

Report of the **Conservation Committee**

This document

is confidential

until 10.00 on Monday 22 June 2009

Report of the Conservation Committee

Tuesday 16th June 2009, Madeira, Portugal

The meeting was opened by Hyun-Jin Park (Korea), who welcomed the participants. A list of participants is given in Appendix 1.

1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1.1 Appointment of Chair

Hyun-Jin Park (Korea) was confirmed as Chair.

1.2 Appointment of rapporteurs

Jemma Miller (Secretariat) was appointed rapporteur.

1.3 Review of documents

A list of documents is given as Appendix 2.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda, as circulated, was adopted with the following changes (see Appendix 3).

- (1) Under item 10, Other Matters, consider document SC/61/O20 relating to the first International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (MMPAs), sponsored in part by the IWC, held in March 2009.
- (2) Under item 10, note the recent Scientific Committee workshop on climate change held in February 2009.

3. INVESTIGATION OF INEDIBLE 'STINKY' GRAY WHALES

At IWC/57, the Conservation Committee established a research programme to address the issue of inedible stinky gray whales caught by Chukotkan aboriginal subsistence hunters.

3.1 Report on progress

The USA introduced IWC/61/CC22, a paper summarising the 2008 collection activities related to stinky gray whales in Chukotka, which was co-authored by the Russian Federation. Over the last forty years, Chukotkan aboriginal subsistence hunters have occasionally noticed a peculiar smell associated with exhalations and tissues from eastern North Pacific gray whales. During the last ten years, the number of stinky whales appears to have risen and in 2008 ten stinky whales were reported, compared with two in 2007. Samples were collected from eight of the 2008 stinky whales by (1) a USA/Russian cooperative group and (2) Chukotkan researchers. Fifteen samples were taken from the eight whales and each of the samples was split into three parts. Analyses will be conducted in Russia, USA and Japan.

Blubber samples from the 1994 and 2001 hunts are currently being analysed by the US National Marine Fisheries Service for polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE), flame retardants and other classes of persistent organic pollutants. The results of these analyses will be available for IWC/62.

3.2 Committee discussions and recommendations

In response to a query by Mexico, Russia confirmed that samples were treated well; avoiding freeze-thaw cycles that could compromise sample quality. Results from their chemical analyses indicated the presence of flame retardant in the intercellular liquid and although a link has not been made between this and the stinky phenomenon, it is still of interest. The USA also confirmed samples were stored and collected in an appropriate manner and new analyses based on the presence of flame retardants and PBDE would be conducted.

The North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management will continue to support field research efforts to obtain and store samples; however funding for future analyses of samples has not been secured.

4. SHIP STRIKES

In 2005 the Conservation Committee agreed to initiate work to make progress on the issue of whales being killed or seriously injured by ship strikes, recognising that this is also a matter being addressed by the Scientific Committee. The Ship Strikes Working Group (SSWG) was established to develop more detailed proposals and to coordinate any work initiated.

New Zealand introduced its voluntary national progress report (IWC/61/CC6). Bryde's whale ship strikes are a serious problem in the Hauraki Gulf, near Auckland. It noted IWC engagement had assisted greatly in this matter in

bringing the issue to the attention of Maritime New Zealand. As a consequence stakeholders have sought to improve knowledge of Bryde's whales in the Gulf by funding aerial surveys to estimate abundance and deployment of D-tags to study their underwater behaviour and surfacing, as well as their responses to ship noise.

Australia introduced its report on ship strikes (IWC/61/CC3). There were ten incidences of ship strikes in Australian waters during 2008 and it is now using the IMO draft guidelines to improve management of ship strikes, particularly information gathering. Education of mariners has been improved and technology is being developed to detect the presence of cetaceans.

The USA summarised relevant information contained in IWC/61/CC14 and CC15, which included domestic regulations, research, monitoring, reporting and outreach efforts. Regarding ship strikes, in December 2008 speed restrictions of 10 knots or less were implemented for certain vessels along the US Atlantic Seaboard, which corresponds to an area of right whale occurrence. Also, in 2008, two vessel routing proposals were submitted to the IMO, in an attempt to further reduce right whale ship strikes. These were endorsed and became effective 1 June 2009.

