

5 The Way forward

Key issues from Day 1

3.1.1 Dr Cara Miller - Review of Pacific Cetaceans and Threats: highest level of concern for PI cetaceans comes from bycatch (tuna fisheries including impacts from ALDFG and inshore gillnet fisheries), direct take/hunting and pollution including plastics. Kikori delta in PNG - situation where a swim bladder fishery for the Chinese market is devastating local Australian humpback and snubfin dolphin populations found nowhere else in the PIR (similar to near-extinction of the vaquita porpoise in the Gulf of California)

Gaps in knowledge in order of priority – diversity,
distribution/density, demographics

- **Suggestions for Recommendations from meeting?**
 - Support IMMA management plan development for Kikori Delta?
 - Funding?
 - Others?

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Key issues from Day 1, cont'd

3.1.7 Dr Scott Baker-Aquatic Wild Meat.

Direct Take Solomon Islands. Currently likely just Fanalei still hunting dolphins on a regular basis (meat and teeth). Welfare issue for animals and humans. Was a cessation in hunting due to agreement with Earth Island Institute 2010, resumed in 2013 with 1698 catches documented in 2013 within 3 months. Need collaborative research including genetic identity and abundance estimate for targeted dolphins, human environment studies, potential to undertake tourism in the nearby Florida Islands.

➤ **Suggested recommendation:**

- PhD student from Solomon Islands to study human/dolphin rel in tandem with study on genetic i.d. and abundance.
- funding?
- Others?

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Key issues from Day 1, cont'd

3.1.2 David Mattila - Disentanglement: Potential increasing risk of entanglement in Pacific from garbage patches and ALDFG. Both longline gear and FADs implicated in whale entanglements in other areas – it would be surprising if same is not true for Pacific. Welfare and conservation issue; Capacity building focus. Training for Vanuatu and Tonga was in 2014 with SPREP in Tonga. *Both have disentanglement kits, PNG, Vanuatu, FP and NC put their hands up during WDAP meeting as needing training. France committed to training French Territories*

➤ **Suggested Action Point:**

- France to coordinate cetacean disentanglement training for French territories
- others?

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Key issues from Day 1, cont'd

3.1.3 Maurice Brownjohn - Fish Aggregating Devices: 60-80,000 dFADs deployed each year. No cetacean interactions with dFADs reported in the Pacific. FADs have become increasingly sophisticated, with up to 350 deployed per vessel in WCPFC. *[noting only 9.4% retrieved in one study] Low entanglement FADs and biodegradable FADs discussed in chat*

➤ Suggested recommendations?

- MOU Signatories to support mandatory use of non-entangling and biodegradable FADs
- MOU Signatories to investigate and support FAD retrieval requirements as part of FAD management
- Others?

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Key issues from Day 1, cont'd

3.1.4 Rochelle Constantine - Important Marine Mammal Areas. Globally significant sites for marine mammals that could potentially be delineated and managed for cetacean conservation. 20 approved sites in the Pacific with several more that could be designated with more information. Most have more than 15 species. Reviewed every 10 years. *Question – how can we use these to improve management and conservation of whales and dolphins? Need to plan for info needs 2026 review*

➤ **Suggested recommendations:**

- Oceania IMMA coordinators to advise members on information needs in candidate areas for 2026 review;
- surveys? funding?
- Others?

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Key issues from Day 1, cont'd

3.1.5 Teisa Fifita - Marine Tourism in Tonga T\$ (pa'anga) 9.3 million (US\$4.1 million) revenue in 2019. Actions taken to protect whales include limiting hours of interactions allowed seasonally and each day and limiting #s of licensed vessels. 2017 started enforcement activities on water and in ports, and appears to be having an effect with reduced infringements; upgrading training materials; finalising and submitting new regs by end of year.

- Suggested recommendations or offers of technical /financial support?

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Key issues from Day 1 (cont'd)

- **3.1.6 a Hannah Hendriks - Strandings of Oceania.** Strandings are a key source of information on species distribution in the Pacific and have potential to understand threats from COD. 76 strandings recorded in old APOD database (no longer supported), now moved to 'Flukebook'.. Mostly dugong, sperm whales, Cuvier's beaked whales and short-finned pilot whales. Need submissions! Reports can be submitted through SPREP website portal
- **Any suggested recommendations/actions?**
 - Training on database use?
 - Others?

