

ECO

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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<http://savedolphins.eii.org>

Japan Flaunts IJC Against “Scientific” Whaling

In March 2014, the International Court of Justice in The Hague (ICJ) ruled against Japan’s “scientific” whaling scheme. Based in its bogus scientific justification, Japan has killed whales in Antarctica since the beginning of the moratorium in commercial whaling, which went into effect in the 1985-86 whaling season.

Between 1987 and 2014, Japan has slaughtered around 1,000 minke whales, supposedly for science. The court vote was an overwhelming 12-4 that Japan was violating the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, with a strong demand that Japan end their false “scientific” whaling effort.

Japan canceled the Antarctic hunt for the 2014-15 season, but returned in 2015 with a brand new “scientific” whaling scheme, proposing to kill 333 minke whales (down from pre-court decision quotas of 1,000 minke whales). Of the 333 killed in the 2015-16 season, about two thirds were pregnant females.

Furthermore, in October 2015, Japan announced that the ICJ’s jurisdiction “does not apply to...any dispute arising out of, concerning, or relating to research on, or conservation, management or exploitation of, living resources of the sea”.

Once again, Japan’s Fisheries Agency has asserted its political

clout in Japan over any other considerations of international adherence to the norms and treaties Japan has previously sworn to uphold. Japan’s promises regarding whaling are empty. Japan’s whaling industry, heavily subsidized by Japan’s taxpayers (largely without their knowledge), continues to rule supreme in the land of the rising sun.

The big question: Will the International Whaling Commission meeting today in Slovenia take action to stop Japan’s illegal whale hunts?

Norway’s Wrong Way Whaling

Norway is now killing more whales than any other nation. A new report, “Frozen in Time: How Modern Norway Clings to Its Whaling Past”, produced by the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), OceanCare and Pro-Wildlife, details Norway’s undermining of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) ban on commercial whaling and exposes the growth of its overseas trade in whale products. These shipments – some of which have transited European ports en route to Japan – play a key role in sustaining the Norwegian whaling industry.

“As one of the world’s most modern and prosperous countries, Norway’s whaling is an anachronism,” said Dr. Sandra Altherr, biologist with Pro-Wildlife.

“Slaughtering whales to eat and trade has no place in Norway and serves only to diminish the country’s international reputation.”

The Norwegian government is funding a number of projects, both to promote domestic sales of whale products and to develop alternative commercial products derived from whales, including dietary supplements, medicines, and cosmetics. In 2015, the Myklebust Hvalprodukter Company announced the launch of a series of new products derived from whale oil, including skin cream.

While diplomatic pressure has been brought to bear on Iceland and international legal action has been taken against Japan for their whaling programs, the report underscores that Norway has

largely been spared international attention and criticism.

The full report can be accessed here:
<https://awionline.org/content/new-report-details-norways-efforts-promote-whaling>

For any previous editions or additional copies of ECO contact editor Mark J. Palmer at markjpalmer@earthisland.org

Massive Assault on Namibia Whales & Dolphins

Unless the Namibian Government denies a permit, the Russian flagged vessel -- now reportedly owned by a Chinese company -- will get the go-ahead for the most deadly capture of orcas, bottlenose dolphins, pinnipeds and penguins in history.

The lives of 10 orcas, 100 bottlenose dolphins, and hundreds more pinnipeds and penguins are at stake.

The *Ryazanovka* now reportedly sits in Walvis Bay port, in Namibia, far from its sordid history in Russian waters where it has occasionally captured marine mammals for sale to foreign companies.

Reports indicate that this scheme is bankrolled by a Chinese company paying for delivery to entertainment facilities in China.

As of this writing, the Namibian Government is still undecided as to whether it will allow the captures to move forward. The Fisheries Ministry has indicated that a decision will be made within the next few days. The Chinese are also leveraging by negotiating military bases in certain hotspot areas such as Namibia. Discussions for such a proposed military base started with Namibia during 2014.

