

ECO

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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Japan Struggles With Whaling Crisis

The highest levels of the Japanese government are now being compelled to deal with the whaling issue - for the first time since the 1980's when the moratorium was enacted and the United States threatened economic sanctions.

Prime Minister Fukuda and the foreign ministry are desperately attempting to control—and perhaps

resolve—the crisis that was touched off earlier this year when the new Australian government launched a major attack on Japan's Antarctic whaling and environmental groups harassed the whaling fleet.

The crisis comes just as Japan is preparing to host the annual meeting of the G-8 industrial nations next month. Prime Minister Fukuda, who

will project Japan as the global leader in the battle against global warming and its effects, sought to repair Japan's tattered environmental image by commanding that no divisive whaling issues be raised at this week's IWC meeting.

And the United States has been doing Japan's bidding at the IWC by pushing for “compromise” in the decades-long stalemate over whaling.

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Grand Plan in Tatters

Denmark managed to nearly destroy the Grand Plan to “save” the IWC yesterday, two days after it was unveiled, by insisting on a divisive vote of the IWC for its controversial humpback whale quota for Greenland.

As outlined in *ECO* yesterday, the World Society for the Protection of Animals prepared a stunning report for the IWC showing that whale meat in Greenland was readily

available in supermarkets, rather than fulfilling the nutritional needs of local fishing people for aboriginal subsistence.

For years, Denmark has refused to provide the IWC with information on the disposition of whale meat in Greenland to justify continued aboriginal whaling. Instead, Denmark brought their proposal to the Plenary Session yesterday, asking for consensus on allowing Greenlanders to kill (in addition to many other whales and marine mammals they

already kill) ten humpback whales annually for five years.

Under informal agreement all week, the IWC has been proceeding without taking up controversial issues and avoiding any fights. Denmark's insistence on pushing for a Schedule Amendment requiring a three-quarters vote caused havoc in the session.

The European Union announced it had carefully studied the proposal and had agreed that all its countries

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Yet Another Reason to Mistrust Japan Whalers

Japan's IWC delegation assures the Commission members and the world that they are only interested in hunting sustainable whale populations under strict scientific controls.

But the evidence is otherwise.

Repeatedly, DNA analysis by researchers on whale and dolphin meat samples bought in Japanese markets reveals protected species of whales have been killed, processed into meat, and sold to unwary

consumers. These infractions are not reported to the IWC.

Of ninety-nine whale meat products examined since 2006, by a team led by Dr. Scott Baker of Oregon State University, six baleen species have been identified: humpback, fin, sei, Bryde's, North Pacific and Antarctic minke whales. Humpbacks have been protected by the IWC since 1964.

Furthermore, using forensic techniques similar to those used to

identify DNA from individual criminals, the team identified DNA from 15 individual fin whales for sale. But during that period, the Japanese whalers only reported catching 13 fin whales.

In response, the Scientific Committee requested data on fin whale catch DNA from Japan.

The government of Japan has refused this request, despite claiming the whale kill is taking place for the specific purpose of providing scientific data.

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Japan Silent on Dall's Tragedy

During Wednesday's plenary session discussing the Scientific Committee's report on small cetaceans saw 15 countries make strong interventions expressing their concerns

over Japan's Dall's

porpoise hunt, led by the United Kingdom and supported by the US.

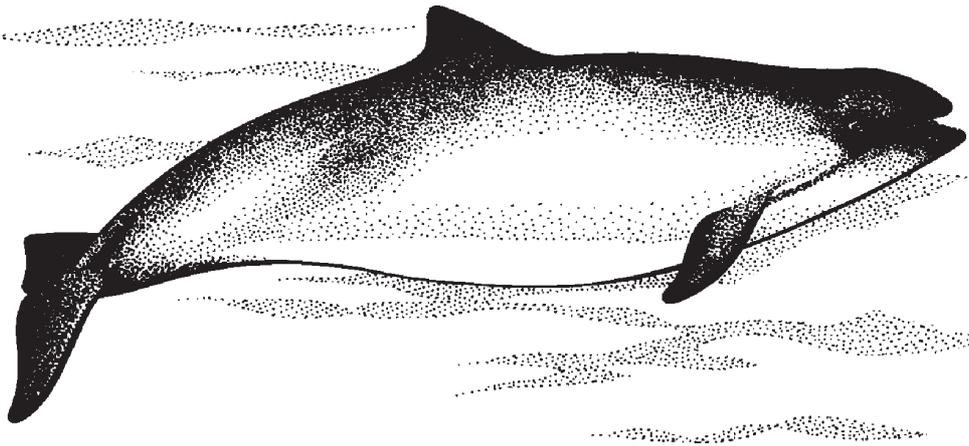
The Japan Fisheries Agency officiates

over the deaths of 20,000+ dolphins and porpoises every year, many killed with the coldest of harpoons.

Portugal's commissioner asked Japan directly if they would implement the recommendations of the Scientific Committee and reduce the Dall's slaughter to sustainable

levels. Sweden also asked if Japan would respond?