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Key issues from Day 1 (cont'd)

- **3.1.6 b Karen Stockin - IWC Strandings Initiative.** Karen was the first Strandings Coordinator for the IWC Strandings initiative, which supports training and capacity building. IWC Expert Group provides advice on dealing with strandings <https://iwc.int/strandings-initiative>. Can coordinate by Zoom, WhatsApp and cellphone. Karen (NZ) and Lindsay Porter (Hong Kong) in similar time zone to Pacific. *Strandings training requested during WDAP meeting Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu and PNG. Panel members available any time for advice for emergency response; Genetic samples can be sent to NZ*
- **Suggested recommendations/actions:**
 - Invitation for more local members of strandings expert panel– suggest **Juney Ward/Samoa**
 - SPREP could coordinate regional online training on strandings with IWC/Karen Stockin & Lindsay Porter & IFAW; future hand on training when possible.
 - SPREP to include emergency links for stranding on website and in the Action Plan
 - Equipment needs for strandings/necropsies? Funding?
 - Necropsy samples to NZ/ share contacts (links of SPREP website to IWC strandings information)
 - Encourage further discussions with CITES and NZ government to facilitate movement of samples
 - Others?

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Key issues from Day 1 (cont'd)

- **3.1.8 Simon Childerhouse - DSM** – high uncertainty around impacts and no recognised international best practice for mitigation; precautionary approach needs to be central. Wide range of potential impacts (environmental, ecological, physiological, noise) coupled with knowledge gaps on important areas for cetaceans such as breeding, feeding, migrating and nature of DSM. *From discussion: Some member governments keen to progress DSM; Some PI governments calling for a 10-year moratorium; lack of dedicated research on whales in areas of interest to miners; many cryptic cetacean species in open ocean, no report of their presence evidence doesn't mean none there.*
- **Suggested Recommendations and Actions:**
 - International Seabed Authority draft standards – regional submission (maybe too late) SPREP to coordinate regional consultations to any relevant draft documents coming from the International Seabed Authority.
 - EIA standards/guidelines needed for PICTs. AP MOU Signatories could ask CMS to coordinate global guidelines, including cetacean survey methodology
 - MOU Signatories to include issue of appropriate EIAs for DSM in ABNJ negotiations
 - PIC MOU signatories required to undertake proper EIAs before mining including research on cetaceans present.
 - MOU Signatories to support long-term (3 year?) studies of cetacean abundance and distribution in any prospective mining area before mining can proceed
 - SPREP to add a knowledge resources link on virtual library
 - DSM is on the Agenda of the Environment Minister's high level Talanoa at the SPREP meeting this year. Do MOU signatories want to prepare on potential impacts to cetaceans?



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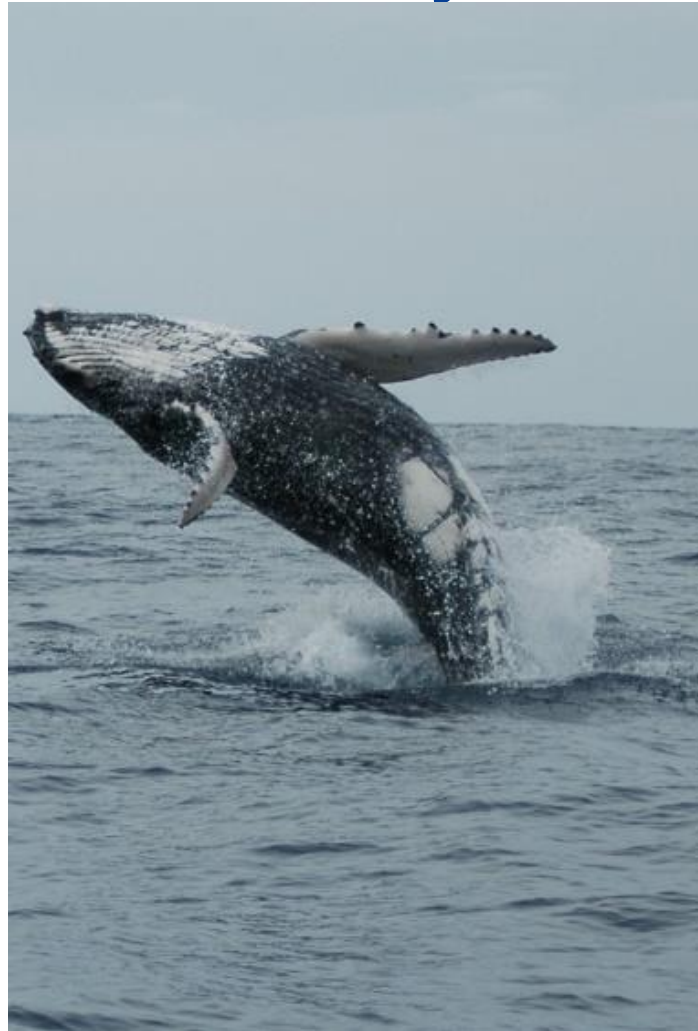
Key issues from Day 1 (cont'd)

- **3.1.9 Viv Tulloch -Climate Change.** A Model of Intermediate Complexity for Ecosystem Assessments (MICE) links krill and whale population dynamics with climate change. Models predict concerning declines and even local extinctions for Pacific populations of blue, fin and southern right whales as a result of krill declines from ocean warming. There is potential for shifting prey selection to enable whales to adapt but need ongoing protection to allow them to recover but need immediate action to reduce emissions. *Discussion: Alarming potential loss of cetacean biodiversity; shift in breeding grounds; Research on HBW connectivity across South Pacific and Southern Ocean coming soon; Important for Pacific voice in negotiations this year e.g. plastics, ISA, BBNJ, global biodiversity and post 2020 framework, and potential contributions of healthy whale populations to mitigating climate change impacts.*

➤ **Suggested actions:**

- Dr Constantine (SPWRC) will share analysis of HBW analyses on habitat use changes, when available.
- MOU signatories to continue to work towards united Pacific voices in international negotiations and consider synergies e.g. plastics – developing a plastic pollution declaration; climate change (UNFCC COP 26 – December 2021 CBD)
- Others?

