
2012: IWC64 in Panama City, Panama

The 64th annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) opened on Monday, July 2 in Panama City, Panama. This “plenary” IWC meeting is the culmination of more than three weeks of meetings of scientific and technical committees which have been working in closed sessions, discussing a vast range of conservation, welfare and management issues for the IWC to consider and maybe even *vote* upon.

Although AWI and other NGOs are not permitted to speak in the technical sub-committees that address infractions of IWC rules, whale killing methods, and the regulation of Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW), our views and concerns have been represented to national delegations here by a team of experts with decades of combined experience. Nevertheless, we hope that a long-overdue change to the Rules of Procedure for the IWC next week will permit NGOs to finally address the plenary directly on specific agenda items of concern.

A key issue on the IWC's agenda will be a proposal from Latin American nations to create a whale sanctuary in the South Atlantic—a proposal AWI strongly supports but which is fiercely opposed by the whaling nations and their allies. Another hot topic will be proposals from the United States, the Russian Federation, Greenland, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines to renew (and in Greenland's case, increase) their ASW quotas. AWI has brought compelling new information to the IWC from recent undercover investigations revealing that a significant proportion of whale meat from Greenland's quota is sold in tourist restaurants

(<http://www.awionline.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/GreenlandReportAvailabilityofWhaleMeat-072012.pdf>)—thus undermining the claim that the hunts constitute “subsistence” whaling. Additionally, we have published and distributed a new, comprehensive report on whaling in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (<http://www.awionline.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/SVGReport072012.pdf>) (view report in Spanish (<http://www.awionline.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/SVGReportSpanish072012.pdf>)), and AWI's lawyers have advised the United States that the nation's own requested quota for the Makah Tribe in northwest Washington State is premature and inconsistent with a 2003 ruling by a federal court that such whaling violates the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

AWI will also be working to:

- Advance the IWC's efforts to address the threat to whales and dolphins from marine debris and chemical contaminants;
- Support establishment of an IWC working group to address animal welfare considerations, including the possibility of euthanizing large stranded whales who cannot be rescued;
- Oppose a proposal by Japan to allow four whaling communities to violate the commercial whaling moratorium by hunting minke whales;
- Ensure that the IWC recognizes the plight of the thousands of small whales and dolphins who are not covered by the moratorium, but taken in commercial as well as subsistence hunts.

We are grateful to the government of Panama and the warm, friendly people for their gracious hospitality, and look forward to the challenges and opportunities for cetaceans that the next week will bring.

AWI'S OPENING STATEMENT

The 64th meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) constitutes a challenge. A challenge to Contracting Parties to overcome the difficulties that led to the disruption of the IWC's 63rd meeting. While that meeting ended in disarray, there was progress made by the IWC in Jersey, British Isles given its decision to revise and update and modernize its operating procedures and practices. Many have suggested that the IWC is dysfunctional, that it is at loggerheads, that it can't effectively conserve or manage cetaceans, or that it is broken. AWI does not concur. While its actions, or lack thereof, are often frustrating and the internal politics hinders conservation efforts, the commercial whaling moratorium has been a significant accomplishment saving tens of thousands of whale lives.

In addition, the Scientific Committee continues to engage in stellar work on a number of important issues related to cetacean biology, ecology, habitat, and threats to all species, large and small. AWI applauds the Scientific Committee for its continued commitment to study cetaceans, their habitats, and the threats to both. Yet, the time has come to end those studies—implementation reviews—intended to develop commercial whaling quotas or standards. Commercial whaling has been banned for decades and it will never resume. The many Contracting Governments that supported the moratorium and that steadfastly oppose commercial whaling must demand that those funds they pay to the IWC are never used to allow or even set the stage for commercial whaling.

