

**Annual Report of the International Whaling Commission 2004**  
**56<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, 2004**

**Resolution 2004-1**

**RESOLUTION ON WESTERN NORTH PACIFIC GRAY WHALE**

CONCERNED that the IUCN listed the western gray whale as “critically endangered” in 2000 because of its geographic and genetic isolation combined with the small population size of about 100;

FURTHER CONCERNED that the Scientific Committee has noted that only 23 reproductive females are known;

NOTING that the Scientific Committee in 2004 strongly agreed that the evidence that this population is in serious danger of extinction is compelling;

RECALLING that in 2001 the Commission passed a Resolution (Resolution 2001-3) calling on range states and others to actively pursue all practicable solutions to eliminate anthropogenic mortality in the western North Pacific gray whale stock and to minimise anthropogenic disturbances in the migration corridor and on their breeding and feeding grounds;

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the report of the 2004 Scientific Committee that states that the recovery and growth of the population appear to be hindered by a variety of biological difficulties and that the onset of oil and gas development programs is of particular concern with regard to the survival of this population;

NOTING the management recommendations of the 2004 Scientific Committee that as a matter of absolute urgency measures are taken to protect this population and its habitat off Sakhalin Island;

NOTING that although there already was independent scientific advice, there is, nevertheless, a continued need for expert and independent scientific advice on the effects that oil and gas development projects might have on the western North Pacific gray whale stock.

NOTING that in recent years significant resources and effort in studying the western North Pacific gray whale stock near Sakhalin Island, and that in view of the uncertainty over the possible negative impacts on the population and its habitat by current oil and gas activities, this kind of research and monitoring must be continued in greater detail as oil and gas activities increase in scale.

FURTHER NOTING that the International Whaling Commission is internationally recognised as having competence for the management and conservation of whale stocks, has a wealth of scientific knowledge and expertise and has been reviewing research on the western gray whale population off the Sakhalin Island since 1995.

NOW THEREFORE THE COMMISSION:

CALLS UPON range states and others to be mindful of Resolution 2001-3 when contemplating exploration projects in and around Sakhalin Island and to continue to observe the recommendations to actively pursue all practicable actions to eliminate anthropogenic mortality in this stock and to minimise anthropogenic disturbances in the migration corridor and on breeding and feeding grounds;

ENDORSES all conclusions and recommendations of the 2004 Scientific Committee concerning western gray whales including that:

- (1) “as a matter of absolute urgency that measures be taken to protect this population and its habitat off Sakhalin Island”;
- (2) “strongly recommends that the ongoing Russian-US and Russian and Republic of Korea national programmes on western gray whale research and monitoring continues and expands into the future”;
- (3) “strongly recommends that all range states develop or expand national monitoring and research programmes on western gray whales”;
- (4) “strongly recommends that in situations when displacement of whales could have significant demographic consequences, seismic surveys should be stopped.”

REQUESTS that the Secretariat urgently offers its services and scientific expertise to the organisations concerned with oil and gas development projects and potential exploration projects in the Sakhalin area, and provides them with the findings of any relevant research and Scientific Committee reports;

FURTHER REQUESTS that the Secretariat makes every effort to actively participate and provide advice and expertise at any international expert panels convened to consider the impacts on the western gray whale of oil and gas development projects in and around Sakhalin Island.

**FURTHER REQUESTS** that the Commission request all the range states to develop, begin or continue scientific research programmes on the migration, distribution, breeding, population assessment and other research of the entire range of the western gray whale.