

July 12, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

The President has signed S. 229 - Endangered Species Act amendments. This bill amends the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to exempt legally obtained sperm whale oil and scrimshaw from existing prohibitions on their sale in interstate and foreign commerce.

Under the Endangered Species Act, as amended in 1973, the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce are charged with the conservation, protection, restoration, and propagation of threatened and endangered species of fish, wildlife, and plants.

The bill will:

- exempt from restrictions on the sale in interstate or foreign commerce of endangered species and derivative products such as sperm whale oil and scrimshaw, subject to certain procedural safeguards, as may have been held in inventory prior to December 28, 1973, the effective date of the Endangered Species Act;
- permit the interstate exchange of endangered species and their parts and products by museums and certain other cultural organizations without violation of the Act;
- provide for the disposition by the government of forfeited endangered species and their parts and products;
- provide the same authority to make arrests as was available under the original Endangered Species Act and certain other acts and which was apparently inadvertently omitted when the Act was revised in 1973;
- modify or clarify the applications of certain notice and hearing requirements fixed by the Act.

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