

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), 9-12 May 2005, Savonlinna, Finland,	Tore Haug (Norway)
B	24 th Meeting of the Scientific Committee of CCAMLR, Hobart, Australia, 24 – 28 October 2005	Karl-Herman Kock (Germany)
C	15 th Annual Meeting of NAMMCO, Selfoss, Iceland, 14 – 16 March 2006	Henrik Fischer (Denmark)
D	13 th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council, Nairobi 16-18 November 2005	Bill Perrin (USA)
E	IATTC 73 rd Meeting, Lanzarote, Spain 20-27 June, 2005	Steve Reilly (USA)
F	Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) of the Cartagena Convention for the Wider Caribbean	Alessandra Vanzella-Khouri (UNEP-CAR/RCU)
G	14 th Annual Meeting of PICES (PICES XIV), Vladivostok, Russia, 29 September-9 October, 2005	Hidehiro Kato (Japan)
H	Standing Committee on Research and Statistics, (SCRS) of ICCAT, Madrid, Spain, October 3-7, 2005	Laurie Kell (UK)
I	13th Annual Meeting of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee, Reine, Lofoten, Norway, 24 - 27 October 2005	Lars Walløe (Norway)
J	13 th Meeting of the Advisory Committee to ASCOBANS, Tampere, Finland, 25-27 April 2006	Peter Reijnders (Netherlands)
K	Report of the Eastern Caribbean Cetacean Commission (ECCO) activities for 2005/06	Nigel Lawrence (Dominica)

REPORT FROM THE 2005 ACTIVITIES IN ICES

Observer: Tore Haug (Norway)

The ICES Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME) met 9 - 12 May 2005 in Savonlinna, Finland, to report comprehensively on the populations of seals and harbour porpoises in the Baltic. The group also addressed issues related to the European Commission standing request regarding fisheries that have a significant impact on small cetaceans and other marine mammals (by-catches, mammal-prey interactions, spatial distribution, etc.). Preparations were also started for a future workshop on marine mammals health and immune status, disease agents and links to environmental quality.

The Joint ICES/NAFO Working Group of Harp and Hooded Seals (WGHARP) met at Department of Fisheries and Oceans, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, from 30 August - 3 September 2005. Here, WGHARP assessed harp seals in the Barents Sea / White Sea and harp and hooded seals in the Greenland Sea, under terms of reference provided by the ICES Advisory Committee of Fishery Management (ACFM), and the process with definition and implementation of biological reference points for the stocks in question was continued. Work aimed to improve and compare assessment models used were also done.

The 2005 ICES Annual Science Conference (ASC, at the 93rd Statutory Meeting of ICES) was held in Aberdeen, Scotland, 20-24 September 2005. 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 2005 ASC, two particular theme sessions were devoted particularly to marine mammals:

- In theme session R ("Marine Mammals: Monitoring Techniques, Abundance Estimation, and Interaction with Fisheries") 18 oral presentations and 20 posters addressed issues such as distribution, habitat use, feeding ecology (including studies of functional response), interaction with fisheries, abundance estimation, and population dynamics of seals and whales. Several presentations addressed questions related to methodology.
- Theme session X addressed the issue "Mitigation Methods for Reduction of Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Bycatch in Fisheries". 15 oral presentations and 4 posters addressed problems related to: i) the bycatches, and ways to prevent these, of porpoises and dolphins in various fishing gears, and ii) the conflicts between grey seals and various fisheries in the Baltic.

Upcoming theme sessions, relevant to marine mammal issues, intended for the 2006 ASC in Maastricht, The Netherlands, include, but may not be restricted to: "Marine Mammals, Seabirds, and Fisheries: Ecosystem Effects and Advice Provision".

Observer's Report from the 24th Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Hobart, Australia, 24 – 28 October 2005

Dr. Karl-Hermann Kock (Germany)

The 24th 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 24 to 28 October 2005. 23 of the 24 Member countries attended the meeting.

I provided a verbal report on those results from the 57th Annual Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the IWC and the Workshop on Sea Ice held in Ulsan (Republic of Korea) in May - June 2005 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 2004.

