

Outcome and Follow-up to IWC/61

ARNE BJØRGE, DEBRA PALKA, GREG DONOVAN

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE REPORT

The complete Report and Annexes can be found on the IWC website:

http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/screport.htm

Items 22-24 of our report (IWC/61/Rep 1, pp 96-101) describe Committee priorities and initial agenda for the 2010 meeting, data processing and computing needs for 2009/10, and funding requirements for 2009/2010 respectively.

E-mail correspondence groups

[Annex Q](#) gives e-mail correspondence groups and their terms of reference. **Please check it** to make sure that your name is included under those Working Groups you wish to participate in - if you wish to join any of the Working Groups, please contact Jemma Jones directly (jemma.jones@iwcoffice.org). Remember, if your e-mail address changes, please let the Secretariat know. Convenors of all groups have been notified of their members and the e-mail addresses you used when you registered.

Task table for the intersessional period

The Secretariat has pulled out all of the tasks identified in the Committee's report and who should complete them. This has been placed on the Scientific Committee website -**please check it** and if at all possible, follow it!!

http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/sctasks.htm

NEXT YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING: VENUE AND DATES

The 2010 Annual Meeting of the Committee (SC/62) will be in Agadir, Morocco. **The tentative time-window for the SC meeting is 30 May to 11 June, with pre-meetings most likely 28 and 29 May.** There will be two pre-meeting meetings on issues related to AWMP and IA. Depending on progress made intersessionally, the pre-meeting of AWMP will consider issues related to gray whales and Greenlandic Fisheries. The pre-meeting of IA is planned to cover abundance estimates of Antarctic minke whales based on data from the IDCR/SOWER surveys. These pre-meetings are scheduled to facilitate the completion of IA and AWMP agendas and the details of the agenda items to be discussed will be circulated as soon as possible and certainly by 1 February 2010. These pre-meetings will be considered part of the main sub-committee or SWG agendas: discussion will not be re-opened during the main sub-committee week.

ANNUAL MEETING TIMETABLE AND SUB-GROUP STRUCTURE

At this year's Scientific Committee meeting, 14 sub-committees (including Standing Working Groups and *ad hoc* Working Groups) were established. Seven days were available for sub-committees, and up to 105 sessions for sub-committees were scheduled (three concurrent meetings for each of five work sessions per day, starting at approximately 08:30 and ending typically at 18:00). The time after 18:00 was used for e.g. *ad hoc* working groups, report drafting and computer analyses. Evening sessions were also available for sub-committees that were unable to complete their agenda during day sessions as well as special Committee sessions on particular topics (e.g. the *Implementation* process, SORP). We will follow this approach at SC/62.

As you will see from our approved work plan (see below and the IWC/61/Rep 1, Item 22, pp 96-97), the sub-committee and working group structure next year is similar to the structure used in Madeira. In addition, the Special Permit (SP) working group will meet during two evening sessions early in the sub-committee week to complete its agenda. The Sanctuaries working group (SAN) will only be established if there is a new formal proposal for sanctuaries submitted according to the guidelines for review by the Committee. As last year, , one evening session will be used to 'communicate' a key theme of the Committees work; the 'Comprehensive Assessment' and 'the AWMP' are candidate themes.

The sub-committees and the respective Convenors are given in the table below. At the convenors meeting the day after the Committee meeting, it was agreed on a trial basis to nominate co-convenors to some of the larger sub-committees. Precise details of how this will work will be left to the individual convenors and co-convenors but it is hoped that this will contribute to easing the workload of some convenors, add more people to the convenors group and provide training in chairing meetings. It will also mean that there will be a reserve in the event that a convenor is unable to attend the meeting.

Sub-Committee/WG	Convenor	Co-convenor
RMP: Revised management procedure	Bannister	
AWMP: Aboriginal whaling management procedure*	Donovan	
NPM: North Pacific minke whales	Hammond	
BRG: Bowhead, Right & Gray whales*	Kitakado	
IA: In-depth assessment	Walløe	Skaug
BC: Bycatch & other anthropogenic mortality	Perrin	
E: Environmental Concerns	Moore	
EM: Ecosystem Modelling	Gales	Ferguson
WW: Whalewatching	Kato	Bejder
SM: Small Cetaceans	Fortuna	
SD: Stock Definition	Bravington	
SH: Southern Hemisphere	Zerbini	Robbins
SP: Special Permits	Bjørge	
DNA: DNA testing	Pastene	
*All papers relevant to the eastern gray whale <i>Implementation Review</i> will be dealt with in AWMP		

COMMITTEE PRIORITIES FOR 2010 IN THE LIGHT OF COMMISSION DISCUSSIONS

As in recent years and with the Committee's agreement, the Convenors met after the close of the Committee meeting and drew up the following as a basis for an initial agenda for the 2010 meeting. The same criteria as in previous years were taken into account (e.g. IWC, 2004b, p. 51). The Committee had recognised that these priorities may have to be reviewed in light of decisions made by the Commission. The priorities given below have been modified to take into account Commission discussions (see below), particularly with respect to western North Pacific common minke whales.

