

Annual Report of the International Whaling Commission 2002
54th Annual Meeting, 2002

Resolution 2002-1
Guidance to the Scientific Committee on the Sanctuary review process

RECALLING that amendments to the Schedule, including the establishment of Sanctuaries, require criteria for their periodic review by the Scientific Committee.

CONVINCED that the establishment of Sanctuaries for conservation purposes represents an integral part of best management practices for wildlife in general.

NOTING that sanctuaries were established and have been maintained for a number of reasons, of which scientific considerations, although important, should not be definitive in the validation process. When considering scientific arguments for sanctuary evaluation, if consensus is not possible, then a precautionary approach should prevail.

RECALLING FURTHER that since 1995, the IWC has recognised the need for a broader understanding of environmental changes and threats affecting whale stocks in the Antarctic marine ecosystem and recommended the application of precautionary principles in their discussions. On several occasions there was consistent support within the SC (2002) for the precautionary approach, specially when dealing with Arctic and Antarctic resource management. (SC/54/IA7, IA11, IA15, SC/54/E3, E11, E16, SC/54/IA7, IA11, IA18, SC/54/BRG4).

RECOGNISING that if there is no consensus on specific issues within sanctuaries, the Precautionary Approach should limit the negative impacts of environmental uncertainty (e.g. effects of climate change over sea-ice dynamics and feeding habitat accessibility and unforeseen problems in the RMP to the other regions where it was applied). In such cases, currently established sanctuaries complement the provisions of paragraph 10 e) of the Schedule as an integral management strategy.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that sanctuaries of appropriate spatial and temporal scales are consistent with the practice of establishing large-scale areas closed to harvest as essential components of best management practices. These no-take regions should therefore be regarded independently of any other management actions or the provisions of paragraph 10(e) of the Schedule to the Convention. The long-term provisions and dimensions of an individual sanctuary depend on factors other than those determining the Commission's short-term management policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION:

INSTRUCTS the Scientific Committee that, in reviewing Sanctuaries, it includes the following principles in addition to those in the Instructions from the Commission to the Scientific Committee for Review of Sanctuaries approved by the 53rd Annual Meeting.

- 1) Temporary overlap of management measures, for example Para 10(e) of the Schedule and a sanctuary, cannot be used to invalidate any long-term scientific and conservation value of a given Sanctuary.
- 2) The application of the Precautionary Approach shall be determined in accordance to Principle 15 of the 1992 Rio Declaration.