
Editorial

Welcome to this the first issue of the tenth volume of the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*. This volume contains eleven papers covering a range of conservation and management issues.

One of the most important difficulties in assessing and assigning priorities to conservation and management issues around the world is a lack of scientific information, particularly from countries for which cetacean science is in its infancy and/or in which resources for such work may be limited. The Journal has always seen encouraging this as an important part of its work and in this issue I am pleased that we have a number of important papers from such areas of the world. The two papers by Smith and colleagues address the issue of cetaceans in Myanmar and in Bangladesh, in particular looking at distribution, abundance and interactions with humans. Flach and colleagues provide abundance estimates of the Guiana dolphin off southeast Brazil using line-transect methods from a small boat and illustrating the value of this approach for other similar areas. Johnston and colleagues present important information on the ecology and stock structure of cetaceans from the little-studied waters of American Samoa. Acevedo and colleagues report on the spatial and temporal distribution of humpback whales off Venezuela.

The recovery of severely depleted populations is of course an extremely important conservation issue. For such populations even small numbers of human-induced mortality can prevent or slow down recovery and it is important to obtain as much information as possible to assist in developing effective mitigation measures. One of the most severely endangered populations is that of the western gray whale and international co-operation is vital if the population is to recover. It is thus important that we have a paper documenting the discovery of a photographic match between an animal from the feeding grounds and on its migratory corridor that has been co-authored by scientists

from the Russian Federation, Japan and the USA (Weller and colleagues). The status of blue whales in the western North Pacific is very poorly known although it seems clear that they remain at a very low level; Gilpatrick and Perryman examine the geographic variation in blue whales from the North Pacific and from the Southern Hemisphere. Southern right whales, once severely depleted throughout their range, have shown encouraging rates of increase in many regions. Kemper and colleagues review anthropogenic mortalities and human interactions off Australia since 1950.

The importance of sound to cetaceans is becoming increasingly apparent as is the value of sound-related studies both in terms of assessing the impact of sound from a conservation and mitigation perspective (e.g. see the paper by Brownell and colleagues) and use of the calls made by cetaceans to improve our knowledge of their abundance, distribution and stock structure (e.g. see the paper by Boisseau and colleagues).

Anthropogenic activity may have a variety of direct and indirect effects on cetacean populations, including increasing the severity of the effects of natural diseases if, for example, immune responses are compromised. Little is known about diseases that may affect cetaceans in the wild. Ohishi and colleagues present a review of the occurrence of *Brucella*, a bacteria that is known to cause reproductive disorders in a number of terrestrial mammals, in western North Pacific and Antarctic cetaceans.

Finally, 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!

G.P. DONOVAN
Editor