

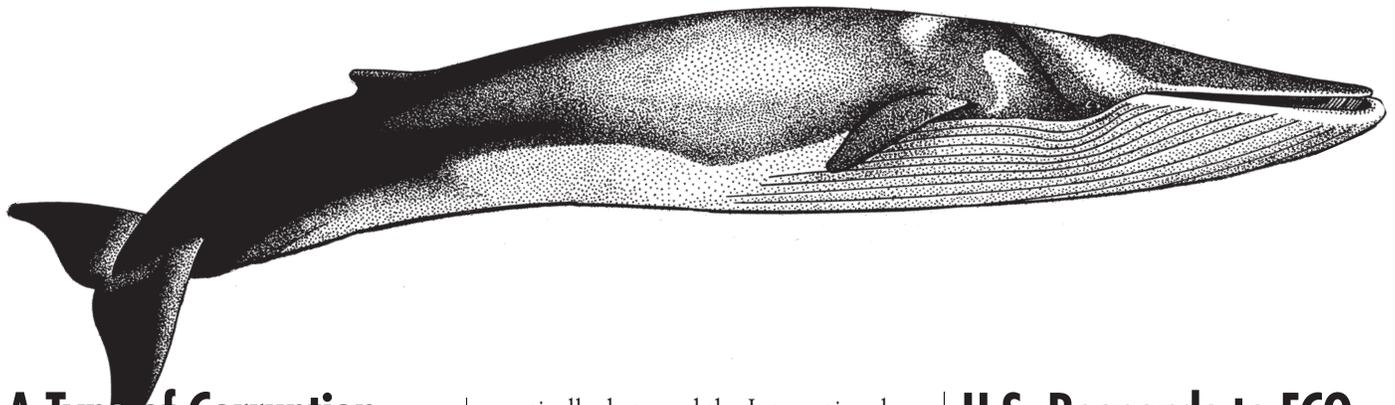
Eco

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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A Type of Corruption

What do the Fukushima nuclear disaster and scientific whaling have in common? Both are in part consequences of the continuously revolving-door between corporations, government and the Diet (Parliament) in Japan. The earthquake and tsunami of 11 March 2011 was the work of God or Nature, according to one's theological inclinations, but its appalling effects on people and Nature from the breakdown of the nuclear plants was largely the fault of humans. Such things should not be built by the sea in a known earthquake zone in the first place. And as the IAEA report and others on the "accident" demonstrate, the operating company was utterly incompetent and unprepared to deal with the situation, a failure enhanced by years of lax or absent regulation by the authorities. Cascading human errors occurred, of the kind we must expect and try to protect against when dealing with vastly complicated and dangerous materials and instruments. Luckily the consequences of decades of fake "scientific" whaling are not so disastrous, but they have

practically destroyed the International Whaling Commission as a regulatory instrument for an inherently destructive "mining" industry. And the same government and political institutions have been responsible.

This discourse would not be relevant were it not that rumors abound that we should all be nice to the Japanese delegation to the IWC in Jersey, because the Japanese people have suffered and are still suffering so terribly from the earthquake, the tsunami and their outcome, especially radioactive pollution. What a fine opportunity for those in the Obama Administration to pursue the dreaded "compromise" with the pirate whaling industry, mainly—it seems—to ensure that Alaskans get their share of whale meat in 2012 and thereafter. Making deals to ensure the continuation of albeit limited global commercial whaling for the next five, ten, or more years will not be the slightest help to the hundreds of thousands of people whose lives have been disrupted by nature and their government's reckless incompetence.

Nor help the uncounted millions who in

concluded on page two

U.S. Responds to ECO

Hello ECO, the US Delegation read with great interest the article "Why Do They Hate US?" However, with all due respect, we believe there are several reasons you may have overlooked. As such, we humbly submit the following other reasons:

- Because we believe our Jersey shore is better than the shore of Jersey.
- Because we like Reggae music since we can dance to it.

(ECO Editor's Note: Yeah, we can't figure out this one either...)

- Because we will fight for speaking rights for observers even when they use those rights to tell us we can't dance.
- Because of the strikingly good looks of the members of the US delegation (thanks Doug!).
- Because USA beat Brazil in Women's World Cup qualifier.
- Because we continue to remove extraneous letters in words like colo[u]r and program[m]e.
- Because if we were any more open and transparent we would be naked, and that would be really scary.
- Next year: Need we say more?

Come Back for Big Blue?

