

16/38. AIRSTRIP AT POINTE GEOLOGIE, ANTARCTICA

AWARE that in 1982 France began preliminary work for construction of a new airfield near its Dumont D'Urville research base on Pointe Geologic, Antarctica, and that this involves destruction of nesting areas of penguins and other seabirds;

FURTHER AWARE that Pointe Geologic contains eight of the ten bird species that nest on the Antarctic continent and provides habitats for other Antarctic fauna;

COGNIZANT that Dumont D'Urville is the principal research station in the Antarctic that allows research on emperor penguins during the entire year and that it was established to facilitate biological research;

CONCERNED that construction and operation of the airfield could pose significant threats to Antarctic wildlife on Pointe Geologic;

TAKING NOTE of the recommendations against the airfield project by the French Academy of Science and an independent scientific commission (le Comité des Sages), and the concerns expressed by scientists and conservation organizations in many countries;

NOTING that the Agreed Measures for the Conservation of Antarctic Fauna and Flora and French national law apply to such projects in the Antarctic and that there is international concern whether the agreed measures and national law have been fully complied with;

CONSIDERING that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties have not evaluated Pointe Geologic as a possible protected area under the Antarctic Treaty and the Agreed Measures;

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

1. CALLS UPON the French Government to study thoroughly alternatives to the airfield project on Pointe Geologic and to determine the relative environmental impacts on Antarctic wildlife of the various alternatives, and then to inform the Antarctic Treaty Parties concerning these studies;
2. URGES France to take fully into account the recommendations of le Comité des Sages regarding the airfield project;
3. REQUESTS that France and the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties thoroughly study the option of protecting Pointe Geologic from further construction; and
4. FURTHER RECOMMENDS that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties expand their cooperation to make best use of each other's equipment and research stations in order to minimize impacts of stations and logistical facilities on Antarctic ecosystems.