



SOUTH ATLANTIC ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STEERING COMMITTEE HELD IN STANLEY – SAERI OFFICE ON MONDAY THE 5TH OF MARCH 2018 AT 2PM

PRESENT: Marina Costa (MC) Chaired by Marina Costa
Andrew Stanworth (AS)
Paul Brewin (PB)
Grant Munro (GM)
Scott Baker on Skype (SB)
Tara Pelembe on Skype (TP)

1. WELCOME

Marina Costa welcomed all attendees.

2. CONSTITUTION

There being a quorum present, the Chairperson declared the meeting duly constituted and informed that Dr Sonja Heinrich and Dr Paul Brickle 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 with no further amendment.

3.2 Actions undertook 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, Marina, Andy, Filippo Galimberti, Denise Blake and the fishery observer Veronica Iriarte had meetings to discuss the issue. The steps following steps have been suggested: (i) Marina will prepare a draft of the SAP for the end of **April**; (ii) the draft will be shared with the FC and the fishery observers; (iii) the draft will be presented to Denise Blake, the Environmental

Officer in **June**; (iv) the document will be presented to first Environment Committee meeting after June.

We discussed to modify the updated version of the Cetacean SAP as following:

- To shorten the document including the species that are likely to be observed in the coastal and offshore waters of the FI including: Commerson's and Peale's dolphins, orca, sei whale, southern right whale, pilot and sperm whale (offshore). The following less common species will be shortly discussed: mikes, humpback, fin and blue whales, and hourglasses dolphins.
- To include a review of the threats adding a risk matrix and suggesting possible activities to carry out in the FI within a reasonable (and possible short) time.
- To include a plan prioritizing which species and research questions will be investigated in the future.
- To include a section about the FI stranding network (increase stranding reports by people on camp using official channels, provide people in loco with a simple protocol to collect data about possible human interaction, establish a stranding team who will be responsible for reports, standardize reporting, establish a policy for collection and storage of genetic samples, establish funding from FIG).
- To include a session about whale-watching practices and to update the code of conduct including the newborn Commerson's issue in Port Stanley.

PB suggested to make a list of species of more concern or rare. **AS** added that it is very difficult to foreseen species and number of cetacean stranded and it is likely that the funding if donated will be used for any stranding until they will run out. **PB** also suggested that FIG should support the communication strategy informing of the stranding protocol the citizens. **GM** suggested using the Wool Press newsletter to contact people on camp. Everybody suggested that **MC** will include these different hypotheses in the SAP draft for review.

2. In relation to the request to increase the local community involvement. The following actions have been carried out: (i) two photo-identification courses have been carried out (27th of January and 3rd of February) involving 20 people – Discussion are going-on to repeat the course in Fox Bay and Saunders Islands – As result from the course ten people are handling the matching 12 sightings (1,675 photos) of which 5 have been successfully completed and 7 are on-going; (ii) increase the number of public presentations (i.e. 4 presentation done and one planned: Night at the Museum on the 6th of November 2017; Environment Committee on the 15th of December 2017; Falkland Woman Association on the 26th of February 2018; Tall Ship Tenacious 4th of March 2018; and another is planned in March in Port Howard); a webinar have been carried out in cooperation with CIEEM, on the 7th of February 2018 – Attendees were from UK and St Helena; (iii) identification cards of Commerson's and Peale's dolphins have been mailed to 34 locations/people on camp; (iv) an open boat day to visit the Song of the Whale vessel have been organized for the public; (v) a second Cetacean awareness Day is under discussion; (vi) the preparation of material informing non-scientist about how to collect basic information from stranding events is under preparation.
3. In relation to the request Sonia Master student to handle C-POD data. There are no available students in St Andrews this year.

MC will discuss with Sonja the possibility to contact other universities (when Sonja will be back from the field work in Chile.

3.3 Project updates

1. **FC and SAERI's data collaboration.** MC had a meeting with AS to discuss about the creation of common catalogues for photo-identification of cetacean species. Protocols used during the DOKE for data collection, matching and the generation and update of the fin catalogue have been shared. The update catalogues for each species will be available at the end of the DOKE project. Discussion have been made with iLaria Marengo to prepare a tool allowing an easier way to share the catalogues. It has also been decided to use the FC email (whales@conservation.org.fk) to allow the public reporting opportunistic sightings.
2. We received the **grant offer letter** for the third year.
3. **Fieldwork.** The season 3 has been carried out successfully. The season 4 is on-going.
4. **Photo-id work.** Maria Taylor has worked for three months on Cc photo-ID: she renamed 20 sightings and re-did 19 Garcia's sightings. Marcello Cazzola has been employed for the next 5 months from the 1st of March to the 31st of July. Marcello will resume the sighting to re-do (n=7) and continue with the new sightings. Amy Guest will support the project carrying on matching work for 2.5 days per week for 4 months (Apr-Jul).

The following tables summarize the photo-id work by species and by survey.

