

Action Plan 2011-2016 (submitted by the USA)

Objective	Actions	Notes	Timelines	Responsible parties
1. Research Develop the necessary principles and tools are developed to assist in ensuring that whalewatching does not have a significant adverse impact on the behaviours and fitness of individual cetaceans or populations, or on their habitats.	1.1 - Develop (and/or review), pending further comprehensive scientific research and assessment (refer to action 1.3 refers) guiding principles to be followed in whalewatching operations to minimise potential adverse impacts	Principles will need to <u>should be precautionary where data are lacking and should make every effort to</u> address (as appropriate): (a) regionally specific issues (b) sectoral issues including the nature of the whalewatching platform as well as user type commercial/recreational); (c) life history basis of species (resident vs migratory; small vs large cetaceans) and (d) the category of cetacean populations (resident, migratory in breeding grounds migratory in feeding ground; migratory in migratory corridor).	Short term	Scientific Committee
	1.2 - Identify data deficient and critically endangered populations likely to be subject to whalewatching. Develop <u>precautionary guidance and advice</u> on additional mitigation measures that may be required for whalewatching operations on such populations.	Critically endangered populations should be defined using IUCN categories or relevant national legislation (where identification is undertaken on a regional basis).	Short term	Scientific Committee Contracting Parties

	<p>1.3 – Consider an integrated research program to better understand the possible effects of whalewatching on the demographic parameters of cetacean populations. Seek to:</p>	<p>The program or its components should be designed such that it is able to (a) demonstrate a causal relationship if one exists, between whalewatching exposure and the survival and vital rates of exposed cetacean individuals; (b) understand the mechanisms involved in causal effects (if they exist) in order to help define a framework for improved management.</p> <p>Consideration should also be given to the development of standard methodologies for the conduct of assessments.</p>	Long term	Scientific Committee
<p><u>2. Assessment</u></p> <p>Appropriately scaled monitoring programs are will be developed that maximise the chance of detecting potential adverse impacts on individual cetaceans and on populations.</p>	<p>2.1 - Review Collate, review and update ‘operator’ data collection systems and associated templates to ensure they are scientifically useful robust and data can be used in future research / analytical studies.</p>	<p>The conduct of this task needs to be informed by work designed to give effect to action 1.3</p> <p>Previous work by the Scientific Committee - such as that on utilising the opportunities for scientific research conducted from whalewatching boats using standardized data forms, will be relevant.</p>	Medium to Short term Long term	Scientific Committee

	<p>2.2 - Facilitate the development of common metrics for impact assessments which may be used to inform management of whalewatching activities to mitigate <u>potential</u> impacts on subject individuals or populations.</p>	<p>The conduct of this task needs to be informed by work designed to give effect to action 1.3</p> <p>Development must take into account the need for regionally relevant and/or population specific metrics.</p> <p>Metrics should consider thresholds of concern, limits of acceptable change -and 'exposure caps'.</p>	<p>Medium term <u>Long term</u></p>	Scientific Committee
	<p>2.3 - Improve industry and public access to data, information and research results from monitoring programs.</p>	<p>Use of web-based tools should be given priority, subject to meeting the needs of remote communities.</p>	Medium term	Scientific Committee, IWC Secretariat
<p><u>3. Capacity building</u></p> <p>Identify methods to facilitate cooperation and information / expertise sharing between Contracting Parties and others to support the development of a responsible whalewatching sector and the provision of benefits to local communities.</p>	<p>3.1 - Identify, on a regional basis, specific capacity building and development needs.</p>	<p>A key initial task will be the development of an agreed regionalisation for the action.</p> <p>The needs of all key whalewatching constituencies, including vessel operators, tourism organisations and government regulators/managers, will need to be identified.</p> <p>Mechanisms such as workshops, email and web based communications (or other means as appropriate) should be considered.</p>	Short term	Conservation Committee, <u>Scientific Committee</u> Contracting Parties

