

Southern Ocean Whale Research in the IWC Management Area III (0-70°E) with particular reference to the recoveries of Humpback Whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)

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Approximately two million whales were removed from the Southern Ocean by open boat and modern whaling operation over the last three hundred years, including catches of over 210 000 Southern Hemisphere humpback whales between 1903 and 1973. The histories of the catch operations and catches within each of the seven winter recognised breeding grounds and associated migration paths and within the Southern Ocean feeding grounds are reviewed, including catches and operations from low- and high-latitude land stations, and both regulated and unregulated pelagic whaling operations. Particular accent is placed on the operational catch history of some 55,000 humpback whales from the South East Atlantic Ocean (Gabon, Angola, Namibia and South Africa), the Western Indian Ocean (South Africa, Mozambique and Madagascar) and the associated Southern Ocean region between 1908 and 1973. Despite Southern Hemisphere humpback whales being afforded global protection in October 1963, Soviet fleets continued to take humpback whales until 1973, and the first signs of recoveries of African populations were recorded in the late 1980s. Subsequently certain of the African populations have been observed to be increasing at over 10% per annum and close to the maximum biologically feasible rate. Model results from the Western Indian ocean suggest the Area III population to be near recovery levels. Recent local research activities are discussed in light of their potential for expansion to within the summer krill feeding area in Area III of the Southern Ocean.