



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

Nairobi, Kenya, 16-18 November 2005

CMS/ScC.13/Inf.10

DEVELOPING THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN WDCS AND CMS

Note by the Secretariat

The CMS Secretariat is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the 13th meeting of the CMS Scientific Council, the document entitled “Developing the Partnership between WDCS and CMS” prepared and submitted to the Secretariat by the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society. The report is being reproduced unedited in the form and the language in which it was received by the Secretariat.

Developing the Partnership Between WDCS and CMS

WDCS is an international non-governmental organization with substantial resource and expertise in the area of cetacean conservation. Our activities span more than 25 countries around the world. Our expertise crosses the spectrum from cetacean conservation science and field research, to the development of habitat protection models and policy implementation, to political and legal capabilities covering a wide range of cetacean conservation and protection issues.

WDCS is also one of the leading world-wide funders of non-invasive cetacean conservation research. We work closely with recognized cetacean science experts, and are very interested to direct significant energy into field research that serves the needs of CMS, its cetacean conservation Agreements and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

During the 8th CMS Conference of the Parties, WDCS and the CMS Secretariat will sign a formal Partnership Agreement which includes the development a Joint Work Programme to contribute to the CMS Strategic Plan 2006-2011.

Our intent in entering this Partnership is to build conservation initiatives around the ecological needs of cetaceans. We wish to develop a recognised 'migratory range approach' to conservation to:

- address the multiple, cumulative and synergistic impacts faced by these species;
- effectively protect habitat critical to their survival, including areas that are regularly used for feeding (including hunting), breeding (all aspects of courtship) and raising young, as well as areas used for socialization and communication; and
- weave a fabric of broader conservation measures across many jurisdictions, coordinating local, regional and international efforts to maximize the marine conservation outcomes for all concerned.

As part of the Partnership Agreement WDCS is pledging for the next triennium to:

- work with CMS towards the 2010 target and cetacean conservation around the world;
- work with all current and future CMS cetacean related agreements and MoUs in their development, resourcing, on-ground implementation, and promotion through regional and international opportunities;
- share with CMS our scientific information resource to assist CMS with its commitment to the 2010 target and to report against trends in abundance and distribution of cetacean species, the status of threatened cetacean species, and the coverage of effective cetacean critical habitat protection.

We retain our strong and ongoing organisational commitment to the two existing regional Agreements - the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) and the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) and the developing Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitat in the Pacific Islands Region - and are committed to working towards the

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Document date: November 2005

development of agreements in South East Asia, the Bay of Bengal and in Central West Africa and to develop protection opportunities in South America and the Caribbean.

WDCS Working Group in Support of CMS Cetacean Research Priorities

In the next triennium, as a contribution to the Joint Work Programme under the Partnership Agreement, WDCS will expand our programme of work to harmonize with the CMS Strategic Plan 2006-2011, in order to maximise the effectiveness of WDCS, CMS and its Agreements and MoUs.

To support this Joint Work Programme, WDCS proposes to convene an ongoing WDCS Working Group in Support of CMS Cetacean Research Priorities (WGCP) to prioritise projects that would be accepted as a contribution to the CMS Strategic Plan 2006-2011. The key objectives of the WGCP will be to:

1. develop key science work to be undertaken in each triennium, in support of the cetacean related priorities within the CMS Strategic Plan 2006-2011;
2. agree on WGCP contributions to the Joint Work Programme; and
3. increase the flow of information into formal CMS processes through the CMS Appointed Scientific Councillor for Aquatic Mammals and Large Fishes.

Where WDCS is the sole financial contributor, WDCS will retain funding control of all projects conducted under the WGCP, but commit to share fully with CMS the outcomes of these research projects. Where projects are jointly funded, control will be decided through the Joint Work Programme.

The WGCP will involve the CMS Appointed Scientific Councillor for Aquatic Mammals and Large Fishes and the CMS Secretariat Scientific and Technical Support Officer, as well as key WDCS individuals and invited participants, and will ensure appropriate consultation with the CMS Scientific Council.

