

ECO

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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Secret Scheme to Support Commercial Whaling

What are the US delegation and its leader, William Hogarth, up to? Every US delegation, from Richard Nixon to Jimmy Carter to Bill Clinton to Ronald Reagan, has strongly upheld opposition to commercial whaling. Now the US, in the last year of President George Bush's presidency, is trying to cut a deal behind closed doors to allow Japan to engage in commercial

whaling in spite of the IWC moratorium.

While the US delegation continues to give lip service to support for the whaling moratorium, Dr. Hogarth has apparently been negotiating, according to the Japanese, to reinstate the "normalization" of the IWC and a return to commercial whaling, even if such whaling is called something else.

According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, "a backroom deal designed to restore Japan's right to commercial whaling is behind its decision to spare humpback whales from its Antarctic hunt.

"Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Masahiko Kourumura, has detailed a bargain with the US chairman of the (IWC) to 'review' the contentious kill of humpbacks from Australian stocks."

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Iceland and Japan's Illegal Trade in Whale Meat

Question: Why were the Icelanders crying?

Answer: You'd cry too if all you had to eat was blubber.

OK, you've heard that one before...

But trade in illegal whale blubber became a reality when, just weeks before the start of the IWC meeting, Iceland and Norway shipped 80 tons

of endangered fin whale meat and 5 tons of minke whale meat to Japan.

Trade in whale meat is banned by both the IWC and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. Conveniently, Japan, Norway and Iceland have refused to recognize the two treaties.

Kristjan Loftsson, the notorious CEO of Iceland's whaling company,

defended the trade, apparently conducted by him with the blessings of Iceland's fisheries agency without the knowledge of the rest of Iceland's government. It is not even clear if Japan was aware of the trade, with the Japanese embassy in Oslo claiming that no import license was approved by or requested from Japan.

In a new study published by Icelandic scientists, working for the

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Japan's Outlaw Whalers Massacred Chile's Endangered Whales

Japanese whaling companies evaded the IWC ban on killing blue, humpback and right whales by setting up unregulated whaling stations on the southern coast of Chile in the mid-1960's, according to historical records.

More than 700 of the highly-endangered marine mammals were harpooned in Chilean waters by Japanese catcher boats over a four-year period between 1964 and 1968, virtually wiping out the remaining stocks in the eastern South Pacific.

Chile was not a member of the IWC at the time, so any whaling there was outside of IWC quotas or bans.

The Japanese whalers moved into Chile in 1964 because the IWC that year banned all blue whaling. For years, Japan had bitterly resisted proposals to halt the killing of blue whales despite the plummeting catches of the huge animal. The Japanese government only acquiesced after the seven Japanese pelagic fleets—including more than 100

catcher boats—could not find a single blue whale in the 1963-64 Antarctic season.

But the Japanese whalers knew that a remnant population of blue whales survived in the sheltering fjords of southern Chile, the mating and calving grounds for whales. So beginning in 1964 the Japanese government quietly licensed its whaling companies to set up shore stations along the Chilean coast. Sources in Tokyo report that the

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Spare Yen?

Don't be surprised if you see representatives of the Japan Institute of Cetacean Research outside the hotel begging for money.

A story in the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* revealed that the whaling folks owed the Japanese government 1 billion yen.

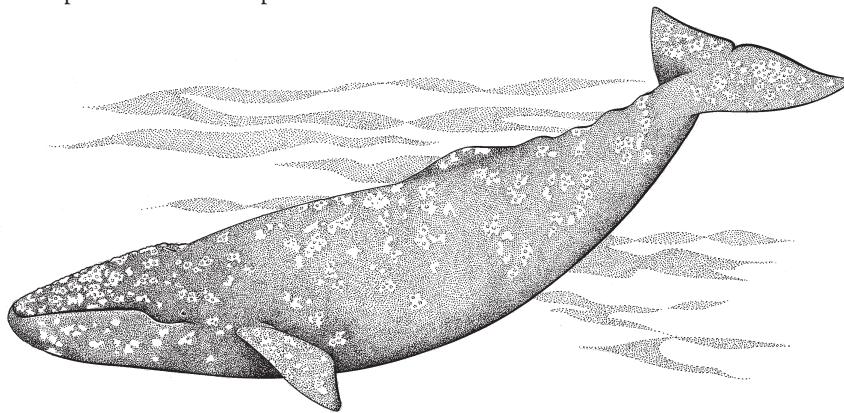
Apparently, since 2000, the government affiliated Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation has loaned expensive interest-free loans

to the research whaling scheme, to be paid back by sales of whale meat. In 2006, the Institute was loaned 3.6 billion yen to finance the "scientific" whaling operations in Antarctica.

However, a glut of whale meat (resulting in a drop in price of 20%), accidents aboard the whaling vessels in the Antarctic (including a devastating fire), plus harassment by Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd

Conservation Society boats led to a severe decrease in meat revenues. The Institute posted a loss of 700 million yen in 2006, with additional tens of millions of yen in payments to the government going unpaid.

