

4.023 Conservation and recovery of the Mediterranean Monk Seal *Monachus monachus*

CONSIDERING that the Mediterranean Monk Seal is a species of high biological as well as cultural and symbolic value, the recovery of which is directly related to the condition of coastal and marine ecosystems;

NOTING that the species numbers less than a thousand worldwide and is on the list of the ten most endangered mammal species in the world;

BEARING IN MIND that there are now two geographically separated concentrations, in the eastern Atlantic (Saharan coast and Madeira) and the Aegean Sea (Cyprus, Greece and Turkey);

AWARE that indicators of the presence of the species on the south-eastern Mediterranean coast are increasingly more sporadic and alarming, and suggest that the population may be in a state of actual or imminent collapse;

REMEMBERING that half a century ago the Monk Seal was present less than 200 km from Barcelona where the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress is being held;

GRATIFIED by the significant efforts made in the last few years on the coasts and islands of the eastern Atlantic and the Aegean Sea, some of which have been extremely successful, such as those in the Islas Desertas, the Saharan coast and at some Greek and Turkish colonies;

TAKING into consideration:

- (a) our greater knowledge and experience of management, thanks to the efforts of government agencies, academic institutions and NGOs;
- (b) the notable efforts of various Mediterranean countries in establishing marine parks and reserves, which have enabled sub-aquatic ecosystems to recover at a significant rate; and
- (c) the existence of a Pinniped Specialist Group within the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC);

RECOGNIZING that, in spite of these positive factors, the species is still in a critical situation, and that both populations, Aegean and Atlantic, are becoming increasingly isolated, which adds a genetic risk to the fragility of the species and its demographic dispersal; and

REITERATING the contents of the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* and of all international and regional documents that categorize this species as having maximum priority for recovery;

The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008:

1. CONGRATULATES the authorities, NGOs and researchers of Greece, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and the European Union that have worked to help this species in recent years;
2. PROPOSES that all IUCN's members from Mediterranean countries maintain and increase their efforts to aid the recovery of the species;
3. REITERATES the importance of extending the network of Marine Protected Areas and improving their management, in accordance with the Barcelona Convention's *Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Biodiversity in the Mediterranean*, as one of the guarantees to ensure the species' recovery; and
4. ASKS the States of the western Mediterranean, in collaboration with other countries harbouring populations in better condition, to draw up and apply a regional strategy to enable existing or recently extinct populations to recover, as a key initiative so that, in future, the genetic flow between the Atlantic and Aegean populations can be re-established;

In addition, the World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008, provides the following guidance concerning implementation of the *IUCN Programme 2009-2012*:

5. REQUESTS the Director General to:

- (a) stimulate and facilitate collaborative Monk Seal conservation projects among IUCN's Mediterranean members with the assistance of the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation and of the SSC Pinniped Specialist Group; and
- (b) communicate this decision to all entities named in this Resolution.

State and agency members of the United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.