



Save People and their Cultures too

Editorial by Eugene Lapointe



AI am often asked about the difference between IWMC's philosophy and that proclaimed by animal rightists and environmental extremists. After all, we all label ourselves conservationists, but we clearly are not on the same page. The answer is that IWMC cares about people. We promote the conservation of animals and plants for the benefit of people and the total environment whereas the extremists claim that it is

important to preserve animals and plants against use by people. The only time they are concerned about human beings, it seems, is when they are chasing people away from their dearest high profile species.

We observed this being played out at two recent important gatherings, the annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission held in June in Madeira, and the CITES Standing Committee meeting that just concluded in July, in Geneva.

Let's be clear. Both the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) exist to regulate human use of wild resources by applying the best scientific knowledge for the benefit of people and their resources and the environments of which we are all an integral part. The founding members of those Conventions were convinced that wild resources are both valuable and vulnerable, and were determined that people and their total environment could and should be conserved through honest and well informed efforts.

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In This Issue

Save People and their Cultures too, Editorial by Eugene LapointePage 1

Sauver les peuples et leurs culturesPage 2

Salven a la Gente, y a su cultura tambiénPage 4

Myths of the Cyber-SealsPage 6

FAO Members work on implementing Sustainability Measures for Global FisheriesPage 7

Are Seal Problems coming back to bite us?Page 8

NoteworthyPage 9



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Unfortunately, this laudable original vision has been challenged by a few decades of self-serving, cultural and political pressures that no longer prioritize the whole earth, but now attempt to change that original, holistic and humane goal by taking people out of Nature's equation. IWMC supporters and other respectful resource users are working to right these wrongs, and to do so before these worthwhile Conventions fall apart. In short, their missions have been usurped and distorted.

In June, the Chairman of the IWC, with the agreement of the Commission, asked for special presentations by six members of the NGO community: three were supporters of sustainable use (which included native peoples from New Zealand and Russia) and three were from the anti-whaling groups (including Greenpeace and the guru of the anti-whaling movement, Sydney Holt). While our side was saying that whales are important for people, all we could hear from the other side was the same old talk about a need to save the whales immediately from a variety of environmental threats and especially from hunting. (You have heard all these before, I am sure.)

At the end of the CITES Standing Committee, the leader of the Species Survival Network (SSN) took the floor to make a special appeal to CITES to, "take special care and show more consideration for the thousands of animals and plants which are not represented at CITES". Unfortunately, it was not possible for IWMC to get the floor at this point, as it was the very end of the meeting. But I would have said that CITES must take care of the several millions of people who have never heard - and will never hear - about CITES, but who will have their lives, their livelihoods, their traditions and cultures negatively impacted by culturally biased and scientifically unjustified CITES decisions. CITES decisions made for the wrong reasons - such as those based on politics and not the science which is supposed to be the basis of its decision making - can lead to the disappearance of cultures. Every time a culture is lost, an important part of humanity disappears. The extinction of a culture is forever, and is no less significant on this planet than the extinction of plant or animal species.

Conservation is about the sustainable interaction of Man and Nature. Both sides of the equation are equally important.

Sauver les peuples et leurs cultures

On me demande souvent quelle est la différence entre la philosophie d'IWMC et celle que proclament les défenseurs des droits des animaux et les extrémistes environnementaux. Somme toute, nous nous sommes étiquetés conservationnistes nous-mêmes mais, de toute évidence, nous ne nous trouvons pas sur la même ligne. La réponse tient au fait qu'IWMC se préoccupe des gens. Nous promouvons la conservation des animaux et des plantes pour le bien de l'humanité et de l'environnement dans son ensemble, alors que les extrémistes prétendent qu'il faut préserver les animaux et les plantes de leur utilisation par l'homme. Le seul moment où, semble-t-il, ils s'inquiètent des êtres humains, c'est pour les éloigner de leurs chères espèces charismatiques.

Nous avons constaté cela lors de deux récentes réunions importantes, la réunion annuelle de la Commission baleinière internationale, en juin à Madère, et la session du Comité permanent de la CITES, achevée en juillet à Genève.

