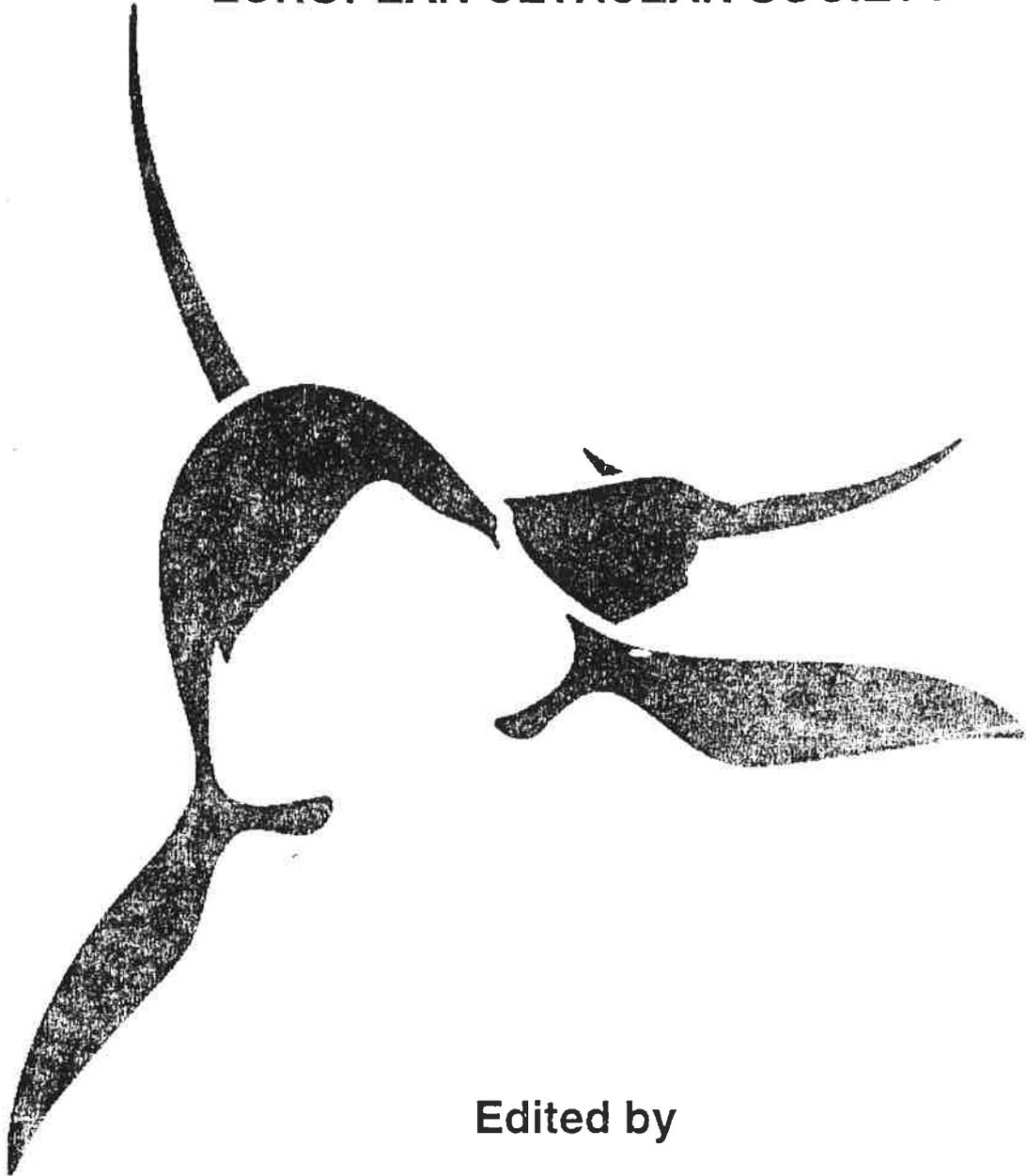


ECS Newsletter no. 25

**The
EUROPEAN CETACEAN SOCIETY**



Edited by

Peter Evans

Winter 1995/96

EDITORIAL

I hope you find this newsletter interesting to read. If you have any comments or contributions of your own, please get in touch (preferably enclosing any articles on diskette in MS Word or Word Perfect). And if any of you would like to help me with the editing, do please write!

