

## 19.42 The Conversion of Military Bases into Wildlife Conservation Areas

WELCOMING the fact that within the last ten years, the world's major powers have entered into agreement to reduce the number of military bases;

NOTING that some military bases are large in size, have undergone little environmental degradation, and often contain valuable natural habitats that support healthy and abundant wildlife populations;

AWARE that military bases already under State ownership, have been given relatively strict protection and could easily be transferred into wildlife conservation areas;

RECALLING that the IV World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas (Caracas, 1992) recommended that "all efforts be made to minimize the adverse effects of military activities, both in times of peace and of armed conflicts, while at the same time recognizing that the armed forces can make a valuable contribution to the protection and regeneration of the environment";

The General Assembly of IUCN - The World Conservation Union, at its 19th Session in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 17-26 January 1994:

1. URGES all States:

- (a) to review their existing military lands, including both marine and terrestrial training areas, to determine in cooperation with government departments, NGOs, indigenous peoples, and local communities, the value of those lands for wildlife conservation;

- (b) to consider the conversion of unused military lands that prove to be valuable for wildlife conservation, into areas managed for the conservation of wildlife;
  - (c) to ensure that the public, indigenous people and local communities are informed of proposed changes to military lands and that governments take measures to address related aboriginal title issues, recognizing the legitimate rights of indigenous people and local communities;
  - (d) to manage such lands with the full participation of NGOs, indigenous people and local communities, whether national, provincial or local, responsible for the management of protected areas;
2. RECOMMENDS to all States that, in converting such lands into wildlife conservation areas, provision be made for appropriate access, use or occupation by indigenous people, local communities and the public, provided this is consistent with the conservation aims of the area;
  3. REQUESTS the Director General to take steps, with in existing resources, to promote a productive dialogue between military and conservation interests, and to this end, to advise IUCN members on possible areas of mutual interest between IUCN and the military.