

**REC 3.112 Establishing a marine protected area for blue whales *Balaenoptera musculus* in the gulf of Corcovado, Chile**

WHEREAS recent investigations carried out by Chilean scientists have identified an area with a high concentration of blue whales *Balaenoptera musculus* engaged in feeding and nursing activities in the Gulf of Corcovado, western coast of Chiloé Island in Chile (the blue whale, the largest mammal in the world, is a species under recovery after populations were severely depleted and almost totally extinct over 40 years ago; current population estimates amount to no more than 1,400 individuals in the Southern Hemisphere);

WHEREAS one of the main reasons that restrain the proliferation of marine mammals is the lack of safe feeding, reproduction and socialization areas for such species;

CONSIDERING that fjord and archipelago ecosystems are poorly represented at a world level, and that fjords and channels are protected environments with mixed saline conditions that occur naturally in very specific places of the planet, and that Chile is privileged in that sense;

CONSIDERING that the Gulf of Corcovado supports not only blue whales, but also important species such as humpback whale *Megaptera novaeangliae*, killer whale *Orcinus orca*, Chilean or black dolphin *Cephalorhynchus eutropia*, Peale's dolphin *Lagenorhynchus australis*, South American sea lion, *Otaria flavescens* and South American fur seal *Arctocephalus australis*, among others;

CONSIDERING that the United Nations has made an overall request to world governments to preserve marine life through the establishment of marine protected areas; that today, less than 0.5 percent of the planet's marine habitats are under protection; and that this figure, compared to the protection of land areas, which amounts to 11.5 percent globally, confirms the level of exposure of marine resources at a world level;

CONSIDERING that Recommendation 17.38 *Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment* adopted by the 17<sup>th</sup> IUCN General Assembly (San Jose, 1988) recommended the following definition of marine protected areas: "Any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying waters and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by legislation to protect part or all of the enclosed environment"; and

CONSIDERING that following the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, Johannesburg, 2002), the WSSD *Plan of Implementation* involves an assessment of the global marine environment by 2004 and the establishment and development of a network of marine protected areas by 2012; and that likewise, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) *Jakarta Mandate* includes a Ministerial Statement that acknowledges the urgent need to address conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine biological diversity, as well as a multi-annual Work Programme on coastal and marine biological diversity;

The World Conservation Congress at its 3<sup>rd</sup> Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004:

ENCOURAGES the relevant authorities of the Republic of Chile to:

(a) ensure the protection of the blue whale habitat recently discovered in the Gulf of Corcovado, through the establishment of a marine protected area; and

(b) develop and implement a management plan for this marine protected area, aimed at ensuring the survival of the blue whale by preserving the ecosystem relationships that facilitate its conservation, with the active participation of local communities.

State member Sweden abstained from voting on this motion for reasons given in the Swedish Government's general statement on the motions process (see page x).

The Department of State, United States, provided the following statement for the record:

*State and agency members United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolution Process.*