

# Eco

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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## Polls Apart

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has commissioned a series of recent polls showing that many small nations currently following Japan's lead in favor of whaling do not have the support of their own citizens. Perhaps this is the reason that many such countries support a secret ballot?

"The evidence is overwhelming," states Dr. Susan Lieberman of WWF.

"Governments are ignoring public opinion and claiming to vote for whaling on behalf of their citizens."

Added Dr. Lieberman: "Commercial whaling will not help alleviate poverty nor help coastal communities—it doesn't matter how many times you state it, it doesn't make it true."

According to the poll, the public opposes commercial whaling by 64% in the Marshall Islands, 64% in Tuvalu, 47% in Kiribati (with 14% saying they

"don't know"), 76% in Palau, and 72% in the Solomon Islands. In five Caribbean countries polled, none had a majority of the public in support of commercial whaling.

Why, WWF asks, are delegates from all these countries supporting the Japanese Fisheries Agency and whaling when their people say *no*?

To see the survey and other information on IWC matters, visit WWF's site, [www.panda.org/species/iwc/](http://www.panda.org/species/iwc/).

## Japan Loses Vote on Small Cetaceans

Yesterday, despite concerns that Japan had bought a majority of votes within the Commission using international fisheries aid, the IWC narrowly defeated Japan's resolution to remove the issue of small cetaceans from the agenda later in the week. By two votes, the Commission agreed to retain the item.

Japan had boasted before the meeting that they had 36 nations lined up in support of their position. But they were only able to muster 30 delegations to vote for dumping discussion of small

cetacean issues, versus 32 votes in favor of the small cetacean item. Denmark, to their credit (as they often vote with the pro-whaling bloc) abstained.

Since 1974, the IWC Scientific Committee has discussed and made recommendations on numerous issues involving small cetaceans. Often the issue of exploitation of small cetaceans is bound up in commercial whaling issues. (The Japanese village of Taiji, for example, historically conducted commercial whaling and is asking the IWC for permission to whale again for

minke whales. The village is also notorious for their cruel drive fisheries that kill thousands of dolphins annually.) Small cetaceans are as important as large cetaceans.

Yet, the Japanese delegation refused to allow the issue to pass without a vote, called by the exasperated Chairman Henrik Fischer. More than an hour was wasted voting on whether or not to discuss small cetaceans—which probably exceeds the amount of time the Commission will actually spend discussing the item when it comes up later in the week.

## Japanese Company Nissui Caves In

On Friday, March 31st, in response to a series of international consumer boycotts, the Japanese company Nissui, owner of whaling ships and a whale meat cannery, announced they would divest their whaling company assets and no longer participate in Japan's controversial "scientific" whaling scheme.

Nissui owns part of Sealord Tuna, based in New Zealand, and Gorton's Seafoods in the US. Greenpeace, Humane Society of the US, the Environmental Investigation Agency, and other groups instituted a boycott of Gorton's fish products in the US and UK last year. Earth Island Institute and Greenpeace launched a boycott against

Sealord Tuna in New Zealand last fall, urging the company to divest its whaling industry activities. Most observers view Japan's scientific whaling scheme as a ruse to keep up commercial whaling, as the Nissui Company benefits from the government subsidy of their whaling fleet and cannery, while the meat products from the dead whales are sold on the Japanese market.

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## Transparency International Blasts IWC Vote Buying

The distinguished NGO Transparency International, which has led the international effort to address corruption in national governments, has expressed concern about the corruption of the IWC through vote trading.

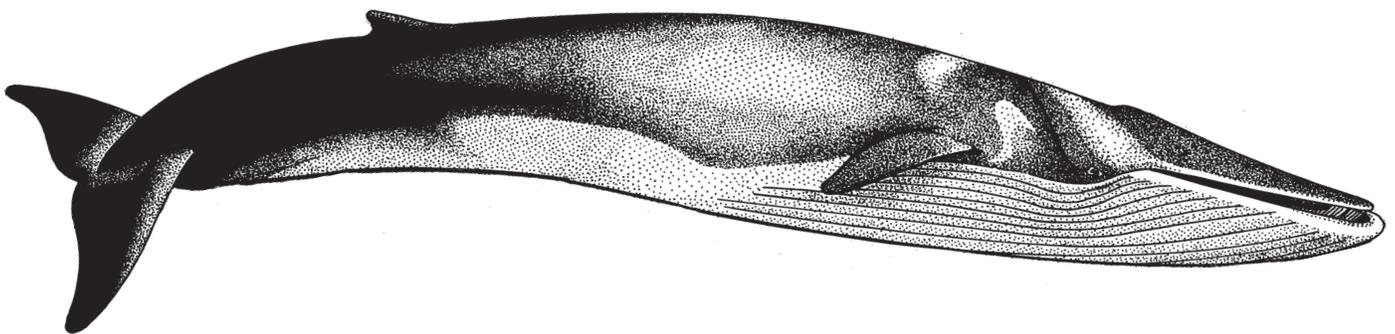
Andrea Figari, Programme Manager for TI, issued a statement on June 12th complaining that vote trading within the IWC threatens whale conservation

protections, such as the international moratorium on commercial whaling and the establishment of the Antarctic Ocean Whale Sanctuary.

