



Commercial ban voted, subsistence

The International Whaling Commission voted last week to outlaw commercial whaling — the one activity credited with greatly depleting the world's whaling populations.

In doing so, the IWC also did not support a separate move to outlaw all aboriginal subsistence whaling activities. Such activities are conducted only by Inupiat Eskimos on the North Slope of Alaska.

Because no action was taken on the Eskimo whaling, the North Slope Whalers will be allowed to take up to 47 whales over the next three years.

The commission earlier rejected a proposal by Spain to ban subsistence whaling. Spain's move was condemned by Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission representative Eugene Brower as a ploy to divert attention from the commercial whaling and to force the United States to abandon its stand supporting the commercial whaling ban.

The vote to ban commercial whaling was 25 to 7. Those

voting against the ban were Brazil, Iceland, South Korea, Japan, Norway, Peru and the Soviet Union.

Five other countries did not vote and two were absent.

Although the ban was passed, it doesn't mean an end to the commercial whaling because some of the major commercial whaling nations such as the Soviet Union and Japan and Norway already have declared they will continue hunting whales. The Soviet Union has not decided. Those three countries have taken 90 percent of the whales killed last year.

If the three nations ignore the ban, there is really nothing that the IWC can do to enforce the regulation. Individual countries can, however, outlaw whaling in their territorial waters.

The commission ban will not take effect until 1986 and the IWC ruled just before the close of its meeting that 11,331 whales can be killed in the next year. Some 14,553 whales were taken this season.