

WELFARE ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ENTANGLEMENT OF LARGE WHALES

Submitted by the USA

BACKGROUND

The workshop proposed by Norway in 2007 was to focus on approaches to the euthanasia of large entangled whales that cannot be released alive. When the co-chairs (Norway and Australia) were developing a draft agenda for the workshop for review by the organizing committee in Santiago, Australia suggested expanding the workshop to include an overview of current methods used to mitigate the entanglement of large whales and the development of a decision matrix under which entangled whales are managed. In discussion it emerged that there are three identifiable, although interlinked aspects to this issue: (1) prevention/mitigation methods; (2) a decision matrix for dealing with entangled animals including a thorough overview of disentangling techniques; and (3) if euthanasia is decided to be the appropriate option, how best this can be achieved. The organizing committee agreed that prevention is certainly the ultimate solution to entanglement issues. It also recognized that considerable work on mitigation methods is occurring throughout the world but that as yet prevention is a goal that has not been achieved although entanglement rates have in some cases been reduced. It is a complex and large subject; while there are general aspects, it will need to be dealt with on a case specific basis (e.g. by fishing gear, geographical region, species etc.). Although it can be argued that it is logical to focus on prevention/mitigation first, the organizing committee agreed that because whales are being entangled now, and will continue to be so until/if effective prevention strategies are developed, it is important from an animal welfare perspective that items (2) and (3) above are addressed as a matter of some urgency. For a number of reasons, including the nature of the expertise required and the broad scope of issues under item (1), the organizing committee agreed, therefore, to focus initial consideration on Items (2) and (3) for this workshop. The organizing committee agreed that upon completion of the present workshop, plans should be made for a workshop focused on mitigation and prevention. At the 2008 IWC meeting, a steering group was appointed to further develop the workshop. The steering group has evaluated venues and dates, contacted persons for development of the draft papers, provided further clarification on the terms of reference for each paper, developed a provisional list of experts to participate in the meeting, developed a budget, and provided minor editing on the draft agenda. It has been agreed that the workshop will include 25-30 invited experts.

DURATION, TIMING AND VENUE FOR THE WORKSHOP

Given the broad nature of the agreed scope and the importance of having sufficient time to develop authoritative and comprehensive guidelines, the steering committee recommends that the workshop be held, in Maui, Hawaii from April 13-15, 2010. The timing of the workshop is such as to avoid peak entanglement seasons and field seasons for the experts attending the meeting. The meeting would be hosted by NOAA's Pacific Island Regional Office and the Hawaiian Island Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Office and held in the NOAA facility on Maui. This venue is recommended for the following reasons:

1. There is a suitable meeting room with the necessary space and capabilities available at no cost on the site.
2. The site is the central hub in an existing disentangling network, giving easy access to equipment and vessels for examination, and experienced disentangling staff for input if appropriate.

BUDGET

Room – No cost

Travel, lodging and per diem for 15 invited participants:

15 IPs x 4 nights x £86 per night	= £5,160
15 IPs x 5 days x £64 per day	= £4,800
15 IPs x £1,000 per airfare	= £15,000
TOTAL Travel	£24,960

Available funds:	£16,156
Approved from IWC/60	£7,000
Voluntary Contribution from the USA	£9,156

Additional Need: £8,804

Background papers:

Contract for production of survivorship analyses and papers

US contract 12,226

Draft Agenda
WORKSHOP ON WELFARE ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE
ENTANGLEMENT OF LARGE WHALES
April 13-15, 2010
Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary
Maui, Hawaii

1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

- 1.1. Appointment of Chair
- 1.2. Appointment of rapporteur(s)
- 1.3. Review of documents

2. OBJECTIVES FOR THE WORKSHOP

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. OVERVIEW OF THE ENTANGLEMENT OF LARGE WHALES

4.1. Key species involved

- Species of whales most commonly entangled
- Identification of the most critical interactions occurring (endangered species etc)

4.2. Priority regions

4.3. Types of Entanglements

- Categories/classes/types of entanglements
 - o Entanglements in floating or movable gears
 - o Entanglements in immovable or anchored gears
- Types of gears regularly causing entanglements

4.4. Damages and wounds commonly seen on entangled whales

- o Superficial wounds of minor severity?
- o More severe damages or wounds?
- o Emaciation/physical exhaustion?

4.5. National Data on Large Whale Entanglements (input from member governments)

- National reports on number of whales entangled each year, including species and locations and type of entanglement.
- National reports on entanglement release attempts, times to death and types of entanglements that have led to death.

