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Our Ref: SB/JAC/31367 8 September 2011

CIRCULAR COMMUNICATION TO MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE IWC.SC.162

Outcome and follow-up to SC/63 in Tromsø, Norway

Debra Palka, Chair of the Scientific Committee, has requested that the attached information be circulated to the Scientific Committee.

Simon Brockington
Secretary to the Commission

c.c. Intergovernmental Organisation observers to the IWC

Outcome and Follow-up to IWC/63

DEBRA PALKA

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE REPORT

The complete Report and Annexes can be found on the IWC website:

http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci com/screport.htm

Items 21-23 of our report (IWC/63/Rep 1, pp. 66-74) describe Committee priorities and initial agenda for the 2012 meeting, data processing, computing needs and funding requirements for 2011/12 intersessional time period.

E-mail correspondence groups

Annex R gives e-mail correspondence groups and their terms of reference. **Please check it** to make sure that your name is included under those Working Groups that you wish to participate in. If you wish to join any of the Working Groups, contact the Secretariat directly (secretariat@iwcoffice.org). Remember, if your e-mail address changes then let the Secretariat know. Convenors of all groups will be notified of their members and the e-mail addresses you used when you registered. The Secretariat will be creating e-mail lists for each of the groups to facilitate communication.

INTERSESSIONAL WORK

Budget

We are pleased to note that despite the financial climate, the Commission accepted our reduced budget request (Table 13 under Item 23 of the Report, p. 70) for the 2011/12 intersessional activities (as well as for Invited Participants to the 2012 Annual Meeting, SC/64). We owe special thanks to Simon Brockington, Sean Moran and Greg Donovan for their help in supporting our request.

Task table for the intersessional period

The Secretariat is working hard to pull out all of the tasks identified in the Committee's report and who should complete them. This will soon be placed on the Scientific Committee website and if at all possible, follow it!! **Please check** http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/scmain.htm periodically. We will also send out direct notification to you when it becomes available.

Intersessional workshops

The latest information on dates and venues is given below. As more information becomes available it will be sent to you and put on the website. Terms of reference, actual or likely dates, venues and steering groups can be found on the website (http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci com/workshops/workshops.htm). Each workshop will be eventually given a dedicated web page (check the website periodically).

Topic	SC report	Venue	Dates	Steering Group
WNP common minke whale Implementation	6.3.2	Tokyo, Japan	12-16 December 2011	R5
Review				
AWMP gray whale Implementation Review	8.2-8.4	La Jolla USA or	Last 2 weeks in March 2012	R10
and Greenland hunt SLA development		Copenhagen		
		Denmark		
Antarctic minke whale abundance	10.1.1	Bergen, Norway	February 2012	R12
Arabian Sea humpback whales	10.2.2.2	In the region	Not yet decided	R16
Southern Hemisphere right whales	10.5.1	Puerto Madryn,	13-16 September 2011	
		Argentina		
IWC-POWER	10.7.4	Tokyo, Japan	26-30 September 2011	R18/R19
Genetic guidelines	11.1	Cambridge, UK	Spring 2012	R21
Marine Renewable Energy Developments	12.6	Panama City, Panama	Pre-meeting	R29
and Cetaceans				
JARPN II Expert Panel (if required)	17.2.2	Tokyo, Japan	February 2012	
SORP non-lethal research techniques	19.2.6	Puerto Varas, Chile	March 2012	R37

NEXT YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING: VENUE AND DATES

The 2012 Annual Meeting of the Scientific Committee and Commission (IWC/64) is scheduled to be in Panama City, Panama within the period 11 June to 6 July 2012. The final dates for the Scientific Committee meeting will be finalised in early October. We will send out direct notification to you as soon as it becomes available as well as placing it on the website.

There will be one pre-meeting to SC/64 which will be on Marine Renewable Energy Developments and Cetaceans.

ANNUAL MEETING TIMETABLE AND SUB-GROUP STRUCTURE

At this year's Scientific Committee meeting, 14 sub-committees (including Standing Working Groups and *ad hoc* Working Groups) were established. Seven days were available for sub-committees, and up to 105 sessions for sub-committees were scheduled (three concurrent meetings during each of five work sessions per day, starting at approximately 08:30 and ending typically at 18:00). The time after 18:00 was generally used for *ad hoc* working groups, report drafting and computer analyses; though some evening sessions were also used for sub-committees that were unable to complete their agenda during day sessions. We will follow this approach again at SC/64.

As you will see from our approved work plan (see below and the IWC/63/Rep 1, Item 21, pp 66-68), the sub-committee and working group structure next year is similar to the structure used in Tromsø. The Sanctuaries working group (SAN) will only be established if there is a new formal proposal for sanctuaries submitted according to the guidelines for review by the Committee.

