

# ECO

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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## Japan's Whaling for "Science" Condemned by IWC Majority

The hot topic for this year's IWC meeting: Would Japan's Fisheries Agency get away with its outrageous expansion of scientific whaling in the Antarctic?

The result? Yesterday, a majority of IWC countries strongly condemned Japan for moving forward to more than double the take of minke whales and add endangered fin and humpback whales to their annual

slaughter.... sorry, science. But Japan will go whaling anyway.

Japan's controversial whaling effort - killing whales for dubious scientific studies that have virtually never been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals and then selling the meat in Japanese markets - has been condemned by dozens of IWC resolutions. It is no secret that Japan ignores the public and scientific

outcry against its "research" whaling as studiously as the US administration of George Bush ignores scientific evidence for global warming (but at least in the US, the vast majority of scientists reject the Bush politics on global warming).

Despite the new policy by the IWC Chair to limit speakers to one minute, in the interests of speeding *continued on page two*

## Norway's Whale Slaughter Revealed

Recent video footage of a Norwegian whale hunt in May 2005, taken by environmentalists and discussed at this IWC meeting, has been described as an "aberration" by Norway. Norway maintains that 80% all whales, now hunted under a reservation taken by Norway to the existing moratorium on commercial whaling, are killed "instantaneously," although this has never been independently verified. With over 700 minke targeted in this year's hunt, Norway's assertion suggests that up to 150 whales or more will suffer for several minutes or more before death, a considerable animal welfare concern.

Contrary to Norway's assertion, the documented events in the May 2005 hunt show a striking similarity

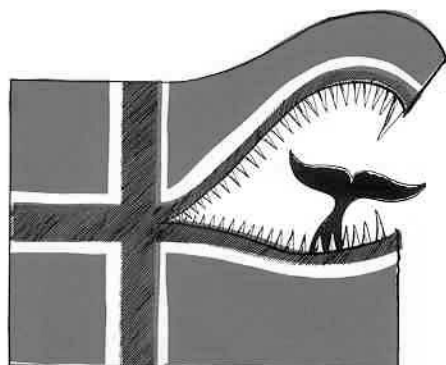
to those reported almost 20 years ago, suggesting that despite the introduction of more powerful penthrite grenades, the potential for considerable animal suffering remains unchanged. A legitimate observer program is desperately needed to address these actions.

In the 2005 video, a minke whale was harpooned

and was documented to be still alive after being shot seven times with a rifle, at least 14 minutes and 28 seconds later. In 1990, a report written by a Norwegian whaling inspector and presented to Norway's Fisheries Department in June 1986 was obtained. The report revealed that, on a single whaling voyage in 1986, the vessel killed four minke

whales more than its quota of 16 (a 25% over-catch) and that seven whales were shot with "cold" harpoons, banned by the IWC as unacceptably cruel in 1983. The whalers killed 18 females and 2 males. 14 of the 16 whales were pregnant. Of the two males killed one had its "testicles shot to pieces." This unfortunate animal was harpooned with an explosive grenade, and took 15 minutes to die, dying of bullet wounds. The most horrific account is that given of the death of one of the females. Harpooned first with an explosive harpoon, then with a "cold" harpoon, and shot eight times with a rifle, she took 30 minutes to die.

Norway continues to insist that their commercial whaling can be conducted responsibly and without depleting whale stocks. But a report produced by Norwegian government advisers in 1990 suggested a hidden agenda, which had nothing to do with "responsible" exploitation of whales. The report, prepared by Knut Heen of the University of Tromsø, *continued on page 4*





## Japan's Secret Slaughter

Japanese coastal fishermen continue to kill thousands of Dall's porpoises and other species off the coast of Japan annually. It is estimated that around 350,000 Dall's porpoises alone have been harpooned since Japan "suspended" coastal minke whaling in 1988 to comply with the IWC moratorium. That's an average of 20,000 animals each year, by far the biggest cetacean kill in the

world. 40,000 Dall's were killed in a single year after the IWC introduced the commercial whaling moratorium.

Campaign Whale notes that not only has Japan refused to suspend the Dall's hunt pending assessment of the status of populations off Japan, but the Japanese government refuses to supply the necessary data repeatedly requested by the IWC for these populations to be assessed by the

Scientific Committee—strange behavior from a government claiming to support sustainable whaling based on good science.

The Dall's porpoise is bearing the brunt of the commercial whaling moratorium introduced by the IWC. Member states have a moral responsibility to press Japan to suspend the Dall's porpoise hunt and allow the Scientific Committee to urgently review the status of the populations Japan is hunting.

Campaign Whale is urging delegates at this year's meeting to call upon Japan to halt the Dall's hunt and comply with previous IWC resolutions and requests to provide data on the Dall's porpoise populations being hunted to the Scientific Committee.

