

## REPORT OF THE SEATTLE SORP WORKSHOP 2009

NATIONAL MARINE MAMMAL LAB CONFERENCE ROOM,  
ALASKA FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER AT SAND POINT SEATTLE, 1-3 DECEMBER 2009

### **1. Welcome**

Nick Gales thanked the US Government and Monica Medina for providing funding through the IWC and NOAA for hosting the workshop. Thanks to Phil Clapham, Amy Kennedy, Ryan Wulff and Jemma Jones for organising meeting logistics.

### **2. Workshop details**

The aims of SORP were reiterated with a focus on the fact that SORP was an integrated programme, with the sum being more than the parts. SORP projects, which will be the focus of SORP, need to be well defined and have specific and measurable milestones, objectives and realistic timeframes. It was **agreed** that SORP, as a non-lethal research collaboration, would not collaborate with any programme (or data from such a programme) that has a lethal component or is partly or fully funded by lethal programmes. A list of participants is attached as Appendix 2.

### **3. SORP projects**

Five SORP projects were **agreed** by the workshop. These projects will form the basis of the SORP work programme in the short term. A short summary of these projects are listed below and full details attached in Appendix 1. Each project will be developed by a Project Steering Group (PSG) and managed by a Project Coordinator. Each PSG will operate independently of each other but all will report to the SORP Steering Group (SSG). A potential coordinator for each project has been identified – some of these people have not yet been approached to fill these roles but we hope they will agree to do so. It is the role of these people in the first instance to start discussions within each PSG about confirming membership and developing a full project proposal and budget request. Childerhouse will contact each proposed coordinator to see if they are happy to undertake the role.

- (i) What is the distribution and extent of mixing of Southern hemisphere humpback whale populations around Antarctica? [CONSTANTINE?]
- (ii) Foraging ecology and resource partitioning of sympatric humpback and minke whales: comparative experiments across Antarctic regions [FRIEDLAENDER]
- (iii) Distribution, seasonal occurrence, abundance and trends of Antarctic blue and fin whales in the Southern Ocean [SAMARAN?]
- (iv) Distribution, relative abundance, migration patterns and prey preferences of three ecotypes of killer whales in Antarctic waters [PITMAN?]
- (v) Measuring the impacts of climate change on baleen whales in the Southern Ocean [CHILDERHOUSE]
- (vi) Living whales in the Southern Ocean ecosystem – workshop in 2011 [BAKER]
- (vii) The SORP Year of the Whale 2013/14 [GALES]

Projects 1-3 are reasonably well developed and can be further refined by the PSG. Project 4 needs to be merged from the two existing killer whale proposals (4a and 4b) from the US and French. Project 5a and b needs considerable development and further scoping by the PSG. Projects 6 and 7 are more distant but require some additional scoping and development.

The project proposals are much as were discussed at the Workshop but have been edited for consistency and some details that were discussed subsequent to the original proposal added. Projects 4 and 5 both have two proposals associated with them. The role of the coordinator and PSG is to develop these into a single comprehensive project and report back to the SSG.

### **4. Management procedure for SORP projects**

#### *a. Coordination*

Each project will be scoped, defined and developed by a Project Steering Group (PSG) and managed by a Project Coordinator. The PSG will ideally be small (e.g. 4-5 people) and will make decisions relevant to their projects. They will liaise closely and seek input from other collaborators that are not on the Steering Group. It is important to note that not all collaborators may be represented on the PSG and therefore it is important for the PSG to consult regularly with all collaborators.

*b. Reporting*

The Coordinator of each project will provide an Annual report to the Coordinator SSG (Childerhouse) who will compile a full report for the IWC Scientific Committee meeting.

*c. Data management*

Each project will need to develop a data management plan for how to handle the data. This plan should be simple and straight forward and allow open and transparent access to data collected as part of SORP. This will however require rules to protect the right of data collectors and holders when making data available. Meta-data summaries (e.g. data and samples collected) from each project will be provided to the SORP Secretariat and will be made available on the SORP website.

*d. Progress*

Each project will need to develop a project plan that is well defined, has specific and measurable milestones, objectives and realistic timeframes.

*e. Communication*

Communication within each project will be managed by the Project Coordinator. Communication between projects and the SSG will be managed by the Project Coordinator and the SORP Coordinator.