Nevertheless, despite the advances of the Scientific Committee, whales continue to be killed for commercial gain, often disguised by science or contrived as subsistence. Neither is acceptable and efforts must be made, within and external to the IWC, to end these practices that are inconsistent with global public opinion, inherently cruel, and for which there is no justification. While we recognize that there are some subsistence groups who have a legitimate need to whale, subsistence, not profit must be the primary motivating factor. Though the current definition of "subsistence use" permits some amount of commercial sale of whale products, what is happening in some subsistence whaling nations is far from consistent with the spirit or intent of the aboriginal subsistence whaling standards of the IWC. If people have a legitimate need for whale products, it is rational to attempt to meet that need. Foreign tourists have no such legitimate need. If a country permits whale products to be sold to tourists, this does not constitute a need consistent with aboriginal subsistence whaling. If anything, any aboriginal quotas allocated to these countries must be reduced, not increased or allowed to remain static.

AWI recognizes the importance of IWC64 not only to determine if Contracting Governments can meet the challenge of engaging in diplomacy without resorting to unacceptable behaviors, but also to vigorously debate the many issues on the meeting's agenda and to create a future for cetaceans much brighter than the past.

Of urgent concern is a resolution to what constitutes a quorum. The answer is simple—a session can only be quorate and a vote can only occur if a simple majority of Contracting Governments attending a meeting are present in the room and if all governments being counted towards a quorum must have voting rights. Allowing those governments who have not paid their fees and, hence, do not have voting rights to be counted towards a quorum is rewarding bad behavior. That should never be allowed in any international fora. AWI also opposes strategies intentionally designed to prevent independent votes on important issues such as the draft schedule amendment that combines aboriginal subsistence quotas requested by the United States, Russia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines into a single proposal. This was not done to improve the efficiency of the meeting or to save time; it was done to ensure that the weaker subsistence quota requests are protected

by the stronger. While AWI has concerns about how need is calculated by the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, the lack of complete data on time to death, and of the cruelty inherent in the hunt, there is little question that the AEWC satisfies the definition of subsistence use, that it is constantly working to improve the efficiency of the hunt (thereby reducing cruelty), and that the science that it and its allies pursue is second to none.

In Russia, though these aboriginal hunts have never received critical attention from the NGO community, there is considerable concern over the cruelty inherent in killing both bowhead and gray whales. Times to death reaching two or more hours are unacceptable. We recognize that others have attempted to assist the Russians in improving the efficiency of its hunt but, for any number of reasons, these efforts have either not been possible or have not been successful. We also question the need for the size of the quotas requested by Russia for its aboriginal peoples. Its needs statement, like many others, does not contain the level of detail and analysis that should be encompassed in such a document. Furthermore, recent evidence of commercial sale of whale products in Russia requires increased attention to this hunt, its monitoring scheme, and regulatory underpinnings.

Of additional concern is the Makah gray whale hunt which, at the moment, is no hunt at all. The Makah are barred by a US federal appellate court from engaging in any whaling— and have been since 2003—pending compliance with domestic legal requirements. A quota issued now is of no consequence, relevance, or use for the United States or the Makah.

Humpback whales are the target of a controversial aboriginal hunt in St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Its quota is also up for renewal and must be denied since it has consistently failed to meet the requests, requirements, or questions of the IWC or its Scientific Committee. Its need statement is woefully inadequate, it has continued whaling well beyond the life of the original whaler (who passed in 2002) despite statements claiming it would stop, calves continue to be killed in the hunt, and whale products are sold commercially throughout the country inconsistent with the spirit and intent of the IWC. Continuing to provide this country with chance, after chance, after chance to satisfy the requirements of the IWC is not working and, without some penalty, will never work and may set a dangerous precedent for other international fora.

Humpback whales are only one of many great whales targeted in the Greenlandic hunt. At IWC64 Denmark, on behalf of Greenland, is seeking an increase in the requested tonnage of whales permitted by the IWC to be taken in the country's aboriginal hunt. This increase is the product of a highly flawed needs statement that bases the increase in need on a human population increase that is substantially overstated. It also fails to consider demographic changes and alterations in dietary consumption patterns—evidence that all suggests Greenland should be seeking a smaller quota not larger. Further, Contracting Governments cannot support a proposed increase in the tonnage of whales to be taken annually when, as is the case here, the commercial sale of whale products is significant and increasing. Such sales do not reflect local sales among neighbors in remote villages, but massive quantities of whale meat being sold in supermarkets and at restaurants; high end restaurants catering to tourists—not Greenlanders. Finally, the government's own promotion of whale meat to tourists makes it impossible to reconcile such high levels of commercial sale with alleged subsistence need—a need that, in some cases, is not being met as so much of the whale products are being sold for commercial gain.

