

Eco

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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St. Kitts Declaration Concocted in Private Meeting

On June 15th, 2006, the day before the official opening of the 58th meeting of the IWC, 21 countries got together to cook up the “St. Kitts Declaration”.

The meeting included only whaling countries and their client states: Antigua & Barbuda, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Grenada, Gabon, Republic of Guinea, Iceland, Japan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu.

These countries, without input from any other IWC member nations, drafted the ‘St. Kitts Declaration’ in private and

endorsed it unanimously, thereby precluding negotiations with other countries at the regular session of the IWC. The June 15th version calls the IWC “dysfunctional”, endorses lethal whaling “research” conducted by Japan, Iceland, the Caribbean and African countries for “providing valuable scientific information for the management of whales,” and states the conviction of the countries that “sustainable whaling is possible.”

Between the time (on Thursday, June 15th) when this draft was approved and Saturday, June 17th, when a new draft was presented to the full Commission for consideration,

additional paragraphs were added attacking NGO groups and claiming whales threaten fish stocks by competition with humans.

The Japanese Fisheries Agency, during IWC 58, has coyly claimed they wish to set up a future meeting of countries to help “normalize” the IWC by inviting only those countries that support whaling. What Japan left out of discussion was that such a meeting had already taken place in St. Kitts the day before the IWC officially opened.

The St. Kitts Declaration was approved by one vote on Sunday, as Japan and St. Kitts marshaled countries receiving substantial fisheries aid from Japan in exchange for their support for whaling at the IWC.

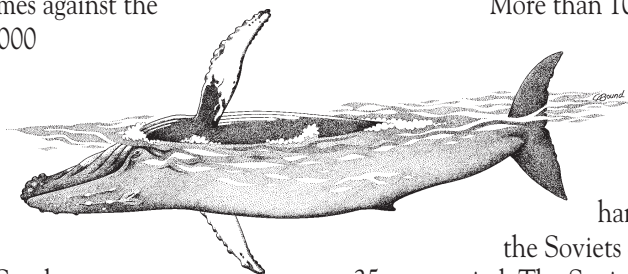
When the Humpbacks Never Returned

As Japan prepares to harpoon humpback whales in the Antarctic as part of their so-called “scientific whaling” scheme, let us not forget one of the greatest crimes against the whales: the 46,000 humpbacks that were secretly—and illegally—killed by Soviet Union whalers in the Southern Hemisphere. The seas were virtually emptied of the humpbacks. Their entrancing songs almost died out.

Between 1947 and 1973 four Soviet whaling fleets scoured the South Pacific,

South Atlantic, Indian and Southern Oceans in search of the profitable humpbacks, as well as the fast-disappearing blue and right whales.

More than 100,000 whales that were “protected” by the IWC were harpooned by



the Soviets over the 25-year period. The Soviets lied to the IWC - and to the world - about their whaling piracy.

The collapse of communism and the Soviet state brought forth revelations by Russian scientists about the illegal

whaling. A team of scientists headed by Phil Clapham of the United States has pieced together the scandalous story.

“The large removals from (seas around Australia) indicate that the populations in these regions remain well below pre-exploitation levels despite reported strong growth rates off eastern and western Australia,” the scientists’ report stated. “Populations in many areas of Oceania continue to be small, indicating that the catches ... had long-term impacts on recovery.”

In essence, the Soviet whalers had “cooked the books”, providing one set of statistics to the IWC, but keeping the real statistics secret for decades. Thousands of protected whales, including endangered species, females

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WWF Polling On Target

In Saturday's ECO (#2), we reported on polling conducted by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) of several nations whose delegations are voting in lockstep with Japan and Norway. The polling revealed that most of the public in those countries were in opposition to a renewal of commercial whaling, in contrast to the votes in the Commission from their government delegations.

However, over the past few days, several delegates from these countries

have challenged the polling, claiming that the sampling methods used were biased, etc.

In other words, since the delegates could not refute the results of the scientific polling of public opinion in their own countries, they instead challenged the poll itself as being somehow wrong, a technique more common in brutal dictatorships than in democracies.

WWF has issued a press release responding to these criticisms in detail. The polling was conducted by professional pollsters using random

telephone interviews in each country. In the Pacific, the polls were carried out by the Fiji-based Tebbutt Research. In the Caribbean, the survey was conducted by Meridian Marketing Support Services Ltd. Both companies used international polling standards and random phone interviews in each country, using the native languages where appropriate to the sample.

