

INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF THE TWENTY-THIRD MEETING

Accomplishments of the 23rd Meeting

The meeting of June 1971 made the following progress toward the goals of the Commission:

- a) Extensive discussions were held to consider implementation of an International Observer Scheme. The Commission approved amendments to the Schedule which clarified its intent to establish such a scheme. It was agreed that all member nations should implement the scheme for the 1971/72 season.
- b) The catch limit for the Antarctic in the 1971/72 season was reduced from 2,700 to 2,300 blue-whale-units. It was agreed that in the 1972/73 season the blue-whale-unit should be eliminated and quotas should be established by species.
- c) Catches for the North Pacific in 1972 will be reduced by 20 per cent from the 1971 levels, as follows: fin whales 1,046; sei and Brydes whales combined 3,768; sperm whales 10,841.
- d) The Scientific Committee will meet early in 1972 to review the status of sperm whale stocks and to seek practical methods of limiting the catch of males.
- e) It was agreed that the financial contribution of member nations for the operation of the Commission should be increased to £385 for 1971/72 and to £425 for 1972/73.

1. Date and Place. The twenty-third meeting of the Commission was held at the Department of State, International Conference Suite, Washington DC, from 21 to 25 June 1971. The proceedings were conducted by the Chairman, Mr I Fujita (Japan).

2. Representation. Commissioners and Delegates of Contracting Governments represented Australia, Canada, France, Iceland, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Panama, South Africa, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Observers attended from Brazil, Italy, New Zealand, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the Friends of the Earth, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the Fauna Preservation Society, the International Society for the Protection of Animals and the World Wildlife Fund.

3. Address of Welcome. The opening session was addressed by the Honorable U. Alexis Johnson, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, who in extending a hearty welcome to the Commission on behalf of the United States Government remarked that the Commission had its birth in Washington in 1946 but had not met in the United States until this meeting. He said that in many respects this was the most critical meeting ever held by the Commission, the whole concept of the multilateral international commission as an effective means of dealing with the conservation of major living marine resources was on trial. The placing of

eight species of whales on the Endangered Species List by the United States Government and the announcement that after December 31, 1971 it would issue no more licences to kill whales expressed the view of the people of the United States that the Commission had acted neither soon enough nor forcefully enough to prevent destruction of a valuable international resource. Through the efforts of the Commission there was a code of regulation incorporating minimum size limits, catch quotas, closed areas and closed seasons, prohibitions on killing certain species and other beneficial measures. Many important problems remained unsolved, the major ones were:

- (1) the International Observer Scheme;
- (2) the blue-whale-unit catch limit in the Antarctic;
- (3) the levels of catch quotas as now established.

The need for adequate surveillance of the enforcement of regulations was recognised and he hoped the Commission would take forthright action following the special meeting held on the subject. The blue-whale-unit must be abolished as a regulatory device and quotas must be established by species and by stock; and more stringent criteria should be used in setting quotas. Mr Johnson said they had faith in the ability of the representatives of the member nations of the Commission in acting for the common good in the cause of restoring world whale resources to their maximum level of productivity. He wished success to the Commission's work.

4. Mr Sukhoruchenko and Mr Wimpenny. The deaths were reported of Mr Sukhoruchenko the Commissioner for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for many years and Mr Wimpenny formerly Secretary for the Commission. The Chairman paid tributes to the contribution made both by Mr Sukhoruchenko and Mr Wimpenny to the work of the Commission and the meeting stood in silent tribute to their memory.

5. Adoption of Agenda. The agenda were adopted on the proposal of the Commissioner for Norway seconded by the Commissioner for Japan.

6. Review of Previous Season's Catches. Statistics relating to the catch outside the Antarctic in 1970 and the catch in the Antarctic in 1970/71 prepared by the Bureau of International Whaling Statistics were distributed. The Director of the Bureau, Mr Vangstein, was unable to attend the meeting and the report of the Bureau usually given at the Commission's meeting was read by the Commissioner for Norway. A copy is appended to this report.

7. Scientific Committee. The Scientific Committee met under the Chairmanship of Dr D G Chapman (USA) during the week commencing 14 June 1971. The Committee also met on a number of occasions during the following week to consider specific points. Its report was issued as meeting document IWC/23/4.