Documents IWC/61/CC12rev and CC17 were summarised by Argentina. New legislation has been implemented by the Argentine Coast Guard from 1 June to 30 November each year to reduce ship strikes with southern right whales in the nursery ground of Peninsula Valdes. Vessels must use navigation corridors, reduce their speed to less than 10 knots and use the minimum speed possible while manoeuvring at harbour. Any collisions with whales must be reported. These measures were taken in direct response to the collision of a navy vessel with a southern right whale, which resulted in the death of the animal. Further legislation from the Ministry of Defence instructs the Argentine Navy to minimise activity in Golfo Nuevo and San Jose, the docks 'Almirante Storni' and 'Comandante Luis Piedrabuena' and the lighthouses 'Punta Ninfas' and 'Morro Nuevo'.

Brazil introduced its voluntary national cetacean conservation report (IWC/61/CC18). It noted information contained in it had also been presented to the Scientific Committee, particularly in relation to humpback whales. Brazil highlighted that the major breeding grounds for humpback and right whales are regularly monitored for boat traffic.

Chile introduced a document concerning a vessel collision with a large whale off Southern Chile (SC/61/BC7), which had also been discussed by the Scientific Committee this year. A cruise liner docked in Puerto Montt, Chile with a dead female sei whale on its bow and this is believed to be the first confirmed vessel strike of a large whale in Chilean waters.

Spain provided a summary of activities on cetaceans carried out by the Canary Islands Government and a review of historic data records of cetaceans and ship strikes in the Canary Islands (IWC/61/CC16). A stranding network has been in operation in the region for over a decade and cases are grouped into three classes: boat collisions; fisheries interactions; and other cases of interest. In 2008 there were 73 stranding cases of 12 different species. Four cases were of possible boat collisions and five were caused by interactions with fisheries. With regard to historical data, an average of almost five cetaceans are struck by ships each year, approximately half of these cases being sperm whales. Spain informed the committee that to build on its current work in this area the Regional Government of the Canary Islands intends to contract a study on the abundance of sperm whales and ziphids in the archipelago allowing it to put mortality levels into the context of the population as a whole.

The Committee thanked Spain for their comprehensive study on cetaceans in the Canary Islands, which is a well established whalewatching area. In response to a query by Belgium in relation to the risks that high-speed ferries pose to sperm whales, Spain noted that there has been cooperation between ferry operators and government representatives for a number of years. Information on progress on mitigation measures relating to high-speed ferries (see Item 4.2) will be presented to the joint IWC/ACCOBAMS workshop.

4.1. Report from the Ship Strikes Working Group (SSWG)

The Chair of the SSWG introduced its Fourth Progress Report to the Conservation Committee (IWC/61/CC11). Since IWC/60 there have been four main areas of progress within the SSWG: (1) collaboration with IMO; (2) the ship strikes database; (3) awareness raising; and (4) preparation for a joint IWC/ACCOBAMS workshop (see Item 4.2). Ship strikes were put on the IMO agenda by a core group of IWC members at the 57th Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) in March/April 2008. A guidance document was presented by the USA at the 58th MEPC meeting proposing *inter alia* a number of ship strike reduction measures including amendments to traffic separation schemes, creation of areas to be avoided, speed reduction, mandatory ship reporting systems, onboard observers, notices to mariners and detection systems. Italy, Spain, France and Monaco have submitted a document synthesising the knowledge of ship strikes in the Mediterranean Sea and prioritising mitigation measures. Both the IWC Secretariat and the Chair of the SSWG attend MEPC meetings.

With regard to raising awareness of the issue of ship strikes, a folder on ship strikes has been developed by Belgium and was made available to the meeting. It contains advice to help mariners avoid collisions and details of the online IWC ship strikes database. The folder can be personalised with the contact details for the ship strikes contact point or local stranding network coordinator. The SSWG Chair emphasised the importance of establishing links between such networks and those familiar with collision issues.