Contracting Government's must stop the abuse of the aboriginal subsistence whaling opportunities provided by the IWC and they must not allow the commerciality of the practice to literally pull the food from the mouths of those indigenous persons and communities in need. While we recognize that there are some in Greenland that have a legitimate need for whale products, the need is not and will likely never be as high as the government claims. Only by rejecting the draft

schedule amendment will Denmark and Greenland recognize that changes must be made, past data must be reevaluated, new evidence must be analyzed, and far greater monitoring must be implemented to determine and justify a legitimate need for its indigenous people.

AWI recognizes that aboriginal subsistence whaling is just one element in a far larger suite of global concerns relevant to cetaceans. Such concerns include ocean noise, pollution, bycatch, disease, climate change, habitat degradation, commercial fishing, ship strikes—threats to great whales, small cetaceans, and a diversity of sea life that are worsening or expanding, not improving or declining. While there is an absolute need to ensure that aboriginal subsistence whaling is conducted in a manner consistent with the spirit and intent of the ICRW and Schedule, the future of the world’s whales, dolphins, porpoises, and other marine species mandates serious and consistent efforts to address the myriad threats—the worsening threats—that affect the survival of these species.

AWI is dedicated to alleviating the suffering of animals, wild or domestic. Since whaling, regardless of the modern weapons used, can’t be done without causing suffering, AWI does not support whaling. Yet, it recognizes that some communities have a need for whales and encourages those communities, their governments, and their scientists to ensure that such hunts are conducted in the most efficient and humane manner possible and that science—credible science—is constantly collected to understand the ecology and biology of the species, the impacts of the hunt, and broader threats to species and their habitats. Where a need cannot be demonstrated, where the need for science is ignored, and where commerciality becomes more important than meeting legitimate need, the Contracting Governments of the IWC must act. Those governments have a chance to act this year, to deny requested quotas to St. Vincent & the Grenadines and to, at a minimum, reject Greenland’s request for a larger quota—proposals that have no merit.

AWI has been a longstanding participant at the IWC. It has seen the highs and lows of this body as it has struggled over the years to find its way. It has, at times, proven its worth by making important decisions that have saved tens of thousands of whales. Yet, whales continue to die unnecessarily for “science.” There is no need to continue such killing—it is nothing more than gratuitous violence directed at a sentient creature by those attempting to hold on to a tradition from the past that the overwhelming majority of citizens oppose, for which there are shrinking markets, and for which taxpayers—those subsidizing a dying industry—have no tolerance. Considering the threats facing the world’s oceans and their inhabitants, the threat most under human control is our direct and indirect impacts to marine species, including cetaceans. Since we simply don’t know how these expanding threats will impact whales in the future, the precautionary principle dictates caution now, and such caution requires that all unnecessary killing of great whales be ended immediately.

The IWC can help achieve this future—it must. To do so, governments must discard the politics of whaling to embrace the protection of whales. They must pursue the conservation and non-lethal study of whales today and in the future just as vigorously as commercial whalers tragically pursued leviathans today and in the past. Will the IWC embrace this future?

JULY 2, 2012 - DAY 1

The 64th Annual Meeting of the IWC opened at 10 am under the chairmanship of Herman Oosthuizen, the Commissioner for South Africa who chaired the last meeting in Jersey in 2011 on a temporary basis. After calling the meeting of several hundred delegates from 69 Contracting Governments and over 90 NGOs to order, he introduced the Panamanian minister

of Foreign Affairs who proudly welcomed the meeting to Panama and described its recently established corridor to promote the study of marine mammals and whale watching. After a short break, Oosthuizen announced that a closed meeting of Commissioners had decided yesterday upon a new Chair for this meeting and the next intersessional period, Bruno Mainini of Switzerland.

Simon Brockington, Executive Secretary of the IWC, reported on which countries had lost their voting rights due to non-payment of annual fees or lack of appropriate credentials. The meeting moved directly to an issue that the IWC failed to complete last year after Japan and its allies departed the meeting en masse, leaving it without a quorum—a proposal to adopt a whale sanctuary in the South Atlantic, proposed by Brazil, Argentina, South Africa and Uruguay.

