

## Report of the Working Group on Whale Watching

*Submitted by the Chair of the Standing Working Group on Whalewatching (SWG-WW)*

### Background

At the 63<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the Commission adopted new terms of reference for the Working Group on Whale Watching (WGWW) and endorsed the proposed 5-Year Strategic Plan<sup>1</sup> (Strategic Plan) for whale watching. The primary role of the WGWW is to provide oversight of the delivery of actions and products under the Strategic Plan, including development and maintenance of a web-based living Handbook.

At the 65<sup>th</sup> meeting of the IWC, the Commission endorsed the following work plan for the two-year intersessional period (2014-2016):

- Host a joint WGWW-SCWW workshop immediately prior to the next Scientific Committee meeting to complete the outline of the web-based living Handbook;
- Begin to populate sections of the Handbook;
- Complete the survey referenced in action 3.1 and distribute it to an initial “pilot” region for feedback;
- Add two new *ex officio* industry members, one each from the United States and Argentina, to the WGWW from 2014-2016.

### Meetings of the WGWW

Through the 2014-2016 intersessional period, the WGWW met mostly by correspondence with an in-person workshop in San Diego, CA, in May 2015, just prior to the IWC 66a Scientific Committee (SC) meeting and a small working group meeting held in Cambridge in May 2016 to complete the outline of the Handbook.

### Joint WGWW-SCWW Workshop on the Handbook, May 2015

The overall goals of the workshop were to discuss the development of a beta version of the Online Handbook for Whale Watching and the process needed to achieve it by the next Commission meeting in 2016. The meeting was well attended and had good representation from both the WGWW and the SC’s Subcommittee on Whale Watching (SCWW).

The discussion focused on the Handbook outline developed by the SCWW and it was generally agreed that format and structure of it would be a key to its success. The introductory page will lay out some important definitions, roles and/or concepts surrounding whale watching, and then specific portals defined by end user type (e.g., industry, general public, educator, management) would guide users into the Handbook itself. From there a ‘level’ approach will generally be followed for each topic or theme: Level 1 (short, simple); Level 2 (for people who wish more detail after reading Level 1); Level 3 (for specialists who wish to explore the topic thoroughly).

It was acknowledged that the Handbook would be a living document/work in progress that would change primarily once we understood who the main users are. For the purposes of a beta version, however, there was agreement that the focus should be on a few areas where we had available information.

### Working group meeting to develop Web-based Living Handbook (Beta version), May 2016

In May, 2016, a small number of WGWW members met with the IWC Secretariat in Cambridge, UK, to develop a “beta” version of the web-based handbook. The focus was on populating a number of key areas of the handbook that could be presented to the Conservation Committee at IWC 66. The beta version was then designed to provide an overview of the proposed structure of the Handbook and include examples of the type of information it will include. The group also noted that in order to complete the Handbook, there would be additional funding and resource needs. Therefore, it was recommended that the Chair work with the Secretariat to develop a project plan and projected budget to complete the Handbook. The WGWW will be looking for feedback on the beta version and the proposed budget (Appendix 1).

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<sup>1</sup> [https://iwc.int/private/downloads/ZibAR4HShR6wiYdH9C8NRw/AC-002s3%20IWC%20Whale%20Booklet\\_HR.pdf](https://iwc.int/private/downloads/ZibAR4HShR6wiYdH9C8NRw/AC-002s3%20IWC%20Whale%20Booklet_HR.pdf)

### **IWC 5 Year Strategic Plan on Whale Watching**

The 5 year Strategic Plan covered the period 2011-2016. The WGWW recommends that the Plan continue to be the overarching strategy for the work of the WGWW and remain in place. A number of significant achievements have taken place over the last 5 years throughout implementation of the plan and there are a number of actions the WGWW will still be working on. During the next intersessional period, the WGWW propose to do a full review of the existing plan, make any necessary revisions and outline the next timeframe for the revised plan.

### **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Workshop**

The 'Building sustainable whale and dolphin watching tourism in the Indian Ocean region' workshop was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 24-26 February 2016. The workshop was developed and delivered in partnership by the Australian Government, the IWC, the IORA Secretariat, the Sri Lankan Institute of Policy Studies and Murdoch University's Cetacean Research Unit.

