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## Editorial

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Welcome to this the first issue of the eleventh volume of the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*. This volume contains nine papers covering a range of conservation and management issues. We have unfortunately had a series of problems with respect to getting the Journal published due to internal problems at the printers we have used for many years. Sadly, after attempts to secure further investment, they are no longer trading. We are now dealing with a different company and the Journal should once again appear promptly.

The impact of ship strikes on cetaceans, and thus potentially on cetacean populations, is an issue of increasing concern. Quantifying the extent of ship strike mortality is difficult for a number of reasons including the fact that with large fast vessels, collisions often go unnoticed and thus unreported. The paper by Williams and O'Hara uses spatial modelling and GIS visualisation techniques to provide spatial risk maps for fin, humpback and killer whales in British Columbia. Such an approach is valuable for determining priorities for mitigation measures, for example, instigating shipping lanes.

Studies of bowhead whales in the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort (B-C-B) Seas are of great importance since IWC management advice using the *Bowhead Strike Limit Algorithm* is required for the aboriginal subsistence hunt from this population. Information on stock structure and abundance is vital to providing advice on safe catch limits and there are two relevant papers in this issue. Givens *et al.* provide information on the factors that influence aerial line transect detection of B-C-B whales, which has the potential to improve understanding and accuracy of future surveys in the area. Sadykova and Schweder present information on the inter-annual migration ranks of B-C-B bowhead whales passing Barrow in the spring. This migration occurs around the mating season and has important implications for genetic interchange and stock structure.

Photo-identification remains an invaluable and widely applicable tool for studying cetacean populations, providing *inter alia* information on abundance, stock structure, migration and population biology. There are several papers, from as many countries, employing the technique in this issue.

Poncelet *et al.* present a comprehensive study of killer whale population dynamics in the Indian Ocean, spanning 1977-2002. Minton *et al.* present important evidence of a discrete Arabian Sea population of humpback whales. O'Brien *et al.* draw on the data contained in a number of existing photo-identification catalogues to find possible long-distance matching of bottlenose dolphins around the Irish coast. Da Silva and Tiburcio use Empirical Bayesian methods to improve estimation of the size of a closed population using photo-identification data.

Interactions between cetaceans and fisheries are important for a number of reasons. Data on consumption is of importance for ecosystem modelling. Cetaceans are commonly the top predators in their ecosystems and their interactions with the targets of commercial fisheries are of great interest. The paper by Laran *et al.* examines information on densities of both cetaceans and their prey species in the Ligurian Sea and considers estimates of consumption and prey composition for different species.

The Journal strongly encourages the publication of results from previously little studied areas. In this issue it is pleased to publish a comprehensive review of marine mammal records from Iran. Despite its 1,700km coastline, very few records of marine mammals off Iran exist. Braulik *et al.* compile marine mammal records from numerous sources in Iran including skeletal remains, photographs, videos and strandings data. As well as bringing all this information together, the threats to marine mammals in the area are also reviewed.

I would like to draw your attention to the *Guide for Authors* included at the end of this issue. Please read these carefully before submitting manuscripts. Not following the guidelines may result in considerable delay in the consideration of your manuscript!

Finally I would like to thank Andrea Cooke for stepping up to take on many of Helen Coulson's duties, who is now on maternity leave.

G.P. Donovan  
*Editor*