

1.26 Threats to Dugong

AWARE that the dugong (*Dugong dugon*) is listed as Vulnerable in the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals*;

NOTING that the largest populations of the species in the world are thought to reside in the waters of northern Australia and Papua New Guinea;

CONCERNED that there has been a rapid and catastrophic decline in numbers along the Queensland coastline from Cape Bedford to Hervey Bay, a distance of over 1200 km;

AWARE that researchers have attributed the decline in numbers to drowning in commercial fishing and shark protection nets, to traditional hunting and, at the southern end of the area, to decline in the seagrass beds essential for the species;

AWARE that increased tourist resort, marina development and other boating facilities that may increase the number of boats in and along the Great Barrier Reef and southern Queensland coast may threaten the dugong population;

ACKNOWLEDGING that along this coast groups of indigenous peoples have voluntarily ceased hunting of dugong until the population recovers;

ACKNOWLEDGING ALSO that commercial fishers have agreed to undertake a range of special measures to prevent continuing dugong mortality;

NOTING that the Australian Government has recently allocated special funds to undertake a dugong recovery plan consisting of a programme of management, education and research designed to prevent further decline in dugong numbers;

The World Conservation Congress at its 1st Session in Montreal, Canada, 14–23 October 1996:

1. CALLS UPON all States with dugong populations to undertake urgent measures to ensure that all steps are taken to prevent further decline of the species in their country;
2. CALLS UPON the Chair of the Species Survival Commission to request the Sirenia Specialist Group to complete and promote the implementation of the Sirenia Action Plan, with special reference to the status of the dugong;
3. CALLS UPON the Director General to write to all governments of States with dugong populations, including the Australian Government, expressing concern and :
 - a) urging that an ongoing programme of funding be provided for full implementation of Operative Paragraph 1;
 - b) urging that coastal tourist resorts and marina developments be restricted to locations that do not threaten the dugong populations along the Great Barrier Reef and southern Queensland coastline.

Note. This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegation of the State member Germany indicated that it had not participated in discussion of the Recommendation nor would it have participated in any voting. The delegations of the State members Sweden and United States indicated that had there been a vote they would have abstained.

The use of the term “indigenous peoples” in this Recommendation shall not be construed as having any implications as regards the rights which may attach to that term in international law.