The WGCP will convene in close association with each CMS Scientific Council meeting and will provide appropriately timed WGCP reports for the CMS Scientific Council, Standing Committee and Conference of the Parties.

WDCS Proposed Interim Work Programme in Support of the CMS Strategic Plan 2006-2011

Until such time as the WGCP formally contributes to the agreed Joint Work Programme, WDCS will maintain our planned work programme.

The following 7 proposals, that will be considered by the WGCP, are presented for information and possible consideration by the CMS Scientific Council:

1. Appendix I, Concerted Action Species
 - a. Blue whale, *Balaenoptera musculus*, Ecology and Conservation in Coastal Productive Areas off Chile (Project ID WDCS 1)
 - b. Southern right whale, *Eubalaena australis*, survey off the Atlantic Uruguayan coast (Project ID WDCS 2)
 - c. Abundance and distribution of cetaceans, including Atlantic spotted, *Stenella frontalis*, and bottlenose, *Tursiops truncatus*, dolphins and Bryde's whale, *Balaenoptera edeni*, in the central coast of Venezuela: Implications for conservation and management (Project ID WDCS 9)
2. Appendix II, Cooperative Action Species
 - a. Preliminary Survey and Conservation of Irrawaddy Dolphin *Orcaella brevirostris* & Indo-Pacific Hump-backed Dolphin *Sousa chinensis* in Sembilang National Park, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia. (Project ID WDCS 4)
 - b. Abundance estimation and movement patterns of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins, *Tursiops aduncus*, using photo-identification in the Swatch-of-No-Ground of Bangladesh (Project ID WDCS 6)
 - c. Assessment of current status and conservation of Irrawaddy dolphins, *Orcaella brevirostris*, in Chilika Lagoon, Orissa (Project ID WDCS 7)

- d. Establish a protected area for Irrawaddy dolphins, *Orcaella brevirostris*, and a human-dolphin cooperative fishery in the Ayeyarwady River of Myanmar (Project ID WDCS 8)
3. Projects in support of CMS Resolution 7.2, and the development of Agreements or Memorandum of Understanding
 - a. Abundance estimation and movement patterns of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins, *Tursiops aduncus*, using photo-identification in the Swatch-of-No-Ground of Bangladesh (Project ID WDCS 6)
 - b. Assessment of current status and conservation of Irrawaddy dolphins, *Orcaella brevirostris*, in Chilika Lagoon, Orissa (Project ID WDCS 7)
 - c. Establish a protected area for Irrawaddy dolphins, *Orcaella brevirostris*, and a human-dolphin cooperative fishery in the Ayeyarwady River of Myanmar (Project ID WDCS 8)
 4. Projects in support of CMS Recommendation 7.4, and regional coordination for marine mammal conservation in South East Asia
 - a. Preliminary Survey and Conservation of Irrawaddy Dolphin *Orcaella brevirostris* & Indo-Pacific Hump-backed Dolphin *Sousa chinensis* in Sembilang National Park, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia. (Project ID WDCS 4)

These project proposals are articulated in more detail in annex 1.

13th Scientific Council Consideration

The submission of this document to the 13th meeting of the CMS Scientific Council seeks the Council's:

1. Acknowledgment of the Partnership Agreement between WDCS and CMS, and WDCS's commitment to:
 - a. work with CMS towards the 2010 target and cetacean conservation around the world;
 - b. work with all current and future CMS cetacean related agreements and MoUs in their development, resourcing, on-ground implementation, and promotion through regional and international opportunities;
 - c. share with CMS our scientific information resource to assist CMS with its commitment to the 2010 target and to report against trends in abundance and distribution of cetacean species, the status of threatened cetacean species, and the coverage of effective cetacean critical habitat protection.
2. Endorsement of the proposal to convene an ongoing WDCS Working Group in Support of CMS Cetacean Research Priorities (WGCP) to develop and agree on WGCP contributions to the Joint Work Programme that will support of the cetacean related priorities within the CMS Strategic Plan 2006-2011; and
3. Agreement to review the progress of the WDCS/CMS collaboration at its 2006 and 2007 meetings.

