

INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW PANEL

48TH MEETING

LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA (USA)
29 OCTOBER 2009

DOCUMENT IRP-48-11

USE OF RAFTS FOR DOLPHIN RESCUE

The Secretariat presented this document at the 47th meeting of the International Review Panel in June 2009 (IRP-47-11, *Use of rafts for dolphin rescue*). It proposes that guidelines be adopted to clarify what type of raft is suitable for dolphin rescue, as required by the AIDCP.

The IRP discussed the dimensions and materials that would make a raft suitable for rescuing dolphins. Some Parties asked for time to review with their industries the specifications for these rafts, and it was agreed to postpone the discussion of the matter until the present meeting.

Some informal consultations have taken place between the Secretariat and vessel representatives, but no conclusions have been reached.

The Parties still need to decide whether to approve guidelines to clarify what constitutes a raft suitable for dolphin rescue.

After a possible infraction was identified by an observer on a trip aboard an IDCP vessel, the Secretariat received a communication from the relevant Party indicating that there were “notable differences among observer programs” when determining the presence of the dolphin rescue gear, particularly the use of a rescue platform, as indicated in paragraph 2.c of Annex VIII of the AIDCP.

The Secretariat considers that this is an issue that needs to be addressed by the Parties.

The relevant paragraph in the AIDCP reads as follows:

“A vessel with a carrying capacity of more than 363 metric tons (400 short tons) operating in the Agreement Area shall

....

c. Have an operable raft suitable for the observation and rescue of dolphins;”

The Secretariat is of the view that this requirement needs modification, considering that “suitable” can be interpreted in different ways, and proposes a solution that would involve adding a phrase at the end of the cited paragraph, as follows:

c. Have an operable raft suitable for the observation and rescue of dolphins conforming with guidelines approved by the Parties;

The following guidelines are proposed for the consideration of the Parties.

GUIDELINES FOR REQUIRED RAFT FOR THE OBSERVATION AND RESCUE OF DOLPHINS (ANNEX VIII.2.c.)

1. Material: The raft should be made of durable commercial-grade material which can be rigidly inflated, is puncture-resistant, and is capable of withstanding deck and net abrasions.
2. Dimensions and capacity: minimum overall length 2.5m, minimum overall beam 1.30m, payload capacity 300 kg or 3 persons.
3. Vessels should carry the equipment necessary for repairing the raft.