

Draft Terms of Reference for a proposed intersessional ad hoc group to progress animal welfare and ethics issues within the International Whaling Commission

Submitted by the United Kingdom

During the IWC63 Whale Killing Methods and Associated Welfare Issues Working Group (WKM WG) countries reaffirmed that the welfare of whales was an important issue that needed to be addressed. The aim of the intersessional group is to provide ideas and advice to the Whale Killing Methods and Associated Welfare Issues Working Group which will assist it in taking a scientific and objective approach to the management of animal welfare and ethics, consistent with standards in other intergovernmental fora.

The group shall:

1. Review in detail the UK Whale Welfare and Ethics Report (IWC/63/WKM&AWI4) and:
 - (a) refine the conclusions and recommendations to those of common agreement;
 - (b) identify knowledge gaps in the report and areas which could benefit from further research.
2. Produce draft text of an IWC position statement on animal welfare and ethics, incorporating intent for consideration of these issues within management decisions.
3. Commission an independent review of the nature, intent and operation of ethical review processes in the use of animals in research in:
 - a) intergovernmental and regional advisory bodies with an animal research mandate and;
 - b) national animal research legislations which incorporate an ethical review procedure.
4. Review information and expertise in relation to cetacean welfare held by other marine resource management bodies, with a view to consideration of MOUs to facilitate information sharing and collaborative projects with the IWC.
5. Propose options by which animal welfare and ethics could be better integrated across the spectrum of the IWC's work.
6. Review the group's progress and TOR at IWC64 and produce a final report to the Whale Killing Methods and Associated Welfare Issues Working Group at IWC65.

The ad hoc group should consist of interested countries reflecting both a geographical range and a range of interests with regard the use of whales. The IWC should establish a voluntary fund, to which the UK will contribute, to enable the intersessional group to consider holding a meeting during the intersessional period.