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DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD

COUNCIL OF NATURE CONSERVATION MINISTERS

NINTH MEETING

PERTH 10 JULY 1980

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COUNCIL OF NATURE CONSERVATION MINISTERS

NINTH MEETING

PERTH 10 JULY 1980

MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS PRESENT

Western Australia:

Hon. G.E. Masters,
Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife,
Conservation and the Environment.
(Chairman).

Mr B.K. Bowen.
Mr C.F. Jenkins.
Dr F.G. Smith.

Commonwealth:

Hon. D.S. Thomson,
Minister for Science and the Environment.

Mr T. Richmond.
Mr K.E. Thompson.

Australian Capital Territory:

Dr B.H. Pratt, representing
Hon. R.J. Ellicott,
Minister for the Capital Territory.

Northern Territory:

Hon. P.A. Everingham,
Chief Minister and Attorney-General.

Dr G.A. Letts.
Mr M.A. Elliott.

Queensland:

Hon. I.J. Gibbs,
Minister for Culture, National Parks
and Recreation.

Dr G.W. Saunders.

New South Wales:

Hon. E.L. Bedford,
Minister for Planning and Environment.

Mr D.A. Johnstone.
Mr J. Giles.

Victoria:

Mr J.D. Brookes, representing
Hon. W.V. Houghton,
Minister for Conservation.

Mr J.C. Wharton.
Mr D.S. Saunders.

Tasmania:

Mr G. Middleton, representing
Hon. A.B. Lohrey,
Minister for National Parks and
Wildlife, Lands and the Environment.

South Australia:

Hon. D.C. Wotton,
Minister of Environment and
Minister of Planning.

Dr P.W. Ellyard.
Mr N.C. Gare.
Dr S. Barker.

Secretariat:

Mr P. Reece,
Secretary to Council.

Mr D. McAllister.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and apologies.
2. Adoption of agenda.
3. Summary record of eighth meeting of Council.
4. Marine parks and reserves.
5. International matters.
6. State representation on Australian delegations.
7. World Wildlife Fund.
8. World Conservation Strategy.
9. Reports from Working Groups.
 - (a) Kangaroo Management.
 - (b) Youth for Conservation Program.
 - (c) Law Enforcement.
 - (d) Remote Sensing.
 - (e) Selection and Classification of Protected Areas.
 - (f) Sub-professional Training.
 - (g) Endangered Fauna.
 - (h) Endangered Flora.
 - (i) Technical Conference Program.
10. Proposed working group on endangered vertebrates.
11. Interstate trade in fauna.
12. Protection of marine mammals.
13. Annual statement of research projects.
14. Export of family pets.
15. Cage standards for circus animals.
16. Endorsement of "Flora of Central Australia".
17. Senate Standing Committee inquiry into forestry.
18. Other business.
19. Next meeting of Council.
20. Press statement.

Agenda Item 1 - Welcome and apologies

The Chairman, Mr Masters, opened the meeting at 10.00 a.m. and welcomed all Ministers and their advisers.

He informed the meeting that apologies had been received from:

- Hon. R.J. Ellicott, who was being represented by Dr Pratt.
- Hon. W.V. Houghton, who was being represented by Mr Brookes.
- Hon A.B. Lohrey, who was being represented by Mr Middleton.
- Hon. V.S. Young, New Zealand Minister for Lands, Forests and the Environment.
- Hon I. Kor, Papua New Guinea Minister for Environment and Conservation.

Members noted that Mr Reece had replaced Mr R.E. Hogg as Secretary to Council.

Agenda Item 2 - Adoption of agenda

Council adopted the provisional agenda for the meeting without alteration.

Agenda Item 3 - Summary record of eighth meeting of Council

Council resolved to accept the draft summary record of its eighth meeting as an accurate account of the proceedings, subject to the inclusion under Agenda Item 6 (Role of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service) of an additional paragraph proposed by Mr Everingham, reading:

"The Northern Territory Minister advised that the Commonwealth was still in default in respect of (i), (ii) and (iii) above."

(Resolution 120)

Council noted that in compliance with the agreed procedure the summary record, having been cleared by all Ministers who attended the eighth meeting, would be available for tabling in Federal Parliament in due course.

