



Issues to Watch at the 58th Meeting of the International Whaling Commission June 2006

Whaling

- There is no need for **large-scale commercial whaling** in today's world – people no longer need their bone, blubber, meat, or oil.
- Though the IWC implemented a **ban on commercial whaling in 1986**, whale stocks that were depleted by many years of commercial whaling have yet to fully recover.
- **Norway** continues to hunt whales for commercial purposes under an objection filed when the moratorium was implemented. Since the ban went into affect, Norway has killed over 6500 whales.
- In 1988, **Japan** started hunting whales under the special permit provision for lethal research whaling. Since then, Japan has killed over 8,000 whales under the guise of scientific research.
- In 2002 in a controversial move, **Iceland** was permitted to re-join the IWC and filed a reservation to the moratorium, meaning it is not legally bound by the moratorium. Iceland immediately began hunting whales under the scientific research provision, but stated it would start commercial whaling in 2006 – this year.

The Votes - Losing the Conservation Majority

- For the past 30 years, conservation countries have been held the simple majority. If the pro-whaling nations take the lead this year and take control of the Commission, they will try to destroy the IWC's **conservation agenda** and seek to remove the final barriers to the resumption of commercial whaling.
- Japan plans to institute **secret balloting** for all votes taken by the Commission so that citizens cannot hold their country representatives accountable.
- Japan also wishes to create a new category of whaling permitted by the IWC for its coastal communities, which it calls **small-type coastal whaling**. If passed, this would be the first time commercial whaling would be able to be conducted openly by Japan in spite of the existing ban.
- Japan and its pro-whaling allies could dismantle the **Conservation Committee**.
- The pro-whaling countries may shift the **Scientific Committee's** attention away from any conservation related activities and to focus exclusively on generating whale quotas.
- They could stop the creation of **whale sanctuaries** or the promotion and furthering of **whale watching** as a viable option to whaling.

The RMS

- Since 1993, IWC member countries have been negotiating a new management regime for commercial whaling called the **Revised Management Scheme (RMS)**, which would need to be in place should IWC members vote to lift the ban on commercial whaling.
- Japan is pushing for quick adoption of a weak version of the RMS because, under at least one scenario, adoption of the RMS would **immediately lift the moratorium** on commercial whaling.
- This pressure from Japan and its allies has forced other members of the IWC to accept **unreasonable compromises** on the RMS.
- Among other **shortfalls**, recent RMS proposals do not ensure the detection of illegal, unreported, and unregulated whaling activities or products coming from whales caught or obtained by non-IWC member nations; do not address IWC members that conduct so-called scientific whaling, with self-allocated quotas; and do not allow the IWC to take any enforcement measures for non-compliance.
- Current drafts of the RMS fall far short of what would be expected today in a modern **fisheries management** regime.

Lethal “Scientific” Whaling

- A clause in the IWC Convention permits whaling hunting for lethal research.
- **Japan** started its research whaling program in 1988 with a "sample" size of 300 minke whales, all hunted in the Antarctic Ocean.
- In **1995**, the Japanese government increased its self-allotted quota to 140 more minkes in the Antarctic and an additional 100 minkes in the North Pacific Ocean.
- In **2000**, Japan added another 100 minke whales, plus 50 Bryde's whales and 10 sperm whales, to the North Pacific quota.
- In **2002**, Japan added another 50 minke whales and 50 sei whales in the North Pacific.
- And last year, Japan added another 410 minkes, plus 50 fin whales and 50 humpback whales (both of which are endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act) to its Antarctic program. (In this first season, Japan intends to kill 10 fins---the full sample size will not be hunted until 2007.)
- In summary, **Japan now kills almost 1000 whales a year under the “scientific whaling”** loophole. Since the moratorium went into effect, a total of over 24,000 whales have been killed, the majority by Japanese research whalers.
- The United States is in a unique position among IWC member nations, because the Pelly Amendment provides the U.S. government with a legal mechanism to apply **economic sanctions** against countries like Japan that are undermining international fisheries and environmental treaties.
- HSI/HSUS has called on the United States to invoke the **Pelly Amendment** to enact sanctions against Japan for its recently expanded scientific whaling programs. Though the United States has maintained a firm policy against all commercial and scientific whaling, the government has failed to take a strong stand against it.

The “whales eat all the fish” fallacy

- Historic industrial whaling reduced many whale stocks to **near extinction** and the number of whales today is a mere fraction of what it was in the mid-19th century.
- There’s no question that the world’s fish populations are in serious trouble -- over 70 percent of global stocks are being fished at or over capacity. But **human over-fishing** and fisheries mismanagement have done this damage, not natural predators.
- Yet many non-whaling countries, including many Caribbean countries, are receptive to it because it shifts the blame for diminishing fish stocks to a convenient **scapegoat**. HSI is working with marine scientists to debunk the idea with scientific evidence.
- Whales are part of **complex natural ecosystems**. Killing them in an attempt to preserve fish would have unknown and almost certainly harmful consequences---and might well further jeopardize fish populations.
- **“Food for Thought”** is a study examining the potential for competition between marine mammals and fisheries for the ocean’s fish conducted by Dr. Kristin Kaschner and world-renowned fisheries biologist Dr. Daniel Pauly. This study offers the first reliable estimates of the degree to which whales and people compete for fish stocks. The analyses conclude that most food consumed by whales consists of prey types that fisheries do not target. Further, whales consume most of their food in areas where humans do not fish. It is the continuation of present fisheries management approaches and the export of fisheries products from developing countries – not whales – that endanger world food security. **See: <http://www.hsus.org/foodforthought>**

