

Hickel's Order on Whales

Washington

The Interior Department has backed away from suspending an order by its ousted secretary Walter J. Hickel that was designed to protect endangered whales.

One of Hickel's last official acts was an order placing eight species of whales on the endangered list and ban-

ning importation of whale products.

And one of the earliest actions of the department following his ouster by President Nixon was a move to hold up publication of the order in the Federal Register. Publication is required before the order can become official.

It has been disclosed, how-

ever, that the order would be published in the Register today as scheduled, and deputy under secretary William Rogers, whose phone call to the Government Printing Office had held up the order, was quoted by an aide as terming his action a "ghastly mistake."

The action delaying the order stemmed, it is said, from

to Stand

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a telephone call from U. Alexis Johnson, under secretary of state for political affairs, to Rogers, asking that publication of the Hickel order be stopped.

The State Department has for some time been attempting to negotiate a reduction of whaling through the International Whaling Commission, and it objected to the

unilateral move by the United States. Johnson is understood to have made these points to Rogers.

Makers of pet food and cosmetics and other users of whale products in the U.S. had also objected to the ban during extended hearings held at the Interior Department before Hickel issued his order. *N.Y. Times Service*