One of the saddest legacies of the intense period of whaling following the second World War, was the almost complete annihilation of the blue whale in the southern hemisphere. Many scientists believed the species was doomed to extinction; many thought with so few whales left in so vast an ocean, that the individuals would not be able to find mates.

We now know that the voices of the blue whales can travel immense distances underwater. It may be due to this fact that the few survivors were able

to continue the species.

Photo identification of individual blue whales is now being carried out by researchers in Australia, Chile, and other southern countries, with several hundred individual animals being recognized in such photo catalogs.

Additional DNA samples (which can be obtained without harm to the whales) are further addressing the question of the viability of these small populations.

It appears that the blue whale may be able to make it in the Antarctic after

all, if it continues to receive protection from whaling activity. (ECO notes that there is ample evidence that past whalers often ignored IWC regulations and killed protected individuals in the vicious hunts for more and more whales.)

We also note that a number of similar studies are being undertaken to assess other depleted species of whales, including right whales, gray whales, and many dolphin species, by individual nations under the purview of the IWC Scientific Committee and the Conservation Committee.

Corruption, concluded from page one the future will still be wondering what to do with the accumulated permanent waste from nuclear power production, something not counted in—in fact carefully shielded from—the debate about the future of this industry.

Our generation professes to care about the welfare of future generations. That, after all, is what “sustainable use and development”, “preservation of biodiversity” and so on are supposedly all about. But do we really care, except perhaps about our own direct descendants in the first, maybe second, generation? The consequences of nuclear games will be with us for at least tens of thousands of years. I thought about that while reading in *National*

ECO

ECO is published by Earth Island Institute's International Marine Mammal Project at the annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission in Isle of Jersey, on behalf of environmental and animal welfare organizations around the globe.

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Geographic magazine yesterday about the excavation of a newly rediscovered temple at Göbekli Tepe in southern Turkey, close to the modern Syrian frontier, that is twice as old as the great Stonehenge—and with much better decorated, shaped limestone pillars, with animal bas-reliefs like the gargoyles of Notre Dame. Yet we are forcing our descendants to look after our radioactive rubbish for much longer than that. And pay the rising cost and the interest on our debts. The pains of modern Greece in comparison with Classical Greece are nothing compared with that.

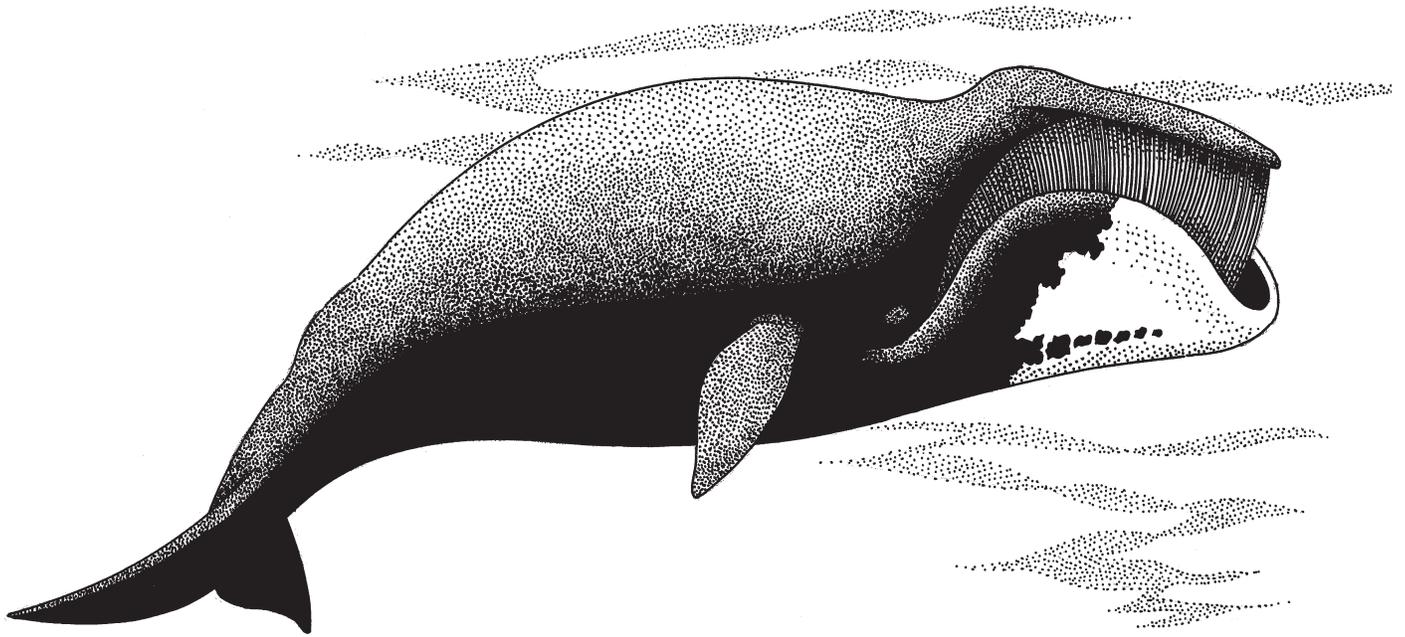
With luck the effects of over-exploiting fishes like cod and bluefin tuna and numerous shark species could be repaired in a few years, a decade or two, by serious management of fishing. But the effects of whale-mining will, with ecological luck, take nearly a century of restraint to repair themselves. (The long-lived fishes such as the Antarctic toothfishes, that the Marine Stewardship Council declares are being sustainably exploited, might take nearly as long to recover, eventually, from the current massacre.) And these creatures, the cetaceans, are self-aware; I wonder what their descendants will be thinking when they look into the mirror that is the great World Ocean, their Ocean?

