

Ocean Noise Coalition Efforts at UNICPOLOS-6

(The United Nations Informal Consultative Process
on Oceans and the Law of the Sea)

June 2005

The Ocean Mammal Institute (OMI) organized and chaired the UN Working Group which attended the Sixth Meeting on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at the United Nations (UNICPOLOS-6), June 6 - 10, 2005. This group built upon the efforts of OMI and the European Coalition for Silent Oceans at UNICPOLOS-5 in 2004. The General Assembly of the United Nations established UNICPOLOS to facilitate its annual review of ocean issues

Our goal at UNICPOLOS-6 was to educate delegates on the issue of Ocean Noise and its impact on marine life and have the issue referred to the UN General Assembly for further consideration.

Other members of the UN Working Group from North America who sent representatives to UNICPOLOS-6 included the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), the Animal Welfare Institute, and Seaflow.

Ocean Care from Switzerland represented the European Coalition for Silent Oceans and Centro de Conservacion Cetacea from Chile and COMARINO from Mexico represented the Latin American Ocean Noise Coalition.

OMI organized the North American Ocean Noise Coalition and delegated Ocean Care and Centro de Conservacion Cetacea to organize the European Coalition for Silent Oceans and the Latin American Ocean Noise Coalition respectively, in order to create a unified international voice to protect marine life from potentially deadly noise created from air guns, military sonars, shipping and other intense sources. Working together they comprise an International Ocean Noise Coalition.

These three broad NGO coalitions represent over 130 environmental and animal welfare organizations, around the world with

memberships of well over 15 million people. OMI, representing these 3 coalitions, worked with the UNICPOLOS Secretariat obtaining permission to attend UNICPOLOS-6 and meet with delegates, read a position statement on Ocean Noise during the UNICPOLOS meeting, distribute educational materials on Ocean Noise during the meeting and hold a wine and cheese reception for delegates to inform them about the issue and show a specially prepared DVD. The Coalition also submitted a petition on Ocean Noise signed by over 130 environmental and animal welfare organizations representing memberships of over 15 million people globally. Dr Marsha Green of OMI met with one of the meeting co-chairs prior to the start of UNICPOLOS to discuss the Ocean Noise issue, the Coalitions' focus on fisheries at the meeting and other Coalition's goals. On the first day of the meeting Dr Green and Dr Alaniz of COMARINO read the coalition position statement on Ocean Noise in English and Spanish.

The Coalition's efforts at UNICPOLOS-6 were a solid success. The meeting referred the Ocean Noise issue to the General Assembly for their fall 2005 meeting. The Chair's text reads, " It was proposed that the General Assembly.....request further studies and consideration of the impacts of ocean noises on marine living resources."

During UNICPOLOS-6 the Ocean Noise Coalition held a press conference which resulted in global coverage of the Ocean Noise issue in over 14 newspapers and radio / TV broadcasts programs including Reuters, the BBC and the *New York Daily News*.

OMI continues to chair the UN Working Group as they plan their efforts to continue to educate delegates on the Ocean Noise issue at the UN General Assembly this fall.