The Commission agreed that for **western North Pacific common minke whales**, the Scientific Committee should follow the option in the Scientific Committee report (Item 20.2.2 (2) - pages 93-4 of the version on the website) that specifies completing a full *Implementation Review* as soon as possible, ideally by the 2012 Annual Meeting. This will be possible if the *pre-Implementation Assessment* can be completed at the next Annual Meeting.

With the current workload for sub-committees, items of lower priority on sub-committee agendas ('other issues' below) will only be discussed if time allows. When discussing its priorities, the Committee again stressed that papers considering anything other than priority topics will probably not be addressed at next year's meeting. It agreed that this information should be included on the website when the information about document submission is published next year.

Budget

We are pleased to note that the Commission accepted our budget request (Table 15 under Item 24 of the Report, pp 97-100) for the 2009/10 intersessional activity and for Invited Participants to the SC62. We owe special thanks to Nicky Grandy and Sean Moran for their help in supporting our request.

Committee priorities and initial agenda for the 2010 meeting

Revised Management Procedure (RMP)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) review results of a workshop to estimate the parameters of the environmental model and finalise the Bayesian meta-analysis so that a final decision can be made on the range for MSYR to be used in the RMP at the 2010 meeting;
- (2) finalise the approach for evaluating proposal amendments to the CLA;
- (3) finalise the audit of the Bryde's whale survey data;
- (4) use the Bryde's whale *Implementation Simulation Trials* to evaluate the effect size (and power) for current and historical age-composition data;
- (5) review previous (and any new) genetic power analyses for the western North Pacific Bryde's whales;
- (6) evaluate the trade-off between the cost of finding Bryde's whales and successfully attaching satellite tags and the value of this information to address questions of stock structure;
- (7) review the research proposal for the North Atlantic fin whale 'variant with research' to be submitted to the 2010 meeting; and
- (8) review the North Atlantic fin whale abundance estimates for use in the CLA.

Aboriginal Whaling Management Procedure (AWMP)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) review the results of the intersessional workshop to refine the specifications and implementation of the sex-ratio methods and the associated robustness tests so that a decision can be taken at the 2010 Annual Meeting on whether the sex-ratio method can be used to provide management advice (*inter alia* this is dependent on the coding and hence validation of the sex-ratio method and the associated robustness tests);
- (2) develop and review appropriate operating models for West Greenland fin whales for use in the development of an *SLA*;
- (3) conduct the *Implementation Review* for the Eastern North Pacific gray whales; and
- (4) provide the annual review of catch advice for the Greenlandic hunts (apart from bowhead whales), eastern North Pacific gray whales and St Vincent and The Grenadines humpback whales

Bowhead, right and gray whales (BRG)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) assess the stock structure and abundance of the Eastern Canada and West Greenland bowhead whales and provide catch limit advice for the Greenlandic hunt;
- (2) perform the annual review of new scientific information and catch advice for the B-C-B Seas stock of bowhead whales;
- (3) review new information on all stocks of right whales, western North Pacific gray whales, and the small stocks of bowhead whales; and
- (4) review the report of the intersessional Steering Group on the assessment of southern right whales.

In-depth assessment (IA)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) produce agreed abundance estimates of Antarctic minke whales using IDCR/SOWER data;
- (2) conduct an analysis of ageing errors that could be used in catch-at-age analyses of Antarctic minke whales and review the results;
- (3) continue development of the catch-at-age models of the Antarctic minke whales; and
- (4) continue the examination of the differences between minke abundance estimated from CPII and CPIII, particularly the impact of sea ice on the abundance estimates.

North Pacific common minke whales (NPM)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) Review results of the intersessional workshop and complete *pre-Implementation Assessment*
- (2) If (1) is completed plan for First *Implementation Workshop*

Issues identified at the Annual Meeting that will form part of the *Implementation* process

- (3) continue work on integration of available abundance estimates from Japanese and Korean surveys with consideration of migration as well as correction of $g(0)$;
- (4) continue work on investigation of stock structure for western North Pacific common minke whales including stocks in the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea;
- (5) continue work for drawing information on the trend and/or relative abundance index.