Japanese taxpayers may want an explanation. As few eat whale meat on the Japanese market, just what are Japanese taxes going for?



Chilean President Outlaws Whaling

To a unanimous ovation of Congress, Chilean President Michelle Bachelet announced that she would send legislation to parliament banning all whaling in that country's waters and the establishment of a new whale sanctuary.

President Bachelet also stated Chile's strong opposition to scientific whaling as conducted by Japan. "Chile will oppose any capture and death of whales with scientific purposes during the next meeting of the International Whaling Commission."

Massacres, concluded from page one Japanese government even financed the construction of the factories where whale carcasses were towed for processing.

A ruthless massacre of 690 blue whales took place over the next four years. Mother blue whales and their calves were pursued deep into the long fjords, where the still, icy blue waters were stained red by the harpooned giants. And even rarer whales were hunted down: 13 humpbacks and 3 Southern Right whales, both species "protected" under IWC rules.

The outlaw whalers did not limit themselves to highly-endangered species. The Japanese killer boats also harpooned more than 1,600 fin and sei whales, and more than 1,500 sperm whales, all outside the IWC quota system.

Japanese refrigerator ships transported all the whale meat and oil back to Japan, where government agencies raised no objections to the imports of "protected" species. The

Chilean shore stations shut down in 1969 when the local whale populations had reached "commercial extinction," a coldly economic term used to describe a resource that is too depleted to exploit profitably.

Tens of thousands of blue, humpback, fin and right whales once populated Chile's southern waters where they wintered after feeding each summer in the krill-rich Antarctic seas. The vast pelagic whaling fleets of the last century, led by Japan, the Soviet Union and Norway, systematically destroyed the great whale stocks of the Southern Ocean. And then the Japanese whalers finished off the few survivors hiding along Chile's coast.

The Japanese government should be called to account for this tragedy. Its complicity in licensing and financing the outlaw whaling in Chile—and authorizing of import of the plundered whale meat and oil—spreads the bloody stains from the Chilean fjords all the way to Tokyo harbor.

ECO

ECO is published by Earth Island Institute's International Marine Mammal Project at the 60th meeting of the International Whaling Commission in Santiago, Chile, on behalf of environmental and animal welfare organizations around the globe.

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US Congress Opposes All Whaling

Two resolutions have been introduced into the US Congress opposing all whaling. The resolutions state: "commercial whaling in any form, including special permit whaling and any coastal or community-based whaling, undermines the conservation mandate of the Convention and

impairs the Commission's ability to function effectively."

Rep. Nick Rahall, chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, has introduced HCR 350. In the Senate, Senator John Kerry and Barbara Boxer introduced SCR 86.

The resolutions include the sense

of Congress that the US must "oppose any initiative that would result in any new, Commission-sanctioned coastal or community-based whale hunting, even if the whale hunting is portrayed as noncommercial and including any commercial whaling by coastal communities that does not qualify as aboriginal subsistence whaling..."

Both resolutions are expected to pass with unanimous support.

EU United in Opposing Whaling

On June 5th, the European Union voted unanimously, with one abstention, to oppose any commercial whaling at the IWC meeting this year. (Denmark, which has whaling issues in the Faroe Islands and Greenland, was the one abstention.)

The 27-member nations called for continued support for the commercial whaling moratorium, for new whale sanctuaries, and to encourage non-lethal whale research.

Stated the EU's Executive Commission: "There is no need to

kill to obtain scientific information about whales," a strong rebuke to the "research" whaling scheme of the Japan Fisheries Agency.

"The international ban on commercial whaling must stay and more efforts need to be made internationally to protect whale species," the EU stated.

US Deal, concluded from page one

The *Herald* article notes that "Japan wants to 'normalise' the organisation by returning to its 1946 purpose of regulating whaling, and lifting the global moratorium against the industry..."

NGO participants in phone calls with Dr. Hogarth have received similar hints of an impending deal that would allow commercial whaling and allow a new category, "community-based whaling", that would bypass the moratorium and allow Japan to add commercial whaling for minke whales to their already expansive annual coastal dolphin slaughter.

Japan's IWC leader Minoru Morimoto stated bluntly, in an editorial in the *Herald* on 1/16/08, that "(w)haling will continue around the world and Australia has a choice: participate in a calm and rational manner in discussions to manage whale resources within the

commission or be left out of a new organization that will manage whaling..."

"I fully respect the right of Australians to oppose whaling for

oppose commercial whaling, yet also alluded to efforts to reach consensus in the IWC to "move forward" and "reduce killing of whales" rather than end killing of whales altogether.

As Patrick Ramage of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) stated, speaking for the US conservation community in his testimony before the Committee, "the good people of Japan and the citizens of the United States share at least one problem in common: the approaches currently pursued by our respective delegations to the IWC do not accurately reflect the will of our people."