As for the surviving humans, they

won't even remember what happened. We lost Göbekli Tepe for 12,000 years. Later, much later, those ancient engineers, the Babylonians, left messages on clay tablets that have come down to us. Later the Eastern Europeans and middle-Easterners wrote on animal skins and paper, some of which survived until now, though not so intact as the clay tablets. Now it is being said that keeping libraries full of paper, and continually adding to them, is too expensive, so everything will go on magnetic, optical or other digitized media. My librarian and information technology friends tell me we shall be lucky if those can persist, let alone be read, by the end of the 21st century—that is by about when the whales will be swimming again in abundance in a warmer Southern Ocean. There's progress! I hope that the Golden Record of humpback whale song, on the Voyager 2 spacecraft, just about to leave the solar system, will one day be heard, by someone; now, was it 33.33LP, 78 or 45 rpm EP?

Meanwhile, let us continue harassing the Japanese, Norwegian and Icelandic whalers until they decide to act in accordance with the intentions of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling 1946, not its unfortunate loopholes.

—Dr. Sydney Holt



Arctic Oil Drilling Threatens Vulnerable Whales

As the IWC continues to study the effects of oil on whales, Greenpeace is demanding an immediate ban on oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Ocean.

The vulnerable Arctic ecosystem is already under unprecedented threat from climate change resulting from the burning of fossil fuels with receding ice threatening ice dependent species such as the narwhal and bowhead whale. Now, as the oil industry encroaches ever further into the Arctic, these same species face further threats including those resulting from oil spills.

A new briefing published by Greenpeace, "Black on White: the Threat of Arctic Oil to Whales," summarizes the threats and flags up some of the latest relevant scientific information.

The short Arctic drilling season is made perilous by icebergs. Drilling platforms have tugs and ships with water cannon standing by to divert icebergs and contingency plans to move the rigs if they fail, but no one knows how to clean up oil in ice strewn waters. Dispersants are unlikely to work and even if they do will only distribute the

oil through the water column with its toxicity undiminished.

It is very difficult to detect oil below ice and amongst broken ice sheets, and experts say that there is no way to contain an oil spill if it is trapped underneath a large body of ice. Oil skimmers used so extensively in the Gulf of Mexico, where they were only partly effective, are simply unable to operate if they cannot reach the spilled oil due to sheet ice.

New information about the short and long term impacts of oil spills on cetaceans is beginning to come through from the research carried out by various groups of scientists following the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico. 101 carcasses were observed after the Gulf oil spill, but a recent study in *Conservation Letters*, "Underestimating the damage: interpreting cetacean carcass recoveries in the context of the Deepwater Horizon/BP incident," estimates that the true death toll could be as much as fifty times higher as most bodies sink unseen.

While the IWC's intention to convene a workshop to consider the

anthropogenic impacts on Arctic cetaceans is something to be welcomed, clearly the best way to protect whales and the fragile Arctic ecosystem from oil spills is not to drill in the first place. Once oil is pouring from an undersea blowout, and collecting under the ice, it's too late.

"Black on White: the Threat of Arctic Oil to Whales" can be found at:

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/PageFiles/322340/IWC%%20Oil%20Briefing.pdf>

Thanks, DJ!

ECO takes this opportunity to again thank DJ Schubert of the Animal Welfare Institute, based in Washington DC, for his efforts in herding environmental and animal welfare NGOs at this year's IWC meeting.