*f. Funding*

There is only a small amount of core funding for SORP and SORP project. Each project will be responsible for developing funding plans and proposals but there will need to be a coordinated approach to funding. Funding proposals should be sent to the SSG for endorsement who will provide support (and leverage with regional Governments and funding Agencies) in gaining funding. It is suggested that PSG develop funding proposals to support partial salaries of Project Coordinators from IWC SORP research funds to support the development of the projects and also the sourcing of additional funds. It was agreed that a new section should be added to the SORP Project Proforma to define "Desired Resources" which would list requirements other than strictly funding that projects would like to have to achieve their objectives (e.g. Antarctic ship time, access to transport or other platforms). These desires can then be taken to the appropriate member Governments or other Agencies and formally requested.

**5. Associated SORP projects**

It was **agreed** that the term *Associated SORP project* should not longer be used. If a research project forms part of one of the SORP projects and is collaborating with that project (e.g. provide data or samples), then that research project is part of SORP. It is important to recognise that just because a research project isn't part of SORP doesn't mean that it is not important or high quality science but simply that it does not presently fit within the defined project framework of SORP.

**6. Funding available for SORP research programmes***a. Australian IWC contribution to SORP*

The Australian Government has contributed AUD\$500,000 to the IWC SORP fund. This is a one off contribution and there are no plans to make another contribution. The fund is managed by the IWC. The Australian Government is thanked for its contribution.

*b. Other SORP contributions*

The US Government has made a contribution to SORP but it has yet to be announced. Some of the funds from the contribution have been made available to support attendance of people at this workshop. The New Zealand Government has made two weeks of ship time available specifically for the 2009/10 Antarctic Whale expedition run jointly by the Australian and New Zealand Governments. The US and New Zealand Governments are also thanked for their contributions.

*c. Approval mechanisms for spending*

Funds in the IWC SORP research fund can be secured for project work using the following process:

- (i) Each PSG develop a proposal for the use and funds and submit to the SSG. This will be on a proforma to be developed.
- (ii) The SSG will review the proposal and recommend support/decline/partly support the proposal.
- (iii) The SSG will then forward all of the approved funding requests to the IWC for review and endorsement. The budget will be discussed in SC Plenary and endorsed by SC, forwarded to the

Convenors Group and added to the SC budget as a request to the SORP Research fund rather than the normal SC budget (e.g. similar to the process for the Small Cetacean Fund).

Funds for normal SC funds can still be applied for through the normal SC Sub-committee prioritisation system and additional funds secured.

*d. Securing additional future funding*

There are many other opportunities for SORP funding. In all likelihood, these external sources will contribute the majority of funding for SORP. It is the role of each PSG, with support from the SSG, to seek additional funds and other contributions (e.g. ship time, personnel time) for projects from member Governments. It is envisaged that these will be direct requests (after gaining IWC project endorsement) from the SSG to member Governments.

## 7. SORP Steering Group

The SSG will provide scientific guidance at a high level but at the project level, projects will be driven by the Project Leader/Coordinator and the PSG. The SSG (i.e. in a similar way to how JARPA and JARPN research plans are reported to SC) is independent of the normal SC process but prepares documents and material for the SC to consider, review and endorse. The SSG will meet at SC each year (and generally not inter-sessionally) and will communicate via email during the remainder of the year. There are still two vacant places on the SSG, for an Oceania/New Zealand representative and a large programme (e.g. SOS, ICED) representative. Phil Clapham stepped down from his role on the SSG and has been replaced by Bob Brownell. Thanks to Phil for his contribution so far.

## 8. 2011 Non Invasive workshop

See attached Project description in Appendix 1.

## 9. 2013/14 Year of the whale

See attached Project description in Appendix 2.

## 10. Development of data sharing & sample archiving agreements

*a. Partnership coordination*

Coordination of data sharing and archiving will be managed by the PSG and reported to the SSG via the SORP coordinator.

*b. Documenting and reporting of participating projects*

Each PSG will provide a finalised project proposal to the SORP Coordinator. These will be reviewed by the SSG, compiled into a report and submitted to the IWC for consideration at the next SC. These project proposals will be on the proforma developed already and will include requests for funding from the IWC SORP research fund. In future, each PSG will provide an annual progress report to the SORP Coordinator who will compile the reports and submit to the IWC for SC review.