The sub-committees and the respective Convenors are given in the table below. We would like to welcome two new Convenors, Jackson for Stock Definition (SD) and Leaper for Bycatch (BC). In addition, we would like to thank the leaving chairs of these sub-groups, Bravington and Perrin, for their hard work and dedication over the years.

Title	Convenor (co-convenor)	
Revised Management Procedure, RMP	Bannister	
Pre-Implementation Assessment of western North Pacific common minke whales, NPM	Hammond	
Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Management Procedure, AWMP	Donovan	
Bowhead, Right and Gray Whales, BRG	Kitakado	
In-depth Assessment, IA	Walløe	
Southern Hemisphere whale stocks other than Antarctic minke and right whales, SH	Robbins	
Stock Definition, SD	Jackson	
Estimation of bycatch and other human-induced mortality, BC	Leaper	
Environmental Concerns, E	Moore (Rowles)	
Ecosystem Modeling, EM	Ferguson	
Small Cetaceans, SM	Fortuna	
Whalewatching, WW	Urban-Ramirez (Carlson)	
DNA, DNA	Pastene	
Special Permits, SP	Bjørge	

COMMITTEE PRIORITIES AND INITIAL AGENDA FOR THE 2012 MEETING IN THE LIGHT OF COMMISSION DISCUSSIONS

As in recent years and with the Committee's agreement, the Convenors met after the close of the Committee meeting and drew up an initial agenda for the 2012 meeting based on the Committee's discussions. The same criteria as in previous years were taken into account (e.g. IWC, 2004b, p. 51). The Committee had recognised that the work plan and priorities may have to be reviewed in light of decisions made by the Commission, including the budget. The initial agenda for the 2012 meeting is given below.

With the current workload for sub-groups, items of lower priority on sub-committee agendas ('other issues' below) will only be discussed if time allows. When discussing its priorities, it is again stressed that papers considering anything other than priority topics will probably not be addressed at next year's meeting. It agreed that this information should be included on the website when the information about document submission is published next year.

Revised Management Procedure (RMP)

The following issues are high priority topics:

General Issues

- (1) refine the data and assumptions on which the meta-analyses of environmental impacts on growth rate and of increase rates at low population size are based;
- (2) complete the MSYR review;
- (3) specify and run additional trials for testing amendments to the CLA;
- (4) finalise the approach for evaluating proposed amendments to the CLA;
- (5) evaluate the Norwegian proposal for amending the RMP;
- (6) modify the Norwegian 'CatchLimit' program to allow variance-covariance matrices to be specified for the abundance estimates. Compare the results from the modified program with those from the 'accurate' version of the Cooke program for some cases; and
- (7) run the full set of revised results for the North Atlantic fin whales, the Western North Pacific Bryde's whales, and the North Atlantic minke whales using the Norwegian 'CatchLimit' program and place the results on the IWC website (carry over from the 2010 work plan).

Preparations for Implementations

The Committee is concerned over the feasibility of its future timetable of work, particularly given the delay in the western North Pacific common minke whale *Implementation Review*. It has previously noted that it was not possible to undertake two major *Implementations* or *Implementation Reviews* simultaneously (IWC, 2011e, p.65). This will be taken into account when discussing Items 1, 3, 4 and 5 below next year.

- (1) prepare for the 2013 Implementation Review for the western North Pacific Bryde's whales;
- (2) examine whether and when the optimization method used when conditioning trials fails to find the actual minimum of the objective function and any implications of this for previous results of *Implementation Simulation Trials*;
- (3) review a revised research proposal for North Atlantic fin whales for the 'variant with research' to be submitted to the 2012 meeting;
- (4) prepare for the 2014 Implementation Review for North Atlantic minke whales¹;
- (5) prepare for the 2014 Implementation Review for North Atlantic fin whales; and
- (6) review a proposal for a pre-implementation assessment of North Atlantic sei whales.

Implementation for the western North Pacific minke whales

- (1) review results of intersessional workshop;
- (2) complete the work assigned to the 'First Annual Meeting' in accordance with our guidelines.

Aboriginal Whaling Management Procedure (AWMP)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) continue work on the development of *SLA*s for the Greenlandic hunts with a focus on common minke whales and fin whales;
- (2) complete the Implementation Review for eastern gray whales with a focus on the PCFG;
- (3) complete an Implementation Review for B-C-B bowhead whales;
- (4) develop guidelines for Implementations and Implementation Reviews;
- (5) provide management advice for the appropriate subsistence hunts; and
- (6) review the Greenlandic programme to provide information on conversion factors.

¹ As the original *Implementation* was undertaken in 1993 before the Requirements and Guidelines for *Implementations* were developed, a fuller *Implementation Review* is appropriate.