8. Pelagic Catch Limit in the Antarctic. The Scientific Committee reported that it had discussed at length four papers bearing on the status and yield of the Antarctic fin whale stock, and had considered particularly those aspects having to do with the rate of recruitment and those that have raised doubts concerning the analysis of this stock. It had however been unable to reach a single estimate for the sustainable yield in 1971/72. Most members of the Committee believed that the best estimate was 2,200 whales (1,100 blue-whale-units), while the Japanese scientists estimated a yield of 4,250 (2,125 blue-whale-units) with which the USSR scientists agreed. For sei whales the Committee estimated that the

sustainable yield was about 5,000 (833 blue-whale-units). The Technical Committee by a majority decision recommended that the catch limit for 1971/72 should be 2,300 blue-whale-units representing a reduction of 400 units on the 1970/71 limit. The USA Commissioner considered this figure too high and proposed a limit of 2,140 blue-whale-units which, assuming the catch of sei whales would be at about the same level as in the last two seasons, would hold the fin whale stock at about its present level. This proposal did not obtain the three-fourths majority required by the Commission's Rules of Procedure for amendments to the Schedule and the Commission accepted the Technical Committee's recommendation that the catch limit for 1971/72 should be 2,300 blue-whale-units, seven countries voting in favour, two against and three abstaining. It decided to amend paragraph 8(a) of the Schedule accordingly.

9. Blue-Whale-Unit. The Scientific Committee urged the replacement of the blue-whale-unit for fixing catch limits in the Antarctic by limits for each separate species as the most effective means of ensuring that the catch of each species will be at a level that will not result in a further decline in the stock. Procedural difficulties prevented such a change in the Schedule at this meeting but the three Antarctic whaling countries (Japan, Norway and USSR) agreed to meet in advance of the 1972 meeting to make arrangements to establish quotas by species for the 1972/73 Antarctic season and to include this item on the agenda for the next annual meeting of the Commission.

10. Minke Whale Stocks in the Antarctic. The Scientific Committee reported that preliminary estimates of population size and maximum sustainable yield of minke whales in the Antarctic were 150,000-200,000 and 5,000 respectively and that the stock is essentially unexploited. The Commission accepted the Technical Committee's recommendation that a careful watch should be kept on the level of catches of this species.

11. Baleen and Sperm Whale Catch Limits in the North Pacific Ocean. The report on the status of stocks in the North Pacific Ocean was considered by the Commissioners for the North Pacific whaling countries and their recommendation that the 1971 catch limits should be reduced by 20% for 1972 was accepted by the Technical Committee. They reported that agreement had also been reached to reduce the limits of both the fin and sei whales by at least another 20% in 1973. The Commission approved the Committee's recommendation to amend the Schedule as follows:-

Paragraph 8(f) Delete "1308" and add "1046", delete "1971" and add "1972".
Paragraph 8(g) Delete "4710" and add "3768", delete "1971" and add "1972".
Delete "the succeeding few years" and add "1973", and
Delete "within a few years".

A proposal submitted by the Commissioner for the USSR that paragraph 8(h) should be deleted was considered by the Technical Committee which recommended that the words "Until the end of 1972" should be inserted at the beginning of the sub-paragraph. The amendment was approved by the Commission.

In 1970 there was agreement between the countries whaling in the North Pacific to limit the catch of sperm whales in 1971 to 13,551 whales. The North Pacific Commissioners now proposed that the catch limit for sperm whales in the North Pacific in 1972 should be 10,841 whales and that this restriction should be included in the Schedule. The Technical Committee supported these proposals and

the Commission accepted the recommendation that the following sub-paragraph should be added to paragraph 8 of the Schedule:

- " (i) the number of sperm whales taken in the North Pacific Ocean and dependent waters shall not exceed 10,841 whales in 1972."

12. Sperm Whale Stocks. The Scientific Committee reported that further analysis and new population models were needed for sperm whale stocks and recommended that a special stock assessment meeting be held early in 1972. An assessment was now available for the area between 20°E and 70°E in the southern hemisphere and the Committee considered that it would be wise to prevent any increase in the male catch in that area. It recognised the difficulty of establishing suitable regulations to provide for this and urged that steps be taken as rapidly as possible to review all the possibilities of achieving this objective. The Commission endorsed the proposal to hold a special stock assessment meeting early in 1972. It was suggested that the Committee should give particular attention to the problem of limiting the catch of males not only in the North Pacific where the Commissioners for the countries in that area had agreed that consideration should be given to determining methods of separating catches of males and females, but also in the southern hemisphere. The Commission accepted a proposal put forward by the delegation for South Africa that catch limits should be imposed for the area between 20°E and 70°E in the southern hemisphere and added the following sub-paragraph to Paragraph 8 of the Schedule:

- " (j) The number of sperm whales taken in the area south of the Equator between 20° East longitude and 70° East longitude in the 1971/72 pelagic season shall not exceed 923 whales and in the 1972 coastal season shall not exceed 1,824 whales. These figures in subsequent seasons to be further adjusted on the basis of the latest scientific assessment."