For more information about the polling and poll results, visit World Wide Fund for Nature's Internet site, www.panda.org/species/iwc/

More Whale Meat, Lower Prices

In a new report distributed at the IWC, Japan's whale meat inventory from "scientific whaling" continues to soar, while the prices continue to plummet.

Sakuma Junko of the Iruka (Dolphin) & Kujira (Whale) Action Network of Japan wrote "Investigating the Sale of Whale Meat—the 'Byproduct' of Research Whaling" as a detailed look at whale meat inventories and prices in Japan.

Whale meat supply and inventory has almost doubled, from under 2,000 tons per month in the mid-1990s to as high as 4,000 tons or more in 2006.

As the same time, prices for different species of whale meat have declined from as high as 3,500 yen per kilo or more in 2000 to 2,000 yen per kilo in 2005.

The report cites a 2002 public opinion survey conducted by the Asahi

Shimbun news organization. The survey asked "How often do you eat whale meat?"

33%: "I don't eat it"

53%: "I stopped eating it a while back"

9%: "I eat it only infrequently"

4%: "I sometimes eat it"

1%: "Other/no response"

Junko concludes: "We, however, are alarmed the way the government is spending a lot of tax money to 'forcefully' make the public eat more whale meat."

Ben White

Gone almost as soon as he was stricken by the stomach cancer that took him from our midst, Ben White was a source of inspiration, energy and love to so many of us. Ben always faced problems as challenges with solutions. His approach was direct and to the point, always. An arborist by vocation, Ben's skills as a tree climber led him to scale heights and hang banners to publicize our many environmental causes, and his fearless nature led him to

actions where he risked his life in order to save the lives of others. Who can forget Ben's determination to stop LFAS tests by putting his body in the way of lethal sonar? But Ben was far more than an in-your-face protester. He was a thoughtful person who truly believed that change can happen when people finally understand that whales and other life on Earth have rights to freedom, peace and security in their ocean homes, just as we do in ours.



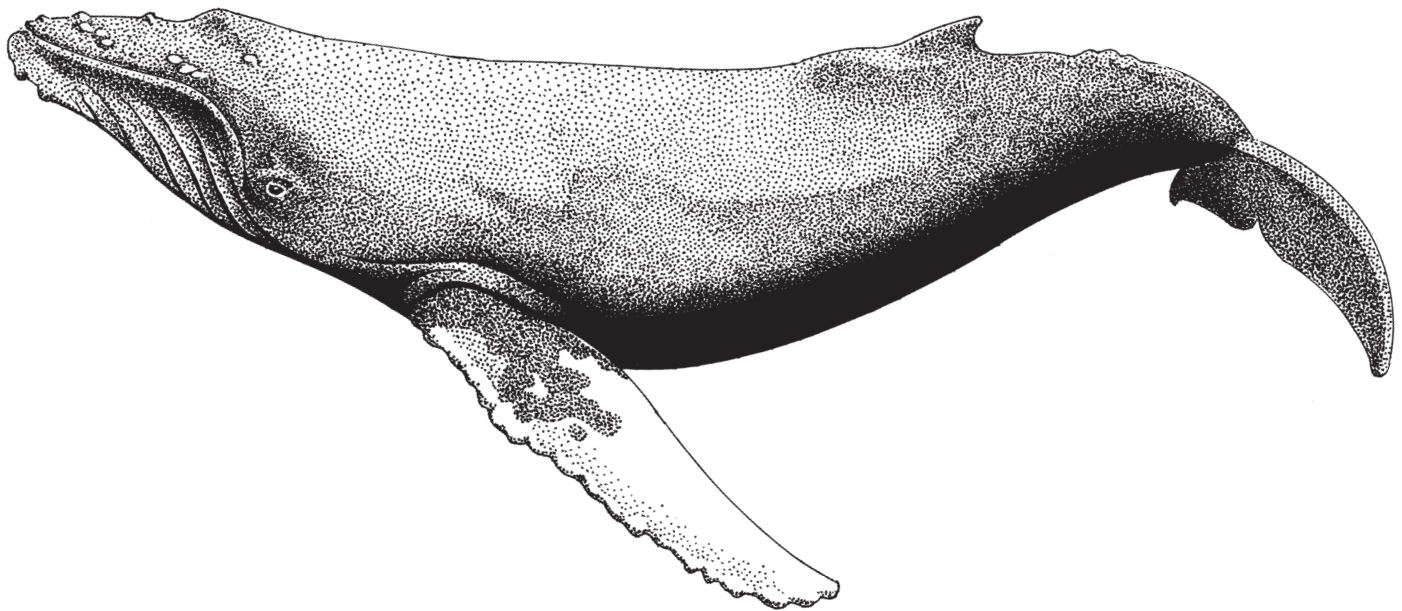
Ben was unconsciously selfless, always responding with an immediate

"anything" when asked to help. There were no questions, just heart. Ben's unique ability to bring attention to issues at IWC meetings was just one aspect of his contribution to our world. He was never down, never defeated, no matter how bad things looked. As Ben's life came to a sudden stop, his body shrinking by the day, he remained cheerful and optimistic. Never doubting what was to come, Ben taught us how to die as he taught us how to live.