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

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

Joint CCAMLR-IWC workshop

The following section is a largely verbatim excerpt from section 13 of the Report of the 24th Meeting of the Scientific Committee of CCAMLR (SC-CAMLR). I bring this to the attention of the Scientific Committee of the IWC (SC-IWC) for further consideration during the intersessional period 2005/06 and at the 58th Meeting of SC-IWC in St. Kitts and Nevis in May-June 2006:

At the 24th Meeting of the Scientific Committee in Hobart in October 2005 SC-CAMLR noted the work being undertaken in a variety of fora to model the Antarctic marine ecosystem, particularly modelling of krill predators to provide advice on management issues in the region. SC-CAMLR further noted that

- (i) Members of SC-CAMLR and SC-IWC are now developing models of the Antarctic marine ecosystem which could form the basis for providing management advice;
- (ii) it would be useful for both Scientific Committees to utilise knowledge of krill predators in a consistent way, such knowledge would be estimates of abundance, trends in populations and parameters for key ecological processes, including the physical environment as well as food-web dynamics.

SC-CAMLR agreed that a joint workshop with SC-IWC would be useful 'to review the state and characteristics of information, including knowledge on abundance, trends in populations and parameters, required for ecosystem models being developed to provide management advice on krill predators in the Antarctic marine ecosystem.

SC-CAMLR agreed to establish a Steering Committee to develop a work program leading to a workshop in 2008. The terms of reference for the workshop were agreed to be:

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.

SC-CAMLR requested the Steering Committee liaise, as needed, with data owners about how to report on the information to be used in the workshop that arises from their data.

SC-CAMLR agreed that experts in the development of Antarctic marine ecosystem models generally, such as in GLOBEC, ICED, should be involved in the workshop in order to help facilitate discussion on the types and quality of information needed in developing models for the provision of management advice.

The Steering Committee should consider, *inter alia*:

- i. the Report of the CCAMLR Workshop on Plausible Ecosystem Models for Testing Approaches to Krill Management (SC-CAMLR, 2004), and
- ii. to review the state and characteristics of information, including knowledge on abundance, trends in populations and parameters, required for ecosystem models being developed to provide management advice on krill predators in the Antarctic marine ecosystem;
- iii. to summarise the types of information, including knowledge on abundance, trends in populations and parameters, used to model the Antarctic marine ecosystem for providing management advice, where such information might include, *inter alia*:
 - a) the key physical and biological elements of the models defined at appropriate spatial and temporal scales;
 - b) production and life history characteristics of the key taxa;
 - c) functions dealing with movement and space;
 - d) trophic relationships, including predator–prey relationships and competition;
 - e) biomasses (current or historical);
- iv. to review the relative state of existing information (in terms of extent and quality), with emphasis on the guild of krill predators in the Antarctic food web, including fish, squid, penguins, flighted seabirds, seals and whales, including:
 - a. abundance, trends and temporal and spatial structure of populations;
 - b. parameters used in capturing relationships between the distribution and behaviour of predators with sea-ice, bathymetry and oceanography;
- v. to review the parameters needed to model top-down or bottom-up influences on krill biomass;
- vi. to identify key knowledge gaps;
- vii. to consider the relative importance of the information required to appropriately explore the role of krill predators in the Antarctic marine ecosystem.

The Scientific Committee recommended that the SC-IWC be invited to join SC-CAMLR in organising this workshop and requested:

- i. the CCAMLR Secretariat correspond with the IWC Secretariat to inform them of this invitation;
- ii. the CCAMLR observer to the IWC, Dr Kock, work with the Steering Committee to correspond with the Chairs of the IWC and the SC-IWC to initiate communication between the two Scientific Committees, with the view to having this invitation considered at the next meeting of the SC-IWC.

The Scientific Committee requested that the Steering Committee develop a work plan and initiate subgroups to begin preparations of materials for the workshop in 2008 over the intersessional period and provide a consolidated proposal next year for the workshop, including details of a work plan over 2007–2008, a venue and budget. It was agreed that the new CCAMLR Headquarters would be an appropriate workshop venue pending consideration of timing, budget and the availability of the Secretariat.

