

## **Open Letter to World Leaders attending the G20 Summit**

**Osaka, Japan, Saturday 29 June 2019**

Dear (G20 leaders)

As you prepare to take your seats at the first ever G20 Summit to be held in Japan, we write to express our deep concern over the Japanese Government's decision to leave the International Whaling Commission (IWC), effective 30th June 2019, and conduct commercial whaling within its 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone and coastal waters.

We ask you to send a public message to your Summit's honourable hosts that your countries object to Japan's commercial whaling intentions in the strongest possible terms.

The international ban on commercial whaling, agreed by the IWC in 1982, applies to territorial waters as well as the high seas. It is one of the world's most important conservation and welfare measures and has saved several populations from extinction. It has proved of vital importance in protecting the world's great whales, enabling the gradual recovery of whale populations after decades of human-driven, catastrophic decline. However, many whale populations remain depleted or endangered.

Today, all whale populations are vulnerable to non-hunting threats including bycatch, ship collisions, climate change, and chemical, litter and noise pollution, which will take their toll on these mammals long into the future.

It therefore remains critical that co-ordinated global efforts are maintained to ensure the continued protection and survival of the world's whales. This includes maintaining the international ban on commercial whaling.

Japan's decision to overtly conduct commercial whaling, whilst also leaving the international body charged with overseeing whale conservation and whaling, shows a disregard for their duty to co-operate in the management of living marine resources as required by both customary international law and the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Japan's commercial whaling aspirations serve no pressing need for whale meat in Japan or anywhere else in the world. Consumption of whale meat in Japan declined by almost 99% between 1962 and 2017, during which time government data shows that less than 4,000 tonnes were eaten.

Commercial whaling is an inherently and exceptionally cruel practice which has no place in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. There is no reliably humane way to kill whales at sea, and exploding harpoons often cause these animals to die slowly and in agony.

As the G20 Summit takes place in Osaka, peaceful protests will take place in London, Edinburgh and other cities around the world, reflecting overwhelming global public opinion that commercial whaling is inhumane, archaic and unnecessary.

Whales are iconic, long-lived and socially complex. They are important sentinels of the health of our oceans and contribute important ecosystem services to the marine environment. International collaboration to protect whales is a global responsibility that must not be undermined by a single country acting in isolation, motivated by short-sighted self-interest.

We therefore request all G20 leaders to agree a declaration at the G20 Osaka Summit, calling for an immediate end to all commercial whaling.

### **Celebrities**

Steve Backshall, BAFTA-winning English naturalist, writer and TV presenter  
Liz Bonnin, Wildlife and natural history presenter  
Nicky Campbell, radio broadcaster and presenter  
Stephen Fry,  
Ricky Gervais, Comedian, actor, screenwriter.  
Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE. Founder - the Jane Goodall Institute & UN Messenger of Peace  
Virginia McKenna, OBE, actress, author and wildlife campaigner  
Will Travers OBE President Born Free Foundation

### **NGOs**

#### **Argentina**

Fundación Cethus  
Instituto de Conservacion de Ballenas

#### **Australia**

Australians for Animals Inc  
Australian Marine Conservation Society  
Australian Whale Conservation Society  
Humane Society International (Australia)  
Organisation for the Rescue and Research of Cetaceans in Australia (ORRCA)  
Whales Alive  
World Animal Protection Australia New Zealand

#### **Brazil**

Augusto Carneiro Institute  
Brazilian Humpback Whale Institute

#### **Canada**

Animal Alliance Canada  
No Whales in Captivity  
World Animal Protection  
Zoocheck Canada

#### **China**

Animals Asia Foundation

#### **France**

Eastern Caribbean Coalition for Environmental Awareness (Martinique)  
Fondation Brigitte Bardot  
Robin des Bois

#### **Germany**

Delphinschutz.org  
Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz  
M.E.E.R. e.V .

Pro Wildlife e.V.

### **India**

The Corbett Foundation  
Sagar Shakti  
Sanctuary Nature Foundation  
Wildlife Conservation Trust  
Wildlife First  
Wildlife Protection Society of India  
Wildlife Society of Orissa  
Wildlife Trust of India

### **Indonesia**

Animal Friends Jogja  
FLIGHT  
Jakarta Animal Aid Network

### **Italy**

Tethys Research Institute

### **Japan**

Iruka and Kujira Action Network (IKAN)  
Japan Wildlife Conservation Society

### **Mexico**

Casa Wayu  
Causa Natura  
Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental  
Conservación de Mamíferos Marinos de Mexico  
COMARINO  
Fundación Antonio Hagenbeck y de la Lama  
Fundación Tierra Nueva  
Grupo de los Cien  
Grupo Gema del Mayab.A.C.  
Legis Green  
Nuevo Ciclo  
Producciones Serengueti S.A.  
Empty the Tanks  
Marea Azul, Lourdes Rodriguez Badillo  
Protectora Nacional de Animales  
Reserva para la Protección de Fauna y Flora  
Teyeliz, A.C.

### **Russian Federation**

Free Russian Whales Coalition  
Dolphin Rescue and Research Center ("Delfa")  
Marine Mammal Protection Center ("Orcinus")  
Rescue Center ("Seal")  
Save Dolphins

### **Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Humane Society

### **South Africa**

AfriOceans  
Animal Law Reform South Africa  
Captured in Africa Foundation  
Future 4 Wildlife  
Pit Track K9 Conservation & Anti Poaching  
Elephant Specialist Advisory Group  
Voices4Lions  
Southern African fight for Rhinos

### **South Korea**

Humane Society International/South Korea  
Korea Animal Rights Advocates  
Korean Animal Welfare Association

### **Turkey**

#### **UK**

Animal Defenders  
Born Free Foundation  
Campaign Whale  
Change for Animals Foundation  
Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation  
Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)  
Humane Society International  
Institute of Fisheries Management  
Marine Conservation Society  
MARINELife  
ORCA  
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals  
Whale and Dolphin Conservation

#### **USA**

American Cetacean Society  
Antiwhalingsociety.com  
Animal Welfare Institute  
Blue Sphere Foundation  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Cetacean Society International  
Defenders of Wildlife  
EIA-US  
Earthtrust International  
Green Vegans  
Humane Society International  
International Fund for Animal Welfare  
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
NewYork4Whales  
Oceanic Preservation Society

Origami Whales Project  
SeaLegacy  
Shark Research Institute  
Shark Stewards  
The Whaleman Foundation  
The WILD Foundation