

**Press Release from 54th Annual Meeting
Shimonoseki, Japan, May 2002**

54th Annual Meeting The Annual Meeting took place from 20-24 May 2002 at the Kaikyo Messe Conference Centre, Shimonoseki, Japan, under the Chairmanship of Prof. Bo Fernholm (Sweden). Delegates thanked the Government of Japan and the people of Shimonoseki for their warmth, hospitality and for the excellent facilities provided.

The associated meetings of the Scientific Committee and Commission Committees and Working Groups were held at Tw14.232cf 0.0016 Tc0.0047 Tw[ether t)10.3(h)1.7(e C)-10.7(o)14.5(mmiss)-6.6

Norway has lodged objections to the ban and has exercised its right to set national catch limits for its coastal whaling operations for minke whales. As in previous years, the

the following:

Eastern North Pacific gray whales (taken by those whose "traditional, aboriginal and subsistence needs have been recognised") - A total catch of 620 whales is allowed for the years 2003 - 2007 with a maximum of 140 in any one year.

West Greenland fin whales (taken by Greenlanders) - An annual catch of 19 whales is allowed for the years 2003 - 2007.

West Greenland minke whales (taken by Greenlanders) - The annual number of whales struck for the years 2003-2007, shall not exceed 175 (up to 15 unused strikes may be carried over each year).

East Greenland minke whales (taken by Greenlanders) - An annual catch of 12 whales is allowed for the years 2003 - 2007 (up to 3 unused strikes may be carried over each year).

Humpback whales (taken by St Vincent and The Grenadines) - For the seasons 2003-2007 the number of humpback whales to be taken by the Bequians of St. Vincent and the Grenadines shall not exceed 20. The meat and products of such whales are to be used exclusively for local consumption in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Such whaling must be conducted under formal legislation that accords with the submission of the Government of St Vincent and the GrenadenTete(un)kp.4(d)2(C5(f)1./252.3(2(ing)-(2(inge)22mtr)13.3(e)-4.4(8

sperm whales in the western North Pacific. Different views on the value of this research were expressed in the Scientific Committee and the Commission.

Whale killing methods and associated welfare issues In 1998, the Commission passed a Resolution that encouraged nations to supply relevant data on killing times and related issues in future years and also to provide technical assistance to reduce time to unconsciousness and death in aboriginal subsistence fisheries. This year, the Commission reviewed progress in the context of the revised 'Action Plan' developed by the Commission in 1998 and will hold an expert workshop on this issue in 2003.

Environmental Research In recent years, the Commission has strengthened its commitment to research on environmental changes and the effects on cetaceans. In particular, last year, it has provided some 'seed funding' for two major collaborative research initiatives made by its Scientific Committee with respect to (1) chemical pollutants (POLLUTION 2000+) and (2) baleen whale habitat and prey studies in co-operation with CCAMLR and Southern Ocean GLOBEC (SOWER 2000). However, these programmes require considerably more funding if they are to succeed and the Commission has decreased funding for research this year. Governments and others are requested to provide additional funding.

The Scientific Committee will hold a modelling workshop to begin looking at the issue of interactions between fisheries and cetaceans. *[Note: this workshop took place in La Jolla, USA in July 2002]*

Small Cetaceans Notwithstanding the different views of member countries over the legal competence of the IWC to manage small cetaceans, many Contracting Governments continue to co-operate in the consideration of small cetacean issues, particularly with respect to the work of the Scientific Committee.

Financial contributions During the year, the Commission-appointed Task Force worked intersessionally to develop a more equitable scheme for financial contributions. Specifically, a new scheme should reduce the financial burden of membership of small developing countries. At the Meeting, the Task Force reported that it had made good progress but had not yet been able to produce a fully-developed scheme. The Commission directed the Task Force to try to complete its work by the next Annual Meeting in 2003. In the meantime, the Commission adopted an interim scheme which gives a substantial amount of relief to a number of member governments.

Future Annual Meetings The 2003 meetings will take place in Berlin, Germany, from 26 May to 19 June.

The 2004 meetings will take place in May in Italy.