

INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM
AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

5th MEETING

**Cancun (Mexico)
21 June 2007**

AGENDA

	Documents
1. Opening of the meeting	
2. Adoption of the agenda	
3. Review of the SAB work plan	SAB-5-03
4. Other business	
5. Place and date of next meeting	
6. Adjournment	

The fifth meeting of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) was held in Cancun, Mexico, on 21 June 2007. The board members and observers in attendance are listed in Appendix 1.

1. Opening of the meeting

Dr. Robin Allen, Director of the IATTC, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

3. Review of the SAB work plan

Dr. Allen introduced Document SAB-5-03, which described the current work plan of the SAB and its recommendations.

- 1. Prevalence and significance of cow-calf separation:** Dr. Allen indicated that the scientific work on this had been completed. The studies focused largely on calf development, swim performance and aerodynamics of swimming. He then focused the attention of participants to the recommended work on this issue and noted that NMFS is the only agency pursuing these studies. There were no changes to the work plan.
- 2. Life history and fishery-related stress effects studies:** Dr. Allen mentioned that the IATTC had completed the computerization of all life history data collected by IATTC on-board observers. He added that the sampling kits used to gather information on necropsies had suffered some damage while being used under the hard conditions at sea and it would require refitting before being used again. There were no changes to the work plan.
- 3. Review of currently available estimates of abundance for dolphin stocks:** Dr. Allen indicated that the latest cruises by NMFS had concluded and requested ideas from the members regarding the population models once the estimates are completed. The members in general thought that it was premature to change or modify the models. Dr. Javier Ariz indicated that this subject should be kept in the agenda and that any model should be reviewed and revised if needed. Mr. Jeremy Rusin stated that the main aim of the cruise was to identify ocean features and search for biases in the line transect data and therefore it covered a relative small area of the high-seas EPO, and that all species sightings would be incorporated to the data pool, but that the focus was the main stocks of dolphins involved in

the fishery. Dr. Allen added that the cruise served as a test for the sampling assumption more than as a survey. Mr. Rusin added that the objective of the cruise was to test the method under different modes of searching. The SAB recommended that the methodology should be tested and that the survey data for 2007 should be incorporated.

4. **Stock assessment of coastal spotted dolphins:** There were no changes to the work plan.
5. **Ecosystem effects:** Dr. Allen indicated that currently there was an important amount of activities performed by different groups whose results would be of importance to the AIDCP as well as the IATTC but none of them had concluded. There were no changes to the work plan.
6. **Mortality estimates:** Dr. Allen presented Document SAB 5-03a which focused on looking for possible missing dolphin mortality data, the sensibility of the procedure, the identification of the missing mortality, and the prediction of it. He indicated that this procedure could be implemented in any of the national programs if needed. Dr. Allen recognized that because of the level of statistical analysis used in the procedure, understanding the document was difficult, but he added that the group assigned to this task was very well versed in applied statistics. Mr. Alvin Delgado said that the Venezuelan national program volunteered that its data be analyzed under this procedure, and that although the results were marginal, he believed that these procedures should be used to compare among national programs. He indicated that the Venezuelan national program was implementing a new form to complement the information. Dr. Allen noted that the method could be used by vessel managers for particular purposes, but the focus of the SAB was the recommendation to use this method to obtain better estimates of dolphin mortality. Dr. Dreyfus mentioned that the Mexican national program had collaborated with the statisticians and had discussed the fact that the data have normal deviations, and therefore it can not be assumed that there was mortality in sets where the system detects there was erroneous data, considers the mortality erroneous and labels the data as such. Therefore, the statement that the sets were found to have erroneous data is not precise, and so this method can be used only as a tool for program managements and should not be used to modify the mortality. Dr. Allen noted that the issue of modifying the sensitivity was still being studied, and he also noted that other variables should also be considered to fully assess this procedure, like spatial distribution, but the most important thing was to take into account that some small vessels have been sighted by observers fishing on dolphins and that more instances could be occurring. He added that the IATTC will continue to produce alternative Type-1 and Type-2 error analysis on the sensibility of the model. After this, the IATTC would try to determine if using national program data is necessary. Dr. Dreyfus asked if there were instances of reported mortalities by other fleets. Dr. Allen responded that data for small seiners would be available in four to six weeks. He added that the second part of this study would be the analysis done by NMFS that Mr. Rusin is expected to report after working in collaboration with IATTC staff. This report, he noted, will probably be ready in some few months. Dr. Ariz indicated that in other oceans there have been some reports of sporadic mortality caused by small seiners. Mr. Ramón Montaña noted that the artisanal longline fishery observed by the IATTC had no reports of dolphin mortality. Dr. Ariz noted that a workshop in this issue was being programmed in the Indian Ocean. Dr. Allen noted that one of the goals of this study was to review past mortality estimates using improved techniques.

Dr. Dreyfus presented information on the simulation of obtaining necropsies of dolphins for 100 trips. He indicated that approximately 300 dolphins would be sampled. He noted that a table with the information would be available to the SAB shortly.

7. **Population modeling:** Dr. Allen noted that Dr. George Watters of the NMFS was doing an analysis of the historical data, and that the information would be made available to the SAB members as soon as possible. There were no changes to the work plan.
8. **Gear technology and fishing techniques to improve dolphin release:** Dr. Dreyfus reported on tests of net panels designed to keep the backdown channel open better. Unfortunately, too few sets with

panels installed were sampled to make statistically valid conclusions, because captains were unwilling to test the panels on their vessels. To date there was data for 66 sets in which four dolphins had died. Mr. Delgado added that the Venezuelan captains indicated that they were willing to use them but none had actually installed them in their nets. There were no changes to the work plan.

9. **Capture of mature tuna not in association with dolphins:** Dr. Ariz indicated that the data obtained by the Spanish Oceanographic Institute have not been analyzed yet, partially because the radars used in the studies did not have adequate resolution. He added that there were discussions with those involved to use equipment using more appropriate frequencies or equipment, including LIDAR. There were no changes to the work plan.

4. Other business

Dr. Ariz asked if the members that have retired from the group would be replaced. Dr. Allen replied that Ms. Nina Young had left Ocean Conservancy and Dr. Steve Reilly of the NMFS had retired, and their posts would be available. The Director could consider nominations of scientists to replace them after consultation with the Parties. The group agreed with this approach.

The SAB gratefully acknowledged the leadership, hard work, and invaluable guidance that Dr. Allen had given the SAB as a Presider for all these years.

5. Place and date of next meeting

The next meeting of the SAB will take place in June 2008 at the time of the meeting of the Parties to the AIDCP.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Appendix 1.

ATTENDEES – ASISTENTES

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