The global centralised ship strikes database is now available on the IWC website for data entry and by May 2009 the database had 763 records. Around 150 new records are in the process of being reviewed and validated. Future developments will include enabling web-based browsing of the database. Reporting of ship strikes by member countries is key in progressing the database. The SSWG Chair noted the importance of publicising the database and suggested: (1) sending by the SSWG Chair of a mailing with the folder (see above), including to shipping federations; (2) inclusion of the database website address in email footers; and (3) advertisement in relevant shipping publications and specialised press. The SSWG Chair also reported on his active participation in training courses for mariners in The Netherlands and France, as well as presentations at IUCN and CMS meetings, in association with Australia and the USA.

The Chair of the SSWG briefly summarised other information received. Information on new legislation to reduce ship strikes was received from Argentina and the USA and he encouraged the taking of such positive action by other countries. The SSWG has been cooperating with a number of organisations including CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS. He thanked those countries that had submitted voluntary national cetacean conservation reports containing information on ship strikes. New voluntary contributions towards the work of the SSWG were acknowledged from Belgium and France.

The Committee thanked the SSWG for its report and noted the importance and relevance of its work.

The Chair of the Scientific Committee summarised the main areas of IWC/61/Rep 1 relevant to this item. Ship strikes are on the Scientific Committee agenda because as part of the Revised Management Procedure, recommended catch limits must take into account estimates of mortality due to *inter alia* bycatch, ship strikes and other human factors.

The format and structure of an international ship strike database was agreed by the Scientific Committee in 2007 in collaboration with the Conservation Committee. The web-based data entry system is now in use, but work remains to further develop and maintain the database, clarify policies for access and interchange with national databases and develop tools and procedures for data review and validation.

The Scientific Committee is concerned by the high rate of ship strikes involving fin and sperm whales in the Mediterranean Sea and other areas and hence supported the proposed IWC/ACCOBAMS workshop on mitigation (see Item 4.2).

4.2 Committee discussions and recommendations

The Chair of the SSWG introduced IWC/61/CC5, which outlined a proposal for a joint IWC/ACCOBAMS workshop on ship strike reduction in Monaco, late September 2010. The purpose of the workshop is to bring together all stakeholders (including scientists, politicians, shipping industry, NGOs etc.) and the terms of reference are: (1) exchange, evaluate and analyse data on cetacean distribution and shipping traffic; (2) examine existing ship strike reduction methods; and (3) develop scientific and conservation recommendations and a two-year work plan. The geographical focus of the workshop will be the Mediterranean Sea and the Canary Islands due to availability of data and the high number of ship strikes in these areas. Voluntary contributions towards the workshop have been received from Belgium and Italy.

The UK expressed its appreciation for the work of the SSWG, particularly with respect to the collaboration with IMO and the development of guidance for minimising collisions. It also supported the joint IWC/ACCOBAMS workshop and noted that ASCOBANS is keen to receive the results of the workshop to assist in its ship strikes work. The UK voiced concern regarding collisions of powerboats and yachts with cetaceans and suggested working with worldwide yachting associations to gather further data on collisions.

Mexico suggested that updates in current legislations be made available to all countries to aid in developing mitigation measures and exchange of information. Mexico expressed support for the joint workshop and hoped the scope of the work could be extended beyond the Mediterranean Sea and the Canary Islands in the future.

The Committee strongly endorsed the proposal for the joint IWC/ACCOBAMS workshop and expressed appreciation for the work of the SSWG with respect to preparing for the workshop.

5. SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE POPULATION OF CHILE-PERU

Last year the Conservation Committee received reports from: (1) a workshop on the status of the southern right whale population of Chile-Peru; and (2) the Scientific Committee. The Conservation Committee noted the importance of continuing work on the status of right whales and has thus retained the item on its agenda.