The Scientific Committee agreed for the Steering Committee to initially comprise Drs A. Constable (Convener), M. Goebel, K. Kovacs, J. Pierre, P. Trathan and C. Southwell. The Scientific Committee requested that Members participate in the development of the work program and asked that the Steering Committee update and obtain feedback from Members during this work.

CCAMLR's participation in the International Polar Year 2007/08

In 2004, the Scientific Committee agreed that a synoptic survey and a net sampling survey in the South Atlantic region would be the most appropriate activity for CCAMLR in the IPY-2008. The survey would focus on krill but would collect a range of ancillary physical and biological data including observations on marine zooplankton, marine mammals and birds.

The steering group of CCAMLR has developed and submitted an Expression of Intent to the Joint IPY Committee. Concurrently contact was established with the IWC Scientific Committee Chair, the Chair of the SCAR Group of Experts on Birds and the steering group of the CoML, inviting these groups to actively participate in the CCAMLR-IPY-2008 activity. The Joint IPY Committee evaluated the CCAMLR proposal and formal recognition of the CCAMLR initiative was received by IPY (proposal EoI 148). The CCAMLR Survey 2008 became the 'lead project' for the topic 'Natural Resources, Antarctic'. The final proposal was submitted to IPY as a consortium proposal on 7 September 2005. This proposal was submitted to the Commission of CCAMLR for final approval in October 2005.

The Scientific Committee of CCAMLR encouraged all Members to actively participate in the CCAMLR core project. Firm commitments for ship-time and other activities should be provided to the next IPY subgroup meeting which will be held in association with WG-EMM in Namibia in July 2006.

Cetacean – fisheries interaction

Available information on cetacean – fisheries interactions in the Southern Ocean has been published in Purves et al. (2004) and Kock et al., (Polar Biology, in press). Very little new information became available on cetacean – fisheries interactions since 2004 from either the longline fisheries on *Dissostichus* spp. or the trawl fisheries on mackerel icefish (*Champsocephalus gunnari*). South Africa reported that large numbers of killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) impacted on the longline fishery on *D. eleginoides* in the Prince Edward Islands. Usually two of every three fish caught are taken by killer whales before they can be hauled on board. The further development of a pot fishery which is not impacted by killer whales was considered as one option to replace longlining and avoid predation.

CCAMLR's 'Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment' concluded that the interaction between cetaceans and fisheries in the Southern Ocean appear to present a very limited risk of incidental mortality of cetaceans, perhaps because sperm whales and killer whales are capable of breaking longlines. So far only one fatality is known when a smaller baleen whale (probably a minke whale) died in 2003.

References

Purves, M.G., D.J. Agnew, Balguerías, E., Moreno, C.A. and Watkins, B. 2004. Killer whale (*Orcinus orca*) and sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) interactions with longline vessels in the Patagonian toothfish fishery at South Georgia, South Atlantic. CCAMLR Sci. 11: 111 – 126

Kock, K.-H., Purves, M.G. and Duhamel, G. Interactions between cetaceans and fisheries in the Southern Ocean. Polar Biol. (in press)

SC-CAMLR 2004. Report of the 'CCAMLR Workshop on Plausible Ecosystem Models for Testing Approaches to Krill Management'. Report of the 23rd Meeting of the Scientific Committee, Hobart, Australia, 25 – 29 October 2004, Annex 4, Appendix D, 235 – 337

IWC-OBSERVER REPORT, NAMMCO 15. ANNUAL MEETING, ICELAND, MARCH 2006

Henrik Fischer

The 15th Annual Meeting of NAMMCO took place in Selfoss, Iceland 14 – 16 March 2006. The Meeting was attended by the four Contracting Parties, four GO's, two IGO's and three NGO's.

Among issues discussed and decisions taken at the fifteenth meeting of particular interest for the IWC were the following:

1. Icelandic Research Programme on minke whales.

The preliminary results from the ongoing research was presented for the first time publicly. Data collections and observations were in particular related to the life history and biology of the minke whale. Emphasis was especially given to feeding ecology, a topic of importance in multi-species modelling and ecosystem based approaches to management. A meeting related to ecosystem-based management has been held in collaboration with ICES at their Annual Scientific Conference last year.