Global Corporation Connections

- In today’s increasingly global society, a **global corporation** must address the concerns and needs of its consumers around the world. Consumer pressure can cause global corporations to change practices that are destructive towards animals.
- The HSUS has joined the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and Greenpeace in asking **Gorton’s of Gloucester** to use their corporate connection with a Japanese whaling company to help end the exploitation of whales.
- Gorton ’s is now owned by the **Japanese conglomerate Nissui (Nippon Suisan Kaisha)**. And since 2001, when Nissui purchased Gorton’s, the whaling company that Nissui co-owns has been responsible for the slaughter of more than 2,700 whales.
- A **report** by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) which can be found on the HSUS website explains the relationship between Gorton’s, Nissui, and Kyodo Senpaku in greater detail.
- Other product lines that Nissui owns throughout the world include **Sealord, Unisea, Fishking, and J.P. Klausen & Co.**
- On March 24, 2006, the Japanese whaling company that Nissui currently co-owns announced that **shares of its company will be transferred** to several public interest corporations.
- Through their historic involvement in and profiting from whaling; Nissui, Gorton's and Nissui’s other subsidiaries are in a key position to persuade Japan to end its lethal research whaling program once and for all.

Whale welfare

- All methods used for hunting whales cause **suffering** to the animals. The size of whales, their adaptations for diving, and the conditions at sea make instantaneous death virtually impossible, so individual whales, even when hit with an exploding harpoon, can take at least a few minutes and even an hour or more before dying.
- Sometimes whales are **struck and lost** at sea where they are likely to suffer a slow, painful death.
- Pro-whaling nations also try to undermine the IWC by arguing that **humane whale-slaughtering methods** are not relevant or required by the IWC. This is clearly untrue and is counter to standard adherence to “humane slaughter” concepts for livestock.
- The IWC has the legal and moral mandate to require that whales be killed humanely. The majority of IWC member countries re-affirmed this in 2004 by passing a **resolution on the need to address welfare in whale killing**.
- HSI is part of the **Whalewatch** Global Campaign Coalition:
http://www.whalewatch.org/index_en.asp

The human health concerns of consuming whale meat.

- Many people don't know and governments won't tell them that eating whale meat may be a **health hazard** for humans.
- Whales can accumulate **environmental contaminants** that bond with fat (blubber), such as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs), dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) and dioxin, and also heavy metals such as methylmercury.
- The **effects on humans** who consume contaminated whale meat or blubber are very serious. It can cause cancer, nerve damage, reproductive and developmental disorders, immune system suppression, liver damage, skin irritation, and endocrine disruption.

Cetaceans and Noise Pollution

- Marine mammals are highly **sound-oriented** creatures. Whales and dolphins rely on a form of biosonar, known as echolocation, to sense their surroundings.
- **Human activities**—including oil and gas exploration, the raising and dismantling of oil rigs, active sonar and explosives testing by the military, the use of noisemakers to deter marine mammals from fishing nets and fish pens, marine experiments that involve the use of loud sounds, and the increasing level of engine noise from boat and ship traffic—may have **far-reaching, long-term debilitating effects** on marine mammals, including damage to their hearing and disruptive effects on their social lives and foraging habits.

Whale sanctuaries and whale watching

- Because of **ecotourism opportunities**, whales are now more valuable alive than dead. Protecting whales provides financial, educational, and aesthetic opportunities for people.

- **Whale watching** is a large and growing industry in many countries, providing an educational and non-consumptive way for people to profit from whales. People want to have the experience of observing whales swimming freely in the ocean.
- This **provides benefits to the tourism industries and local economies** of towns that offer whale watching. It isn't just the tour operators that profit. These coastal communities gain income from tourist money spent on restaurants, lodging, and other services.
- The best way to protect whales and coastal communities offering whale watching is to create **sanctuaries for whales** – areas that provide safe refuge for whales during critical feeding, breeding and calving times. Sanctuaries not only keep whales safe from hunting but will also provide a framework for protecting their habitat and ecosystems.
- The IWC has **created two whale sanctuaries**, one in the Southern Ocean (Antarctica) and one in the Indian Ocean.
- Efforts by member nations to create **additional sanctuaries** in the South Pacific and South Atlantic have been **defeated** due to pressure from pro-whaling nations such as Japan, Iceland and Norway.
- They are also trying to **abolish established sanctuaries**.
- Meanwhile, **Japan** undermines international law by continuing to kill whales in the Southern Ocean Sanctuary.

For the most up-to-date information on the IWC and related issues, go to:
www.protectwhales.org