Chile introduced a 'Report of Measures Taken in Chile to Protect Southern Right Whales' (IWC/61/CC19). In March 2009 the population of southern right whales was classified as 'endangered' under Chilean legislation (the maximum level possible) and in 2008 the Chile-Peru sub-population was classified as 'critically endangered' by IUCN. Due to its endangered status Chile has taken a number of measures to afford maximum protection to the population including legal measures and recording sightings. Last year all whaling operations were permanently banned and a decree declaring 43 cetacean species to be a national monument was granted. Two national sightings networks have been implemented along the Chilean coast and in 2008 seven opportunistic sightings comprising at least ten southern right whales were documented.

In July 2008 a southern right cow-calf pair was sighted. Protective measures were deployed by the Chilean navy, including prohibition of entry by any marine platform, until the whales left the bay in mid-August. Similar measures will be taken until regulations are in place for whalewatching in Chile.

New Zealand commented that it is funding a research expedition to study southern right whales in the sub-Antarctic Auckland Islands in July 2009. Australian scientists will be involved in the work, as well as a Chilean researcher. Expertise in connecting genetic samples and development of a photo-ID catalogue will be shared and it is hoped the research will facilitate development of a Chile-Peru research programme for southern right whales. New Zealand offered to provide technical advice in relation to this whenever required.

A number of countries commended the Government of Chile for taking such proactive management decisions. The Committee agreed to retain this item on the agenda next year.

6. WHALEWATCHING

In 2007 it was noted that while the Scientific Committee deals with scientific aspects of whalewatching, the Conservation Committee could usefully address aspects relating to management, including the implementation of the Scientific Committee's recommendations, socio-economic aspects and international cooperation.

6.1. Report from the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the Scientific Committee summarised the relevant parts of the Scientific Committee report (IWC/61/Rep 1). In recent years the Scientific Committee has noted increasing disturbance of cetaceans through whalewatching activities. To address this issue, a large-scale whalewatching experiment (LaWE) has been proposed to assist in describing effects of whalewatching, to improve understanding of mechanisms and to develop mitigation measures. The Scientific Committee made a number of recommendations for long-term impact assessment research and commended actions taken by the USA to protect Hawaiian spinner dolphins through establishment of control areas to facilitate long-term research.

The Scientific Committee reiterated its recommendation that in order to be effective, codes of conduct should be supported by an appropriate legal framework. It commended the Madeira Regional Government for its recent management measures and encouraged the Madeira Parliament to approve and implement proposed whalewatching regulations. A number of other recommendations relating to whalewatching were made including: (1) governments issuing whalewatching permits allocate a percentage of fees to research/enforcement programmes; (2) a review of the nature and extent of aerial platforms; and (3) right whale research and whalewatching monitoring in southern Brazil.

6.2. Committee discussions and recommendations

A number of countries including Australia, Mexico and South Africa expressed their support for the LaWE and Mexico indicated that it has an ideal site for this.

New Zealand and the UK supported the recommendation relating to proposed whalewatching regulations in Madeira and New Zealand noted the responsible manner that Madeira already conducts whalewatching.

New Zealand emphasised the importance of whalewatching to its tourism industry, economy and its indigenous people and it therefore strongly supports well managed whalewatching standards. In response to the comments of the Scientific Committee in 2007 on dolphin watching in Doubtful Sound and Fiordland, New Zealand the Department of Conservation and local operators have developed a voluntary code of conduct that promotes the best international practice by operators and monitoring suggests that this is being widely respected. Within the Pacific Islands region whalewatching has expanded dramatically in recent years and is thus an important part of the economies of these

small countries. New Zealand further stated that the attention of the Conservation Committee to whalewatching is pertinent, relevant and helpful.

The UK noted that previous recommendations by the Scientific Committee have helped governments develop policies and has led to management advice in Chile, Croatia and Australia. Future work to evaluate the inter-relationship between pressures such as noise, ship strikes and whalewatching was encouraged.

South Africa noted that it looks forward to receiving the results from the review of aerial platforms and drew attention to the value of the 'Compendium of Whalewatching Guidelines' that the Scientific Committee has been compiling for a number of years. South Africa also supported the recommendation relating to right whale research in southern Brazil. Mexico commented that the work of the Scientific Committee has aided Mexico in reviewing its whalewatching guidelines. Spain commented that although the recommendation regarding governments allocating a percentage of fees to enforcement programmes is a good one, it would be difficult to implement.

