

ECO

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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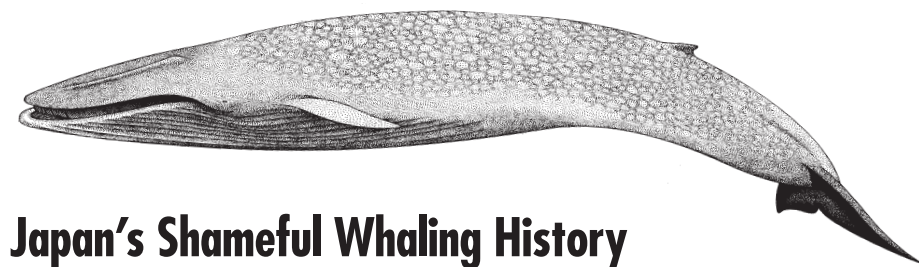
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Japan's Bid to Control the IWC

Japan's recruitment of countries through vote-buying schemes is in full swing as the IWC opens today. The voting status of at least ten countries is still uncertain, pending the payment of dues and the deposit of formal instruments to join the IWC.

While a majority of pro-whaling countries cannot end the moratorium on commercial whaling (amending the Schedule requires three-quarters vote of the IWC), there are a number of threats to whales from a pro-whaling majority, including:

- Introduction of secret ballots so pro-whaling votes by nations would be hidden from the media and the public.
- Disbanding IWC committees such as the new Conservation Committee aimed at promoting global cetacean welfare and healthy seas.
- Appointment of an IWC Chairman sympathetic to commercial whaling.
- Passing resolutions supportive of the continued commercial killing of whales under the guise of "science,"



Japan's Shameful Whaling History

For the past 70 years, since Japan launched its first pelagic whaling fleet, the government has given free rein to Japanese whaling companies to plunder the world's whales. From the beginning, Japan has refused to adopt international agreements or actively allowed its whalers to evade treaty obligations that it did sign.

Tens of thousands of endangered whales, "protected" under international treaty, were harpooned by Japanese whalers over seven decades, often by Japanese-owned whaling fleets based in outlaw nations, and even by pirate whaling ships roaming the high seas.

The last of the blue, humpback and right whales were hunted to "commercial extinction" by these ruthless whalers.

As ECO reported at last year's IWC meeting, the Japanese Imperial Army directed the whaling massacre in the 1930s. Prof. George Small wrote in *The Blue Whale*: "It is evident ... that the Japanese government prior to 1940 had no desire to impose any restraints on its pelagic whaling fleets. To have imposed any would have resulted in decreased production at a time when Japanese military aggression was placing severe demands on all sectors of the economy.

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allowing Japan to continue to increase its "scientific" whale kill.

- Removing NGO groups and media deemed not sympathetic to whaling. (Indeed, Item #3 on the Plenary Session agenda is entitled: "Interference with Whale Research" by Japan, presumably aimed at actions by Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd Society in confronting Japanese whaling vessels in the Antarctic this past year.)

An IWC majority built on vote buying and outright bribery must be strongly condemned by sovereign countries.

International Demarche Against Whaling

A dozen countries have filed diplomatic demarches against whaling by Japan and Norway in the continuing controversy over the violation of the 1986 IWC Moratorium on commercial whaling.

Citing Norway's objection to the whaling ban and consequent commercial whaling and Japan's questionable "scientific" whaling scheme, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and Spain signed the two demarches presented this spring to Japan and Norway.

Stated the British Fisheries Minister, Ben Bradshaw, "The UK and many other countries remain strongly opposed to Norway's existing and

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The pelagic whalers of Japan were thus free to kill any whale regardless of species or size at any time.

“During those years, several international agreements, designed to prevent overexploitation of stocks of whales, were reached under the aegis of the League of Nations. The agreements included the standard prohibitions such as the killing of nearly extinct Right whales, suckling calves of any species, and females accompanied by a calf.

“Japan refused to sign or abide by any of the agreements. Moreover, Japan refused to participate in the negotiations leading to the agreements even when for her benefit the North Pacific, her oldest whaling area, was specifically excluded.”

After World War II, the Japanese government continued to give its whalers carte blanche. Although Japan reluctantly joined the International Whaling Commission in 1951, four years after its creation, it immediately handed policy-making to the Japan Whaling Association, an organization of the whaling companies. The Japanese commissioner to the IWC until 1965 was the chairman of the JWA.

