

Report of the Conservation Committee Planning Group (CCPG)

Friday 19 July 2019, Defra, London

1. Welcome and aims of the meeting

The Chair of the Conservation Committee, Lorenzo Rojas Bracho, sent apologies that he was unable to attend. The meeting was chaired by Rosie Carpenter (interim Vice-Chair of the Conservation Committee- see Item 9). Sarah Ferriss and Sarah Smith of the Secretariat were appointed as rapporteurs.

The Chair drew attention to the Terms of Reference (Annex A) for annual Conservation Committee Planning Group (CCPG) meetings, which were endorsed at IWC66 in 2016. This meeting would discuss progress in the intersessional period and then focus on planning and agenda setting for the biennial Conservation Committee meeting.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda (Annex B) was adopted. The list of participants is given at Annex C and a list of documents available to the meeting is at Annex D. A brief discussion on the Conservation Committee Chair and Vice-Chair positions was added to Any Other Business.

3. Conservation Committee update since IWC67

The interim Vice Chair of the Conservation Committee presented an update paper summarising intersessional progress on voluntary conservation reports, bycatch, Conservation Management Plans (CMPs), ship strikes, whale watching, marine debris and ecosystem functioning (Document IWC/Jul19/CCPG/01). Participants were invited to add any brief additional updates.

Stephanie Langerock (Belgium and Chair of Bycatch Standing Working Group) invited Contracting Governments to reach out through their networks to help with the identification of Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI) pilot and affiliated projects and to support fundraising efforts.

Miguel Iñíguez (Argentina and coordinator of the Franciscana CMP), highlighted work undertaken on the Franciscana CMP working with the governments of Uruguay and Brazil, noting the sad passing of the Commissioner for Uruguay and that discussions are proceeding with the alternate Commissioner. Iñíguez also gave an update on work on the southern right whale in Argentina, including an entanglement workshop and planned future entanglement trainings. He noted that a process has been initiated to nominate the development of a CMP for the South American river dolphin, for endorsement at IWC68 in 2020.

On whale watching, Rebecca Lent (IWC Executive Secretary) drew attention to the promotional materials developed on the Whale Watching Handbook. Adam Clarke (Australia) requested content for the next IORA newsletter which could include case studies, best practice, profiles of researchers etc.

Mark Simmonds (HSI) gave a short update on preparations for a workshop on marine debris (3-5 December 2019 in La Garriga) and welcomed nominations of participants.

4. Database of recommendations

a) Update on the database of recommendations

The Secretariat gave a presentation on the database of recommendations, noting that: the database is almost operational; IWC67 recommendations have been entered, including 2017 and 2018 Scientific Committee (SC) recommendations; that data entry for 2019 SC recommendations is ongoing; and that back-data entry is under consideration. In addition, the 2019 Scientific Committee had discussed and made recommendations on the use of the database.

The Secretariat presented some questions and options for the Conservation Committee to consider, particularly on how the database could be embedded into CC working practices and support review of implementation.

The CCPG thanked the Secretariat for its work to develop the database of recommendations and **agreed** it would be useful to receive outputs from the database at least annually. It noted that Standing Working Groups (SWGs) would find it useful to receive outputs of relevant recommendations after the Conservation Committee meeting as well as outputs of SC recommendations. SWGs could also have a role in identifying and reviewing implementing recommendations.

The CCPG discussed the addition of a field in the database (potentially some sort of traffic light system) to indicate whether or not a recommendation is high priority or urgent. The CCPG **agreed** that the Secretariat be asked to explore the potential for a field indicating level of urgency in the database.

b) Draft Conservation Committee agenda

The CCPG discussed the agenda for the next Conservation Committee in September 2020, including how the database of recommendations could be used at the meeting.

The UK, supported by Belgium, the Netherlands and the US, agreed that at the next Conservation Committee it would be useful to take an in-depth look at some topics, using an output from the database, but that further discussion was needed on how to choose those topics. The Netherlands (Svoboda) suggested that an “urgency” or “priority” field in the database would help provide some focus. Belgium highlighted a role for SWGs in indicating priority issues. The USA (Eckert) noted various ways that topics could be selected including from database outputs, SC recommendations, and the advice of the SWG Chairs.

