

13. Shiretoko (Japan) (N 1193)

Decision: 39 COM 7B.13

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-15/39.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decision **36 COM 7B.12**, adopted at its 36th session (Saint-Petersburg, 2012),
3. Notes the State Party's efforts to maintain a healthy population of Steller's Sea Lion in the Sea of Japan and in the property, and urges the State Party to ensure that catch quotas are regularly reviewed and adjusted to maintain a stable to growing population of sea lions in the property, and in the wider seascape;
4. Notes with appreciation the reported positive impacts from the modification of river structures, however, notes with concern that no further modifications to the dams on the Rusha river have taken place as requested by the Committee at its 36th session in 2012 (Decision **36 COM 7B.12**), in particular in light of the State Party's noted concerns about negative impacts from these dams on the downstream river bed and the availability of salmonid spawning habitat;
5. Considers that a natural salmonid migration and spawning behaviour are vital for the property to serve as an "outstanding example of the interaction of marine and terrestrial ecosystems", and also considers that, with the removal of the salmon and trout hatchery at the mouth of the Rusha river in 2012, the benefits of the three check dams for disaster risk reduction are outweighed by their impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
6. Also urges the State Party to continue further modifications of these dams, including consideration of the option to fully remove them, in close consultation with the local authority and communities, in order to fully mitigate the impacts of the three dams on the Rusha river, to also consider the option of removing the concrete below surface level, and to fully decommission the road and bridge that lead to the former hatchery, in order to restore normal flow of surface and ground water, and to promote river braiding and meandering to improve salmonid spawning habitat;
7. Recommends the State Party and the IUCN SSC Salmonid Specialist Group to seek a consensus based on best available science regarding the most appropriate and practicable solution and to consider the possibility of inviting an IUCN Advisory Mission to the property to provide advice on these matters;
8. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2016**, an updated report, including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017.