Sadly, establishment of the sanctuary, which Brazil and its allies have proposed almost annually since the 1990s, failed to gain the necessary three-quarters majority, although it secured a solid 65 percent of support. Unfortunately the absence of several European Union countries who would have voted in favor of the proposal, tipped the balance.

During the lunch break that followed, NGOs convened to decide which of us would address the Commission on issues of concern. Our hope is that, for the first ever, NGOs will be allowed at this meeting to make substantive interventions on specific agenda items.

The meeting resumed at 2 pm with a discussion on whether to retain the agenda item, “Future of the IWC”—the stalking horse under which the US previously proposed a deal that would have led to an overturn of the whaling moratorium. The agenda then moved to whale stocks and a series of reports from the Chair of the Scientific Committee on the status of various populations of whales currently protected from commercial whaling, but including some still targeted in so-called Scientific Whaling by Japan, commercial whaling under objection by Norway, and under Reservation by Iceland. One major point of interest was the report that the Scientific Committee has finally settled on a population estimate for southern hemisphere minke whales, the species targeted by Japan in Antarctica. The estimate is almost half that of the previous figure, and the Scientific Committee must now try to explain the difference—is it a decline in the population or could there be another explanation?

The day ended on the potentially contentious issue of Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW), with a report on the previous week’s meeting of the relevant subcommittee and a report based on the work of the Scientific Committee on the status of stocks subject to subsistence hunts. This provided a taste of what tomorrow might bring, as countries started to stake out their various positions, particularly with regard to whether the Bequian people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines actually qualify as indigenous and whether the blatant commerciality of the Greenland hunts justifies the current quotas, let alone an increase as Denmark requests on behalf of its autonomous dependent territory.

The meeting closed without introducing the respective ASW proposals—one jointly by the US, Russia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and another by Denmark for Greenland.

Panama hosted an evening reception with traditional dancers bedecked in feathers and sequins. Commissioners, the Secretariat and observers huddled during this reception to discuss the events of the day and the coming discussions tomorrow.

JULY 3, 2012 - DAY 2

The day opened with a continuation of the subject of aboriginal subsistence whaling quotas and the introduction by the United States of a proposed Schedule amendment by the Russian Federation, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) and the United States for a renewal of whaling quotas for their respective natives for a period of six years. These included bowhead whales for the Alaskan and Russian natives, gray whales for the Makah tribe of Washington State and Russian natives, and humpback whales for the people of Bequia in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

AWI has grave concerns with the quota requests for St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Makah tribe, and thus this attempt to bundle the quotas together under one proposal. We believe that the proposed quota for each whale stock should be judged separately, on its own merits.

After the joint proposal was introduced, countries lined up to speak in favor and against it, with many countries speaking against the Bequian request on the grounds that the hunt does not qualify as a subsistence hunt. Japan, Iceland, St. Kitts and Nevis, Iceland, St. Lucia and other pro-use countries supported the proposal while others were conflicted—supporting the US and Russian parts of the proposal while opposing the Bequian component. After much discussion, the debate ended and the proposal was put to a vote. The countries voted in line with their statements, with those expressing conflict falling on either side—some voted against the package because of their objection to the SVG hunts, and others reluctantly voting in favor, their support for the Russian and US hunts overriding their concerns with the SVG hunts. When the dust settled, the proposal passed with more than the necessary $\frac{3}{4}$ majority. Of the 12 Latin countries, only Mexico and the host country of Panama had supported the proposal. Monaco and India abstained.

In explaining its yes vote, Mexico took issue with the package approach, saying that it didn't want a precedent to be set and demanding that it not happen again. The commissioner from Mexico stated that his vote was for the United States and Russia, conceding that the SVG hunt is not aboriginal. Other countries followed suit.

An almost audible collective sigh of relief emanated from the US delegation, though not from its NGOs—including AWI—which was appalled that the US would hide behind blatant abuses of the IWC convention in order to secure its bowhead quota.