The CCPG **agreed** that the CCPG update paper (IWC/Jul19/CCPG/01) under agenda item 3 was a useful way of giving updates on intersessional CC activities, freeing up time for in depth discussions on some topics.

The CCPG **agreed** that the Chair and Vice Chair should prepare a draft CC agenda for comment, including suggested topics for in-depth reviews.

Species of urgent concern

Simmonds (HSI) highlighted the need to consider why conservation efforts were not working overall, noting that the vaquita is a prominent example, but there are many other species with a very unfavourable status. He noted that the Small Cetaceans Task Team was attempting to address populations with an unfavourable, but not yet critical, status.

The Netherlands (Svoboda) suggested looking at an early warning mechanism to identify such populations. The Chair of the SC (Suydam) noted the need to think about why IWC recommendations are not having the desired impact and to better communicate high priority issues and actions. Lent (IWC Executive Secretary) noted that several threats to cetaceans are not in the IWC mandate to

regulate, and it is important to communicate recommendations to other bodies, and for Contracting Governments to communicate with their counterparts in other departments or ministries.

The CCPG noted the need to review of how the IWC is responding to recommendations for species of urgent concern, including to review progress with the delivery of the CC Strategic Plan. The CCPG **agreed** that the issue of small or very threatened populations should be considered at the Joint CC/SC Working Group and asked Simmonds to provide a paper to support those discussions.

c) Language used in Conservation Committee recommendations

The CCPG discussed the language used in CC recommendations to facilitate entry of recommendations to the database of recommendations. The Secretariat noted that the recent meeting of the SC had endorsed updated guidance on drafting SC recommendations. This included language to ensure recommendations should be deemed high priority, focussed and be standalone; actions that are specific and provide information on who the recommendations are aimed at; and a timeframe or a target completion date where possible.

The CCPG **agreed** that the CC should adopt guidance for drafting its recommendations, and this should be aligned with the SC approach. The CCPG **requested** that the Secretariat develop draft guidance on drafting recommendations for endorsement at the next Conservation Committee meeting.

5. Joint Conservation Committee-Scientific Committee Working Group

The Chair introduced this item, noting that it allowed for a discussion on the future work plan of the Joint CC/SC Working Group including the timing and agenda for its next meeting. Given that the joint CC-SC had focused most of its efforts to date on the development of the database of recommendations it was timely, now that the database had been established, to have this discussion on its future role.

The Chair of the SC noted that the joint CC/SC had not met in 2019 but a productive meeting was held in 2018 focused on the database of recommendations. He noted that the database should be very useful in facilitating two-way communication between the two Committees, though back-data would be important for its effectiveness. He suggested a focused meeting in 2020 to discuss use of the database and how it can support joint work on particular topics would be useful. Belgium (Langerock) agreed with the suggestions from the SC Chair.

The USA (Eckert) noted the role of the joint CC/SC in planning the intersessional work of the two committees. The Chair of the SC noted that a meeting in advance of the SC (rather than afterwards) might better achieve this. Simmonds (HSI) suggested that the small cetaceans task team could also be on the joint CC-SC agenda.

Netherlands suggested that it would be helpful to give more thought to how back data entry into the database of recommendations might be achieved and the associated time burden.

The CCPG **requested** the Secretariat to further consider back data entry for the database of recommendations and develop a short document for discussion by the joint CC-SC.

The CCPG **agreed** that there should be a plan to hold a CCPG and joint CC-SC meeting back to back with the Scientific Committee, potentially before the SC, and that timing would be further discussed with the respective Chairs.

