

PANEL 1

BUILDING INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTION

Monday 14 November, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

COORDINATOR: BRAD BARR

SESSION OVERVIEW:

Recognizing that one of the particularly significant challenges MMPA scientists and managers must confront is finding sufficient funding to support management and research activities needed to effectively achieve management goals, this panel will focus on innovative partnerships to help attain this goal. Programs like the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (<http://www.barrierreef.org>) have been established, at least in part consistent with Article 17 of the World Heritage Convention, to support research on GBR natural and cultural resources. This might represent a potential model for establishing an institution to support research and management in marine mammal protected areas (MMPAs) around the world. The GBRF possesses a structure and process for identifying a research strategy, developing a catalogue of peer-reviewed proposed projects that are consistent with that strategy, and a prioritization process which guides the allocation of available funds to these projects. None of this is particularly ground-breaking, but our understanding is that this Foundation has been quite successful in finding funding and supporting needed research. Something similar might perhaps be a resource for MMPA managers and scientists.

Since the inception of the International Committee on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICoMMPA), we have been searching for some way to offer the opportunity to our community of practice to help them address critical research and management issues, many of which are shared challenges at most MMPAs around the world. We thought that this GBR Foundation model might be one way to provide this opportunity, and the International Committee on MMPA could be the institution, with a foundation partner, that does the work needed to implement this model for the MMPA community. To make this happen, we already have, we believe:

- 1) a compelling issue (marine mammals and the protected areas established to conserve and protect key places critical to their survival),
- 2) an MMPA community that is confronting considerable challenges from human activities that are threats to the long-term health and welfare of these charismatic species, and working relationships with these places that desperately need the support,
- 3) a committed group of the most widely-recognized experts in the MMPA community around the world who could convene and conduct workshops that would help develop, in consultation with our community of practice and foundation partner, the strategies, processes, and criteria needed to effectively implement the initiative...as well as provide the necessary peer review of proposals to insure that only the most scientifically robust proposals are put forward for funding,



4) Close institutional and partnership connections with the agencies that manage these places, international marine conservation organizations working on these issues and challenges (such as the IUCN MMPA Task Force, for example, currently engaged in implementing the “Important Marine Mammal Area” initiative), and the research community that supports the work of MMPAs around the world.

What we currently lack, however, is a suitable foundation partner, but we have begun some initial efforts to identify potential foundation collaborators. We particularly require a foundation partner that possesses the knowledge and insight to advise us on what projects and proposals would have traction in the funding community, as not all projects that may be identified in this process will necessarily be of interest to potential funders, and has established relationships with the philanthropic organizations that may be relevant to our mission.

However, before we move too far forward with any one potential approach, we should step back and see how others have successfully addressed this challenge. This panel will assemble representatives from these types of foundations to present their models, and to elicit their expertise in helping to find a path forward in support of effective MMPA research and management.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Present the idea of an MMPA Foundation and how it might be developed and successfully implemented.
- 2) Hear other approaches for achieving sustainable funding for place-based conservation initiatives.
- 3) Seek comments and advice from experts actively implementing similar initiatives on the idea of an “MMPA Foundation”
- 4) Seek input and perspectives from the Conference participants on how to most effectively move forward with something that will serve the community in offering opportunities for funding innovative, and essential, research and approaches to MMPA management.

PANEL 2

USING IMMAs: HOW CAN THE TOOL OF IMMAs (IMPORTANT MARINE MAMMAL AREAS) CONTRIBUTE TO BIODIVERSITY AS WELL AS MARINE MAMMAL CONSERVATION ON THE HIGH SEAS?

Monday 14 November, 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**COORDINATORS:
GIUSEPPE NOTARBARTOLO DI SCIARA AND ERICH HOYT**

SESSION OVERVIEW:

More than half of the Earth’s surface, comprising the pelagic ocean and deep seas, lies in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) where marine mammal species spend considerable parts of their year migrating and sometimes feeding and breeding. Yet this region of the ocean presents a huge challenge to biodiversity conservation in terms of data gaps about marine mammal distribution, knowledge of the impact from human activities, difficulties in mitigating threats, and the challenges of management so far from land. On the one hand, the legal situation in the ABNJ awaits full clarification over the next few years. But even with a legal regime for protecting biodiversity, stakeholders will need to come together to devise clever strategies for protecting biodiversity on the high seas. The IMMA is our marine mammal tool, but it is just one tool we can use to achieve goals of conservation. Other tools include CBD EBSAs, World Heritage Sites (WHSs), marine important bird areas (IBAs), IMO PSSA, IUCN KBAs and other directives for shipping, as well as MPAs and MMPAs with various goals and levels of protection, IMMAs themselves are not MPAs, but as scientific tools they will be able to provide input to all of these directives.

The IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (MMPA Task Force) has recently hosted and will report on valuable discussions on the use of IMMAs at the IUCN World Conservation Congress (Sept. 2016, Hawaii), Pew meetings (Oct. 2016, Netherlands) and at the first IMMA Workshop in the Mediterranean (Oct. 2016, Crete). The Task Force, working with the International Committee on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICMMPA) and benefitting from ideas from the wider community of practice, looks forward to rolling out regional technical workshops over the next five years across most of the southern hemisphere to identify IMMAs and implement biodiversity conservation initiatives.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Present a primer on the value and use of IMMAs.
- 2) Update ICMMPA participants on the status of discussions regarding the identification of IMMAs for marine mammals and biodiversity.
- 3) Engage managers and other stakeholders in the challenges of managing and protecting biodiversity on the high seas. The IMMA is our marine mammal tool, but it is part of a suite of high seas tools (EBSAs, KBAs, WHSs, HSMPAs) that we can use to achieve goals of conservation. These tools can be even more valuable when used together.



