

2.80 The ecospace of Beringia and the Earth's migratory species

RECALLING with satisfaction that Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush announced their intent to establish an International Park across the Bering Strait;

AWARE that Beringia is one of the Earth's keystone biodiversity regions, with birds migrating between Beringia and South America, Oceania, South East Asia, Europe and Africa, and with marine mammals, such as Grey Whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*), migrating between Baja California in Mexico and Beringia, and with fish, such as salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.) migrating between the waters of Japan and Korea to spawn in Beringia;

KNOWING that the Bering land bridge was the earliest pathway for humans moving between Asia and North America, and is still the home of the Inuit and place of sacred lands and prehistoric and archaeological cultural sites;

RECONFIRMING prior IUCN decisions regarding the importance of establishing a protected area regime for Beringia, as reflected in Recommendations 1.108 *Conservation of the Bering Sea Ecosystem* and 1.109 *Beringian Heritage International Park* adopted by the 1st Session of the World Conservation Congress (Montreal, 1996) and Recommendations 17.57 *Bering Land Bridge World Heritage Site, USSR and USA* adopted by the 17th Session of the IUCN General Assembly (San Jose, 1988) and 18.45 *Beringia* adopted by the 18th Session of the General Assembly (Perth, 1990);

APPRECIATIVE of the contributions of the Commission on Environmental Law (CEL), and in particular the tireless work of the late Professor Oleg Stepanovich Kolbasov, Vice Chair of CEL, in his work to support the establishment of the Beringian International Park;

UNDERSTANDING that there is support for the establishment of an international park agreement and an interest in cultivating ecotourism in the region, consistent with natural and cultural values; and

RECOGNIZING the principle of national sovereignty and that each country will manage its designated sites in accordance with its own applicable laws and regulations;

The World Conservation Congress at its 2nd Session in Amman, Jordan, 4–11 October 2000:

1. URGES the Russian Federation and the United States of America to continue to advance their stewardship of the world's biodiversity resources in the lands, air and water of Beringia;
2. REQUESTS the Commission on Environmental Law to continue its studies and consultations with interested parties on the legal and institutional framework for the cultural and biodiversity resources of Beringia;
3. URGES all IUCN members to support efforts to conserve the habitats for species of migratory birds and mammals that are found in Beringia during part of the year, and throughout their range beyond Beringia.

This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegation of the United States made a formal Statement for the Record, supporting the Recommendation as adopted but noting that, “the US cannot support or advocate a ‘joint management’ system, which lacks due regard for the principles of national sovereignty and the applicable laws of Russia and the United States. The protected lands in either country will be subject only to the laws and regulations of their governments and will not be subject to any international management or regulation”. The Statement is reproduced in full in the Congress Proceedings.