity of suffering? Is more research needed to understand/demonstrate a particular welfare concern?)
- Identifying and prioritising key issues/concerns and fundamental gaps in our understanding
- Providing recommendations on how to address the priority issues/concerns/gaps within the IWC and by organisations and experts outside of the IWC.

Key Deliverables

A workshop report will be produced for endorsement by the Commission at its meeting in October 2016. The report will also be shared with the IWC Scientific Committee (June 2016). The report will identify the main thematic areas where non-hunting threats to cetacean welfare should be considered and provide a brief summary of current understanding of welfare implications, fundamental gaps in knowledge, and prioritised recommendations for work necessary to address identified gaps (including how to close them i.e. organisation responsible).

3. Workshop 2 - Technical Workshop (1.5 days) – Developing a practical framework for the handling of cetacean stranding events

Aim

To help support and build global capacity for effective cetacean stranding response and promotion of the IWC as a leading body to review progress, provide advice, facilitate development and application of best practice, and collate and share information on this topic. The workshop will achieve this by drawing together existing best practice, guidance, and expertise to produce a cetacean stranding response framework.

Deliverables

A practical framework for the handling of a cetacean stranding event (single and mass stranding) will be produced for consideration by the IWC Scientific Committee and adoption by the Commission at its meeting in October 2016. The framework will be derived from the review of existing best practice protocols and will seek to provide guidance to member states and response organisations in the establishment/improvement of localised stranding response protocols. It will provide a “tiered approach” in order to ensure it can be adopted/applied across countries with differing capacities.

Recommendations relating to the provision of funds, training, data collection and sharing will also be made.

Points to note

The workshop will be informed by the outputs of the June 2014 Woods Hole workshop ‘To Develop An International Marine Mammal Stranding and Entanglement Response Toolkit’ Furthermore, it will build on the outputs of the joint IWC/Society for Marine Mammalogy (SMM) Workshop on Investigations of Large Mortality Events, Mass Strandings, and International Stranding Response on 11-12 December 2015. The organisers of this workshop will be involved in the planning process to ensure duplication is avoided and that existing work is effectively built upon.

4. Logistics

Efforts will be made to hold the workshops in good time before the 2016 IWC Scientific Committee in order that the outputs can be considered at this meeting. A date in April 2016 is preferred.

Estimated attendance is for 15-25 experts from different countries. There is the potential to bring additional experts in via video conferencing to provide topic specific presentations.

South Africa has offered to host the workshops. Kruger National Park is being considered and venue quotes are being compiled. Utmost consideration will be given to ensuring the venue is cost efficient and easy for participants to access.

A minimum of 4 days will be required for the two workshops. Additional time could potentially be added to provide a practical aspect i.e. opportunity to meet park wardens to discuss welfare/euthanasia relating to the handling of large wild terrestrial animals. Time in the margins of the workshop could also be afforded for other ad-hoc IWC meetings i.e. on Conservation Management Plans. An additional day could be added to accommodate these if appropriate.

Voluntary contributions to progress intersessional work on the IWC Welfare Action Plan have been provided by the UK (£20,000) and World Animal Protection (£2000). The primary costs of the workshop will need to be met from these voluntary funds.

The UK Government Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) has secured additional ‘in-kind’ resource to assist with the practical organisation of the workshop.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The UK, in collaboration with the steering group (made up of intersessional group members and other interested parties), will:

- Draft workshop agendas.
- Provide a first draft document for discussion at the workshop which: identifies the non-hunting threats to cetacean welfare which require consideration; summarises the current state of knowledge and key gaps/issues for the identified threats and; recommendations (and priority) for addressing them within the IWC and by organisations and experts outside of the IWC.
- Provide a first draft guide for the handling of a cetacean stranding event for discussion at the workshop.
- Provide final workshop outputs for approval by workshop attendees and subsequent consideration by the IWC Scientific Committee and endorsement by the Commission.

The Secretariat will:

- Work with the UK, steering group, and workshop host to make the necessary practical arrangements, including identifying and inviting appropriate experts to present.
- Assist in the drafting of the workshop papers.
- Provide additional support at the workshop i.e. rapporteur

The steering group will:

- Assist with the planning of the workshop and the workshop papers (providing initial input, comment and review, as appropriate).
- Agree appropriate experts to invite.