6. Developing work areas on the CC agenda

The Chair noted that this agenda item would allow for discussion of topics included in the Conservation Committee Strategic Plan but that have not yet developed work plans.

a) Noise

Iñiguez introduced document IWC/Jul19/CCPG/06, recalling previous discussions on development of a CC work programme and establishment of an intersessional group on underwater noise. He outlined proposals for the pre-SC workshop on noise (May 2020, Cambridge) and for a second workshop, hosted by Argentina later in the year, to develop a CC strategic plan and workplan. He invited additional members to join the intersessional group.

Netherlands reported on the recent Aquatic Noise Conference in The Hague and requested to join the intersessional group.

The Secretariat highlighted IWC engagement with the IMO on underwater noise and work by Canada to get this topic on the IMO workplan.

The CCPG **welcomed** proposals for the two workshops on noise and looked forward to their reports.

b) Climate Change

Simmonds introduced document IWC/Jul19/CCPG/09, outlining previous IWC work on climate change but that this is out of date. He highlighted the need for a communication effort on what is known on impacts of climate change on cetaceans and suggested a workshop exploring public engagement as a primary theme. This could potentially include an element for the public to attend.

The Chair of the SC, the UK, Belgium, and the USA welcomed the paper and idea for this workshop. The UK highlighted that oceans were becoming much more prominent on the agenda of the UNFCCC, that UNFCCC COP 25 in December was being hailed as “the blue COP” and the UK would host UNFCCC COP 26 in 2020, which could be an opportunity to highlight work on cetaceans

As Chair of the ICSGF, Stephanie Langerock (Belgium) proposed that the project template be completed for this workshop soon and offered help in fundraising.

Carolina Cassani (Fundación Cethus) offered help in promoting the workshop outputs.

The CCPG **agreed** to establish an intersessional correspondence group convened by Mark Simmonds and with the Chair of the SC, UK and Belgium to further plan this workshop.

c) Pollution

Pierce (Spain) introduced document IWC/Jul19/CCPG/05. He recalled SC work on pollution and briefly discussed potential CC work, as outlined in the document. This could include a number of review tasks, developing proposals for mitigation and management actions and collaboration with other bodies. He asked the advice of the CCPG on how to further develop these proposals.

The Chair of the SC noted that the SC had done extensive work and agreed the need for further consideration of the CC role. He suggested including the previous and current convenors (Ailsa Hall and Patricia Holm) of the SC Environmental Concerns Committee in these discussions.

The Netherlands highlighted the benefits of close collaboration with other organisations including OSPAR who are working on an indicator on PCBs in harbor porpoises.

Simmonds recalled that papers on mitigation (e.g. by Jepson) had been written but that the SC does not focus significant attention on this, and that further work, potentially leading to advice to Contracting Governments would be welcomed. He suggested that interested parties develop a paper to the SC and that ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS be involved.

CCPG **agreed** that (Pierce and Salvatore) should bring together interested parties (including Convenors of the Environmental Concerns subcommittee) to develop a paper for the next Scientific Committee.

7. Finance

a) Intersessional correspondence group on strengthening financing

The Chair of the Intersessional Group on Strengthening IWC Finance (ICGSF) (Stephanie Langerock, Belgium) gave an update on progress in implementing the recommendations of the ICGSF. She noted that the Working Group on Operational Effectiveness (WGOE) had also discussed this at its meeting earlier in the week and that she would be working with the Chair of the Budgetary Subcommittee to explore options for fundraising across the Commission as a whole (not just for conservation) and to support the costing of actions in governance review. The WGOE will further consider whether the ICGSF continues (and its mandate if so) or should be merged with another group.

She highlighted that the ICGSF had developed a list of potential funds and donors and asked for advice from Contracting Governments on additional sources, particularly regional funding sources.

b) Voluntary Conservation Fund

Sarah Ferriss (Head of Programme Development, Secretariat) provided an update on the Voluntary Conservation Fund (VCF), noting expenditure since IWC67 and balances in the fund. Earmarked funding for two priorities (whale watching – updates to handbook and a marine debris workshop) would be mobilised in the current months.