But Chairman Hogarth, true to his vision of peaceful relations among his flock, intervened saying: "Japan



has not asked for the floor, so we will move on."

The UK delegate summed up the mood by stating: "I sincerely hope that in the new spirit of cooperation in the IWC, Japan will indicate its willingness to embrace the majority view in this Commission that the

IWC has the mandate to address all small cetaceans, and act accordingly."

Austria made an impassioned intervention, and, referring to the extinction of the baiji in China and the imminent threat of extinction of the vaquita of Mexico, vigorously

insisted that the IWC should recognize what the core IWC issues are: the prevention of extinction. The IWC should intervene where the

Scientific Committee recognizes a directed take is of concern and take action.

The world is waiting for Japan to take the initiative to end their cruel whale, porpoise, and dolphin hunts, once and for all.

Grand Plan, concluded from page one would oppose the Denmark proposal, based on the lack of information

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about nutritional needs in Greenland.

This precipitated quite a good, old-fashioned IWC fight, with whaling nations and their client nations attacking the EU.

Others expressed dire upset for the future of the IWC. One commissioner offered her "condolences" to Chairman Hogarth for the demise of his effort to reach consensus. The Japanese delegation expressed their deep sorrow, saying this was a sad day in the history of the IWC. Iceland added to the hand-wringing by claiming: "This proposal has been harpooned, but it may yet be saved."

During the frothy debate, no one mentioned that many of the countries (especially Japan) castigating the EU were themselves opposed to

approving a quota of bowhead whales for Alaskan Inuit during the IWC meeting in Shimonoseki, Japan. That blocked vote by Japan and company resulted in a crisis resolved in a follow up Intersessional meeting, after there were calls for the US to leave the IWC.

Denmark insisted on a vote, which was duly voted down 29-Aye and 36-No. One surprise: The US voted for the quota, ignoring the issue of meat allocation.

Come to think of it, the US vote is not so strange as it might seem. Didn't the US push a gray whale quota for the Makah tribe in Washington State without ever making the case for subsistence need (since the tribe had flourished for 70 years without whaling)?

Japan is Poisoning Its Own People

The Environmental Investigation Agency has produced a stunning report for IWC 60 on the contamination problems with whale, dolphin and porpoise meat on the Japanese market. Over the past ten years, the report notes, many independent studies and analyses of marine mammal meat have been conducted, all of them showing high levels of mercury, in some cases many times higher than levels recommended by Japanese health agencies.

Yet, no effort has been made by Japan to warn consumers and remove the poisoned meat from markets.

More recently, EIA collected 67 meat samples for analyses in 2006 and 2007. Fifty-two percent of the products exceeded health limits for either mercury, methylmercury or PCBs.

Dall's porpoise blubber contained PCB levels more than eight times higher than Japan's regulatory limit. One packet (of unlabeled meat from an unknown cetacean) was 17 times

higher in mercury and 12 times higher in methylmercury levels than the regulated level.

The EIA investigation also found more than 26% of the products were not correctly labeled as to species or common names for cetaceans.

EIA notes that laws already exist to remove seafood with high mercury levels that pose serious health threats.

EIA concludes by recommending an end to dolphin and porpoise hunts altogether, providing alternative support to fishermen and others who lose work due to the health shutdown.

Crisis, concluded from page one

Japan, which has few friends and even less sympathy in the world, depends on the U.S. to help bail it out of difficult situations that arise in international affairs—like the whaling issue.

Back in 1984, Japan violated the IWC's ban on sperm whaling. When environmental groups threatened legal action to force the U.S. to impose economic sanctions against Japan for the outlaw whaling, the U.S. and Japan suddenly signed a bilateral agreement whereby Japan was exempted from not only the sperm whaling ban but also the general whaling moratorium that went into effect in 1986. In return, Japan promised to end "all whaling" by 1988.

This bilateral agreement, which is still in effect and has the status of a treaty, was openly violated by Japan when it continued whaling beyond 1988. The environmentalists won their lawsuit and the U.S. imposed sanctions: the loss of fishing access to the U.S. 200-mile EEZ. To this day, Japan remains certified by the U.S. as an outlaw whaling nation and cannot fish in U.S. waters.

The U.S. is once again attempting to save Japan's neck by creating the Small Working Group

on the Future of the IWC. This not-small gang of 24 nations will be meeting for years to come to seek an end to the bitter international crisis that now engulfs Japan.

Japan's only recourse is to abandon its pelagic whaling—the deep-sea fleets that have been hunting down whales for the last 22 years in violation of the IWC ban. Until it does so, the nations of the Southern Hemisphere will increase their pressure against the Antarctic whaling, and environmental and animal welfare groups will continue to inflame public opinion worldwide against the illegal whaling.

Several NGOs are now considering a massive, new boycott campaign against Japanese products similar to the boycott in the 1970s that rocked Japanese industry and compelled Japan to abide by IWC quotas.