13. Length of Antarctic Season. The Commission accepted the Technical Committee's recommendation that there should be no change in the opening and closing dates of the Antarctic season.

14. The Sanctuary. The Commission accepted the Technical Committee's recommendation that the Sanctuary should remain open in 1971/72.

15. Appointment of Inspectors on Catchers functioning also as Factory Ships. The Commissioner for Norway proposed an amendment to paragraph 1(a) with the object of ensuring that both the national inspector and an observer appointed by the Commission could be accommodated on these smaller vessels. The Commission approved the following amendment to the Schedule as recommended by the Technical Committee:

Paragraph 1(a). Insert after "inspection" in line 2 the following:

"provided that at least one such inspector shall be maintained on each catcher functioning as a factory ship".

16. Catchers Functioning as Factory Ships off the African Coast. The South African delegation drew attention to the action the South African Government had taken to control the activities of these catchers and urged the Commission to make a direct approach to the countries whose harbours were being used by them to

take similar action. The Commission agreed that the countries concerned should be informed of the position and that it should be suggested to them that these vessels should be denied transshipping facilities. The United Kingdom delegate reported on the measures that his Government was taking to deal with one of these ships including the appointment of a whaling inspector who, with the co-operation of the South African Government, would investigate the vessel.

17. International Observer Scheme. The Chairman of the Commission had invited all the member-nations engaged in whaling to a special meeting held immediately prior to the meeting of the Commission to consider measures to implement an international observer scheme. It was attended by delegates representing Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America. The following recommendations made by this group were submitted to and endorsed by the Technical Committee:

- (i) All member countries should implement an international observer scheme for the 1971/72 season.
- (ii) It should be carried out on a regional basis as follows: (1) the North Pacific, (2) Antarctic pelagic, (3) North Atlantic and (4) Southern Hemisphere land stations. The interested governments should meet to work out details in the very near future to be signed at a later date.
- (iii) Amendments to the Schedule were proposed in order to facilitate an early implementation of the scheme.
- (iv) The question of the cost to the Commission of the administration of the scheme should be referred to the Committee on Finance and Administration.

The Commission approved the following amendments to the Schedule:

Paragraph 1(a) Delete the words "and also such observers as the member countries engaged in pelagic whaling may arrange to place on each others' factory ships."

Paragraph 1(b) Delete the second sentence.

Add a new paragraph,

"Paragraph 1(c) - There shall be received such observers as the member countries may arrange to place on factory ships and land stations or groups of land stations of other member countries. The observers shall be appointed by the Commission and paid by the Government nominating them."

The Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee (Dr Sprules) reported that the Committee had considered these proposals and were satisfied that some additional costs in administration would be incurred by the Commission. It was not possible to say at this stage how much was likely to be involved and the Committee recommended that for the coming whaling season the governments of the member nations participating in the Scheme be requested to provide any additional funds required by the Secretariat to administer the Scheme pro rata on the basis of the respective national catches of whales. For subsequent seasons, it recommended that the matter be reconsidered at the next annual meeting in the light of the estimated cost of the first year's operations and of the estimated cost in the following year. The question could then be considered of assessing each member nation a very small token cost or contribution of say £20, thus giving

every member of the Commission the opportunity to make a small contribution to the cost of administering this most important Scheme. The balance of the cost would be met by the participating nations pro rata based on the national catches of whales. The Committee's recommendations were accepted by the Commission.

18. Infractions. The infractions of the Convention as reported by the whaling countries were considered by a sub-committee appointed by the Technical Committee. It reported a slight decrease in the figures representing infractions expressed as a percentage of the total catch for Antarctic operations as compared with the figures for the previous year although they were not as low as those for 1968/69. Outside the Antarctic the pattern of infractions was much the same. It noted that the established pattern of sperm whale infractions being significantly greater than baleen whale infractions held true again. A suggested explanation of this was that with the comparatively large numbers of male and female animals encountered together north of the Antarctic, it is extremely difficult to estimate the lengths of the animals within a foot or two when they are being exploited in large pods.

