

COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The reports of Observers representing the Commission at the following meetings are attached as the Appendices indicated:

| Appendix | Meeting | IWC Observer |
|-----------------|---|--|
| A | ICES Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME), 30 January - 2 February 2006, Denmark | Tore Haug (Norway) |
| B | 25 th Meeting of the Scientific Committee of CCAMLR, Hobart, Australia, 23 – 27 October 2006 | Karl-Herman Kock (Germany) |
| C | 16 th Annual Meeting of NAMMCO, Tromsø, Norway, 27 February to 1 March 2007 | Mads Lunde (Denmark) |
| D | 14 th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council, Bonn, Germany, 15-17 March 2006 | William F. Perrin (USA) |
| E | 14th Annual Meeting of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee, Reykjavik, Iceland, 21-23 November 2006 | Lars Walløe (Norway) |
| F | 15 th Annual Meeting of PICES, Yokohama, Japan, 13-22 October 2006 | Hidehiro Kato (Japan) |
| G | FAO Twenty-seventh Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), Rome, 5- 9 March 2007 | Joji Morishita (Japan) |
| H | Fifth Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS, Egmond aan Zee, Netherlands, 18 – 20 September 2006 and The Hague, Netherlands, 12 December 2006. | Greg Donovan (Secretariat) and Peter Reijnders (The Netherlands) |
| I | 14 th Meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Agreement on Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas, San Sebastian, Spain, 19 - 21 April 2007 | Peter Reijnders (The Netherlands) |

REPORT FROM THE 2006 ACTIVITIES IN ICES

Observer: Tore Haug (Norway)

The ICES Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME) met 30 January - 2 February 2006 in the ICES Headquarters, Copenhagen, Denmark to review any new information on population sizes, bycatches and mitigation measures for fisheries that have a significant impact on small cetaceans and other marine mammals. Additionally, so far as it was possible, the working group summarized the planned observations to meet requirements of EU Regulation 812/2004 (implementation of onboard monitoring schemes and observers to monitor and estimate the scale of bycatch of marine mammals in certain fisheries) by ICES area member state for 2006. The working group also reviewed the information on the diets of marine mammals in the ICES area and provided an overview of the difficulties and methods in studying diet. For 10 defined regions of the Northeast Atlantic and the Mediterranean, an estimation was made of the 4-6 most important species in terms of biomass and the available information on diet was summarized. Furthermore, the plans to conduct a workshop on environmental quality and marine mammal health were continued and a planning group was proposed. The workshop should address the biological effects at the level of the individual, explore the subsequent impacts at the population and community levels, and finally elaborate on the relevance for integrated chemical-biological assessment of ecosystem health and implications for management.

The Joint ICES/NAFO Working Group of Harp and Hooded Seals (WGHARP) met at the ICES Headquarters in Copenhagen, Denmark, during 12-15 June 2006 to consider recent research and to provide catch advice on the North Atlantic stocks of hooded seals. Recent research included issues such as stock identity and distribution, catch (mortality) estimates, abundance estimates, biological parameters and ecological relationships, on North Atlantic hooded seals. The working group reviewed Canadian assessments for the Northwest Atlantic stock, and calculated an assessment for the Northeast Atlantic stock.

The 2006 ICES Annual Science Conference (ASC) was held in Maastricht, The Netherlands, 19-23 September 2006. Several ICES committees (e.g., Living Resource Committee and Marine Habitat Committee) deals with marine mammal issues. Thus, both present and future theme sessions at the ASC are designed with marine mammals included as an integral part. At the 2006 ASC, one theme session was devoted particularly to marine mammals: Theme session L ("Marine Mammals, Seabirds, and Fisheries: Ecosystem Effects and Advice Provision"), where 13 oral presentations and 3 posters addressed issues such as distribution, abundance, reproduction, prey consumption and trophic interactions, interactions with fisheries, bycatches and strandings of seals and whales. Preliminary results from the SCANS II survey (July 2005) were presented and suggested a current abundance of 344 000 (CV = 0.14) harbour porpoises in the North Sea and adjacent waters.

Upcoming theme sessions, relevant to marine mammal issues, intended for the ASC in 2007 in Helsinki, Finland, in 2008 in Halifax, Canada, or later, include, but may not be restricted to: "Stock Identification – Applications for Aquaculture and Fisheries Management" (2007), "The Role of Sea Ice in Polar Ecosystems" (2008), "The Life History, Dynamics and Exploitation of Living Marine Resources: Advances in Knowledge and Methodology" (2008), "Mitigation of Seal-Induced Catch and Gear Damages" (2008 or later) and "Impact of Anthropogenic Noise on Marine Organisms" (2008 or later).