On behalf of the Conservation Committee the Chair thanked the Scientific Committee for its hard work, particularly for the extensive assessment and recommendations relating to whalewatching.

Spain introduced its paper on whalewatching in the Canary Islands (IWC/61/CC10), which gives information on (1) the evolution of whalewatching; (2) activity areas and target species; (3) regulation and management; (4) facts about the whalewatching industry; and (5) problems identified and action taken. The paper had already been discussed by the Scientific Committee when reviewing whalewatching in Portugal, the Canary Islands and the Strait of Gibraltar. A number of countries, including Belgium, Korea, Sweden and South Africa thanked Spain for its comprehensive report and noted its use in developing whalewatching management strategies.

In response to a question from Sweden regarding the slowdown in growth of the industry in recent years Spain responded that this is most likely to be due to current global economic problems, but there may be other factors involved and it is not possible to determine future trends in whalewatching demand.

Korea noted that there is currently no whalewatching industry in Korea. Feasibility studies have been conducted, particularly in the Ulsan area, to determine suitable places for whalewatching. In April this year a whalewatching vessel began to operate in the Ulsan area, but was unsuccessful due to unpredictable weather and sea conditions. Korea noted that it would need time to develop appropriate whalewatching. Korea understands conservation to mean the management of human activities to sustain healthy whale populations and that this is the function of the IWC. In this regard the effort of member nations involved in the discussions of the Future of the IWC should be acknowledged. Korea emphasised the effort it put into data collection through systematic surveys and opportunistic sightings as reported in its national Progress Report.

Chile summarised relevant information in its voluntary national cetacean conservation report (IWC/61/CC24). In 2009 three significant whalewatching-related activities occurred: (1) formation of a working group to develop a process for the regulation of whalewatching; (2) a project to ensure high quality whalewatching operations; and (3) an international seminar on responsible whalewatching. The latter item led to the creation of a Plan of Action to develop a responsible whalewatching industry.

South Africa presented IWC/61/CC9 on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa. The document reported on the intersessional activities of the Intersessional Correspondence Group (CG) on Whalewatching, which met in the Kruger National Park, South Africa earlier this year. The CG considers that it is up to governments to determine appropriate management action, with the IWC fulfilling an advisory role. The CG identified two critical areas of potential work in relation to the research and assessment needs of establishing whalewatching in countries: (1) assessment of the potential opportunity for whalewatching activity; and (2) monitoring the impacts of whalewatching activities. An important element of any future programme will be the development of frameworks to assist in the development of appropriate monitoring regimes and to prioritise areas for assessment. The CG considers the management of whalewatching activities as one of the most critical but also underdeveloped issues and is thus a key area for future work. The issues in relation to management revolve around three specific areas: (1) identifying key elements of effective management for responsible whalewatching; (2) managing whalewatching in a precautionary way when information is lacking; and (3) reviewing governance and regulatory frameworks, coupled with impact assessment.

The CG agreed that whalewatching will continue to expand and generate increasing economic and social benefits. Future work around capacity building and development could focus on: (1) what can be learnt from others; (2) what support do communities and countries want; and (3) how can countries with expertise, resources and a desire to assist be linked up to these countries.

The CG recommended a number of steps to build on the momentum that has been generated in relation to whalewatching:

- (1) note the report of the CG and endorse the proposed approach and the identified theme;
- (2) establish a Standing Working Group on Whalewatching;
- (3) task the Working Group, in consultation with the Scientific Committee, with the preparation of a five-year strategic plan for consideration at IWC/62;
- (4) support in principle an intersessional workshop to initiate the strategic plan; and
- (5) establish a small Steering Committee to oversee workshop preparations.

Brazil noted the document is particularly relevant to Latin American countries for both socio-economic and management purposes. It also noted that the issue has great potential in uniting the Commission as a whole. Australia remarked on the diversity in forms and potential for whalewatching globally, the expansion of whalewatching and thus the growing need and demand for management advice. It also noted that the Commission is uniquely positioned, via its scientific and management subsidiary bodies, to progress work in this area. Australia indicated that it would be able to provide a voluntary contribution of AU\$25K to support the intersessional workshop.

