

16/30. WHALING

RECALLING that at each Session of the General Assembly of IUCN since the 1972 call by the United Nations for a moratorium on commercial whaling, strong support has been given for such action;

RECALLING ALSO that the World Conservation Strategy (WCS) calls for a moratorium on all commercial whaling as an international priority, until, among other criteria, it can be determined that "permitted levels of exploitation are safe, and an effective mechanism exists for detecting and correcting mis takes in the management of any stock";

NOTING with satisfaction that the International Whaling Commission (IWC) at its 34th Annual Meeting in 1982, established zero catch limits for commercial whaling on all stocks of species of whales for which it had accepted responsibility for regulation, as from the 1985/86 pelagic and 1986 coastal whaling seasons;

CONSIDERING that the above action by IWC is equivalent to the establishment of a moratorium as called for by the UN General Assembly, UNEP, IUCN, and other international organizations, with respect to those species and effective for the Member States of the IWC;

NOTING that the deliberations of the IWC's Scientific Committee have revealed serious deficiencies in the scientific basis for determining sustainable catch levels for any commercially exploited stock of species of whale;

AWARE that most whaling nation members of the IWC have declared their intentions to abide by the 1982 decision, but that Japan, Norway, and USSR have, within their rights under the 1946 Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, lodged objections to that decision and are therefore not bound by it;

AWARE that commercial whaling continues in the Azores Islands and that Portugal is not yet a member of the IWC;

AWARE that objecting countries are seeking ways by which they might withdraw their objections yet continue their current whaling practices, thus evading the implications and spirit of the 1982 decision, through, for example, redefining their activities as "noncommercial" or by taking substantial numbers of whales under permits for scientific research, which may be issued under national authority, and subsequently allowing the products to enter commerce;

NOTING that as from 1 January 1985 all species and populations of whales, the exploitation of which is regulated by the IWC, will be listed on Appendix 1 of CITES, but that some whaling countries have lodged reservations against some or all of these listings;

RECOGNIZING that in deciding to examine its own functions and the operations of its Scientific Committee during the pause in commercial whaling, the IWC has undertaken a difficult but essential task, the performance of which will require the active participation of its members during that time; and

NOTING that the IWC is being placed in serious financial difficulty through non-payment of dues by several Member States, and concerned that there may be a danger that this difficulty will continue in the coming years;

The General Assembly of IUCN, at its 16th Session in Madrid, Spain, 5-14 November 1984:

1. EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION of the decisions by IWC and CITES and especially of the acceptance of those decisions by most whaling countries, some of which thereby suffer economic losses and other adverse social consequences locally and temporarily;
2. STRONGLY URGES the objecting and reserving countries to reconsider their objections and reservations with a view to withdrawing them unconditionally before the 1985 meetings of the IWC and CITES respectively;
3. CALLS UPON the Government of Portugal to join the IWC and to adhere to the Commission's decisions whereby the catch limit for sperm whales in the North Atlantic Ocean is now set at zero;
4. URGES all national authorities to increase vigilance with respect to illegal trade in whale products and to any unregulated operations of whaling vessels under their flags;
5. FURTHER URGES all Governments to continue to support the IWC financially, and to actively participate in its work in the moratorium period, during which it will be attempting to monitor the whale stocks, to improve methods of studying whales and of assessing stocks, and to develop a more rational and comprehensive management policy and more effective means of implementing it than have been available hitherto;

6. DEPLORES that the Government of Japan has authorized the recent recommencement of sperm whaling in the Western North Pacific, notwithstanding the establishment by the IWC of a zero catch limit for this species in that area, as from and including the 1984 season;
7. ALSO DEPLORES that the Governments of Brazil and USSR, whose vessels are engaged in exploiting minke whales in the Southern Hemisphere, have lodged objections to the 1984/85 and 1985 catch limits which were established by the 36th Annual Meeting (1984) of the IWC in accordance with scientific advice; and
8. CONSIDERS that these actions pave the way to unregulated and excessive exploitation of the stocks of whales involved as well as greatly reducing the credibility of the IWC as an effective instrument for the regulation of current and any future whaling;
9. REQUESTS these Governments urgently to revise their policies so that until the 1982 decision comes into effect, commercial whaling shall proceed in strict accordance with current IWC decisions regarding catch limits; and
10. FURTHER REQUESTS other Governments, particularly members of IWC, immediately to make known to these objecting Governments their determination to do all in their power to encourage the full implementation of IWC decisions.