**OBSERVER'S REPORT FROM THE 25TH MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF THE
COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ANTARCTIC MARINE LIVING RESOURCES
(CCAMLR), HOBART, AUSTRALIA, 23 – 27 OCTOBER 2006**

Observer: Dr. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany)

The 25th Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) was held under the chairmanship of Dr. E. Fanta (Brazil) at the CCAMLR Headquarters in Hobart, Australia, from 23 to 27 October 2006. 23 of the 24 Member countries attended the meeting.

I provided a verbal report on those results from the 58th Annual Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the IWC and the Workshop on Underwater Noise and Cetaceans held in St. Kitts in May - June 2006 which were of interest to CCAMLR, and on the number of whales taken in the CCAMLR Convention Area under the remit of the IWC in 2005.

Main topics of the meeting were:

Fishery status and trends of Antarctic fish stocks, krill, squid and stone crabs
Incidental mortality of seabirds and marine mammals in fisheries in the CCAMLR Convention Area
Harvested species (krill, fish, and stone crabs and their assessment)
Ecosystem monitoring and management
Management under conditions of uncertainty about stock size and sustainable yield
New and exploratory fisheries
Possible joint activities of CCAMLR with the IWC with respect to ecosystem modelling in the Southern Ocean
Planned IPY and IWC Cooperation with CCAMLR

Reports of the Scientific Committee (SC-CAMLR) and its Working Groups on Ecosystem Monitoring and Management (WG-EMM) and Fish Stock Assessment (WG-FSA) and their various subgroups are available through the CCAMLR secretariat and on the CCAMLR web site.

Krill fishing

The krill catch was 105 084 tonnes (until 1 October 2006) which was exclusively taken in the Atlantic Ocean sector of the Southern Ocean. The krill catch at the end of the fishing season on 30 November 2006 is likely to reach the same level as in the preceding season (127 000 tonnes). Main fishing nations with ca. 50% of the total catch were Japan and Korea. The catch in the (current) 2006/07 season has been forecasted to reach 350 000 tonnes. These forecasts need to be viewed with considerable caution. The catch prediction for the 2005/06 was also in the order of 300 000 tonnes while 125 000 tonnes (preliminary figure) have been eventually taken.

The new pumping technology which pumps krill out of the cod – end of the net continuously has raised considerable concerns among some CCAMLR members. The Scientific Committee asked for further detailed information about the new technology and mentioned potential (statistical) problems when the continuously fishing vessel is crossing boundaries of statistical areas, subareas or divisions.

Planned CCAMLR-IPY projects

It should be noted that since this report had been completed further activities have taken place. Sharon Hedley should be consulted for further progress on the matter.

The Scientific Committee of CCAMLR had initially developed a core project to conduct a synoptic survey of krill, pelagic fish and plankton biomass and biodiversity in the South Atlantic (CCAMLR-IPY-2008 Survey) which had been established as a lead project under the IPY topic 'Natural Resources, Antarctic'. An umbrella project 'Integrated circumpolar studies of Antarctic marine ecosystems to the conservation of living resources' had been developed with a wider circum-Antarctic perspective than the original CCAMLR-IPY proposal above. The short form title of the proposed activity is listed as 'Antarctic Marine Ecosystem Studies (AMES)'.

Despite the strong request of the Commission, no firm commitments could be made by Members to participate in the CCAMLR-IPY-2008 Survey until July 2006. By the time of SC-CAMLR-XXV only Peru, an Acceding State, had confirmed that it would participate in the CCAMLR-IPY-2008 Survey. The Scientific Committee noted with great regret that several Members who had expressed their strong interest at the beginning of the planning phase had withdrawn their tentative commitments due to domestic decisions on the necessary budget or access to the required ship-time.

The Scientific Committee agreed that the limited available resources of participating research vessels precluded the conduct of the CCAMLR-IPY-2008 Survey, as initially agreed by CCAMLR and endorsed by the IPY Joint Committee. As a consequence, it would not be possible for CCAMLR to obtain a revised estimate of krill biomass in Area 48 in 2008.

