

Second Meeting of the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS

Istanbul, 20-22 November 2002

Recommendation 2.1

The ACCOBAMS SC1 (recommendation 1.1) had expressed concern over the unregulated deployment of acoustic alarms, urging caution in deployment until controlled studies have been conducted and they have been shown to be both effective in reducing competitive interactions between dolphins and fisheries, and not harmful to the conservation status of cetacean populations. Given: (1) that such controlled studies have not yet taken place; (2) the existence of competitive interactions between dolphins and fisheries within the ACCOBAMS area; (3) the commercial marketing of such devices; (4) the wide uncontrolled use of acoustic deterrent devices (ADDs) in some countries; and (5) requests for advice on their use received by the Secretariat from the authorities of several riparian Countries, the Scientific Committee recognises that it must take an immediate initiative in developing guidelines and advice for the use of ADDs.

The Committee recognises that despite the obvious need, it is not in a position at present to propose such guidelines and advice at this meeting. Noting that an expert workshop on the problems of conflicts between dolphins and Mediterranean coastal fisheries was held at ICRAM from 4-5 May 2001 (Reeves *et al.* 2001), the Committee agrees that the most efficient way to proceed is to hold a workshop of no more than five experts before February 2004, to develop at least interim guidelines for consideration and adoption by the Committee as soon as possible. The workshop should base its work on the conclusions and recommendations of the ICRAM workshop.

Terms of reference for the workshop:

The workshop will focus only on the competitive interactions between dolphins and fisheries, not on questions related to bycatches. The Scientific Committee agreed that the primary aim of the workshop will be to develop a risk assessment framework in order to provide practical guidelines for the use of ADDs and/or other mitigation measures that will be of immediate use to ACCOBAMS parties and riparian countries. It may also provide recommendations for future work that will enable refinement of any proposed guidelines.

In developing such guidelines, the workshop will consider to the extent possible:

- (1) an evaluation of likely and possible impacts of ADDs on cetaceans at the individual and population level;
- (2) an evaluation of the effectiveness of acoustic deterrents in reducing harmful interactions between dolphins and fisheries in specific cases;
- (3) identification of the work required to reduce the most important uncertainties in the provision of advice on the effectiveness and potential impacts on cetaceans of the use of such devices;
- (4) the identification of potential alternatives to acoustic devices for reducing conflicts between dolphins and fisheries.