David Phillips, Director of

Earth Island Institute's Int'l Marine Mammal Project stated: "Granting this permit would be catastrophic for orcas and other dolphins. These blood dolphin traders leave a trail of death and depletion. And the orcas and dolphins they capture face inhumane treatment and shortened lives in concrete tanks."

There isn't much time to turn the tide on this dangerous plan.

South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary: Will IWC Act?

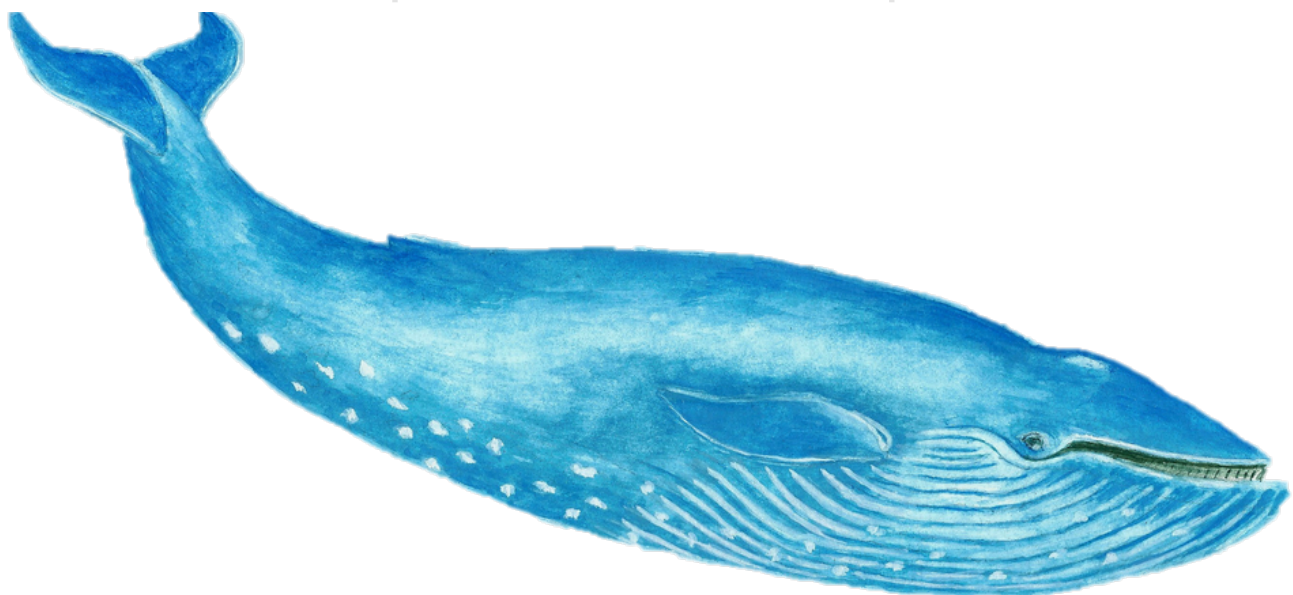
Once again, the government of Brazil, Gabon, Argentina, South Africa and Uruguay are asking the IWC to vote on establishing a whale sanctuary in the South Atlantic, "to promote the biodiversity, conservation and non-lethal utilization of whale resources in the South Atlantic Ocean."

The proposal notes pointedly that: "The South Atlantic Ocean has been the scene of severe exploitation of most of the species of large whales, not only by coastal whaling, but in more recent decades by pelagic fleets foreign to the region and largely detached from the South Atlantic nations' legitimate interests in the

management of whale resources."

The Sanctuary was first proposed by Brazil in 1998, and has been discussed by the IWC since 2001.

Fifteen years of consideration seems plenty of discussion to ECO. Will the IWC finally act in Slovenia this year?



Threats to Whales

The Scientific Committee of the IWC met in Slovenia this summer, in preparation for the meeting of the IWC.

Among many other issues, the Committee reviewed several whale sanctuaries established by the IWC, especially a proposal for a new sanctuary in the South Atlantic Ocean and to review the existing Southern Ocean Sanctuary.

