



Animal Welfare Institute

900 Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20003

The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) wishes to thank the government of Slovenia, and the city of Portorož for their kind hospitality on the occasion of the 65th Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). We also must commend Dr. Simon Brockington and the entire staff of the IWC Secretariat for their tireless efforts to organize IWC meetings and to broadly oversee the implementation of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. We take this opportunity to encourage all contracting governments and observers to IWC65 to work together to reshape the IWC into a modern agreement that confronts the serious challenges facing cetaceans and our shared planet.

Cetacean welfare issues

The evolution of the IWC's consideration of the welfare of cetaceans over the last 65 years is consistent with global developments in scientific understanding of animal physiology, sentience and pain over the same period. Contracting governments' evolving understanding of animals' welfare and the need to treat animals humanely has, in large part, persuaded the IWC to expand its welfare mandate in recent years to include addressing non-whaling threats to cetaceans as well as euthanasia.

In addition to supporting the intersessional working group on welfare's proposal to consolidate the IWC's welfare mandate, AWI specifically encourages contracting governments to consider the secondment of a dedicated welfare adviser to the Secretariat, and/or the dedication of funds to establish a permanent position on welfare within the Secretariat. We also recommend that the IWC invite a permanent observer from the Organization on Animal Health (OIE) to attend its meetings.

Small Type Coastal Whaling

Since the 1990s, Japan has repeatedly sought a Small Type Coastal Whaling (STCW) quota for four coastal whaling communities, claiming that they continue to suffer economic and social distress as a result of the IWC's moratorium on commercial whaling. We urge contracting governments to reject the proposal outlined in IWC/65/09 for the following reasons: (1) The proposal violates the commercial whaling moratorium; (2) if adopted, the proposal would essentially create a new category of "community based" whaling, which would (i) violate the recent International Court of Justice (ICJ) decision that all whaling is currently prohibited unless it falls under Article VIII or Schedule Paragraph 13 and (ii) blur the distinction between commercial whaling and ASW; and (3) the removals would be unsustainable.

With regard to this last point, AWI notes that the IWC's Scientific Committee has expressed concern about the depleted status of a small population of J-stock minke whales which mixes at certain times of the year with the more populous O-stock. It is vulnerable to by-catch and

already subject to Japan's special permit whaling in the region. Recent developments in genetic studies also seem to indicate the potential existence of a "J-like" stock of minke. The Scientific Committee has yet to fully understand the complex implications of these stocks mixing, making Japan's proposal premature and irresponsible.

Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling

As delegations to the International Whaling Commission (IWC) noted at the time, Greenland's recent needs statements (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012) submitted in support of requests for its Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW) quotas, have not adequately substantiated its claimed need for increasing amounts of whale meat.

Greenland's 2014 needs statement (IWC65/17), which claims that Greenlanders now need almost 800 metric tons (tonnes) of whale meat annually, provides some new information, but it does not adequately substantiate Greenland's claim that the nutritional, subsistence and cultural need for whale meat in Greenland has increased but is not being met by its existing quota.

Greenland cannot justify an increase in its ASW quota simply on the basis that the total human population of Greenland has increased since the 1980s. ASW quotas should be based on the number of native people with a traditional and continuing nutritional, subsistence and cultural dependence on whales and whaling, use current data, and cite to published data and studies on human population and demographics and the availability and consumption rates of cetacean products, other traditional native foods and alternative sources of protein.

Sanctuaries

AWI strongly supports the proposal for a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary and commends the proponents for their tenacity in trying to protect whales in their region. Through such tenacity the proponents have made clear the immense value to establish this sanctuary and AWI encourages contracting governments to reward these efforts with their endorsement, ideally by consensus, for this proposal. In particular, AWI encourages those governments that have signed the Montevideo Declaration in January 2013 to comply with the direction provided in that document to support the South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary proposal at IWC/65.

Regrettably, whales in the North Atlantic face increased hunting quotas under reservation or objection to the commercial whaling moratorium, as well as increasing exports under reservation to the ban on international commercial trade imposed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). We urge contracting governments to express displeasure at these hunts and exports directly to Norway and Iceland and within the Commission.

Notably, AWI found evidence of a shipment of fin whale meat from Iceland illegally imported into the Port of Seattle in the State of Washington, in the USA. We commend relevant US wildlife and customs enforcement agencies for their efforts to investigate these claims and we

strongly encourage those agencies to prosecute, to the fullest extent of the law, those responsible for this violation of US law should the evidence prove to be true.

Special permit whaling

We welcome the proposed resolution to clarify how the IWC implements the recent decision of the International Court of Justice (*Whaling in the Antarctic. Australia v. Japan: New Zealand intervening*). We urge the Commission to ensure that an operative paragraph is added to the resolution requiring that no future special permit operations are permitted unless *inter alia* the data produced are “required for management”.

Small cetaceans

AWI is deeply concerned about the status of several small cetacean species and populations. Of particular concern are the species identified by the Scientific Committee as being critically imperiled including the vaquita and Maui’s and Hector’s dolphins. We urge the Commission to strongly urge the range states to follow the recommendations of the Scientific Committee in respect of these species.