

Recommendations of the Ship Strikes Working Group to the Conservation Committee

The Ship Strikes Working Group (SSWG) meeting on 21st May 2007 agreed the following recommendations for further work and forwards them to the Conservation Committee for its consideration:

Co-operation with IMO

- i. The Secretariat should continue to follow up with the IMO to seek IGO status. Attaining IGO status will be facilitated by support from Contracting Governments that are also members of IMO. Contracting Governments are therefore urged to support IWC's application.
- ii. IWC Contracting Governments that attend the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) are encouraged to take a common approach at its meetings to ensure a place for ship strikes on the MEPC's agenda.

International database on ship strikes

In endorsing the work of the Vessel Strike Data Standardisation Group, the SSWG recommends:

- iii. that the proposed small expert group (see Annex) start to populate the database with historical vessel strike data (Phase II). The proposed budget of £11,400 for this work is approved and will be met by a voluntary contribution from the Government of Australia.
- iv. the collection of new data using the template.

Adoption of national and regional legislation, rules and action plans to reduce the impact of ship strikes, with priority for high-risk areas (Recommendation 3 of SSWG's First Progress Report to the Conservation Committee)

- v. The establishment of a small expert group to determine how Recommendation 3 can be implemented through specific action plans with priority for high-risk areas. It was noted that the SSWG and Conservation Committee could make an important contribution to this work by facilitating access to shipping information.

Multidisciplinary expert workshop on ship strike mitigation

- vi. A Steering Committee should be established after IWC/59 to consider whether a multidisciplinary expert workshop could contribute to ship strike mitigation and if so, to develop a detailed proposal, including time-scale.

Recommendations relevant to the Scientific Committee

- vii. Further work is developed on histopathology methods to confirm ship strikes.
- viii. Research on increased mortality caused by the whale watching industry be continued and intensified to obtain long term trends data.

General

- ix. That the SSWG be asked to continue with its work

Annex

Implementation of Recommendation 2 of IWC/59/CC3 : set up an international, centralized database on vessel strikes with cetaceans. Phase II.

K. Van Waerebeek, R. Leaper and M.F. Van Bressem (Proponents)

Background

During 2006-07, the newly formed Vessel Strike Data Standardisation Group (convened by KVV) successfully completed the task set out at IWC/58 (Phase I): develop a template for a standardised, relational database for ship strikes, as reported in SC/59/BC12. The database is now ready for data entry.

Terms of Reference of Phase II

- (i) Populate the database with 'historical' vessel strike data (publications, reports, unpublished data); coordinate with entities that might decide parallel data-entry into the same template as to avoid duplication, while ensuring full compatibility (cf. announced US database)
- (ii) Initiate in contacting (where possible) primary sources of collision events to retrieve previously unreleased, archived information. Depending on data volume, follow-up might need be extended beyond the foreseen period in the present proposal.
- (iii) Fine-tune the database template as to solve relatively minor practical problems that might arise with data-entry from varied sources.
- (iv) In close co-operation with the SSWG, explore and implement practical ways to enhance wide distribution of the database template, with the aim to ensure that this template becomes the global standard for ship strike data archiving.

Composition of multidisciplinary expert group

- Koen Van Waerebeek, co-ordinator (Belgium): population biologist with broad expertise in cetacean necropsies, anatomy and epidemiology; familiar with ships and nautical topics.
- Russel Leaper (UK): mathematician specialized in modelling of cetacean ecological parameters; applied marine technology.
- Marie Van Bressem (Germany): research veterinarian and epidemiologist, with vast track record of cetacean necropsies. Co-convenor of the new *IWC Cetacean Emerging and Resurging Diseases Working Group* (CERD).

Formal deposit of database

Secretariat of the International Whaling Commission

Proposed budget : £ 11,400

Covering 4 consultant-months, and associated costs :

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| i- Consultants: 4 months @ £ 2,600/month | £ 10,400 |
| ii- Internet, phone, computing/printing | £ 1,000 |