

Resolution 2005-3

RESOLUTION ON THE WESTERN NORTH PACIFIC GRAY WHALE

RECALLING Resolution 2001-3, which *inter alia* called on range states and others to actively pursue all practicable actions to eliminate anthropogenic mortality and minimize anthropogenic disturbance to the western gray whale population; and Resolution 2004-1, which *inter alia* called upon range states to develop or expand national monitoring and research programmes on western gray whales;

WELCOMING the report of the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) set up by IUCN, to which the IWC Secretariat contributed, the work carried out under the Russian national program, and the work carried out under the Russia-US program;

WELCOMING the cooperation between Sakhalin Energy Investment Corporation Ltd (SEIC) and IUCN to address the potential impacts of their oil and gas activities on western gray whales;

WELCOMING the desire to re-route the planned platform-to-shore oil and gas pipelines around instead of through the gray whale feeding ground off Piltun Lagoon;

REMAINING CONCERNED that noise generated during the pipeline, platform emplacement and onshore construction in the coming season will impinge upon the Piltun feeding ground;

ENCOURAGED by the finding of the Review Panel that the population of Western Gray Whales appears to have increased over the period 1994-2003, even using low abundance estimates; but

CONCERNED that the Review Panel found that the population includes less than 30 reproductive females, and that one population model using the lowest abundance level of all presented found that a hypothesised additional death of just one female whale per year could drive the population to extinction before 2050;

NOTING WITH CONCERN that, despite the efforts by the Japanese authorities and peoples concerned not to disturb the animal and release it from entanglement, a female gray whale was drowned in a set net in Tokyo Bay on May 10, 2005;

NOW THEREFORE THE COMMISSION:

CALLS upon range states to take all practical measures to avoid all anthropogenic mortality, and in particular to develop and implement strategies to prevent accidental deaths;

CALLS UPON all organisations concerned with oil and gas projects to take all practicable measures to ensure that received noise levels in the Piltun feeding ground are reduced to a minimum and are in accordance with any future recommendations of the IWC Scientific Committee;

SUPPORTS the ISRP proposal for a comprehensive strategy to save western gray whales and their habitat;

FURTHER CALLS UPON all organisations, range states, authorities, scientists and other stakeholders concerned with developments in the waters around Sakhalin Island to support the efforts to develop a framework for collaborative research, monitoring and mitigation efforts between oil companies, independent experts, national programmes and authorities and the IWC and other intergovernmental organisations, and that they share all relevant data collected;

REQUESTS the Secretariat continue to offer its services and scientific expertise to appropriate collaborative efforts to develop a comprehensive strategy and ensure continued effective monitoring of the population.