William Hogarth, the IWC chairman and U.S. commissioner, has been working relentlessly over the past year to cobble together a solution to Japan's misery.

But Japan has a second major cetacean headache, this one exploding right on its shore. An undercover documentary film about the slaughter of dolphins and small whales at the seaside town of Taiji has

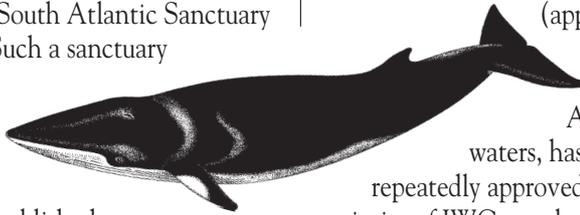
been produced by an American team. Japanese officials have turned white-faced when shown the video, "The Rising." And the Oceanic Preservation Society will release a feature-length 90-minute film about the Taiji killing and toxic dolphin meat worldwide in January. The short video can be viewed at the OPS website: www.opsociety.org.

The new Australian government set off alarms in the corridors of power in Tokyo when Environment Minister Peter Garrett courageously released damning photos of the whale-killing—especially a picture of a dead mother whale and its calf being hauled up the stern slipway of the *Nisshin Maru* factory ship—Japan's outlaw whaling was exposed damningly to the entire world.

Japan's two dominant agencies, the foreign and trade ministries, are aghast at the negative impact of whaling and dolphin-killing on Japan's international image. The influential intellectual community in Japan is vocally criticizing Japanese whaling policy and the hard-line Fisheries Agency. The Japanese news media is beginning to report the dark history and the scandals behind whaling and the trade in poisonous meat.

A South Atlantic Sanctuary for Whales

Chile has joined Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, and many other Latin American countries in proposing a South Atlantic Sanctuary for whales. Such a sanctuary would complement the new Chilean sanctuary, established within the Chilean EEZ on Monday



by President Michelle Bachelet.

The proposed Sanctuary, abutting the Southern Sanctuary (approved by the IWC in 1994) of Antarctic waters, has been repeatedly approved by a majority of IWC members. But the establishment of a sanctuary requires

a 3/4 vote of the IWC membership.

Chile and Brazil have not been discouraged by this continued opposition from a minority of member nations. Indeed, Chile is hosting IWC 60 as part of its continuing efforts to promote the Sanctuary idea.

One thing is for certain—the supporters of the Sanctuary are not going to give up on protecting the whales and the southern oceans.

Burning at the Stake, Take Two

The Russian commissioner revisited his bizarre take on European history on Thursday during the debate over Greenland humpback whales.

Attacking the European Union's consensus opposition to a humpback whale quota for Greenland, the Russian exclaimed: "Europe does not need science. (Europe) is proposing we liquidate the Scientific

Committee."

Copernicus, who was not burned at the stake, must be rolling over in his grave in Poland. Copernicus was a progressive scientist who shattered the religious mythologies about the solar system and introduced the Age of Enlightenment and the study of nature.

The ruthless destruction of the great whales is itself an artifact of the

brutality of the Middle Ages. It is the whalers who are attempting to put modern science and the truth to the torch.

Russian history, from the czars to the commissars (and even to the oligarchs today), records relentless brutality toward heretics.

Copernicus would be standing with the whales and against the senseless butchery if he were alive today—and against the misreading of history.

Baiji, R.I.P.

During Wednesday's report on small cetaceans by the Scientific Committee, the Chinese delegation made a long statement about its efforts to protect the finless porpoise in its river habitat. But we can't be

optimistic about the survival of this species, given the massive economic development, damming and channeling of rivers, and catastrophic pollution across China.

ECO recalls similar promises by China over the past two decades to protect the Baiji, the famed river

dolphin of the mighty Yangtze River. But the monster Three Gorges Dam has turned the Yangtze into an industrial zone and a massive cesspool.

And the Baiji was declared extinct last year.

Rest in peace.

Who? US?

Our friends with the Wise Use Movement [sic] publication *IWMC Conservation Tribune* have lamented that the biggest delegation this year

at the IWC is not Japan, the US or Chile but the "Whales Need US" group, which numbers 53 individuals, by IWMC's count.

ECO would like to point out that "Whales Need US" is a loose

coalition of existing groups in the US of A working on IWC issues for many decades.

And besides, some of us object to being called "individuals."

Mistrust, concluded from page one

Says Patrick Ramage, Whale Program Director of the International Fund for Animal Welfare: "The government of Japan claims it can regulate whaling and the whale meat trade. In truth, it can do neither."

Adios, Santiago Amigos

ECO's editors, assistant editors, artists, proof-readers, technicians, interns, designers, lawyers, and Dr. Sidney Holt bid a fond farewell to our new friends and the warm hospitality

of Chile. We especially salute Chile's enlightened attitude towards the need to protect and promote whales, dolphins and their ocean homes!

See you all in Portugal next year.