

Report of the First Meeting of the WDCS Cetacean Liaison Group

6th and 7th September 2006, San Diego, USA

The Cetacean Liaison Group has been established with a view to assisting WDCS to develop, and where possible implement, a forward strategy of key science and political work that needs to be undertaken in each triennium to progress the cetacean related priorities of CMS CoP decisions, to provide advice and recommendations to CMS on cetacean issues, and to support existing relevant CMS processes such as the taxonomic working group on marine mammals within the Scientific Council.

The meeting acknowledged the need for greater integration of science and policy work within the CMS cetacean area, and for increased coordination of civil society attention to processes within CMS.

Cetacean Liaison Group membership

The Cetacean Liaison Group agreed that the current membership of the group was appropriate to commence with, but that additional members may be sought at some point to compliment existing participation. In particular, increased participation from South America and from developing countries in other regions was considered important.

CMS agreements

The Cetacean Liaison Group noted that in addition to underpinning the development of new agreements, maintaining and strengthening existing agreements was also important. This issue will be the focus of a future meeting.

The Cetacean Liaison Group agreed that it was appropriate to encourage the member States and Secretariats of the CMS agreements to more actively use the parent convention – CMS – both to ensure that the CMS family progress was reported and recognised for its global contribution and to enable the agreement Parties and Secretariats to engage more actively with issues of global concern such as CMS CoP resolutions, recommendations, species and populations Appendix listings and CMS relationships with other forums. For example, resolutions and other actions agreed by the regional bodies could be passed up to the CMS CoP for endorsement and possible additional action. This interaction should not impede the autonomy of the agreements, but should seek to create a stronger and larger global CMS family.

WDCS agreed to create a briefing document highlighting agreement achievements and demonstrating how agreements can lead to conservation benefits. This will be for distribution in regions where new agreements were being developed.

In addition to ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS and the Pacific agreement, the Cetacean Liaison Group has agreed to initially focus on developing the following regional agreements:

WDCS CMS Programme Coordinating Office
PO Box 720, Port Adelaide Business Centre
South Australia 5015, Australia
Phone: +618 8242 5842
Fax: +618 8242 1595
Web: www.wdcs.org/wildoceans
Email: wildoceans@wdcs.org

WDCS International and UK
Brookfield House, 38 St Paul Street
Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 1LY
Phone: +44 1249 449 500
Fax: +44 1249 449 501

WDCS Deutschland
Altostr. 43, 81245 Munchen
Deutschland
Phone: +49 89 6100 2393
Fax: +49 89 6100 2394

WDCS South America
Fco. Beiró 3731
(1636) Olivos
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Phone: +54 11 4799 3698
Fax: +54 11 4799 3698

WDCS North America
70 East Falmouth Highway
East Falmouth, MA 02536, USA
Phone +1 508 548 8328
Fax: +1 508 457 1988

WDCS Australasia
PO Box 720, Port Adelaide Business Centre
South Australia 5015, Australia
Phone: +618 8440 3700
Fax: +618 8447 4211

1. West Africa/Tropical East Atlantic
2. South Asia (Pakistan – Myanmar)
3. Southeast Asia (Thailand – Philippines, southern China – northern coast of Australia.)

CMS Appendix I and II species and population lists

The Cetacean Liaison Group discussed the evolved perception of CMS Appendix II listed species as species and populations that are vulnerable. The Group acknowledged that it was important to foster an accurate interpretation of CMS Appendix II while also avoiding negative interpretation through the de-listing if species or populations for which agreements have already been concluded.

With reference to the text of the convention, Appendix II lists migratory species which have an unfavourable conservation status and which require international agreements for their conservation and management, as well as those which have a conservation status which would significantly benefit from the international co-operation that could be achieved by an international agreement. Despite this language, in some quarters the perception of App. II classification is that it is parallel to the IUCN Red List category of Vulnerable, a lower level of threat compared with App. I species which should be Endangered.

It was thought that, while it is important to stick to the Convention's definition, a differentiation among species listed on App. II could be helpful to consider. Such a differentiation could encourage a more detailed perception and interpretation of the CMS Appendix II listing as those species or populations whose conservation status would significantly benefit from international cooperation and that:

1. had not yet been addressed through the development of an international agreement for their conservation, therefore providing an impetus for conservation action and agreement development within the CMS family; or
2. had been addressed through the development of an international agreement for their conservation, therefore providing an impetus to monitor the progress of conservation efforts;

In support of this differentiation, the existing agreements Secretariats could be urged to formally report on conservation progress associated with Appendix I and II species and populations, enabling CMS to more accurately track their global conservation progress. The Cetacean Liaison Group agreed that this global role was important for CMS to maintain.

WDCS agreed to develop a white paper describing the operational differences among CMS Appendices, CITES Appendices, and the IUCN Red List. This white paper will also articulate that species and populations not listed on CMS Appendix I may still be endangered but have not been brought forward for listing either because of a lack of range States that are CMS Parties or because at the individual population level their non-migratory status disqualifies them, or because of a general lack of information on status. Differences among the other appendices and classifications will also be summarized and the CMS Appendix II criteria will be clarified.

