

Terms of Reference and work plan for Photo-ID Task Force

Objectives

- (a) to compare the catalogues¹ of the Russia-USA programme and the Institute of Marine Biology (Vladivostok) programme to arrive at an agreed list of known individuals;
- (b) to suggest appropriate further collaboration, taking into account the need for annual updating of the comparison, and for consistency in: (i) identification of new individuals; (ii) identification of re-sightings; and (iii) classification of photographic quality.

Methods

1. Conduct a cross-matching of the two existing catalogues, involving: (a) the people involved in the development and matching of the individual catalogues; and (b) additional experienced matchers:
 - determine, for each whale in each catalogue, which whale, if any, it matches in the other catalogue;
 - resolve doubtful cases, if necessary by examining all available photographs of the whales involved.
 2. Discuss, and if possible make recommendations for, further work, including:
 - consistent protocols for the assessment of photographic quality, matching of individuals, and inclusion of definite and candidate new whales in the catalogues;
 - arrangements for annual updating (cross-matching of new additions to each catalogue each year);
 - matching of photographs submitted by third parties, if any;
 - scientific questions that could be addressed using the photo-id data;
 - facilitation of collaborative analyses, taking into account questions of protection for data owners.
- Experience with other catalogues (e.g. North Atlantic humpback whales, Europhlukes) should be taken into account where relevant.
3. Report back to the WGWAP on the results of the cross-matching, including summary statistics of the matching process, recommendations for further collaboration, and any outstanding issues or problems.

¹ By catalogue here, we mean the reference set of photographs (best) for each individual. This differs from a database that includes the complete sightings history for each individual along with the photograph(s) used for each agreed resighting and the quality of those photographs.

Work plan

	Task	Completion
1	Exchange catalogue CD's between the two teams.	mid-January 2007
2	Each team to conduct an initial in-house cross-matching of the catalogues. Results to be reported back to the Task Force, including any comments or questions and indication of any matches considered to be uncertain	mid-February 2007
3	External expert reviews results of each team's cross matching exercise and provides comments and advice, particularly with respect to inclusion and matching criteria, and uncertain matches	mid-March 2007
4	3-day hands-on workshop in Seattle, including persons from each team actively engaged in the photo-id work, plus the external expert under item 3, plus additional task force members as appropriate. The workshop shall resolve any questions arising during steps 1-3 and in particular resolve any doubtful or uncertain identifications. The workshop shall have access to the full sighting histories and photo archives of each team, so that any outstanding matching uncertainties can be resolved. It will consider and if possible make recommendations on a future process or processes	April 2007
5	Report of the Task Force, including the workshop, submitted to WGWAP	May 1 2007

Note: some task force members will be unavailable during May 2007 – the dates are 'pessimistic' and it may be possible to bring forward the schedule if circumstances permit

Contact persons for each team

Institute of Marine Biology: Olga Tyurneva

Russia-US team: Dave Weller

Safeguards

Data providers' rights will be protected. No use of the data will be made without the express permission of the data providers. Any use of the data by the WGWAP will protect the data providers' rights in accordance with paragraph 3(e) of the WGWAP TOR. Any other use of the data will be subject to agreement between the scientists and institutions providing and using the data. The rights of any third parties contributing additional data will be similarly respected. Any external experts engaged to assist with the matching shall assent to these conditions. "Data" includes both photographs and auxiliary information, such as time, date and location of photographs.