The Scientific Committee agreed that it would not be prudent to postpone the decision on the participation of CCAMLR in IPY any longer, because the steering group would run out of time to finalise the planning of the survey before the start of the field season in January 2008. Furthermore, it was felt necessary to inform those projects associated with the planned CCAMLR-IPY-2008 Survey, such as IWC and SCAR-GEB groups, about the unsuccessful development, so that they may modify their projects accordingly.

The Scientific Committee decided to carry on with its contribution to IPY with a modified acoustic research project on krill and other key species and to make best use of the available research resources during IPY.

The Scientific Committee requested members of the CCAMLR-IPY steering group to determine as a matter of urgency if research vessels engaged in other IPY projects would be available to measure krill acoustic biomass and conduct net sampling and CTD casts. If such ships were available, the convener of the steering group should investigate if CCAMLR scientists may participate in the research effort to collect data relative to CCAMLR's objectives. If such opportunities exist, then the convener should communicate this to the steering group and to CCAMLR Members.

The Scientific Committee endorsed the nominations of Drs S. Iversen (Norway) and E. Fanta (Brazil) as the new Co-conveners of the IPY steering group, and endorsed the revised membership of the group which now consisted of Drs V. Alder (Argentina), M. Azzali (Italy), M. Gutiérrez (Peru), S. Hanchet (New Zealand), G. Hosie (SCAR-CAML) and N. Sanjeevan (India), with support from the Data Manager.

The Scientific Committee recommended that the Commission urge all Members to contribute to the CCAMLR-IPY projects and advise the CCAMLR-IPY steering group as soon as possible of any new development regarding the availability of ship-time.

The Scientific Committee and their working groups will develop the acoustic sampling protocols for the 2008 IPY, and agreed that the steering group hold a planning meeting, preferably in the first half of 2007.

Joint CCAMLR-IWC Workshop

The Scientific Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Steering Committee for the CCAMLR-IWC Workshop (SC-CAMLR-XXV/6). Details of the workshop would be developed in 2007 and finalised at SC-CAMLR-XXVI.

The terms of reference for the workshop are to:

1. Consider the types of information needed for models on the Antarctic marine ecosystem that could be developed for providing management advice.
2. Consider how the information could be used in modelling the Antarctic marine ecosystem, the quality of the information and key gaps needing to be resolved before such information might be used in the development of those models.
3. Consider metadata, rather than reviewing individual datasets and undertaking analyses to summarise the data, where the metadata would comprise information on the estimates of abundance, population trends and parameters, their data sources and methods used to estimate them.

The workshop is scheduled in April 2008 in Hobart.

Cetacean – fisheries interactions

The Scientific Committee noted that, there were no reports on entanglement or incidental mortality of cetaceans in longline gear; this differed from 2004/05, when 2 cetaceans were reported caught.

Scientific observers on krill vessels

Longliners in the CCAMR Convention Area have 100% coverage of international scientific observers while krill fishing vessels have not. The Scientific Committee reiterated the need to collect standard scientific observations on krill fishing vessels. Systematic scientific observer coverage of the krill fishery is required across all fishing methods so as to allow the Scientific Committee to develop advice on the fishery, including evaluation of by-catch and the efficacy of mitigation measures.

The Scientific Committee noted that most Members will be deploying scientific observers on their vessels in 2006/07 (paragraph 4.5 and Table 4). The Scientific Committee urged all members to implement scientific observations, in accordance with the CCAMLR Scheme of Scientific Observation, on vessels fishing for krill in the Convention Area.

**IWC-OBSERVER REPORT
ON THE 16TH NAMMCO ANNUAL MEETING, NORWAY, FEBRUARY 2007**

Observer : Mads Lunde (Denmark)

The 16th Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) took place in Tromsø, Norway 27 February – 1 March 2007. The meeting was attended by the four contracting parties (Norway, Iceland, Faroe Islands and Greenland), three observer governments (Japan, Denmark and Canada), three inter-governmental organisations (IWC, NAFO and NEAFC) and three NGO's. The commission had specific discussions on **recommendations from the NAMMCO (newly formed) management committee of Seals, Sealing and Walruses and the management committee of cetaceans.**

Of particular interest of the IWC among other subject were the following:

1) International observation of Marine Mammals

In 2007 whaling in the Faroes will be subject to observation through NAMMCO. NAMMCO has since 1998 had an International Scheme for the observation of marine mammals, which provides international oversight in the regulation of marine mammal hunting in NAMMCO member countries. The scheme now requires an update to take account of technical developments and safety requirements for observers on board whaling and sealing vessels.