Argentina reiterated the comment of Brazil that whalewatching is very important for the economy of Latin American countries, as well as for the conservation of the whales and dolphins. In particular in Argentina, it is very important for the coastal communities of Patagonia. Since 2006, the Argentine Cooperation Agency has been developing a cooperative programme to promote responsible whale watching activities in the countries of Latin America. Since its inception, seven whalewatching workshops or related issues have been developed in Chile, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela. This programme includes capacity building and provides expertise through governmental experts and training of tour operators. For these reasons, Argentina offered to host the intersessional whalewatching workshop.

Mexico expressed its appreciation to Australia for providing financial support for the workshop in South Africa and to the counties in the CG. It thanked South Africa for hosting the workshop and presenting the report and noted that the proposed intersessional workshop will provide an excellent starting point for initiating a strategic plan and for development of the key actions detailed in the report. The framework looks beyond scientific issues, focusing on the practical needs of communities, regions and nations in developing sustainable industries.

Belgium noted two areas that are particularly difficult in the context of management of whalewatching: (1) monitoring of compliance; and (2) enforcement of regulations and suggested that intersessional work should focus on these areas.

New Zealand emphasised the need for consistency in whalewatching operations and management throughout the migratory path of highly migratory species. In this regard New Zealand drew the attention of the Committee to the first workshop for whalewatch operators in the Pacific Islands region, which was convened in Auckland in April 2008. Participants included managers, operators and scientists and voluntary guidelines were drafted for whale and dolphin watching in the region. New Zealand also noted the importance of the IWC in supporting developing countries (including non-members) in undertaking research resulting in good management.

Spain indicated that it has contributed in this area for a number of years and informed the Committee that last year a Royal Decree was adopted that focuses on whalewatching which Spain regards as a highly important issue.

Many countries thanked South Africa for its excellent presentation and the CG for producing such a comprehensive document. Further, the Committee agreed to establish a Standing Working Group on Whalewatching and the Committee fully endorsed the recommendations of IWC/61/CC9. A number of countries indicated they would be interested in participating in the workshop Steering Committee, including Australia, USA and Mexico.

7. WHALE SANCTUARIES

7.1. Report from the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the Scientific Committee confirmed that no new proposals were received under this item by the Committee this year. However, the Scientific Committee received a report from the first International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas, which was held in Hawaii, April 2009. This report was well received by the Scientific Committee and is further discussed under Item 10.

7.2. Committee discussions and recommendations

France introduced its paper describing long-term acoustic monitoring of baleen whales in the Southern and Indian Sanctuaries (IWC/61/CC7). A year-long acoustic data set recorded from a permanent hydro-acoustic station near the Crozet Islands (French Southern and Antarctic Lands) was analysed to provide the annual cycle of occurrence of

baleen whales in the area by using species specific calls. Fin whale calls were detected occasionally and only during the austral autumn-winter. Antarctic blue whale calls were very abundant, occurring year round with a peak during autumn and winter. Pygmy blue whale calls of 'Australia type' and 'Sri Lanka' were detected occasionally and only during the summer and winter. The pygmy blue 'Madagascar type' call was detected during summer to winter, with a peak during late summer/autumn. The results suggest that this sub-Antarctic area is an important feeding ground for blue whales.

The Chair of the Committee noted that the survey provided very useful information. Brazil thanked France for bringing this work to the Committee and noted its use for the sanctuaries concerned. On a separate matter, Brazil indicated that as in previous years the proposal for a South Atlantic Sanctuary is still on the Commission's agenda this year.

8. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANS

The Chair of the Scientific Committee reported that last year the Scientific Committee had agreed to introduce the concept of conservation plans. A discussion paper related to this matter will be submitted to IWC/62. This year the Scientific Committee focused on western North Pacific gray whales.

