

**SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL COMMENTS**

(arising from ScC-SC8)

**VESSEL STRIKES**  
**UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.2**

(ScC-SC8 Agenda item 8.3.2)

**GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE DOCUMENT**

The Sessional Committee noted that Table 1 *Locations of at-risk CMS-listed whale populations* does not include four whale populations that are highlighted in the IWC Strategic Plan, and are migratory species:

- Western gray whale – North East coast of Sakhalin Island (Russia/Japan)
- Eastern North Pacific (ENP) blue whales – USA West Coast (California)
- North Atlantic right whale – USA & Canada East Coast
- Arabian Sea humpback whales – Port of Duqm, Oman

The four populations not included are either not listed on CMS Appendices or are occurring in non-Party Range States. The Arabian Sea humpback whale is subject of a draft joint CMS-IWC Conservation Management Plan (UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.2/Annex 3) and mitigating vessel strikes forms a key component of the recommended actions.

The Committee also proposed to renew Decision 14.48 a).

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO COP15**

The Scientific Council recommends to adopt the draft decisions with amendments as specified below.

**COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC SECTIONS/ INCLUDING POSSIBLE PROPOSALS FOR TEXT REVISION**

The following text is proposed for deletion in draft Decision 15.AA (b) (page 8 of the document):

[Parties identified in Table 1 of UNEP/CMS/Doc.25.3.2 *Vessel Strikes* are requested to report to the Conference of Parties at its 16th meeting on the progress in implementing the Decision.

The following text is proposed to be added in draft Decisions (page 8 of the document):

15.AA bis: *Directed to Parties that are Range States to CMS-listed species of marine megafauna that are subject to vessel strikes*

Parties that are Range States are requested to reach out to relevant stakeholders engaged in commercial, recreational or other vessel activities to encourage systematic reporting of all vessel strike incidents involving whales, dolphins or porpoises to the Ship Strike Database of the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

The following amendments are proposed in draft Decision 15.BB c) (page 8 of the document):

develop advice on appropriate placement of re-routing measures, such as including area avoidance (ATBA) and/or the establishment of vessel speed restrictions for key cetacean habitats, and make recommendations to Parties.