The Cetacean Liaison Group agreed to develop Appendix listing proposals for the following species and populations, to be brought to SC14 for initial review and then to SC15 and CoP9 by Range States:

1. Atlantic humpback dolphin, *Sousa teuszii* – Appendix I
2. Harbour porpoise, *Phocoena phocoena*, (West African populations) – Appendix II
3. Clymene dolphin, *Stenella clymene*, (West African populations) – Appendix II
4. Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin, *Tursiops aduncus*, (Solomon Islands regional population) – Appendix II
5. Melon headed whale, *Peponocephala electra*, (Solomon Islands regional population) – Appendix II
6. Pantropical spotted dolphin, *Stenella attenuata*, (Solomon Islands regional population) – Appendix II
7. Spinner dolphin, *Stenella longirostris*, (Solomon Islands regional population) – Appendix II
8. Humpback whale, *Megaptera novaeangliae*, (Pacific Islands breeding population) – Appendix II.
9. Irrawaddy dolphin, *Orcela brevirostris*, – Appendix I

WDCS project development

The Cetacean Liaison Group suggested the following projects that should be considered for implementation by supporting NGOs (including WDCS) and national institutions. WDCS will function in a coordinating role to facilitate uptake for each of the Group's priority regions:

Pacific Islands Region

Regional definition: spanning between the Tropic of Cancer and 60 degrees South latitude and between 130 degrees East longitude and 120 degrees West longitude.

1. Review/assessment of the species involved in the Solomon Islands drive hunt and live-capture operations;
2. Review/assessment of the impacts of dolphin tourism on the spinner dolphin in the region;
3. As appropriate, inventory surveys in Countries and Territories that have signed the CMS agreement;
4. Review/survey mitigation measures to address depredation by cetaceans on local longline fisheries in the region

The Cetacean Liaison Group also agreed to track the IWC assessment of island breeding populations of humpback whales affected by scientific whaling as this assessment relates to the CMS agreement and may consider a project related to these populations at a later date

Tropical West Africa

Regional definition: spanning from Morocco south to Angola

5. Review/assessment of impacts to Atlantic humpback dolphins;
6. Review/assessment of the impacts of bycatch and directed takes and bycatch in Ghana;
7. Review/assessment of the status of harbour porpoises in Senegal and Mauritania
8. Review/assessment of bycatch on north west African population of harbour porpoise
9. Technical symposium/workshop to develop a small cetaceans action plan;

South Asia

Regional definition: spanning from Pakistan in the west around to Myanmar in the east and encompassing all northern islands in the Indian Ocean and inland to include river dolphins.

10. Multi-species training workshop on bycatch assessment and mitigation, in conjunction with South East Asia
11. Technical symposium/workshop, encompassing both a marine and river dolphin focus, focussed on reviewing the status of cetaceans in South Asia, developing an action plan for their conservation and working towards a CMS agreement (understanding that this work will be followed by WDCS working towards an agreement that will cover all cetaceans);
12. Review/assessment of where bycatch is known to be creating new directed take markets;

Southeast Asia

Regional definition: spanning from Thailand east to the Philippines, north to southern China and south to encompass all of Indonesia and the northern coast of Australia.

13. Multi-species bycatch training workshop, in conjunction with South Asia;
14. Part 2 of the Timor/Arafura Sea surveys

In addition, the Cetacean Liaison Group also suggested the following WDCS projects for the other developing regions:

Temperate Southeast Pacific

Regional definition: Peru and Chile

15. Review/assessment of regional bycatch and directed takes;
16. Review/assessment of bycatch and directed takes for offshore use as bait;
17. Review/assessment of habitat pressure and directed takes on coastal bottlenose dolphins;
18. Review/assessment of extent of sperm whale long-line depredation;

Tropical Southeast Pacific

19. Assessment of current bycatch levels of short-beaked common dolphins, pantropical spotted dolphins and bottlenose dolphins in artisanal fisheries off Ecuador and the Pacific coast of Colombia.

Temperate Southwest Atlantic

Regional definition: southern Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina

The Cetacean Liaison Group was not able to provide input on this region during this meeting and agreed that additional regional expertise was required. However, it was acknowledged that Brazil and Argentina are the only South American nations that have provided a modest level of domestic resources to support national cetacean conservation and research projects. It might be appropriate to consider review/assessment of regional bycatch as one of the region's research priorities.

Scientific Council Strategic Implementation Plan

The Cetacean Liaison Group discussed the CMS Scientific Council Strategic Implementation Plan Actions 1.1.1 and 1.2.1 and agreed that a review of the conservation and migratory status of species and populations for Appendix I and II listings would be possible for submission at SC15 if sufficient clarity could be sought during SC14 about the depth of the review. The Cetacean Liaison Group agreed to facilitate this work, and this progress could be reported to SC14.

Implementing resolution 8.22

The Cetacean Liaison Group endorsed the WDCS proposed workplan in support of the requirements of Resolution 8.22 and suggested that a cross correlation with requirements within the Scientific Council Strategic Implementation Plan might be appropriate to see if additional work required under the Implementation Plan could also be achieved.

Future meetings

The Cetacean Liaison Group agreed to meet again in 2007, after the next meeting of the CMS Scientific Council (March 2007) and the 59th Annual Meeting of the IWC (May 2007).

This report was concluded by consensus on: 8th November 2006