Soyons clairs. Tant la Convention internationale pour la réglementation de la chasse à la baleine (CIRCB) que la Convention sur le commerce international des espèces de faune et de flore sauvages menacées d'extinction (CITES) ont été créées pour réguler l'utilisation humaine de ressources sauvages, pour le bien des populations, de leurs ressources et des milieux dont elles sont une partie intégrante, en fondant cette régulation sur les meilleures connaissances scientifiques possibles. Les membres fondateurs de ces conventions étaient convaincus que les ressources sauvages sont à la fois précieuses et vulnérables, et ils étaient persuadés que les peuples et les milieux dans lesquels ils vivent peuvent et doivent être conservés, grâce à des mesures honnêtes et reposant sur des informations solides.

Malheureusement, cette vision originelle louable est défiée depuis quelques décennies par des pressions égoïstes, culturelles et politiques, qui ne donnent pas la priorité à la terre dans son ensemble, et l'on tente maintenant d'en changer le but primaire, global et humain en retirant l'homme de l'équation de la Nature. Ceux qui soutiennent IWMC et d'autres utilisateurs respectueux des ressources oeuvrent au redressement de ces erreurs, et cherchent à le faire avant que ces conventions utiles ne s'effondrent. En bref, les missions de ces dernières ont été usurpées et dévoyées.

En juin, le président de la CBI, avec l'accord de la Commission, a demandé à six membres de la communauté des ONG de faire des présentations sur la question, trois étant favorables à l'utilisation durable (elles comprenaient des représentants des populations natives de Nouvelle-Zélande et de Russie) et trois appartenant au groupe des opposants à la chasse à la baleine (dont Greenpeace et Sydney Holt, le gourou du mouvement anti-chasse). Alors que ceux de notre bord disaient que les cétacés étaient importants pour des peuples, ce que nous avons pu entendre de l'autre bord ne fut que les vieilles rengaines sur la nécessité de les sauver sans plus attendre de toutes sortes de menaces environnementales, et surtout de la chasse. (Vous avez déjà entendu cela, j'en suis sûr.)

Au terme de la session du Comité permanent de la CITES, le représentant du Species Survival Network (SSN) a pris la parole pour lancer un appel à la CITES pour qu'elle "voue un soin particulier et accorde davantage d'intérêt aux milliers d'espèces animales et végétales qui ne figurent pas à la CITES". Malheureusement, IWMC n'a pas été en mesure de prendre la parole à ce stade, à la toute fin de la session. Mais j'aurais déclaré que la CITES doit prendre soin des millions de personnes qui n'ont jamais entendu parler de la CITES - et qui n'en entendront jamais parler - mais dont les vies, les moyens d'existence, les traditions et les cultures subissent l'effet négatif de décisions qui sont culturellement faussées et ne sont pas scientifiquement justifiées. Des décisions sont prises par la CITES pour de mauvaises raisons - telles celles qui sont fondées sur la politique et non sur la science, supposée être à la base du processus de prise de décision - ce qui peut entraîner la disparition de certaines cultures. Chaque fois qu'une culture est perdue, c'est une importante part de l'humanité qui disparaît. L'extinction d'une culture est définitive et n'est pas moins importante sur terre que l'extinction d'une espèce animale ou végétale.

La conservation concerne l'interaction durable entre l'Homme et la Nature. Les deux côtés de l'équation sont d'égale importance.



Salven a la Gente, y a su cultura también

A menudo me pregunto cuál es la diferencia entre la filosofía de IWMC y aquella de los extremistas por los derechos del animal y ambientalistas radicales. Al fin y al cabo somos todos conservacionistas, aunque es evidente que no estamos en el mismo bote. La respuesta es que a IWMC se interesa por la gente. Promovemos la conservación de los animales y las plantas para el beneficio de la gente y el medio ambiente a escala global, mientras que los extremistas reclaman que es importante proteger animales y plantas contra la utilización por el hombre. Aparentemente, el único momento en el que se preocupan por la gente es cuando la alejan de sus especies carismáticas más adoradas.

Esto último lo hemos constatado recientemente en dos reuniones importantes: la reunión anual de la Comisión Ballenera Internacional, realizada en junio en la Isla de Madeira, y la reunión del Comité Permanente de la CITES, realizada en julio en Ginebra.

Seamos claros. Tanto la Convención Internacional para la Regulación de la Caza de la Ballena (CIRCB) como la Convención sobre el Comercio Internacional de Especies Amenazadas de Fauna y Flora Silvestres (CITES) han sido creados para regular la utilización de los recursos silvestres a través de la aplicación del mejor conocimiento científico, para el beneficio de la gente, sus recursos y los ambientes de los cuales son parte integrante. Los fundadores de esas Convenciones eran concientes de que los recursos silvestres son tan valiosos como vulnerables, y convencidos de que la gente y su medio ambiente pueden y deben ser conservados a través de medidas honestas respaldadas por información contundente.

Lamentablemente, esta visión original tan loable ha sido desafiada durante décadas por posturas culturales y políticas egoístas que no priorizan al planeta en su conjunto, y que ahora intentan cambiar esa visión original, holística y humana sacando a la gente de la ecuación de la naturaleza. Quienes apoyan a IWMC y demás utilizadores respetuosos de los recursos están trabajando para corregir estos errores, antes que esas valiosas Convenciones se derrumben. En resumen, sus misiones han sido usurpadas y distorsionadas.

En junio, el presidente de la CBI, con el acuerdo de la Comisión, solicitó que se realizaran seis presentaciones especiales sobre el tema por parte de miembros de la comunidad de ONGs: tres a favor de la utilización sustentable (que incluían pueblos originarios de Nueva Zelanda y Rusia), y tres contra la caza de la ballena (que incluía a Greenpeace y al gurú del movimiento contra la caza de ballenas Sydney Holt). Mientras que los que están de nuestro lado sostenían que las ballenas son importantes para la gente, del otro lado se escuchó el viejo discurso acerca de que se deben salvar inmediatamente a las ballenas contra las amenazas ambientales y en particular de la caza (estoy seguro que ustedes han escuchado esto alguna vez).

Al finalizar la reunión del Comité Permanente de la CITES, el líder del Species Survival Network (SSN) tomó la palabra para hacer un llamado a la CITES para que “de un trato especial y muestre mayor

consideración por los miles de animales plantas que no están incluidas en la CITES". Lamentablemente, no fue posible para IWMC tomar la palabra en ese momento, ya que sucedió sobre el final de la reunión. De haber podido hubiera dicho que la CITES debería dar un trato especial a los varios millones de personas que nunca oyeron, ni jamás oirán, hablar de la CITES, pero que cuyas vidas, bienestar, tradiciones y culturas sufrirán el impacto negativo de las decisiones de la CITES culturalmente influenciadas y científicamente injustificadas. Las decisiones de la CITES fundamentadas en razones erróneas - como aquellas basadas en la política y no en la ciencia, como debería ser - pueden desencadenar la desaparición de las diversas culturas. Cada vez que se pierde una cultura, desaparece una parte importante de la humanidad. La extinción de una cultura es para siempre, y no es menos importante para este planeta que la extinción de una especie vegetal o animal.

La conservación es la interacción sostenible entre el hombre y la naturaleza. Ambos lados de la ecuación son igualmente importantes.



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Myths of the Cyber-Seals

The age of the Internet has seen increasingly frequent use of deceit and dishonesty by those protest organizations that seek to raise funds along with their “humane” profiles. A prime example is PETA, whose home site on the sealing issue contains outright false information about the animals being slaughtered, and about the manner of that slaughter. Seals on that site are depicted both verbally and visually as white coat pups, and the opinions and misconceptions of celebrities are presented, along with photographs of these people, including President Barack Obama, Paul McCartney and aging beauty Pamela Anderson. Celebrity endorsement of protest is apparently a powerful marketing tool.

Truth is not a part of this picture, which is the case in most website “exposés” that protest the use of animals. The protest industry has many components, all of which make maximal use of the facts of cyber-life; there is no editorial “parsing” of these sites for slanderous or libelous content, and no one edits out falsehoods that routinely cause harm to entire societies, as well as to environmental management programs and to ecosystems in the real world. Seals, fish, people and the entire marine ecosystem are harmed by these deliberately false depictions of sealing.

In the case of the PETA website, the claims made are that whitecoat pups are routinely clubbed and otherwise cruelly treated, when in fact, whitecoats have not been taken for years, and most of the harvest involves skilled shooting of independent animals in the head. Not that this matters to PETA - no seals should be killed, according to them, regardless of the abundance of these animals in the absence of a market in the EU and the US, and regardless of the impact that loss of a market for seal products has on the ecology of the western Atlantic.

Nations do not “sue” for libel, regardless of the damage that such false information may have caused. The 5+ million harp seals off eastern Canada are increasingly stressed by their own abundance, because they are hungry and over crowded, while the human fishermen in the same environment are increasingly impoverished by lack of a market for seal products and by the increasing scarcity of the fish upon which they depend.

Cyber-seals and cyber-sealing are created in malice and are meant to impress the ignorant thousands of people who enter “save the seals” on a search engine because they are pre-disposed to believe the anti-sealing messages that PETA and other such groups promise to deliver. Some of these people are children, who are victimized in this manner because they have no knowledge of other information sources which would present a more realistic perspective of seals and sealing in these times.

IWMC deplores all such efforts to prevent the sustainable, ethical use of animals by people who need to do so for their own livelihoods, and for the sake of maintenance of their environment. This has become a genuine human rights and environmental issue, crafted to portray both animals and humans in inaccurate and deliberately misleading ways. The intent of protest groups is to demonstrate their political clout as public policies on the environment are crafted in response to public insistence that animals not be utilized.

The only way that governments can combat this egregious situation is by revoking the charity status of groups that persist in this dishonest behavior. PETA.org is treated as a tax-exempt charity in the United States and in other countries, and if



those nations believe that their own citizens are being deceived through the Internet publication of such material, then they have the option to revoke that charity status. Such a move would finally make some difference in the degree to which deliberate falsehoods are presented and

perhaps, in the amount of funds that are continually made available to do damage to each nation's allies.

FAO Members work on implementing Sustainability Measures for Global Fisheries

Ninety-one nations have formed an agreement that is intended to eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the world's oceans, thus making true sustainability of fisheries an attainable goal in the near future. The key to success shall be a system through which foreign fishing vessels shall notify a port of the treaty-member nation in advance of their arrival, giving information on their itineraries and their catches, and when they have received permission to dock, they shall submit to a rigorous inspection to verify those catches, the gear used to procure them, and the areas in which the catches were made. All ships' records shall be a part of the port inspections, and if a vessel is denied entry to that port, such denial and the reasons for it shall be publicly disseminated to other member nations, so that illegal, unreported and unregulated catches shall find no markets, anywhere.

The treaty agreement among the cooperating nations has been drafted to be in compliance with the FAO constitution, and shall be reviewed by FAO members in the coming months, with formal adoption expected to be realized in November.

The new regulations are called "Port State Measures", and apply to the way each nation's ports shall treat and inspect foreign vessels. The only potential problem is that each member nation "can apply the measures to their own fishing fleets as well should they choose". (SAMUDRA news alert, September 2, 2009) The implication is that each nation might not require its own flagged vessels to undergo the same rigorous inspection that is required of foreign vessels. This may be a potential weakness in the treaty, and it is hoped that strict inspections shall apply to all vessels coming in to port to market their catches, so that IUU fishing shall finally come to an end.

IWMC applauds all those nations whose leaders have contributed to this proposal, and congratulates all those who enter into this agreement in transparency and with full intentions to make compliance with fisheries quotas and other scientific recommendations a part of their national position on marine resource management.

Are Seal Problems coming back to bite us?

In the United States of America, it is illegal (under federal law) to as much as annoy a seal or sea lion, much less try to shoo it away from one's own boat or dock facility. This is because the Marine Mammal Protection Act forbids people to negatively interact with any marine mammals, regardless of their abundance or even if they are presenting a threat to people as they swim, try to enter their boats, or walk on the beach. In other words, these are "not to be touched" for any reason. Americans, who see sea lions hogging the salmon as they try to return to their natal streams to spawn, are beginning to be very afraid that the MMPA in its present form is a big mistake.

In Ireland recently, the Sunday Independent newspaper noted that the public has begun to call for a cull of the animals, as a series of attacks on human swimmers has frightened many people, and left some with serious bite wounds. The August 16 piece noted that "Dozens of cases of people being nipped, clawed or, even more frighteningly, dragged under the water by seals have been reported this summer." Irish citizens are very alarmed and are sure that a human fatality will be likely if something isn't done right away. The area of the attacks is a traditional swimming hole where people have always enjoyed themselves without this danger. The Irish government made seals a totally protected species some time ago. Spokespersons for the Irish Seal Sanctuary claim that it is all the humans' fault because some people have been feeding the animals - other people say that the seals are coming up to fishing boats and snatching fish from the hooks of anglers, frightening families who are out on the water for a holiday.

The species in Irish waters is the gray seal -the same abundant animals that consume up to

500,000 tons of fish per year off the Scottish coast. ICES, the International Convention for the Exploration of the Sea, notes that the North Sea population has grown to about 200,000 - and that adult animals consume about two and a half tons of fish each, annually. ICES scientists have expressed doubts that the cod stocks can ever recover if the seal population continues unchecked. Scottish fishermen are gratified that ICES and the EU Parliament's fisheries committee have finally backed up fishermen's claims that seals are taking so many fish that the total removal by both seals and people, is now unsustainable.

In western Canada, a similar incident occurred when a five year old girl was suddenly grabbed on the arm by a harbor seal that leaped at her while she stood on the dock next to her father, as the man cleaned his day's catch of fish. She was dragged under, but was then released with severe bite wounds, bobbing to the surface because of her life jacket. It was speculated that perhaps the seal was unduly aggressive because fishermen had previously been throwing scraps to the animals. However, this child narrowly escaped death on that day, renewing concern about the growing number of seals in those waters, and seal-human conflicts over the fish resource.

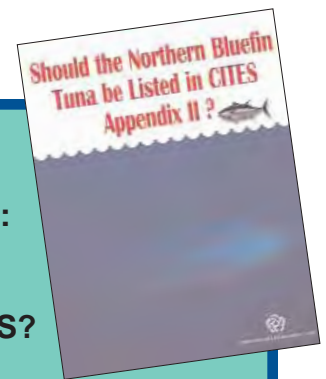
In the waters off eastern Canada, there are now some 5.6 million harp seals, and gray seal stocks are rapidly increasing as well. The proposed EU ban on the import of all seal products is increasingly seen as a huge environmental mistake by fishermen and marine resource managers, while anti-sealing NGO websites continue to call for a halt to the killing of any seals - except by Inuit,



which is not actually going to help those people either, since they will not be able to find markets for their seal products in either the US or the EU.

The time has come for the world to practically and honestly face this problem, furthered by ignorance on the part of the general public, and by clever use of anti-sealing websites everywhere in the US and the EU. Seals are a part of the envi-

ronment; they are in need of control, and humans have the knowledge with which to effect control of seals without endangering them. In a practical management system, seals, fish, and people would all be able to nourish themselves and to continue to use the resources of the sea to their advantage, without undue harm to each other. May that day come soon!!



Noteworthy

Available on IWMC website www.iwmc.org is the following documentation:
Should the Northern Bluefin Tuna be listed in Cites Appendix II?
El Atún rojo del Atlántico ¿debería incluirse en el Apéndice II?
Le thon rouge de l'Atlantique devrait-il être inscrit à l'Annexe II de la CITES?

A new book by Dr. Milton M.R. Freeman entitled "Inuit Polar Bears and Sustainable Use" is available from the Canadian Circumpolar Institute (CCI) Book Distribution Center by fax at (780) 492-1153 or on the following website: <http://ualberta.ca>

A book by Randall Eaton that defines what hunting and fishing do to develop character, values and virtues in youth and profoundly connect them with nature, entitled "From Boys to Men of Heart: Hunting as Rite of Passage" is available at www.randalleaton.com;

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