



CIC – International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation



56th General Assembly
April 29th – May 2nd 2009, Paris, France
“Hunting: a Passion for the Future”

Sustainable management of seal populations

RECOMMENDATION

CICGA56.REC02

NOTING that the total seal population in the North Atlantic and Arctic oceans, including the Baltic Sea, is estimated at nearly 10 million animals, and the number has increased substantially over the last decades, whereby harp seal is the most numerous species with close to 8 million animals;

FURTHER NOTING that seals consume annually some 9 million tons of fish, and by comparison the consumption of wild-caught and farmed fish by EU citizens amounts to 10 million tons, and have a great ecological impact on fish populations;

REGRETTING that the EU bodies will decide on a ban on import and trade of seal products and that such an action will substantially and negatively impact the management of these animal populations;

RECOGNIZING that independent scientific monitoring has concluded that seal hunting methods can satisfy the stringent animal welfare requirements, and this is recognized also by the European Food Safety Agency;

FEARING that if wild species are not managed on the basis of scientific knowledge, but on emotional or political arguments, this could negatively impact biodiversity as well as human welfare:

the 56th CIC General Assembly in Paris from 29 April to 2 May

EMPHASIZES that seals should be managed according to the same principles that apply to the management of other species, being laid down in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and more specifically in the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines.

The ban, which the EU has now contemplated, is in violation of these principles and guidelines, and if implemented, will bring the EU into contradiction with the CBD.

EXPRESSES its deepest concern, because such a decision by EU bodies affecting the sustainable use, hunting, culling and management of game populations as well as the livelihood of rural communities, is made with no basis in biological, ecological or animal welfare facts.

CALLS upon all individuals, organizations and governments committed to conservation, wise and sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as human welfare, to support the management of seals as a natural resource and consider the wider implications for sustainable use if the trade in seal products is banned.