

## **Meeting Report: “Workshop on Climate Change & Adaptation Options for Cetaceans and Other Marine Biodiversity of the Eastern Pacific,” Santo Domingo de Heredia, Costa Rica, 9-11 February 2009**

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In recognition of the potential threat posed by climate change to the ecology of the Eastern Pacific and in support of the International Whaling Commission’s (IWC) initiatives regarding the impact of climate change on cetaceans, the government of Costa Rica hosted a Workshop on Climate Change and Adaptation Options for Cetaceans and Other Marine Biodiversity of the Eastern Pacific, in Santo Domingo de Heredia, Costa Rica, 9-11 February 2009. This three-day meeting was presided by Roberto Dobles, Costa Rica’s minister of environment, and brought together 72 international experts in cetacean biology, oceanography, biodiversity, conservation and climate to discuss the current status of cetacean populations in the eastern tropical Pacific and to assess their vulnerability and adaptation options to climate change in the region.

The primary goal of the workshop was to conduct a collaborative scientific review of the impact of climate change on oceanographic conditions in the eastern tropical Pacific and their interpretation for the design of adaptation responses for cetaceans and other marine biodiversity. A secondary objective was to further develop the concept of “sensitivity indices” as a means of assessing the vulnerability of cetacean species to climate change. The dynamic of the workshop followed, with some adjustments, the “Climate Camp” methodology developed by WWF ([www.worldwildlife.org/climate/climatecamp.html](http://www.worldwildlife.org/climate/climatecamp.html)). Several presentations were given during an initial plenary session, covering the topics of climate change scenarios, implications for biodiversity, and adaptation measures. During the rest of the workshop, breakout groups conducted an assessment of the impacts of climate change on marine and coastal environments, using as a guide the variables addressed in the “Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership Annual Report Card 2007-2008” put out by the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership ([www.mccip.org.uk](http://www.mccip.org.uk)). Five groups worked in parallel by considering how these variables affect: 1) cetaceans, 2) other endangered species (seabirds, marine turtles, sharks), 3) fish and plankton, 4) marine and coastal ecosystems (reefs, mangroves, estuaries, beaches, intertidal, marine bottoms), and 5) physico-chemical oceanographic variables. The results from the working groups were discussed during a final plenary session and potential adaptation measures were considered. The group working with cetaceans also assessed the knowledge and conservation status for the 38 species or subspecies known to occur in the region, and, based on this knowledge, selected three representative species and ranked them on 15 criteria based on earlier work, to arrive at a sensitivity index for each species.

This workshop provided a rare opportunity for scientists from Latin America and elsewhere to come together and discuss how climate change scenarios might affect cetaceans and their marine environments in the region. Some of the results from the workshop were subsequently presented at the “Second IWC Workshop on Cetaceans and Climate Change,” held in Siena, Italy, 21-25 February 2009. A report from the workshop will be published on 15 June 2009 and

distributed electronically ([www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)), as well as in hard copy at the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the IWC, in Madeira, Portugal. The workshop was possible through the joint efforts of Costa Rica's Ministry of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications; Conservation International; EcoAdapt; Fundación PROMAR; the International Fund for Animal Welfare; the Inter American Institute for Global Change Research; The Nature Conservancy; the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society and WWF.

## ***From the Student Member-at-Large***

*Lynne Williams*

Greetings students! I wanted to let you know that there has been a change in the dates regarding the student travel grant applications. We will now be opening the application for these travel grants on Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The new closing date for submission for the student travel grant applications is Sunday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Remember, to qualify for this grant, you need to: 1) make sure you are a current SMM student member at the time of submission, 2) be currently enrolled as a student at a recognized academic institution, 3) be first author on an accepted oral or poster presentation, and 4) register for the conference by the early registration deadline. Notification of the student travel grant awards will be made no later than Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009. If you are granted an award, you will need to make sure you register for the conference by the end of the early registration period (July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 - note that this has changed) or the award will be granted to someone else.

Also, I recently formed the Student Affairs Committee. The members of this committee have assisted me in deciding how to award the student travel grants and will be helping me in making plans for the Student Affairs Workshop at the upcoming biennial. These newly appointed committee members are Juan Pablo Torres Florez (Universidad Austral de Chile), Marianne Marcoux (McGill University, Montreal), Alexis Rudd (University of Hawaii at Manoa), and Mandy Wong (University of British Columbia, Vancouver).

As always, if you have any questions about SMM student issues, please feel free to e-mail me at [lynnee.williams@duke.edu](mailto:lynnee.williams@duke.edu).

## ***Book Reviews***

*Stephen Insley, Book Review Editor, Marine Mammal Science ([sinsley@ucsc.edu](mailto:sinsley@ucsc.edu))*

*The goal of this supplemental review section is to keep everyone informed of any publications of interest (e.g. books, proceedings, gray literature, special issues, etc.) that may not warrant a full, published review. I encourage everyone to send in contributions. This could be simply the publication information along with the cost and how to obtain copies if there are specific instructions that are not enclosed with the book or on the web site of the publisher. Or alternatively, send brief one or two paragraph summaries (i.e. not analytical reviews as published in the journal) to me at the journal or the above email address.*

**Marine Debris in Alaska: Coordinating Our Efforts.** M. Williams and E. Ammann (Eds.), Alaska Sea Grant, 2009, 136pp, ISBN: 978-1-56612-135-4. Available at <http://seagrant.uaf.edu/bookstore/pubs/AK-SG-09-01.html> for \$15.00 US.