For this current issue, I would like to thank Marjan Ad'dink, Paula Barnett, Vassili Papastavrou as well as the other ECS Board members for their contributions.

With this newsletter comes the second announcement for our 10th Annual Conference, to be held in Lisbon between 10th and 14th March 1996. Look forward to seeing you there!

PETER EVANS

15th COUNCIL MEETING OF THE ECS

On 7-8 October 1995, five members of the ECS Council met aboard the "Gemini" in San Remo harbour, Italy. Apologies for absence were received from Mads-Peter Heide-Jørgensen, Roland Lick, and Ursula Siebert.

Changes to Council Marina Sequeira retires from the Council in March 1996. Council recommended asking Anne Collet if she would stand for Council membership. This would also particularly facilitate organisation of the joint ECS-SMM-EAAM Conference in Monaco. Candidates for Council membership proposed by the membership at large will be announced in the winter 95 newsletter.

Student member He or she will be elected at the AGM in Lisbon. This will be advertised in the newsletter. Nominations by students with a paragraph on personal details should be sent to Peter Evans, to be published in a newsletter prior to the Annual Conference. Nominees should preferably have e-mail.

Conferences

Lugano - 1995

a) Finances: the conference account has a balance of 11,614.73 SF. Of these funds, 9,800 SF are membership fees, the remainder being the balance from the conference.

b) Attendance: 280 persons from 21 countries (18 European) attended. There were five guest speakers (Watkins, Ford, Clark, Gordon, and Goodson).

c) Workshops: Ethograms (Herzing), and Acoustics (Gordon).

d) Working Groups: the following met during the conference: Pathology, Mediterranean, and Computer Support.

e) Proceedings: these have been partially edited and will be about the same length as the last one (i.e. about 300 pp.).

f) Video and Sound Recordings: Video and sound recordings of all verbal presentations were made, and will be stored in the ECS archives.

Lisbon - 1996

a) Organisation An update was given by Marina Sequeira on the arrangements, finances, registration, etc. The conference will be held at the Gulbenkian Foundation which will provide three rooms: a lecture theatre for up to 300 persons, a room for poster displays, and a lobby for the Secretariat. These are only available during weekdays.

Any workshops at the weekend will be held either at one of the hotels or in the University.

Hotel reservations will be made through an agent, and the same will apply for the workshop rooms.

The first announcement will be prepared by Marina Sequeira and sent to Peter Evans, to be circulated with the first newsletter (October).

In the second announcement, the ECS will send the pre-registration form of EAAM, and vice versa.

b) Travel connections Connections between the ECS and EAAM Conferences: there are buses to Sado, whilst there will be free transport from the Algarve to the EAAM Conference courtesy of the EAAM.

c) Council meetings The ECS - EAAM joint Council meeting is proposed for Thursday morning (14th March) in Lisbon at the Gulbenkian.

The first ECS Council meeting will be held on Sunday 10th March at 17.30h at the same hotel where the monitoring workshop and registration will take place. A second Council meeting will take place at Wednesday lunchtime.

The committee set up to judge student prizes will meet on Tuesday evening to decide. All students giving verbal presentations should therefore be slotted into the programme before Wednesday. The committee will report to the Council about their decisions at the Wednesday lunch Council meeting.

d) Sponsors: Marina Sequeira will ask ICN for support for the printing of the proceedings, various announcements, and the conference programme. Other possibilities include: Junta Nacional Investigacion Cientifica Technologica (JNICT) and EXPO.

e) Conference Programme:

Abstract deadline is 30 November. Abstracts should be sent on diskette as well as hard copy to Toni Raga on Word Perfect 5.2 for Windows, or a text file, or by e-mail (toni.raga@uv.es)

Review deadline is 15 January, and contributors will be notified by the beginning of February.

There will be about 30 verbal presentations, but no presentation submitted for a student award should take place on the Wednesday.

f) Invitees from other European countries A number of scientists from various Eastern European countries, which are scarcely if at all represented at ECS Conferences, will be specifically invited. These include Russia, Malta, Turkey, and Greece.

g) Representation at the next EAAM Conference It was suggested that Ursula Siebert should represent the ECS at the EAAM Conference.

h) Conference Theme "Population biology in relation to conservation".