The meeting continued with the introduction by Denmark of its proposed Schedule amendment on behalf of Greenland for an increase to its subsistence quotas of bowhead, fin, minke and humpback whales. Greenland responded to AWI's findings on the commercialization of the Greenland hunts by claiming that revenue from the sale of whale products was used to purchase whaling equipment. They justified the sale of whale meat by saying that because it did not maximize profits, it was not the same as commercial whaling.

The floor discussion that followed was fairly predictable with countries falling into the usual groups of those in support and those opposing along the lines of pro-use and conservation, with the United States, as an ASW whaling nation, in the former camp. After a dozen or more interventions on either side, Denmark asked for the agenda item to be held over until after the lunch break.

Upon resumption, the meeting heard a few more interventions, including strong opposition from Australia, New Zealand and India. Denmark asked again for the item to be held over—to give the EU time to go back to Brussels to coordinate—and the meeting moved on to the report of the conservation committee.

Mexico, as chair of the committee, gave reports on the meeting held last week which included summaries of work done by the Scientific Committee and various working groups, on the “stinky” whales found in some Russian hunts, ship strikes, southern right whales of Chile-Peru, whale watching, marine debris, conservation management plans, and the voluntary fund on small cetaceans which is providing support for critical work on threatened and endangered populations, including the Vaquita porpoise.

Following the close of the meeting, delegates and observers attended a reception hosted by the government of Australia, at which the Honorable Tony Burke, Australia’s Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, gave a rousing speech about the importance of whales and the marine environment for future generations.

JULY 4, 2012 - DAY 3

The third day of plenary opened with a report from the Whale Killing Methods working group which met last week. Their summary report included reports from some of the whaling nations on the methods and weaponry used in their hunts. No information on the St. Vincent and Grenadines hunt was presented and, as usual, Norway, Japan and Iceland continue to state that they report whale killing information only to NAMMCO—the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission—because of previous “misuse of data.” AWI holds that as parties to the IWC these countries have obligations to report data to the IWC.

Next up on the agenda was Small Type Coastal Whaling and the usual request by Japan for a quota of whales for four coastal towns, including Taiji, of dolphin drive hunt infamy [[link to drive hunt page](#)]. After making its case, including claims that allowing such a proposal would not be a lifting of the moratorium on commercial whaling but an exception to it and that the resultant meat would be used only for domestic consumption, Japan sat back to hear a few supporting statements—but mainly criticism—of its proposal.

Australia put it bluntly, stating outright that the proposal was a request for a resumption of commercial whaling and that it could not be accepted. The US, New Zealand, Monaco, Mexico, the EU and Latin American nations also all opposed. Not surprisingly, Russia, Iceland, Norway and Japan’s other allies, including St. Vincent and the Grenadines, all supported the proposal, expressing sympathy with coastal peoples (but leaving their other, more political reasons for supporting it unstated). Interestingly, Denmark asked if the whales to be taken would be in addition to those already hunted in Japan’s North Pacific research whaling program, and that it couldn’t take a position until it received that information. Eventually the item was tabled leaving Denmark and the rest of the Commission waiting for an answer.

Next came the Revised Management Procedure (RMP)—the method used to calculate numbers of whales that could be taken from each stock sustainably if the moratorium were ever to be lifted. The Scientific Committee (SC) calculates the RMP using a complex process of modeling and numerical trials called implementation reviews for each whale stock. The chair of the SC gave a report on its work with respect to the RMP. Controversial issues included an Icelandic request for an

implementation review of sei whales—suggesting Iceland wants to add these whales to its whaling program. The US, with Mexico, Argentina, UK and Australia supporting, opposed this, stating that the current fin whale quota by Iceland is as much as three times higher than that which would be sustainable and that this is not the time to be discussing sei whales.

After the report of the SC on the status of the implementation plan for Western North Pacific minke whales, found in waters off Japan and Korea, the latter country announced its intention to resume scientific whaling to “get more data on stock structure and abundance estimates.” It urged expedited completion of the RMP.

This led to a cacophony of opposition from the conservation-minded countries and the usual support from those promoting use. Denmark again gave an interesting intervention, stating that it was not going to participate in the discussion.

