

Resolution Adopted at the 68th Meeting

RESOLUTION 2022-1

RESOLUTION ON MARINE PLASTIC POLLUTION

CONFIRMING that the impact of marine plastic pollution on cetaceans is a priority concern for the International Whaling Commission (IWC);

RECOGNISING that plastic pollution spans five of the eight priority areas of environmental concern identified by the IWC Scientific Committee and endorsed by the Commission in IWC Resolution 1997-7;

RECALLING the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly, and especially Goal 14 to Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources, which includes the following target 14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution;

RECALLING Resolution 2018-3 on Ghost Gear Entanglement Among Cetaceans;

RECOGNISING the transboundary nature of marine plastic pollution and the importance of international cooperation by IWC Contracting Governments and other International Organisations, bodies and instruments, including inter alia the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Arctic Council and International Maritime Organisation (IMO);

EMPHASISING the alarming scale of actual and projected increases in plastic pollution and the adverse impact of marine plastic pollution on cetaceans, which is more substantial than previously thought;

RECOGNISING the IWC's unique global role and mandate in understanding and addressing the impacts of plastic pollution on cetaceans that have serious conservation and welfare implications.

THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION:

COMMENDS the adoption by the UN Environment Assembly of Resolution UNEA/EA.5/Res.14, which requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to convene an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment;

DIRECTS the Secretariat to explore options for the IWC to engage as a stakeholder within the INC process, as appropriate;

ENDORSES the outcome of the December 2019 marine debris workshop, relevant reports of the Scientific Committee and the Conservation Committee workplan on marine debris (to be discussed at IWC68);

DIRECTS the IWC Secretariat to explore ways to increase collaboration and cooperation with relevant international organisations and bodies to share information that contributes to the development of effective measures to prevent or mitigate marine plastic pollution impacts on cetaceans, avoiding unnecessary duplication of work and regulation and in addition to action encouraged in Resolution 2018-3;

REQUESTS the Scientific Committee to develop an approach to be considered by the IWC that would assess the current knowledge of the impact of marine plastic pollution on cetaceans and would provide a global risk assessment that identifies 'hotspots' of cetacean exposure to plastic debris;

ENCOURAGES the Conservation Committee, Scientific Committee, and Whale Killing Methods and Welfare Issues Working Group to consider engaging, as appropriate, in pilot projects of other organizations or entities on marking of gear used in fishing activities that lead to cetacean entanglement;

RECOMMENDS Contracting Governments to report relevant information, such as status, reduction, recycling and reuse efforts, on marine plastic pollution and plastic ingestion in stranded animals in their voluntary conservation and national Scientific Progress reports;

RECOMMENDS the IWC Secretariat to add marine debris mapping to its engagement with the Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) process;

REQUESTS the Secretariat to develop a strategy for the IWC to reduce the use of single-use plastics as much as possible in all meetings and the day-to-day operations of the Secretariat; and

REQUESTS the Secretariat to report back to IWC69 on progress made in the implementation of this Resolution, including an assessment of financial forecast for this resolution for the next biennium.