

# ENDANGERED WHALES



## WE HAVE A PROBLEM:

- Many whale species still face extinction.
- Blue whales, the largest animals ever, may now number as few as 400.<sup>1</sup>
- Rogue nations Japan, Norway and Iceland flout the international ban on commercial whaling.
- Other threats facing whales include global warming, toxic dumping, noise pollution and lethal “bycatch” from fishing.

## SOLUTION:

- Japan, Norway and Iceland must join the rest of the world and respect the moratorium on commercial whaling.
- The loophole Japan exploits to carry out whaling for “scientific” research should be closed.
- Fishing operations causing large numbers of whale bycatch deaths must be cleaned up or stopped.
- Concerted international action must be taken to stop other threats to whales including global warming, noise pollution, ship strikes and toxic contamination.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Tell the Bush administration to strongly support whale protection so whaling countries get the message.
- Ask elected officials to press Iceland, Japan and Norway to respect the commercial whaling moratorium.
- Demand that the U.S. curb global warming pollution and sign the Stockholm Convention, which bans the most harmful chemicals on the planet.
- Tell Congress that you oppose sonar intelligence gathering and sonic blasts for oil exploration because these practices can harm and kill whales.

*“To most people, whaling is all nineteenth-century stuff. They have no idea about huge floating slaughterhouses, steel-hulled chaser boats with sonar to stalk whales, and harpoons fired from cannons.”*

Bob Hunter,  
Greenpeace founder

# TAKE ACTION TO SAVE THE WHALES

## The Issue

Two decades after the launch of an international moratorium on commercial whaling, these highly intelligent creatures still face extinction. Gray whales in the western North Pacific, for example, are now thought to number just 100.<sup>2</sup> Exploiting a loophole allowing “scientific” whaling, Japan continues to kill hundreds of whales a year; in 2005, Japan more than doubled its Antarctic Minke whale quota to 935 and began hunting endangered fin whales. Norway, meanwhile, doesn’t even pretend its whaling is for anything other than commercial purposes. Yet the deliberate hunting of whales is now recognized as just one of a number of grave threats facing these magnificent mammals; chemical contamination, noise pollution from seismic testing and sonar navigation systems, ship strikes and ozone depletion all hurt whales. Meanwhile, global warming and overfishing are decreasing the amount of prey available for many whale populations, and fishing “bycatch” continues to kill about 300,000 whales, dolphins and porpoises every year.

## The Solution

The International Whaling Commission’s (IWC) moratorium on commercial whaling must be obeyed by all nations, including Iceland, Japan and Norway. Restoring whales’ natural habitat will, however, take longer. An international network of ocean reserves where no industrial fishing is permitted will help. But the U.S. must also start showing real leadership by curbing global warming, signing the Stockholm Convention to ban the most toxic chemicals on the planet and banning the use of sonar and sonic blasts in the ocean.

## The Opposition

Japan and Norway continue to make bogus claims about the importance of whaling to their national economies and cultures. The truth is that only 11 percent of Japanese support whaling, according to a 1999 poll.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, in Norway, whaling accounts for less than 0.2 percent of fishing revenues. Nevertheless, Japan has embarked on a successful vote-buying campaign of nations in the Caribbean and even landlocked countries to create a voting bloc in the International Whaling Commission that threatens to lift the whaling moratorium. Meanwhile, the Bush administration, arguably the most environmentally-unfriendly in history, has fallen increasingly silent, even as Japan’s pro-whaling bloc threatens to gain a majority at the IWC.

## What You Can Do

**SEND A MESSAGE:** Contact Congress at 202-224-3121 and demand that the Bush administration halt any secret review of U.S. anti-whaling policy. Tell elected officials that you oppose the use of sonar intelligence gathering and sonic blasts for oil exploration because these practices kill whales.

**WHALE-FRIENDLY TRAVEL:** When you consider a vacation abroad, ask if the country you plan to visit has sold its vote on the International Whaling Commission to Japan in its bid to bring back commercial whaling. Contact the country’s tourism board and either let them know why you’re not visiting or thank them for supporting whale conservation.

**GET INVOLVED:** Either on campus or online at:  
[www.greenpeaceusa.org/getinvolved](http://www.greenpeaceusa.org/getinvolved)

## Greenpeace Victories

- In April 2006, U.S. seafood giant Gorton’s and its Japanese parent company, Nissui, agree to get out of whaling.
- In 1994, the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary is established.
- In 1992, a worldwide ban on high seas driftnet fishing is adopted by the United Nations.
- In 1986, the International Whaling Commission implements its worldwide moratorium on commercial whaling.

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[www.greenpeaceusa.org/oceans](http://www.greenpeaceusa.org/oceans)

1. International Whaling Commission estimate. Available at: <http://www.iwcoffice.org/conservation/estimate.htm#assessment>  
2. Ibid. 3. Independent poll released by Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*, April 2, 2002

