

ECO

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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Japan Wants 3,000 Minkees Annually from Southern Ocean Sanctuary

Japan announced that it intends to resume commercial whaling this year in the IWC-designated Antarctic Ocean whale sanctuary.

Japan's "scientific whaling" scheme already kills 440 minke whales annually, with the resulting whalemeat on sale throughout Japan.

A spokesman for the Japanese IWC delegation told reporters that Japan intends to take 2,914 minke whales every year for five years, worth 200 million euros (\$US 248 million) on the Japanese market.

Several nations, receiving fisheries aid directly from Japan in return for support of whaling in the IWC, supported Japan's position. "We have been perplexed to realize that a whale that consumes three-to-four times its own body weight continues to be seen as a resource that should be untouched by humans at a time that the nations of the world strive to find food for their people," stated the delegate of Suriname, a new member this year.

In fact, research demonstrates that whales eat few of the fish species that human fisheries depend on, and further most of the world's fish (as is the case with most of the world's foods) go to Japan, the US, and Europe, not the developing world. Hunger is caused not by whales, but by a global food distribution system based on who can pay the most. Blaming whales for hunger is complete nonsense, as several delegates have remarked during IWC proceedings this year.

Japan needs a 3/4 vote to overturn the 1986 moratorium on whaling. Some nations, such as New Zealand, are opposed to lifting the moratorium and want to protect whales, both for the intrinsic value of whales, the monetary value from whalewatching and research efforts on whales, and to avoid cruelty.

Clearly, the pro-whaling views of

Japan, Iceland, and Norway are only sustained by a hodge-podge of nations that have sold their votes for the dubious financial benefits of foreign aid from Japan. "Some of the poorest developing countries in the world are being used to vote in favor of whaling," notes John Frizell of Greenpeace. "This is a clear case of money talks."



IFAW Responds to Attack by Pro-Whalers

At an emergency two-hour meeting of IWC commissioners Monday evening, Japan and its pro-whaling bloc complained bitterly about a press release issued that day by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). The press release was headlined "IWC Opens at Crossroads: Whale Conservation or

Corruption?" Japan and its client states expressed outrage over the word "corruption" in the stormy meeting, according to reports. They demanded that action be taken by the commission against IFAW, which is one of the largest conservation organizations in the world. (concluded on page 3)

Greenland Continues to Defy IWC Rules

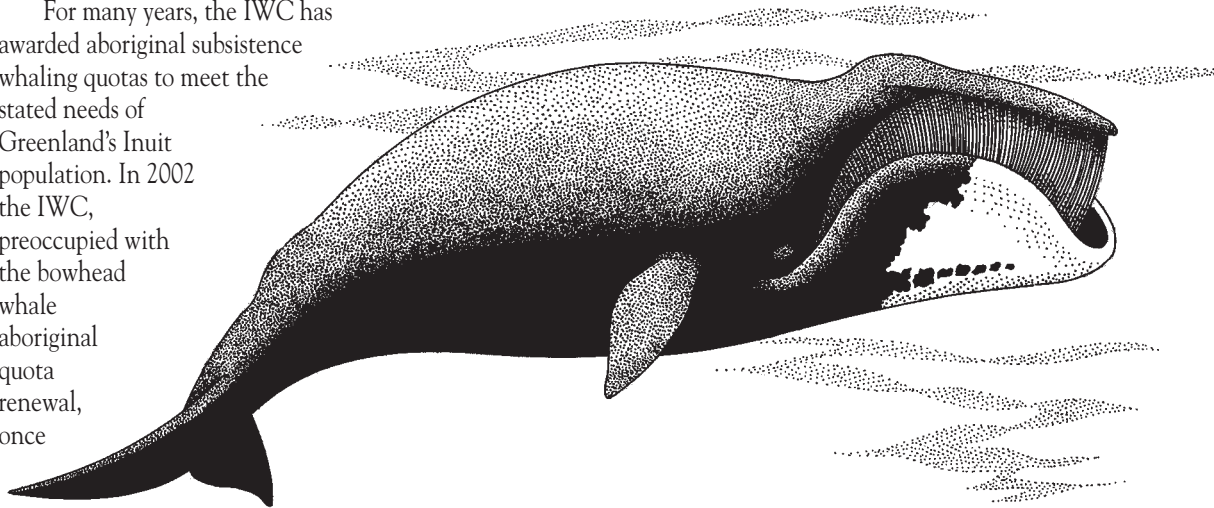
Once again Greenland has flagrantly violated IWC rules and requirements, according to the latest whaling statistics and the IWC Scientific Committee.

For many years, the IWC has awarded aboriginal subsistence whaling quotas to meet the stated needs of Greenland's Inuit population. In 2002 the IWC, preoccupied with the bowhead whale aboriginal quota renewal, once

commercialization of products intended by the IWC to meet local subsistence needs. It documents the following:

its subsistence needs, Greenland radio reported in 2002 that Greenland is "floating in whale meat" and is seeking to export minke meat to Norway.