19. Finance. The report of the Finance and Administration Committee was considered by the Commission.

(a) The Statement of Income and Expenditure for 1970/71

The statement showed that expenditure amounted to £6,519 compared with £6,630 in 1969/70. The decrease arose from a reduction in staff costs at the 1970 Annual Meeting, although this was slightly offset by increases in other costs, and a saving in expenditure on stationery, printing and postages. Income amounting to £5,198 was lower by £503 due to the withdrawal of one member country and a reduction in the income from invested funds. The Commission approved the statement on the recommendation of the Finance and Administration Committee.

(b) The Estimate for 1971/72 and Rate of Contribution

The estimate showed that while expenditure on most items continued to rise because of increased costs, the total would be slightly less than in the previous year due (1) to a saving on the cost of the Annual Meeting as a result of the generous provision of accommodation and services by the USA and (2) no provision having been made for a contribution to the Bureau of International Whaling Statistics for the collection and summarizing of data for stock assessment. In the preparation of the estimate, account had been taken of the Commission's decision at its last meeting that the rate of contribution for 1971/72 should be increased by 10% subject to the usual review by the Finance and Administration Committee. Expenditure for the year is expected to exceed income by £400 even with the increased contribution and the Committee reported that it was satisfied that the increase was necessary to minimize the reduction in the accumulated balance. The Commission confirmed its decision that the rate of contribution for 1971/72 should be £385 and approved the estimate for that year as recommended by the Finance and Administration Committee.

(c) Forward Estimate for 1972/73

The Committee considered a forecast of the Commission's financial position in 1972/73. In recent years it has become necessary for the Commission to use part of its balance in hand to meet current years' expenditures and if this practice is continued it will on present estimates have to use about £1,100 from the balance in 1972/73. Proposals for achieving reductions in

expenditure had been put forward, including the production of the annual report by a cheaper process and the recording of the Commission's proceedings by tape instead of the more expensive process that has been used hitherto, and the Committee recommended that they should be adopted. Despite these savings it seemed likely that the Commission's expenditure would continue to exceed its income with the possibility that the balance in hand would be spent in the course of the next two or three years and the Committee recommended that, subject to the examination of the position next year, the contribution of member countries should be increased to £425 in 1972/73. The Commission accepted the Committee's recommendations.

20. Collection of Catch, Effort and Length Distribution Data. A report on the present position of this work which is being undertaken for the Commission by the Bureau of International Whaling Statistics is included in the Director's report referred to in paragraph 6. Further work, notably in connection with the catches in the North Pacific, has still to be done and as the funds provided by the Commission for this purpose have been exhausted the Scientific Committee recommended that a further sum of £500 should be paid. This was considered by the Finance and Administration Committee. In order to meet this expenditure it would be necessary to draw further on the accumulated balance and in view of the Commission's financial position the Commissioner for Norway undertook to recommend to his Government that the cost of the work that had to be done this year might be met by Norway. Appreciation of this offer was expressed, particularly having regard to the substantial expenditure already incurred by Norway in maintaining the Bureau.

21. The Commission's 22nd Report. The draft report which had been circulated was approved subject to the inclusion of certain statistical details to be provided by the Bureau of International Whaling Statistics.

22. Date and Place of Next Meeting. The Commission accepted the Finance and Administration Committee's recommendation that the next meeting should be held in London, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, in the week beginning 26 June 1972.

23. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman. In accordance with the Commission's Rules of Procedure, the Chairman, Mr I Fujita the Commissioner for Japan retired on completion of three years in that office. On the proposition of the delegate for Japan seconded by the Commissioner for the USSR, Dr J L McHugh the Commissioner for the United States was unanimously elected Chairman for the ensuing three years. On the proposition of the Commissioner for the USSR seconded by the Commissioner for Japan, Mr I Rindal the Commissioner for Norway was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman for the same period.

24. Statements by Observers from other Organisations. Statements were made by Mrs J McIntyre of Friends of the Earth, Mr R S Fitter of the Fauna Preservation Society, Mr J Walsh of the International Society for the Protection of Animals, Dr C W Holloway of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and Mr S R Seater of the World Wildlife Fund.

25. Constitution of Committees. The membership of the Commission's Committees for the year was as follows:

Technical Committee: Australia, Canada, France, Japan, Norway, Panama, South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom and the United States

of America were elected to be represented on the Technical Committee. Mr I Rindal (Norway) was elected Chairman. Iceland and Mexico also subsequently opted to serve on the Technical Committee and the Chairman agreed that they should do so.

Scientific Committee: Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom and United States of America. Dr D G Chapman (United States of America) was elected Chairman.

Finance and Administration Committee: The Chairman of the Commission nominated representatives from Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Dr W M Sprules (Canada) was elected Chairman.

J L McHugh
Chairman