



## Joint Statement of the Animal Welfare Institute, OceanCare and Pro Wildlife

The undersigned nongovernmental organizations acknowledge the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW), which established the International Whaling Commission (IWC) as the competent international organization for the conservation and management of whales. We especially congratulate the IWC on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the entry into force of *Schedule paragraph 10(e)*, which instituted the global moratorium on commercial whaling.

We believe that both the implementation of the ICRW and *Schedule paragraph 10(e)* helped conserve many whale populations, and that the moratorium in particular has prevented the killing of tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of whales. Those former whaling countries that opted to abide by international law and accept the moratorium are to be congratulated.

Three decades after its implementation, the moratorium remains one of the most effective conservation measures adopted by any multilateral environmental agreement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It continues to play a vital role in protecting great whales. However, we note with concern that the number of whales killed for commercial purposes—under objection (Norway) or reservation (Iceland) to the moratorium or via special permit whaling programs (Japan)—has risen in the past decade. More than 40,000 whales have been killed by these countries since 1986. We note with alarm that the last IWC resolution on commercial whaling was passed in 2001 and that this silence has been interpreted by whaling nations as the IWC's acceptance of their whaling.

Further, international trade in whale products has escalated. Since 2008, more than 7,500 metric tons of whale meat has been shipped by Iceland and Norway to Japan under reservations to the listing of great whales on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). We point to the fact that *CITES Resolution Conf. 11.4 (Rev. CoP12)* defines the relationship between CITES and the IWC, and that at the September/October Conference of the Parties to CITES in Johannesburg, South Africa, the CITES parties signaled their support of the IWC's moratorium by rejecting an attempt to rescind *Decision 14.81: Great Whales*.

We are adamant in our belief that, while legitimate scientific study of whales must be conducted in order to better understand whales and their role in our ocean ecosystem, such research does not require the hunting or killing of whales. We note the September passage by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Congress of *Motion 058: Concerns about whaling under special permits*, which calls on Japan to cease issuing special permits for whaling in the Antarctic and western North Pacific oceans and for all States to refrain from issuing any further permits under Article VIII of the ICRW.

We are conscious of the important social and economic contributions that responsible, sustainable whale and dolphin watching industries can make to island and coastal states, particularly for developing economies. We also note that, in addition to the importance of live whales for the eco-tourism industry, whales are increasingly acknowledged as serving an important role in the ecosystem, including in combating climate change. They amplify productivity and benefit fisheries, thus contributing to efforts to enhance food security, as noted in the draft resolution presented by Chile (*IWC66/15: Cetaceans and ecosystem services*).

Contaminants have significant negative health effects for cetaceans and the consumers of cetacean products. Cetacean diseases are on the rise, including those capable of spreading from animals to humans (zoonoses)—posing additional risks to communities that consume cetacean products.

Whales and dolphins, as well as their environment, face an increasing number of threats, primarily anthropogenic. The cumulative effects from climate change, bycatch, entanglements, ship strikes, hunting and pollution (from noise, chemical sources, and marine debris) are severe, and underscore the need for global cooperation to ensure cetaceans' survival.

Indeed, given the precarious situation that our oceans are facing now compared to 30 years ago when the moratorium was instituted, and the vital role that whales play in maintaining healthy marine ecosystems, we believe that the IWC moratorium must remain intact—now more than ever.