From 1951 to 1964, the Japanese commissioner, acting on orders of Japan’s giant whaling companies (Nippon Suisan, Taiyo and Kyokuyo), blocked all attempts at the IWC to halt the destruction of the blue and humpback whales. Even Norway, which created the modern whaling industry and led the assault on the Antarctic seas, was appalled by Japan’s intransigence and greed.

Japan only agreed to an IWC ban on hunting blue whales after its seven fleets, deploying more than 100 catcher

boats, could not find a single blue whale in 1964. However, the whalers knew that a few remnant herds of this greatest of all animals survived in the sheltering fjords of southern Chile.

So while the Japanese government and whaling industry piously proclaimed their adherence to the blue whaling ban, the government deviously licensed its whalers to set up shore stations in Chile, which was not a member of the IWC. For four years between 1964 and 1968, the Japanese whalers killed 690 blue whales in Chilean waters, often pursuing mothers and calves into the deepest reaches of the fjords, where the still waters were stained with blood.

The rapacious Japanese whalers in Chile didn’t limit their hunt to just one endangered species; they also knocked



off 13 humpback and three right whales. Moreover, they killed over 1,600 fin and sei whales, and more than 1,500 sperm whales. All of the meat and oil was shipped back to Japan. The government conveniently looked the other way.

Perhaps the most egregious whaling crimes were practiced by Japan’s Taiyo Fishery Co. It got into pirate whaling in the 1968 in a joint venture with Norwegian whaling interests. A former Dutch catcher boat, the *AM No. 4*, was converted to a combination factory ship/catcher boat by adding a huge freezer compartment and a stern slipway for hauling whales aboard for slaughter.

Renamed the *Sierra*, the pirate whaling ship roamed the North and South Atlantic for a dozen years, flying flags of convenience such as Bahamas, Somalia and Cyprus. It killed thousands of whales outside IWC regulation, many of them “protected” blue, humpback and right whales. The meat and oil was shipped from various Atlantic ports to

Japan on Taiyo reefers.

The *Sierra*’s deadly rampage only stopped in July 1979 when it was put out of action by the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society ship, which rammed it outside the port of Oporto, Portugal. Seven months later, after undergoing repairs, the *Sierra* was mysteriously sunk in Lisbon harbor by limpet mines attached to its hull by persons unknown.

A sister pirate whaler of the *Sierra*, the *Tonna*, met an even more improbable fate. Because the *Sierra* had a narrow stern slipway, its owners had obtained a larger ship that could handle the huge fin whales found in the North Atlantic. A former Japanese stern trawler, the *Shunyo Maru*, was remodeled as a factory/catcher ship at the Hayashikane Shipbuilding yard in Japan. Hayashikane was a major subsidiary of Taiyo. The ship was originally built there in 1966.

Renamed the *Tonna* and flying the flag of Netherlands Antilles, Taiyo’s new pirate ship made an initial foray in April 1978 off the coast of West Africa, where it served as the factory ship for the *Sierra*’s deadly harpoons. In just 42 days, 102 sei whales were killed and the *Tonna* packed up 432 tons of frozen meat. The two ships then sailed north to Las Palmas in the Canary Islands to offload and resupply. There a massive new Norwegian harpoon gun was fitted on the bow of the *Tonna*.

While the *Sierra* remained in port for repairs, the *Tonna* set off in search of fin whales west of Spain and Portugal. In less than a month, 38 of the giant whales—second only to blue whales in size—were harpooned and butchered on the broad rear deck of the ship. By 22 July, the freezer compartments were jammed with 450 tons of meat; the *Tonna* rode low in the water as it turned south toward the Canary Islands.