2. TNASS – international survey for large whales in the North Atlantic.

In 2007 the largest ever NASS survey is planned involving cooperation with Canada and the Russian Federation. The survey will have trans-Atlantic coverage from the European to the North American coast for the first time.

3. User Knowledge.

Following a conference in Iceland a couple of years ago NAMMCO has published the proceedings in a volume entitled: "User Knowledge and Scientific Knowledge in Management Decision-making which will form a reference base for future management deliberations.

4. Focus on hunting methods.

NAMMCO provides a forum for the exchange of information and experiences in hunting methods across the North Atlantic. The NAMMCO Committee on Hunting Methods has developed guidelines inter alia based on comprehensive testing on carcasses under controlled conditions.

5. Int. observation.

NAMMCO has an international observer scheme for the observation of whaling and sealing activities. The main focus this year will be Greenlandic and Norwegian whaling.

6. Re-election of NAMMCO Council Chair and vice-Chair.

Both the Chair – Kate Sanderson (Faroe Islands) and vice-Chair- Halvard P. Johansen (Norway) were re-elected for a further 2-year term.

OBSERVER'S REPORT ON CMS

Bill Perrin

CMS had two meetings in November 2005 in Nairobi: a meeting of the Scientific Council and a Conference of the Parties (COP). All recommendations for action on cetacean issues made by the Council were adopted by the COP:

1. Listing of the Mediterranean population of short-beaked common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) on Appendices I and II.
2. Listing of the Mediterranean population of striped dolphins (*Stenella coeruleoalba*) on Appendix II.
3. Potential funding for:
 - a. Regional workshops to build capacity and assess cetaceans in the South Pacific.
 - b. Regional workshops in Bangladesh to analyse data collected in CMS-supported surveys in the Bay of Bengal.
 - c. A regional workshop in Bangkok to build capacity in SE Asia and S Asia to cope with problems of bycatch in fisheries.
 - d. A regional symposium and planning workshop to assess status of small cetaceans and threats in the western Indian Ocean.
4. Support of efforts to develop an MOU for cetaceans in the South Pacific.
5. A resolution on bycatch promoting cooperation with FAO and direct action to assist developing countries to address the issue.
6. Adoption of a close working partnership with the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS).
7. A resolution addressing human-induced impacts on cetaceans, calling *inter alia* for collaboration with the IWC work program addressing these issues, including entanglement and bycatch, climate change, ship strikes, pollution, habitat and feeding ground degradation, marine noise.

The next meeting of the Scientific Council will be in late 2006 or early 2007, most likely in Bonn. The next COP will be in 2008.

**OBSERVER'S REPORT, 2005 ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE
INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM (AIDCP) AND INTER-AMERICAN
TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION (IATTC)**

Steve Reilly

NOAA Fisheries, SW Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, CA USA

The meeting considered routine business for the most part, including ongoing problems with financing the Agreement. It was agreed to temporarily implement an increase in membership fees (scaled to capacity of member vessels), and to decrease the frequency of meetings held each year as a further cost-cutting measure. The Parties also discussed a proposal to link the issuance of Dolphin Mortality Limits to demonstrated compliance with tuna conservation measures under the IATTC, but no consensus was reached on the proposal.

IATTC 73rd Meeting

Lanzarote, Spain 20-27 June, 2005

A report of the eastern Pacific tuna fishery for 2004 (link at <http://www.iattc.org/PDFFiles2/FisheryStatusReport3.pdf>) indicated that a total of 1,469 dolphins were killed in the course of purse seine fishing operations, comprised of 498 spotted dolphins (two stocks), 434 spinner dolphins (two stocks), 481 common dolphins (three stocks) and 56 dolphins of other species. The proportion of common dolphins was somewhat higher than normal.

Tuna conservation matters considered included a continuing concern regarding overfishing of bigeye tuna, especially juveniles taken in both purse seine and long line operations. Management measures were agreed that would limit fishing seasonally to address this concern.