Agenda Item 4 - Marine parks and reserves

Council noted the agreement reached the June 1979 Premiers' Conference regarding the respective roles of the Commonwealth and the States in the establishment and management of marine parks and reserves, and also the action being taken by Standing Committee to set up formal liaison between CONCOM and the Australian Fisheries Council in relation to marine parks and reserves.

Council resolved to endorse the proposition by Standing Committee that, subject to the agreement of the AFC, each initial proposal to develop a marine park or reserve which met the criteria agreed to by the Premiers' Conference would be forwarded by the appropriate State and Commonwealth authorities to the Secretariat, who would in turn refer it to both the member agencies of CONCOM and the AFC Secretariat.

(Resolution 121)

Agenda Item 5 - International matters

Council noted the report summarising the current status of each of the following international conventions and agreements concerned with nature conservation:

- (i) The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat.
- (ii) The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.
- (iii) The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.
- (iv) The Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals.
- (v) The Agreement Between the Government of Australia and the Government of Japan for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Birds in Danger of Extinction and Their Environment.
- (vi) The Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific.
- (vii) The Antarctic Marine Living Resources Convention.
- (viii) The Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals.
- (ix) The Agreed Measures for the Conservation of Antarctic Flora and Fauna.

Council resolved to request the Commonwealth to ensure that before any future international conventions or agreements of relevance to CONCOM were negotiated on behalf of Australia, the States and Territories would be consulted with sufficient lead time to enable them to put forward their views.

(Resolution 122)

Agenda Item 6 - State representation on Australian delegations

Council considered administrative arrangements for the inclusion of State representatives on Australian delegations negotiating international conventions or agreements of relevance to CONCOM, and resolved to endorse the recommendation of Standing Committee that:

- (i) The current Chairman of Standing Committee or his nominee be the person proposed to the Commonwealth as the States' representative on any particular delegation.

- (ii) If the current Chairman was a Commonwealth officer, then the person proposed be the next Chairman from a State or the Northern Territory or his nominee.
- (iii) The cost of sending a States' representative on each delegation be shared equally by the States and Territories.
- (iv) Under the cost sharing arrangements, CONCOM might also nominate a technical adviser for inclusion on a delegation.

(Resolution 123)

Council expressed concern over the decision of the October 1977 Premiers' Conference that the initiative for the inclusion of State representatives on Australian delegations would have to come from the States themselves, and therefore Mr Thomson undertook to convey this concern to the Minister for Foreign Affairs with the request that the States receive the earliest possible advice of future negotiating conferences in which Australia would be participating.

Agenda Item 7 - World Wildlife Fund

Council noted advice from Standing Committee, in response to the resolution of its previous meeting that the operation of the World Wildlife Fund in Australia and its interaction with government agencies be monitored for a period of twelve months, that:

- (i) Relations between the WWF and the agencies represented on CONCOM had been generally satisfactory.
- (ii) Monitoring of the activities of the WWF would continue on an informal basis, with members of Standing Committee reporting on any difficulties which arose.

Agenda Item 8 - World Conservation Strategy

Council noted that, following the launching in Australia by the Prime Minister of the IUCN World Conservation Strategy:

- (i) The President of the Australian Committee for IUCN, Mr D.A. Johnstone, had written to the Prime Minister suggesting that he request CONCOM to consider the applicability of the Strategy to Australia with a view to recommending to the Commonwealth how it might best be implemented in this country.
- (ii) In his reply to Mr Johnstone, the Prime Minister had pointed out that the complex nature of the issues raised in the Strategy necessitated detailed study and wide consultation at the Commonwealth level, and therefore it would be premature to refer the document to CONCOM at the present time.

Council further noted advice of the consultative arrangements proposed by the Commonwealth to involve interested government agencies and non-government bodies in the development of a national conservation strategy for Australia.

Agenda Item 9 - Reports from Working Groups

(a) Ad hoc Working Group on Kangaroo Management

Council considered in detail the report prepared at its request by the ad hoc Working Group on Kangaroo Management regarding the operation of the system of carcase tags for commercially harvested kangaroos, and resolved to endorse the recommendation of the Working Group that the existing tagging system be retained as it formed an integral part of the kangaroo management programs of the States.

(Resolution 124)

Council also agreed to defer, pending a final decision by the United States Government on the lifting or otherwise of the current ban on the importation of kangaroo products, any action in respect of the remaining recommendations of the Working Group that:

- (i) The State quotas for harvesting the commercial species of kangaroos be set within biologically meaningful ranges, rather than as specific figures.
- (ii) These ranges be reviewed every three years and re-established for the next three-year period.

