

Overview of the work of the technical adviser assigned to the Secretariat in relation to ship strike mitigation: October-May, 2012.

The Secretariat

1. INTRODUCTION

At IWC/63 in 2011 the Commission endorsed an F&A Committee recommendation to supply a technical expert to the Secretariat in order to assist with reducing conflicts between cetaceans and marine resource users. The appropriate paperwork was signed in early October, and the position is scheduled to last through December, 2012, with an option to extend if parties agree. The brief summary of the objectives for this secondment are as follows:

- Advance work associated with the entanglement of large whales;
- Further desired work on the IWC ship strike database;
- Represent, where appropriate, the IWC at other international organizations or IWC endorsed events

2. SHIP STRIKE WORK TO DATE

While most of his initial effort has been focused on specific tasks related to large whale entanglement, Mattila was able to represent and highlight the IWC ship strike database in several international venues, including the **Second International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas**, where he chaired a panel on immediate human impacts (e.g. ship strike, entanglement, oil spill and whalewatching), and gave two presentations (Plenary and workshop) including the work involved with the IWC ship strike database. The Conference was hosted by France with many partner sponsors, and attended by participants from 42 countries.

Additionally, he represented the IWC at a **UNEP-CEP-SPAW Inter-Regional Workshop on Broad-Scale Marine Spatial Planning and Transboundary Marine Mammal Management**, Panama City, Panama, 21-24 May, 2012. This workshop focused on entanglement and ship strike in the context of marine spatial planning and transboundary governance. Here he gave a presentation highlighting the use of historical whale sighting data in relation to moving the shipping lanes in Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary (USA), and the subsequent real time use of passive acoustics to warn shipping of the presence of endangered right whales, through mobile phone and computer apps. He also brought the existence and purpose of the IWC ship strike database to the attention of the Marine mammal officer of SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programs) of UNEP in Apia, Samoa, during a meeting in October, and various other workshops and symposia in the USA (California and New England) and Korea.

The Technical Advisor has also represented the IWC, and expressed the needs of the ship strike data review group, at an international workshop of experts on: **Criteria and Case Definitions for Human Originated Cause of Death, Proximate or Contributing Cause of Death for: Vessel, Fishing and Gunshot Trauma in Stranded Cetaceans and Pinnipeds**, Woods Hole, MA, USA February 1-2, 2012. The goal of this workshop was to bring together veterinarians and scientists from around the world, who have experience determining human impacts on marine mammals, in order to develop a consensus on the criteria for determining human impacts on both live and dead marine mammals. The results of this workshop will include criteria for determining mortality from ship strikes on large whales, and will be very helpful in assisting the Scientific Committee and the ship strike data review group in finalizing criteria for the IWC ship strike data handbook.

Mattila has been working with several Commissioners, members of the Scientific Committee and representatives of other IGOs in order to establish workshops related to ship strike various parts of the world. This includes adding, when appropriate, a “ship strike” detection component to the recently-established entanglement capacity building workshops (IWC/WKM&AWIRep1). This might include adding a day for a veterinarian expert to train participants in the latest techniques of determining, pre and post mortem wounds from ship strikes and entanglements. Mattila has also assisted in discussions of potential ship strike mitigation workshop(s) during the next year.

3. UPCOMING WORK

Mattila will provide a seminar and engage with government representatives about IWC entanglement and ship strike initiatives at the upcoming annual meeting of the Secretariat of the Pacific Region Environmental Programs, and will continue to assist the ship strike database through outreach and a synthesis of the Woods Hole criteria report, with the existing draft IWC ship strike database handbook. In addition, he will continue to work with Commissioners, Scientists and IGOs to establish capacity building workshops in priority regions.