Figari noted that "(i)n numerous statements public officials have admitted to exerting or accepting influence to vote in one direction at past IWC meetings. Vote buying was discussed in the IWC meeting in 2004."

TI "calls on the IWC to establish the necessary means to investigate and clarify these allegations, so that the Commission can dedicate its time to the work for which it was established."

ECO seconds TI's proposal - the IWC must itself clean up the stench of corruption or risk losing all credibility in international circles.



### What is Normal??

The Japanese Fisheries Agency's Joji Morishita announced yesterday at an early morning press conference that this year the operative word for Japan at the IWC is "normalization." Japan wishes to "normalize" the IWC, as currently the IWC needs to be saved, as opposed to saving the whales. Mr. Morishita complained that the IWC is too polarized and that there is no room for negotiations. He further repeated his oft-quoted threat to leave the IWC in "four or five years", unless Japan sees positive evidence of "progress" at this meeting.

In fact, it is the Japanese Fisheries Agency, which has deliberately polarized

the IWC and repeatedly ignored IWC resolutions and the Schedule by pursuing commercial whaling throughout the world's oceans using bad science as their excuse. Peer-reviewed scientific publications have not accepted any of Japan's so-called scientific studies. Nor has Japan helped the current climate of polarization, as they repeatedly harangue other countries, denounce the Commission when they do not get their way, and buy voting support from corrupt small nations to support whaling. And, of course, Japan repeatedly threatens to walk out of the IWC, which is not very helpful to "normalization" of anything.

ECO does not believe that the behavior of the Japanese delegation can be termed "normal" in any way.

Later in the Plenary session, Mr. Morishita refused to allow any amendment or clarification to their "normalization" agenda item, stating that he would explain what the Japanese Fisheries Agency meant by "normalization" later when the agenda item came up.

Australian Delegate Ian Campbell suggested that rather than "normalize" the IWC (whatever "normalize" means) Australia prefers to "modernize" the IWC, a much better term to cure what ails the Commission.

### Which Way Will the Votes Go?

Reports are that Togo, another supporter of Japan's Fisheries Agency, arrived yesterday afternoon and will participate in Commission votes. Rumors are that the Senegalese

delegation will arrive today.

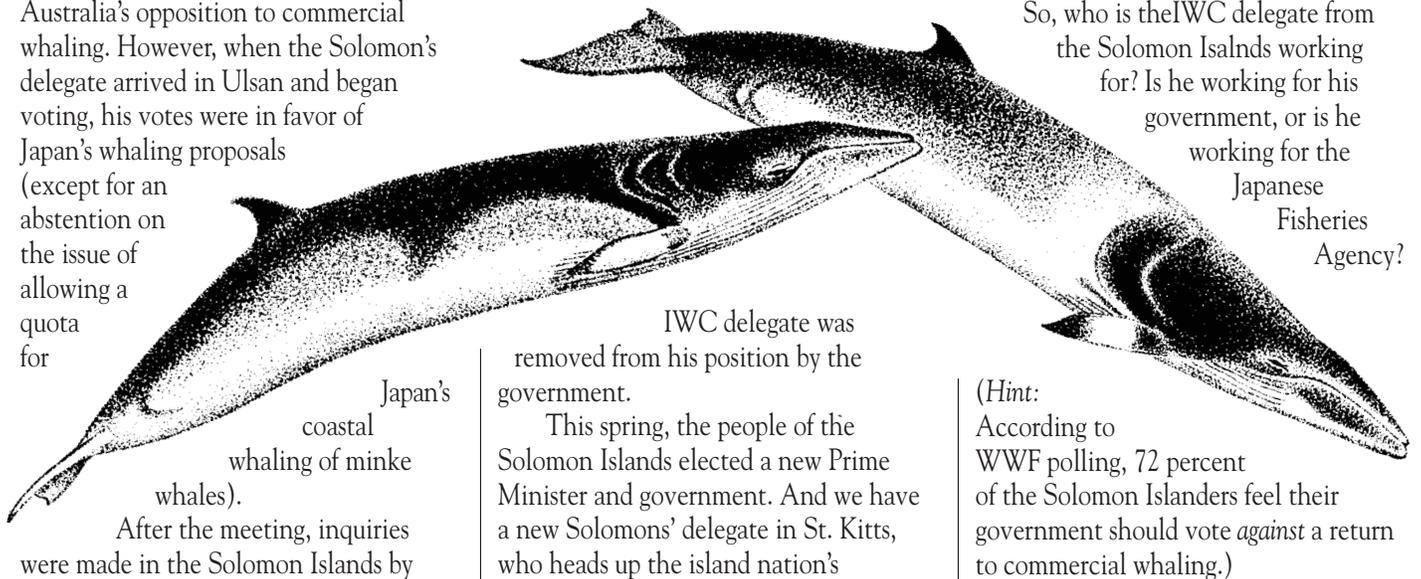
That suggests the remainder of the IWC meeting will come down to one or two votes on either side, depending on the issue, or result in tie votes.