Annex 1: WDCS Project Proposal Summaries

Blue whale, <i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>, Ecology and Conservation in Coastal Productive Areas off Chile	Justification: App I Concerted Action Species	Project ID: WDCS 1
<p>This study aimed to determine and characterize habitat essential to the survival and recovery of blue whales, <i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>, and the extent to which physical and biological processes determine distribution, movements and behaviour. It also aimed to identify current and potential threats to blue whales and their habitat and to help to raise public awareness on the most relevant issues. The importance of this region as a feeding and nursing ground to this endangered species is exceptional since it can be regarded as the most important blue whale aggregation area (in terms of density) identified up to date in the Eastern South Pacific and arguably, throughout the Southern Hemisphere. Auspiciously, the Chilean National Environmental Agency (CONAMA) has endorsed a proposal towards creating a Marine Protected Area in the Western Chiloé Island, Corcovado Gulf and Guambelin Island.</p> <p>Location: - Chile</p>		
Possible collaborating organizations/sponsors	WDCS/WWF-US Fieldwork conducted by Centro Ballena Azul	
Project duration	3 years	
Indicative budget	US\$60,000 (US\$20,000 per annum for fieldwork – includes vessel maintenance etc.)	
CMS Seed activity (funding needs are indicated, where applicable)		
Southern right whale, <i>Eubalaena australis</i>, survey off the Atlantic Uruguayan coast	Justification: App I Concerted Action Species	Project ID: WDCS 2
<p>The southern right whale, <i>Eubalaena australis</i>, is found as its name suggests, exclusively in the southern hemisphere. Its populations were driven to the edge of extinction due to whaling activity and it is currently categorised by the World Conservation Union (IUCN 2002) as a conservation-dependant species. As a migratory animal, during the austral summer the southern right whale is found in high latitudes in its subantarctic feeding areas (60° S), then at the beginning of the austral winter, it migrates to middle (40° S) and lower (20° S) latitudes looking for temperate and calm waters for mating and calving. Uruguay (35° S) is situated between two important reproductive sites of the species in the South Atlantic: the coasts of Santa Catarina State, Brazil (27° S) and Peninsula Valdés, Argentina (42° S). However, the status of southern right whales along the Uruguayan coast is relatively unknown and this project aims to obtain the first systematic right whale data in Uruguay.</p> <p>The field team intends to work with researchers from Argentina and Brazil in order to improve and standardise research methods such as photo-identification, behavioural methods, and abundance estimation. They then seek to integrate this information with that collected in other marine environmental projects, so as to contribute to the knowledge of the species in the area and the establishment of protected areas in the south-western Atlantic Ocean. This information will provide the building blocks for developing future studies in the area, such as DNA research for identifying stocks, migratory route research, standard behavioural sampling methods, and pigmentation patterns. Additionally, these studies should help to highlight possible recovery/recolonisation in areas where the whale populations were previously depleted due to the whaling industry.</p> <p>Location: - Uruguay</p>		
Possible collaborating organizations/sponsors	WDCS Fieldwork conducted by Cetaceos Uruguay	
Project duration	3 years	
Indicative budget	US\$30,000 (US\$10,000 per annum for fieldwork – includes aerial surveys)	
CMS Seed activity (funding needs are indicated, where applicable)		
Preliminary Survey and Conservation of Irrawaddy Dolphin <i>Orcaella brevirostris</i> & Indo-Pacific Hump-backed Dolphin <i>Sousa chinensis</i> in Sembilang National Park, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia.	Justification: Recommendation 7.4 App II Cooperative Action Species	Project ID: WDCS 4
<p>Sembilang National park has a total area of 205.750ha and is the largest mangrove forest in the Indo-Malayan region, providing critical habitat for many threatened species of wildlife including the Irrawaddy</p>		

