

WCC-2012-Res-081-EN
Addressing ocean noise pollution in Africa

RECOGNIZING that anthropogenic ocean noise, depending on source and intensity, is a form of pollution, comprised of energy, that may degrade habitat and have adverse effects on marine life ranging from disturbance to injury and mortality;

RECOGNIZING that noise levels have increased in the African continent's oceans as a result of human activities such as recreational use of the marine environment, oil, gas and mineral exploration and production, vessel traffic, offshore installations, underwater telecommunication developments and other activities;

ACKNOWLEDGING and WELCOMING Resolution 3.068 *Undersea noise pollution* adopted by the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Bangkok, 2004);

ACKNOWLEDGING and WELCOMING the various international and national efforts, including those of the International Maritime Organization, to address ocean noise pollution;

DISTURBED and CONCERNED, however, that no significant interventions and measures have been developed and implemented in Africa to address noise levels in the continent's oceans;

RECOGNIZING that further research on the scale, effects and mitigation of anthropogenic noise on marine species in Africa is urgently needed and must be conducted to the highest standards of science and public credibility, avoiding conflicts of interest; and

FURTHER RECALLING IUCN's strong commitment to the conservation of marine species and habitats, as reflected in its previous Resolutions and Recommendations;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. REQUESTS the Director General, with the assistance of IUCN Members, Commissions and Council, to promote and support the development and implementation of measures to promote among African governments the reduction of anthropogenic ocean noise in the African continent's oceans, such as by drawing this Resolution to the attention of the secretariats of, and meetings of Contracting Parties to, the Regional Seas Programmes of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNEP Governing Council, and other relevant intergovernmental organizations, particularly those with whom IUCN enjoys observer status, and by keeping IUCN Members informed of progress on this issue;
2. FURTHER REQUESTS the Director General to encourage IUCN Members and Commissions to support and conduct further research on the scale, effects and mitigation of anthropogenic noise on marine species in Africa, to ensure that such research is conducted to the highest standards of science and public credibility, avoiding conflicts of interest, and to encourage the application of the results of research in mitigating anthropogenic ocean noise pollution;
3. CALLS ON IUCN Member governments in Africa, through the mechanisms available to them under domestic and international law, including the development of legal instruments, to:

- a. monitor and investigate, in a publicly open, inclusive and transparent manner, the impacts on marine species, including but not limited to mass strandings and deaths, that coincide with periods and/or locations of intense anthropogenic noise;
 - b. encourage the development of alternative technologies and require the use of best-available control techniques and other mitigation measures in reducing adverse impacts from individual noise sources;
 - c. consider how to limit the use of powerful noise sources until their short-term and long-term effects are better understood, and, to the maximum extent possible, to avoid the use of such sources in habitats of vulnerable species and in areas where marine mammals or other endangered species may be concentrated;
 - d. in the case of military active sonar and oil and gas seismic exploration, act with particular urgency to reduce risks and impacts on cetaceans, and other potentially vulnerable species, by restricting military active sonar training exercises and seismic surveys to low-risk areas and/or times of year, and by working actively toward the implementation and further development of international best practices and standards that regulate its use;
 - e. include noise restrictions, as appropriate, in their management guidelines for marine protected areas; and
 - f. work together with national and international non-governmental organizations and with the scientific community in accomplishing these goals; and
4. URGES IUCN Member governments in Africa that are Parties to the UNEP Regional Seas Agreements, and to other regional marine agreements and conventions, to include the reduction of anthropogenic ocean noise and mitigation of adverse impacts in their strategies, action plans and/or measures for the preservation of habitats and the conservation of marine biological diversity.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.