

# ECO

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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## Japan Paralyzes IWC for a Day

The IWC meeting degenerated into chaos Wednesday as Japan and its whaling bloc used amendments and procedural objections to tie up consideration of the aboriginal whaling quotas. An entire day was consumed, and the Commission still didn't conclude the agenda item. Japan and its Caribbean puppets continually objected to subsistence quotas that the rest of the IWC sought to accept by consensus. A major fight erupted early on, climaxing in a time-consuming nation-by-nation vote on the order in which the subsistence quotas would be considered by the IWC. Norway even threw a procedural bomb,

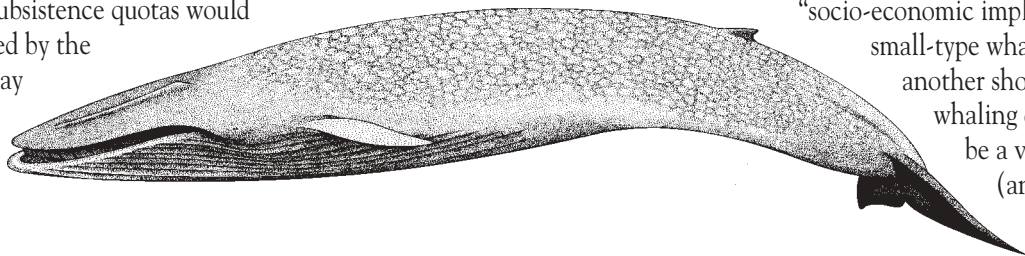
eating up two hours, by seeking to cut the bowhead quotas from five years to two.

Japan's obstruction reflected both rage against its stunning defeats Monday and Tuesday and the whalers' often-used tactic of pushing key votes into Friday, when many delegations are scheduled to depart Shimonoseki. If a few anti-whaling nations catch trains and planes before the meeting wraps up, Japan could have a majority to ram through pro-whaling resolutions, or block those it opposes.

After the meeting, Japan's Commissioner told reporters Japan would oppose the quota for bowhead whales requested for subsistence users in the Russian Federation and U.S. He specifically noted Japan's request (rejected Tuesday) for a commercial quota of minke whales in Japanese coastal waters, suggesting Japan is holding out on bowhead whales in order to leverage a kill of minkes.

With only a third of the agenda items completed and a day and a half left for IWC 54, the IWC faces protracted battles over RMS, environmental and health issues, scientific permits, contributions and "socio-economic implications and small-type whaling"—

another shot at a coastal whaling quota. It will be a very long day (and night) Thursday.



## Japan's Fisheries Agency Demands Australia and New Zealand Leave IWC

Japan's Foreign Ministry has now been taken over by the dubious diplomacy of the Japan Fisheries Agency, which issued a press release on Tuesday demanding that Australia and New Zealand leave the IWC.

Japan's alternate commissioner Masayuki Komatsu was quoted in the official release: "Australia and New Zealand continue to abuse the IWC by reintroducing their proposal for a whale sanctuary in the South Pacific.

"How many times does this proposal have to be defeated before they'll get the point the IWC was never intended to be a protectionist

organization? The IWC is there to regulate the whaling industry for whaling nations.

"It is time Australia and New Zealand abided by their international obligations to bring about the development of the whaling industry, or leave the IWC."

But wait, ECO nobly shouts!

Hasn't Japan repeatedly "abused" the IWC by reintroducing their proposals to gut the Indian Ocean Sanctuary and to establish a coastal minke quota, among other repeatedly-defeated proposals??

Japan's cheap shots continue

against the conservation-minded countries. On Tuesday, Japan and Norway questioned the credentials of the alternate commissioner of the Netherlands, despite the fact that the Credentials Committee had already approved the alternate's status.

Now, Mr. Komatsu is smearing the governments of Australia and New Zealand, in official Japanese government press releases, for taking the same procedural steps as Japan has for years in the IWC. Where is the government in Tokyo while Japan's Fisheries Agency continues to embarrass this proud nation?

## ECO Book of the Year Award

And the award goes to ... *The Truth behind the Whaling Dispute*, by Masayuki Komatsu (co-authored by Shigeo Misaki).

This marvellous little book is the perfect size to slip into a handbag or back pocket and a must for those rare spare moments one has to dip into something entertaining. It is the

## ECO

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perfect balance among fact, fiction and side-splitting fun. The IWC has been treated to Mr. Komatsu's acid interventions for many a year, and now his precious words are available inter-sessionally in the Commission's best read.

ECO picks out a few little gems to entice the reader:

The author exposes the culprit impeding the recovery of the blue whale. Of course it is that cockroach of the sea, the little minke whale, taking the vacant space (left by the devastation of the commercial whalers' heyday) and propagating rapidly. To quote, "Minkes squatted in the house and took it over from the blue whales. Therefore blue whales lost their house to which they could go home."

Now that's what ECO calls sound science!

Komatsu claims that surely some day Japan may bring a case against the IWC to an international court, and how much he is looking forward to that day.