2) Trans North Atlantic Sightings Survey (T-NASS) – 2007

The T-NASS survey is being organised by the Scientific Committee of NAMMCO and includes participation from all NAMMCO member countries as well as Canada and the Russian Federation. The survey for 2007 is well underway and will cover the Northern North Atlantic from shore to shore in July this year and will be closely coordinated with simultaneous surveys conducted off Western Europe and the United States.

3) Hunting Methods

NAMMCO values of workshops where hunters, scientists, technical experts and managers can meet to exchange ideas and viewpoints on hunting matters, and where dialogue can be fostered. NAMMCO will be organising a new workshop on handling, processing and utilisation of marine mammal products in 2008.

An international Workshop on the issue of "struck" and lost" animals in hunting were held during November 2006. Experts, hunters and managers and several organisations attended the workshop from the NAMMCO countries as well as from Canada, Russia, USA, Japan, Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

4) Health benefits of seal – and whale oil

NAMMCO plans to arrange a workshop on the indicated positive health effects of consuming Marine Mammal products to review updated information and research findings in this area.

5) Listing of endangered Species and trade in sealskins and seal products

At the request of Iceland, the NAMMCO Scientific Committee has carried out a review of the appropriateness for the current listing for the Central North Atlantic fin whales in Appendix I (threatened with extinction) of CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species). The Scientific Committee of NAMMCO was of the opinion that this fin whale population does not meet the biological criteria for listing under Appendix I of CITES.

At the meeting concerns were expressed about campaigns in certain countries to ban trade in seal products.

Next meeting will be held in Greenland in 2008.

OBSERVER'S REPORT ON MEETING OF THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

Observer : William F. Perrin

The Council met in Bonn, Germany, 15—17 March, 2007.

New focus on bycatch in fisheries

A new position of Appointed Councillor on Bycatch was approved by the COP in Nairobi in 2005, and Barry Baker of Australia has been appointed to the position. He presented a draft program of work on the issue, to include a comprehensive review of all global fisheries to assess the available information on the bycatch of seabirds, turtles, sharks and marine mammals. The work is proposed to be carried out by a contractor, yet to be recruited.

Implementation of Resolution 8.22: Adverse human induced impact on cetaceans (passed in Nairobi in 2005)

The Council reviewed a proposed program of work and believed it to meet the needs specified by the resolution. The program will review the extent to which CMS and other IGOs are addressing listed impacts: entanglement and bycatch, climate change, ship strikes, pollution, habitat and feeding ground degradation, marine noise and impediments to migration. It will then identify gaps and overlaps, potential collaborations and synergies, and priorities for action. It should be noted that this mandate roughly parallels those of the IWC Conservation Committee and the SC's environment and bycatch sub-committees.

Additions to Appendices I and II

The Council reviewed and endorsed several draft proposals for additions to the appendices:

Atlantic humpback dolphin *Sousa teuszii* to Appendix I

Irrawaddy dolphin *Orcaella brevirostris* to Appendix I

Clymene dolphin *Stenella clymene* to Appendix II

Northwest African population of harbor porpoise *Phocoena phocoena* to Appendix II

Small cetaceans of the Solomon Islands region to Appendix II: Spinner dolphin *Stenella longirostris*, pantropical spotted dolphin *S. attenuata*, striped dolphin *S. coeruleoalba*, Fraser's dolphin *Lagenodelphis hosei*, melon-headed whale *Peponocephala electra*

Appendix I calls for full protection. Appendix II includes species and populations whose conservation status could benefit from regional cooperation. Final versions of the proposals will be submitted by Parties at the next COP in Rome next year.

Additional notes on CMS activities

New agreement on Pacific cetaceans. The MOU for the Conservation of Cetaceans and Their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region was opened for signatures in Noumea, New Caledonia in September last year. The first meeting of the signatories was held in Apia, Samoa on 5 March this year. There are now 11 nations and territories in the MoU: Australia, New Zealand, France, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia, Niue, Fiji, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands. The parties agree *inter alia* to 1) take steps to conserve all cetaceans and fully protect species listed in CMS Appendix I that occur in the region, 2) consider joining other international agreements that work toward that end, 3) review, enact or update legislation to conserve cetaceans, 4) implement an action plan addressing issues relating to cetacean conservation, 5) facilitate exchange of information and expertise. The first meeting of the signatories was followed by a meeting to develop a draft action plan. Issues addressed in the action plan among others will include surveys of distribution and abundance to inventory the cetacean fauna of the region, the sustainability of the dolphin drive fishery in the Solomon Islands, depredation by dolphins and small whales on longline fisheries, and potential impacts of proposed takes by Japan of humpback whales in the Southern Ocean on small island breeding populations in the South Pacific.

