



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
The Director-General

Copied to Janet & Paul

*Copies to JP & HL
JP to list work
already done by ICES, and
write letter for
Glad as Chair of MCPA-*

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Brussels, 25 SEP. 2003
ENV.B1/OH/cdd/D(2003) 310926

Dr D. de Griffith
Director General ICES
Palaegade 2-4
DK-1261 Copenhagen K

Dear Dr. de Griffith,

Subject : Request of scientific information concerning impact of Sonar activities on cetaceans populations

The Commission has for some time received complaints about the impact of sonar on marine mammals. The claim has been that emission of intense, low and medium frequency tone bursts has a disturbing effect on cetaceans. Information has also been forwarded that these sonars might also have an impact fish and fish behaviour.

European legislation (mainly provisions of Directive 92/43/CEE "Habitats") requires Member States of the European Union to take requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection for all cetaceans in European waters. However, in the absence of a comprehensive and authoritative review of the available information concerning the impact of sonar, it is extremely difficult to develop a clear position on this issue.

In the light of the above, we would like to request ICES, within the framework of the existing Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission and ICES, to undertake a scientific review and evaluation of all relevant information concerning the impact of sonar on cetaceans and fish, to identify the gaps in our current understanding and to make recommendations for future investigations/research. The Commission would also be interested in advice about possible mitigation's measures to reduce or minimise the impact of sonar on cetaceans and fish. We would hope to receive the requested advice before the end of 2004.

In the event that your organisation is willing to provide the requested scientific information and advice, I would appreciate to receive a proposal from your side setting out the methodology and timetable together with an estimate of the budget requirements.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Day