Activity	Commerson's		Peale's	
	Sigh	Picture	Sigh	Picture
Done	57 (38%)	7,642	37 (24%)	2,933
Re-done and checked			23	2,186
To check	47 (31%)	7,353	25 (16%)	2,674
Re-done to check MCOS	19*	3,796		
To rename with catalogue	28	3,557	25	2,674
To re-do/to do	48(32%)	13,376	42 (40%)	5,336
To re-do	7**	4,064		
To-do	41	9,312	42	5,336
Total	152	28,371	104	10,976

(*MTAY, **MCAZ)

Season	Total Sight (Cc & La)	Complete	To check (rename/re-done to check)	To re-do*/to do
Focal1	72	59	8	5*
Focal2	45	10	26	9*
Focal3	65	3	31	31

Focal4	36		2	34
Genetic	27	20	5	2*
Opportunistic	11	2		9
Total	256	94 (37%)	72 (28%)	90 (35%)

5. The **paper on abundance** is going on. Analyses have been concluded and final estimation is waiting to be corrected using the drone data. An abstract has been submitted to the European Cetacean Conference and accepted as a poster. Marina will attend the conference from the 6 to the 10th of April.
5. Expenditures are in line with the D+ **budget** avoiding the underspent issue of the past year.
6. We received by the **FIG** the second and last tranche of **£5,000** as from the proposal.
7. An **application to EW** to carry on a long-term monitoring using eco-volunteer has been refused last year, due to logistic issue. Marina is in contact with the EW team to understand if the problem can be solved.
8. A proposal to carryout extra tissue sampling on Peale's and Commerson's dolphins has been submitted to the **Mohamed Bin Zayed Grant** on the 28th of February (\$25,000).
9. The **drone** work has received the permit from the Environment Committee and the work is going on: 48 minutes of Peale's and 35 minutes of Commerson's have been collected. A trip to Port Howard to collect more sampling will be organized between the end of March and the beginning of April or later in April (depending on sea conditions). A trip to Weddell has been refused by the owner. Marina will try to contact and ask.
10. Denise Blake will release the genetic permit for **more tissue sampling** using the pole. If Scott Baker or people from Bas will be on board, a crossbow might be used. Marina is discussing with Jen Jackson the collection of whale **skin** samples.
11. The old research permit has been amended with the inclusion of dolphin faecal data collection using a handle net.
12. Tara asked the attendee a **perception** about how the **project is proceeding**.
 - a. **AS** said: that data have been generated and gathered although the difficulty to work with cetaceans; the project is on track and there are no concerns at this point; he is waiting for the final step of the project.
 - b. **PB** said that he was satisfied from SMSG point of view; skills of the people involved including volunteers, have been implemented and effort for outreach maximized.
 - c. **GM**: the project is going fine but he is waiting for future research to be suggested and which will be the legacy beyond the project.
 - d. **TP** underlined the need to prioritize the research for the future.
 - e. **SB**: the tissue sampling went very well last year and preliminary analyses are exciting; it would be good to include more data from the west of west Falkland depending on the funding.

- f. **SB** also asked about abundance estimate from habitat modeling and **MC** answered that this will be analyzed further (from May).
- g. **AS**: required that the project legacy will include conservation actions for the management of the species and the production of a policy document other than suggest future research.

13. **Partner updates.**

- a. **PB** from SMSG: all fine, no update.
- b. **GM** from Austral Biodiversity: all fine, no update.
- c. **AS** from FC: a small cruise (7 days) was completed in January 2018 around the islands and pictures of dolphins are available; the sei whale cruise is running (in total for 6 weeks) and they will also have dolphins pictures to share (their work include observation, biopsy and photo-id); moreover there is weekly observation going on from Cape Pembroke that is also gathering interesting data.
- d. **SB** from the Oregon State University: the genetic characterization of Commerson's and Peale's dolphins around the West and East Falkland Islands is going on showing no evidence of population differentiation between the east and west islands for the Commerson's but highly significant difference between islands for the Peale's dolphins although comparison have been made with Peale's from Maule, Aysen and Punta Arenas (Chile) that might be different from anything on the Atlantic side. Additional sampling from Chile might arrive but not likely from Argentina. For Commerson's, tests of differentiation were highly significant between the continent and the Falkland Islands. More samples from Commerson's in the west part of west Falkland might be very useful.
- e. **Sonja Heinrich** updates were sent by email and read by MC: Sonja and her team found Commerson's dolphins in the Chilean fjords, around 1200km north of their known range in Chile. They also saw what looks like hybrids between Commerson's and Chilean dolphins, and they got some biopsies of those purported hybrids; Sonja will attend the next IUCN meeting revising small cetacean assessments at the end of March presenting information on Peale's dolphin and she is in contact with SB and MC to present the DOKE preliminary results.
- f. **TP** from SAERI: no update.

14. There were no **other business** and the meeting was declared concluded.

4.	<u>MATTERS ARISING</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
4.1	Discuss with Sonja the possibility to individuate a student willing to analyses the C-POD data, possibly outside the University of St Andrews.	MC to discuss with Sonja
5.	<u>NEXT QUARTER ACTIVITIES PROJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
5.1	Data collection: Focal survey 4 is going on in March in areas B and C. The C-PODs will be serviced and data	MC and Marcello Cazzola with the support of Amy Guest and possible

downloaded.

volunteers

- 5.2 Contact EW for the logistic issues excluding the FI **MC**
- 5.3 Data analysis: Photo-matching Commerson's and Peale's dolphins will go on with the support of Marcello from March to July and of Amy Guest from April to July. **MC** and Marcello Cazzola with the support of Amy Guest and of people who participated to the Photo-ID courses
- 5.4 Draft of the abundance estimated paper for Commerson's and Peale's dolphins to be completed by the end of April. **MC**
- 5.5 Drone work will go on. Another attempt to visit Weddell will be carried out. **MC** and Marcello Cazzola
- 5.6 First draft of the SAP for the end of April, including Prioritized research plan for the future (logframe). **MC**
- 5.7 ECS Conference **MC** will attend and prepare a poster
- 5.8 Report from IUCN Red List Assessment of the Peale's dolphin assessment **Sonja Heinrich**
- 5.9 Finalise field work reports (focal 3, 4 and genetic) for end of March **MC**
- 5.10 Prepare and send the D+ Annual report (deadline is the 30th of April 2018) **MC**

6. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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

7. **CLOSURE**

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

Signed as a correct record
12/07/2018



Chairman