

Annual Report of the International Whaling Commission 2000
52nd Annual Meeting, 2000

IWC Resolution 2000-8
Resolution on Western North Atlantic Right Whales

RECALLING that the Commission passed a Resolution on Small Populations of Highly Endangered Whales at its 51st meeting, noting with concern the status of all stocks of northern right whale, including those in the North Atlantic;

ALARMED that the Western North Atlantic right whale numbers only around 300 throughout the North Atlantic, and, despite having been protected from whaling since the 1930's, appears to be decreasing and is projected to become extinct if trends continue;

CONCERNED that the two major causes of human-induced mortality for this species are ship strikes and entanglement in fishing nets and gear;

WELCOMING the recommendations from IWC Northern Right Whale Workshops in 1998, 1999, and 2000, and the consequent actions taken to date by the United States and Canada of investing in relevant research and taking measures to reduce human- induced mortality;

COMMENDING the United States for submitting, and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) for adopting, a Mandatory Ship Reporting System (MSR) for ships entering two areas off the eastern United States where right whales and high ship traffic both occur, to reduce the threat of ship strikes;

FURTHER COMMENDING the Canadian government for the real time radio advisories to shipping as to the location of whales in the Bay of Fundy;

NOTING the management recommendations of the 2000 Scientific Committee which stress the urgency of making every effort to eliminate anthropogenic mortality in the population, and further state that "There is no need to wait for further research before implementing any currently available management actions that can reduce anthropogenic mortalities."

NOW THEREFORE THE COMMISSION:

CALLS UPON the United States and Canada to continue to pursue actively, practicable actions to reduce as far as possible ship strikes on right whales, in particular by using the information from the Mandatory Ship Reporting System to assess further mitigation steps, including adjustment of traffic;

URGES range states to consider appropriate fishery measures to reduce right whale mortality and injury, including fixed gear modifications and restrictions on usage;

ENCOURAGES the United States and Canada, as well as other countries whose ships transit through northern right whale habitat, to continue and expand educational programs to help mariners actively avoid collisions with right whales;

ENDORSES the research and management recommendations of the Scientific Committee at IWC 52 and the recommendations endorsed by the Scientific Committee from the Workshop on Status and Trends and from the Workshop on Causes of Reproductive Failure;

REQUESTS that the Secretariat transmit the text of this Resolution to the IMO for distribution at its Maritime Safety Committee and Marine Environment Protection Committee;

FURTHER REQUESTS range states for this species to report back to IWC 53, and annually thereafter, on progress made on the management recommendations.