



**IWMC**  
World Conservation Trust

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

3, Passage Montriond  
1006 Lausanne, Switzerland  
Tel/Fax: +41(21) 616-5000

1470 Heather Ridge Blvd, Unit 104  
Dunedin, Florida 34698, USA  
Tel/Fax: +1(727) 734-4949

Email: [iwmc@iwmc.org](mailto:iwmc@iwmc.org)  
[www.iwmc.org](http://www.iwmc.org)

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### **CITES Decision Fails Whales In Long-Term**

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**Santiago, Chile 8 November 2002:** The decision today by the CITES COP12 meeting not to transfer two abundant whale species from Appendix I to Appendix II undermines the mission of the Convention and does little for the long-term protection of whales, warned Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC World Conservation Trust.

Japanese proposals to remove restrictions on minke and Bryde's whales were defeated by simple majority votes.

Mr. Lapointe, a former Secretary-General of CITES, said: "If CITES becomes a one-way mechanism for systematically restricting and prohibiting trade in wildlife, it will begin to lose its effectiveness. There needs to be a return ticket for those species that have recovered, allowing them to be traded again in a carefully controlled manner. Otherwise, nations will instinctively resist CITES measures in the future and many species that could have been protected will face serious problems."

IWMC (International Wildlife Management Consortium) World Conservation Trust is attending CITES COP12 as an official observer organization and is actively participating in many of the discussions. It has several leading academics and conservation experts from different continents among its delegation.

Mr. Lapointe added: "The recovery of whale stocks is a success story but if we continue to prevent all commercial whaling without good reason, we risk going back to square one and losing the entire international framework for managing whales. After all, what is the point of a framework that only stops activity?"

CITES passed a resolution over twenty years ago agreeing not to issue trading permits for species protected by the International Whaling Commission (IWC). This resolution predates the IWC moratorium and represents a loophole in international regulation because it allows a small group of around twenty countries in the IWC to effectively block CITES from assessing for itself the status of whale populations and making decisions on the trade of whale products.

In spite of extensive scientific data demonstrating the abundance of species like the minke and Bryde's whale, the IWC maintains its moratorium. Countries that have delayed the IWC's monitoring and implementation system for whale harvesting for eight years, known as the Revised Management Scheme (RMS), have cited its absence as a reason for opposing Japan's resolution today.

IWMC World Conservation Trust is an international organization that promotes sustainable use as a conservation mechanism, protection of the sovereign rights of independent nations and respect for diverse cultures and traditions. It is a non-profit body supported by donations.

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IWMC World Conservation Trust was established in 1994 and has its Headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, and offices in, Argentina, Canada, China, Japan and the United States. Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC World Conservation Trust was Secretary General of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) from 1982 to 1990.

For more information and interviews, contact Eugene Lapointe

Tel/Fax: +1(727) 734-4949 USA

Tel/Fax: +41 (21) 616-5000 Switzerland

Email: [iwmc@iwmc.org](mailto:iwmc@iwmc.org)

[www.iwmc.org](http://www.iwmc.org)