

**Information note on RMP tuning and catch limits  
calculated by the Scientific Committee**

Submitted by Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand and the  
United States

In his intervention yesterday, the Commissioner of Iceland reported that the catch limits for Iceland were set with the advice from NAMMCO Scientific Committee. The Chair of the Scientific Committee briefly explained the advice in catch limits for this stock. We appreciate this information but also thought we might help to clarify other Commissioners with a more detailed explanation of the IWC Scientific Committee from last year.

At its 2010 meeting, the Scientific Committee calculated RMP catch limits for selected whale stocks as part of its review of the Scientific Advisory Group report (items 20.5.1-20.5.2 of the 2010 SC report, pages 76-77 (pdf file) or 63-64 (printed volume)). Catch limits were calculated using both the 0.72 and 0.60 “tunings” of the RMP. The 0.72 tuning was previously selected by the Commission, and all *Implementation Simulation Trials* conducted by the Scientific Committee to date have been based on the 0.72 tuning. The results for the 0.72 tuning are shown in bold face in Table 7 of the 2010 report.

Discussion and comments on Monday afternoon in relation to questions relating to North Atlantic fin whales may have left some delegations with the impression that the catch limits for different tunings had an equivalent scientific basis. Such an impression would be incorrect. The 2010 Scientific Committee reports states:

The SAG report (and Annex D, Appendix 8) provides results for the 0.72 and 0.6 tunings of the RMP because the whaling countries in the Commission’s support group had requested the latter tuning. This issue is discussed more fully in the SAG report. The Committee noted that although the 0.6, 0.66 and 0.72 tunings of the *CLA* were recommended to the Commission by the Committee, having been subjected to testing during the development of the RMP, the *Implementation Simulation Trials* have only been conducted by the Committee for the 0.72 tuning of the RMP.

The Committee **agrees** that the tuning level which was used when calculating catch limits using the *CLA* should be that which is tested in *Implementation Simulation Trials*; in this case only the 0.72 tuning.

The role of the *Implementation Simulations Trials* is to check that the RMP (which has been tested in the generic case for all three tunings) also performs acceptably in specific, real cases where there is uncertainty over stock structure.

To date, RMP variants for North Atlantic fin whales have been tested in *Implementation Simulations Trials* only for the 0.72 tuning. The Committee found variant 6 (catch limit 46) to perform acceptably, while variant 2 (catch limit 87) was found to be conditionally acceptable, subject to an approved research programme being implemented. No such programme has yet been initiated or approved by the Scientific Committee.

None of the RMP variants for North Atlantic fin whales have been tested for the 0.60 tuning of the RMP. Consequently, the Scientific Committee has made no recommendation regarding their acceptability or otherwise with the 0.60 tuning. Because the 0.60 tuning allows higher catches than the 0.72 tuning, the performance of the RMP (in terms of stock conservation) would be less conservative under the 0.60 tuning than with the 0.72 tuning: how much less conservative can only be determined by conducting the requisite simulation trials.

The delegations of Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand and the US request that the following clarifying text be included under this item in the Chairman's report of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting:

In its 2010 report, the Scientific Committee provided results of catch limit calculations for North Atlantic fin whales for the 0.72 and 0.60 tunings of the RMP (*JCRM* 12(Suppl.) p. 64, Table 7). The Committee **agreed** that the tuning level which was used when calculating catch limits using the *CLA* should be that which is tested in *Implementation Simulation Trials*; in this case only the 0.72 tuning. For the 0.72 tuning, the Committee advised that variant 6 performed acceptably, while variant 2 would be acceptable, conditional on an approved research programme being implemented. No Implementation Simulation Trials of the RMP for North Atlantic fin whales have been conducted using the 0.60 tuning; consequently, the Committee has provided no advice as to the acceptability of any RMP variants using the 0.60 tuning.

Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Monaco New Zealand and the US expressed concern that the takes of fin whales reported by Iceland in 2009 and 2010 (125 whales and 148 whales) were greatly in excess of the catch limit of 46 whales calculated using the only RMP tuning and variant currently confirmed to be acceptable by the Scientific Committee.