8. Relationship with other inter-governmental organisations (Secretariat)

Sarah Smith (Head of Programme Development, Secretariat) presented an update paper on engagement with other inter-governmental organisations and proposals for next steps (IWC/Jul19/CCPG/02). She highlighted engagement with the liaison group of biodiversity related Conventions (including CMS and its daughter agreements ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS) CBD, FAO, IMO, NAMMCO and IUCN. She noted that when capacity has been limited then opportunities were sought for engagement through other members of the IWC community. The Secretariat would continue to keep Contracting Governments and observers updated on these and other activities, including by issuing Circulars when it plans to engage in a particular IGO meeting.

The Secretariat welcomed any comments, in particular on engagement with the process to develop the post-2020 biodiversity framework. At the suggestion of the Bureau, the Chair of the Commission and the Secretariat recently participated in a workshop (10-12 June, Bern, Switzerland) to input to early discussions of the new post 2020 framework and targets. Meetings contributing to further development of the post 2020 framework (leading up to its agreement at the CBD CoP in October 2020) will include several meetings of an Open Ended Working Group (August 2019 and July 2020) which will commence political negotiations, and a series of thematic consultations including one on Marine issues (November 2019). The Secretariat will consult the Chair and Bureau on opportunities to participate in these meetings. The Secretariat proposed continuing to input information on IWC work and priorities relevant to a post 2020 framework, based on existing IWC mandates. This could include highlighting key threats to cetaceans (e.g. those identified in the CC Strategic Plan) that could be addressed in the post 2020 framework and key approaches to addressing threats promoted by the IWC. The Secretariat will continue to inform Contracting Governments of its participation (or the participation of other IWC officers) in this process through Circulars and to seek any comments from Contracting Governments.

Simmonds suggested that future papers to the CCPG also include information on SC work on engaging other organisations. He also noted CMS COP would be next year in India and hoped that the IWC would have significant engagement in this.

The US (Eckert) welcomed this work, noting the importance of strong relationships with other organisations. The US might attend a NAMMCO council meeting as an observer in 2020 and can explore synergies.

Belgium (Langerock) thanked the Secretariat for this work. She emphasised the importance of the IWC engaging in the development of the post 2020 framework, expressing the view that the process to date had been appropriate and inviting Contracting Governments to give feedback to the Secretariat for future engagement. The post 2020 framework had been given more importance and profile following the IPBES report highlighting the scale and consequences of biodiversity loss, and the ambition to have an agreement for biodiversity similar to the Paris climate agreement. On this topic, the UK noted that it had initiated a review of the economics of biodiversity and it hoped to have this ready ahead of CBD COP 20.

New Zealand welcomed engagement with other organisations as work central to ongoing governance improvements and highlighted that it was important to have consistent messages to take to other IFGOs and that this (how key messages can be developed) is a question for the Commission. The UK agreed, noting that the advice of the Bureau on participation in the post 2020 workshop had taken into account the fact that national governments are still forming their positions.

9. Any other business

The Chair noted that, due to the endorsement of the CC Working Methods which included Terms for Chair and Vice Chair, that the Conservation Committee should be ready to endorse new or reconfirm existing Chair and Vice Chair at IWC68. The UK confirmed the offer from Rosie Carpenter to act as interim vice Chair until a replacement is found but that the Vice Chair position is open.

The CCPG noted the above, thanked Jamie Rendell for his wonderful service as CC Vice Chair and thanked Rosie Carpenter for agreeing to take this on an interim basis and Chairing the meeting today.

Annex A. Terms of Reference for annual Conservation Committee Planning Group meeting

The Conservation Committee Planning Group is tasked with helping set the agenda for the biennial Conservation Committee meeting and progression of the Conservation Committees work plan in the intersessional period.

It will:

- Consider the Committee's progress since the last meeting of the Committee, in particular with regards to intersessional work, and support continued effective delivery of its work.
- Identify key discussions, priorities and deliverables for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee.
- Support the Chair in preparing for Conservation Committee meetings.
- Provide an additional opportunity for discussing the strategic development of the Conservation Committee, particularly with regards it's outward facing strategic plan, strategic development of priorities, engagement with other organisations, and funding.