Council noted the information provided by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service concerning the visit to Australia by Dr D. Anderson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the developments following the submission of his report to the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Council resolved that the report of the Working Group be attached to the summary record of the ninth meeting.

(Resolution 125)

(b) Ad hoc Working Group on the Youth for Conservation Program

Council noted advice that a scheme similar to that proposed by the ad hoc Working Group on the Youth for Conservation Program was currently being developed by the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs as part of a wide program of pilot projects aimed at involving young unemployed people in voluntary community service.

Council resolved to endorse the recommendation of Standing Committee that, if when it was announced the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs scheme required the involvement of CONCOM, the Working Group be reconvened to advise Standing Committee regarding future action.

(Resolution 126)

(c) Ad hoc Working Group on Law Enforcement

Council considered the report of the ad hoc Working Group on Law Enforcement regarding the operation of a system of export and import licences to control the movement of indigenous fauna between the States and Territories, and resolved to endorse the recommendations of the Working Group that:

- (i) No export or import licences be issued for the movement within Australia of the following species, except for:
 - (a) Bona fide scientific research at a recognised institution.
 - (b) Display purposes at an approved zoo.
 - Gang gang cockatoos.
 - Golden-shouldered parrots.
 - Hooded parrots.
 - Orange-bellied parrots.
 - Fig parrots.
 - Naretha blue-bonnet parrots.
 - Eclectus parrots.
 - Red-cheeked parrots.
- (ii) A technical group comprising members of the Working Group and the former Standing Working Group on Birds periodically review the list in (i) above and recommend alterations to it as appropriate.
- (iii) For the movement within Australia of all other indigenous species, a positive indication that an import licence had been or would be issued by the receiving State or Territory be required before the exporting State or Territory would issue an export licence.

(Resolution 127)

(d) Ad hoc Working Group on Remote Sensing

Council noted the interim report of the ad hoc Working Group on Remote Sensing, including advice that its final report on the potential of remote sensing in the field of conservation and management of wildlife and other relevant natural resources would be completed and submitted to Standing Committee following a meeting to be held in August at the new satellite data receiving centre at Alice Springs.

(e) Ad hoc Working Group on Selection and Classification of Protected Areas

Council considered the paper summarising the conclusions and recommendations of the ad hoc Working Group on Selection and Classification of Protected Areas concerning possible rationalisation of the classification and nomenclature of land reserved and managed for nature conservation or cultural heritage preservation purposes, and resolved to note the report of the Working Group and request all Ministers to:

- (i) Refer the report to their relevant departments and authorities for detailed examination.
- (ii) Convey to the next meeting of Council the views of their governments regarding the recommendations contained in the report.

(Resolution 128)

(f) Ad hoc Working Group on Sub-professional Training

Council considered the report of the ad hoc working Group on Sub-professional Training, and resolved to endorse the proposal put forward by the annual meeting of training officers and supported by both the Working Group and Standing Committee that the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service facilitate the production of an "Australian Ranger Bulletin" as a vehicle for developing professional attitudes and skills in park management personnel.

(Resolution 129)

Council also accepted the recommendations of the Working Group that:

- (i) The "Bulletin" be a forum for training, communication and idea sharing at the national level.
- (ii) An editorial committee including Commonwealth, State and Territory representatives be established to review all material before publication.
- (iii) All contributions from each State or Territory be submitted to the editorial committee through the relevant representative for approval.
- (iv) A statement be made that the contributing organisations may not necessarily support any of the views expressed.
- (g) Ad hoc Working Group on Endangered Fauna

Council considered the report of the ad hoc Working Group on Endangered Fauna, and resolved to endorse the recommendation of the Working Group that Australia propose the transfer of the green turtle, flatback turtle and Coxens fig parrot from Appendix II to Appendix I of CITES.

(Resolution 130)

Council noted the continuing difficulty being experienced by the Working Group (and by the ad hoc Working Group on Endangered Flora) in obtaining with a minimum of delay Ministerial agreement to its proposals for amendments to the Appendices of CITES, and therefore resolved to delegate to Standing Committee the responsibility for endorsing these proposals in future for transmission to the CITES Secretariat.

(Resolution 131)

Council examined the draft list of Australian endangered fauna which had been prepared by the Working Group at the request of Standing Committee, and resolved to:

- (i) Endorse the list of species as the official list of Australian endangered fauna.

