

United Kingdom
Update to Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report of 2006 (ref: IWC/58/CC 9)

National Governmental Authority Submitting the Report:

Marine and Freshwater Biodiversity Division, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Area 2E, 3-8 Whitehall Place, London, United Kingdom, SW1A 2HH
Tel: +00 44 (0)20 7270 8199 Fax: +00 44 (0)20 7270 8827

The following paper is to be considered an update from the 2006 report

2. Information on Whalewatching Operations (scale, species/populations and relevant management issues)

2.1a Scotland: Tourism is a major industry in Scotland, and whale-watching an important sector of this industry, with total estimated income from this activity in 2000 being estimated to be worth nearly £11 million, involving more than a quarter of a million tourists (Hoyt, 2001; Parsons et al., 2003a). Studies have indicated that domestic (i.e. British) tourists comprise a major proportion of Scottish whale-watchers, and so the domestic market is an important one (Parsons et al., 2003b). Thus, in 2003 a survey was conducted to assess the awareness of, and interest in whale-watching in the Scottish public (i.e. potential domestic tourists; Howard & Parsons, 2006).

It was discovered that 54% of the public interviewed in Scotland's major cities (Glasgow & Edinburgh) took holidays in Scotland (i.e. were potential domestic tourists) and approximately stated that wildlife watching was an important motivational factor for them choosing holidays in Scotland (Howard & Parsons, 2006). When asked which country they thought of first when thinking about a whale-watching destination, although the USA foremost, Scotland featured second (Howard & Parsons, 2006).

More than half of the members of the public were aware of whale-watching opportunities in Scotland, but less (a third of respondents) were actually able to name a specific location (with the most commonly cited location being the Moray Firth; Howard & Parsons, 2006). However, only a small number (7.7%) of those surveyed had actually been whale-watching (Howard & Parsons, 2006). Conversely, half of those questioned expressed an interest in taking a whale-watching trip, indicating a potentially large domestic, but as yet untapped, whalewatching market in Scotland and thus there could be considerable potential for growth in this industry (Howard & Parsons, 2006).

3. Current Government Programs related to Cetacean Conservation

3.1a As a follow up to SCANS-II, the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU) is coordinating the Cetacean Offshore Distribution and Abundance (CODA) project, which will survey European Atlantic waters outside the continental shelf from 42-62°N in July 2007, using visual and acoustic methods. The project is supported by governments and institutions in France, Ireland, Spain and the UK. Focal species are bottlenose and common dolphin, fin whale and deep-diving species. Further development will be made on the management procedure to set safe bycatch limits for small cetaceans, focussing on the common dolphin.

3.2a Work by Murphy and Northridge has focused biological studies on the Northeast Atlantic common dolphin population which is impacted through bycatch in UK and other EU fisheries in European Atlantic waters. Work has addressed age structure of the population, age at sexual maturity and annual pregnancy rates, all of which provide information on population dynamics that underlie any assessment of the conservation status of this population.

4. Current threats to Cetacean Conservation and Management Measures Taken/Proposed

4.4 Ship strikes The Vessel strike Data Standardisation Group of the Scientific Committee have developed a database to record vessel collisions with cetaceans, with the ultimate aim of developing a global data repository. The UK Government is currently investigating how to ensure that UK flagged vessels will use this database to record vessel collisions with cetaceans in the future.

5. Reporting Systems for Cetacean Injuries/Mortalities/Strandings

5.1a The main output from the UK Cetacean Strandings Project in the past year was the final report to *Defra* covering 2000-2005. Although this report mainly covers data attained in the 2000-2005 period, it also has longer-term analyses of trends in major causes of cetacean death from 1990-2004 and looks at trends in pollutant exposures (mainly in UK-stranded harbour porpoises) from 1989-2002.

The report also has summaries of the work done investigating links between pollutant exposure (OC pesticides, PCBs, heavy metals, butyltins, brominated flame retardants) and health status in harbour porpoises, including strong statistical links between elevated PCB levels and porpoises dying of infectious diseases. In addition, the report provides an overview of the newly discovered and reported cetacean gas embolism cases and discusses the possible links with anthropogenic noise sources as a causal factor.

The report summarises all the current research collaborations and research outputs (i.e. peer-reviewed publications) that have accrued from national and international research collaborations using data or tissue samples collected by the UKCSIP since 1990.

The report can be found on the Defra website at:

Jepson, P.D. (editor) (2006) Cetacean Strandings Investigation and Co-ordination in the UK 2000-2004. Final report to the *Department for Food and Rural Affairs*. pp 1-79.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/resprog/findings/index.htm>

A Defra-funded feasibility study into cetacean ear anatomy and pathology was completed in 2006. This study was involved a collaboration between scientists from Germany (FTZ) and the Institute of Zoology.

The final report of this study is also on the Defra website:

Jepson, P. D. Prah, S., Deaville, R. and Siebert, U. (2006) Postmortem Research Feasibility Study on Cetacean Ears. Final Report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 16pp.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/resprog/findings/index.htm>