

**Annual Report of the International Whaling Commission 2003**  
**55<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, 2003**

**Resolution 2003-2**  
**Resolution on Whaling under Special Permit**

AWARE that Article VIII of the ICRW allows contracting Governments to grant Special Permits for purposes of scientific research on whales;

NOTING that Article VIII of the ICRW was drafted and accepted by States Parties in 1946, at a time when few alternatives to lethal investigations existed, a situation drastically different from today;

RECALLING that since the adoption of the moratorium on commercial whaling in 1985/1986, the IWC has adopted over 30 resolutions on special permit whaling in which it has expressed its opinion that special permit whaling should: only be permitted in exceptional circumstances (1995-8 and 9); meet critically important research needs (1987); satisfy criteria established by the Scientific Committee; be consistent with the Commission's conservation policy (1987/1); be conducted using non lethal research techniques (1995-9); and ensure the conservation of whales in sanctuaries (1995-8);

RECALLING in particular that the Commission has expressed serious concern at the possibility of whaling for scientific purposes assuming the characteristics of commercial whaling (1985/2);

RECALLING also that the Commission has stated that the meat and products of special permit whaling should be utilised entirely for domestic consumption (IWC1994-7) and that any commercial international trade in whale products obtained from research whaling undermines the effectiveness of the IWC's conservation programme (1994-7);

CONCERNED that over 7,500 whales have been taken in special permit whaling operations since the moratorium on commercial whaling entered into force and there is no complete record as to how many whales have been struck and lost;

AWARE that whales caught in Japan's special permit operations provide over 3,000 tonnes of edible products per year that are sold for commercial purposes;

NOTING that Iceland has presented a programme to the Commission which would allow the killing of 250 whales (100 minke, 100 fin and 50 sei whales) a year for two years in a Special Permit whaling operation that would provide over 4000 tonnes of edible products;

NOTING that there has never been a formal assessment of sei whales in Icelandic waters, that considerable concern was expressed during the discussions of the Scientific Committee with regard to the status of this population, and that the take of 50 sei whales under the Icelandic feasibility programme would likely threaten its recovery;

RECOGNISING that considerable information on feeding ecology collected by Iceland under its previous Special Permit suggests that fin and sei whale diet is comprised principally of krill and that genetic analysis of whale scats would provide an ideal non-lethal method for determining prey shifts in their diet;

NOTING with concern that most of the data collected under Iceland's previous Special Permit has not yet been published; that most whales killed under that previous permit were exported; and that thousands of archival tissue samples are currently available which could enable the completion of this feasibility programme.

NOW THEREFORE THE COMMISSION

EXPRESSES deep concern that the provision permitting special permit whaling enables countries to conduct whaling for commercial purposes despite the moratorium on commercial whaling;

STATES that the current and proposed Special Permit whaling operations represent an act contrary to the spirit of the moratorium on commercial whaling and to the will of the Commission;

STATES that Article VIII of the Convention is not intended to be exploited in order to provide whale meat for commercial purposes and shall not be so used;

REAFFIRMS that non-lethal techniques available today will usually provide better data at less cost to both animals and budget;

URGES any country conducting or considering the conduct of Special Permit whaling to terminate or not commence such activities and to limit scientific research to non-lethal methods only.