## Eco

ECO is published on the occasion of the 58th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission.

## More Tales from the Solomon Islands

At last year's IWC meeting, many will recall that the government of the Solomon Islands told representatives from Australia that they would support Australia's opposition to commercial whaling. However, when the Solomon's delegate arrived in Ulsan and began voting, his votes were in favor of Japan's whaling proposals (except for an abstention on the issue of allowing a quota for



Japan's coastal whaling of minke whales).

After the meeting, inquiries were made in the Solomon Islands by

Earth Island Institute and other NGOs—why did the Solomons' IWC delegate ignore his own Prime Minister?

Responding to these charges, the

IWC delegate was removed from his position by the government.

This spring, the people of the Solomon Islands elected a new Prime Minister and government. And we have a new Solomons' delegate in St. Kitts, who heads up the island nation's

fisheries agency.

But this *new* delegate voted with Japan to remove the discussion of small cetaceans from the agenda, and, despite coming from a democracy, he abstained from voting on secret ballots.

So, who is the IWC delegate from the Solomon Islands working for? Is he working for his government, or is he working for the Japanese Fisheries Agency?

(Hint: According to WWF polling, 72 percent of the Solomon Islanders feel their government should vote *against* a return to commercial whaling.)

## Stop the Dall's Porpoise Slaughter

Environmentalists have charged that Japan fishermen have slaughtered at least 350,000 Dall's porpoises since commercial whaling was banned in 1986. It is expected, according to Environmental Investigation Agency and Campaign Whale, that 17,700 will be killed this year for meat.

EIA senior campaigner Clare Perry charges that "Japan is trying to hide this hunt by using its voting power to stop any discussion in the IWC. This makes a mockery of Japan's claim that it wants to manage whales sustainably and based on scientific advice."

The Scientific Committee has repeatedly expressed concerns that

Japan's porpoise slaughter is not sustainable, that basic information in the status of the Dall's stocks are lacking, and that quotas are set too high by Japan's Fisheries Agency. The Scientific Committee has expressed its concerns twelve times in the last sixteen years.

Japan has studiously ignored the scientific concerns.

"The Dall's porpoise is being slaughtered at a rate similar to that which pushed so many whale species to extinction," says Campaign Whale Director Andy Ottaway. "The IWC must act before Dall's porpoises are wiped out in Japanese waters."

## Once Again, No Secret Ballots

In another defeat for Japan and its client nations, the IWC defeated Japan's annual request to hide Commission votes from the public and the media. A secret ballot for IWC resolutions and Schedule amendments was defeated

thirty-three to thirty.

It is still a mystery why democratic government delegations believe they can get away with hiding their votes on whaling issues.

*Nissui Caves, continued from page one*

Environmentalists warned that this action by Nissui will not end the Japanese government's perverse support for slaughtering whales—the Japanese government will now take over the

entire "scientific whaling" scheme. But it shows that consumers can profoundly influence the protection of global species by making important choices in the market place. Other companies with ties to the exploitation of whales, dolphin-

deadly tuna, and other endangered species should take heed that such crimes against nature will not be tolerated by consumers.

## Silencing the Singing Whales

The toll of modern whalers is on the increase, and one of the targets is the magnificent humpback whale, a singer of songs in the ocean depths. Dr. Roger Payne brought to the world the beauty and the mystery of the humpback whales' singing, putting out a best-selling record in the 1970's of whale songs.

"The pace of the song," Dr. Payne wrote, "is very grand and extended and appears to me to be set by the slow rhythm of ocean swells — the rhythm of the sea." Today, thousands of tourists around the world enrich local economies to see whales in their natural habitats,

especially the popular singing humpbacks.

But commercial whaling, banned by the IWC, never really came to an end. Norway objected outright, and, using an "objection" procedure under the whaling convention, the country began killing whales in the North Atlantic, claiming that far more whales were present than most scientists believe.

