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## Editorial

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Welcome to the final issue of the third volume of the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*. The Journal continues to grow. This year some 34 papers were published, in addition to a 348pp. supplement and the second special issue (*Right Whales: worldwide status* - edited by P.B. Best, J.L. Bannister, R.L. Brownell Jr and G.P. Donovan). Once more, the authorship and readership is truly worldwide, with authors from some 20 countries (including Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia, North America and South America). The disciplinary and geographical spread of the papers published illustrates the contribution the Journal is making to the conservation and management of cetaceans throughout the world.

The present issue covers a wide range of subjects all of relevance to better conservation and management. Knowing the abundance of cetaceans and any trends in that abundance is clearly central to wise management. Three papers address this topic in this issue, using different techniques (mark-recapture of photo-identified individuals; sightings from a long-term series of major international research cruises; and sightings collected in association with the fishing industry). The lessons to be learned from the last of the approaches make salutary reading, especially in the context of monitoring populations accidentally caught in fishing gear.

In fact, incidental catches in fisheries represent the major threat to cetaceans worldwide. Since its inception, the Journal has paid great importance to this issue, publishing

papers that document the problems in several areas and fishery types and those that help towards finding solutions. This issue is no exception. Two papers identify problems in differing fishery operations (tuna feedlots and gillnets) and different hemispheres (South Australia and eastern USA). It also includes a paper examining the feeding ecology of minke whales. The general question of possible competition between cetaceans and commercial fisheries is becoming increasingly important. As highlighted in the second special issue of the Journal, the North Atlantic right whale is one of the most endangered large cetacean species, numbering only around three hundred animals. In addition to incidental catches, ship strikes represent the major source of mortality of this species. A paper in this issue examines the vocalisations of that species, in order to see if their acoustic behaviour and characteristics can help in developing a solution to this problem.

Finally, another issue that is receiving increasing attention is that of the possible effects of whalewatching on cetacean populations. Given the dramatic increase in that industry it is important that studies are carried out to ensure that populations are not adversely affected. This issue includes a study of whalewatching on the behaviour of migrating gray whales in Mexico.

G.P. Donovan  
*Editor*