

Draft Resolution on Cetaceans and Ecosystem Services

Submitted by Chile

ACKNOWLEDGING that ecosystem services are beneficial outcomes for the natural environment and people, that result from physical, chemical, and biological processes or attributes that contribute to the self-maintenance of an ecosystem and the planet as a whole.

RECOGNIZING the need to integrate the values of biodiversity and ecosystem services into decision-making processes related to the conservation and management of cetacean populations.

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the Commission has given priority to research on the effects of environmental changes on cetaceans due to increasing threats faced by cetaceans, including climate change, pollution, ship strike and entanglement among others.

AWARE that increasing scientific evidence shows that whales enhance ecosystem productivity by concentrating nitrogen and iron near the surface through the release of fecal plumes, in some cases equivalent to that required to support prey consumption, such as it has been reported for blue whales, sperm whales and humpback whales among others.

CONSIDERING that iron defecation from whales stimulates carbon export into the Southern Ocean and thus whales play an important role in regulating atmospheric CO₂ levels, which may ultimately contribute to mitigate climate change.

RECALLING resolution 2001-9 that acknowledged that better understanding of marine ecosystems would contribute to the conservation and management of living marine resources and decided to prioritize the study of interactions between whales and fish stocks.

NOTING the wide collaboration of the IWC with other international governmental conventions and organizations.

NOW THEREFORE the Commission,

ACKNOWLEDGES the increasing scientific research data that shows that whales enhance nutrient availability for primary production in feeding grounds rather than reducing fishery yields.

RECOGNISES the need to include the consideration of world-wide ecosystem services provided by live cetaceans in conservation and management strategies of cetacean populations in particular, and the ocean health in general.

ENCOURAGES member States to work constructively towards the incorporation of ecosystem services delivered by live cetaceans in future decisions and agreements.

RESOLVES to review the legal, ecological, management, environmental, social, economical and financial aspects related to ecosystem services provided by live cetaceans to people and natural systems as a matter of priority.

DIRECTS the Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee to incorporate ecosystem services provided by live cetaceans to its work, including the review of the aspects previously identified.

DECIDES to increase collaboration and co-operation with governmental, regional and other international organizations working on ecosystem services issues, including CCAMLR and FAO, among others.