The Scientific Committee received and endorsed a report from the IUCN range wide workshop. In particular it endorsed the development of a 'Conservation Plan for Western North Pacific Gray Whales'. The core of the plan is to reduce anthropogenic mortality towards zero as soon as possible. This reiterates the view expressed by the Scientific Committee for a number of years. The recommendations of the report cover three broad areas: (1) status and monitoring; (2) threats and improved mitigation; and (3) improved information outside the feeding grounds.

Australia introduced IWC/61/CC3, which addressed Australia's views on the next steps to further develop the process of taking action to improve the conservation status of cetaceans under threat. Specifically the paper proposed a process for advancing Conservation Management Plans within the IWC.

In introducing the idea of a Conservation Management Plan framework at IWC/60, Australia indicated that Conservation Management Plans are intended to provide the Commission with an adaptive, flexible, tailored management tool which can be applied to improve conservation outcomes through targeted management of human activities. The implementation of such a framework cannot be achieved without adequate resources and positive and constructive engagement from the IWC, relevant stakeholders and range states. A three tiered approach was suggested:

- (1) immediate actions to support conservation planning activities underway for critically threatened populations;
- (2) development of conservation management plans for key species; and
- (3) establishment of a mechanism for the ongoing evaluation of development needs for Conservation Management Plans.

In relation to (1), Australia noted the high priority the Scientific Committee has given to preventing the extinction of western North Pacific gray whales. In order to immediately advance the principles of the Conservation Management Plan initiative, a substantial effort could be directed at supporting the implementation of the western North Pacific gray whale conservation plan. This work is currently under the primary control of IUCN's Western Gray Whale Action Plan panel, and Australia proposed that the Conservation Committee should seek their recommendations on how support and resources can be most effectively directed.

With regard to (2) prioritising the species, region and threats that a plan should address is complex. Effort should focus on interactions where the chances of positive conservation outcomes can be maximised.

Technical scientific advice could be distilled by the IWC Scientific Committee from the IUCN species review programmes. This would provide a species specific and regional focus. Tailored information on human activities and geo-political issues could then be sought on the highly ranked candidates for a Conservation Management Plan, with a final recommendation to the Commission coming from the Conservation Committee in consultation with the Scientific Committee.

Examples of areas where Conservation Management Plans could be beneficial include: (1) the southern right whale population that ranges the coastlines of Chile and Peru about which little is known of the threats potentially limiting its recovery; and (2) the more numerous right whales population on the Atlantic coast has recently experienced a series of serious unusual mortality events. Understanding any disease processes and the role human activity has had on them is critical to ensuring the continued secure status of this population.

Finally, a mechanism must be developed for the ongoing evaluation of development needs for Conservation Management Plans. A multi-disciplinary Steering Committee, including IWC scientists and conservation managers could span the technical requirements; input from national programmes, IUCN and other sources would be needed for a strategic evaluation process.

Acknowledging that implementation of a Conservation Management Plan framework cannot be achieved without adequate resources, Australia indicated that it would provide a voluntary contribution of AU\$0.5M to support the development and implementation of Conservation Management Plans. This will be part of an overall voluntary contribution of AU\$1.5M toward IWC conservation work. Australia encourages other countries to contribute to this work.

Many countries thanked Australia for their generous contribution, and supported the inclusion of southern right whales in a conservation plan. The Committee endorsed the formation of a small, specialist group to construct a list of candidate management plans. The membership of the group will include Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Mexico New Zealand, UK, USA and South Africa as well as representatives from the Scientific Committee. The specialist group will report back to the Committee before priorities are addressed.

9. NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORTS ON CETACEANS

9.1. Introduction of national reports

The Chair noted that several countries had submitted voluntary national cetacean conservation reports: Australia (IWC/61/CC4); New Zealand (IWC/61/CC6); Panama (IWC/61/CC8); UK (IWC/61/CC13); USA (IWC/61/CC115); Argentina (IWC/61/CC17); Brazil (IWC/61/CC15); Mexico (IWC/61/CC20); France (IWC/61/CC21); and Chile (IWC/61/CC13). Reports included information on *inter alia* legal developments, whalewatching; ship strikes, conservation management plans, bycatch and international cooperation.

