



# CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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THIRD MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE  
CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS AND THEIR  
HABITATS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION  
Noumea, New Caledonia, 8 September 2012  
Agenda Item 3.3

## REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP

*(prepared by the Technical Advisory Group Coordinator)*

1. The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was initiated after the 2<sup>nd</sup> CMS Pacific Cetaceans MOU Meeting of the Signatories held in Auckland, New Zealand, in 2009. At this meeting Cara Miller, supported by WDCS, was endorsed as the Coordinator and entrusted with making progress on this body. The following is a brief outline of work to date.
2. For the second half of 2009 and early 2010 several processes were initiated, including the following:
  - a) Communication with the coordinators of the other technical bodies that support CMS cetacean agreements as well as the Chairman and the Appointed Councillor for Marine Aquatic Mammals of the CMS Scientific Council to encourage a working relationship and synergy with these expert bodies;
  - b) Collation of Pacific cetacean species listed on the CMS appendices as well as conservation status reports for all Pacific cetacean species;
  - c) Uploading of Pacific cetacean diversity records into an online tool developed for the Pacific Cetaceans MOU was commenced;
  - d) A preliminary list of Signatory requests gathered at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of Signatories was compiled.
3. In November 2010 a call for nominations to the TAG was circulated to all Signatories. This call indicated that experts could be from any discipline that Signatories anticipated they might seek assistance in progressing the CMS Pacific Cetaceans MOU. Nine nominations were received. Brief profiles of each of these nominees were then circulated to Signatories (in March 2011) and subsequently were all approved by unanimous consent. As a result the make-up of the TAG is as follows: Prof. Scott Baker, Dr. Laura Boren, Dr. Simon Childerhouse, Dr. Louise Chilvers, Dr. Rochelle Constantine, Mr. Peter Komidar, Dr. Cara Miller (Coordinator), Dr. Michael Noad, Dr. Marc Oremus, and Dr. Margi Prideaux.
4. In January 2011 the TAG Coordinator began work on developing a summary report of Pacific cetacean species to be submitted by the TAG on behalf of the Signatories to CMS COP10. The reporting format used for this report was based on information that is currently

requested by CMS for its Parties and also included recommendations made on reporting format by participants at the 2<sup>nd</sup> CMS Pacific Cetaceans MOU MOS. The draft report was circulated to all TAG members in May 2011 for their technical comment. Versions incorporating iterative comments and edits were circulated a number of times to TAG members and Signatories. Signatories were given a final opportunity to provide input comment and give approval on the final version before it was submitted to CMS COP10. The final report represents a comprehensive assessment of Pacific cetaceans within CMS Pacific Cetaceans MOU EEZs and can be found at [http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop10/docs\\_and\\_inf\\_docs/inf\\_18\\_09\\_pic.pdf](http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop10/docs_and_inf_docs/inf_18_09_pic.pdf).

5. Additional work by the TAG has sought to recognize information needs for Signatories. In February 2011 a listing of requests collected during the 2<sup>nd</sup> CMS Pacific Cetaceans MOU was circulated for reference. In April 2012, a request for information on the potential impacts of sea-bed mining on cetaceans was received by the TAG Coordinator from Fiji. An outline for this proposed information document is given in the Annex. However, it is hoped that this meeting might provide further input into the overlying objectives of this planned work to therefore enable benefit to as many Signatories as possible. Hence, clarification and recommendations for the scope of the TAG information document on the impacts of sea-bed mining on cetaceans are requested during the 3<sup>rd</sup> CMS Pacific Cetaceans MOU MOS.

6. As a partner of CMS since 2005 WDCS is committed to assisting the effective and strategic implementation of CMS cetacean agreements. Accordingly, Cara Miller and WDCS would be happy to continue the role as Coordinator of the TAG until the MOS4. Further information on future work can be found in CMS/PIC/MOS3/Doc.5.1.

**Action requested:**

The Signatories, and where appropriate other meeting participants, are requested to:

- Take note of the TAG Coordinator's report.
- Comment on the outline of the sea-bed mining information document.

**Annex:**

Information document on sea-bed mining

Topics to be covered:

- a. Background information on the activities and scope of sea-bed mining operations
- b. Current locations of sea-bed mining activity in the PIR
- c. Locations/PICTs with licenses available for sea-bed mining
- d. Listing of locations/PICTs that may have sea-bed mining operations occurring in the future
- e. Direct and indirect impacts of sea-bed mining activities on cetaceans
- f. Pacific cetacean species most vulnerable to sea-bed mining
- g. Current frameworks for assessing the environmental impact of sea-bed mining activities in the PIR