

## MARINE MAMMAL AND BIRD POPULATIONS

### ANTARCTIC PACK ICE SEALS (APIS) PROGRAM

8.1 Dr Bengtson reviewed the past year's progress of SCAR's Antarctic Pack Ice Seals (APIS) Program. A planning meeting was held in May, 1994, during which time a Draft Implementation Plan for the APIS Program (SC-CAMLR-XIII/8) was developed. The SCAR Group of Specialists on Seals conveyed its thanks to CCAMLR for its financial support during 1993, which helped to fund this meeting.

8.2 The plan describes proposed research operations at three scales: circumpolar, regional, and sub-regional. It is planned that the APIS Program field activities will be conducted during five years (1995/96 to 1999/2000), with the 1998/99 season being targeted for coordinated, multi-ship operations on a circumpolar scale. Two of the focal areas for APIS Program field work are also integrated study regions for CEMP activities (Antarctic Peninsula and Prydz Bay).

8.3 The Scientific Committee welcomed the progress being made in developing the APIS Program and reiterated its support for the program, which is expected to provide information useful to the Scientific Committee's work. In particular, the proposed research on crabeater seals, a CEMP species selected for monitoring, will address topics of direct relevance to CCAMLR.

8.4 It was recalled that so far very little progress had been made in developing standard methods for monitoring crabeater seals as part of CEMP. The Scientific Committee recognised that one of the areas in which the APIS Program could benefit CCAMLR is through the specification of standard methods for studying pack-ice seals. Therefore, it was agreed that the Chairman would write to the Convener of the SCAR Group of Specialists on Seals requesting that group's assistance in drafting CEMP standard methods for crabeater seals.

8.5 The Scientific Committee agreed that CCAMLR should continue its support of the development and planning of the APIS Program, and it recommended that an amount of A\$2 500 be provided to SCAR in 1995. These funds would help to sponsor a planning meeting, provisionally scheduled for May or June 1995, that would focus on determining the scope and coordinating the logistic requirements of the program's field activities.

8.6 Dr Bengtson informed the Scientific Committee that because it was unlikely that he would be participating in future meetings of CCAMLR, he would no longer be able to serve as the liaison officer between the Scientific Committee and the APIS Program. The Scientific Committee thanked Dr Bengtson for his efforts to ensure good communication between these two groups, and

nominated Dr Boyd as its new liaison officer with the APIS Program. It was recalled that Dr Boyd is well positioned to serve in this role given that he is active both in the APIS Steering Committee and in CEMP.

8.7 The Scientific Committee noted that it would be very helpful in maintaining effective communication with the APIS Program if the liaison officer would submit annual reports to the Scientific Committee concerning relevant developments and progress in the APIS Program. A report in respect of the APIS planning and development meeting was specifically requested.

8.8 Several Members informed the Scientific Committee that they were already undertaking pack-ice seal research leading up to the formal start of the APIS Program. The US noted that it would conduct aerial surveys and other studies of pack-ice seals during February-March 1995; scientists from Norway and the UK will collaborate in the cruise. This research was planned partly in response to the Scientific Committee's encouragement to Members to undertake such surveys as a matter of priority (SC-CAMLR-VII, paragraph 6.7; SC-CAMLR-IX, paragraph 6.4; SC-CAMLR-X, paragraph 7.11).

8.9 Australia reported that it was presently conducting crabeater seal research in the period leading up to the initiation of the APIS Program; one focus of this work would be on methodologies for future surveys. Chile stated that it plans to participate in the APIS Program, both through its national research program and through collaboration with scientists from other countries.

#### STATUS AND TRENDS

8.10 Dr Croxall reported that the IUCN (World Conservation Union) has produced new, draft objective criteria for identifying threatened species and for assigning them to specific categories of threat (including near-threatened status). Designation of a species in one of these categories can be expected to have world-wide repercussions on conservation activities directed to such a species.

8.11 The first global application of these criteria has been to birds, and a book containing the relevant listings has just been published by BirdLife International<sup>3</sup>. Two bird species of special interest to CCAMLR are listed in the volume: wandering albatross, threatened; and grey-headed albatross, near-threatened. The Scientific Committee's attention was drawn to this development.

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<sup>3</sup> Collar, N.J., M.J. Crosby and A.J. Stattersfield. 1994. *Birds to Watch 2. The World List of Threatened Birds*. The official source for birds on the IUCN Red List. BirdLife Conservation Series No. 4. BirdLife International, Cambridge.

8.12 It was also noted that one of the objectives of the forthcoming International Conference on Albatross Biology and Conservation, to be held in Hobart in August 1995, will be to establish a mechanism for a more comprehensive and critical evaluation of the status of all albatross species. The results of this work could be of interest to the Scientific Committee in respect of its evaluation of the status and trends of marine mammal and bird populations.