

Marine Scientists Petition to the IWC

We the undersigned marine scientists respectfully call on the member nations of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) not to undermine the conservation achievements of the last few decades by again endorsing commercial whaling at their next meeting.

We are aware that at its 62nd meeting in Agadir, Morocco, June 21st- 25th, the IWC will consider a proposal to grant catch limits to the three member nations of the IWC – Japan, Norway and Iceland - that continue to take whales for commercial gain, using well-known loopholes in the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. The proposal will even permit whaling in a Marine Protected Area (“sanctuary” in the terminology of the IWC) created specifically to protect whales in large parts of their ranges. We believe that to do so would be highly inappropriate and untimely and would again risk the future of the whales.

Whilst aware that some whale populations are showing signs of increase in the absence of whaling pressure, partly as a successful result of the global “moratorium” on commercial whaling adopted in 1982, and partly from application of the management procedures agreed in 1975, such increases are not a sufficient rationale to justify the IWC endorsing commercial catches. There is no evidence that any of the few populations and species known to be increasing have reached, or are anywhere near, the levels that might justify non-zero catch limits under the IWC’s existing management and conservation policies and procedures. Furthermore, whales inhabit marine ecosystems that are now increasingly impacted by human activities ranging from oil spills to the effects of persistent pollutants, climate change and increased ship traffic and other hazards; these provide further rationale for providing these remarkable animals of the global commons with the highest possible levels of protection, including protecting them from commercial takes.

The lessons of the past show that commercial whaling has always been intractable to sustainable management, and we see no changes in the attitudes of the industry which continues to favour extracting monetary value from the whales as fast as possible and, in the process, evading and obstructing efforts to ensure full compliance with international regulations and transparent supervision. The long-lived and slow-breeding whales are also difficult and expensive to monitor adequately. We are also growing increasingly aware of the complexity of their population structures, behaviour and societies.

Given the risks involved and that commercial whaling meets no essential human need, we call on all the IWC governments to abandon experiments in the lethal use of whales and instead refocus their efforts on the conservation of whale populations, on understanding their roles in the marine ecosystems of which they are important parts, and promoting, where appropriate, responsible non-lethal uses of them such as whale-watching.

Signatories:

1. Sidney Holt D.Sc. Adviser to charity *Global Ocean*, Italy
2. Mark Peter Simmonds, International Director of Science, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, UK
3. Professor Hal Whitehead, Dalhousie University, Canada
4. David Suzuki, Canada
5. Sylvia Earle, USA
6. Erich Hoyt, Senior Research Fellow, WDCS, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, Scotland
7. Paul Spong, Director, Orca Lab, Canada
8. Mike Bossley, The Australian Dolphin Research Foundation
9. Bernd Würsig, Texas A&M University, USA
10. Alexandra Morton, Canada
11. Craig Matkin, USA
12. David Bain, USA
13. Brigitte M. Weiß, Université de Neuchâtel, Switzerland
14. Rob Lott, The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, UK
15. Lindy Weilgart, Research Associate, Dalhousie University and Scientific Advisor, Okeanos Foundation, Canada
16. Margi Prideaux, Australia
17. Ingrid N. Visser, Senior Scientist, Orca Research Trust, New Zealand
18. Cara Miller, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society International, Flinders University, Australia
19. Sarah Dolman, The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, Scotland
20. Stephen Palumbi, Director, Hopkins Marine Station, USA

21. Robin W. Baird, Cascadia Research Collective, USA
22. L. Neil Frazer, University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA
23. David K. Mellinger, Cooperative Institute for Marine Resources Studies Oregon State University, USA
24. David Ainley, LastOcean Trust, New Zealand
25. Tosca Ballerini, Old Dominion University, USA
26. Robert B. Dunbar, Stanford University, USA
27. Diego Narvaez, Old Dominion University, USA
28. Ida Ballerini, UK
29. Andrea Piñones, Old Dominion University, USA
30. James P. Barry, USA
31. Gerald Kooyman, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, USA
32. Kumaran Sathasivam, India
33. Nirmal Jivan Shah, Chief Executive, Nature, Seychelles
34. Tina Tin, France
35. Giacomo Tavecchia, Spain
36. Umer Waqas, Pakistan
37. Karsten Brensing, The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, Germany
38. Andrew Willson, Environment Society of Oman
39. Kanjana Adulyanukosol, Senior Marine Biologist, Marine and Coastal Resources Research Center (Upper Gulf), Thailand
40. Joseph T. Eastman, Professor, Ohio University, USA
41. Peter Corkeron, USA
42. Robert Baldwin, Oman

43. Peter Wilson, New Zealand
44. Joseph T. Eastman, Ohio University, USA
45. Paul Dayton, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, USA
46. Eric J Woehler, Australia
47. Muhammad Shoaib Kiani, Karachi University, Pakistan
48. Chris & Genevieve Johnson – earthOCEAN, Australia
49. Ibrahim Naeem, Director, Environmental Protection Agency, Republic of Maldives
50. Benjamin Kahn, Director, APEX Environmental - Coral Triangle Oceanic Cetacean Program, Indonesia/Solomon Islands
51. Jan L. Plass, New York University, USA
52. Iain R. Benson F.R.G.S - Oman Whale and Dolphin Research Group (OWDRG)
53. Mohamed Abdel Ghany, Red Sea Marine Park, Egypt
54. E.C.M. Parsons, George Mason University, USA.
55. Shahaama Abdul Sattar, Marine Research Centre, Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, Rep. of Maldives
56. Sultan al-Bulushi, Oman
57. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, Honorary President, Tethys Research Institute, Italy
58. Giovanni Bearzi, President, Tethys Research Institute, Italy
59. Lesley Suttly, CEO and Head of Operations Eastern Caribbean Coalition for Environmental Awareness, Martinique/Guadeloupe, France
60. Walker O.Smith, College of William and Mary, USA
61. Hanna Nuuttila, University of Bangor, Wales, UK
62. Sir Ronald Sanders*, UK
63. Peter H Sand, University of Munich, Germany*

