



SOUTH ATLANTIC ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STEERING COMMITTEE HELD IN STANLEY – SAERI OFFICE ON TUESDAY THE 24TH OF OCTOBER 2017 AT 2PM

PRESENT:

Dr. Paul Brickle (PB)
Dr. Marina Costa (MC)
Dr. Paul Brewin (PBrew)
Mr. Grant Munro (GM)
Dr. Scott Baker on Skype (SB)
Mrs. Tara Pelembe on Skype (TP)
Dr. Maria Garcia (MG)

Chaired by Dr. Paul
Brickle

1. WELCOME

Paul Brickle welcomed all attendees.

2. CONSTITUTION

There being a quorum present, the Chairperson declared the meeting duly constituted and informed that Dr Andrew Stanworth and Dr Sonja Heinrich sent their apologies as they could not attend the meeting.

3. MINUTES

3.1 The last steering committee meeting's minutes has been approved by the committees.

1. FC and SAERI's data collaboration still needs to be discussed and clarified.

3.2 Actions undertake in response to the DARWIN+ Annual Report feedback.

1. In relation to the development an extra output including the steps needed to update the

SAP, MC is discussing with Nick Rendell to develop a workflow document..

2. In relation to the request to increase the local community involvement, MC and MG have worked with Ilaria Marengo to develop a citizen science program that is providing local volunteers the needed training and material to record and report wildlife encounters around the Falklands. The material was sent last week. In the future, there is the development of an app that will facilitate data collection.
3. MG and MC sent Sonia Heinrich an outline of the CPOD data we are collecting and target questions; Sonia is looking for a master student at the University of St Andrews to work on these data under her and Alex Coram (ajc27@st-andrews.ac.uk) supervision.

3.3 Project updates

1. GM mentioned that FC has circulated the Sei whale project report.
2. TP informed the committee about the approval of the budget's change request by DARWIN, and outlined that this change was a result of the delay in fieldwork and respective payments that pushed the money expenditure to the following financial year.
3. TP informed the committee that Maria leaves by the end of November.
4. TP informed the committee that further discussion is needed to establish future support in Maria's absence to continue the photo ID work. It was mentioned that SAERI's intern Amy Guest could potentially support this work.
5. MC outlined that the winter focal survey (June-July) was successful. She highlighted that 1) during this time Commerson's were not seen in as high numbers as summer; 2) Peale's dolphins were encountered in large number in area A, off Port Williams during winter; and 3) there was unexpected congregation of southern right whales around the Islands from the end of May to the end of August.
6. MC informed the committee that the cetacean awareness day was successful.
7. MC informed the committee that the South Georgia report is been submitted for internal review.
8. MC informed the committee that photo matching of the first 2 focal seasons will be finished by the end of December.
9. GM inquired about future options to investigate where Commerson's disappear to during winter, suggesting to extend the areas covered in winter.
10. PB highlighted the need to assess later during the project which are the residual questions and prioritise them for future research initiatives.
11. SB shared his experience on tackling such research question as his 20 year work with Maui and Hector's dolphins has yet to bring to light similar behavioural patterns of dolphin movement during winter. Him and his colleagues have not been answered this question due to the difficulty in tagging and tracking these small animals.
12. GM mentioned the work conducted by the JNCC surveys showed that many

Commerson's dolphins were seen seeking shelter over the north of Falkland's Sound during winter.