PANEL 3

REGIONAL: MEXICO (PACIFIC SIDE) THROUGH PANAMA INCLUDING COSTA RICA

Tuesday 15 November, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

COORDINATOR: JORGE URBAN

SESSION OVERVIEW:

We plan to use the Humpback Whale as liaison species to forge partnerships of the countries of the region on marine protected areas and marine mammals. More information coming soon!

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama share besides the humpback other large whales like blue and sperm as well as several other small cetacean species. We propose the following objectives for this Panel:

- 1) Present a review of the information on the science and management of this species in this region.
- 2) Explore the possibility of establishing a network of researchers and MPA managers to collaborate and exchange information on the marine mammal protected areas in the region.

PANEL 4

MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS OF MMPAS THAT COVER BOTH SHORELINE AND OFFSHORE WATERS

Tuesday 15 November, 11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.

COORDINATOR: SCOTT GENDE

SESSION OVERVIEW:

Coming Soon!

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

Coming Soon!



PANEL 5

MAKING THE COSTA RICA DOME HAPPEN

Tuesday 15 November, 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

COORDINATOR: MIGUEL INIGUEZ

SESSION OVERVIEW:

The Costa Rica Dome (CRD) is an area of high primary productivity in the Northeastern tropical Pacific, which supports marine predators such as tuna and cetaceans. Located off the western coast of Central America, the width of its extent varies between 300 and 1,000 km. The average location of the Dome's core approaches 9° North and 90° West, beyond national jurisdiction. Its diameter and position changes year to year and during a characteristic annual cycle.

The Costa Rica Dome provides year-round habitat that is important for the survival and recovery of the endangered blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*). The area is of special importance to the life history of a population of the blue whales, which migrate south from Baja California during the winter for breeding, calving, raising calves and feeding.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

1. Present update information on the CRTD.
2. Explore best strategy to join forces that contribute towards the conservation of the CRTD.

PANEL 6

EVOLVING PERCEPTIONS AND STEWARDSHIPS WITHIN HUMAN COMMUNITIES

Wednesday 16 November, 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

COORDINATOR: DAVID MATTILA

SESSION OVERVIEW:

The objective of this session is, in essence, to examine whether marine mammals and marine mammal protected areas can foster a broader environmental stewardship ethic in a variety of communities. Marine mammals are often touted as a “flag ship” species whose charisma can be helpful in developing and nurturing a broader understanding of and conservation ethic for the marine environment in general. Panelists will present case studies of if and how marine mammals and MMPAs can effectively be used to foster partnerships for protection.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

To examine case histories, from a variety of cultures and communities, of how marine mammals and marine mammal protected areas have (or have not) fostered a greater environmental stewardship. Objectives are to identify those variables and attributes which seem to work, the challenges that must be overcome and even those cases which were not successful (e.g. why not). In so doing, provide guidance for MMPA managers to increase the efficiency of their use of marine mammals as flag ship species for broader stewardship.



PANEL 7

RIVER DOLPHINS

Wednesday 16 November, 11:15 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

COORDINATOR: MIGUEL INIGUEZ
SESSION CHAIR: FERNANDO TRUJILLO

SESSION OVERVIEW:

River dolphins face dramatic transformation of their habitats in the Amazon and Orinoco basins in South America. The main threats for these species are deforestation, water connectivity loss, overfishing, direct catches, pollution and climate change.

Just regarding deforestation, the annual rate remains between 5 to 6% every year since 2011, but the accumulate loss is over 700.000 km² from 1970. The most dramatic transformation has been in the south of the river Amazon in Brazil and also in the Andean region. The water connectivity in the Amazon is under high threat due the large number of dams (over 150), that isolate dolphin populations and stop fish migration. Probably the most dramatic example of this is for the recent described river dolphin species in the river Tocantins (*Inia araguanensis*) where the number of dolphins is relatively low. Overfishing is also affecting river dolphins, food security for local people and economic activities in the Amazon. The volumes of catches of catfish has decreased and new species are been trade including the scavenger piracatinga fish (*Calophysus macropterus*). This situation trigger one the most important threat for river dolphins that were illegally hunted during the last decade mainly in Brazil and Peru. Governments are reacting to this promoting a commercial ban for this fish species particularly in Brazil, but the threat still remain in other countries.

Pollution is also one of the big issues in the Amazon basin mainly for illegal gold mining and the use of thousand of tonnes of mercury that according with national reports are polluted rivers, fish and humans. Finally, the climate change is an important factor affecting aquatic ecosystems in the Amazon and Orinoco basins. The effects of El Niño and the Niña phenomenon is disrupting the flooded patterns in the forest making flooded and dry seasons shorter or longer. The result of this is reduction of suitable habitat availability and also changes in reproduction and lateral migration of fishes.

The main question regarding all these threats is how protected areas may help to reduce or mitigate the effects on river dolphins. In most cases protected areas do not include managing plans for aquatic ecosystems and their species, so is a great challenge to address efforts to redefine the role of some of these areas and propose the monitoring of key aquatic species such as river dolphins.

During the Second ICCMP meeting in Martinique, the scientific community recognized that river dolphins needs special habitat protection and identified as a positive step the implementation of an Action Plan and also a network initiative (SARDPAN) to connect river dolphins and protected areas.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

1. Evaluate the main threats for river dolphins in South America.
2. Establish the role of protected areas for river dolphins in South America.
3. Present advances in aquatic conservation initiatives that may include river dolphins.
4. Make recommendations to include river dolphins in managing plans for protected areas.