OBSERVERS REPORT FROM NAMMCO SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Observer : Lars Walløe

The 14th meeting of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee was held at Reykjavik, Iceland, 21-23 November 2006. In addition to members, observers from Canada and the Russian Federation attended the meeting.

A Joint NAMMCO/IWC Scientific Workshop on the Catch History, Stock Structure and Abundance of North Atlantic Fin Whales was held in March 2006. The report from this workshop was presented to the IWC-SC last year. Based on the new information presented the NAMMCO-SC found no reason to change its advice provided in 2005, that projections under constant catch levels suggest that the West Iceland sub-stock (the “inshore sub-stock”) will maintain its present abundance (which is above MSY level) under an annual catch of about 150 whales.

In 2004 the Scientific Committee was requested by the Council to continue its assessment of humpback whale stocks in the North Atlantic, assessing the long-term effects of annual removals of 0, 2, 5, 10 and 20 whales for West Greenland, and providing estimates of sustainable yield for other stocks. In all cases the management objective would be to maintain the stocks at a stable level. The Committee reviewed abundance estimates from ship and aerial surveys conducted off West Greenland in September 2005. The estimate from the aerial survey of 1,246 (CV 0.56) was considered most reliable because the realized coverage of the ship-base survey was low and unevenly distributed within strata. This estimate is negatively biased, probably substantially so, as no corrections were applied for whales missed by observers or for whales submerged during the passage of the survey platform. To provide conservative interim advice on the number of humpback whales that could be safely taken in West Greenland waters, the Committee decided to apply a replacement yield estimate of 2% to the lower confidence limit of 429, which provides an estimated sustainable annual removal of 8.6 whales. The replacement yield of 2% used in this calculation is appreciably lower than observed rates of increase in other areas of the North Atlantic. Therefore the Scientific Committee concluded that a removal (including by-catch) of up to 10 animals per year would not harm the stock in the short or medium term. This advice should be considered interim in nature, and should be revisited once the abundance estimate from the 2005 survey is revised and a new estimate from the planned 2007 survey is available.

The Committee last provided advice on the status of narwhal stocks in West Greenland and Canada in 2005. Since then an aerial survey covering the index area for wintering belugas and narwhals off West Greenland was conducted in March and April 2006. A monitoring plan from 2007 to 2011 covering both wintering beluga and narwhals off West Greenland, as well as summering aggregations of narwhals in Northwest Greenland and East Greenland, and stock identification studies of all major aggregations of narwhal and beluga in Greenland has been developed by the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources. The Committee welcomed and fully supported the research plan for narwhal, beluga and walrus in Greenland and recommended it be supported and implemented.

The Scientific Committee was informed that the narwhal quota for West Greenland will be 260 in 2006/7, plus 115 in Melville Bay, plus 10 to be distributed in the spring, if necessary. The Committee remained concerned that the narwhal quota had been increasing since it was introduced and that total removals has remained above the recommended level for West Greenland of 135. It advised that delay in implementing catch reductions to the recommended levels will result in delay in stock recovery and probably in lower available catches in the medium term. For Melville Bay, no specific recommendations on sustainable removals have been provided, but the Committee remained concerned that this may be a small stock, and that the quota of 115 might not be sustainable.

The Scientific Committee was informed that the beluga quota for West Greenland will be 140 for West Greenland plus 20 for Qaanaaq in 2006/7. The Committee commended Greenland for their management efforts to improve the conservation status of beluga in this area, and noted that the quota had been reduced since its introduction in 2004. Nevertheless the Committee remained concerned that the total removals were still above the recommended level for West Greenland of 100. Maintaining higher catches reduces the probability of halting the decline, and delay in implementing harvest reductions will increase the risk of continued stock decline.