Workshop themes will be (a) "Cetacean monitoring programmes" and (b) Lung Pathology; they should both be open to all.

Stralsund - 1997: There was confirmation that the 1997 Conference would take place in Stralsund.

Monaco - 1998:

Protocols for conference organisers

These are now completed, and can be requested from the Secretary.

Protocols for workshop organisers These are still being compiled by Geneviève Desportes.

Structural Aspects of the Society The flow diagram relating the activities of Treasure, Mailing Office, Editor, and Secretary, that Phil Hammond prepared, remains useful and needs to be advertised widely, both in the newsletter and as a separate leaflet that can be distributed to new members, so that people know specifically where to address their requests.

Finances and membership

An ECS Publications bank account will be opened in Oxford, UK, to be administered by Peter Evans as Editor. The Cambridge account will be closed and the balance transferred to Oxford.

The main Society account will be held in Germany with the Treasurer, Roland Lick. He will send to the Oxford account sufficient funds to print and send out the next three newsletters, and to print the ECS leaflet. The Lugano Conference account will be closed and transferred to the Treasurer.

The Treasurer will be requested to circulate a financial statement to all Council members.

Membership database & the role of National Contact Persons A number of ECS members have reported that they are not receiving proceedings, or newsletters. The reasons for this were examined. For some, it has become clear that they had not provided details of address changes, with material which had been sent out from Cambridge being returned, marked "no longer at this address". Matters have also been complicated by the fact that members have not been clear whom to notify concerning address changes. This has been exacerbated by two change-overs of Secretary in two years, and now a change in Treasurer.

As a consequence, it was felt that updating of the membership list should be a priority. Mandy Lisle (SMRU, Cambridge) kindly offered to do this as soon as possible, with copies of the complete database circulated on diskette to all the Council members. Following splitting of the database by country, this should be sent to each of the National Contact persons who would then review their members' details, make changes to addresses where known, and then return the edited versions to Mandy. In this way, the entire database should be reviewed and updated every year following the Conference.

ECS Leaflet update The estimated cost of colour printing in UK for 10,000 copies of the ECS Leaflet was £848. It was recommended that the leaflet should contain a separate sheet within it with details of subscription, contact addresses, etc which are likely to change regularly.

ECS sales The estimated costs of a T-shirt and Polo neck shirt will be determined by Marina Sequeira for production in Portugal in time for the Lisbon conference. The aim is to produce 200 T-shirts in grey with a dark blue ECS logo (mainly medium + large sizes, but with a few

extra large) and 200 polo neck shirts in white with a dark blue logo (medium + large sizes).

ECS and other Societies

SMM: Regular exchanges between the two newsletter editors should take place.

EAAM: During 1996, Peter Evans and Mads-Peter Heide-Jørgensen will explore together the possibility of ECS joining forces with EAAM to produce a common journal.

Observer status

ASCOBANS: Observer status has now been granted. Peter Evans will liaise with Christina Lockyer at the Secretariat to ensure that the ECS is kept informed of progress.

OTHER CONVENTIONS & INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS:

Observer status will be sought with the Barcelona Convention, ASCOMABS (Bonn Convention), IUCN SSC Cetacean Specialist Group, UNEP Global Marine Mammal Action Plan, and Council of Europe once the ECS information leaflet is ready.

Training courses Training in Cetacean Science and Conservation does not exist properly in Europe, and it was felt that the ECS should make some new initiatives in this area.

Toni Raga reported on the possibility of a summer course at the Universidad Internacional Menéndez y Pelayo in Santander, Spain, and examined several other sites including Valencia, where courses can be given. These could form 5- to 7-day courses, with 12 lectures or round table discussions involving around 12 speakers, including 1-2 American, 6-8 European, and 2-3 Spanish nationals. The possible title could be Marine Mammals: Biology and Conservation. These courses are very cheap for students (about \$100). English (with no translation) is the working language used. A maximum of about 100 students may participate. 60% of the funding is provided by the university who pay for travel and accommodation for invited lecturers. A special cheap hotel is available for foreign students.