"The Dall's porpoise's only crime is being a small cetacean that Japan refuses to recognize the IWC has jurisdiction over. That does not mean that the government of Japan has no moral responsibility to the IWC and the rest of the world to act responsibly and stop this hunt," explained Andy Ottaway of Campaign Whale.

*"Science," continued from page 1* the agenda, the debate on scientific slaughter lasted through the afternoon, following the inevitable power-point presentation on JARPA II which is essentially the same power-point presentation Japan gives every year.

But Australia's resolution condemning the "scientific" whaling proposal was approved narrowly 30-27. Japan had picked up a new voting nation on its side in the form of

Nauru, newly arrived at the IWC meeting yesterday. However, this advantage was countered by the abstention of the Solomon Islands, apparently fulfilling at last its government's pledge to Australia a few weeks ago. Surprisingly, Denmark, usually a strong supporter of the whaling nation bloc, voted for the resolution.

Japan launched yet a new tirade following the vote, invoking the poor Japanese researchers, huddled on cold decks in dangerous waters, out slaughtering whales for science, while cruel nations "remote from reality" in comfortable hotels in Korea etc. etc.... Chairman Fischer tried to cut off the remarks as being outside the agenda, but Japan continued ranting,

claiming that "next year" things will be different "the reversal, of history - the turning point is soon to come" as all of the pro-whaling nations that did not attend this year's meeting "will be there." Japan also acknowledged that they fully plan to continue research whaling despite the condemnation of the IWC.

The whaling proposal by Japan, thinly disguised as bad scientific research, deserves universal approbation. The Japanese Fisheries Agency continues to embarrass its government and shame its people by their dedication to slaughtering whales at any cost.

ECO thanks the IWC majority for speaking out for the whales and for legitimate science.

# ECO

ECO is published on the occasion of the 57th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission.

## Ocean Noise: European Parliament Speaks Out

Last Fall, the European Parliament overwhelmingly approved a resolution asking European members states to ban the use of intense military sonars known to harm whales until adequate environmental studies can be conducted.



The proposed resolution was originally prepared by the North American Ocean Noise Coalition and the European Coalition for a Silent Ocean.

A number of scientific bodies, including the IWC Scientific Committee and the IUCN, have expressed deep concern over the continued strandings of whales around the world that occur in conjunction with offshore naval exercises using mid-range to low frequency sonars at very high levels.

Environmental groups have charged that dozens of cetaceans off the coast of Washington, Puerto Rico, the

Canary Islands, Greece, Portugal and other locations have beached themselves, sometimes hemorrhaging

blood through their eyes and ears, during navy maneuvers. Many experts believe that fisheries may also be impacted by the military sonars and other sources of human-generated noise underwater.

At the recent meeting of the UN Law of the Sea Treaty in New York, environmentalists called upon the United Nations and its member states to:

Acknowledge the need for international and regional regulation

of underwater noise pollution.

Urge relevant UN bodies, including the UNEP Governing Council and Regional Seas Programs, UNCLOS, UNICPOLOS and UN-Oceans, to take the lead in organizing a multinational task force to develop international agreements regulating ocean noise levels.

Include within the mandate for the above bodies active consideration of all measures necessary to prevent, reduce, control, and eliminate pollution of the marine environment from intense noise sources, with the goal of developing effective mitigation procedures and alternative technologies for reducing the hazards of intense ocean noise.

Apply the Precautionary Principle with regard to the marine environment to significantly reduce, mitigate or cease activities resulting in the production of intense underwater noise until effective guidelines are developed.

## Solomons' Bouncing Act

In this week's first edition, *ECO* reported that the government of the Solomon Islands had promised Australia that they would oppose a return to commercial whaling. It seems the representative of the Solomons' IWC delegation has a very limited view of what that entails.

To his credit, the good Commissioner abstained from voting in opposition to the Australian

resolution condemning Japan's outrageous expansion of "scientific" whaling in the southern ocean. Japan's JARPA II research was opposed by a narrow majority of IWC countries on a 30-27 vote.

However, on every other vote, the Solomon Islands has supported the pro-whaling stance of Japan, Norway, and Iceland. The Solomons voted against a new South Atlantic

whale sanctuary proposed by Brazil and Argentina. The Solomons voted for abolishing the existing Southern Ocean Sanctuary. More importantly, the Solomon Islands delegation voted in favor of Japan's off-the-charts RMS, to renew commercial whaling.

So, what's up with the Solomons? Where does the government—or perhaps we should ask, the government's IWC delegation—really stand?

## Sanctuary Standoff

As at recent IWC meetings, the votes on whale sanctuaries continued the existing stalemate between supporters and opponents.

A resolution in support of establishing a South Atlantic Sanctuary proposed jointly by Brazil and Argentina was defeated with 29 votes in favor, 26 against, and two

abstentions. The establishment of the sanctuary requires amending the Schedule, so a 3/4 vote was needed.

Similarly, Japan's effort to abolish the existing Southern Ocean Sanctuary fell far short of a 3/4-majority vote needed, getting only 25 votes in favor, 30 votes against, and two abstentions.

