

Dear Prime Minister Fukuda,

On behalf of whales everywhere, and humpback whales particularly, I am writing to thank you for delaying the planned departure of Japan's whaling fleet this week, and to urge you to cancel the whaling expedition completely and permanently end Japan's involvement in industrial whaling.

More than 200,000 members of my species were killed by commercial whalers in the 20th Century. This persecution lasted for nearly eighty years. By the time it ended, nearly ninety percent of humpback whales had been killed, leaving our species on the verge of extinction. The International Whaling Commission helped avert this catastrophe when it banned the commercial killing of humpbacks in 1965, and imposed a moratorium on commercial whaling for all great whales in 1984. For a few years, we lived in peace, giving us hope that our family would someday recover. In many places, particularly in the Southern Hemisphere, that recovery has been slow, and humpback populations remain depleted.

For more than twenty years, a small number of countries, including your own, have continued commercial whaling in defiance of the IWC moratorium, killing more than 25,000 whales since the moratorium came into force. While my species has been not been openly targeted by commercial whalers during this time, neither have we been completely spared. In 1999, my mate disappeared in the waters of the North Pacific. His DNA was later found in samples of whale meat tested in a Japanese market.

This year, the threat to whales, and to my family, is greater than it has been in decades. The Fisheries Agency of Japan has announced that it will kill more than 1000 whales this year under the guise of "scientific research", including 50 humpbacks. As creatures of the world, you and I both know this killing has nothing to do with science; but it has everything to do with the survival of my family, my species and the many other whales that share our fate.

As the Prime Minister of Japan, you can put an end to this farce, stop the needless killing in the false name of research, bring Japan once again into compliance with the letter and spirit of international law, and become part of the solution to the oceans crisis, instead of part of the problem.

Sincerely,

Neo (concerned humpback whale mother)