If the ECS were to contribute to this, they would need to raise \$2,-3,000. The Society cannot commit this sum in its present financial situation. However, Toni will try to raise the amount in the next few weeks (writing to UNEP, WWF, Greenpeace, etc.), and if he gets verbal assurance that the ECS will get this money, we can go ahead and commit the Society to it [*Editor's note: this project has since been*

confirmed - see announcement below by Toni Raga].

Other Business: A possibility of funding support for the Society from the EU was discussed. This would be investigated by Peter Evans.

The ECS position regarding nuclear tests in the oceans was discussed. A Council Resolution against Nuclear Testing in the Oceans was prepared and this is presented below. The ECS membership will be invited to ratify it at the Annual General Meeting in Lisbon.

ECS COUNCIL

ACOMABS: protecting the Mediterranean and Black Seas

The formal negotiation meeting for the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Mediterranean and Black Seas (ACOMABS) was convened under the Bonn Convention in Monaco during September 1995. The agreement, once signed and implemented, will be a powerful conservation instrument, and will serve as a milestone in the struggle to ensure the continued survival of cetaceans living in a particularly beleaguered marine region. The negotiations made remarkable progress including agreement on:

- prohibition of all deliberate takings
- no allowance concerning the lethal taking of cetaceans for scientific research
- lack of inclusion of provisions for captive breeding and re-introduction in the wild
- protection extended to ALL cetacean species present in the Mediterranean and Black Sea on a permanent, temporary or accidental basis
- maximum drift-net length 2.5 km/boat (as it presently is for EU countries)

Despite the positive progress there were two major stumbling blocks which remain to be renegotiated. The first concerns the Marmara Sea, considered by Turkey to be part of its own internal waters to be excluded from the Agreement. This position is thought untenable by Greece. Secondly, European Commission representatives were only present as observers due to their not having obtained a negotiation mandate. The Agreement holds important implications concerning fishery limitations and thus there is a need to obtain agreement from all European Union member states. Therefore no important decisions could be taken regarding

fisheries, not even on the internationally condemned high-seas driftnets.

GIUSEPPE NOTARBARTOLO DI SCIARA

European Course on Marine Mammals: Biology and Conservation

A course entitled "Marine Mammals: Biology and Conservation" organised by the Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo will take place in Valencia, Spain, between 9th and 13th September 1996. English will be the working language. Several leading scientists are expected to participate. The course will consist of twelve one-hour lectures (plus one additional hour for questions and discussion) covering topics such as life history strategies, energetics, pathology, pollution, fisheries interactions, legislation and management, etc. In addition, a round table discussion on marine mammals - their sustainable use and conservation, is also scheduled.

Further details will be given during the next European Cetacean Society conference in Lisbon.

JUAN ANTONIO RAGA

National Activities

I am making an appeal to ECS members to supply me with recent information on national activities, since, so far, news has only been received from Slovenia (thanks to Darja Ribaric). It is impossible to impart information to ECS members when it has not been received, so please do help.

I also request that you return the pathology questionnaires that were circulated. To date, only 6 of 21 have been returned! Please send them to me as soon as possible. Thank you for your assistance.

URSULA SIEBERT

RECENT RESEARCH

Italy

The "Centro Studi Cetacei" of the Italian Society of Natural Sciences

The first National Conference on Cetacea was held in Riccione in October of 1985, conceptualised by the Milan Public Museum of Natural History. It was hosted and organised by Adriatic Sea World. It was at the site of this conference that the constitution of a "Centro Studi Cetacei" (C.S.C.)

was drawn up, to be created within M.P.M.N.H. with operational guidance from S.I.S.N. (Italian Society of Natural Sciences).

One of the initial goals C.S.C., whose aim is to unite researchers and the main institutions in Italy concerned with Cetacea, was to create "Progetto Spiaggiamenti" (a stranding project). This project was to conform with similar projects already operational in other countries by creating a national network for the reporting and intervention of stranded Cetacea with the possibility of inspection and recovery along the entire Italian coastline. In 1990, a second project was added, relating to the special needs of Cetacea stranded still alive.

Most of the osteological finds recovered during the interventions have been sent to enrich the cetacean collections of a number of Italian Zoological Museums.