The captain of the *Tonna*, a veteran Norwegian whaler named Kristof

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Whale Burgers and Dog Food

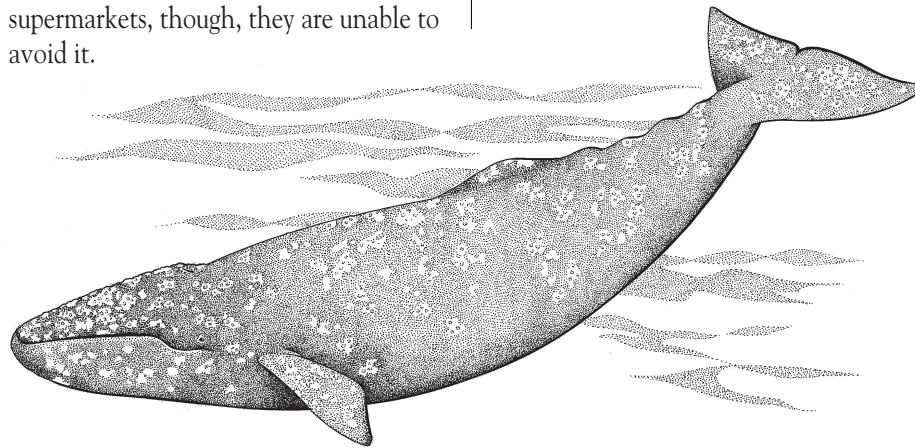
Japan is getting very desperate trying to rid itself of thousands of pounds of dead whale meat that consumers will not buy. This surplus undercuts the claims by the Japanese Fisheries Agency that whaling is somehow needed to provide Japan with meat for the future.

It is estimated that by 2005, Japan had stockpiled 4,800 tons of whale meat in storage - whale meat the government has been unable to shove it down consumer throats. Yet, Japan is *increasing* the killing of whales for their so-called "scientific research" whaling, including doubling the number of minke whales killed in the Antarctic and killing endangered species such as humpback and fin whales.

School children are one target audience—the Japanese government is promoting whale burgers and other

whale meat lunches for schools throughout Japan. Colorful brochures reportedly praise the meat and call whaling a national heritage.

But schoolchildren, like most Japanese, don't particularly like the discount whale meat for lunch or any other meal. Unlike consumers in supermarkets, though, they are unable to avoid it.



Dogs probably don't like it much either, but unlike school children, they cannot talk back. Several Japanese internet sites sell whale meat for dog food, according to environmentalists.

Greenpeace calls the marketing ploys "a desperate gesture" by the Japanese government to justify continued commercial whaling under the guise of scientific research.

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Vesterheim, was a greedy man. He and his officers were being paid a standard bonus of \$2.50 for every ton of meat. When they spotted a huge fin whale dead ahead, they decided to make some extra, easy money.

The whale was harpooned and dragged to the rear of the ship, where giant winches slowly pulled the 66-foot carcass, weighing probably 70 tons, up the slipway. The sea had been calm that day 200 miles off the coast of Portugal. But an afternoon squall blew out of the west, rocking the ship.

As wind and wave buffeted the *Tonna*, the glistening dead whale slid to the port side of the deck, tilting it sharply. The converted fishing vessel was unable to right itself. Waves washed onto the deck and into open portholes and hatches. Saltwater cascaded into the engine room. The electrical control panel shorted out in a blaze of sparks, sending acrid smoke billowing through the passageway.

The *Tonna's* crew desperately tried

to release the whale that was crippling the ship. But the electric winches were frozen, and the thick steel cables that had dragged the carcass on board were too thick to cut through quickly. Capt. Vesterheim shouted orders to cut up the carcass and throw it overboard. The three Japanese flensers began madly hacking at the bulk.

In a scene of supreme irony, the *Tonna* wallowed helplessly like a harpooned whale.

The waves inexorably swamped the pirate whaler. At 7:40 p.m., the *Tonna's* battery-operated emergency radio sent out a Mayday distress signal. The crew of 42, made up mostly of South Africans, scrambled into three liferafts.

But in a scene straight out of Herman Melville, Capt. Vesterheim decided to go down with his ship. Perhaps humiliated by his plight, he waved to the crew from the bridge as the *Tonna* sank stern-first into the ocean depths, tugged down and down by another Moby Dick.

All of the crewmen were rescued

unharmful later that night by a passing Greek freighter. Interviewed by authorities in Madeira, where they were dropped off, they all said they had been whaling "for the Japanese." The three expert Japanese flensers, Isamu Shinkawa, Tatsuhide Saito and Masakichi Shibata, had formerly worked on Taiyo whaling ships.

Taiyo operated many more pirate whaling ships in the 1970s and 1980s, including the *Cape Fisher*, *Susan*, *Teresa*, *Paulmy Star No. 3*, and the *Sea Bird*. All flew flags of convenience and were based in non-IWC countries. Ownership was hidden behind dummy companies in offshore havens. All had Japanese crewmen in key positions. All of the whale meat was shipped to Taiyo in Japan.