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Funding needs

- *MAXIMISING THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM STRANDINGS (Action 8.1.3):*

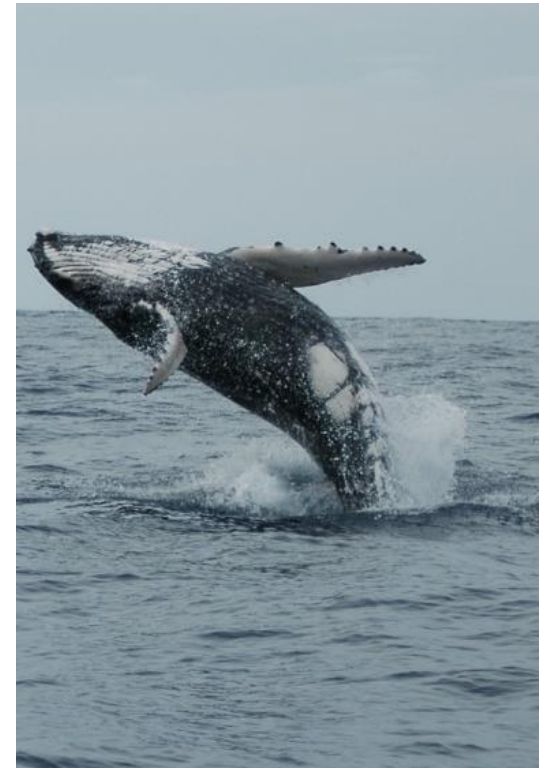
- Training in identification and data recording
- Necropsy training
- Sample retrieval
- Sample analysis

\$100,000

- *DISENTANGLEMENT OF WHALES (Supporting Action 8.1.2)*

- IWC in-country training
- Supply of disentanglement kits

\$50,000





**SPREP
PROE**

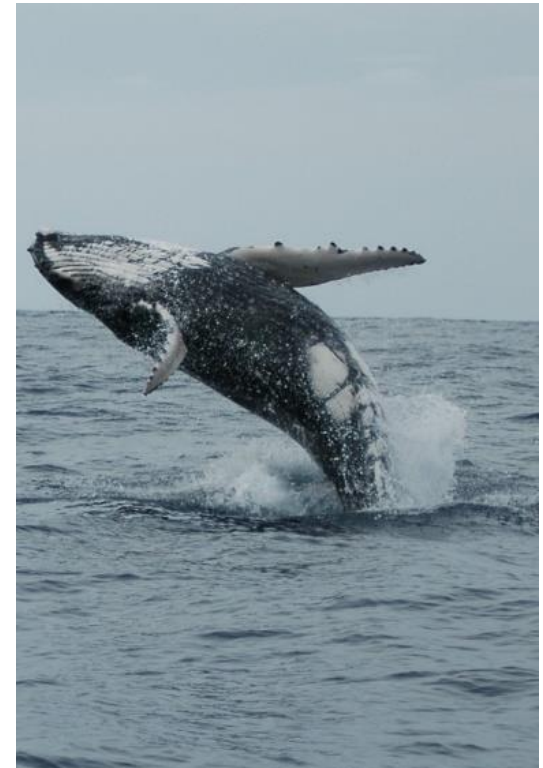


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Funding needs

- *SMALL CETACEAN ISSUES*
- Support development of Important Marine Mammal Area Management plan for Kikori River Delta, PNG. (Supporting Action 3.1.1)
\$40,000
- Support a PhD or post graduate study of human environment relationships with regards to dolphin drive hunts in Malaita Island, Solomon Islands. (Supporting Action 5.1.2).

\$130,000



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Funding needs

- *IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE OF DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE OF THREATENED CETACEANS (supporting Objective 2)*
- Fund and support in collaboration with PICTs and cetacean experts, surveys of threatened and near threatened whale and dolphin species which are listed on CMS appendices. Will also contribute to inventory of cetacean species in the region.
 - include capacity training in survey techniques.
 - provision of equipment (hydrophones, cameras, laptops).

\$30,000/country
- Fund and support, in collaboration with the Government of Tonga, surveys of humpback whale abundance in Tonga, using local personnel, over two breeding seasons. The abundance estimate generated will be used to support the future management of the whale-watching industry

\$70,000