*c. Standardised protocol*

These will be developed for each SORP project and will be relevant to that project. They will detail the data standards required to be met by each contributor to ensure that everyone is clear about what is expected and that joint analysis can progress with consistent data from all collaborators.

*d. Data and sample sharing*

The fundamental basis of SORP will be that all data collected under SORP will be made available to everyone, while respecting the IP of the people collecting it and their right to have a fair opportunity to publish it. It was **agreed** that the SPLASH data sharing agreement should be used as a starting point in developing a standard data sharing agreement. Brownell agreed to develop a draft of this to be circulated to the SSC. It was also **agreed** that a “sunset” clause would be useful to include as part of an agreement that means that the data becomes available to everyone after a reasonable period of time. External data requests would also be included in the data sharing agreement. The final arbiter of disagreements over data sharing will be the SSG after due consideration with the PSG. In addition to data sharing, it may also be possible for SORP to share equipment. Appropriate equipment that has been purchased for SORP and can be reused, should be recorded with the SORP Coordinator, who will keep a record of what is available and where it is held.

*e. Data and sample archiving*

PSG will identify data and sample holdings and will make meta-summaries available to the SORP Coordinator who will lodge these summaries online. The AAD is presently developing a meta-data database that may be useful in recording SORP data and sample holdings. Double will explore options for this database being used to store SORP meta-data summaries.

## **11. SORP Annual Report**

An annual report will be prepared each year for the IWC SC. It will be prepared by the SORP Coordinator from summaries provided by the PSG. The annual report will include individual project summaries (e.g. including progress of each project against agreed milestones and outputs, data collected and archived and where it is held, plans for future work for each project), meta-data summaries, and any plans for new projects.

## **12. Review 2009/10 field projects with relevance to SORP**

There are several projects for the 2009/10 austral summer season that will form part of, or contribute to, SORP projects. Specifically:

- (i) Australian aerial surveys of the pack ice investigating whale distribution within the pack ice
- (ii) Joint Australian/New Zealand Antarctic Whale Expedition investigating baleen whale ecology between 150°W and 150°E
- (iii) French sighting survey for cetaceans aboard the L'Astrolabe
- (iv) US survey of foraging ecology and resource partitioning by Duke University
- (v) Brazilian Antarctic programme undertaking dedicated cetacean surveys

It was also noted that Chile and Argentina are building new Antarctic vessels that can be used for cetacean research in the future.

## **13. Work plan**

### *a. until IWC 62*

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date due</b>
Additional development of SORP project 4 [ <i>Killer whales</i> ]	Pitman	31 January 2010
Additional development of SORP project 5 [ <i>Baleen whales and climate change</i> ]	Childerhouse	31 January 2010
For each project, identification of Coordinator and PSG	Each PSG	31 January 2010
Development of draft data sharing agreement	Brownell	31 January 2010
Finalisation of project proposal for the SSG to present to the next SC	Each PSG	31 March 2010
Funding proposals for IWC SORP research funds and other funds (e.g. SC funds, NSF, member Government funding requests)	Each PSG	31 March 2010
Development of SORP website and data and sample meta-data summaries	Childerhouse	31 March 2010
Explore options for use of AAD database for SORP meta-data summaries	Double	31 March 2010
Completion of SORP Annual Report for IWC	Childerhouse	30 April 2010
Set up Steering Group for 2001 Non-invasive research methods workshop and develop proposal	Baker	31 January 2010
Set up Steering Group for 2013/14 Year of the Whale project and develop proposal	Gales	31 January 2010

### *b. Beyond IWC 62*

- i. Finalise Non-invasive research methods workshop project
- ii. Develop 2013/14 Year of the whale project

## Appendix 1 DRAFT SORP Project descriptions

DRAFT SORP Project descriptions are attached.

1. What is the distribution and extent of mixing of Southern hemisphere humpback whale populations around Antarctica?
2. Foraging ecology and resource partitioning of sympatric humpback and minke whales: comparative experiments across Antarctic regions
3. Distribution, seasonal occurrence, abundance and trends of Antarctic blue and fin whales in the Southern Ocean
4. Distribution, relative abundance, migration patterns and prey preferences of three ecotypes of killer whales in Antarctic waters
5. Measuring the impacts of climate change on baleen whales in the Southern Ocean
6. Living whales in the Southern Ocean ecosystem – workshop in 2011
7. The SORP Year of the Whale 2013/14

## Appendix 2 List of participants

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