Bycatch issues were also given considerable attention, including bycatch of seabirds, sharks and turtles, with resolutions passed to set the stage for decreases in bycatch levels of all three groups.

A full report of the AIDCP and IATTC meetings can be found at:

<http://www.iattc.org/Meetings2005ENG.htm>

Appendix F

PROTOCOL ON SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS AND WILDLIFE (SPA) OF THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION FOR THE WIDER CARIBBEAN.

*Alessandra Vanzella-Khouri, Programme Officer, UNEP-CAR/RCU, 14-20 Port Royal Street, Kingston, Jamaica
Tel.: (876) 922-9267-9; Fax: (876) 922-9292 ; avk.uneprcuja@cwjamaica.com; www.cep.unep.org*

1. Background:

The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region is a comprehensive, legally binding regional umbrella agreement for the protection and development of the marine environment in the region. The Convention, referred to as the Cartagena Convention, was developed under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and presently has 23 (out of 28 possible) States that are Contracting Parties. Its area of application comprises the marine and coastal environments of the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea and the areas of the Atlantic Ocean adjacent thereto, south of 30 north latitude and within 200 nautical miles of the Atlantic Coasts of the States.

The Convention is supplemented by three Protocols covering oils spills response, biodiversity conservation and land-based sources of pollution. The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA Protocol entered into force in 2000 and is the only regional biodiversity agreement for the conservation and protection of the marine environment in the Wider Caribbean. The Regional Coordinating Unit (CAR/RCU) of UNEP for the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) coordinates implementation of the SPA Protocol and its programme through the mandate of member governments and SPA contracting parties. Additionally, a Regional Activity Centre (RAC) for SPA in Guadeloupe, under the auspices of the Government of France, provides technical support for the implementation of the programme in support of SPA.

2. Relevance to the IWC:

Articles 11 and 21 of the SPA Protocol call for the development and implementation of programmes for protected species, as well as guidelines and criteria for the management of protected species, including migratory species. Annex II of the SPA Protocol lists all species of marine mammals of the Wider Caribbean as threatened and endangered. In this context, governments have agreed on the need to develop a regional management plan for the conservation of marine mammals, through Decisions of Meetings of the Contracting Parties of the SPA Protocol, of the Tenth Intergovernmental Meeting of the CEP and the Seventh Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the Cartagena Convention, 7-11 May 2002; and the results of the informal consultation presented to the Second Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of SPA (Curaçao 2003).

3. Recent developments :

A Regional Workshop of Experts on the Development of the Marine Mammal Action Plan for the Wider Caribbean Region (Barbados, 18 – 21 July 2005) was convened by UNEP-CAR/RCU to review and further develop a "Draft Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region", prepared under the coordination of UNEP-CAR/RCU through an electronic Working Group of experts.

The immediate goal of the Wider Caribbean Marine Mammal Action Plan is to assist Governments of the region in their efforts to develop and improve marine mammal conservation policies and practices. The Plan is intended to provide a framework for activities at the national level and regional or international co-operation, on the basis of respect for the sovereign rights of Governments. The broad aims include: management of human interactions; assessing and mitigating threats; addressing strandings, takes and captivity; habitat degradation; and species protection (improved scientific knowledge, maintained or restored abundance where appropriate, protected habitats); and using the precautionary approach within the context and principles of sustainable development.

4. On-going work and next steps :

Following decision III of the Third Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of SPA (Venezuela, 4-8 October 2005), the existing electronic Working Group of experts should be expanded to include other interested Parties and organizations and continue working with a view to present a progress report with a revised draft of the regional Marine Mammal Action Plan to the Fourth Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the SPA Protocol (December 2006). In the interest of progress, and with regard to marine mammal conservation, decision III also recommends that countries of the region begin developing national action plans to the extent possible. Priority actions identified and on-going under the coordination of UNEP-CAR/RCU include: the compilation of a bibliography on marine mammals; education and public awareness materials; guidelines and criteria associated with captivity; protocols and techniques for responding to strandings; research protocols; and country capacities/capabilities and institutional support.

