

Project Update: October 2011

The Russian Government has issued the capture quotas for 2012. Again they allow the capture of 10 killer whales without distinguishing the whales from the resident (fish-eating) and transient (mammal-eating) ecotypes.

At the same time, we analysed the data obtained in our expedition and the preliminary results confirm that these ecotypes must be considered separately in Russian waters. We have finished the preliminary analysis of vocalisations recorded from the resident and transient killer whales in Russia and compared them with the north-eastern Pacific populations.

We have submitted an abstract on the results of this analysis to the 26th Conference of the European Cetacean Society. We have sequenced the mitochondrial DNA (D-loop and cytochrome b gene) from five resident and one transient killer whales from Russian waters and found that they match with the sequences described previously for the resident and transient killer whales from the north-eastern Pacific.