<p>Dolphin <i>Orcaella brevirostris</i> and the Indo-Pacific hump-backed dolphin <i>Sousa chinensis</i>, however despite several recorded sightings of individuals of both species, Sumatra is not included in the "official" distribution of either species.</p> <p>The main objectives of this project are to assess populations of both dolphin species in the coastal waters of the national park and to provide base-line information on cetacean diversity in the area. This study will be the first of its type in Sumatra, and the information gathered will be used to work towards formal protection of the various dolphin populations and their preferred habitat. This pilot study will also be used as a means of engaging in collaborative research with Irrawaddy and Indo-pacific humpback dolphin researchers elsewhere in the world and will contribute important data to the global knowledge of both species.</p> <p>This preliminary survey of the coastal waters of Sembilang National park will consist of two components and include (1) boat-based surveys to assess base-line species abundance estimates, (2) information on current and historical distribution gathered from; interviews with animal traders and hunters, forestry and nature conservation departmental records (Provincial and District), forestry staff and local communities.</p> <p>Location: - Sembilang National Park, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia</p>	
Possible collaborating organizations/sponsors	WDCS
Project duration	3 years
Indicative budget	US\$60,000
CMS Seed activity (funding needs are indicated, where applicable)	

Abundance estimation and movement patterns of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins, <i>Tursiops aduncus</i>, using photo-identification in the Swatch-of-No-Ground of Bangladesh	Justification: CMS Resolutions 7.2 App II Cooperative Action Species	Project ID: WDCS 6
<p>The Swatch of No Ground is a trough-shaped marine valley or undersea canyon that crosses the continental shelf diagonally and is situated on the south of the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta. It is located approximately 35 km from the Sundarban of Bangladesh and has a maximum depth of 1200m, with depths at its edge ranging between 60-800 m. A probable resident population of at least 100 Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins <i>Tursiops aduncus</i> was recently discovered along the edge of the Swatch-of-No-Ground, sharing habitat with at least two species of baleen whales (Bryde's, <i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>, and fin <i>B. physalus</i>) and at least two other delphinids (spinner, <i>Stenella longirostris</i>, and Pantropical spotted, <i>S. attenuata</i>).</p> <p>The objectives of this project are to estimate the population size and investigate movement and residency patterns of the bottlenose dolphin population using photo identification techniques and to document the occurrence of other species in the Swatch. This study will be the first of its type in Bangladesh, and will be used to highlight the rich cetacean diversity in Bangladesh waters and to work towards formal protection of the bottlenose dolphin population and their preferred habitat.</p> <p>Cetacean by-catch by coastal fisheries information will also be collected through opportunistic in situ interview sessions with fishing boats encountered. As deep sea fishing is a comparatively new technique for the Bangladesh fisheries industry, basic data is almost non-existent. As there is no commercial value of dolphin, by-catch carcasses are not brought to the fish landing sites therefore this study will mainly aim at interviewing fishermen at work.</p> <p>Location: - Swatch-of-No Ground, Bangladesh</p>		
Possible collaborating organizations/sponsors	WDCS	
Project duration	3 years	
Indicative budget	US\$30,000 (US\$10,000 per annum – includes vessel maintenance)	
CMS Seed activity (funding needs are indicated, where applicable)		

Assessment of current status and conservation of Irrawaddy dolphins, <i>Orcaella brevirostris</i>, in Chilika Lagoon, Orissa	Justification: CMS Resolution 7.2 App II Cooperative Action Species	Project ID: WDCS 7
<p>Irrawaddy dolphins in Chilika are found in four ecological regions of this lagoon and are currently thought to be an isolated population however, confirmation of this requires further research along the east coast of India. Population size is estimated to be 110-117 animals and the wide range of threats, including boat activity (fisheries and tourism) and habitat degradation are a serious concern to their continued presence in the area. Further research throughout the lagoon is essential in order to determine the current distribution,</p>		

trends in abundance and movement patterns to identify hotspots for the dolphins. Location: - Chilika Lagoon, India	
Possible collaborating organizations/ sponsors	WDCS
Project duration	3 years
Indicative budget	US\$60,000 (US\$20,000 per annum)
CMS Seed activity (funding needs are indicated, where applicable)	