Monaco summed it up best by stating that scientific whaling is obsolete, a sad legacy of a 60 year old instrument, that cetacean science has moved on significantly since and that there is no reason whatsoever to obtain good data through lethal means.

With that, the RMP discussion was closed and the Scientific Permits agenda item was opened with a review of the SC’s works on that topic. After debate on the validity of reviewing Iceland former scientific whaling program, this too closed and the Commission moved onto Safety at Sea and the (now expected) presentation by Japan bemoaning the efforts to obstruct its Southern Ocean whaling program. Typically, nations lined up in response to condemn actions at sea that put people and the environment at risk.

After another appeal from Korea about the hardships faced by its fisherman after the moratorium was enacted, the session closed for a break.

The final session began with reports on catches by non-member nations, with no report from Indonesia and a report on bowhead catches by Canadian Inuit. A report on Infractions by members nations followed, with Norway as chair of the infractions sub-committee reporting on infractions from the US (involving the taking of a bowhead calf); and past infractions by Denmark, Iceland, Korea and Norway—which reported 14 instances of cold harpoons being used in its commercial hunts in 2009.

The rest of the afternoon was spent on environmental and health issues, with the chair of the SC giving reports on the State of the Cetacean Environment, the Pollution 2000+ research program, diseases, impacts of oil and dispersants on cetaceans, marine renewable energy developments, and cetaceans and anthropogenic sound.

The chair closed the day by announcing that he wanted to move things along on day four and, after Monaco tried and failed to get a discussion of its proposal on the agenda for the morning session, the meeting adjourned. An evening reception organized by AWI rounded off the day.

The penultimate and longest day so far. The chair rather rapidly dispensed with climate change, ecosystems modeling, and anthropogenic impacts to cetaceans in the Arctic—two of the remaining outstanding environmental and health items—with reports on progress made by the SC on these issues. The meeting then moved on to health issues and the introduction of a resolution on the degradation of the marine environment with respect to impacts on cetaceans and humans, introduced by Germany on behalf of European nations. Several countries voiced support for the resolution, with some countries offering amendments, including one from Australia relating to scientific whaling (later withdrawn to achieve consensus). The resolution reappeared a few times during the day and eventually passed by consensus.

The Chair then returned to Denmark's proposal for an increase to its ASW quota. Denmark immediately asked for a vote and after hearing two speakers—the EU opposing and US supporting (stating that the SC has concluded that the increase won't hurt the stock and the use of products is sufficient to satisfy the interpretation of ASW by the IWC), the Chair moved to the vote.

25 countries voted in favor of the proposal and 34 against with three abstentions so the proposal failed. All the EU and Latin countries opposed with the pro-whaling nations and the US supporting. Some outrageous statements by pro-use countries followed, accusing those who opposed the vote of denying Greenlanders of food and chastising the members to "sleep well" on their actions. More rational statements came from countries like Ecuador, which had voted no. Ecuador's representative explained that while the country supported true ASW, the commerciality of the hunts—as evidenced by the work of AWI and WDCS—brought the alleged need for more animals into question. The representative of Monaco probably summed it up best when he stated that Greenlanders have choices about what they eat, stressing the advantage of being surrounded by abundant marine resources, including seals and terrestrial food such as reindeer, sheep and vegetables. He ended by highlighting the health risk from eating cetaceans, and concluded that Monaco couldn't support a quota increase—"quite the contrary."

After several countries had spoken, Denmark addressed the meeting, stating that the outcome of the vote showed that the IWC, by not wanting to establish Greenland quotas, did not want to take responsibility for the hunt. The Danish representative then stated that they would go home and reflect on what will be done regarding the future.

The meeting then settled down to more mundane but equally important issues relating to discussions of the work of the finance and administration committee (including quorum issues), the move to biennial meetings, and the establishment of a bureau. With no resolution on what constitutes a quorum and an unchallenged recommendation by the Chair to leave things as they are, the meeting moved onto the frequency of meetings and setting up a bureau. No country opposed, although several countries including the US asked for a spot on the bureau, and the issue was tabled pending the drafting of a document to change the rules of procedure, to be circulated on day five.