64. Jaime Bolaños-Jiménez, Sea Vida, Venezuela
65. Marina Fastigi, Director Kido Foundation, Grenada
66. Dario Sandrini, Director Kido Foundation, Grenada
67. Silvia Olmastroni, Università degli Studi di Siena, Italy
68. Maddalena Jahoda, Tethys Research Institute, Italy
69. Elena Politi, Tethys Research Institute, Italy
70. Kevin Robinson, Cetacean Research and Rescue Unit (CRRU), Scotland
71. Naomi A. Rose, Humane Society International, USA
72. Marc Fernandez Morron, CIRN/University of Azores, Portugal
73. Joern Selling, Spain.
74. Paul C. Hoetjes, Netherlands Antilles, Netherlands
75. Barbara Galletti - Centro de Conservación Cetacea, Chile
76. Lee M. TalbotGeorge Mason University, USA
77. Mariano Sironi, Scientific Director, Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas, Argentina
78. Diego A. Taboada* – President - Instituto de Conservacion de Ballenas – Argentina
79. Ada Natoli, Italy
80. Madeleine de Grandmaison, Conservator, Museum of Natural History, Martinique, France
81. Victoria Rowntree, Director, Right Whale Program, Whale Conservation Institute/Research Associate Professor, University of Utah, USA
82. Louise Blight, University of British Columbia, Canada
83. Claire Bass, WSPA, UK
84. Mariachiara Chiantore, Università degli Studi di Genova, Italy

85. Marcela Uhart, Associate Director, Latin America Global Health Program, Wildlife Conservation Society, Argentina
86. Anna Hall, University of British Columbia, Canada
87. Julieta Martino, Researcher, Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas, Argentina
88. Valeria Falabella, Wildlife Conservation Society, Argentina
89. Dr. Stacy Kim, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, USA
90. Sue Miller-Taei, Director, Pacific Islands Marine Programme, Conservation International & SPWRC
91. Carina Maron, Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas, Argentina
92. Paul D. Jepson, Zoological Society of London, UK
93. Rob Deville, Zoological Society of London, UK
94. Paul Tixier, Centre d'Etudes Biologiques de Chizé, France
95. Vanesa Tossenberger, Fundación Cethus, Argentina
96. Marta Hevia, Fundación Cethus, Argentina
97. Cecilia Gasparrou, Fundación Cethus, Argentina
98. Jimena Belgrano, Fundación Cethus, Argentina
99. Alexandros Frantzis, Scientific Director, Pelagos Cetacean Research Institute, Greece
100. Simon Wilson, Sultanate of Oman
101. K. Lankester, The Netherlands
102. Sue Taei, Independent State of Samoa
103. Karina Groch, Research Director, Projeto Baleia Franca/Right Whale Project, Brazil
104. Alexei Birkun, Jr. Chairman, the Black Sea Council for Marine Mammals, Ukraine

105. Roger Payne, Founder/President, Ocean Alliance USA
106. Hans-Juergen Maegert, Anhalt University of Applied Sciences, Germany
107. Leopoldo Bianconi, Italy
108. Claudio Campagna, Wildlife Conservation Society, Argentina
109. Michelle Paleczny, Canada
110. Sascha Hooker, Sea Mammal Research Unit, University of St Andrews, UK
111. Anke Hofmeister, Area Marine Biologist, Six Senses Resorts & Spas, The Maldives
112. Charles Anderson, UK & Maldives
113. Leslie A. Cornick, Alaska Pacific University, Anchorage, USA
114. Margarida Castro, Portugal
115. Kendra Daly, University of South Florida, USA
116. Liz Slooten, New Zealand
117. Emmanuelle Martinez, Coastal-Marine Research Group, Massey University, New Zealand
118. Guy Stevens, The Maldives
119. Fabian Ritter, M.E.E.R. e.V., Germany
120. Claire Garrigue, Scientific advisor, Opération Cétacés, New Caledonia
121. Mark Orams, New Zealand
122. Monique Jansen van Rensburg, Massey University, New Zealand
123. Paula Bracht Brynildsen, DVM, Oslo, Norway
124. Onno Diekmann, Center for Marine Science, Portugal
125. Paula Sobral - IMAR, Institute for Marine Research, Portugal
126. Pedro Morais, International Center for Coastal Ecohydrology, Portugal

127. Sue Fisher*, WDCS, USA
128. Siri Martinsen, NOAH , Norway
129. Margarida Cristo, CCMAR and University of Algarve, Portugal
130. Sônia M. F. Giancesella, Oceanographic Institute, Sao Paulo University, Brazil
131. Laureline Meynier, Massey University, New Zealand
132. Sônia M. F. Giancesella, Oceanographic Institute, Sao Paulo University, Brazil
133. Ana Marçalo, Portuguese Wildlife Society/Centre for Environmental and Marine Studies, Portugal
134. Cassio Pinheiro Edelstei, Brazil
135. Asha de Vos, University of Western Australia
136. Sabine Dittmann, Flinders University, Australia

*This document has been signed by marine experts (scientists and *professionals in other relevant disciplines) in their personal capacity; where an affiliation is given this does not necessarily imply the support of the named institution or country.*

Version saved 16/6/2010 09.15