Establish a protected area for Irrawaddy dolphins, <i>Orcaella brevirostris</i>, and a human-dolphin cooperative fishery in the Ayeyarwady River of Myanmar	Justification: CMS Resolutions 7.2 App II Cooperative Action Species	Project ID: WDCS 8
<p>The aim of this project is to provide technical and logistical support to the Myanmar Department of Fisheries for establishing a protected area for Irrawaddy dolphins <i>Orcaella brevirostris</i> and a human-dolphin cast-net fishery in an approximately 70-km segment of the Ayeyarwady River between Mingun (located just upstream of Mandalay) and Kyaukmyaung. During a status assessment in December 2004, 23 individuals from this "Critically Endangered" population, which numbers only about 72 individuals, were observed occupying this segment. It is also the only area where a cooperative fishery between the dolphins and cast-net fishermen is reported to occur. The main threats to these dolphins include: - electric fishing; entanglement in gill-nets; gold-mining operations; pollution; habitat degradation. In many areas of the world dolphins are viewed as competitors to humans. From a conservation perspective, this project has a great advantage because the dolphins are generally revered by local people and they provide direct economic benefits to cast-net fishermen via their role in the human-dolphin cooperative fishery. We intend to capitalize on the already positive attitude of fishermen by promoting the cooperative fishery and, if deemed desirable after learning more about the dolphins and consulting extensively with the fishermen, providing opportunities for income generation from tourism activities that involve dolphin and fishery watching. The idea would be to establish a certification process whereby qualifying fishermen would be able make extra money by taking small groups of tourists out in their boats to observe the cast-net fishing technique and the dolphins. This money would be an enormous help to these generally impoverished fishermen and may also be an option to partially compensate local fisheries departments and townships for lost revenue from permits no longer sold for gill netting concessions as these are eliminated on a stepwise basis.</p> <p>Location: -Upper reaches of the Ayeyarwady River, Myanmar</p>		
Possible collaborating organizations/ sponsors	WDCS and WCS (Lead Researcher; Brian Smith)	
Project duration	3 years	
Indicative budget	US\$150,000 (includes staff time, office rent etc.)	
CMS Seed activity (funding needs are indicated, where applicable)		

Abundance and distribution of cetaceans, including Atlantic spotted, <i>Stenella frontalis</i>, and bottlenose, <i>Tursiops truncatus</i>, dolphins and Bryde's whale, <i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>, in the central coast of Venezuela: Implications for conservation and management	Justification: App I Concerted Action Species	Project ID: WDCS 9
<p>During 1996-1998, researchers from the Venezuelan Ministry of Environment (MARN) started a pilot project on the cetaceans of the state of Aragua, in the central coast of Venezuela. They found the presence of Atlantic spotted, <i>Stenella frontalis</i>, and bottlenose, <i>Tursiops truncatus</i>, dolphins and Bryde's whale, <i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>. Dolphins are found to be present all year around and certain species of whale can be found approximately between October-February each year. The encounter rate with cetaceans on this coast is about 60-70%. Since 1998, no systematic research efforts have been made to evaluate the current status of cetacean populations in this area. In addition, almost all the research effort has been made on the western half of the coast of the State of Aragua. With an increase in tourism to the area, local and regional dolphin and whale-watch operators have started to show an interest in offering commercial trips, therefore a very high increase in the number of vessels and dolphin-human interactions is expected in the short-medium term. In order for the activity to be considered sustainable, research and monitoring efforts must be re-started on a systematic basis. According to the "National Strategy on Biological Diversity and its Action Plan" (MARN 2001) one of the top priorities is scientific research and monitoring. Accordingly, the</p>		

aim of the present project is to update and improve the quality of scientific information on abundance and distribution of cetaceans in the coast of Aragua, as the foundation on which sustainability of this industry will be granted.	
Location: - Aragua State, central-coast of Venezuela	
Possible collaborating organizations/ sponsors	WDCS
Project duration	3 years
Indicative budget	US\$45,000
CMS Seed activity (funding needs are indicated, where applicable)	