



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY • 722 JACKSON PLACE, N.W. • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

# News Release

## SHIRLEY TEMPLE BLACK STATEMENT ON ENDANGERED SPECIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Shirley Temple Black, Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, made the following statement today at the meeting of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Joint Committee on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Quality. Mrs. Black is a member of the U.S. delegation to the second annual meeting of the Joint Committee, which administers the cooperative program under the U.S.-Soviet Environmental Agreement signed in Moscow by Presidents Nixon and Podgorny on May 23, 1973. Mrs. Black was also a U.S. representative at the first meeting of the Joint Committee September 18-21, 1972, in Moscow.

### Protection of Endangered Species

Most endangered species are large animals, birds, or fish whose danger comes from another large animal -- man.

We kill them directly, for flesh, skin, or bones. Or we kill them indirectly by destroying their habitats.

Our excuse is short-term economic advantage. We remain blind to the long-term significance of our greed. Actually, the species destroyed represent a net economic loss. But this is only a minor aspect of this world tragedy.

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The past century is marked for enormous industrial and scientific advances. Populations of big human animals have rushed ahead. Living standards are generally on the rise. So is degradation of our Environment.

In one century, we have seen the extinction of more species than in the previous 2,000 years!

We here all know the critical state of whales. Scientific data confirms that in the future, unless whaling nations revise current practices and appetites in the whale fishery, eight species of great whales are on the way to ultimate extinction.

We appreciate the actions of the Soviet Government voluntarily agreeing to phase out the whaling for Fin Whales in the Antarctic, and the fact that in three years there will be a moratorium on taking Fin Whales. I would hope that our Soviet colleagues will ask their Government to reconsider their position in the rejection of the agreement of the International Whaling Commission regarding Minke and Sperm Whales.

The tragedy, to which I alluded earlier, lies not in the extinction of earth's largest living creatures. This objection is based on emotionalism. The true tragedy lies in violent disruption of the great and complex marine ecosystem.

Whales are a point of pivotal importance. Although the largest living thing, they feed on some of the smallest living things. The whale is the key link of the marine ecosystem. Destroy the whale and we remove the keystone of a great arch, and the stones shall surely fall about our heads.

The price to humanity will be high.

Let us join together to resolve that this price is too high. It is a needless price; it impoverishes us all.

Our current practices lead to irreversible extinction of great whale populations, environmental shock, and a bitter lesson for mankind.

Why can't we listen to our wisdom? Why can't we muster our self-discipline? Why can't we serve our true best interests?

Why must we have to learn only by destroying?

Tom Kimball, Executive Vice President of the National Wildlife Federation, and a public member of the U.S. Environment Delegation to the U.S.S.R. last year, recently stated, and I quote:

"Satisfactory substitutes have been found for all whale products, including lubricants, cosmetics, soap, paint, shoe polish, and margarine. Much is used for domestic pets or for ranch mink. Though whale meat is eaten in small quantities by humans, the amount of protein which it contributes to the diet is, by any standard, insignificant," Kimball stated.

The U.S. has banned the importation of all whale products, and has phased out its last whale fleet. Many other countries have also discontinued whaling practices because the supply of whales dropped so low.

Let us avoid paying a needless price -- which impoverishes us all -- the irreversible extinction of an important living species.

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