DJ has been open and helpful to all requests, and there are many, and in sorting out all the difficult decisions that have to be made.

And thanks also to all the NGOs who made last night's NGO reception such a success.

A hearty round of applause for all!

Whale Meat Case in Los Angeles

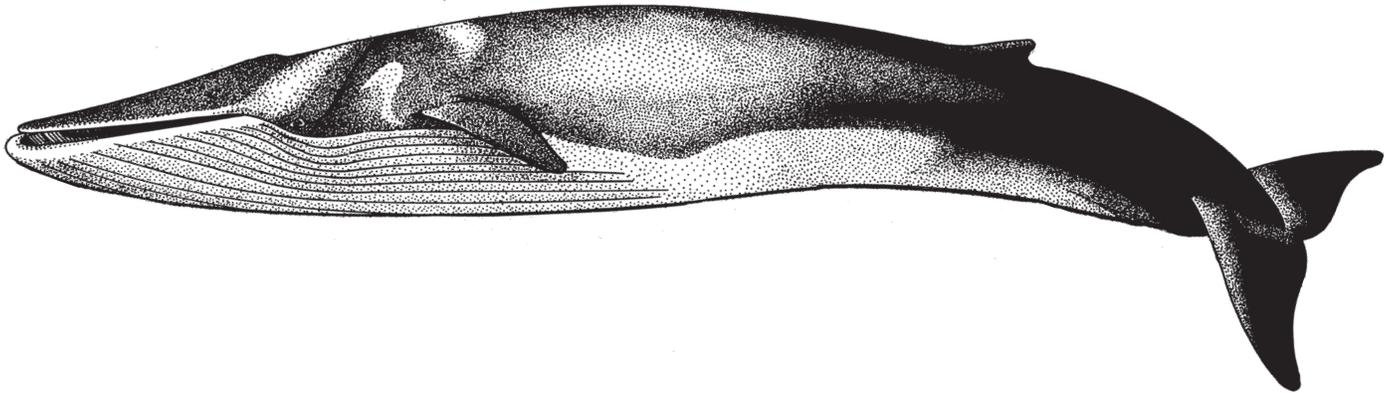
A famous Japanese sushi bar in Santa Monica, CA, has been shut down, and the owner has pled guilty to illegally importing and serving sushi made from sei whale meat.

Learning of the availability of the

meat, two female activists went into the restaurant and ordered a large dinner for \$600, finally urging the chefs to provide them with whale meat. They filmed the entire sequence, with help from Charles Hambleton, associate producer of *The*

Cove documentary. They also smuggled out samples of the meat for DNA analysis.

Ginichi Ohira pleaded guilty last month to importing the illegal whale meat from Japan; sentencing is expected in September. Also charged was the chef serving the meal.



Device to Allow Talking with Dolphins?

The Georgia Institute of Technology, in conjunction with Dr. Denise Herzing's long-term wild dolphin research, has developed a device that can translate dolphin sounds to English and English to dolphin sounds.

With the device, which includes an

underwater keyboard (apparently for divers, not for dolphins) and two hydrophones, works to translate dolphin sounds into words like "seaweed" and "bow wave ride." Eventually, the device should decode more words in "dolphinsese." The device is now being

tested in the Bahamas.

ECO recommends that the IWC, which only recently began allowing representatives of NGO groups to address the full Commission in Plenary sessions, to consider opening up the microphones to dolphins and whales. Assuming, of course, that whale cursing does not get too out-of-hand?

An Act of Mercy for a Dolphin in Japan

The incredible tsunami that swept over Japan's northern coast in March stranded a baby dolphin in a rice paddy more than a mile from the coast.

Mr. Ryo Taira, a pet shop owner who had been going about trying to save pets in the tsunami zone, heard from a person who saw the dolphin stranded. Mr. Taira went to the paddy and managed to catch the dolphin with the help of friends and wrap it in wet towels. They then brought the dolphin to the ocean and released it.

Mr. Taira told the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper: "I don't know if it will live, but it's certainly a lot better than dying

in a rice paddy." Mr. Taira thought the dolphin perked up when they managed to get it back into the ocean.

Many Japanese care deeply about animals and are willing to go out of their way to help. Volunteers in Japan have often worked hard to save dolphins that strand on beaches in Japan. And whale-

and dolphin-watching cruises are gaining in popularity.

When will the Japan Fisheries Agency stop promoting whale and dolphin killing in conflict with the Japanese people?