	3.2 - Identify, on a regional basis, examples of demonstrated best possible practice within the whalewatching sector.	As for action 3.1	Short term	Conservation Committee, Scientific Committee , Contracting Parties
	3.3 - Identify and facilitate opportunities for the transfer (or development where a gap has been identified) of best possible practice approaches to meet identified capacity building needs.	Additional mechanisms (to those identified for actions 3.1 and 3.2) may include exchange visits, training, and internships.	Medium term	Conservation Committee, Contracting Parties
	3.4 - Identify and facilitate mechanisms to disseminate products developed under the Strategic Plan.	Consideration should be given to using mechanisms already employed by government aid agencies and appropriate NGOs, marine research institutes and other Multilateral Environment Agencies.	Short term	Conservation Committee, Scientific Committee , IWC Secretariat
	Review – comprehensively assess the utility of outputs to allow for activities to be refocused, if required.	Inputs from Contracting Parties and other users will be critical.	Within two years of commencing work on actions.	Conservation Committee

<p>4. Development</p> <p>Facilitate access to funding and development organisations and to information concerning economic and social cost and benefit analyses associated with the establishment of whalewatching operations.</p>	<p>4.1 - In conjunction with relevant international bodies, facilitate access to guidance for Contracting Parties and others on creating enabling environments for whalewatching operations to market and run their businesses responsibly.</p>	<p>All actions need to be developed recognising that the responsibility for economic, business and social development lies with industry and national governments.</p> <p>Relevant international bodies may include UN and other Development Agencies, and the World Tourism Organization.</p>	Short term	Conservation Committee, IWC Secretariat
	<p>4.2 - Identify and list funding and development organisations able to offer assistance relevant to the establishment and maintenance of whalewatching operations at varying scales.</p>	<p>As for action 4.1</p> <p>Relevant bodies -may include UN Development Agencies, the GEF, NGOs and Philanthropic Foundations.</p>	Short term	Conservation Committee, IWC Secretariat
	<p>4.3 - Provide advice on the development of 'communities of practice' and other collaborative forums to assist communities (and Contracting Parties) seeking to develop whalewatching operations to share information on challenges and opportunities encountered in establishing whalewatching operations.</p>	<p>As for action 4.1</p> <p>It is envisaged that a key player in this respect will be the range of international NGOs and Philanthropic Foundations who are able to provide effective co-ordination and support services to regional groupings of operators.</p>	Short term	Conservation Committee, IWC Secretariat.

	4.4 - In conjunction with relevant international bodies develop guidance and training tools that address occupational health and safety aspects of whalewatching operations.	As for action 4.1	Medium term	Conservation Committee, Contracting Parties
5. Management Develop an adaptive management framework for whalewatching, based on best available science, which addresses the needs of management and industry.	5.1 - Complete an inventory of the suite of governance arrangements, including implementation schemes , available to manage the whalewatching sector.	The inventory will need to include analyses and case studies, and cover the spectrum from highly regulated permit and cap systems to voluntary codes of practice. A key resource exists in previous work (under the Scientific Committee) on compiling information on existing and 'model' legislation and guidelines from around the world (A Review of Whale Watch Guidelines SC/56/WW10).	Short term	Conservation Committee, Scientific Committee
	5.2 - Complete an inventory of measures currently utilised to minimise potential impacts on cetaceans and their habitats arising from whalewatching actions.	The inventory will need to clearly link measures (such as management guidelines) with the potential impacts they are intended to mitigate. Measures to protect habitat should not be neglected.	Medium term	Conservation Committee, Scientific Committee

	<p>5.3 - Develop training and education tools for industry practitioners.</p>	<p>Tools should (a) address understanding and improving cetacean and visitor safety, (b) support improvements in existing whalewatching practices; and (c) help enhance visitor understanding and experiences.</p> <p>Training can usefully address issues as diverse as boat handling (safety and ensuring appropriate responses to stress behaviours and animal welfare issue) and visitor interpretation skills (biology, natural history, conservation status, local area, habitat and culture).</p>	Medium term	<p>Conservation Committee, Scientific Committee, Contracting Parties</p>
	<p>5.4 - Develop advice on cost-effective monitoring and compliance regimes and alternative strategies to promote environmentally responsible whalewatching.</p>	<p>Advice should be illustrated with case studies covering different practices (from formal boat inspection regimes to community education to promote 'public' monitoring and reporting.)</p>	Medium term	<p>Conservation Committee, Scientific Committee</p>