

17.46 WHALING

RECALLING IUCN's support for a moratorium on commercial whaling as expressed in resolutions passed at each General Assembly since such a moratorium was proposed by the United Nations in 1972;

RECOGNIZING that Article VIII of the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (under which the International Whaling Commission (IWC) is established) allows Contracting Parties to issue special permits to their nationals for the taking of whales for scientific purposes, and that paragraph 30 of the Schedule makes this conditional on such permits first being reviewed by the IWC Scientific Committee and that such whaling is exempt from the procedures and regulations governing commercial whaling, including the setting of catch limits and the protection of species or populations;

NOTING that since the IWC's 1982 decision in favour of a moratorium went into effect in 1986, the Governments of Iceland, the Republic of Korea, and Japan have engaged in or have authorized scientific research involving the killing of large numbers of whales under special permits;

AWARE that the Government of Norway is considering the issuance of special permits this year;

BEING INFORMED that the IWC adopted at its 1987 Annual Meeting three resolutions which affirmed that the scientific whaling programmes of Iceland, the Republic of Korea and Japan did not satisfy criteria which the Commission had established by general resolutions adopted at its 1986 and 1987 Annual Meetings, and called on those countries to refrain from issuing or to revoke special permits until the uncertainties identified in the programmes were resolved;

BEING FURTHER INFORMED that at a special meeting of the IWC Scientific Committee held in December 1987 to review a proposed feasibility study for the scientific whaling programming of Japan, scientists from most countries represented at the meeting advised that the proposed study would not resolve the problems previously identified in the original programme and, further, that the study did not address problems, the solution of which was necessary to facilitate the Comprehensive Assessment of Whale Stocks, on which the Commission is now engaged or for development of effective management procedures for future whaling;

DEPLORING the fact that Iceland and Japan have not complied with the 1987 resolutions of the IWC by refraining from issuing or by revoking existing permits;

DEEPLY CONCERNED that the Government of Japan issued permits for taking minke whales in the Antarctic immediately after the Scientific Committee had, at its special meeting, severely criticised its plans, and began killing whales before the Commission had had an opportunity to express its view on those plans as required by the general resolutions adopted in 1986 and 1987;

FURTHER CONCERNED that continuation of whaling under special permits contrary to recommendations of the IWC will effectively negate the 1982 moratorium decision, reduce the effectiveness of the IWC in providing for the conservation of whale stocks world-wide, and impede in practice the conduct of the Comprehensive Assessment of Whale Stocks;

AWARE that contrary to IWC decisions and schedule requirements, Iceland, Japan, and Norway have refused to supply data on whaling vessels;

BEING AWARE that Japan, with support from Norway, has proposed that some types of commercial whaling be reclassified as aboriginal/subsistence whaling;

The General Assembly of IUCN, at its 17th Session in San Jose, Costa Rica, 1-10 February 1988:

1. URGES the Governments of Iceland, the Republic of Korea and Japan to abide by the resolutions of the International Whaling Commission calling upon them to refrain from issuing, or to revoke, special permits for whaling for scientific purposes until the uncertainties identified by the IWC's Scientific Committee have been resolved.
2. REQUESTS the Government of Norway, in taking its eventual decisions about the issuance of special permits, to act in accordance with the advice to be provided by the Scientific Committee and with the view to be taken by the Commission on the basis of that advice.

3. ENCOURAGES the Governments of Iceland, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Norway, as well as other IWC Member States, to contribute to the implementation of research identified by the Scientific Committee as high priority, particularly in the context of the Comprehensive Assessment of Whale Stocks.
4. URGES Iceland, Japan, and Norway to adhere to Commission requirements and resume the annual supply of data on whaling vessels to the Commission.
5. CALLS UPON any country now contemplating the conduct of commercial whaling in the guise of subsistence whaling, to refrain from this attempt to circumvent the 1982 decision of the IWC that established zero quotas.