Apart from the two above mentioned projects, C.S.C. has for some time been involved in the coordination of research projects made possible by the use of samples coming from the initial projects.

C.S.C. also publishes an annual summary of cetacean strandings along the Italian coastline.

C.S.C. is recognised by Ministero delle Risorse Agricole, Alimentari e Forestali (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forest Resources) and received permission for its activity by Ministero dell'Agricoltura e Foreste (Ministry of Agriculture and Forests) (C.I.T.E.S. Office) and by Ministero dell'Ambiente (Ministry of Environment) (Service for the Conservation of Nature).

Unusual Strandings During the first nine years of activity by C.S.C., the following strandings were visited:

23 fin whales (partially preserved skeletons)
Two minke whales (one skeleton)
62 sperm whales (partially preserved skeletons)
One dwarf sperm whale (skeleton)
17 Cuvier's beaked whales (partially preserved skeletons)
43 Risso's dolphins (partially preserved skeletons)
31 long-finned pilot whales (partially preserved skeletons)
Three false killer whales (partially preserved skeletons)
Six common dolphins (partially preserved skeletons)

Report on Ongoing Projects The following list refers not only to pre-existing research (to which persons responsible used completely or partially the data and samples coming from the C.S.C. projects), but also research initiated at the beginning of its activity:

- Contaminants - heavy metals and organochlorines
- Detoxification systems
- Bacterial and viral infections
- Age determination - histological analysis of teeth and amino acid racemisation
- Stomach contents
- Parasites - Helminths and Crustaceans

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NEWS FROM ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

The Marine Mammals of Thailand Research Project

The Marine Mammal Project is moving address to the Kasetsart University Campus, P.O. Box 9-14, Bangkhen, Bangkok 10900, Thailand.

For those wishing to visit us and the project library on marine mammals, please contact by telephone first: Phone and fax number 66-2-579-3649 (Michael Andersen, tel. 66-1-934-7064; Birgitte Christensen, tel. 66-1-934-7026).

MICHAEL ANDERSEN
BIRGITTE S. CHRISTENSEN

RECENT CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

Behavioural Ethogram Workshop Report

A workshop was held on February 8th at the beginning of the 1995 ECS conference, with the aims of 1) reviewing how ethograms are constructed, 2) sharing ethograms for different species and under differing field conditions, and 3) determining a procedure to standardise terminology for behaviour that may have multiple names allotted to it.

Twenty participants from nine countries attended the workshop and presented current ethograms as well as those in the making. Although the majority of participants worked with the bottlenose dolphin, *Tursiops truncatus*, various other genera were represented.

An ethogram is a catalogue of descriptions of discrete behaviour that typifies the basic behavioural repertoire of the species, requiring documentation of observable behaviour. Ethograms have been developed for some species of cetaceans but inconsistent terminology for identical behaviours makes comparison difficult. The same problem exists in categorising vocalisations both between species and within the same population. Thus a long term goal of the workshop emerged to develop a dictionary of terms for researchers to apply to their studies. Structural versus functional ethograms were reviewed and the possible levels of analysis. Participants presented their own ethograms, describing the methods of data collection they employed and tools used in their application to surface, underwater, interspecific and intraspecific studies. In an attempt to share terminology for consistent behaviours, small groups reviewed their terminology for overlap.

It was generally agreed that future plans should be to share and discuss ethograms on similar species and where possible try to document the behaviour by video or illustration. The workshop would also like to perform the same exercise for vocalisations. Denise Herzing has agreed to co-ordinate this for the next ECS meeting in Lisbon, and other interested ECS members should contact her directly or through ECS.

DENISE HERZING

Second German-Ukrainian Workshop

The Second German-Ukrainian Workshop "Comparative Investigations on Small Cetaceans of the Black Sea and German Waters" was held between October 2-7, 1995 in Crimea.

During the workshop the presentations on cetacean abundance, distribution, ecology, pathology, parasitology, genetics, microalgology, and by-catch estimations were given by eleven participants from both countries. The BREMA Laboratory in Simferopol, the Institute of Biology of Southern Seas in the Karadag reserve area, and the Marine Mammal Rehabilitation Centre in Laspi Bay were visited. The trips along Black Sea and Azov Sea coasts gave the opportunity to learn more about the stranding network in Crimea.