What would Ben do in our present situation at the IWC, backs against the wall? Carry on. He would tell us that these are just bumps in the road, not to doubt the end of this story. Then he would turn his face to the friendly island breeze coming across this warm sea, and smile.

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



Humpbacks, continued from page one with calves, and undersized whales had been butchered on the high seas.

The key years that the whale music ended were 1960 and 1961. The Soviet fleets hunted down more than 23,000 humpbacks in the Southern Ocean those two years. The once-healthy humpback populations that wintered along the coasts of Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, French Polynesia and other South Pacific islands never returned. The scientific community at that time was mystified; how had tens of thousands of whales that migrated annually through the South Pacific suddenly disappeared?

“The Scientific Committee of the IWC examined the evidence and concluded that the only satisfactory explanation was a large and unrecorded catch of humpback whales during two successive years in the Antarctic,” explained Prof. George Small in his remarkable history of modern whaling, *The Blue Whale*.

“It would be difficult if not impossible to refute the conclusion that the vanished humpback whales were killed and not reported,” Small wrote in 1970. “That raises another equally serious problem: an infraction of that

magnitude could not have taken place without the knowledge and condonance of a national government and its inspectors. What nation killed the humpbacks?

“There is a very close relationship between the production of a factory ship and the number of whales it processes. The quantity of oil produced from 5,000 humpback whales added to normal production would have been so disproportionate to the recorded catch that any company committing such an infraction would be detected immediately. All whaling companies examine closely each other’s figures on catch, production and open-market sales of oil in Western Europe. The Bureau of Whaling Statistics also scrutinizes them carefully. The only whalers whose sales go unobserved and whose records can not be examined are those of the Soviet Union.

“The belief is widely held among European and Japanese whalers that the Soviet Union is responsible for the several thousand vanished humpback whales. Conclusive proof of Soviet culpability is lacking. But 5,000 vanished humpback whales are proof that impartial and trained international inspectors are needed on the factory

ships of all nations,” Small observed in *The Blue Whale*.

But the Norwegian whalers, who had invented modern whaling and discovered the vast whaling grounds around Antarctica, knew that there were serious infractions of IWC rules by other whaling nations. Beginning in 1955, the Norwegian government repeatedly advocated the placement of international observers on all factory ships. The Soviets rebuffed the proposal - and continued to exceed quotas and kill “protected” whales by the thousands.

When the Soviets finally relented in 1973, they agreed only to swap observers with Japan, another nation suspected of secretly violating IWC rules. The scientific community is now seeking evidence of collusion between Japan and the Soviets on infractions. For example, how did Japan reconcile the huge amounts of whale meat and oil it purchased from the Soviets with the Soviets’ reported whale catches?

And now, once again, the last of the humpback whales are facing the harpoon. This time it is the Japanese, prostituting science, dispatching the humpbacks with a cynical “sayonara.”

The humpbacks are singing a sad song these days.

Underwater Noise Pollution Confirmed

The IWC's Scientific Committee recently conducted a workshop on the issue of seismic testing and other underwater noise pollution sources and the effects on whales. The Committee's conclusions, unanimously adopted by the Commission yesterday, called for measures to address the acoustic impacts on whales, fish, and other marine species from exposure to the intense noise blasts of industrial air guns.

These air guns, which generate explosive noise for weeks to months at a time at intensities loud enough to cross entire ocean basins, are increasingly used by the oil and gas industry in high energy seismic surveys conducted in coastal regions throughout the world's oceans.

The Scientific Committee, the world's foremost international body of whale scientists, reviewed scientific case studies of marine mammals exposed to noise from seismic air gun surveys and identified a range of potential impacts to whales, from significant changes in feeding and other survival behaviors to damage to fish and other prey species to stranding and death. Citing this "cause for concern," the Committee adopted recommendations for mitigation, monitoring, and research to begin to address these impacts.