The safety of whalewatching is described in great detail, and he expresses his opinion that there should be proper guidelines to avoid danger in this pastime.

He notes that recently several nations came (to the IWC) to support Japan in forming a firm front for "contention." "This helps me act more in a relaxed mood."

Komatsu explains how leftover food is a great problem faced by many developed nations, including Japan. America's leftover food could feed Canada—but ECO lost the plot on how this relates to the whaling debate. (Blame Canada?)

Claims are made that EIA is more radical than Greenpeace (although Greenpeace may wish to dispute this) in an effort to explain in only three easy pages why Japan left

the room while the IWC passed a Dall's porpoise resolution.

The book presents a chilling mystery. Who wrote the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary Proposal? It reveals that "the Chairman of the Finance and Admin Committee was a man from the U.K., Mr. Llewelyn." Three paragraphs are devoted to the color of badges. It is gripping stuff.

Against the gloomy background of the Vietnam War and problems of pollution, social disorder prevailed, driving young generations to drug use and revolt. The "Save the Whales" movement in the United States "brightened up the hearts of many Americans."

Oh yes: it was U.S. President Richard Nixon who made U.S. anti-whaling policy to distract us all from other environmental issues.

There is an in-depth analysis of how burping cows are contributing to global warming and how commercial whaling can help solve this problem. This is better than Pepto Bismol!

The book is filled with little quizzes such as "Do you know the current world population?" The reader is kept on his toes with questions, maths, anecdotes, humor and obsessive recall.

The penultimate paragraph at last explains the author's most famous quote—yes, you guessed it—it's the "minkes are the cockroaches of the sea" analogy. And the final sentence? "Excessive protection of whales is evil, it gives adverse effects to the marine ecosystem as a whole."

The book is a foot-stomping rant, but it is entertaining and well worth the read. The reader will conclude that Mr. Komatsu's favourite number is 760,000, but, who knows, perhaps in the sequel this will have decreased. This number has certainly been abandoned by the Scientific Committee and every other responsible scientist.

ECO's rating: 

## Something Rotten in Denmark?

EIA investigators bought minke whale meat in Japanese markets last week labeled as a product of Greenland. Whale products from Greenland, of course, are supposed to be limited to local consumption for subsistence purposes by the indigenous people, not sold to nations such as Japan. The presence of such whale meat also violates CITES provisions prohibiting international trade in endangered species.

Denmark's response in session on

Wednesday? "Must be a mistake in labeling."

Japan's delegation was even more helpful: "In the past, there has been mislabeling of whale meat as being from Greenland and Russia, when it comes from Antarctica."

Besides, Norway and Japan insisted that trade in whale meat was beyond the competence of the IWC. In response, UK argued strongly that this was not an issue of trade, but of IWC management of whale stocks

and whaling. "We are very disappointed in this response from Norway."

Whale meat was also purchased last week labeled from the Russian Federation, also a potential violation of IWC regulations for subsistence whaling.

Further investigations of these scandalous revelations are warranted. Clearly, the Japanese whale meat market is out of control, and the Japanese government has been shamefully absent in enforcing international regulations.

## Things Change

They told us that we were wrong to stop them from utilizing a living resource. It was wrong, they told us, to take away their jobs. Our opposition to their whaling was even described as being racist.

Shimonoseki, Japan, in 2002?

No! Richmond, California, in 1972.

The U.S. government had decided to end whaling in the U.S.A., closing down the last whaling station in the country, based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Whales from the Gulf of the Farallones were hunted and ground up into Cal Can dog food. Then-Secretary of Interior Walter Hickel, as he was leaving

office, put several species of whales on the federal endangered species list.

At the public hearing held in Richmond to air the views of the public, environmentalists were treated to claims by the remaining whalers of the hardships that would be caused—claims that have grown stale from repeated use by other nations. The work force at the rendering operation and for the last, lone catcher-boat were mostly African Americans, worried about their job losses. The owner was opposed to closure.

Fifteen years after the closure of this last U.S. whaling operation, one of the former gunners was invited out on a whalewatching cruise to the Farallon Islands, his old hunting

grounds. Like the other former employees of the U.S. whaling station, he had moved on to a productive life. He thoroughly enjoyed the trip out on the water with an enthusiastic group of people going to see blue and humpback whales that had repopulated the area. The passage of the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act has changed the landscape of nature protection in the United States. Today, whalewatching cruises up and down the California coast bring in hundreds of millions of dollars annually and are a staple of the coastal tourist industry.

Things change, and whales are now more far more valuable alive.

## Red Alert! Toxic Orca!

An orca recently stranded on the Olympic Peninsula in the United States raised alarms for the health of whales and points to the dangers of human consumption of whale meat.

The 22-foot long female orca tested so high in polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) that scientists' instruments went off the scale. The levels are dozens of times higher than levels known to adversely affect harbor seals. Levels were about 1,000

parts per million of PCBs, far higher than levels considered safe for human consumption in Japan and Norway.

There were no obvious signs of injury or disease to the orca, so the cause of stranding is still unknown.

## Oh, Rats!

Japan's always-quotable Mr. Masayuki Komatsu has again succeeded in confusing the admittedly easily-confused staff of ECO by his explanation of his

"cockroaches" quotation in his book. "I simply implied that minke whales were numerous and fertile like cockroaches. Norwegians call minke whales 'rats' of the sea for the same reason. My expression certainly helped people to question over the

notion that whales are the sacred cows of the sea."

Rats? Sacred cows? Cockroaches? Whales?

ECO wonders where Mr. Komatsu learned his biology?



## Soundblasting the Oceans: The Japan Connection

ECO has discovered that the U.S. Navy's proposed soundblasting system—SURTASS Low Frequency Active (LFA) Sonar—has been based in Japan.

In the midst of a national security emergency declared against terrorism, the U.S. Navy is wasting millions of dollars on this Cold War relic sonar “bomb” that is better at killing whales than protecting U.S. troops and ships.

The Navy is ostensibly waiting for final permits allowing them to blast the oceans with intense sound to detect “enemy” submarines at long distances. The U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service is supposed to protect whales and other endangered marine life, but the political fix is in, so permits are expected to be released as soon as late May.

The Navy has reportedly positioned the LFA Sonar experimental vessel in Japan, and will conduct further tests of the loud system north of Japan (off the coast of China and North Korea) once the permits are issued. This is the same vessel that LFA protesters swam alongside during experiments on wild whales off Hawai'i, forcing the vessel to suspend half their proposed broadcasts.

Experimental LFA Sonar uses an array of giant speakers to blast a basso burst of noise — as loud as standing next to a Saturn 5 rocket launch — into ocean waters. The deafening sound energy is strong enough to destroy sensitive hearing tissue and cause ears to bleed. It also appears capable of achieving bubble formation in the super-saturated blood stream of deep-diving

cetaceans, with devastating results. The full strength of the LFA Sonar beam has never been tested on wild whales or any other species—only very low sound levels were used in the experiments.

Dreamed up to detect Soviet subs lurking in the ocean, LFA is still classed as experimental because it has obvious military disadvantages: it pinpoints the presence of the surface ship towing the array and “paints” friendly subs to a

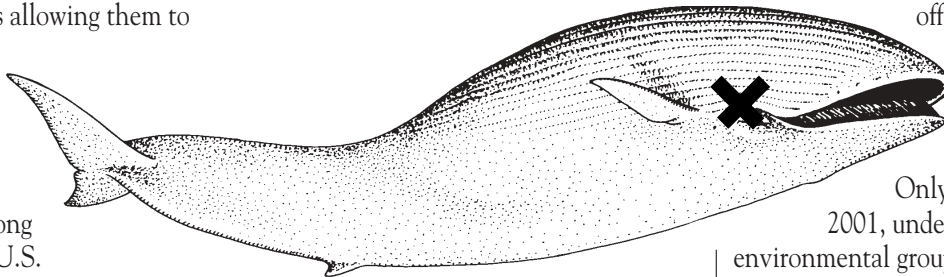
condemned to a horrible death on the beaches where they seek sanctuary. Other marine life, including fish, mollusks, dolphins, sea turtles, and other sensitive species will likely be impacted, but nobody knows for sure. Basic research on sound impacts on marine life is lacking.

The Navy has spent years denying that LFA Sonar has any “biological effects.” In fact, for two years, the U.S. Navy denied that their active sonar experiments off the Bahamas caused the strandings and deaths of beaked whales.

Only in December 2001, under pressure from environmental groups, did the Navy and NMFS release an interim report on those strandings admitting that the active sonar used caused the whale deaths. Yet now it has applied to the federal government for an exemption from whale-killing and harassment bans, as well as an exemption from protection for endangered marine species.

LFA Sonar does nothing to counter terrorism. It never proved useful against Soviet subs, which no longer cruise world's oceans anyway. So why is the Navy wasting a classified number of precious tax dollars on a whale-killing boondoggle? And why is the Navy ignoring alternative “passive” Sonars which provide more underwater information without revealing the location of our ships and submarines?

LFA is a gamble of unprecedented proportions with ocean life. All countries should find common purpose in vigorously objecting to this technology that has the potential of destroying a wide variety of marine life, including whales, throughout the oceans.



listening enemy, exposing both to attack, and is fatal to Navy SEALs and other personnel working underwater. It's a dumb bomb in the age of cruise missiles. The Navy is ignoring sophisticated computer-enhanced passive listening devices that could be used as a substitute.

Despite LFA Sonar's questionable utility and strategic obsolescence, U.S. Navy bureaucrats seek a license to deploy LFA Sonar worldwide and to keep killing whales and other marine life in our oceans.

The largest known active Sonar massacre so far identified: 14 beaked whales and two minke whales beached in the Bahamas in 2000. The entire population of beaked whales in the area disappeared. This massacre was from a mid-range frequency Sonar system; LFA Sonar is louder and its sound energy travels longer distances. Whales and other marine mammals rely on sound to find food, attract mates, raise their young, and navigate. Deafened by LFA Sonar and in severe pain, they are