The UNEP-CAR/RCU secretariat is exploring possible areas of cooperation and synergies with international relevant organizations and experts to further the objectives and implementation of the SPA Protocol, including the IWC regarding cetacean management and conservation. Relevant documentation is available from the UNEP-CAR/RCU website at: <http://www.cep.unep.org/pubs/meetingreports/MMAP/mmap.php>.

OBSERVER REPORT OF THE 14TH ANNUAL MEETING OF PICES

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 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 14th annual meeting of PICES (PICES XIV) was held at Hyundai Hotel, Vladivostok, Russia in 29 September – 9 October, 2005. Unfortunately Kato was not able to attend the meeting due to simple logistic reason happened during movement position from National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries to Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology. Information obtained correspondence with Dr. W. Sydeman of MBM/AP co-chair.

MBM/AP met afternoon on 5 October, 2005 and following discussions raised during regular session.

- (a) AP-MBM urges member nations to increase support for delegates and participation in general for scientists to attend annual PICES meetings. The PICES community would benefit greatly from this effort.
- (b) AP-MBM would benefit from Chinese agencies (Forest Service Administration [seabirds], State Oceanic Administrations [marine mammals]; assigning delegates to AP-MBM.
- (c) AP-MBM would benefit from more Korean agency (KORDI, NFRDI) involvement. Korea has expanding interest in marine birds and mammals. The Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem project offers new opportunities. AP-MBM requests that Korea provide another delegate to this committee with expertise in seabirds. In particular, Dr. “Sunny” Pae may be a suitable candidate for this position.
- (d) AP-MBM is concerned with lack of participation by Russian marine bird and mammal scientists. The AP-MBM and PICES would benefit greatly by their active participation.
- (e) AP-MBM encourages Canada to designate a marine bird expert to serve on this committee. Canada has many active marine bird research programs, yet the Canadian marine bird position on the AP has been vacant for 3 years.

In addition, MBM/AP reviewed the topic session (S3) “*Factors affecting distribution, foraging ecology and life histories of top predators in the western North Pacific and its marginal seas*” was held 4 October, 2005 at the Hyundai Hotel. This session was co-convened by BIO/AP-MBM (Drs. Kato and Sydeman) and Dr. S. Kitaysky and Dr. A. Trites. The half-day session was well subscribed, with 9 oral presentations and 3 poster presentations. The topic session was viewed as completely successful, taking both a wide geographic approach, and regional focus (Sea of Okhotsk). All presentations were excellent and represent continuing integration of MBM research in PICES community. The session provided an excellent overview of oceanography of the western North Pacific and Sea of Okhotsk as well as specific MBM research in the region. Highlights included information on the occurrence of extremely rare northern right whales in Sea of Okhotsk and interactions between Sakhalin Island oil exploration and endangered gray whales. Differences in the scale of responses to climate variability between marine mammals and marine birds were discussed. A trans-Pacific overview of Steller’s sea lion and northern fur seal population dynamics was presented.

For PICES XV, *MBM/AP* proposed to have a full day workshop on “*Synchrony in responses of marine top predators to large-scale climate variability: mechanisms of environmental forcing*”, which was supported by BIO and approved by the Science Board.

The next PICES annual meeting (PICES XV) will be held at Red Brick Warehouse (#1), Yokohama, Japan in October 12 – 22, 2006.

**OBSERVERS REPORT OF THE 2005 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
RESEARCH AND STATISTICS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS**

Laurence Kell, CEFAS, Lowestoft Laboratory, Pakefield Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 0HT, UK

The 2005 STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH & STATISTICS (SCRS) of ICCAT was held in Madrid, Spain between October 3 and October 7, 2005.

The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas is responsible for the conservation of tunas and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas. There are about 30 species of direct concern to ICCAT: Atlantic bluefin (*Thunnus thynnus thynnus*), yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*), albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) and bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*); swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*); billfishes such as white marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*), blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*), sailfish (*Istiophorus albicans*) and spearfish (*Tetrapturus pfluegeri*); mackerels such as spotted Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus maculatus*) and king mackerel (*Scomberomorus cavalla*); and, small tunas like skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), black skipjack (*Euthynnus alletteratus*), frigate tuna (*Auxis thazard*), and Atlantic bonito (*Sarda sarda*).