Bowhead, Right and Gray whales (BRG)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) review any new information on North Pacific gray whale stock structure and movements, and if necessary, provide information to the SWG of AWMP relevant to the *Implementation Review*;
- (3) review stock structure and abundance in a more comprehensive manner for Eastern Canada and West Greenland bowhead whales, if appropriate data and analyses are provided;
- (4) review report of southern right whale workshop to be held in Argentina during September 2011; and
- (5) review new information on all stocks of right whales, western North Pacific gray whales, and small stocks of bowhead whales.

In-depth assessment (IA)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) further resolve the reasons for the differences between estimates of abundance of Antarctic minke whales between the OK and (hazard-probability and trackline conditional independence) SPLINTR models, and thus provide agreed estimates of abundance at next year's meeting;
- (2) apply the statistical catch-at-age models using the full suite of available data so that the results may be considered at next year's meeting; and
- (3) continue the examination of the differences between minke whale abundance in CPII and CPIII, by further investigation of the relationship between sea ice and minke whale abundance.

Bycatch and other human-induced mortality (BC)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) collaborate with FAO on collation of relevant fisheries data and joining FIRMS;
- (2) progress in including information in National Progress Reports;
- (3) continue estimating risk and rates of bycatch and entanglement;
- (4) develop methods to estimate mortality from ship strikes;
- (5) continue development and use of the international database of ship strikes; and
- (6) review of information on other sources of mortality.

Stock Definition (SD)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) review draft guidelines for genetic analyses and DNA data quality;
- (2) review statistical and genetic issues concerning stock definition;
- (3) review TOSSM; and
- (4) develop working definitions of terminology and unit-to-conserve.

DNA (DNA)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) review genetic methods for species, stocks and individual identifications;
- (2) review results of the 'amendments' work on sequences deposited in GenBank;
- (3) review collection and archiving of tissue samples from catches and bycatches; and
- (4) develop reference databases and standards for diagnostic DNA registries

Environmental Concerns (E)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) review SOCER;
- (2) review progress on POLUTTION 2000+ Phase II;
- (3) review progress of CERD working group;
- (4) review new information on effects of anthropogenic sound on cetaceans and approaches to mitigate these effects;
- (5) review progress on recommendations from Climate Change Workshops;
- (6) update plans for an Arctic Anthropogenic Impacts on Cetaceans Workshop; and
- (7) review marine renewable energy development premeeting.

Ecosystem modelling (EM)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) explore how ecosystem models might contribute to developing scenarios for simulation testing of the RMP;
- (2) review other issues relevant to ecosystem modelling within the Committee;
- (3) review ecosystem modelling efforts undertaken outside the IWC; and
- (4) review any new information on ecosystem model skill assessment.

Southern Hemisphere whales other than Antarctic minke whales (SH)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) Southern Hemisphere humpback whales:
 - a. begin assessment of breeding stocks E and F;
 - b. review new information from the Arabian Sea;
 - c. review new information from other breeding stocks; and
- (2) review new information on Southern Hemisphere blue whales in preparation for assessment.

Small cetaceans (SM)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) status of Ziphiids in the North Pacific;
- (2) voluntary funds for small cetacean conservation research;
- (3) review progress on previous recommendations; and
- (4) review takes of small cetaceans.

Whalewatching (WW)

The following issues are high priority topics:

(1) assess the impacts of whalewatching on cetaceans;

Additional items:

- (2) review reports from Intersessional Working Groups:
 - (i) Large-Scale Whalewatching Experiment (LaWE) steering group;
 - (ii) LaWE budget development group;
 - (iii) online database for world-wide tracking of commercial whalewatching and associated data collection;
 - (iv) swim-with-whale operations; and
 - (v) in-water interactions;
- (3) review the scientific aspects of the report from the Conservation Commission;
- (4) review whalewatching in the region of the next meeting;
- (5) consider information from platforms of opportunity of potential value to the Scientific Committee;
- (6) review of whalewatching guidelines and regulations; and
- (7) review of collision risks to cetaceans from whalewatching vessels.

Scientific Permits

The following issues are high-priority topics:

- (1) review of activities under existing permits;
- (2) review of new or continuing proposals;
- (3) review results of specialist meeting to review the modified JARPN II special permit, if submitted; and
- (4) plan for final review of results from Iceland's scientific take of North Atlantic common minke whales.

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION DECISIONS

You can find a summary of the Commission's discussions via the press release on the website:

http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/meeting2011.htm

There were two resolutions passed during the 2011 Commission meeting. Resolution 2011-1 is on improving the effectiveness of operations within the International Whaling Commission and Resolution 2011-2 is on safety at sea. They are detailed at:

http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/resolutions/resolution2011.htm