
Editorial

Welcome to this the first issue of the eighth volume of the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*. I would like to apologise that certain unforeseen logistical problems have delayed production of this issue. These have now been addressed and the year's remaining issues will be available as scheduled. This volume contains eleven papers covering a wide range of management issues.

One of the potential tools available for informed management is the use of protected areas or sanctuaries. Decisions on the value or otherwise of this approach must not only take in scientific information but also appropriate legal frameworks to address the variety of threats that can potentially or actually affect cetacean populations. The first paper in this volume reviews the International Whaling Commission's Southern Ocean Sanctuary, particularly in the context of recent developments in the field of marine protected areas.

Any conservation and management strategy requires certain basic information and one of the most fundamental parameters is population abundance. There are a number of papers dealing with this topic in this issue. The first, by Cañadas and Hammond uses the rapidly developing technique of model-based abundance estimates and in this case (bottlenose dolphins of southern Spain) has the great advantage of a long-term dataset. The results highlight the importance of long-term monitoring. The paper by Du Fresne *et al.* looks at the effect of line-transect placement in coastal surveys and in particular the choice of random or systematic designs. Dolar *et al.* present important new information on the distribution and abundance of cetaceans in the central Philippines, an area where previously there was little or no information. Similarly, Aliaga-Rossel *et al.* present new information on distribution and encounter rates of the poorly studied river dolphin (*Inia geoffrensis*) in the central Bolivian Amazon. The note by García-Godos presents the first information on sperm whales off Peru for many years. It is extremely valuable to receive information from these little studied areas to begin the process of assessing potential threats and developing appropriate

conservation strategies and the *Journal* is pleased to publish such papers.

One of the most important threats to cetacean populations is their incidental capture in fisheries and the *Journal* has always highlighted the importance of addressing this issue in a rigorous scientific manner. In this issue, the paper by Lesage *et al.* examines bycatches of harbour porpoises in the gillnet fisheries of the St Lawrence River in Canada. The authors conclude these still give cause for concern.

Conservation and management also requires information on stock structure to enable proper interpretation of *inter alia* abundance data and removals. The paper by Robbins *et al.* clarifies the stock structure of the humpback whales taken in the small aboriginal subsistence fishery from the island of Bequia in St Vincent and The Grenadines. The paper by McDonald *et al.* discusses the potential of using song to identify the stock structure of blue whales.

Determining the present status of cetacean populations requires information on past removals and there is a fascinating paper by Reeves *et al.* on the history of Bermuda shore whaling which began in the early 1600s and continued into the 20th century. Determining the levels of these early catches requires a painstaking search of early literature and log books. A number of other pieces of information are necessary for modelling exercises examining the present status of cetacean populations and the paper by Koski *et al.* presents a new approach to minimising bias in the estimation of the length-frequency distribution of bowhead whales from the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas (animals which are subject to limited aboriginal subsistence whaling).

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