The Report of the Planning Committee for the Trans North Atlantic Sightings Survey (T-NASS) was presented to the Committee. The meetings of the Planning Committee have included participation from Canada, the USA, the Faroes, Greenland, Iceland, the Russian Federation and Norway, plus representatives from the SCANS-II and CODA projects and the IWC. The Committee was very pleased to see that the planning for the T-NASS was well underway. It was particularly encouraging that Canada, Greenland and the Russian Federation were full participants, and that the USA was willing to work so closely with the T-NASS to coordinate their surveys with it. The cooperation of the CODA survey was also acknowledged.

Last year the Committee tentatively decided to hold a meeting of the Working Group on Marine Mammal – Fisheries Interactions in 2007. Unfortunately little progress has been made in modelling efforts for the Barents Sea or Iceland. Once again the Scientific Committee was forced to conclude that it could not provide the requested advice on the economic aspects of fishery - marine mammal interactions in the 2 areas (Barents Sea and Iceland) and with the 2 species (minke whales and harp seals) that have been identified as feasible for this assessment. As in the past, the Scientific Committee emphasized that progress in this area will not be made unless significant additional resources are dedicated to it. Given the lack of progress, the Committee considered that it would be premature to hold a Working Group meeting in 2007, and recommended that it be postponed to 2008 at the earliest.

The next meeting of the NAMMCO-SC will be held in Greenland in early October 2007.

OBSERVER REPORT OF THE 15TH ANNUAL MEETING OF PICES

Observer : Hidehiro Kato (Japan)

The PICES (North Pacific Marine Science Organization) is an inter-governmental organization among Canada, China, Japan, Korea, Russia and US. It has four committees, Biological Oceanography Committee (*BIO*), Fisheries Science Committee (*FIS*), Marine Environmental Quality Committee (*MEQ*), Physical Oceanography and Climate Committee (*POC*), one technical committee for data exchange (*TCODE*) and one major research project program *PICES-GLOBEC CCCC* (Climate Change and Carrying Capacity) under the Science Board of PICES. PICES met regularly once a year having regular business meetings and associated symposium, number of participants is sometimes over 400 people. PICES has had interests on marine birds and mammals since 1997 as ecosystem components from ecosystem and environment view points through having a special working group to assess feeding impact by marine birds and mammals to ecosystem (WG11 chaired by Hunt and Kato; 1997 - 99) and MBM (Marine Mammals and Birds) advisory panel (*MBM/AP*) to understanding coupled climate-ecosystem fluctuations in the North Pacific Ocean in collaboration with other study areas (co-chaired by Kato and Sydeman, 2000 – current) under auspices of *BIO*.

The 15th annual meeting of PICES (PICES XV) was held at Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse #1, Yokohama, Japan October 13 – 22, 2006.

MBM/AP met afternoon on October 13, 2006 and following discussions raised during regular session.

1. Review of AP-MBM/BIO-POC Workshop (W8)

The workshop “*Responses of marine mammals and seabirds to large scale and long term climate changes: Mechanisms and environmental forcing* (conveners; Y. Watanuki, S. Minobe and W.J. Sideman)” was held at the same venue October 12, 2006, which was very successful. Eight oral papers and 3 posters were presented. The venue was very comfortable and facilitated discussion. It was noted that an after-workshop meeting and/or dinner would be desirable for continued dialogue. Posters need more attention and time. A full-day workshop might have been better for discussion. It was noted that we are still giving disparate talks, when more integration with each other would be good. It was concluded that the workshop presentations were not appropriate for publication. While the material was excellent, some of it is already published, and the new material is still in the early stages of analysis and interpretation. Integration with climatologists and oceanographers was excellent, but mechanisms of seabird and marine mammal responses are still poorly understood. There are, however, many aspects of research on marine birds and mammals that provide compelling advantages in looking at climate change impacts on marine ecosystems of the North Pacific.

2. Discussion of publication of previous workshops from PICES XIII and XIV on diet of predators in the North Pacific

AP – MBM believes this work should be resurrected. There are many very nice datasets available, and it is important to highlight them through publication.

3. Discussion for workshop/topic sessions for 2007 PICES XVI (Victoria, Canada)

AP-MBM will put forth a modified description of half-day theme session description on climate change, phenology, and effects on top predators.

4. Participation from all countries in AP – MBM.

There has been good participation from USA, Canada, Russia, and Japan in the AP - MBM. Korea is endorsed to send nominated members, and they have participated in the past. China has not provided delegates to AP – MBM. AP - MBM asks that China provide delegates and also Canada provide seabird expert.