Membership

The group is intended to be small and focused and does not replace a full meeting of the Conservation Committee. Attendance is not restricted but may be limited by available space. It will primarily be composed of the Chair and vice-chair of the Conservation Committee, Chairs of the Committee's standing working groups, and nominees from contracted governments. Additional expertise will be invited as appropriate to the agenda by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Conservation Committee. The meeting will be Chaired by the Chair of the Conservation Committee.

Timings

The Conservation Committee planning meeting should meet at least annually and where possible in conjunction with meetings of the Scientific and/or Conservation Committee to ensure best use of resources.

Conservation Committee Planning Group

Friday 19 July 2019, 9.30 –12.30

Location: Room 808, Nobel House, Defra, SW1P 3JR.

- 1. Welcome and aims of the meeting**
 - a) Appointment of Chair [Rose Carpenter (UK) is proposed]
 - b) Appointment of Rapporteur [The Secretariat will offer to act as rapporteur]
 - c) Terms of Reference and aims of the meeting
 - d) Review of documents available to the meeting
- 2. Adoption of the agenda**
- 3. Conservation Committee update since IWC67 (Rosie Carpenter) .**
- 4. Database of recommendations**
 - a) Update on the database of recommendations
 - b) Language used in Conservation Committee recommendations
 - c) Joint Conservation Committee-Scientific Committee Working Group (Robert Suydam, USA)
- 5. Preparation for IWC68**
 - a) Draft Conservation Committee agenda
- 6. Developing work areas on the CC agenda**
 - a) Noise (Miguel Iñiguez)
 - b) Climate Change (Mark Simmonds)
 - c) Pollution (Graham Pierce)
- 7. Finance**
- 8. Relationship with other inter-governmental organisations (Secretariat)**
- 9. Any other business**

Annex C List of participants

ARGENTINA

Miguel Iñíguez

AUSTRALIA

Adam Clark

BELGIUM

Stephanie Langerock

DENMARK

Natascha Johns

NETHERLANDS

Anne Marie Svoboda

NEW ZEALAND

Jan Henderson

SPAIN

Graham Pierce

UK

Gemma Harper

Catherine Bell

Rosie Carpenter

USA

Roger Eckert

Thomas Gleason

Madison Harris

Jessica Kondel

Animal Welfare Institute

Sue Fisher

Centro de Conservacion Cetacea

Elsa Cabrera (by telephone)

Humane Society International

Mark Peter Simmonds

Fundación Cethus

Carolina Cassani

IWC Scientific Committee Chair

Robert Suydam

IWC Secretariat

Rebecca Lent

Sarah Ferriss

Sarah Smith

Marguerite Tarzia

Annex D List of documents

Document Number	Title	Authors
IWC/Jul19/CCPG/GEN/01 Rev 1	Draft Agenda Conservation Committee Planning Group 2019	IWC Secretariat
Primary papers		
IWC/Jul19/CCPG/01	CC intersessional progress since IWC67	SWG Chairs and IWC Secretariat
IWC/Jul19/CCPG/02	Secretariat progress report on co-operation with other organisations	IWC Secretariat
IWC/Jul19/CCPG/03	Update from the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Strengthening Finance	Chair of the ICGSF
IWC/Jul19/CCPG/04	Use of the IWC Database of Recommendations by the Conservation Committee	IWC Secretariat
IWC/Jul19/CCPG/05	Developing Conservation Committee work on Chemical Pollution	Salvatore Siciliano and Graham Pierce
IWC/Jul19/CCPG/06	Report of the CC Correspondence Group on Noise	Miguel Iniguez
IWC/Jul19/CCPG/07	Update on the Voluntary Conservation Fund	IWC Secretariat
IWC/Jul19/CCPG/08	Climate Change and the IWC- an update	Mark Simmonds
IWC/Jul19/CCPG/08	Example of database output of IWC67 Conservation Committee recommendations	IWC Secretariat