- Despite the IWC's requirement that minke and fin products



again rubber-stamped Greenland's request for 19 fin whales and 187 minke whales, in spite of the increasingly urgent warnings by the Scientific Committee that it could not provide sound management advice on West Greenland minke and fin whales whose abundance estimates are 11 and 17 years out of date, respectively. Since 1998, the Scientific Committee has required the urgent collection of survey data and genetic samples.

A detailed examination of 14 years of data by the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) reveals serious problems with the sustainability, regulation and welfare implications of Greenland's hunts, their heavy reliance on small cetaceans, and widespread

- Between 1996 and 2002, 92 percent of minkes killed in East Greenland were female.
- Greenland's killing methods are inadequate to ensure instantaneous death or insensibility, and struck and lost rates are high. A fin whale took 12 hours to die in 2003, and in 2002 and 2003, two minke whales took five hours to die.
- Both the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) and the Joint Canada/Greenland Commission on the Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga (JCNB) have warned for years that Greenland's west coast beluga and narwhal hunts are unsustainable and that the two stocks are in dramatic decline. However, quotas for 2004 have been set at almost three times the level recommended by the JCNB.
- Despite Greenland's claim that it needs more whale meat to meet

must be consumed locally, hunters sell 19 percent of minke whale and 40 percent of fin whale products to a company that markets them commercially throughout Greenland and Denmark, according to the Greenland national statistics office.

In addition to WDCS's damning report, WWF Denmark has recently published a highly-critical review of Greenland's failure to fulfill its legal obligations to various conservation agreements, including the IWC and CITES. It can be viewed and downloaded at the WWF website, www.panda.org.

Recommendations of the Scientific Committee, adopted at this meeting, state that if Greenland's data collection (toward which the IWC has allocated 63,000 pounds since 1998) does not yield the data required, it will recommend immediately that Greenland's fin whale quota be reduced or eliminated.

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ECO is published on the occasion of the 56th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission.

Whaling Nations Pose a Threat

An editorial in the Independent, UK, July 20, 2004.

The International Whaling Commission is meeting in Sorrento, Italy, under a shadow: the possibility that pro-whaling nations could control a slim majority in the commission for the first time...

Despite being traditionally outnumbered in the commission by anti-whaling nations such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States, pro-whaling countries have persuaded a host of smaller nations to join their voting bloc. Japan has been channeling development aid to countries such as

Antigua, St. Vincent, and the Ivory Coast in return for votes on the commission. This meeting could represent the crowning triumph of this unethical approach.

Perhaps the most depressing aspect of this affair is the fact that since the 1986 moratorium, pro-whaling countries regularly have flouted the commission's will anyway. A majority simply would enable them to do so more effectively. Since 1986, Japanese sailors have killed thousands of whales on the spurious grounds that their bodies are needed for "scientific research." The real purpose is to provide food for the Japanese

market. Norwegian fishermen have mounted periodic objections to the ban and have hunted while their case is under consideration. Soon pro-whaling countries may not even need such excuses.

The response from anti-whaling nations must be firm. They must do everything in their power to safeguard the 1986 ban and prevent it from being eroded in practice. They must make it clear to Japan that its tactics of bribing smaller nations will not be tolerated. Finally, increased moral pressure must be brought to bear on all countries that continue to jeopardize the existence of these creatures in pursuit of the gratification of human appetites.

IFAW, concluded from page 1

The controversial press release (which can be read in full at www.ifaw.org) quoted Fred O'Regan, president of IFAW and a delegate at the Sorrento meeting: "Any majority for whaling at this meeting will be bought, not won. The fact is, if vote-buying were to stop, the IWC would have a massive pro-whale majority. Japan can't recruit countries with the power of its arguments, so it relies on the power of its currency. If Japan succeeds, this meeting will mark the first time an international convention has been hijacked by a single country and could lead to treaty busting in other international conventions."

The chairman and vice chairman of the Commission requested a meeting with O'Regan yesterday to discuss the press release and the complaints against IFAW. The meeting took place Tuesday afternoon. Chairman Schmitt and vice-chairman Morimoto of Japan questioned O'Regan about the contents and objective of the press release. Last evening IFAW issued the following statement:

IFAW Statement To Media Regarding Meeting With IWC Chair And Vice Chair

In light of ongoing media coverage and an organizational commitment to transparency, IFAW wishes to clarify recent communications between our organization and the IWC chair and vice chair regarding the issue of vote buying.

IFAW was contacted by the IWC Secretariat earlier today and asked to attend a meeting with IWC Chairman Pro-Temp Schmitt and Vice Chairman Pro-Temp Morimoto, which IFAW promptly did.

IFAW was informed that certain IWC Commissioners objected to an IFAW press release on vote buying distributed to the media in the IWC media center and via the internet on July 19, 2004. IFAW was also informed that a closed meeting of the IWC Commissioners was held yesterday evening to discuss these objections.