13. All members agreed that the question of where Commerson's go in winter remains and that will require further discussion in the future.
14. SB informed the committee that the request to extend the genetics sampling was denied by the Falkland's environmental committee mentioning that the need of extra samples was likely not clearly explained to the committee. . PB was not in the environmental committee that denied the extension of the genetics work. GM suggested that having representatives of SAERI in the committee may help demonstrate the value of continuing genetics sampling of cetaceans in the Falkland Islands.
15. SB highlighted the fact that the genetics work is sufficient but that biosying will be very useful to perform stable isotope analyses that can help us understand dolphins' feeding habits as well as spatial and temporal changes on their diets..
16. SB informed the committee on the preliminary results of the genetics analyses. Commerson's dolphin samples have been processed, while analyses on Peale's samples are in progress. Difference in haplotypes from Falklands Commerson's dolphins suggests they are a distinct population from the South American one but not at level of subspecies. SB also mentioned that no haplotypes seem to be shared between Falklands Commerson's and Kerguelen Islands Commerson's, as previously speculated. SB informed the committee about the collaborations and on-going communication with colleagues in Chile and Argentina on *Cephalorhynchus* genetics.
17. TP informed the committee that the half year DARWIN report will be circulated next week.
18. The committee was informed about the loss of equipment during the last focal survey. Two deep CPODs were lost during a storm sometime prior to their recovering in July 2017. CPODs were deployed using weights that permitted manual recovery from the RHIB and the weight might have been not enough. GM informed the committee he did not yet notified to Premier about the loss. He also mentioned that a buoy from Premier Oil, with one tonne anchor, was also lost during a storm in Berkley Sound. He suggested that if more CPODs were to be deployed in the future in Falkland's Sound, there will be a need to use a larger platform (i.e. vessel) allowing for larger anchor. Grant will inform Premier Oil of the C-PODs loss.
19. MC explained that the three remaining CPODS deployed along the entrance, the channel and inside Many Branch should be sufficient to collect acoustic data to investigate how and when Commerson's use Many Branch sheltered bay.
20. MC informed the committee that CPODs will be recovered and serviced on the fieldwork commencing in November.
21. MC informed the committee that a drone will be used to investigate dolphin's dive times to include in the abundance estimates. She explained that even though usually there is a research component exploring the disturbance caused by the drones on the species of interest it is too consuming to investigate disturbance of drones on dolphins in the Falkland Islands due to the tight deadlines and logistic constrains. Additionally, she highlighted that from previous literature and cetacean studies we can assume there is minimal to no disturbance of drones on these species behaviour.

22. PB informed the committee about the delays in acquiring spare parts for the RHIB. Thus, SMSG may require some flexibility to start fieldwork in the beginning of November. MC suggested that the other SMSG boat might be used for part of the survey.
23. TP informed the committee on the upcoming Islands Environmental conference in St Helena, and the initiative to present DOKE's work at the event.
24. The committee was informed about the cetaceans watch guidelines developed by FC for the Falkland Islands. PB suggested the need to incorporate a dolphin component to the cetaceans watch guidelines for the Falkland Islands.

4. <u>MATTERS ARISING</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
4.1 Need to establish the workflow for the project outcome in the context of SAPs in accordance to the feedback received from DARWIN after the annual review.	Marina Costa to discuss the workflow with Nick Rendell.
4.2 Cooperation between FC and SAERI.	Paul Brickle and Andy S. will meet to discuss the terms of future cooperation and coordination between SARI and FC.
4.3 Cetacean biopsy permit.	Paul Brickle and Marina Costa will attend the next Falkland Island's Environmental committee to present and explain the initiative to continue biopsying dolphins to carry out stable isotope analyses.
4.4 CPOD loss during winter storm	Grant Munro to inform Premier of the loss of the two CPODs.
4.5 CPOD data analysis.	Marina Costa and Sonia Heinrich to look for a student to analyse CPOD data.
4.6 Need to establish future support for photo identification work.	Marina Costa, Tara Pelembe and Paul Brickle to discuss and find appropriate support.
4.7 Permit to conduct the drone work.	Marina Costa to finalise research permit and submit to Nick Rendell
5. <u>NEXT QUARTER ACTIVITIES PROJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
5.1 Data collection: Focal surveys will be undertaken in November and December 2017 in areas A, B and C. The C-PODs will be serviced and data downloaded.	MC and MG with the possible support of a volunteer
5.3 Data analysis: Photo-matching Commerson's and	MC and MG with the support of a

Peale's dolphins for the two first field seasons and the genetic survey will be completed by mid-December. volunteer

5.4 Abundance estimated for Commerson's and Peale's dolphins will be completed by the end of December. MC

5.5 Drone work will be included in the third field season and a research permit will be prepared and submitted to the EPD. MC and MG with the support of a volunteer

5.6 Circulate the link to the Sei whale report. GM

5.7 Circulate the D HY report MC

5.8 Inform Premier Oil about the loss of two C-PODs GM

5.9 Incorporate a dolphin component to the cetaceans watch guidelines for the Falkland Islands MC

6. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be in February 2018, the date to be agreed.

7. **CLOSURE**

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed.

Signed as a correct record



Chairman