



April 21st 2005

## WDCS Report to the 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee

WDCS, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, has been privileged to work closely with the CMS Secretariat on a number of initiatives in the past two years and is pleased to be invited to attend as an observer to this 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee.

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

WDCS is interested to develop a closer working relationship with CMS. Current activities that are representative of the emergent relationship between WDCS and CMS include the joint development of the CMS, ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, WDCS brochure 'Conserving Cetaceans', our partnership with CMS during the 'Migratory Species: A Passport to 2010' workshop held during the IUCN World Conservation Congress. We also retain our strong and ongoing 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 are committed to working towards the development of arrangements in South East Asia, West Africa and in the South Pacific. WDCS is also assisting with the initiation of conservation activities in South Asia through a programme of field research and forthcoming regional workshops and we look forward to this region developing.

### WDCS Pledge to CMS

During the 12th Scientific Committee meeting, WDCS took the formal step of affirming its intent to develop a closer relationship with CMS. We pledged our intent to:

- 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 and the status of threatened cetacean species, as well as the coverage of protected areas for cetaceans;
- ensure that appropriate review is applied to the quality of the technical and other support we are offering;
- work in partnership with CMS towards the 2010 target and cetacean conservation around the world.

We reaffirm this pledge to CMS during this Standing Committee meeting and offer the following report of our recent and related work as an indication of our intent.

### WDCS Cetacean Research

WDCS is one of the leading funders of non-invasive cetacean conservation research world-wide. Over the past decade, WDCS has supported over one hundred conservation field projects in over forty countries, spanning all six continents. These projects include scientific work such as population studies, research on threats and threat mitigation, as well as a broad range of conservation initiatives, working with local law enforcement agencies and developing alternative fishing activities to reduce bycatch. We work closely with recognized experts in the field of cetacean conservation and are very interested to direct significant energy into field research that serves the needs of CMS and its Parties, with an aim of working towards cetacean conservation mechanisms under the CMS umbrella such as new Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding.

In the last triennium WDCS has co-funded, with CMS, a three year cetacean survey and workshop project in the Bay of Bengal, South Asia. We are interested to look towards the future and expand this programme of work in line with the CMS Strategic Plan 2006-2011 to maximize the potential of both CMS and WDCS resources. We intend to work closely with the CMS Secretariat and CMS Parties to further develop this alignment prior to CMS CoP 8 and next the triennium.

## **Cetacean Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding**

WDCS remains deeply committed to the development of the two existing cetacean relations regional Agreements – ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS. WDCS has been represented in the Advisory Committee of ASCOBANS, and participates actively in the work of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS and provides essential global information on threats that cetaceans currently face, including fisheries interactions, noise and chemical pollution, habitat degradation and global warming to both Agreements.

WDCS is pleased to be recognised as an official ACCOBAMS Partner organisation “as a consequence of the historical relationship” with the Secretariat and “in facilitating cooperation in assessment and management activities of man-cetacean interactions and also in activities of capacity building, collection and dissemination of information, training and education”.

We are equally committed to working toward new regional Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding and towards this aim have provided technical support to the South Pacific Island States as they work towards a regional arrangement for marine mammals. WDCS has supported and attended the two regional workshops and will maintain a high level of involvement as the arrangement develops. We are also interested to become increasingly involved in the development of arrangements in South East Asia, West Africa and South Asia.

## **WDCS Publications**

From mid 2005, WDCS will commence electronic publication of an annual research report of the WDCS field research, science and policy work programmes. We intend to make this research and policy data available to CMS and CMS Parties as a contribution towards the CBD 2010 targets and with National reporting. The first of these reports will be available to CMS Parties by June 2005.

WDCS has recently completed a major global review of cetacean protected areas. The research has been widely reviewed by marine protected area practitioners around the world and details over 430 marine protected area systems that work towards cetacean conservation, in domestic and international jurisdictions, in 18 marine regions. The cetacean protected area dataset contained in this publication will be electronically launched in the third quarter of 2005 where it will be kept current and available to CMS Parties as a further data source.

## **Promotion of CMS**

WDCS was pleased to promote CMS and actively work towards CMS inclusion in the key recommendations of the World Parks Congress in 2004. The Durban Accord refers also to the role of CBD, CITES, CMS and Ramsar in the development and management of protected areas and importantly recommendation (#22) seeks to Build a Global System of Marine and Coastal Protected Area Networks by 2012, which includes species conservation and the special needs of migratory species.

WDCS worked closely with ACCOBAMS, ASCOBANS and CMS in the development of the information document ‘Conserving Cetaceans’, published in English, Spanish, French and German. The report was launched to global media in promotion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Year celebrations.

In support of CMS and WDCS mutual goals of conserving migratory species and the promotion of the migratory range approach, WDCS contributed both financially and through the presentation of a case study during the workshop ‘Migratory Species: A Passport to 2010’ during the 2004 IUCN World Conservation Congress.

We look forward to furthering this work in line with CMS Strategic Plan 2006-2011.

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