5. Report of the Pacific Continuous Plankton Recorder – Marine Bird and Mammal Project

Dr. Sydeman made a progress report on accomplishments of the Continuous Plankton Recorder (CPR) Marine Bird and Mammal Project.

6. Country reports – Climate Change and Marine Birds and Mammals

Dr. Kornev provided a report on Russian time series and studies.

7. Cooperation with IWC*

AP-MBM nominates Dr Kato to serve. AP – MBM asks that PICES nominate Dr Kato to serve as PICES representative to IWC.

8. Other matters

There was a discussion about the PICES Ecosystem Status Report, and plan for its revision. In particular, AP – MBM members and observers wondered when they could provide comments.

The next PICES annual meeting (PICES XV) will be held October 26 – November 5, 2007 at Victoria Conference Center, Victoria, Canada. In addition to regular AP-MBM meeting, a workshop titled “*Phenology and climate change in the North Pacific: implications of intra-seasonal variability in zooplankton to fish, seabirds, marine mammals and fisheries (humans)*” co-sponsored by AP-MBM is planned to be held.

REPORT OF THE 27TH SESSION OF THE FAO COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES (COFI)

Observer: Joji Morishita (Japan)

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held its Twenty-seventh session in Rome from 5 to 9 March 2007. 131 country members of the Committee and the European Commission attended the meeting along with observers from 41 intergovernmental and 29 non-governmental organizations.

The following are some of the major topics discussed at the COFI.

(a) Strengthening Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and their Performance

Japan reported the results of the joint tuna RFMOs meeting held in Kobe, Japan in January 2007 which discussed common issues and possible cooperation among tuna RFMOs. The Members of the Committee highly appreciated the initiative and emphasized the importance of implementing the Course of Action adopted by the meeting. The United States proposed compilation of criteria for performance review to be conducted by individual tuna RFMOs.

(b) Implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries

In response to the 2007 United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries, the Committee agreed to have an expert meeting by August 2007 and an intergovernmental Technical Consultation in January or February 2008 to establish technical guidelines for deep sea fisheries. The guidelines would present specific options for the management of deep sea fisheries including identification of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and assessment of the impacts of fisheries on VMEs. The Committee also discussed such issues as marine debris, incidental catch, and marine protected areas (MPAs).

(c) Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported Fisheries

The Committee reconfirmed the importance of eradicating IUU fisheries. Norway proposed to hold an expert meeting and an intergovernmental Technical Consultation for drafting a new legally binding port state control measures agreement. This proposal received wide support. The Committee also supported an expert meeting to discuss possibility of an FAO global fishing vessel register.

(d) The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and Related International Plans of Action (IPOAs)

Implementation of the Code and four related IPOAs (fishing capacity, IUU, shark, and sea birds) were reviewed. The Committee encouraged its members to strengthen the implementation of the Code and IPOAs, especially the IPOA for fishing capacity. Establishment of guidelines for implementing the sea bird IPOA was proposed and FAO will initiate the process in consultation with relevant organizations.

(e) Small-scale Fisheries

The Committee discussed small-scale fisheries management and its importance for fishing communities in the developing countries. Many developing countries requested the establishment of a Sub-committee for small-scale fisheries however, the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department expressed its concerns about financial limitations for the establishment of a new sub-committee.

The next meeting of COFI will be held in 2009 in Rome.

OBSERVERS' REPORT OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO ASCOBANS

Egmond aan Zee, Netherlands, 18 – 20 September 2006, and
The Hague, Netherlands, 12 December 2006.

Observers: Greg Donovan and Peter Reijnders

This report concentrates on the scientific aspects of the meeting. Much of the meeting was also concerned with administrative matters and the structure of the Secretariat. They are not discussed here but information can be found in the full report (available on the ASCOBANS website).

The Meeting passed a number of resolutions concerning cetacean conservation and management. These are summarized below.

Resolution 1: Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea.

The Parties broadly welcomed a document presented as the basis for developing a conservation plan for harbour porpoises in the North Sea.