9.2. Committee discussion and recommendation

Brazil highlighted that in late 2008 it declared all waters under its jurisdiction as a whale and dolphin sanctuary. The UK noted that information on a mass stranding event mentioned in its report has recently been published and is available from www.defra.gov.uk.

10 OTHER MATTERS

The UK noted that an intersessional workshop took place earlier this year in Siena to study the effects of climate change on cetaceans. The UK looked forward to receiving the report of that workshop during the Commission plenary meeting and noted a request from the workshop on the need to progress work on the consequences of climate change for small cetaceans. This was supported by the Scientific Committee; but given its workload there was inadequate time to consider this matter in any detail. The UK supported the proposal for a small intersessional workshop to be held to progress this important and pressing matter; noted that funding will be required to support the workshop and requested any countries interested in assisting in this matter or requiring further information to consult UK scientists to aid in developing the necessary plans. A report of the intersessional workshop should be available to the Committee in 2010.

The USA hosted the first International Conference on MMPAs in Hawaii, March/April 2009 (see SC/61/O20). Over 200 managers, scientists and educators were brought together from 40 countries to engage in sessions that provided a forum for sharing information on approaches to marine mammal management and conservation. The conference was supported by many nations and the USA particularly acknowledged the financial contributions from the Government of Australia and the IWC. France has agreed to host the second conference in late 2011/early 2012.

11 ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The report was adopted by correspondence on 19th June.

Appendix 1
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ARGENTINA

Miguel Iniguez

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Appendix 2

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

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	2 List of Documents	
	3 Country Report on Ship Strikes: Australia	4
	4 Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report: Australia	9
	5 Outline proposal for a joint IWC-ACCOBAMS workshop on reducing risk of collisions between vessels and cetacean	4
	6 Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report: New Zealand	9
	7 Long-term acoustic monitoring of baleen whales in the Southern and Indian Sanctuaries (submitted by France)	7
	8 Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report: Panama	9
	9 Report of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Whalewatching (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa)	6
	10 Whalewatching in the Canary Islands by Elejabeitia, C. and Urquiola, E. (submitted by Spain).	6
	11 Ship Strikes Working Group: Fourth progress report to the Conservation Committee	4.1
	12 Actions to Reduce the Threat of Ship Collisions with Southern Right Whales in Patagonia Argentina (submitted by Argentina)	4
	13 Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report – (United Kingdom)	9
	14 Update on the United States’ Actions to Reduce the Threat of Ship Collisions with Large Whales	4
	15 Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report, 2009: United States of America	9
	16 Activities on cetaceans carried out by the Canary Islands Government in 2008 and Review of Historic Data Records of Cetaceans and Ship Strike in the Canary islands (submitted by Spain).	4
	17 Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation report : Argentina	9
	18 Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report: Brazil	9
	19 Report of Measures Taken in Chile to Protect Southern Right Whales (submitted by Chile)	5
	20 Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report: Mexico	9
	21 France voluntary report to the Conservation Committee for the year 2008	9
	22 Summary of 2008 collection activities related to “stinky” gray whales in Chukotka, Russia (submitted by the United States of America and the Russian Federation)	3
	23 A Strategic Approach to the development and implementation of Conservation Management Plans (Submitted by the Government of Australia)	8
	24 Chile Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report, 2009	9
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Appendix 3
AGENDA

1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS
 - 1.1 Appointment of Chair
 - 1.2 Appointment of rapporteur(s)
 - 1.3 Review of documents
2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
3. INVESTIGATION OF INEDIBLE 'STINKY' GRAY WHALES
 - 3.1 Report on progress
 - 3.2 Committee discussions and recommendations
4. SHIP STRIKES
 - 4.1 Report from the Ship Strikes Working Group
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5. SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE POPULATION OF CHILE-PERU
6. WHALEWATCHING
 - 6.1 Report from the Scientific Committee
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7. WHALE SANCTUARIES
 - 7.1 Report from the Scientific Committee
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8. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANS
9. NATIONAL REPORTS ON CETACEAN CONSERVATION
 - 9.1 Introduction of national reports
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10. OTHER MATTERS
11. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT