

# Eco

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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## Bowheads: The Elephant in the Room

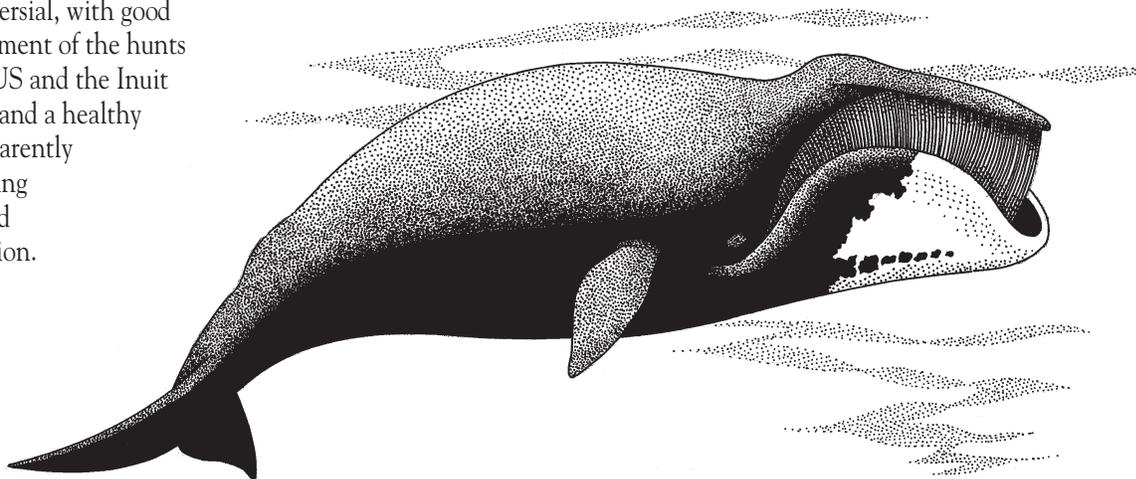
Once again, the US is up in arms about the need for the IWC to focus on bowhead whales and their subsistence harvest by a handful of villages on Alaska's north coast. The awarding of the quota is not particularly controversial, with good management of the hunts by the US and the Inuit people, and a healthy and apparently recovering bowhead population. Some animal welfare NGOs have urged an end to the hunts, concerned with the suffering of bowheads.

But the US delegation will scramble and beg for adoption of this quota, and Alaska's Senators and the one Representative have already introduced legislation to bypass the IWC should the

in perplexity.

The US has "bundled" the bowhead quota with quotas for subsistence whaling by Russia for gray whales and by St. Vincent and Grenadines for humpback whales. "Bundling" is a diplomatic term meaning: "Give Our

Enemies a Harder Target to Shoot At," under the assumption that opposition will be blunted if a unified stand is presented. Sort of like a big school of fish confusing



IWC fail to adopt the quota, and one can only stand by and scratch one's head

and foiling a hungry shark.

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## Japan Rewards Compliant Nations

It has been an open secret at the IWC that Japan rewards nations that vote for whaling with funding, including development aid.

Now, a new scientific study published in the journal *Foreign Policy Analysis* has confirmed the obvious: Japan puts more funds into nations that support its position at the IWC.

Drs. Jonathan Strand and John Tuman of the University of Nevada conducted an extensive review of voting behavior in the IWC, correlating

support for Japan's position on whaling with increased foreign aid, termed official development assistance (ODA).

"Taken together, these results suggest that microstate members in the IWC received more real Japanese aid, on average, in comparison with non-microstate IWC members and other recipients that are not members of the IWC. This finding lends support to the proposition that Japanese ODA concentrates in IWC microstates because aid officials expect that

microstates are economically vulnerable and are therefore open to aid inducements to vote against the moratorium."

The analysis focuses on microstates that are presumably more subject to influence from ODA than larger nations that are involved in the IWC but still receive some aid from Japan. Accordingly, Strand and Tuman separated the voting records and ODA receipts of microstates from larger nation members of the IWC.

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## Sanctuary: Mind the Gap

The IWC member nations Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay are again asking the IWC this year to approve a South Atlantic Sanctuary for whales, filling in the area of the South Atlantic Ocean not already covered by the Southern Ocean Sanctuary and the Indian Ocean Sanctuary. All whaling would be prohibited in this Sanctuary.

“We propose that all countries continue to declare their waters as a sanctuary for whales, to create a great corridor and whale sanctuary in the Americas. From Alaska to Chile and from Canada to Argentina, including the waters of the Caribbean,” said Gabriel Despaigne, of the Green Association of Panama, an NGO.

Last year Japan blocked any vote on the Sanctuary proposal towards the end of the IWC meeting in Jersey by the unprecedented action of leaving the Plenary Session along with a contingent of Japanese client countries, depriving the meeting of a quorum, and also raising the interesting question for the first time as to what a quorum of the IWC consists of?

Discussions have been ongoing as to how to constitute an IWC quorum, but the Latin American

nations have been promised a vote on the Southern Atlantic Sanctuary as the first item of business in the Plenary Session (actually item 4.1 on the provisional Agenda).

“If the conservation of whales does not advance in this poor obsolete Commission, the region has legitimacy and political power to propose their own or international conservation framework or (develop) a regional treaty,” said Jose



Truda of the Cetacean Conservation Center, an NGO based in Brazil and Argentina.

### **Bowheads, concluded from page one**

And who is this dark predator that would threaten the good ol' USA and its bowhead quota? One need only look to Resolution 64/9 proposed (once again) by Japan to establish commercial whaling off Japan's shores.

Five years ago, at the IWC meeting in Anchorage, Japan blocked approval of the US bowhead quota in retaliation for opposition to Japan's commercial whaling proclivities.

The US spent the next five years

conducting excruciating negotiations on “the future of the IWC,” seeking a deal with Japan to allow coastal whaling once again, ostensibly in return for less whaling in the Antarctic. Those negotiations could not be reconciled with the opposition to commercial whaling held by other nations. With the US talking commercial whaling, it was left to Australia, the European Union, and many Latin American nations to oppose any breach of the IWC moratorium. The talks failed, and Japan

still does not have its commercial quota.

Of course, Japan continues to kill these whales, claiming scientific research as the reason for the killing.

Will Japan do the same this year?

Evidently, the US delegation is in full bowhead mode, ensuring continued discussions long into the night for a quota for Alaska. Will new dirty deals surface, trading off one species of whales for another?

## ECO

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

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### **Japan concluded from page one**

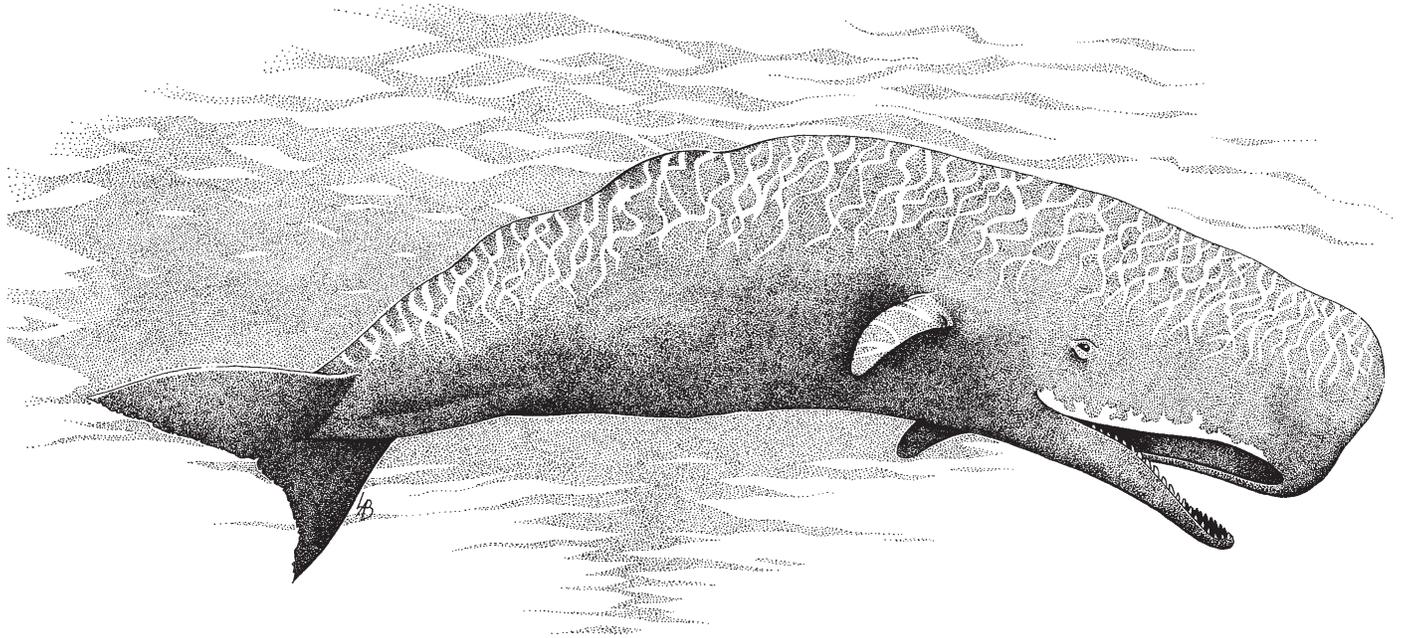
Furthermore, the analysis noted that other Japanese interests, such as their support for oil or trade, do not appear to correlate with Japanese ODA. Only the whaling issue stands out for Japanese use of ODA to achieve support at the IWC.

The review further shows that there is no evidence that nations in favor of the whaling moratorium cut back or “retaliate” on ODA for microstates that vote in Japan's bloc, including the US, New Zealand, Australia, or the UK. The study notes that there is also little evidence to indicate Norway and

Iceland, pro-whaling nations like Japan, employ ODA to enhance their position at the IWC.

Quoting the Associated Press, the report states that: “... the head of the Japanese IWC delegation stated ‘... lacking military might, his country had to use the tools of diplomacy and promises of development aid to ‘get appreciation of Japan's position’ on whaling.”

With this extensive and scientific confirmation of the issue in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, it is time for the IWC to consider steps to stop the bribery of nations for votes in IWC proceedings.



“The moot point is, whether Leviathan can long endure so wide a chase, and so remorseless a havoc; whether he must not at last be exterminated from the waters, and the last whale, like the last man, smoke his last pipe, and then himself evaporate in the final puff.”  
— Herman Melville in *Moby Dick*

## Sanction Iceland

US environmentalists are asking the Obama Administration to take further steps, including trade sanctions, against Iceland for continuing to undermine international agreements through their whaling scheme. Iceland has increased quotas for their whaling program, enacted in defiance of the international moratorium on commercial whaling.

In fact, Iceland plans to kill fin whales in the north Atlantic, a species severely depleted worldwide by whaling. (Claims of its abundance are greatly exaggerated.) An Icelandic union dispute has put the fin whale effort on hold for the moment, but the dispute is reportedly near settlement, setting up a fin whale blood bath in the north for this summer.

Iceland continues to violate the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) by sending boatloads of whale meat and blubber to Japan and other countries, as much as

648 tons to Japan alone since September 2011.

Iceland is currently certified as in violation of the US Pelly Amendment, which under US law allows the President to invoke sanctions against countries that undermine international

fisheries treaties. So far, President Obama has refused to use trade sanctions against Iceland, preferring diplomacy in joint meetings between the US and Iceland. Iceland, the environmental groups point out, has only increased its quotas and activity since being certified.



## Swiss Ban on Import of Captive Dolphins

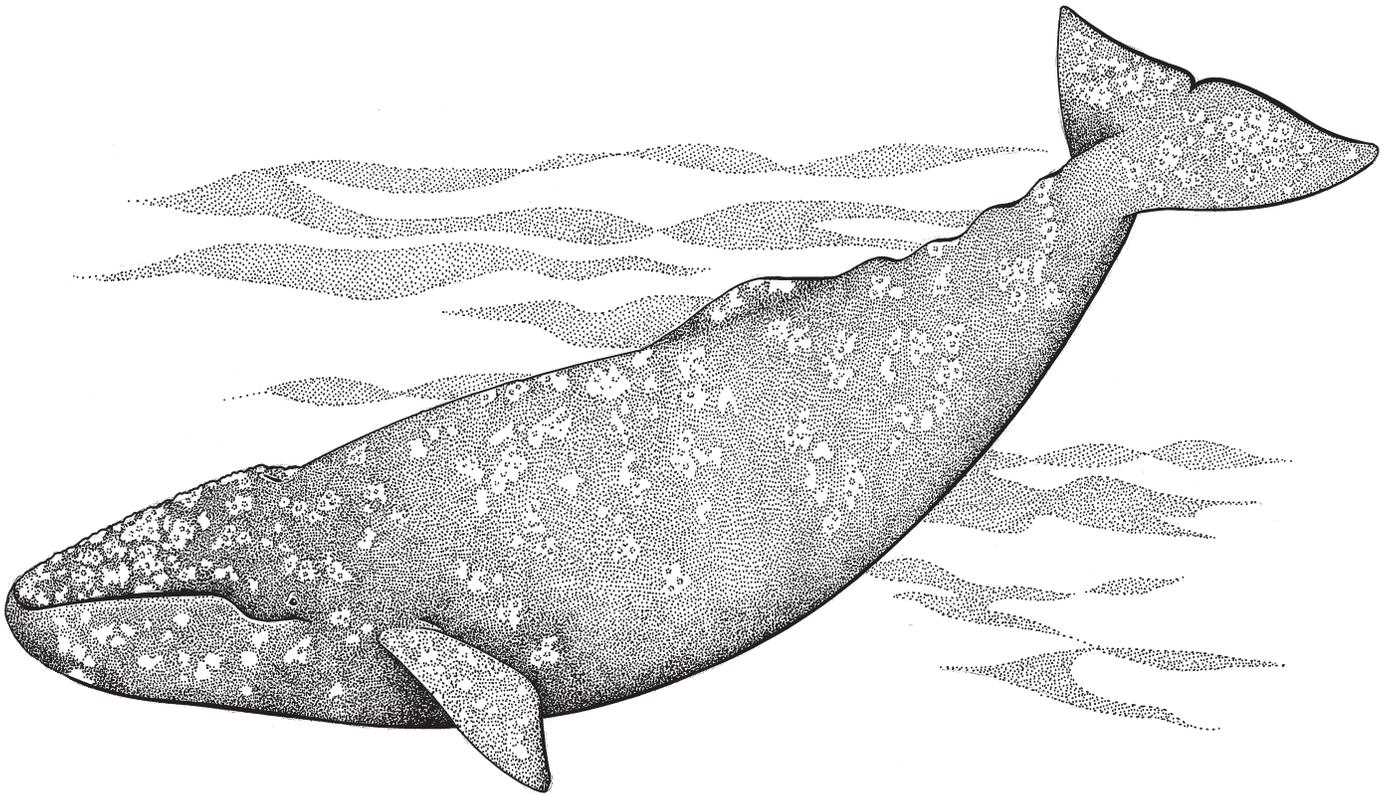
On May 29, 2012, the lower chamber of Switzerland decided to ban the importation of cetaceans to Switzerland—a decision that effectively ends any new captive whale and dolphin shows in the country. Moreover, the decision means that the three remaining dolphins in the last dolphin captivity facility in Switzerland may live out their days there, and no more dolphins will be brought in to replace them.

The decision for an import ban was

taken after the deaths of eight dolphins during the last four years and followed the criticism and pressure by OceanCare and several other animal conservation organizations based in Switzerland, as well as international pressure from Ric O'Barry of Earth Island Institute and many other organizations.

The keeping of cetaceans in captivity cannot be justified from an animal welfare or species conservation point of view. A dolphinarium pool is

too small, too shallow, too bare and lacking in environmental stimulation. Furthermore, the unnatural group structures is very stressful for dolphins held in captivity, making them susceptible to chronic disease, low life expectancy and a high mortality rate of any offspring born in captivity. Successful breeding in captivity is rare, and due to this fact dolphins are still captured from the wild for the international dolphinarium industry. These captures threaten the very survival of wild dolphin populations.



## Greenland Again

Denmark is back again with those Greenland folks who just won't take NO for an answer. Denmark is asking for new quotas for subsistence whaling for Greenland hunters, including ten humpback whales a year for the next five years. Not to mention two bowhead whales, 19 fin whales, and a couple of hundred minke whales.

Wait a minute! Didn't we do this

already? Well, yes, the IWC went over Greenland's subsistence whaling in great detail in 2010 in Agadir, Morocco. At that time, a quota of 9 humpback whales and 16 fin whales (with Greenland promising to kill only 10 fin whales in reality) was adopted by consensus after a great deal of diplomatic angst.

So now Greenland and Denmark are back asking for more whales.

Environmentalists contend the

whales are not needed, as a substantial portion of Greenland's current whale meat winds up in supermarkets for sale, rather than being distributed in a more traditional manner as subsistence whaling implies.

Greenland should get no more whales for subsistence until the government cracks down on illegal sales of whale meat and provides the IWC with a valid subsistence needs report.