- (ii) Agree that the list be only for internal use by Australia and not be used for international purposes, with the exception of (iii) below.
- (iii) Agree that the birds component of the list be adopted for the purpose of discharging Australia's responsibilities under the bilateral Agreement Between the Government of Australia and the Government of Japan for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Birds in Danger of Extinction and Their Environment.
- (iv) Agree to the inclusion on the list of the freshwater fishes to be nominated by an expert sub-committee of the Australian Fisheries Council.

(Resolution 132)

Council also noted that the Working Group had undertaken to prepare, as a low-cost alternative to a detailed red data book of Australian endangered fauna, an annotated list of endangered species with a brief accompanying text on each, based on the approved official list.

(h) Ad hoc Working Group on Endangered Flora

Council noted the report of the ad hoc Working Group on Endangered Flora, including advice of action arising from Australia's participation in CITES and the identification of a number of short term projects aimed at promoting the conservation of Australian flora.

(i) Ad hoc Working Group on the CONCOM Technical Conference Program

Council discussed the recommendations of the ad hoc Working Group on the CONCOM Technical Conference Program regarding a program of technical conferences on topics of common interest to member agencies, and resolved that:

- (i) The conferences should have a workshop format to derive the maximum benefit for all participants.
- (ii) In order of priority the topics which had the support of all members were:
 - (a) Fire management in semi-arid lands.
 - (b) Culling of populations of native animals.
 - (c) Policies for marine reserve management.
 - (d) Wetland ecology.
- (iii) A workshop on topic (a) be held in Victoria in May 1981, with the organisation shared between Victoria and the Secretariat.
- (iv) If possible, a workshop on topic (b) be held in New South Wales also in May 1981.

- (v) Consideration be given to a workshop on topic (c) being held in Western Australia in 1982.

(Resolution 133)

Agenda Item 10 - Proposed working group on endangered vertebrates

Council considered the proposal initiated by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service for the creation of a working group to co-ordinate the protection and management of endangered vertebrates within Australia and recommend appropriate conservation projects for which individual agencies might seek financial assistance from outside sources, and resolved to endorse the recommendation of Standing Committee that an ad hoc Working Group on Management of Endangered Vertebrates be established with the suggested terms of reference.

(Resolution 134)

Council noted the concern expressed by South Australia with respect to the conservation of freckled duck in Australia and resolved to accept the proposal by South Australia that the appropriate officers from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia develop a joint research program to assess the true status of the species over the whole of its range.

(Resolution 135)

Council agreed that a meeting of these officers be convened by South Australia and be held as soon as possible.

Agenda Item 11 - Interstate trade in fauna

Council examined the legal and constitutional implications of the High Court judgement in the Smith versus Capewell case in relation to the interstate movement of "commercial" species of indigenous fauna and flora, and resolved to support the suggestion by Queensland that a special meeting of Standing Committee be held, with both wildlife officers and Crown Law advisers in attendance, with a view to developing a uniform regulatory approach to controlling interstate trade in fauna and flora.

(Resolution 136)

Agenda Item 12 - Protection of marine mammals

Council noted that the Commonwealth had requested the States and Territories to bring into force legislation complementary to the recent Whale Protection Act, either by preparing new free-standing legislation, adopting the Commonwealth legislation or amending their own existing legislation to suit, and resolved to support the Commonwealth view that CONCOM should be the co-ordinating body for the introduction of this legislation.

(Resolution 137)

Agenda Item 13 - Annual statement of research projects

Council noted and thanked Standing Committee for preparing the first annual statement of research projects being carried out or sponsored by the member agencies of CONCOM.

Agenda Item 14 - Export of family pets

Council considered the desirability of tightening the existing controls over the export of indigenous fauna as family pets by persons returning overseas after a comparatively short time in Australia, and resolved to endorse the recommendations of Standing Committee that:

- (i) The qualifying period for which indigenous family pets must be held before permission for their export may be granted by the relevant State or Territory authority and the Bureau of Customs be extended from six months to two years.
- (ii) The relevant authorities have a discretionary power to vary this qualifying period in cases where special circumstances could be demonstrated.
- (iii) The Bureau of Customs be requested to adopt these amended provisions for family pets and revise its procedures accordingly.

(Resolution 138)

Council noted advice that the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs had already indicated his support for these recommendations subject to their acceptance by CONCOM.

