

REPORT OF THE SCOPING MEETING

FOR A WORKSHOP ON WELFARE ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE

ENTANGLEMENT OF LARGE WHALES

The scoping group met on the afternoon of Tuesday 17 June 2008 in Santiago, Chile. The list of participants is given as Annex A.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND RAPPORTEUR

Greg Donovan was appointed as Chair and Australia as rapporteur with assistance from the USA. Final report editing was carried out by the Chair. The report does not always follow the chronological order of the discussions but rather draws upon all discussions to develop conclusions under each agenda item.

2. ADOPTION OF DRAFT AGENDA (FOR THE SCOPING MEETING)

The Agenda adopted is given as Annex B. Given that this was formally a meeting of the organising committee established by the Commission last year (Australia, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, US), it was agreed that while the meeting would be open, only members of the organising committee would participate actively.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE WORKSHOP

The issue of welfare issues associated with the entanglement of large whales that cannot be released alive was raised by Norway at last year's meeting of the Working Group on Whale Killing Methods and Associated Welfare Issues. In the Commission, Norway suggested that approaches to the euthanasia of entangled whales would benefit from more in-depth discussions and recommended that a one-day workshop be held in association with IWC/60.

At the March 2008 Intersessional Meeting on the Future of IWC, revisions were made to the schedule of meetings at IWC/60 to allow sufficient time for follow-up discussions to the March meeting. As a result, it was agreed to replace the planned 1-day workshop on welfare issues associated with entangled/entrapped cetaceans with this half-day scoping meeting of the workshop organising committee.

4. SCOPE, TITLE AND OUTPUT OF THE WORKSHOP

As indicated above, the workshop proposed by Norway last year 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 organising 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. It was agreed that discussion of the scope of the workshop was a key task for this scoping meeting.

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 disentanglement techniques; and (3) if euthanasia is decided to be the appropriate option, how best this can be achieved.

The organising committee agreed that prevention is certainly the ultimate solution to entanglement issues. It also recognised 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 organising 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 organising committee agreed, therefore, to focus initial consideration on Items (2) and (3) for this workshop. There was a valuable discussion as to whether these could best be addressed separately or together. The organising committee agreed

that given the inter-relationship between these in providing advice on how to deal with entangled whales, it was appropriate to discuss them together. In doing so it recognised that this was a large and ambitious task. This is considered further in the discussions related to timing of the workshop. Although there are other scenarios where similar advice may be required (e.g. ice entrapments), the organising committee agree that the focus should be restricted to entanglements in fishing gear and marine debris.

In terms of the output from the workshop, it was agreed that the primary output should be a report that lays out guidelines for dealing with entangled whales. Key components of this will be the development of a decision matrix leading to the most appropriate action to be taken and, if the decision is taken that euthanasia is the most appropriate course of action in a particular case, the best methods to achieve this.

The organising committee agreed that upon completion of the present workshop, plans should be made for a workshop focussed on mitigation and prevention.

5. REVIEW OF DRAFT AGENDA FOR THE WORKSHOP

The organising committee had before it a preliminary draft agenda for consideration. As a result of its discussions under Item 4 on the scope of the workshop, it agreed a revised draft agenda and this is given as Annex C.

Given the ambitious nature of the workshop, the organising committee agreed that it would only be feasible for it to reach its goals, if a number of review papers were available, well in advance of the workshop. Detailed terms of reference are given in Annex D.

The review papers are:

- Overview of Survivorship of Large Whales (Jooke Robbins, Amy Knowlton);
- Overview of Entanglement of Large Whales (Teri Rowles: co-ordinator);
- Overview of the Disentanglement of Large Whales (Dave Matilla, Doug Coughran);
- Euthanasia (Egil Øen, Teri Rowles);
- Overview of Development of Decision Matrix for Large Whale Entanglement (Nick Gales, Terry Rowles)

The organising committee was very grateful to the governments of the USA, Australia and Norway for agreeing to undertake this work.

6. 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 organising committee agreed that the workshop would require 3-4 days. With respect to timing the workshop developed two options for the Commission to consider:

- 3-4 days during the period immediately before the Commission meeting in Madeira;
- 3-4 days in the intersessional period before or after the Madeira meeting

At this stage, the organising committee did not nominate a preference. However they stress the importance of allowing sufficient time for the review papers to be developed. This is crucial to the success of the workshop. They also stressed the importance of providing guidelines in a timely manner on this important issue, but recognised that speed should not be the primary factor, it is better to hold a workshop slightly later when all the preparatory work has been satisfactorily completed than to hold one prematurely that does not meet its goals.