At the end of the workshop, possibilities for further co-operation were discussed. It was a very nice and successful time. The German side was particularly impressed by the beauty of Crimea and the hospitality of the people.

URSULA SIEBERT & ALEXEI BIRKUN

Workshop on the Scientific Aspects of Managing Whale Watching

Whale watching is now firmly on the agenda as a benign form of sustainable utilisation of whales and to the great majority of members of the International Whaling Commission, it is vastly preferable to lethal exploitation.

However, the rapid growth of whale watching worldwide has led to some concerns that whale watching might be adversely affecting whales. There is clearly a need for appropriate rules worldwide to regulate this activity. With the aim of ensuring that whale watching is conducted in a responsible manner, IFAW, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Tethys Research Institute and Europe Conservation jointly convened a workshop to consider the scientific aspects of managing whale watching.

In Spring 1995, some twenty-eight scientists from twelve countries met for the five-day workshop, held in Montecastello di Vibio, Italy. The goal of the workshop was to produce a report containing a framework to guide the process of defining new rules and modifying existing rules, together with a list of recommendations for further relevant research.

The workshop outlined all the possible variables associated with whale watching impacts. Though recent studies have begun to measure many of the short term impacts or reactions of whales to whale watching, the workshop participants generally agreed that it is difficult to interpret short term impacts. In addition, there is little evidence to show any links between short and long term impacts. Such evidence is hard to obtain, and therefore a precautionary approach was strongly recommended. A framework containing initial common sense rules were suggested in the report. Such rules would be flexible and an iterative process was developed for their modification based on feedback from scientific studies.

It is hoped that the report will be of practical use to scientists and will assist them both in offering

advice to managers and operators and in planning scientific research on cetaceans that is relevant to the management of whale watching. The report was considered both by the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission and the IWC Whale Watching Working Group. It will be considered further at the 1996 IWC Meeting, by which time considered comments should have been received on the proposed framework from interested IWC member governments.

Copies of the report are available from:

VASSILI PAPASTAVROU

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Whalewatching Workshop Report

With the burgeoning growth in whalewatching, the workshop on the scientific aspects of whalewatching held in Italy this spring was a timely reminder of our responsibility to manage such interests. Thus the goal of the workshop was to produce a report encompassing the defining of new rules and modifying of existing rules for whalewatching as well as to make recommendations for further research including monitoring impacts of whalewatching. The report was aimed mainly at scientists who study cetaceans to aid them in the advice they offer to managers and operators and in planning scientific research on cetaceans.

The workshop agreed that it was difficult to measure the long-term impacts of whalewatching and that short-term effects, whilst readily observable, were unlikely to relate to the long-term impacts on cetacean individuals, groups or populations. A need was identified for further experimental research in this area. Overall a precautionary approach was recommended by the workshop, with flexible, common sense rules to be applied.

A report on sperm whale watching in New Zealand (Gordon *et al.*, 1992) provided the backbone of the workshop, having combined visual and acoustic techniques to investigate the effects of such activity. This report confirmed the view that it is difficult to interpret short-term changes, but showed the promise of using visual, acoustic and photo-ID techniques to address the problem. It was noted that individual sperm whales can react quite differently to whalewatching and that whalewatching operations

sometimes concentrate on a small proportion of animals present in an area. The report provided a valuable background for the questions to be considered by the IWC and identified a number of topics that required further consideration, which whilst not conclusive provide a framework for discussion. They were:

- consideration of habitat related matters
- the status of the stock(s) subjected to whalewatching
- the implication of short-term behavioural reactions
- the link between short- and long-term reactions
- species-specific factors
- growth of whalewatching, particularly in areas where little information is available

VASSILI PAPASTAVROU

Orlando Impressions

The eleventh Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals took place on December 14-18 in Orlando, Florida. This conference was very big - 4-5 times the size of an ECS conference, with 758 abstract submissions representing 1,382 authors from 32 countries. There were concurrent verbal presentations and more than 700 posters (my estimate). The main impression this gives is that it is BIG.