Agenda Item 15 - Cage standards for circus animals

Council noted the action being taken by Standing Committee, through the Animal Quarantine Division of the Department of Health, to ensure that all overseas circuses intending to tour Australia would be advised of the regulations which were in force in Victoria prescribing minimum cage standards for animals kept in connection with travelling circuses and shows.

Agenda Item 16 - Endorsement of "Flora of Central Australia"

Council discussed the proposal that the other States might assist South Australia with funding for publication of the "Flora of Central Australia" in readiness for the International Botanical Congress to be held in Sydney in August 1981, noting that Mr Wotton had already written to his counterparts in the relevant States seeking contributions towards the goal of \$20 000.

Council agreed that South Australia would provide an initial \$5 000, with a further \$2 500 each being contributed by Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Mr Thomson undertook to try to have the Commonwealth match the largest contribution from any single State (the \$5 000 from South Australia) to bring the total to the required figure.

Agenda Item 17 - Senate Standing Committee inquiry into forestry

Council noted the letter which the previous Chairman of Council, Hon. D.P. Landa, had sent to the Secretary of the Senate Standing Committee on Trade and Commerce conveying the concern of CONCOM that the submission presented on behalf of the Australian Institute of Foresters to the inquiry being conducted into Australia's forestry and forest products industries had contained several unsubstantiated criticisms of existing national parks policy and practice in Australia.

Council also noted advice from the Secretary of the Senate Standing Committee that the report of the inquiry was expected to be tabled in Federal Parliament during the Budget Session in August.

Agenda Item 18 - Other business

Council noted advice of the action being taken by the Australian Fisheries Council to greatly reduce the number of freshwater aquarium fishes imported into Australia by developing a list of approximately 100 species which would be acceptable to both the aquarium trade and the State and Territory fisheries authorities for continued importation.

Council expressed strong support for this action by the AFC in relation to imported fishes, and resolved to urge the States and Territories to consider the introduction of complementary measures to control the breeding, distribution and marketing of aquarium fishes within Australia.

(Resolution 139)

Agenda Item 19 - Next meeting of Council

Council resolved to accept the invitation issued by Mr Brookes on behalf of Mr Houghton to hold its next meeting in Victoria.

(Resolution 140)

Ministers agreed upon the worth of the seminar on "Public awareness and understanding of the objectives and practices of nature conservation" which had been held the previous day, and decided that if possible a similar seminar on another topic of mutual interest should be held in conjunction with the 1981 meeting.

Agenda Item 20 - Press statement

Council agreed upon the attached media release covering the major decisions of the meeting.

Mr Wotton expressed the thanks of all members to the Chairman and his staff for their hospitality and efforts to ensure a successful meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 3.00 p.m. and thanked all participants for their co-operation.

PRESS RELEASE

COUNCIL OF NATURE CONSERVATION MINISTERS

The Council of Nature Conservation Ministers (CONCOM), which comprises the Ministers responsible for nature conservation from the Commonwealth, the States, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, held its annual meeting in Perth today.

Agreement was reached at the meeting that there should be continuing close co-operation between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories in relation to international nature conservation treaties. The States and Territories will be consulted as early as possible regarding issues which will become their responsibility under these treaties. Future Australian delegations negotiating the treaties will, where it is appropriate, include representatives from the States and Territories.

The Council discussed the World Conservation Strategy which was launched in Australia earlier this year by the Prime Minister. Members noted an invitation to send delegates from all States and the Northern Territory to a meeting in Canberra on 24 July to consider the development of a national strategy.

The Council noted a recent decision by the High Court which had implications for the movement of native fauna throughout Australia. It was agreed that a special meeting be held to discuss the control problems highlighted by this decision.

The Ministers noted the recent United States Government proposal to lift the import ban on kangaroo products for a trial period of two years. They decided that the present tagging system for commercially harvested kangaroos should be retained as part of Australia's kangaroo management program.

The Ministers endorsed an official list of Australian endangered fauna, consisting of 83 mammals, birds and reptiles. A working group was established to collate strategies aimed at the protection, management and rehabilitation of species on the endangered list.

The meeting also agreed to urge the States and Territories to consider, as a matter of urgency, the introduction of measures to control the breeding, distribution and marketing of aquarium fishes within Australia because of the high potential risk to the health and survival of native species.

10 July 1980