At today's meeting, IFAW was asked to respond to questions regarding the purpose and intent of its press release, the means of

distribution of the release, and the evidence it has regarding vote buying by Japan. The Vice Chairman denied that vote buying exists and said that the Commission also needed to evaluate if IFAW, as an observer organization, is committed to the objectives of the Convention, in order to decide on its credentials.

IFAW indicated that it is eager to engage in open and transparent discussion of the vote buying issue in the IWC. IFAW requested formal, written notification of: 1) what, if any, infractions are being alleged and the evidence of them; 2) what, if any, specific inquiry process or procedure is intended; and 3) what inquiry authority, rules and procedures would apply.

IFAW reaffirms and will defend its right as an NGO to express its views in media releases and press conferences. If there is disagreement it should be aired publicly to ensure transparency, maintain accountability and avoid negative precedents.

IWC Calls for Protection of Western Gray Whales' Habitat

The IWC adopted a resolution by consensus endorsing the concerns of the Scientific Committee about continued offshore oil development in the habitat of the western stock of gray whales. Only 100 western gray whales are known to survive for this stock, including 23 reproductive females. It is one of the most endangered whales in the world.

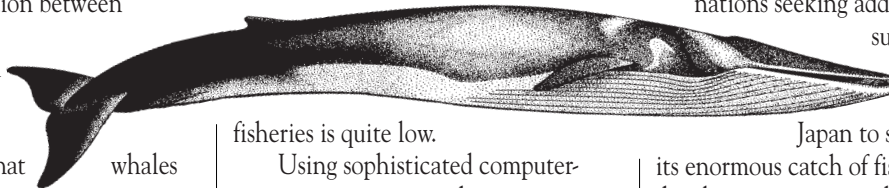
"This is a wake up call for Shell to pay proper attention to the environment when planning major oil projects," stated Dr. Susan Lieberman, Director of WWF's Global Species Programme. "The potential for a catastrophic spill from Shell's oil project poses an unacceptable risk to this highly endangered whale population."

The small population of western gray whales uses the waters off the island of Sakhalin for feeding during the short Arctic summer. WWF fears that construction of the offshore drilling platform proposed by Royal Dutch Shell and the installation of a seabed pipeline nearby could drive away these whales from their only feeding ground.

Whales Don't Compete with Humans for Fish

A new report by Dr. Daniel Pauly and marine biologist Kristin Kaschner of the University of British Columbia, entitled "Competition between Marine Mammals and Fisheries: Food for Thought", counters claims by Japan and Norway that whales present a significant competitor to humans for fish in the seas. Indeed, the detailed research (soon to be published in academic journals) indicates that the fish species preyed upon by whales are not targeted by

any major fishing industries. Therefore, the impact of marine mammals on large commercial



fisheries is quite low.

Using sophisticated computer-mapping programs, and existing literature on marine mammal distribution and prey consumption, the report counters claims that whales are in competition with humans for fish with very strong

scientific data.

Indeed, the report notes that Japan itself is a major consumer of fish products from around the world. It would be far more logical for nations seeking additional food

supplies to appeal directly to

Japan to share part of its enormous catch of fish with developing nations, rather than scapegoating whales for world hunger.

Copies of the report, funded by the Humane Society of the US and HSI, are available on their website at www.hsus.org/whales/.

Does "Full Utilization" Mean Health Scams?

Environmental organizations are raising red flags that Japan has asked for a new agenda item for this year's IWC meeting: "Future Sustainable Whaling – Full Utilization of Harvested Whales."

Could this be a new ploy to bring back whale ivory and spermaceti sales?

ECCEA, Robin Des Bois, and ASMS have noted that Japan has expanded its "research" whaling to include sperm whales in the North Pacific Ocean. Japan reportedly killed thirteen sperm whales in 2001 and 2003.

The groups note that just one

sperm whale can hold between one and three tons of spermaceti oil in their heads. Before the commercial moratorium on killing of whales in 1986, spermaceti alone sold for at least 70 euros a kilo.

Japanese slogans, promoted by the government and their desperate whaling industry, have gone beyond merely extolling the taste of whalemeat, to claims that eating of whale keeps people in fine fettle, physiologically and physically. In other words, by claiming magical properties to whale products like spermaceti, the industry can hoodwink Japanese into thinking

that such products will become a miracle tonic and remedy for any ailment.

In the past, spermaceti was touted as a cure for blows, cuts and bruises, internal injuries, coughs, abscesses, intestinal infections, ulcers, syphilis, and skin disorders. Although whale spermaceti has nothing to do with whale or human sperm, the assumed advantages for males in seeking sexual benefits from spermaceti are ripe for exploitation.

It is illegal in Europe to import or commercialize any whale parts. The IWC must contain charlatan marketers who would exploit public fears and ignorance about health for profits at the whales' expense.