



1982

### Moratorium puts an end to commercial whaling

Following a ten-year campaign that sees public opinion change as people see pictures of Greenpeace activists confronting whalers at sea, the International Whaling Commission puts an end to commercial whaling.

#### THE THREAT

The picture was shocking: by 1970, the total number of blue whales had decreased to less than 6,000. Humpbacks showed a similar decline and populations of Pacific gray, sei and sperm whales had been halved. Exploding harpoons and ever more efficient factory ships ensured that – away from the public's consciousness – some of the planet's most amazing, awe-inspiring species were being eradicated.

#### THE GREENPEACE WAY

Greenpeace launched its anti-whaling campaign shortly after the organisation itself was founded. In 1973 Greenpeace ships began confronting whaling fleets on the high seas. Daring activists in rubber boats put themselves between the harpoons and the whales. A hitherto unseen kind of action brought images of whaling into the living rooms of the public for the first time. A photograph of a dead sperm whale under an ominous exploding harpoon mounted on the bow of a towering, steel-hulled ship circulated the world. Faced with the realities of commercial whaling for the first time, public opinion began to turn against the whalers.

#### PUBLIC SUPPORT

While action was taken at sea, Greenpeace campaigners around the world drummed up public support on land, handing out flyers and running petitions asking national governments to apply international pressure. Lobbying efforts showed results when in 1979 the International Whaling Commission (IWC) established the Indian Ocean Whale Sanctuary as a practical conservation measure. Greenpeace kept up the pressure until in 1982 the IWC finally delivered what the anti-whaling lobby had been fighting for: a moratorium on commercial whaling. After a decade of action, the world's dwindling whale populations had a chance to recover.

#### CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

A few countries, namely Japan, Norway and Iceland, continue to ignore the moratorium to the present day; but Greenpeace continues to campaign for an end to commercial whaling in all forms. In 2010 two Greenpeace activists known as 'The Tokyo Two' were convicted after having exposed a whale-meat embezzlement scandal in Japan. The case brought unprecedented public scrutiny to Japan's "scientific" whaling programme and has helped build public support within Japan to end the senseless hunt.

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