In terms of venue, clearly if the first option is Madeira. The Secretariat is investigating the possibility of this; it can possibly be arranged. For the second option, it was considered that it would be possible to find a host that would offer a venue and facilities for no cost.

7. PARTICIPANTS TO THE WORKSHOP

The organising committee agreed that this should be an expert workshop only. To be successful it was agreed that if possible the workshop should be no more than 25-30 people. Participants should include experts on the survival outcomes of entangled and released whales; veterinarians with prognosis and euthanasia experience; practical disentanglement specialists and decision makers. It was agreed that in addition to experts provided by governments, provision should be made in the budget for some 4-6 Invited Participants. Depending on the venue and the location of the experts, this would require some £4-6,000

8. WORKSHOP CHAIR

The organising committee agreed that the Chair of the Scientific Committee would be an appropriate candidate. It noted that if the meeting was held immediately prior to the Commission meeting then this could be problematic in terms of his other responsibilities.

9. DOCUMENTS AND OTHER PREPARATIONS REQUIRED

This is covered under the requested overview documents discussed under Item 5.

10. BUDGET

Given the discussion above, the primary funding would be related to the participation of 4-6 invited experts at an estimated cost of £4-6,000. If the Workshop is held at a time that precludes the presence of the Chair of the Scientific Committee, then additional funding may be required for a Chair as was the case at previous workshops.

11. OTHER

The Chair thanked the members for extremely productive and constructive discussions. The stage was set for a very valuable workshop. The committee thanked the Chair for guiding them through the discussions.

Annex A **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Australia

Nick Gales
Milena Rafic
Lesley Gidding

Austria

Michael Stachowitsch

Denmark

Ole Samsing
Nette Levermann
Amalie Jessen
Ole Heinrich
Leif Fontaine

Finland

Esko Jaakkola
Penina Blankett

Germany

Karl-Hermann Kock
Petra Deimer-Schutte

Norway

Halvard Johansen
Egil Øen
Hild Ynnesdal

USA

Doug DeMaster
David Mattila
Teri Rowles
Cheri McCarty
Heather Rockwell

Secretariat

Greg Donovan

Annex B
SCOPING MEETING AGENDA

1. Appointment of Chair and rapporteur
2. Adoption of draft agenda (for the scoping meeting)
3. Background to the workshop
4. Scope, title and output of the workshop
5. Review of draft agenda for the workshop
6. Duration, timing and venue for the workshop
7. Participants to the workshop
8. Workshop Chair
9. Documents and other preparations required
10. Budget
11. Other

Annex C
DRAFT WORKSHOP AGENDA

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
 - Entanglements in floating or movable gears
 - Entanglements in immovable or anchored gears
 - Types of gears regularly causing entanglements
 - 4.4. Damages and wounds commonly seen on entangled whales
 - Superficial wounds of minor severity?
 - More severe damages or wounds?
 - 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

- Communication Networks
- Methodology
- Equipment
- Personnel
- Training

5.2. Risk assessments

- Risk assessments: Personnel
 - Known and possible risks for personnel in conjunction with disentanglement operations.
- Risk assessments: Whales after disentangling
 - Methods for evaluation of the health condition of the entangled whale
 - Types of wounds and the wound healing process in whales
 - Possible scenarios after disentanglement:
 - 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

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

6.2. Methods for the humane euthanasia of entangled whales

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

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 – disentanglement or euthanasia.

8. DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

9. SYNTHESIS

10. OTHER BUSINESS

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Annex D

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

Agenda on Overview of Entanglement of Large Whales

Review Paper 1: 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

Review Paper 2: Overview of Entanglement of Large Whales (Terry Rowles: co-ordinator)

- 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

Agenda on Overview of Disentanglement of Large Whales

Review Paper 3: Overview of the Disentanglement of Large Whales (Dave Matilla, Doug Coughran)

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

Agenda on Overview of Euthanasia of Large Whales

Review Paper 4: Euthanasia (Egil Oin, Terry Rowles)

(note: this review should focus only on agenda item 7.2 as the one on 7.1 should be dealt with under the decision matrix discussions. It should include issues of safety to human operators, welfare considerations for the whale, post-mortem issues (such as carcass handling, toxin introduction to environment etc)

Agenda on Overview of Decision Matrices for entangled Large Whales

Review Paper 5: Development of Decision Matrix for Large Whale Entanglement (Nick Gales, Terry Rowles)

- Review of international decision matrices for disentanglement actions, including a discussion of:
 - Assessment of report and decision options
 - Visual assessment of animal (entanglement type and gear type)
 - 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