Resolution 4: Adverse Effects of Sound, Vessels and Other Forms of Disturbance on Small Cetaceans

This called on Parties and Range States that have not already done so to develop measures and procedures on seismic surveys to minimise disturbance to small cetaceans. It also invited Parties and Range States to work with *inter alia* military authorities on developing effective mitigation measures to prevent disturbance and damage to small cetaceans. It also called for further research into the effects (at the individual and population level) of a variety of noise sources on small cetaceans, including high speed ferries, pingers and scarers, industrial activities (including windfarms). The Resolution called for research on mitigation measures and how to measure their effectiveness.

Resolution 5: Incidental take of small cetaceans

This reiterates the ASCOBANS goal that total anthropogenic removal is reduced by the Parties with an objective to reduce bycatch to less than 1% of the best available abundance estimate as soon as possible with a longer term aim of minimising bycatch ultimately to zero. This includes consideration of plans for mitigation measures and proper reporting.

Resolution 6: Activities of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee 2007-2010

This deals with the workplan discussed further in the report of the 14th Advisory Committee meeting below.

Resolution 7: Research on Habitat Quality, Health and Status of Small Cetaceans in the Agreement Area

This deals with a number of research and conservation issues including development of guidelines for identification of MPAs and ultimately their designation, schemes for strandings and bycatch reporting and maximising the scientific information obtained from these, further pollution studies (including POLLUTION 2000+), co-operation with IWC Scientific Committee on a number of issues, encouragement of long-term monitoring, further studies of abundance, trends etc.

Resolution No. 9: Implementation of the Jastarnia Plan

This deals with the recovery plan for Baltic Sea harbour porpoises and is discussed further in the report of the 14th Advisory Committee meeting below.

Appendix I

**OBSERVER'S REPORT ON THE 14TH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE
AGREEMENT ON SMALL CETACEANS OF THE BALTIC AND NORTH SEAS,
San Sebastian, Spain, 19 - 21 April 2007**

Observer: Peter J.H. Reijnders (The Netherlands)

The 14th Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC) to the Agreement on Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS), was held in San Sebastian, Spain, 18-21 April 2007. The meeting was held back to back with the Annual Meeting of the European Cetacean Society (ECS), offering the opportunity to co-organise two workshops: one on Marine Mammals and Windfarms, and one on Marine Mammals and Protected Areas. Reports on both workshops will be posted on the website of ASCOBANS and the ECS.

The main topics at the AC meeting, as far as relevant to the IWC, were:

1. The formulation of the Triennium Workplan (2007-2009)
2. Co-operation with international organisations
3. Enlargement of the Agreement Area

Triennial Workplan

Based on the decisions at the last Meeting of Parties to ASCOBANS (2007, in The Netherlands), the ASCOBANS triennium Workplan 2007-2009 has been established, including prioritisation of the several actions listed.

The major topics included:

- Finalisation and implementation of the Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea. This Plan addresses e.g. anthropogenic factors potentially affecting small cetaceans (incl. pollution, windfarms, sand and gravel extractions, high speed ferries) and required research on preventing and mitigating methods and measures
- Implementation of the "Jastarnia Plan" (Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises). Main items dealt with recently are reduction of fisheries effort, alternative fishing gear, and the EU-requirement to use pingers in certain fisheries
- Bycatch issues. Besides continued investigations to assess the extent of bycatch in the different regions, also methods to prevent and reduce bycatch, particularly the pro's and con's of pinger deployment (as required in certain fisheries by the EU) will be addressed.
ASCOBANS will approach the European Commission and ICES, with the aim that ICES will be requested to take a co-ordinating role in monitoring of bycatch in the Agreement area and other European waters. This co-ordination involves the establishment of a bycatch reporting system

Co-operation with other international organisations

As representative for the Commission I have informed the AC on the activities of the IWC-Scientific Committees activities, in particular about the status of the IWC-POLLUTION 2000+ Programme and the status of the ongoing activities (as a component of the SCANS-II study and *i.a.* discussed in the Small Cetacean Subcommittee), at developing a procedure for setting bycatch limits for small cetaceans in the North Sea and European Atlantic.

The AC welcomed the progress in these matters and reiterated its wish to continue co-operation with the IWC-Scientific Committee.

Enlargement of the Agreement Area

Nearly all ASCOBANS Range States have ratified the change in the Agreement text, on the westward extension of the Agreement area, and it is expected that this extension will come into force in 2007, early 2008.

Of interest is to note that during 2007, a planning meeting will be held on establishing a Memorandum of Understanding for Marine Mammals in West-Africa between CMS and involved countries. The species involved are cetaceans and manatees.