Through the Convention, it is established that ICCAT is the only fisheries organization that can undertake the range of work required for the study and management of tunas and tuna-like fishes in the Atlantic. Such studies include research on biometry, ecology, and oceanography, with a principal focus on the effects of fishing on stock abundance. The Commission's work requires the collection and analysis of statistical information relative to current conditions and trends of the fishery resources in the Convention area. The Commission also undertakes work in the compilation of data for other fish species that are caught during tuna fishing ("bycatch", principally sharks) in the Convention area, and which are not investigated by another international fishery organization.

Information on the by-catch of marine mammals is collected by ICCAT and it has been recommended that this information be collected through observer programs and that some nations have reported on by-catch level of marine mammals to the SCRS. The SCRS has also recommended that the Secretariat develop a data base management system to accommodate scientific observer data and that progress is being made on this topic. The ICCAT web site currently contains the available scientific observer data with information on by-catches of mammals, birds, turtles and other species.

For more detail see the ICCAT web site: <http://www.iccat.es>

OBSERVER'S REPORT FROM THE NAMMCO SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Lars Walløe

The 13th Annual meeting of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee was held at Reine in Lofoten, Norway, 24 - 27 October 2005. In addition to Scientific Committee members, observers from Canada, The Russian Federation and the High North Alliance attended the meeting. The full report of the meeting will be published soon in the NAMMCO Annual Report and is presently available on the NAMMCO web site at www.nammco.no. Topics related to seals and walrus are not presented in this report.

Harbour porpoise

In 2004 the Scientific Committee noted that there is likely a substantial level of bycatch of harbour porpoise in Icelandic fisheries. The same is likely true for Norway. The directed catch in Greenland exceeds 2000 in some years. Better estimates are needed in order to estimate the sustainability of the ongoing catch and bycatch.

Narwhal

A joint meeting of the NAMMCO Working Group on the Population Status of Narwhal and Beluga in the North Atlantic, and the Canada-Greenland Joint Commission Scientific Working Group was held 13-16 October 2005 in Nuuk, Greenland. New results on age estimation were presented and discussed. Catch statistics for narwhal was updated, giving options with various degrees of correction for non-reporting, underreporting and struck and lost. A model based assessment for West Greenland narwhales strengthened the conclusion reached in 2004, that West Greenland narwhales are heavily depleted and that substantial reductions in catch are required immediately to arrest the decline in numbers. Because of lack of information about stock structure and migration of East Greenland narwhal and only a very old abundance estimate, a reliable assessment was not possible for narwhales in this area. A risk analysis on narwhale hunting in the Canadian High Arctic gave as a preliminary conclusion that the situations for narwhales in this area is less dramatic than for narwhales in West Greenland.

Beluga

An updated assessment model for West Greenland beluga, using all available data on catch and abundance, and various combinations of data and parameters as sensitivity tests, was provided. All model runs estimated similar dynamics, where West Greenland beluga is severely depleted.

Minke whales

Norway had continued its 6 year rotational sightings survey program and blocks north of Iceland and around Jan Mayen were surveyed this year. The Icelandic Research Program continued in 2005 with the take of 39 minke whales in coastal waters. An aerial survey with minke and fin whales as the target species was conducted successfully in West Greenland in September 2005.

Fin whales

The NAMMCO Working Group on fin whales met in Oslo 20-22 October 2005. The Working Group discussed available data on stock structure, historical catches and abundance, and discussed a new assessment model for the East Greenland fin whale population. An important aspect of the discussions was to identify research tasks that could be completed and data that could be obtained ahead of the *Joint NAMMCO/IWC Scientific Workshop on the Catch History, Stock Structure and Abundance of North Atlantic Fin Whales* scheduled for March 2006. The workshop was held in Reykjavik, Iceland, 23-26 March 2006. The participants considered this first joint meeting between the NAMMCO and IWC Scientific Committees successful, efficient and productive. The report from the workshop is document SC/58/Rep 3 to this meeting.