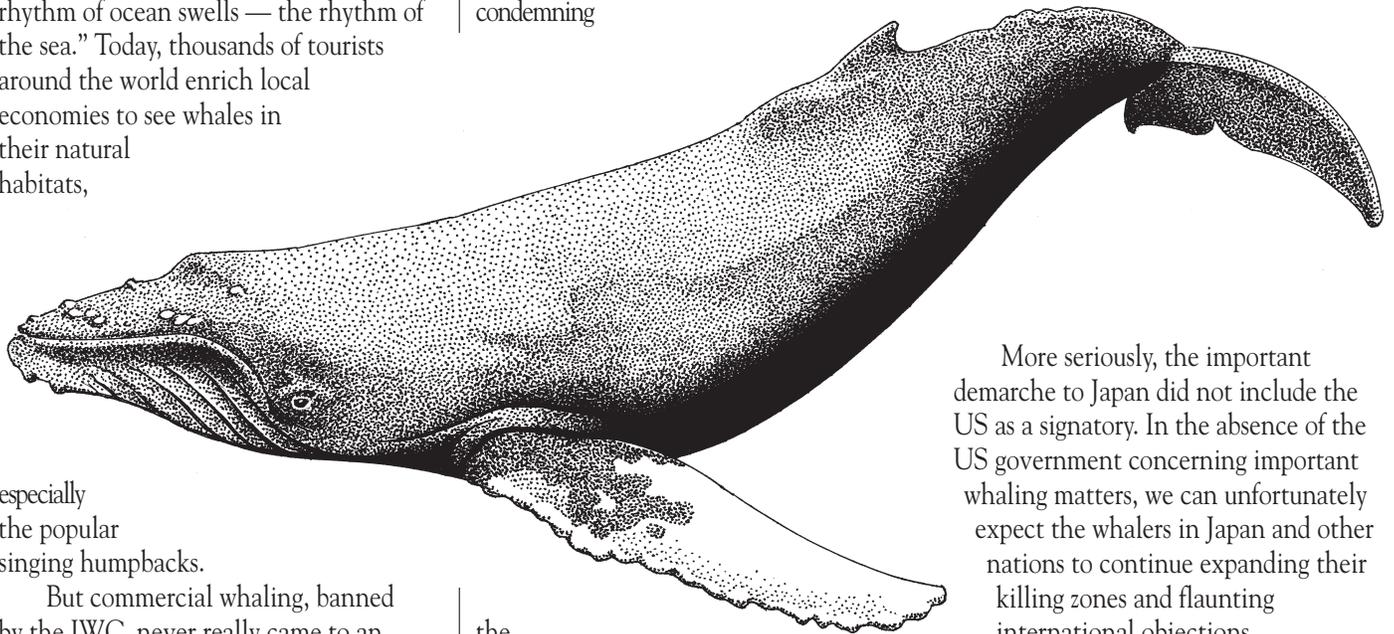
Even more outrageous, the government of Japan promptly bought out their old commercial whaling vessels and began conducting "research" whaling, insisting that their only goal was science. However, meat from the whale victims is now sold on the open market in Japan in order to avoid "wasting" the products of such dubious "science."

Just before last year's meeting of the

IWC in South Korea, Japan announced new targets in the Antarctic. In addition to more than doubling the number of minke whales, Japan boldly announced that they would also start killing fin and humpback whales, again as part of their metastasizing "science" project. Up to fifty of the singing whales would be killed in the Antarctic.

There were of course objections. In fact, the IWC has repeatedly passed resolutions condemning

Administration. Since President George W. Bush came into power, environmentalists have observed the US IWC delegation to take a less active role during IWC meetings, while still verbally supporting protection for all whales. Behind the scenes, the US delegation has pushed for adoption of new provisions to assess whale populations for future commercial exploitation, termed the Revised Management Scheme (RMS).



the Japanese science slaughter as unnecessary, and in 2005, the IWC again asked that Japan end the killing. Japan has refused.

In January, 17 nations, led by Brazil and New Zealand, filed a formal demarche with the government of Japan, protesting the whaling scheme and insisting Japan halt the slaughter. Stated the New Zealand government: "There is no scientific justification to use lethal methods to provide information on whale populations." Japan will not comply.

Frustrating as Japan's dogged embrace of killing whales can be, a new problem has surfaced: The Bush

More seriously, the important demarche to Japan did not include the US as a signatory. In the absence of the US government concerning important whaling matters, we can unfortunately expect the whalers in Japan and other nations to continue expanding their killing zones and flaunting international objections.

So far, the recovering humpback whales off Hawai'i and New England are not targets. As far as we know the Southern Hemisphere whale populations do not mingle with their northern kin. But they do sing — Dr. Payne and other scientists believe some of the lower notes of the humpback whale songs can travel across ocean basins. What will the singing whales of Antarctica be saying to their northern cousins when the whaling vessels start bearing down on them again?

And how long before the whaling vessels go after Northern Hemisphere humpbacks, too? And why is the Bush Administration silent when the singing whales are threatened?