

Outline proposal for a joint IWC-ACCOBAMS workshop on reducing risk of collisions between vessels and cetaceans

This outline proposal is presented as a discussion document to be considered initially by the IWC's Scientific and Conservation Committees at the forthcoming meeting in Madeira. It is anticipated that the discussions at those meetings will assist in clarifying and adding substance to the planning process. Based on those discussions, it will be the responsibility of the Steering Group to develop a final agenda, list of expected papers with timelines and list of invited participants.

1 RATIONALE

In the last couple of years, the Scientific Committee has been developing a centralised database on ship strikes with cetaceans. The ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee has agreed to participate in the process. To date, the database contains more than 700 validated records. An online version has been developed this year that has been recently accessible (since May 2009) for consultation and direct input of new data on http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/shipstrikes.htm. The objective of developing such a global database was to obtain reliable data to contribute towards an objective assessment of the extent of the problem at the population level in order to: better understand factors that contribute to ship strikes; and thus to be able to prioritise mitigation measures and regions. The purpose of the Workshop is to bring together the various stakeholders (including scientists, technicians, ship owners, regulators, etc.) that will be involved in developing and implementing successful mitigation measures.

Mitigation can be addressed through a series of approaches: technical (detection), regulatory (national and international measures, including reporting, vessel speed, shipping lanes, etc.) and informative/educational (awareness raising and crew training).

While many of the issues discussed at the workshop will be of broad application, it will be valuable to choose some areas as case studies. It is proposed to focus on the Mediterranean Sea and the Canary Islands given the amount of data and information already available for these regions.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The general terms of reference are to:

- Exchange, evaluate and analyse data on temporal and geographical distribution of cetaceans, shipping and reported collision incidents, with a view to: identifying priorities for mitigation in terms of species, populations and areas; and identifying ways to improve data collection and assignment of cause of death;
- Examine and evaluate existing mitigation approaches/regulations, identify and assess the likely efficacy of potential new ones and make recommendations for further work, including identifying mitigation measures for priority populations/areas as appropriate and methods to examine efficacy;
- Develop scientific and conservation recommendations and a two-year work plan for consideration by the IWC, ACCOBAMS, IMO and others.

3 PREREQUISITE DATA REQUIREMENTS AND ANALYSES

Tasks before the workshop:

- Collate and analyse data to elaborate geographical and temporal distribution maps for relevant species (e.g. fin whales, sperm whales, pilot whales and other small cetaceans) in the two regions;
- Collate and analyse data on vessel activity, including: shipping routes; number, type and frequency of vessels in a format compatible with that for the cetaceans;
- Collate, evaluate and analyse data on known number of ship strikes per year, per region and per species (including information on direct and indirect ways of identifying ship strikes);
- Collate information on existing mitigation measures and regulations worldwide (and, where possible, include estimation of their efficacy).

4 INTENDED OUTCOME

The report of the Workshop will, in addition to providing the analyses, review and recommendations listed under Item 2 above, develop: (1) a series of research and conservation actions that will include rationale, actions required, responsible persons/groups, timetable and work plan, and approximate budget; and (2) a two-year work plan to be considered in the framework of the collaboration between the IWC and ACCOBAMS. The report will be submitted to the IWC and ACCOBAMS and made publicly available on their websites.

5 LOGISTICAL ASPECTS

5.1 Suggested Steering Group

de Lichtervelde (co-convenor, Belgian chair of the IWC Ship strikes Working group), Grillo (co-convenor, ACCOBAMS), Asencio (Spain), Donovan (IWC Secretariat), Donoghue (New Zealand), Gallego (Luxemburg), Gidding (Australia), Leaper (IFAW), Lonsdale (United Kingdom), Panigada (Italy), Sequeira (Portugal), Silber (USA) and Hinchliffe (International Chamber of Shipping).

5.1.1 Tasks of the Steering Group

Taking into account discussions of the IWC Scientific and Conservation Committees, the Steering Group will:

- Finalise the Agenda and timetable for the Workshop;
- Identify key papers/analyses/presentations needed for the Workshop, assign them to individuals and develop a timeline for their availability – some initial suggestions are given in Appendix 1;
- Finalise the funded Invited Participants and ensure sufficiently broad stakeholder representation (including science, policy, industry, NGOs).

5.2 Suggested title for workshop

Joint IWC-ACCOBAMS workshop on reducing risk of collisions between vessels and cetaceans¹.

5.3 Format of workshop

Three-four days.

5.4 Timetable and venue for workshop

Second half of 2010, preferably in September, in Monaco and hosted by ACCOBAMS.

5.5 Estimated budget

The estimated cost of the workshop is between £8.700 and £10.700, of which £2.700 for the venue (as the premises are offered by ACCOBAMS, it would only relate to coffee breaks) and £6.000 - 8.000 for travel costs of 8 Invited Participants, assuming travel for other participants would be covered by the participating countries/organizations.

However, this does not include the possible financing related to the commissioning of technical papers prepared in advance and to be used at the workshop.

Voluntary contributions: Belgium has budgetted a €20.000 contribution² (approximately £18.000) for the 2009 IWC budget; €12.000 (approximately £10.800) was contributed by Italy in 2008. Part of that money could be used to finance the workshop.

¹ With a focus on the Mediterranean Sea and the Canary Islands.

² Provided acceptance by the Belgian finance administration.

Appendix 1
Some possible proposed papers and/or presentations

Title	Proposed lead persons
The IWC ship strikes database: lessons learned and future developments	Donovan and Leaper
Examine how the Global Register Of Migratory Species database (UNEP/CMS) can be used	Donoghue
Gather data and develop analysis methods for quantifying shipping density	UNEP/WCMC representative
Gather Mediterranean Sea and Canary Islands collisions data	Panigada (Med); Pantoja and Ritter (Western Med and Canaries)
Stranding networks: proposals to enhance their effectiveness and streamline data provisioning	Gallego, in collabor. with Rowles and Fernández
Put together available collision modelling data	Leaper, in collabor. with Evans, Panigada and Ritter
REPCET as cetaceans reporting system	Mayol
Rhode Island 2008 technology assessment workshop findings	Silber
Industry's views	Hinchliffe (International Chamber of Shipping - ICS)
The role of onboard dedicated observers	Capoulade
The impact of sailing	Ritter, in collabor. with Lonsdale
The impact of whale-watching	Asmutis-Silvia
Assessment of measures taken by IMO	IMO representative
Assessment of measures taken at national level	Tejedor and Johnson