Dolphins

An analysis of the distribution and abundance of common dolphins from the NASS and other surveys was provided. No sightings were made north of 57° N in any year.

North Atlantic sightings surveys

The next NASS is planned for 2007. Efforts have been made to coordinate NASS with other surveys to take place in 2007, both surveys planned to cover European Atlantic offshore waters outside the continental shelf area and possible Canadian and US surveys on their eastern seabords.

**OBSERVERS REPORT ON THE 13TH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE
AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF SMALL CETACEANS OF THE BALTIC AND NORTH
SEAS (ASCOBANS), APRIL 2006, FINLAND**

Peter J.H. Reijnders (The Netherlands)

The 13th meeting of the Advisory Committee to ASCOBANS was held in Tampere, Finland, from 25-27 April 2006.

Two new countries, France and Lithuania, acceded in 2006 to ASCOBANS bringing the number of Parties at 10.

The meeting considered all topics listed in the triennium work plan (www.ascobans.org). Of relevance to the IWC are the following items, conveniently grouped into:

- Recovery Plans for harbour porpoise in the Baltic (“Jastarnia Plan) and for harbour porpoise in the North Sea (NSHPRP)
- Population status of small cetaceans
- Anthropogenic influences on small cetaceans and related mitigation measures

Recovery plans: the implementation of the Jastarnia Plan is ongoing and the first steps include development of a database of opportunistic sightings, strandings and bycatch, investigation of fishing effort, a study on genetics of harbour porpoises in the ASCOBANS area, a workshop on establishment of criteria to be applied in identifying sites of importance to harbour porpoise.

The drafting of a Recovery Plan for harbour porpoise in the North Sea has entered its final stage. During the process it became clear that there was insufficient evidence that there was a need for recovery of populations in the North Sea. Instead of a generic recovery plan as was called for by the North Sea Ministers, it was considered more appropriate to recommend tailored measures for specific stocks, which would rather constitute a Conservation Plan for Porpoise in the North Sea. This Plan will be submitted for adoption by the next Meeting of Parties, coming September in The Netherlands.

Populations status: The preliminary results of the second cetacean abundance survey in the North Sea (SCANS II), held in 2005, were presented to the meeting. Despite the preliminary nature of the findings, it was apparent that many more porpoises were present in the southern North Sea/eastern Channel than previously, with a possible decrease in abundance further north and east. The final results are expected to become available at the end of 2006, early 2007. Other smaller scale surveys carried out in the Baltic and along the coast of Brittany and the Bay of Biscay were discussed as well.

The meeting discussed and supported a proposal for holding two workshops on bottlenose dolphins with key aims to 1) identify fine-scale population structure and distribution, 2) determine key bottlenose dolphin habitat, and 3) quantify reasons for decrease in range.

It was noted that the IWC had also plans to hold a workshop on bottlenose dolphins and the meeting recommended that the organizers should contact the IWC to seek co-operation.

Several anthropogenic related factors and activities having a (potential) impact on small cetaceans and possible mitigation measures to address those were discussed. Activities included were high speed ferries, military activities, offshore extractive activities, wind farms and pollution.

The Committee acknowledged the activities carried out by the IWC Scientific Committee in particular the work under the IWC-POLLUTION 2000+ programme, and looks forward to collaboration on bycatch take modelling. It furthermore would welcome co-operation in the earlier mentioned workshops on genetics in harbour porpoise, on criteria for protected areas and on bottlenose dolphins.

**REPORT OF THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN CETACEAN COMMISSION (ECCO)
ACTIVITIES FOR 2005/06**

*Nigel Lawrence
Dominica*

Since the 58th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and the Scientific Committee (SC) Meeting are being held in St. Kitts it was deemed necessary for the work programme of the Eastern Caribbean Cetacean Commission (ECCO) for the year 2005/06 to focus on mainly public relation exercises and promotion of public awareness relative to these events. In this vein, plans/programmes of a scientific nature had to be differed to the ensuing year.

A report on further developments will be ready for presentation to the next SC meeting in 2007.