

## **17.58 THE ARCTIC INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE RESERVE, CANADA AND USA**

AWARE that the Governments of Canada and the United States of America have signed a bilateral agreement to protect the Porcupine River caribou herd which migrates regularly between Alaska in the United States and the Yukon and Northwest Territories in Canada;

REALIZING the great value of these caribou to native peoples in meeting their essential nutritional and cultural needs;

RECOGNIZING that this huge free-roaming herd is a unique, irreplaceable resource of international significance;

RECOGNIZING also that the range of the herd, as defined geographically in the bilateral agreement, constitutes a spectacular wilderness ecosystem, unique in the Arctic; one that supports biological and cultural diversity as well as remarkable scenery and provides vital habitat for many internationally important species of migratory birds and marine mammals;

RECOGNIZING also the US Department of the Interior is proposing to open the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration and development; and that it is acknowledged in the Final Environmental Impact Statement that the proposed development will dramatically decrease the vital calving habitat necessary for the conservation of the Porcupine caribou herd, and irrevocably alter the wilderness character of the region (polar bear, musk oxen, and migratory birds are also threatened by the proposed development);

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

1. URGES the Congress of the United States to formally designate the entire coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness.
2. URGES the Governments of Canada and the United States to jointly establish an Arctic International Wildlife Reserve through linkage of the Northern Yukon National Park and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.