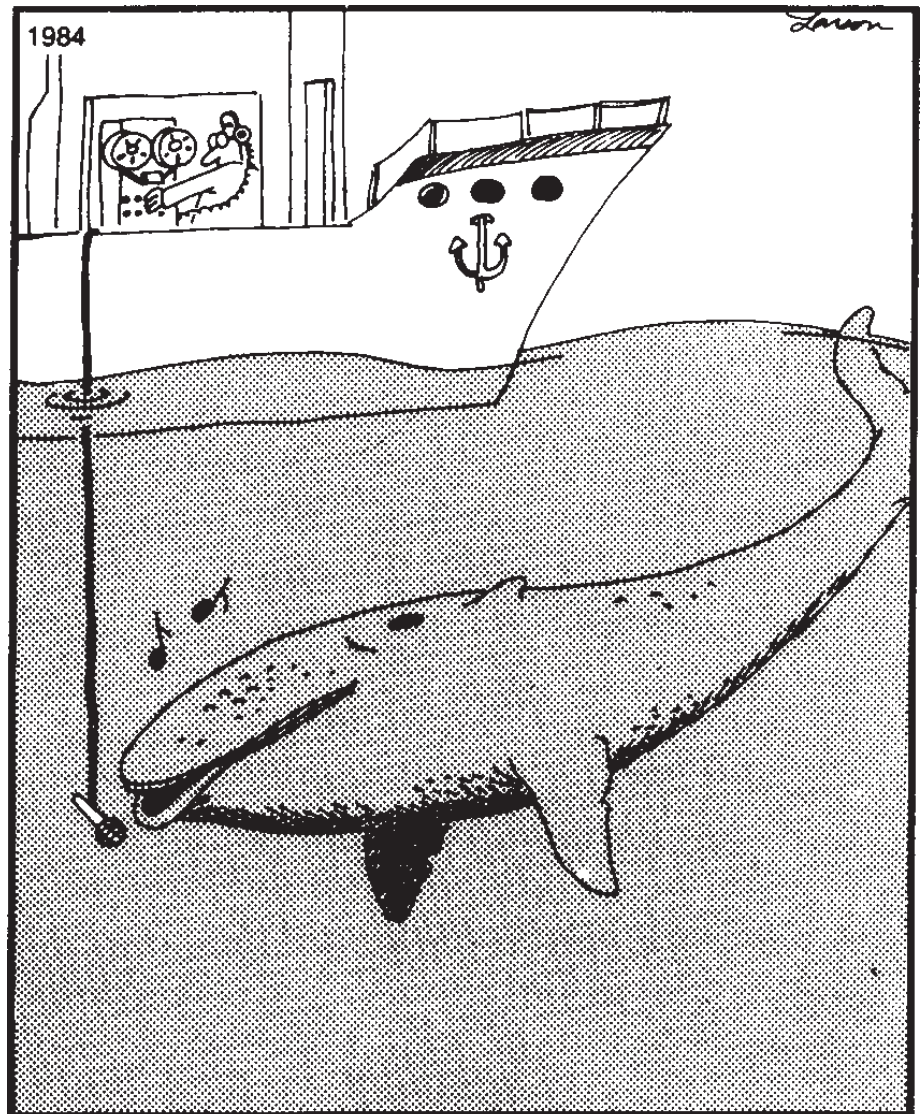
The Scientific Committee also reported confirmation that intense naval sonar was in use in several recent mass strandings near the Canary Islands and southern Spain, where necropsies of whales revealed tissue damage similar to that associated with "the bends" in human divers.

Joel Reynolds of Natural Resources Defense Council cited the Scientific Committee Report: "There is now a broad scientific consensus about the danger high intensity air guns pose to whales and other marine species around the world. The IWC has defined an agenda for reform and regulation of this

increasingly pervasive noise source, calling for risk-averse mitigation to protect species, increased monitoring, world-wide data collection and research, and public transparency, especially where air gun surveys may affect areas of

special concern to whales and fish."

For further background on sources and impacts of ocean noise, go to: www.nrdc.org. Additional information on the issue may also be found at the Ocean Noise Coalition's Internet site, www.OceanNoiseCoalition.org.



A Louie, Louie ... wowoooo ... We gotta go now ... up, to Alaska!

Thanks St. Kitts!

Hang up those thong bikinis, stow away your swim fins, throw out the unused sunscreen, and bid a fond farewell to the lovely isle of St. Kitts. We appreciate the warm hospitality and new

friends we've made.

Get out your mukluks, wax the skis, and get ready for Anchorage, Alaska, next year. If you need air conditioning, just step outside. ECO will see you all in 2007 at IWC 59!