

1.16 Fisheries By-Catch

RECALLING Recommendations 19.61 and 19.62 of the 19th Session of the IUCN General Assembly;

RECOGNIZING that the world's marine biological diversity is of inestimable value to the world community and that the multitude of marine ecosystems represented are essential in the maintenance of a healthy planet;

FULLY CONSCIOUS that marine biodiversity is declining significantly and that the threats to marine biodiversity are increasing, particularly in relation to the global fisheries catch, due to overfishing, pollution and marine habitat destruction;

RECOGNIZING the need for urgent conservation action;

RECOGNIZING that there is ongoing and significant wastage resulting from unwanted by-catch where effective by-catch reduction devices and strategies are not used;

ACKNOWLEDGING the obligations of the global community to conserve natural resources through ecologically sustainable development, as underpinned by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (1995) (UN Fish Agreement) and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) among others;

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the increasing rate of destruction of threatened wildlife species through fisheries by-catch in most fisheries in all oceans of the world, graphically illustrated by the continuing substantial numbers of fatalities involving numerous seabird species, particularly albatrosses, and all marine turtle species;

ALARMED at the slow progress globally in effectively tackling fisheries by-catch issues and of the imminent threats posed to a number of vertebrate species and populations;

NOTING the slow progress being made by Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna in adopting measures similar to CCAMLR's to reduce seabird by-catch;

RECOGNIZING the responsibility of stewardship towards all marine life forms on the planet that rests upon humankind and the rights of species to exist;

RECOGNIZING the efforts in some nations to reduce by-catch in their fisheries;

IN THE BELIEF that the cost incurred for the conservation of wild marine resources should be shared and, in particular, that the users of marine resources must contribute to these costs, and that international efforts are necessary to properly recover and conserve most marine threatened vertebrate species;

RECALLING the resolution of the First International Workshop on Albatross-Fisheries Interactions held in Hobart, Australia in August 1995;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources, after having evaluated current international arrangements for mitigating the effects of fisheries by-catch and relevant species conservation efforts, to develop and implement transparently an IUCN programme using expertise in all of IUCN's Commissions, and the broad membership of IUCN, to substantially reduce, and eventually reduce to insignificant levels all fisheries by-catch in the long-term interests of marine biodiversity conservation;
2. URGES that this programme should, in particular:
 - a) establish in consultation with interested members a special IUCN task force to advance the IUCN by-catch programme;
 - b) develop regional contacts to contribute to the IUCN task force to ensure effective and cooperative arrangements;

- c) call on Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to investigate the potential for promoting the development of mechanisms, including legal instruments, to minimize the negative impacts of fishing practices on marine biodiversity;
 - d) investigate the potential for gaining financial and other support and collaboration from relevant bodies to contribute to an IUCN programme to mitigate impacts;
 - e) investigate the potential for IUCN and the CBD and other relevant bodies to develop jointly and expeditiously a global list of species and marine habitats particularly threatened by fishing operations, including fin-fish species that suffer losses through wastage;
 - f) actively encourage motions to support the listing of all albatross and other impacted seabird species on the appendices to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and to urgently develop regional conservation agreements;
 - g) consider drafting in consultation with members a further resolution on by-catch problems for consideration by the UN General Assembly Annual Session on Oceans in 1997;
 - h) develop a handbook on by-catch mitigation measures for use by fishing fleets globally;
 - i) investigate the potential for minimizing by-catch problems through the provisions of the UN Agreement Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks;
 - j) call upon all countries to sign and ratify the UN Agreement Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks;
 - k) support efforts in the Committee on Trade and Environment of the World Trade Organization to ensure that trade measures used to support genuine environmental objectives are not challenged in the future, and openly to support such conservation measures;
 - l) take particular and strong action through the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) to mitigate by-catch problems in the Southern Oceans;
 - m) promote globally a coordinated international observer and monitoring programme to fully establish the ongoing and detrimental effects of by-catch to marine biodiversity;
 - n) call upon members to report to the next World Conservation Congress on progress made within their EEZs on reducing seabird and other by-catch to insignificant levels;
3. REQUESTS the Director General to report on the progress made with this programme at the next session of the World Conservation Congress and to make further specific recommendations as appropriate and necessary to fully implement this Resolution.

Note. This Resolution was adopted by a show of hands. The delegation of the State member Japan made a statement against the Resolution, that it was inappropriate to attribute seabird depletion to longline fishing, reported in more detail in the Proceedings volume. The delegations of the State members Norway and United States indicated that they had voted against.