On the evening of the 14th, there was a welcome reception at Sea World Orlando, with food and drink enabling one to meet friends and colleagues. This also made for an easy way to start living with jet lag.

On the morning of the 15th, the first task was (in my case) to put up the poster. Since so many posters had to be presented, a poster could only stay up for a single day. This meant that some very serious planning had to be done beforehand in order to get a look at the posters that I simply could not afford to miss. Special time was set aside for poster viewing.

Among the subjects covered were: conservation, ecology, behaviour, population genetics, diving physiology, health and toxicology, morphology and development, and acoustics. It is impossible to give detailed information about most subjects but I will give a few details of some of the symposia/workshops that took place in the evenings.

One topic concerned human-dolphin interaction in captivity and the wild. About twelve speakers with experience in these matters told us about

practical problems. One possible problem is a situation where dolphins receive too many visitors so that their need for rest and recreation as dolphins becomes disturbed, or that they are harassed (this word is sometimes warranted) when they attempt to forage. Another problem can occur (and has) when people swim with dolphins and behave in a way detrimental to dolphins and humans. In the most extreme case, a wild sociable dolphin in Brazil was so badly treated by people in the water with her that she retaliated and fatally injured a young man. As whale and dolphin watching is on the increase, these problems will become more acute and we as marine mammalogists will be asked for advice. so it is an important subject to start debating.

The other topic concerned a method to assess the health of wild *Tursiops*. The idea is to develop a model that can predict the conditions of a dolphin population using health data of individual wild dolphins, for example the Sarasota animals. Although this has only just started, it seems a very interesting and promising method.

After all the work, there were fun and games with the banquet and the dance. It was a very good (though big) conference, and since the next one in 1998 will be the combined conferences of the ECS, EAAM and SMM, we can look forward to Monaco!

MARJAN ADDINK

MEETINGS

Fifth International Symposium on the Oceanography of the Bay of Biscay

An international symposium on the Oceanography of the Bay of Biscay will be held at La Rochelle, France between 16 and 18 April 1996. The scientific programme includes circulation and transport; geology, sedimentation and paleoclimate; nutrients, primary and secondary production; continent-ocean exchanges; deep-benthos on the continental slope; chemistry and pollutants; and fisheries and environmental conditions.

If you would like to attend, or to offer a communication (with possible publication in the journal *Oceanologica Acta*), please contact either A. Herbland, CREMA (CNRS-IFREMER), B.P. 7, 17137 L'Houmeau, France (tel. 33-46-509440; fax 33-46-509160) or J.C. Quero, IFREMER, Station de La Rochelle (tel. 33-46-509350; fax 33-46-509379).

CONTACT ADDRESSES

COMMENT

Free "Willy", yes or no, and what about the costs?

On the 7th of January, the orca Keiko, star of the "free Willy" movies, was flown from Mexico to a new facility in Oregon. This started a discussion on MARMAM, on two subjects: conditions for release of captive marine mammals back into the wild and whether money should be spent on individual animals rather than allocated to species and/or habitats.

The first discussion concerns the fact that Keiko is not in perfect health. For most professionals concerned with release from captivity, an absolute criterion for any animal chosen was that it should not be an ill animal that might affect the wild population. Apparently Keiko suffers from a skin disease and various other ailments. From various comments in the media and on MARMAM, it was not clear if these are easily cured or not. Even if he could get a clean bill of health, at least for the moment the Iceland government says that no permits will be given to bring previously captive killer whales into Iceland waters. Since the idea is that cetaceans should be released as close as possible to where they were originally captured, this makes for another difficult situation.

The second point of discussion concerns the money raised. Although various amounts are mentioned, it seems that more than eight million US dollars were collected for the specific aim of caring for Keiko until his release. The discussion on MARMAM centred around the idea of how this money should be spent. The persons from the Oregon facility said the money was raised from sources that do not normally give money for cetacean research so that this extra money was not threatening other research. The feeling among some of the people engaged in the discussion, however, was that at least two species, the baiji and vaquita, faced very serious dangers of complete extinction, and that if people were concerned about cetacean welfare, they should be encouraged to give to save species rather than individuals. It would be interesting to get the opinion of ECS members concerning these subjects to include in the next newsletter.

MARJAN ADDINK

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