Ramage added that he could not conceive the US ever buying into an agreement to resume commercial whaling as outlined by Hogarth. Such a deal would turn 60 years of whale conservation on its head, would violate the US Marine Mammal Protection Act, and would be entirely inconsistent with US public opinion, he stated.



some 'cuddly' reason," concluded Morimoto, "but this does not give them the right to coerce others to end a perfectly legal and culturally significant activity..."

Dr. Hogarth dodged questions about any deals at a recent Congressional hearing before the House Natural Resources Committee. He insisted the US would continue to

IWC Vote Buying

As if it were still a secret, revelations of the continuing vote buying at the IWC—essentially, Japan offering fisheries aid to small, poor countries in exchange for their attendance and support for whaling at the IWC—continued this year.

National Geographic News revealed that a 1987 report on a symposium held with Pacific island countries “recorded a representative of the Fisheries Agency of Japan telling participants that money to support fisheries comes with certain stipulations.”

According to National Geographic News, the report states: “When the Japanese government selects the countries to which it

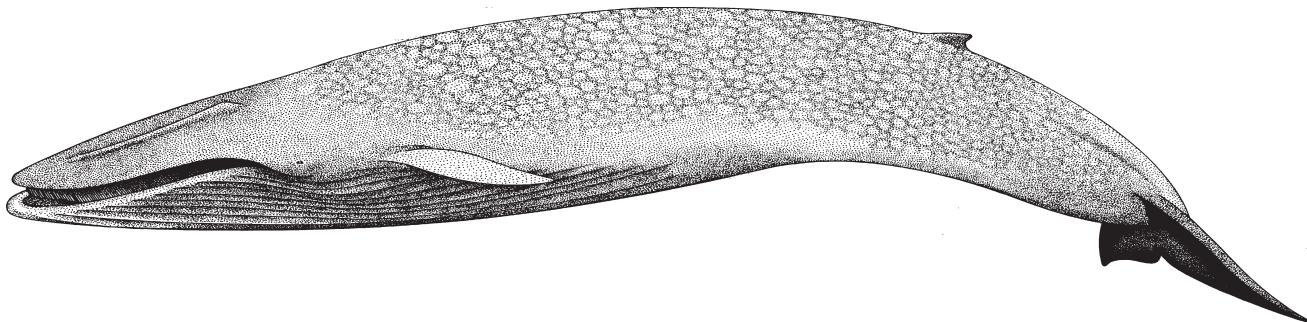
provides fisheries grants, criteria includes that the recipient country must have a fisheries agreement with Japan, and it must take a supportive position to Japan in various international organizations.”

Prime Minister Derek Skua of the Solomon Islands confirmed, according to the *Melbourne Age*, “We are not attending (the IWC Intercessional in London) because usually Japan pays for our attendance, but we refused their assistance and therefore we have not gone because we can’t afford it.” The minister spoke at a joint press conference in the Solomons with Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

And just a few weeks ago, the Prime Minister of Dominica, Roosevelt Skerrit, announced that his

government would no longer support Japan’s position in favor of whaling at the IWC. Stated Minister Skerrit, according to Associated Press, the decision is “in the best interest of Dominica.” The story noted that Dominica has received considerable aid from Japan over the past eight years for its fisheries.

Japan is still trying to recruit new countries to support it. *National Geographic News* revealed that, in early March, Japan had invited representatives from 12 developing countries, several that are not members of the IWC, including Eritrea, Congo, Tanzania, Angola, and Micronesia, to Tokyo to gain “understanding of Japan’s position on sustainable whaling.”



Illegal Trade, concluded from page one Icelandic Marine Research Institute, sponsored by the Icelandic government, the minke whale population off Iceland is now estimated to be only 10,000 to 15,000, based on sightings surveys, only 24% of the number estimated in 2001.

The return of Iceland to commercial whaling had already been criticized by many in Iceland, including Iceland’s Foreign Minister, Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladottir, who said: “I believe this is sacrificing long term interests for short term gains, despite the quota being smaller than in previous years.”

Loftsson claims the fin whale

meat was caught in 2006 and kept frozen for export. “I have had lots of calls from Japan asking me where they can buy the fin meat,” he told *Kyodo News*. “It is similar to Kobe beef.” He further told *Kyodo* that he did not expect any problems and that the meat would soon be on supermarket shelves in Japan. He added: “This trade will be mutually beneficial for the three main whaling countries.”

A number of countries were outraged to hear about the illegal trade, coming at a time when the IWC has been engaged in detailed discussions about the future of the IWC and the need for cooperation to find agreement. “The United States is

deeply disappointed in the reports of recent shipments of whale meat to Japanese commercial markets from Iceland and Norway,” stated Kurtis Cooper of the US State Department.

But the import of the whale meat by Japan from Norway and Iceland proves, once again, that whaling countries can never be trusted to abide by any rules whatsoever. Allowing these countries to engage in commercial whaling and trading in whale meat again, in violation of the international moratorium, would not just harm whales killed in a legal manner—it would allow the unfettered slaughter of all whales in all oceans by an industry immune to legal ethics.