

## 18.38 Hooker's Sea Lion

RECOGNIZING that Hooker's sea lion (*Phocarctos hookeri*), which breeds principally on the Auckland Islands, New Zealand, was exploited to the brink of extinction by past sealing, and that the population has not subsequently increased to a level which can be described as robust;

AWARE that the size of the incidental catch of Hooker's sea lions in the trawl fishery around the Auckland Islands is high in relation to its small population size;

AWARE that significant mortality among sea lion pups occurs when they become trapped in feral rabbit burrows and suffocate;

CONCERNED THEREFORE that the Hooker's sea lion is probably in a state of decline, and is considered threatened;

RECALLING the Final Report of the Project on the Status of Hooker's Sea Lion (IUCN Project No. 3618, 1985) which recommended that, should the population of Hooker's sea lion be declining, the population should be protected;

RECOGNIZING that the 12-mile Fisheries Exclusion Zone surrounding the Auckland Islands, declared in 1983 for the protection of the Hooker's sea lion, has not prevented hundreds of further deaths by entanglement in trawl nets;

WELCOMING the recent announcement that the New Zealand Government would produce a public discussion paper by March 1991 summarizing available information on the problem and possible solutions;

NOTING additional plans by the New Zealand Government to immediately launch a major campaign to benefit the Hooker's sea lion population by controlling the feral rabbit population on Enderby and Rose Islands in the Auckland group;

NOTING ALSO additional joint action by the New Zealand Government and the New Zealand fishing industry to distribute catch report forms to all squid fishers for the purpose of gathering additional data on the catches of sea lions by fishers in the Auckland Islands region;

RECOGNIZING the powers of the New Zealand Minister of Conservation, under the Marine Mammal Protection Act 1978, to provide protection for threatened marine mammals by the establishment of marine mammal sanctuaries;

The General Assembly of IUCN—The World Conservation Union, at its 18th Session in Perth, Australia, 28 November-5 December 1990:

URGES the New Zealand Government, without delay, to declare a Marine Mammal Sanctuary surrounding the Auckland Islands, to ban trawl fishing from the feeding grounds of Hooker's sea lions, or to take other effective measures in order to protect Hooker's sea lions and promote an increase in their population.

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