## Quotable:

"Scientific whaling fools no one. It is obvious to everyone who isn't brain dead that any country that puts into effect such an outrageous program does so solely so it can continue to harvest a protected resource."

—Dr. Roger Payne, *The Canberra Times*, June 22, 2005.

## Donde Esta La Cucaracha?

Those of us who regard IWC meetings as high theatre (comedy? tragedy?) are sorely missing the former deputy commissioner on the Japanese delegation, Masayuki Komatsu. He has been removed from the delegation this year, no doubt because of government fears that the master of insult would provoke new problems in Japan's crisis-ridden relations with China and South Korea.

Three years ago in Shimonoseki, Komatsu's abrasive attacks drew diplomatic protests from Russia and the U.S. One commissioner nearly came to blows with Komatsu during a heated meeting of commissioners. Even Japan's staid Ministry of Foreign Affairs sharply criticized Komatsu's conduct after learning he had been less than truthful in his reports to the ministry during the IWC meeting. A powerful U.S. senator, Ted Stevens of Alaska, was so outraged by Komatsu's blocking of a bowhead whale quota for Alaskan natives that he berated Japan's ambassador to the U.S., warning that Japan would "pay dearly" for its intransigence.

ECO has devoted pages of copy

to Komatsu's antics. One of his most memorable gaffes was his claim that minke whales are "the cockroaches of the sea." The tiny insect, "la cucaracha" in Spanish, quickly became the symbol of Japan's absurd claims that whales were proliferating out of control and were "eating all the fish." Cockroaches were soon roaming across ECO's pages.

In 2001, Komatsu defended Japan's blatant vote-buying in an interview with Australian radio: "Japan does not have a military power. Unlike U.S. and Australia, you may dispatch your military power to East Timor. That is not the case of Japan. Japanese means is simply diplomatic communication and ODAs. So in order to get appreciation of Japan's position, of course you know that is natural that we must do, result on those two major truths. So, I think there is nothing wrong." ODA is Overseas Development Aid. Japan has been struggling to deny this bribery ever since.

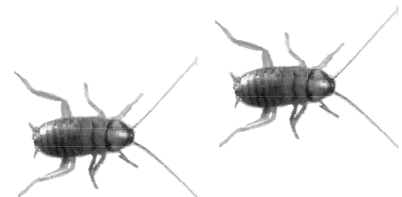
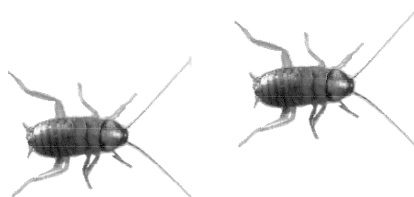
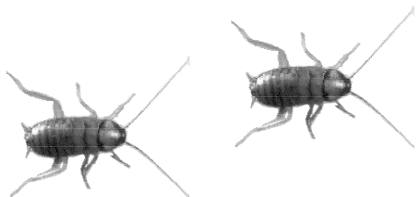
Komatsu, who has been promoted to executive director of Japan's Fisheries Research Agency,

won't keep quiet even though he has been removed from Japan's IWC delegation. Last week, he told the *Washington Post* that, "If we don't eat whale meat, it would be damaging to the ecosystem of the ocean."

In his new role in fisheries research, perhaps Komatsu should heed the warnings of the world's scientists (even many of his own) that it is human overfishing, pollution and habitat destruction, not the whales, that are collapsing the world's fisheries. Japan has been the leader in wiping out stock after stock of fish through both its vast fleets and its giant trading companies that control much of the world market for fishery products.

He is even getting some good advice at home. Komatsu told the *Washington Post* that his own teenage daughter is opposed to commercial whaling. But he added that, "The younger generation is always a problem, so education is very important."

The NGO community, desperate for some theatre of the absurd to relieve the dull plenary sessions, is drafting a plea to the Japanese government: Bring Back La Cucaracha!



Norway, continued from page 1 argued that the numbers of whales and seals around Norway should be drastically reduced to increase catches of cod. Heen claimed it would improve employment figures in the north of Norway, where the fishing and whaling industries are concentrated. The report even went so far as to suggest: "The total Employment impact in the north Norwegian economy increases from

25,200, with a sea mammal population of 1.5 million tons, to 65,500 if the sea mammals are extinct."

The argument that killing marine mammals will increase fish catches is simplistic and based on mathematical models which bear no resemblance whatsoever to the complex relationships among marine species. Most whale species do not eat fish sought by humans. Ironically,

Norway continues to flatter itself that it is in the forefront of world concern for the environment. In May 1990, then-Prime Minister Gro Brundtland said: "The scale of deforestation, soil erosion and loss of species is accelerating. We already know enough to start to act -and act more forcefully".

Fine words from a nation that seems hell bent on waging a war of eradication on marine mammals.