5. OVERVIEW OF THE DISENTANGLEMENT OF LARGE WHALES.

5.1. Current/commonly used methods for disentangling whales

- Network structure
- Methodology
- Equipment
- Personnel
- Training

5.2. Risk assessments

- Risk assessments: Personnel
 - o Known and possible risks for personnel in conjunction with disentangling operations.
- Risk assessments: Whales after disentangling
 - o Methods for evaluation of the health condition of the entangled whale
 - o Types of wounds and the wound healing process in whales
- Possible scenarios after disentangling:
 - The whale survive with negligible damage to organs
 - The whale might survive, but is severely crippled
 - The whale will not survive and will die from its wounds/exhaustion/starvation

5.3. Improving Disentanglement Operations

- Information sharing and communication networks

6. EUTHANASIA OF WHALES THAT CANNOT BE DISENTANGLED OR WILL NOT SURVIVE AFTER DISENTANGLEMENT

6.1. Identification of those situations for which euthanasia should be considered or recommended

- o Whales that cannot be disentangled or will not survive after disentangling due to exhaustion or because vital organs are severely hurt or damaged.

6.2. Methods for the humane euthanasia of entangled whales

- o Types of weapons and equipment vs species of whales
- o Training of personnel

6.3. Conclusions and Recommendations

7. DEVELOPMENT OF A DECISION MATRIX FOR LARGE WHALE ENTANGLEMENTS.

The development of a decision matrix (or “decision tree”) to follow once an entangled whale is reported could be considered. This would draw on discussions under item 6 and include, for example:

- reporting mechanisms,
 - response options;
 - critical decision points;
 - decisions to intervene or monitor;
 - type of intervention – disentangling or euthanasia.
- Conclusions and Recommendations

8. DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

9. SYNTHESIS

10. OTHER BUSINESS

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR REVIEW PAPERS FOR THE WORKSHOP ON WELFARE ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ENTANGLEMENT OF LARGE WHALES

Overview of Entanglement of Large Whales

Overview of Survivorship of Large Whales (Jooke Robbins, Amy Knowlton)

- Review of data on survivorship of large whales in relation to species and gear type where possible
- Humpback and right whales in the US Atlantic Coast will be used as an example

Overview of Entanglement of Large Whales (David Mattila lead, Teri Rowles, Ed Lyman, Jamison Smith, Doug Coughran, Wayne Ledwell, Mike Meyers, Jorge Urban)

- Review the global species of large whales that are entangled in fishing gear with reference to region and gear type
- Review the nature, scale and severity of entanglement types
- Review data on health consequences, including pathology of entanglements

Overview of Disentanglement of Large Whales

Overview of the Disentanglement of Large Whales (Dave Mattila-lead, Doug Coughran, Wayne Ledwell, Ed Lyman)

- Review of current disentanglement techniques, including:
 - o Network structure (information sharing, communications and outreach)
 - o Report assessment and reliability
 - o Assessment of the severity of entanglement and welfare implications for the whale
 - o Tracking equipment
 - o Disentanglement equipment and methodologies
 - o Safety protocols and training
 - o Documentation, follow-up and review procedures
 - o Disentanglement success rates by species, region and gear types

Overview of Euthanasia of Large Whales

Euthanasia (Teri Rowles-lead, Egil Oen, Doug Coughran, Nick Gales)

- Overview of goals of euthanasia
- Mechanisms for humane euthanasia (physical and chemical)
- Equipment needed
- Risks and benefits of each method
- Human safety and training required
- Appropriateness for situations
- Carcass recovery and handling

Overview of Decision Matrices for entangled Large Whales

Development of Decision Matrix for Large Whale Entanglement (Teri Rowles-lead, Nick Gales, David Mattila, Doug Coughran)

- Review of international decision matrices for disentanglement actions, including a discussion of:
 - o Assessment of report and decision options
 - o Visual assessment of animal (entanglement type and gear type)
 - o Assessment of options based on environmental conditions and available resources
 - ☐ No action needed
 - ☐ Tag and track for later action
 - ☐ Take immediate action
- Review of data to inform decision points within the matrix

Provisional List of Participants

Disentanglement expertise:

Ed Lyman (IP-USA)
David Mattila (D-USA)
Jamison Smith (IP-USA)
Scott Landry (IP-USA)
Mike Meyers (IP-South Africa)
Doug Coughran (D-Australia)
Jorge Urban (IP-Mexico)
Wayne Ledwell (IP-Canada)
Hidero Kato (D- Japan)
Young-Roc An (D- S. Korea)

Veterinarians:

Nick Gales (D-Aus)
Paul Jepson (IP-UK)
Michael Moore (IP-USA)
Egil Oen (D-Norway)
Teri Rowles (D-USA)
Craig Harms (IP-USA)
Milton Marcondes (IP-Brazil)
Marcela Uhart (IP-Argentina)

Survivorship and Modeling:

Jooke Robbins (D-USA)
Amy Knowlton (IP-USA)
Doug DeMaster (D-USA)
Greg Donovan (IWC-Secretariat)
Arne Bjorge (Norway)