

# UK Whale Welfare and Ethics Workshop

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## Animal WELFARE and the International Whaling Commission: a brief history

- IWC has brought about improvements to the welfare of whales starting as long ago as the 1950s
- Positive steps:
  - Resolutions related to whaling killing methods and associated animal welfare issues (e.g 1978-4, 1993-1, 1994-1, 1995-1, 1997-1, 1999-1, 2001-2, 2004-1)
  - Banning of the cold (non-explosive) harpoon (1980)
  - Formation of 'Whale Killing Methods Working Group' (1983)
  - Workshops on whale killing methods (1992, 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2006)
  - Action Plan on Whale Killing Methods (1995, 1999, 2003)
  - Resolution to end the use of the electric lance (1995)

## Animal ETHICS and the International Whaling Commission: a brief history

- Ethics first addressed in 1978
- Scientific Committee sub-committee formed to consider cetacean intelligence and social bonds and possible implications for management
- Resolution 1998-4 on use of whales in scientific research
- 1999 report from Secretariat on best practice:
  - (1) cause the minimum of stress and distress, suffering and pain; and
  - (2) consider if the research results could be achieved using fewer animals or by other (non-lethal) means.

# Workshop background

- ‘Future of the IWC’ process: questions and observations regarding animal welfare raised by contracting governments.
- Animal welfare identified as a ‘Category A’ issue requiring resolution → suggestion for further work at IWC63 and IWC64.
- IWC62: UK Government proposed Whale Welfare and Ethics workshop to take place prior to IWC63

# Whale welfare and Ethics Workshop 2011

- March 2011 – workshop hosted by UK (supported by WSPA)
- Over 30 participants from eight countries
- Attended by international experts from fields of animal welfare, animal ethics and cetacean biology
- Animal welfare concerns are not only limited to whaling



# Aims of workshop

- To collate knowledge on the current status of animal welfare science and ethics and management policies globally and;
- To allow discussion and analysis of such information and its potential relevance to the work of the IWC.

## General conclusions from the Workshop (1/3)

- Whales are **sentient** animals with **intrinsic value** – we therefore have a **moral obligation** towards them.
- Human activities can have **adverse impacts** on whale welfare. These can be direct and indirect, intentional and unintentional.
- Humans have responsibility to **prevent suffering** caused by unnecessary human activities and to mitigate those which cannot be prevented.
- Human activities resulting in poor welfare, including fishing gear entanglements, prolonged kills and ship strikes are major animal welfare concerns.

## General conclusions from the Workshop (2/3)

- **Training and education** of all personnel engaged in all forms of human-whale interactions has significant potential to improve animal welfare.
- Ongoing **monitoring** of human-whale interactions, with data collection & analysis, are essential to ensure good animal welfare
- Activities which may result in poor welfare should be subject to **independent scrutiny and ethical review**. Such a review should include a cost-benefit analysis.



## General conclusions from the Workshop (3/3)

- The IWC should take account of best practices in animal welfare advocated and implemented by other international and regional agreements relating to animals (e.g. the OIE codes on killing and use of animals for research)
- Ethics and animal welfare science should be taken into account in the management of all human-whale interactions.
- Whale survival and welfare should be paramount concerns for whale policy makers.

## Conclusions for specific human-whale interactions

- Killing and euthanasia of whales
- Use of whales in scientific research
- Whale watching
- Vessel strikes and entanglements.

## Workshop recommendations (1/6)

1. The IWC should take into account welfare issues in the development and implementation of its management and conservation actions and procedures.



## Workshop recommendations (2/6)

2. The IWC should consider adoption of a Schedule amendment regarding provision and open access to practical and relevant welfare data for all forms of whaling.



## Workshop recommendations (3/6)

3. The IWC should promote 'Responsible Whale Watching' and facilitate the development of a five year strategic plan to progress this work



## Workshop recommendations (4/6)

4. The IWC should introduce a mechanism by which independent ethical review can occur, particularly with reference to whaling conducted for scientific purposes.



## Workshop recommendations (5/6)

5. In light of the welfare and conservation challenges faced by whales in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the IWC should continue to strengthen its conservation agenda.





## Workshop recommendations (6/6)

6. That the IWC convene an intersessional ad-hoc working group of interested member countries to consider in detail the recommendations and conclusions of the Workshop and how these might be adopted by Commission at IWC64.





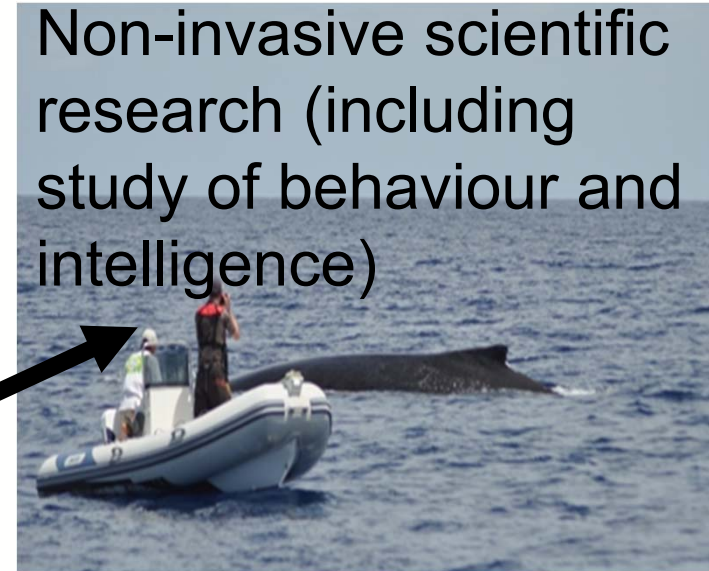
# Possible focus for intersessional group



## Aims:

- To provide advice to the IWC to update and improve its approach to animal welfare and ethics
- To provide recommendations which enable a scientific, holistic and objective approach to the management of animal welfare and ethics by the Commission

# Welfare and ethics: central to the work of the IWC



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**Animal welfare  
and ethics**



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## Concluding comments

Good animal welfare =

Healthy populations for future =

Good for whales and all those who  
benefit from them

