

Whale and Dolphin Conservation, WDC, Note to the CMS Standing Committee, Bonn, November 2013:



WDC-CMS Joint Workshop on Cetacean Social Complexity and Culture will take place on 15th and 16th April 2014.

WDC, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, is an international non-governmental organisation with cetacean conservation and protection activities spanning many countries around the world. The work of WDC includes conservation science, field research and cetacean welfare issues, the development of habitat protection models and policy implementation.

WDC has a formal Partnership Agreement with CMS (since 2005), and maintains a Joint Programme of Work designed to directly support the CMS Strategic Plan. WDC remains committed to continuing to work closely with the daughter agreements of CMS and through ACCOBAMS, ASCOBANS, the Pacific Cetaceans MoU and the West African Aquatic Mammals MoU, attending the agreement meetings and providing technical and advisory support to the Secretariats, Signatories and Parties and the regional conservation communities, as well as facilitating and conducting on-ground research programmes that support each of the agreements action plans.

WDC takes note of the work conducted by the CMS Secretariat since the last Standing Committee meeting and thanks and congratulates the Secretariat staff for their work to further cetacean conservation around the world.

We would like to draw the Standing Committee's attention to the comprehensive Global Programme of Work for Cetaceans (2012-2024), which was adopted by the CMS Parties in 2011. This is a considerable undertaking for WDC as a partner organisation and we would like to specifically note the element of Resolution 10.15 which instructs the CMS Scientific Council to:

'host a workshop to review and provide advice on the impact of the emergent science of cetacean social complexity and culture, as it relates to regional populations and to inform forward decision about CMS conservation priorities' (UNEP/CMS/Resolution 10.15/Rev.1 Annex I).

In collaboration with the CMS Secretariat and the Scientific Councillor for Aquatic Mammals, WDC will host a joint workshop with CMS at the Linnaean Society in London, on 15th and 16th April 2014. Also engaged in the organisation of this workshop we have two of the leading experts in cetacean culture, Professor Hal Whitehead and Dr Luke Rendell. We have had many positive responses from the invited participants and look forward to a very stimulating discussion, resulting in some tangible recommendations.

A report of this seminal workshop will be made available for the Scientific Council's consideration. In addition, supporting documentation in the form of a working document on the outcomes from the workshop will be submitted in advance of the next Conference of the Parties.