

REPORT ON THE 32ND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

by

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The 32nd Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) was held at Metropole Hotel in Brighton, England, from 21-26 July 1980 under the chairmanship of Mr. T. Asgeirsson, Iceland. The meeting of the Scientific Committee was held at New Hall, Cambridge, from 30 June to 10 July under the chairmanship of Dr. J. L. Bannister, Australia, following a workshop on sperm whale, 23-27 June, convened by Dr. G. P. Kirkwood, Australia. Four Technical Committee Working Groups met in Brighton 14-18 July.

24 member nations (including two new members) were represented at the Commission Meeting (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, France, Iceland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Peru, Seychelles, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, USSR, UK, and USA). Observers were present from non-member nations, intergovernmental organisations, and international non-governmental organisations.

Moratorium or Ban on Whaling.

A moratorium on all commercial whaling was proposed again this year, but failed to obtain the necessary three quarter majority. A proposal for a moratorium on the taking of sperm whale was also defeated. A Technical Committee Working Group presented its report on the social and economic consequences of a possible ban on whaling.

In relation to the Indian Ocean Whale Sanctuary established in 1979, it was recommended that IWC should co-sponsor an International Meeting of scientists to plan a programme of monitoring and research in the Indian Ocean. A proposal for removal of the southern boundary limit of the Sanctuary (55° S) was withdrawn.

Catch Limits for the Next Whaling Season.

1. Protected stocks.

In addition to whale stocks classified by IWC as Protection Stocks, a number of stocks have been given protection by the Indian Ocean Sanctuary and by the moratorium on the use of factory ships in all whaling (except for minke whales) adopted in 1979.

2. Exploited stocks.

The remaining stocks were classified as Initial Management Stocks (IMS) or Sustained Management Stocks (SMS), and catch limits for the 1980/81 Antarctic season and the 1981 season in other areas were set as follows for the three main regions (last year's catch limits in brackets):

Southern Hemisphere

Bryde's whales, Peruvian stock	264	(264)
" " other areas	682 <sup>a</sup>	(0 <sup>b</sup> )

Minke whales	7027	(8099)
Sperm whales	300	(580)

North Pacific Ocean

Bryde's whales	529	(479)
Minke whales, Sea of Japan stock	940 <sup>c</sup>	(940 <sup>c</sup> )
" " Okhotsk Sea stock	421 <sup>d</sup>	(421 <sup>d</sup> )
Sperm whales	890 <sup>e</sup>	(1350 <sup>e</sup> )
Gray whales, Eastern stock	179 <sup>f</sup>	(179 <sup>f</sup> )

North Atlantic Ocean

Fin whales, Iceland stock	304 <sup>g</sup>	(304 <sup>h</sup> )
" " Spain, Portugal, Brit. Isles stock	240 <sup>i</sup>	(143 <sup>j</sup> )
" " other areas	157	(157)
Sei whales, Iceland stock	100 <sup>k</sup>	(100 <sup>k</sup> )
Minke whales, Canadian East Coast stock	0 <sup>l</sup>	(48)
" " West Greenland stock	444 <sup>m</sup>	(385)
" " other areas	2110	(2110)
Sperm whales (males)	130	(273)
Humpback whales	0 <sup>n</sup>	(0 <sup>n</sup> )

Arctic Ocean

Bowhead whales	0 <sup>o</sup>	(0 <sup>o</sup> )
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Total all oceans

Fin whales	701	(604)
Sei whales	100	(100)
Bryde's whales	793	(743)
Minke whales	10942	(12003)
Sperm whales	1320 <sup>f</sup>	(2203 <sup>f</sup> )
Gray whales	179 <sup>f</sup>	(179 <sup>f</sup> )
Humpback whales	0 <sup>n</sup>	(0 <sup>n</sup> )
Bowhead whales	0 <sup>o</sup>	(0 <sup>o</sup> )

Notes:

- a. These stocks are in fact protected as they are within the Indian Ocean Sanctuary.
- b. IMS with a zero catch limit pending satisfactory estimates of stock size.
- c. The total catch shall not exceed 3634 in the five years 1980-1984 incl.
- d. " " " " " " 1678 " " " " " " "
- e. Males, incl. a by-catch of max. 11.5% females.
- f. To be taken by aborigines, or on behalf of these, but not for commercial purpose.
- g. Iceland has committed itself to limit the catch to no more than 254 fin whales in 1981 and 1982.