The Taiyo Fishery Co. changed its name to Maruha a few years ago. Notorious even within Japanese industry, it probably did so in an attempt to help cover up its crimes against the whales.

Australian Research: Lethal Whaling a Sham

Australia has developed an extensive research protocol with results that prove Japan's and Iceland's lethal scientific research whaling is simply not necessary.

The 10-year research program of Antarctic marine ecosystems was conducted by Australian experts without any killing of whales, yet shows detailed scientific evidence on the role of whales, their food habits, and other aspects of the ecosystem. The Australian research closely mimics the goals of Japan's so-

called "scientific" whaling.

"(Our research) demonstrates once and for all, if it needed to be demonstrated, that the so-called scientific programs of the countries like Japan, Norway and Iceland, are a sham," stated Senator Ian Campbell, Australian Environment Minister. Campbell noted that his government would supply Japan, Iceland, and Norway with the research data and results from the studies.

Campbell noted: "It needs to underscore to all of the people of the

world, the IWC and everybody else in the world, the incredible importance of whale conservation and the fact that destroying them is in fact not science, not justified and worse, it's done in the name of science."

But Hideki Moronuki of the Japanese Fishery Agency responds: "But as Japan repeatedly explained—that in order to establish an appropriate management scheme for whaling, we need both lethal and non-lethal research."

Japan's whaling is a sham to keep commercial whaling viable.

More Whales are Dying

The IWC instituted a moratorium on commercial whaling in 1986. Now, twenty years later, commercial whaling continues, often under the guise of "research." How many whales have died during this moratorium?

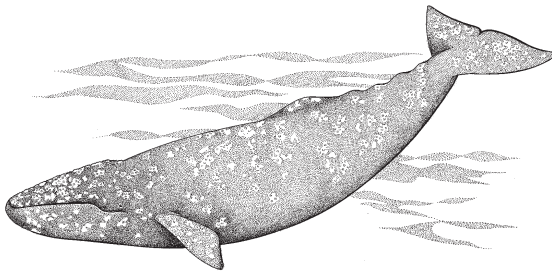
Japan, Norway, and Iceland have killed more than 27,000 whales since the moratorium went into effect. In the 2004-05 season alone, 1,324 whales

have been killed, including ten critically endangered fin whales killed by Japanese whalers in Antarctica for the first time.

Japan repeatedly claims that they ONLY kill whales that are not endangered—in fact, Japan has a very long sad history of killing endangered and protected whales.

The whaling vessels, decks awash in blood,

are still at sea killing more whales as the IWC meeting begins today. The moratorium continues to be a convenient diplomatic fiction.



Demarche, concluded from page one unnecessary lethal whaling activities, and we urge Norway to stop them."

"They (whaling nations) have basically thumbed their nose at the IWC, they thumbed their nose at the International community who have overwhelmingly stated there should be no slaughter of whales," said Australian Environmental Minister Senator Ian Campbell. "It's something that should be put into a previous century — it doesn't belong in this century — there are many

cultures and traditions that don't belong in a modern world."

New Zealand's Conservation Minister Chris Carter noted: "Australia and New Zealand are probably the world's two leading (marine) conservation countries."

Officials of the two whaling nations immediately denounced the effort. "We cannot really take this seriously," said Rune Bjaasted, spokesperson for the Norwegian Foreign Ministry.

Boycott Japan?

The *Christian Science Monitor*, one of America's most respected newspapers, has called for a boycott of Japanese goods in order to protect whales from the Japanese Fisheries Agency.

In a June 2nd, 2006 editorial, the *Monitor* noted: "If the UN General Assembly or the US does not act soon, then a consumer boycott of Japanese products is needed."

"It's not even clear if the Japanese people want to consume whale meat in large quantities. Less than one percent now eat the meat that is sold from the more than 1,000 whales Japan catches annually 'for scientific research' ... Some of the meat has ended up simply as doggie treats.

"Persuasion through facts and logic about the health of whale stocks are unlikely to prevail at the IWC, given Japan's long determination to overturn the ban for cultural reasons and its moneyed clout over weak members.

"Barring quick US or UN action, a temporary consumer boycott of Japanese products would carry the most certainty of save the ban."