The Workshop recommended that the IWC consider its role in supporting the Network should it be endorsed by IORA. It proposed that the IWC could support the IORA Network and continue to implement Objective 3 of the IWC's Strategic Plan for Whale Watching by:

- Sharing information, best practice, experience and expertise with IORA Member States including through the development of the whale watching Handbook, including with case studies relevant to the IORA region.
- Providing capacity-building and training for IORA and its Member States as appropriate.
- Providing guidelines on best practice and other IWC resources to the IORA Secretariat for circulation among IORA Member States.
- Seeking to engage with the IORA Secretariat and the IORA Network through scientific and technical cooperation and, where appropriate, seeking funding, to support sustainable whale watching in the IORA region.

### **Future work of the Working Group on Whale Watching**

The WGWW will continue its role of oversight of the delivery of actions and products under the Strategic Plan, including population of the Handbook. Considering that the Commission moved to biennial meetings in 2012, the WGWW proposes the following plan of work for the next intersessional period of 2016-2018:

- Explore ways to get additional industry input and outside expertise for the relevant sections of the Handbook;
- Explore opportunities for collaboration with relevant intergovernmental organisations (e.g. CMS, CBD, SPREP etc) in the development of the Handbook
- Investigate sources of funding for the Whale Watching Handbook and submit applications to potential funding bodies with the aim of completing the Handbook by IWC67 in 2018;
- Develop revised Strategic plan with a new timeframe;
- Assist with recommendations related to the outcomes of the IORA workshop; and
- Add two new *ex officio* industry members to the WGWW from 2016-2018.

**Appendix 1: Provisional budget to complete the IWC's Whale Watching Handbook**  
*Developed by the IWC Secretariat*

**Background**

The IWC has adopted a Strategic Plan for Whale Watching to support the development of a sustainable, responsible whale watching industry. One of the primary methods for achieving the objectives of the Strategic Plan is the development of a web-based 'living' Handbook on Whale Watching. The Handbook will support whale watching operators, national and regional regulators, and the general public, to ensure whale watching is sustainable now, and as it develops into the future.

The IWC has developed a pilot version of the Whale Watching Handbook which contains a proposed structure for the website along with some example text.

**Project objective**

To complete the development of the IWC's Whale Watching Handbook by IWC67 in 2018

**About the Handbook**

The Whale Watching Handbook will be an online interactive tool to support sustainable management of the whale watching industry. Policy makers, industry and the public can easily search for and retrieve relevant information based on their management question, species or region of interest. Featuring interactive maps of whale watching around the world, the Handbook will include up-to-date information on the sustainable management of whale and dolphin species and a range of case studies to support decision making.

The Handbook will be accessible on mobile devices and will be available in English, French and Spanish.

**Estimated budget**

The proposed budget (Table 1) outlines the potential costs to develop the Whale Watching Handbook based on the vision outlined to date by the Standing Working Group on Whale Watching. The figures presented are provisional and can be updated by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair of the Standing Working Group on Whale Watching, upon further development of a project proposal to submit to grant bodies and other funders. This may include amendment to the number of species, countries and case studies that are to be included in the Handbook.

**Table 1. Estimated budget for the development of the IWC Whale Watching Handbook**

<b>Action</b>		<b>Number of days</b>	<b>Daily rate £</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
<b>Website development</b>	Design and build the online website template to improve functionality and accessibility and keep house style	10	500	5000
	Develop a database for species, country and case study information to allow for searchable portal mapping tools	12	500	6000
	Collect and use photographs and other images, including working with online image providers	2	250	500
<b>Content development</b>	Develop pages and draft text on industry support, education and training, and general species information, resources	20	250	5000
	Compile text for 25 species and enter in database	15	250	3750
	Compile distribution information and produce maps for 25 species accounts - including working with key organisations e.g. IUCN	20	250	5000
	Compile country information for 30 Contracting Governments, link to appropriate websites, and enter in database	15	250	3750
	Coordinate the development of 15 case studies and enter in the database	20	250	5000
	Work with relevant partner organisations e.g. World Tourism Organisation, industry bodies to identify relevant resources for use in the Handbook	5	250	1250
	Seek review from the IWC community including Scientific Committee and Conservation Committee experts	3	250	750
	Translate into French and Spanish	20	500	10000
	Test all pages, links and database entries are working correctly	5	250	1250
<b>Translation Testing</b>	Seek and address user feedback from a range of decision makers, industry representatives and whalewatchers and update as appropriate	5	250	1250
	Develop Networks to disseminate the Handbook and develop user base	5	250	1250
<b>Dissemination Project management</b>	Coordinate all the above activities	5	250	1250
	Report on budget expenditure	2	250	500
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>51500</b>