One of the considerations of the Committee was threats to whales in the area, which provides a good summary of threats to whales worldwide. The Committee did not include commercial whaling, as such whaling is outlawed now by the IWC and would in any event be outlawed in a whale sanctuary.

However, the government of Japan, for one, continues to kill whales in the Southern Ocean Sanctuary, which takes up the Antarctic Ocean. Japan's Fisheries Agency claims to be killing whales for scientific study, but that excuse has been a very transparent way to

get around the moratorium on commercial whaling and continue killing whales – the meat and other products are still sold in Japan.

With regard to the whale sanctuaries, the Scientific Committee listed the threats as:

- Climate change
- Fishery interactions
- Shipping
- Oil, gas and mining exploration and exploitation
- Pollution

For the Antarctic whales, the Committee notes that the main threats as harvest of krill for human and animal consumption and climate change (including ocean acidification), induced by the build up of “greenhouse” gases in the atmosphere such as carbon dioxide and ozone, Earth's two poles are heating up faster than any other portion of the globe,

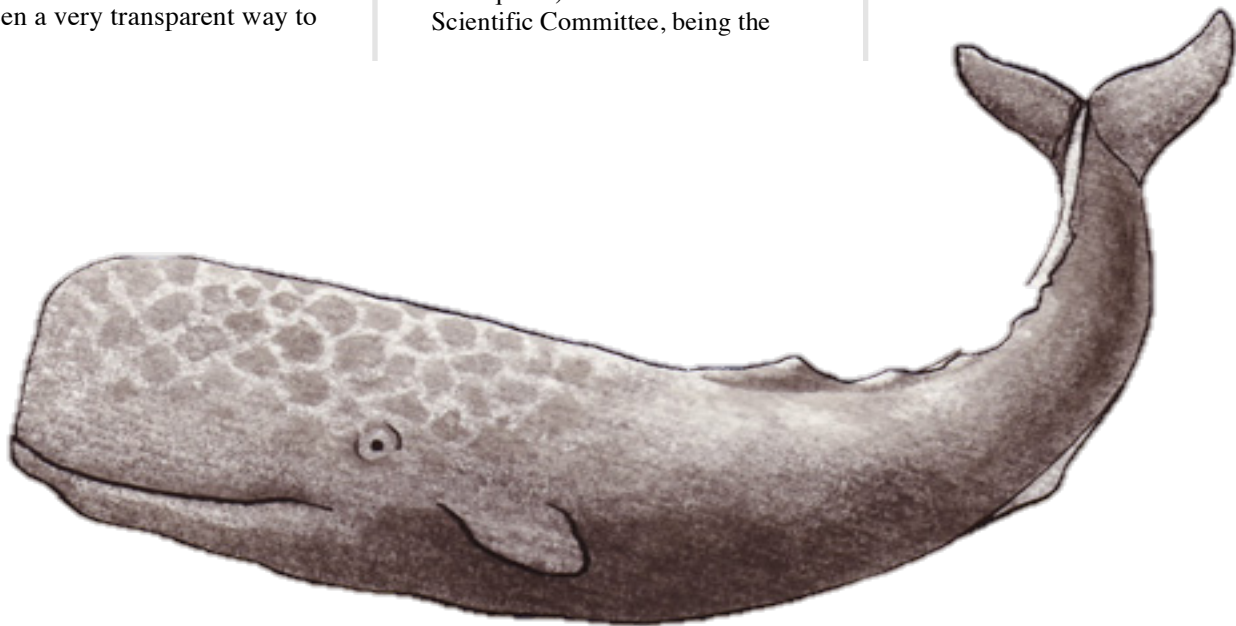
Whale sanctuaries designated by the IWC can only protect whales from exploitation by humans (and, in the case of the rapacious Japan government, even that protection is inadequate!). But the IWC and the Scientific Committee, being the

world's go-to experts on whales, can broadcast their concerns and improve the prospects for whales with other governments and other international treaties.

The IWC can also conduct and/or support research on whales (the kind of research that does no harm to whales, e.g. non-lethal research), providing information for action by other governments and treaties.

