

**Joint Statement by Mexico and the United States
on the Plight of the Vaquita**

The vaquita is an iconic species found only in the Gulf of California, and is the most endangered marine mammal species alive today with fewer than 100 individuals remaining. Previous efforts to conserve the vaquita have slowed the rate of decline, but the resurgence of an illegal fishery for totoaba (which itself is listed on Appendix I of CITES) have negated these achievements. Current estimates suggest that the vaquita faces imminent extinction, possibly by 2018.

Mexico and the United States are alarmed by these findings, which are included in the Reports of the IWC Scientific Committee and of the International Committee for the Recovery of the Vaquita (CIRVA V). Both countries believe that immediate steps are needed to prevent the extinction of the vaquita, such as halting the entanglement of vaquita in gillnet fisheries such as the fishery for the endangered totoaba, which is harvested illegally in Mexico and traded illegally on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border and overseas. The U.S. and Mexico accordingly believe that enhanced cooperation is necessary, including in the following areas:

Enforcement

Both sides are committed to consulting and coordinating own enforcement activities that support the implementation of the Government of Mexico's efforts to enhance protection of the vaquita and combat the illegal capture and trade of totoaba.

Fishing Gear Technologies

Both sides acknowledge the need for continuing research into technologies to replace gillnetting for finfish and measures to encourage the adoption of those technologies.

Socioeconomic Measures

Both sides have pledged to consider measures that would promote vaquita conservation by providing economic incentives and/or alternative career opportunities for affected fishermen.

Acoustic Monitoring

Both sides confirm the need to maintain acoustic monitoring research in order to assess the vaquita population on a continuing basis.

The representatives of Mexico and the United States are submitting this statement to the 65th meeting of the International Whaling Committee to highlight their joint concern for the fate of the vaquita, and to assure the Commission of their ongoing commitment to work

together to avoid the extinction of this species. Both countries call upon other nations to join them in this effort, including nations that are the destination for components of illegally harvested totoaba.