The Chair then moved on to the role of observers. It was generally agreed that observers should be given 30 minutes to speak over the course of the five days of plenary and that both conservation and pro-whaling observers should share the time. That format had been used for this meeting and had worked very well, with NGOs speaking to actual agenda items after country interventions, indicating that useful NGO participation was possible.

The morning session ended with an extra half hour added to the lunch hour by the Chair for bi- and multi-lateral discussions on the various outstanding items during the break.

Agenda item 20.1, Cooperation with Other Organizations, opened the afternoon session and after a back and forth, led by Mexico, about the trade in whale meat between Iceland and Japan, Monaco introduced its proposed resolution on highly migratory cetaceans in the high seas. This mysterious resolution has caused some confusion over its purpose and intent. Monaco explained, stressing the need for setting up effective synergies with the UN to address the "incomplete fragmented coverage of highly migratory species in the oceans." He urged that the resolution is not about the UN taking over management of whaling, but more to strengthen the hand of the Commission. After India supported the resolution, Japan and then St. Kitts and Nevis halted progress by raising procedural issues over the timing of the circulation of a revision to the original proposal. Eventually Monaco agreed to stall discussion until day five to give delegations time to digest the proposal, announcing yet another revision late in the day.

The Chair returned to administrative matters under Agenda item 21.2, 21.3 and 21.4, and then moved on to Item 19, Other Scientific Committee Activities. A discussion on small cetaceans ensued, highlighting, among other issues, the plight of the vaquita—with the SC reporting on its recommendation for a complete ban on gill nets in the Gulf of California to prevent the species extinction; and the Maui's dolphin in New Zealand with a similar urgent appeal from the SC for a gill net ban to prevent annihilation of the last remaining animals.

The meeting ended with reports from the SC on other non-lethal research work, including the Southern Ocean Research Program, and an acknowledgement of the work of Dr. Debbie Polka —whose three-year term as chair of the SC came to an end.

JULY 6, 2012 - DAY 5

The final day commenced with the delegate from Monaco introducing his resolution again and asking for a consensus approval. The third version was far more innocuous than the original. Highlighting the highly migratory nature of cetaceans, the fact that only 38 are listed in the IWC schedule, and inviting parties to collaborate with the UN General Assembly in relation to the "significant unregulated catches of highly migratory species of cetaceans" that continue to take place, "with a view to contributing to the conservation efforts of the IWC." Most countries making interventions spoke up in support. Predictably, the countries vocally opposed included Japan, Iceland, Norway, Palau, and China. After failing to obtain consensus, Monaco withdrew its proposal and suggested a task force be set up with interested countries to continue to work on the resolution's aims.

Next the meeting turned to the SC's work plan, including the controversial issue of funding a workshop to review the results of Iceland's scientific whaling program, which a) has ended after having killed 200 whales; and b) was very controversial since, like Japan's scientific whaling program, it was unilaterally established by Iceland as a way to kill whales for commercial gain. Many countries, including the US, challenged the value of a review. After much discussion, the work plan (including the review) was agreed by consensus with Australia asking for a note in the record stating its opinion that when self-determined whaling takes place, then that country should pay for a review.

The issue of Japan's proposal for a lifting of the moratorium to allow for a resumption of commercial whaling by its four towns was brought back. Japan proposed the creation of an intercessional working group to discuss the issue. With not enough support to see its proposal pass, Japan gave a speech to close discussion, bemoaning the hardships of its coastal

people, indicating that an option open to it is to leave the commission, and ending the speech with a threat that if the issue is not resolved by the next meeting, then Japan would make its own decision on the next move.

The rest of the meeting was devoted to administrative matters, and included a decision to move from annual to biennial Commission meetings. The SC will still meet annually, with the 2013 meeting in South Korea. No country offered to host the next Commission meeting in 2014.

A bureau was also established to handle the Commission's affairs between meetings and provide advice to the Commission, with the US, Panama, Ghana, and Japan appointed to serve along with the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee.

There was consensus on appointing Saint Lucia Commissioner Jeannine Compton-Antoine as Chair and Belgium Commissioner Frederic Chemay as Vice-Chair of the Commission for the next two years.

The meeting closed with the US and others expressing appreciation for the way in which Swiss Commissioner Bruno Mainini had chaired the meeting.
