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THE LENFEST OCEAN  
PROGRAM

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## CONCLUSIONS OF THE LENFEST OCEAN PROGRAM-WWF WAMER JOINT WORKSHOP

### “WHALES AND FISH INTERACTIONS: ARE THE GREAT WHALES A THREAT TO FISHERIES?”

DAKAR, SENEGAL, 08-09 MAY, 2008

1. The Workshop “Whales and Fish Interactions: Are Great Whales a Threat to Fisheries?” took place on 08-09 May 2008 in Dakar. The opening ceremony was chaired by His Excellency M. Souleymane Ndéné Ndiaye, Minister of State, Minister for Maritime Economy, Fisheries and Aquaculture. The Workshop was heightened by the participation of a delegation of Senegalese Parliamentarians member of the Parliamentarians’ Network for the Protection of the Environment. It gathered scientific experts from the West African sub-region and elsewhere, and high level civil servants with responsibilities in fisheries management. The purpose of the workshop was to examine the work undertaken by the Lenfest Ocean Program on whales and fish interactions and to make recommendations for the continuation of this work.
2. The work on-going under the aegis of the Lenfest Ocean Program<sup>1</sup> in cooperation with the WWF West African Marine Eco-Region Office (WWF-WAMER<sup>2</sup>) constitutes an important step for a better understanding of the role of cetaceans, particularly the great whales, in the ecosystem of the West African sub-region.
3. On the basis of detailed presentations on the work underway, the workshop participants made recommendations to the Lenfest team to improve the data and analysis of the project. This requires taking account of additional data currently available in several countries in the sub-region, separating in the simulations the Bryde’s whales and sei whales from the other baleen whales, and applying a 100% feeding rate to the Bryde’s whale because it is resident in the study area. Data on illegal, unregulated or unreported (IUU) fishing should also be taken into account. It would also be useful to publish or make otherwise publicly available the sightings data collected during joint Japan-West African line transect surveys of cetaceans off Northwest African coasts so that they can be incorporated into the analysis, as well as where available stomach content analysis from whale strandings or other non-lethal methods for analysis of feeding habits.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lenfestocean.org>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.panda.org/about\\_wwf/where\\_we\\_work/africa/solutions\\_by\\_region/wamer/index.cfm](http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/africa/solutions_by_region/wamer/index.cfm)



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4. The workshop welcomes the fact that the Lenfest study is largely based on the best available data published by scientific experts from the sub-region, and that Lenfest scientific experts have come to Dakar in a spirit of collaboration in order to identify opportunities for work in common and for the sharing of additional data with a view to improving the quality of the results and seeking to partner with scientists from the sub-region.
5. In order to secure transparent partnerships, scientific cooperation requests should be communicated in advance and in writing to the local scientific institutions and NGOs likely to hold them.
6. The importance of capacity building and financial support for local researchers from within the sub-region must be emphasized and reminded to intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental institutions. The study of whale strandings in the sub-region is an example of a regional research opportunity that is currently lacking resources.
7. The workshop appreciates the fact that the Lenfest scientists plan to present their preliminary results to the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission in June 2008 in Santiago, Chile. It is hoped that the data from Japanese-West African scientific sighting surveys will be available for them to be taken into account.
8. The research results presented at the workshop are preliminary, but they suggest no competition between great whales and local or foreign fisheries in the sub-region. Recognizing the shortage of data available in the sub-region, the Lenfest scientists tested the significance of their data assumptions by making extreme assumptions, and still found that their analysis suggested no competition between whales and fisheries in the sub-region. The comments collected at the workshop will be taken into account to improve data and model quality and the accuracy of the results.
9. Noting that with the current state of knowledge it is not possible to conclude whether great whales have an effect on fisheries in the sub-region, it is important to improve the characterization of the Canary Current ecosystem and to clarify the role of whales in it.
10. The participants appreciate the active participation of Senegalese Parliamentarians at the workshop, especially their contributions about the need to respect all of nature's creatures so they can live in balance, the need to respect local fishing communities and their culture and the need to provide information accessible to the general public.



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11. At the end of the day, the final goal must be restoring the balance of marine ecosystems, including the recovery of fisheries and marine biodiversity including the great whales, and having in mind the well-being of humans whose economy and lives depend on healthy marine ecosystems.

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