- h. The total catch shall not exceed 1524 in the six years 1977 to 1982 incl.
- i. " " " " " " 440 in 1980 and 1981, in any one year not more than 240.
- j. Spain lodged an objection to this catch limit, which is thus not binding for Spain.
- k. The total catch shall not exceed 504 in the six years 1980 to 1985 incl.
- l. Pending a satisfactory estimate of stock size.
- m. The total catch shall not exceed 1778 in the five years 1981 to 1985 incl.
- n. The taking of 10 humpback whales per year is permitted in Greenland by aborigines (using catchers less than 50 gross register tons).
- o. For the Bering Sea stock of bowhead whales it was decided that the aboriginal catch in the three years 1981 to 1982 shall not exceed 45 landed or 65 struck provided, however, that in any one year the number of whales landed shall not exceed 17. (1980: 18 landed or 26 struck).

#### Small Cetaceans, and the Marine Environment.

The Scientific Committee reviewed the status of several stocks of small cetaceans and reiterated its recommendation for action as proposed last year. After a prolonged discussion of whether or not regulation of catch of small cetaceans is within the competence of the Commission, a resolution was passed urging member nations to provide the Scientific Committee with all relevant data on their catch of small cetaceans and on national conservation and regulation measures, and to take note of the advice which the Scientific Committee will continue to offer.

Another resolution urges member nations to take every possible step to ensure that programmes for industrial development do not cause degradation of the marine environment in such a manner that whale populations are damaged.

It was decided that the moratorium on the use of factory ships should also include the taking of killer whales.

#### Humane killing

The Commission received some additional information on killing techniques and the time to death from a few member nations. It was recommended that these items should be pursued further and that a workshop on humane killing and improvement of killing techniques be held before next Annual Meeting.

It was decided that the killing for commercial purposes of whales, except minke whales, using the cold grenade harpoon, should be forbidden.

#### Reports of Special Meetings and Working Groups.

The Commission received a report from a meeting on Cetacean Behaviour and Intelligence, and the Ethics of Killing Cetacea, held in Washington 28 April to 1 May 1980, noted the progress made at this meeting, and endorsed the recommendation that a workshop be held to pursue some aspects of particular interest to whaling.

The Special Scientific Working Group on Management Procedures met at Honolulu, Hawaii, 20-26 March, 1980. The Commission welcomed the report of the Working

Group and noted its recommendations for principles and procedures in whale management. It was decided that the work should be continued by a new Technical Committee working group to establish specific proposals.

International Decade of Cetacean Research (IDCR).

The progress made in the Southern Hemisphere Minke Whale Marking and Sighting Programme and the South East Indian Ocean Whale Marking and Sighting Programme was noted as well of plans for a continuation hereof. It was strongly recommended that similar programmes be conducted in the North Atlantic, and projects to that effect were formulated and given priorities. It was further recommended that funds be made available in support of a study of sperm whales at the Azores and for the completion of a report on sperm whales in the Southeast Pacific. The Commission welcomed also a proposal to make research facilities available at the Icelandic whaling station.

Future Special Meeting.

A workshop on Sighting Techniques and Assessment will be held in Seattle, USA, September 11-16, 1980.

The Working Group on Revised Management Procedures should meet sometime in 1980/81 to examine the recommendations of the Special Scientific Working Group and prepare proposals early enough for the Scientific Committee to use these proposals as basis for its recommendations for stock classification at its next annual meeting.

A workshop on minke whales will be held in Cambridge, England, in the week beginning 22 June 1981.

A workshop on killer whale will be held at the same place and time.

It was decided to establish an *ad hoc* working group on subsistence whaling to develop management principles, and in particular for the setting of allowable catches for the whale stocks involved; it should carry out its work as soon as possible and report its findings to the meeting of the Technical Committee in 1981.

A Meeting on Cetacean Female Reproduction will be held in La Jolla, USA, December 1-9, 1981.

A workshop on Cetacean Behaviour, particularly those matters identified as being of greatest significance to the assessment and management of cetaceans should be held as soon as possible but probably not until 1981/82 in order to allow adequate planning.

Next Annual Meeting of the Commission.

The Scientific Committee will meet in Cambridge between 27 June and 9 July, working groups of the Technical Committee in the week beginning 13 June, and the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Commission will be held in the week beginning 20 July 1981.