Bycatch and other human-induced mortality (BC)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) review collaboration with FAO on collation of relevant fisheries data and joining FIRMS;
- (2) estimation of rates of entanglement and entanglement mortality;

Other Issues

- (3) progress in including information in national Progress Reports;
- (4) review of methods to estimate mortality from ship strikes;
- (5) continue development of the international database of ship strike incidents; and
- (6) review methods for assessing mortality from acoustic sources and marine debris.

Stock definition (SD)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) progress on TOSSM (new tests of methods new reference datasets);
- (2) update guidelines on DNA Data Quality;

Other Issues

- (3) review proposed guidelines on analysis of genetic data for use in management;
- (4) other statistical and genetic issues related to stock definition; and
- (5) consideration of possible definitions of 'unit to conserve' (noting that Appendix 2 this year represents significant progress).

DNA (DNA)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) review genetic methods for species, stock and individual identification;
- (2) review of results of the 'amendments' work on sequences deposited in GenBank;
- (3) collection and archiving of tissue samples from catches and bycatches; and
- (4) reference databases and standard for diagnostic DNA registries.

Environmental concerns (E)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) review the results of the intersessional workshop and complete POLLUTION 2000+ phase II planning (carried over from last year);
- (2) anthropogenic sound (focus on shipping noise);

Other Issues

- (3) review progress on work from the three sub-groups of the 2nd climate change workshop;
- (4) review progress of the cetacean emerging and resurging disease (CERD); and
- (5) SOCER – the focus of the SOCER for SC/62 will be Arctic polar seas;
- (6) other habitat related issues.

Ecosystem modelling (EM)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) discuss EM's role in the Committee;
- (2) consider models that are relevant to the Committee's evaluation of special permit whaling, as well as other relevant ecosystem models; and
- (3) discuss the issues surrounding functional responses at next year's meeting.

Southern Hemisphere whales other than Antarctic minke whales (SH)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) humpback whales-complete the assessment of breeding stock B;
- (2) blue whales (Antarctic and pygmy); and
- (3) prepare for assessment of breeding stocks D, E and F.

Small cetaceans (SM)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) the status of small cetaceans in the eastern tropical Atlantic;

Other Issues

- (2) consider report from the intersessional working group on climate change;
- (3) takes of small cetaceans; and
- (4) review progress on previous recommendations.

Scientific permits (SP)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) consider need to revise 'Annex P'; and
- (2) mechanism to complete Panel Review.

Whalewatching (WW)

The following issues are high priority topics:

- (1) review whalewatching off North Africa;
- (2) assess the impacts of whalewatching on cetaceans (methods and results of changes in behaviour and movement patterns; methods and results of physiological changes to individuals; and methods and results of demographic and distributional changes);

Other Issues

- (3) review reports from Intersessional Working Groups;
- (4) evaluate data from platforms of opportunity;
- (5) review of whale-watching guidelines and regulations; and
- (6) review of risks to cetaceans from whale-watching vessel collisions.

INTERSESSIONAL WORKSHOPS

The full list of intersessional workshops and approximate dates was developed in Madeira and given in Table 13 on page 96 of the report. Further details of each workshop will be provided as soon as they become available but we have the following updates on two of these:

- the AWMP workshop on the sex ratio method for common minke whales will be held in Copenhagen from 14-17 December 2009 - the final details of the venue (probably at the ICES building) are being finalised but this and other information will be put on the website and circulated as soon as it becomes available;
- a *pre-Implementation Assessment* workshop on western North Pacific common minke whales will take place in Japan (venue and final dates to be confirmed) probably during the week 15-19 February 2010 chaired by Phil Hammond - a steering group is being established by the Chair, Vice-Chair and Head of Science in consultation with the convenors.

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION DECISIONS

You can find a summary of the Commission's discussions via the press release on the website:

<http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/meeting2009.htm>.

We have already referred to the Commission's discussions with respect to Western North Pacific common minke whales and the budget.

You will also be interested to note that the Commission did not finalise its discussions on the quotas for Greenland and that these will probably be the subject of an intersessional Commission meeting in early December.

The Commission passed a Resolution by consensus on 'Climate and Other Environmental Changes and Cetaceans' that *inter alia* endorsed the results of our climate change workshop.

<http://www.iwcoffice.org/documents/commission/IWC61docs/61-16.pdf>