Of course, whale sanctuaries are just one way to protect whales and their ocean habitat. Much more work needs to avoid whale entanglements in fishing nets, for example, and to avoid loud undersea noises that can kill whales, such as from intense military sonars and oil exploration airguns. Pollution continues to plague many cetaceans, as the ocean builds up toxic chemicals that enter the food chain.

It is way past time to save our oceans and prevent the collapse of the global environment that sustains whales and us.



Will Japan Stop Whaling in Time for the Tokyo 2020

Japan continues to kill whales and dolphins, in spite of objections from the IWC, the ICJ ruling against them, and the embarrassing documentary “The Cove”.

Japan remains unmoved. Powerful rural legislators have joined with the Japan Fisheries Agency, the fishing industry and fishermen’s unions in opposing any end to whaling and dolphin hunting.

In fact, it is all nonsense. Few Japanese eat whale or dolphin meat anymore, despite clumsy Fisheries Agency attempts from time to time to mount pro-eating whale meat advertising and publicity stunts. Frozen whale meat stack up in warehouses unsold; the meat is turned into jerky and pet food to get rid of it. The claim that whaling and dolphin hunting are “traditions” is very weak, as industrial whaling did not begin in Japan until the beginning of the 20th century (often with opposition from local Japanese fishermen who resented the blood and offal shore whaling stations dumped in fishing ports), the Antarctic trips not starting until the 1930’s. Dolphin hunting is even more tenuous: Taiji’s “traditional” dolphin drive hunts, depicted in “The Cove”, did not begin until 1969.

Japan has bigger fish to fry, if you will excuse the pun. The conservative government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has repeatedly endorsed whaling and issues permits for dolphin hunters like clockwork. They should reconsider. In 2020, Tokyo will be hosting the summer Olympics. The world will focus on Japan, and Japan will have an extraordinary opportunity on the world stage to restore prestige lost through years of its ongoing whaling and dolphin drive hunts.

On that world stage, the slaughter of innocent whales and dolphins, anathema to most of the world’s people and governments, would send a jarring note of Japan’s unwillingness to cooperate with the world bodies like the World Court and the IWC. This need not be the case.

The Olympics are all about cooperation and celebration. The slaughter of whales and dolphins is not an Olympic event. Does Japan really need such tarnished marks on its national reputation?

We are told in antiquity that Greek warriors laid down their arms and ceased wars in order to join the Olympic competitions, upon which our modern Olympics are based. It’s long overdue for Japanese policy makers and hunters to lay down their deadly harpoons and spikes and to join the rest of the world in ending the exploitation of these intelligent and remarkable beings. Country after country, some having longer “traditions” of whaling and dolphin hunting than Japan, have ceased such activities.

The September 1st beginning of another season of dolphin hunting is upon us. In December, the Japanese whaling fleet will set sail again for Antarctic waters. Will the Japan government remain intransigent?

A gesture of international cooperation and goodwill by Japan towards whale and dolphins would have immense global value.

With four years to go before the 2020 Olympics, now is the time for Japan to start phasing out dolphin hunting and whaling.

Original blog appeared on Huffington Post
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-j-palmer/will-japan-stop-whaling-a_b_11899088.html

New IWC Book

ECO is proud to announce Dr. Sidney Holt’s new book, “Save the Whale! Memoirs of a Whale Hugger”.

Sidney tells us: *The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) is the publisher, and some editing and fact checking has been done by Leslie Busby, Kieran Mulvaney, and Vassili Papastavrou.*

The book is largely biographical, focused on my involvement in ‘Saving the Whale’, beginning in 1962 and more or less ending in 2005, so covering the Committee of Three, the UN moratorium on sperm whaling, the securing of an indefinite moratorium on all commercial whaling, and declaration of the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary.

My roles have been in the science assessment, and political, representing at various times FAO of the UN, IUCN, UNEP, and the Governments of the Republic of Seychelles and Italy, and advisor to the delegation of France, and also serving from time to time as observer for IFAW and ILPC.

Copies should be available soon.

