

11. Antarctica and the Southern Ocean

RECOGNIZING that the ecological relationships of Southern Ocean living marine resources are little known and are relatively undisturbed by human activity;

CONVINCED of the economic and ecological importance of maintaining the continued stability of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean ecosystems;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Antarctic Treaty has served well to maintain the relatively undisturbed nature of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean ecosystems;

ACKNOWLEDGING ALSO the current strong pressure that is causing economic exploitation of krill to begin, and of oil and other minerals to be considered;

BEING AWARE that the excessive exploitation will have long range consequences deleterious to the sea in general and to the living resources of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean in particular;

RECOGNIZING that it may be particularly hazardous to take krill without knowing the consequences of such removal because of the key role those organisms have in Southern Ocean ecosystems;

The General Assembly of IUCN, at its 14th Session, Ashkhabad, USSR, 26 September -5 October 1978:

RECOMMENDS to all nations, and especially to those nations currently engaged in stewardship and exploitation of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean that:

- (1) All nations entitled to do so accede to the Antarctic Treaty and that the duration of that Treaty be extended well beyond the 1991 date of expiry;
- (2) All nations wishing to benefit from Southern Ocean resources should accede, in due course, to the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources;
- (3) the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources be developed according to sound ecological principles and especially provide
 - (a) that taking of krill and other biological and mineral resources be strictly regulated and that an independent observer system be included in such regulations;
 - (b) that the collection, analysis and dissemination of biological information be mandatory;
 - (c) that Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) be established where no commercial taking of krill or other biological or mineral resources is permitted, so as to provide for living resource renewal and to serve as base-line areas against which to assess the extent of change in disturbed regions;
 - (d) that the dimension and location of such SPAs be established according to the best available knowledge of ecosystems rather than resource-specific concepts;
 - (e) that the taking of any living resources of the Southern Ocean be first on an experimental basis and integrated with an ecosystem-oriented programme;
 - (f) for cooperation with the International Whaling Convention (IWC) to aid the recovery of whales;
 - (g) for regulation of the impacts of tourism.
- (4) An International Decade of Southern Ocean Research be initiated as a matter of urgency, with particular focus on research emphasizing ecosystem processes, including existing research efforts such as BIOMASS.
- (5) The Antarctic Treaty States ratify as soon as possible the 1972 Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals.