

Sustainable eNews

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Promoting Sustainable Use

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IWMC

World Conservation Trust

Evaluating "Endangered Species" Lists The Tale of the Turtle and Other Creatures

Editorial by Jaques Berney

Because the world is always changing, no information regarding the status of any creature on the planet should be engraved in stone while it still lives and reproduces. It is only proper that so-called "Red" and "Endangered Species" lists be continually reviewed and updated, so that if a species should become threatened or even in actual danger of extinction, the information on its changed status would



be published and steps taken to evaluate its life chances under all circumstances. Sometimes, both monitored and unregulated trade in species thought to be at risk can be temporarily diminished or even halted, through increased surveillance and law enforcement efforts. Sometimes, environmental threats can be discovered and mitigated in order that certain species shall benefit and thrive once more. Everyone in the professional wildlife management community agrees that species welfare in the environment must be evaluated through scientific means, so that neither willful neglect nor ignorance shall adversely affect species at risk.

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However, in a growing number of cases, species may be inappropriately retained on “endangered” lists, for other than reasons of biological reality. This has been seen with some whale species, although scientific investigation of their numbers, fertility rates, and general health has shown that these animals are not in any danger of extinction from any cause, yet they remain on the Appendix I of CITES. The species remain “paper endangered” in order that political objectives shall be met. Those objectives appear to be the political security of those government administrations whose leaders fear slanderous attacks on them for “endangering” whales through decisions to remove them from an “endangered” status at CITES and the IWC.

Another case is that of a species of sea turtle. The Leatherback turtle has been on the US Endangered Species List for years. However, it may no longer be truly endangered, as its numbers appear to be increasing dramatically in the Atlantic as far north as Nova Scotia, where it feeds heavily on jellyfish from May through October, and then heads back down into the warm Caribbean to lay its eggs.

Fred Bonner, outdoor writer for the Washington Daily News, recently reported that Canadian scientists have been counting, tagging and releasing Leatherback turtles off Nova Scotia in an effort to establish a reasonable population profile and to record the northern part of their life histories. Bonner’s piece, “Sea Turtles Might Not be Endangered” appeared on January 6, 2004, and cites a Dalhousie University report that increasing hundreds of the huge “most endangered” of the sea turtles are now regularly appearing off the coast. Furthermore, it is commercial fishermen who are reporting their growing abundance, and who are contributing to the turtle log effort.

Bonner, however, doubts that Leatherbacks will ever be removed from the US Endangered Species List. His opinion is that the nature of modern bureaucracy is that such designations “need” to be maintained in order that civil service jobs not be lost, and that “environmentalists” shall “not be upset”. Wouldn’t it be reasonable to expect, on the contrary, that environmentalists would be delighted to hear that an endangered species had truly recovered? Yet, this is apparently not the case.

We applaud all those scientists whose work involves honest discovery of the biological status of species, whether they be “endangered” or not. Their work is vital to an understanding of the natural world, and of those environments that are so heavily impacted by people. We recognize the political implications of listing and delisting species of wildlife and plants, and feel that there is an encouraging trend in this area. The Gray whale was properly delisted. Minke whales should be recognized as extremely successful in their environments in all the worlds oceans, and they should be removed from the Appendix I of CITES.

The US government is currently conducting a study of Pacific Humpbacks in order to determine if they have recovered from historical commercial whaling. Bowheads have been found to be increasing in the Arctic, in spite of the fact that they are being hunted regularly in a sustainable way by Inuit peoples.



Despite the political goals of certain “environmentalist” NGOs and the threats they pose to governmental officials, science is slowly being recognized as the only valid measure of success for individual species and their ecosystems. IWMC hopes that in the near future, “Endangered Species” lists shall more closely approximate biological reality. □

The Human Impacts of Misguided Environmentalism

Editorial by Eugene Lapointe

Some of us have made the mistake of thinking that radical environmental organizations are supported mainly by private citizens, whose good intentions are fueled by the marketing campaigns that have touched their hearts. While millions of good people have supported campaigns to “save the earth” and to “save” various charismatic species such as elephants, whales, koalas, primates, seals, even sharks, much of the support for these professional fund raising organizations has actually been donated by large corporations, and endowments of the very wealthy. Sometimes, this has perhaps been done for the dual purposes of tax deductions and attractive public relations. The unpleasant truth is that very often, “earth friendly” campaigns that have been organized to “save” environments in Africa and India have been responsible for vast human misery, sickness, and death.

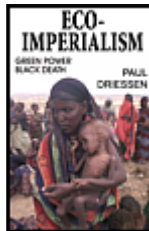
IWMC recommends that everyone read a new book by Paul Driessen, who has analyzed this problem in [Eco-Imperialism: Green Power . Black Death](#). His message is that anti-use and protectionist campaigns of organizations such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, The Pesticide Action Network, Sierra Club, WHO, the US Agency for International Development, and large foundations such as Ford, Pew, MacArthur and Schumann, all regularly contribute to policies and projects that deny indigenous people electricity networks, power plants, genetically engineered crops that would resist insect and fungal pests, water treatment and distribution projects, and sewage treatment. Millions of people, according to Driessen, die needlessly every year because they suffer from the lack of modern power and communication

infrastructure that we in the developed nations now take for granted. Millions suffer from malaria because they are denied insecticides, even to spray inside their homes.

The radical left promotes an elitist philosophy that there are too many people on this earth, and that modern infrastructure and health care development would help more of them live longer, to mature and to breed. Therefore, such “environmentalists” do all they can to keep global powers from the humanitarian tasks of ensuring decent living conditions for millions.

Dr. Patrick Moore, a founder of Greenpeace, left that organization because of his overwhelming disgust over the way that and other such organizations have promoted anti-human “pro-earth” policies that deny poor people electricity, refrigeration, hospitals, and job opportunities. When people are so desperately poor that most of their children die in unsanitary surroundings, they are not concerned with their wildlife habitats and with laws protecting the animals that provide tourists with visual pleasure. They do all they can in order to live, day to day.

We agree with Dr. Patrick Moore, who has said “The environmental movement has lost its objectivity, morality, and humanity.” This is the meaning of Eco-Imperialism, a reality that has descended on much of the third world and shows no signs of relenting. We sincerely hope that Paul Driessen’s book shall raise the consciousness of the world to this reality, and that it shall have the best possible impact for those millions of people who suffer because of the inhumane policies of the powerful among us. □



Global Good News



Fisheries: In December, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization took steps to eliminate illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. The FAO resolution called for immediate proper implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing, effective monitoring and enforcement of each nations' fishing vessels, development of national plans of action on ethical fishing, and in general, encouraged cooperation among nations and regional management bodies as they all strive to eliminate unsustainable practices. IWMC applauds Japan for taking leadership responsibility in these matters.

The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) has taken steps to limit the increase in tuna farming operations in the Mediterranean, and to make sure that trading of tunas shall be limited to "duly registered" tuna farm operations, according to a news item in Isaribi, No 39. Only tuna from "positive list" farms shall be traded within the system, eliminating rogue tuna operations from the international market.



Whaling: There is good news from the Arctic. Bowhead in the western (American) Arctic as well as those stocks in the Canadian Arctic, are stable and increasing, and both Inupiat and Nunavut peoples can be expected to enjoy harvests this coming season. Canadian stocks of Bowhead are said to be holding their own, perhaps with slight increases, and an animal may be taken in

2004, according to Canadian and Inuit co-management authorities. In further news, an additional Alaskan village may soon share in the Bowhead harvest, according to Inupiat sources. Village authorities are deciding whether or not to share their IWC quota with their neighbors in Point Lay, who are anxiously awaiting this decision. Point Lay never had an IWC quota of its own, and they are looking forward to renewing their whaling tradition.



Law Enforcement Notes: State and federal authorities have uncovered two illegal bear hunting operations in Alaska, and five Alaskans have been charged with poaching black bears, primarily for their gallbladders, which were to be sold to recipients in Korea. So far, parts of 14 illegally killed animals were found in freezers in Anchorage, and the criminals have been charged with conspiracy to illegally export wildlife. The men could serve maximum penalties of five years in prison, three years of probation, and fines of \$250,000 each. State and Federal authorities are currently investigating additional cases in which as many as 50 black bears may have been illegally killed for the international gallbladder trade, which is extremely lucrative in parts of Asia, and in certain cities in North America. These cases were reported in the Anchorage Daily News. IWMC applauds the efforts of game wardens everywhere. Wildlife Law Enforcement is an extremely risky profession, and its continued funding and success in investigations is vital to global conservation. □

TUNA
2004
Bangkok

3-5 June
2004

Noteworthy

3-5 June 2004

9th Infish World Tuna Trade Conference and Exhibition Bangkok, Thailand

The four topics of the conference will be:

- Global overview
- Regional tuna industry situation and outlook
- Markets and marketing
- Technology, products and quality

A Novel trend in Animal Rights Fund-Raising

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) is known for raising funds on campaigns of bogus worth ... “save the seals”...”save the whales from hunters”...and their infamous Mexican adventure, in which they were instrumental in preventing the socially and economically beneficial and environmentally benign development of a salt producing plant down in the Baja. These former campaigns raised both millions of dollars and undeserved credibility with the public and with politicians. The public relations success of those former efforts undoubtedly contributed to their new coup: The US Congress has just recently awarded IFAW a \$685,000 grant to implement a project expected to prevent Atlantic Right whales from becoming entangled in lobster gear off the eastern US. The proposal was written by Congressman William Delahunt, and endorsed by Senator Ted Kennedy, the Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association, and the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries.



The IFAW web site has also announced that more funds are needed to complete the project, which involves supplying lobstermen with a new kind of rope that sinks, rather than floats, thus eliminating the hazard to diving whales that the older kind of gear has always presented. The new rope lines between pots on the ocean floor shall now be out of the way of endangered Right whales, which are decreasing at an alarming rate because they keep getting entangled and drowned. Receipt of this federal funding is expected to encourage further funding by the public, for this worthwhile project.

IWMC World Conservation Trust applauds any efficient application of new technology that shall reduce whale entanglement. This project, taken by itself as an example of “the right thing to do” is laudable. We encourage and expect that follow-up studies of Right whale success in the western Atlantic coastal environment shall be done to determine if their mortality is indeed reduced through this effort. We hope that it shall be a successful project.

Our questions and concerns are the following: The allocation from the Congress must be as carefully audited as is any other such allotment, for proper application to the problem at hand, with a public and detailed disclosure of funds spent from the grant, by an outside auditor. This is a reasonable expectation, and perhaps such fiscal follow-up is a routine part of any such Congressional grant to a non-governmental organization. The actual biological results should be compiled over an appropriate period of time in order to determine actual effectiveness.

In our opinion, the social and cultural impacts of this grant will raise IFAW's credibility with the public. While this partnership with the Congress, the Lobstermen's Association and the State Division of Marine Fisheries may be good for Right whales now, it may set a precedent of unquestioned faith in the worth of future IFAW campaigns. The history of IFAW financial and public relations successes has been a series of efforts to impede wildlife management, obstruct sustainable use of renewable resources, and damage the ability of people to sustain and improve their economies and their lives. The IFAW anti-seal hunt campaign in the 1980s has been a disaster of tragic proportion for Inuit, Quebecois, and Newfoundlanders, and has resulted in a seal population increase that is threatening the entire Western Atlantic

ecosystem. Those were among the main reasons why IFAW's application for membership in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) was twice rejected.

IWMC World Conservation Trust urges all who value professional wildlife management and conservation to remember that each NGO campaign must be evaluated on both its biological and its cultural merits, and that results "in the real world" are the most significant. The long-term impacts of anti-use campaigns have been found to be harmful. Recently, research on whale-fisheries interactions has disclosed an enormous impact of growing cetacean populations on ocean ecosystems.



We are not suggesting that the present Right whale project shall have any negative ecological impact. We do insist that protest campaigns against sustainable use are violations of the public's trust, because they are built on misinformation, and do not deserve either public support or scientific community respect, as they explicitly reject the application of science in sustainable use issues. We hope that this singular IFAW "good deed" does not feed the success of future anti-use campaigns. □

Seal Time, 2004

By the time you read this, the harp seals of the North Atlantic shall be delivering their pups once again, as the first week or so of March is the time when the pack ice becomes a seal nursery. Both in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and off the Front east of Newfoundland, harp seals by the millions will be congregating for the annual mass birthing. At last count, there were over 5 million of these animals in Canadian waters.

When the EU first banned the import of the products of seals under the age of one year, back in 1983, there were 1.8 million seals. Lack of a large-scale harvest for pelts has now resulted in this unprecedented ecological disaster. Canada's fishermen have had a hard time finding markets for any seal products...although pelt prices have improved over the last several years, despite the ban, with extension of sales into the Orient.

Now, there is a product that could increase the harvest to levels that managers would feel are sufficient to bring the herd back down to a level more compatible with the ecosystem.

The product is seal oil capsules, to be taken for relief of arthritis, and for improvement in arterial blood flow and general cardiac health. Seal oil is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, and is now known as a "nutraceutical", which means a natural product that is marketed for human consumption.

Although there are efforts to convince the US Congress to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act so that this product could be legally imported, the chances of this happening, especially in an election year, are not good. Yes, the product shows promise of

being a medically approved substance. Yes, the seal herd is so massively huge that the sale of several thousand tons of seal oil would have a beneficial environmental impact.

The "environmentalist" and animal rights lobby is working hard to make sure that American legislators are aware of the threat they pose to their jobs, should they ignore the hype and decide to honor Canada's request to open America to products of this over-abundant marine mammal. Seals have been hunted humanely, with adequate law enforcement and scientific oversight. They are so numerous that they are their own worst enemies. They could provide people in America and Europe with a valuable fur and leather product, as well as with the demonstrated health benefits of seal oil's omega 3's.

IWMC supports Canadian efforts to persuade the American public and the US Congress that harp seals are an abundant, safe, very useful, and professionally managed resource. A renewed harvest is the only way to bring these animals back into balance with the fish, the krill, the seabirds, whales, and people in the western Atlantic. Good luck, Canada. □

IWMC Forum at IWMC.org

We invite you to visit the IWMC Forum Section online for:

How animal rights' pressure cancelled Ontario's spring black bear hunt

By Jim Lawrence
Canadian Outdoor Heritage Alliance

IWMC Forum

www.iwmc.org/sustain/IWMC-Forum/JamesLawrence

In 1999 the Ontario Conservative government bowed to pressure from a small group of animal rights activists and a wealthy Ontario industrialist, and without any consultation with outdoors experts and overriding the opinion of government biologists, cancelled Ontario's annual spring black bear hunt. □

National Geographic Inaccuracies

The March 2004 issue of National Geographic Magazine features a whitecoat harp seal on the cover, and includes a superficial article entitled "Harp Seals The Hunt for Balance". A number of inaccuracies and a misleading impression that whitecoats are the main target of the hunt, result in an irresponsible piece of journalism. Worse, at the end of the article is an invitation to readers to visit the website, in order to participate in a readers' forum, and an opportunity to "vote" for or against the hunt in a "poll" on the web page. When the website was accessed, the "poll" functioned, but the "forum" did not. It was possible to e-mail the magazine regarding this article.



IWMC suggests that as many people as possible should go to nationalgeographic.com/magazine/0403, and give them your opinion. The web page has an opportunity to read excerpts and view photographs from the article.

IWMC Forum at IWMC.org

We invite you to visit the IWMC Forum Section online for:

Closing the Doors on the National Wildlife Refuge System

by Susan Campbell Reneau
bluemountain@montana.com

IWMC Forum

www.iwmc.org/sustain/IWMC-Forum/040326-Reneau.htm

Behind closed doors since 1995 and starting again in earnest in early 2003, the U.S. Dept. of Interior entered into negotiations to transfer a full range of activities and professional management duties at Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska and the National Bison Range Complex (NBR) in Montana with two Indian tribal governments. □

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IWMC World Conservation Trust

A global voice for sustainable use of the earth's resources and the preservation of the cultures and traditions that depend upon them.