

Addendum to GWAP-4 Report: Clarification of Seismic Survey Recommendations

In the final report of the GWAP-4 meeting (22-25 April 2008, Lausanne), posted on the IUCN website in June 2008, some of the recommendations in section 10: 4-D Seismic Survey may not have been entirely clear to all readers. The purpose of this supplement is to clarify what was recommended.

Under Item 10.2, it was stated: “After some discussion and clarifications, the Panel **agreed** that the Task Force as a body had completed its work and endorsed GWAP-4/INF.15 and its recommendations.” In other words, the Panel intended that all of the recommendations explicitly given in the final Seismic Task Force Report (GWAP-4/INF.15) should be considered to be formal Panel recommendations. This means that, in addition to the three recommendations on 4-D Seismic Survey included in the summary list in the GWAP-4 report, the following recommendations apply to the planned 2009 seismic survey:

1. The Panel **recommends** that SEIC implement the full mitigation and monitoring plan as set forth in the report of the Seismic Survey Task Force.
2. The Panel **recommends** that SEIC make every effort to secure a vessel with the capability to tow as many individual streamers as possible, in addition to the six used previously, given logistical constraints and vessel availability (p. 11).
3. The Panel **recommends** that SEIC make every effort to: (a) fully explore measures (e.g. use of additional streamers, analytical approaches) that can be included in the 2009 survey that will allow future surveys to be reduced in terms of their effects on western gray whales, particularly in the feeding area; and (b) continue to explore alternative methods (e.g. vibroseis, winter acquisition) that could replace seismic airgun surveys (pp. 11-12).
4. The Panel **recommends** that SEIC use digital data transmission radio acoustic buoys (p. 28) stationed along the feeding area boundary for real-time monitoring of sound levels at the edge of the Piltun feeding area (p. 34).
5. As a precautionary approach, the Panel **recommends** that two (one for June-July and one for August-September) perimeter monitoring lines be designated, using the kernel density contours based on maximum gray whale densities for that time interval. It further **recommends** that the two boundaries produced by the updated analyses (see Item 4.1) be adopted in the context of the agreed mitigation measures (p. 35).

NOTE: Item 4.1 in the Task Force report includes the following:

“In addition, the Workshop [= Task Force] recognized that, from the perspective of examining the potential effects from seismic surveys, it was important to try to incorporate as much data as possible from areas further offshore, even where the

estimation of appropriate effort is not simple. The primary data sources that fall into this category are: data associated with the photo-identification work and research vessels (in non-systematic survey mode); and data from the MMO programme. Given the complexity of incorporating these data, the Workshop **agreed** that it was not possible to incorporate these data before or during WGWAP-4. It also recognized the importance of completing the analyses in time for the tendering process (June 2008). It therefore **agreed** to establish an advisory group to assist Muir in this analysis comprising Donovan, Cooke and Gailey. Priority will be given to obtaining information for squares for which the present analysis has zero or low effort.”

Reference is then made to the fact that these should be used in combination with the acoustic modelling results to “determine the proposed feeding area perimeter monitoring line....” Therefore, it is clear that the Panel recommended the non-systematic data (e.g. from photo-identification and other research vessels) be included in determination of the monitoring lines and that this work, by implication, be completed in time for the tendering process, which was expected to mean June 2008.

6. The Panel **strongly recommends** that a suitable group of experts be asked to work with SEIC scientists to develop a fully specified field plan and proposed analysis, well before the final plans for monitoring in 2009 are completed (p. 38).

Those six recommendations will be added to the cumulative list for tracking.

R.R. Reeves on behalf of the Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel
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