

Japan
Fisheries
Association



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Views and Opinions of Japan's Fisheries Industry

Whaling Issue

Voices of African Countries on the Whaling Issue

In the meetings of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), African countries have not had an equal opportunity to participate because of the language barrier. They are, however, increasingly making their own efforts to ensure their right to speak. ISARIBI introduces voices of the African countries, which have not been heard adequately in these meetings. They are demanding the IWC Secretariat to give them an equal opportunity to participate in the discussions at the next Annual Meeting to be held in St. Kitts and Nevis from May 23, 2006.

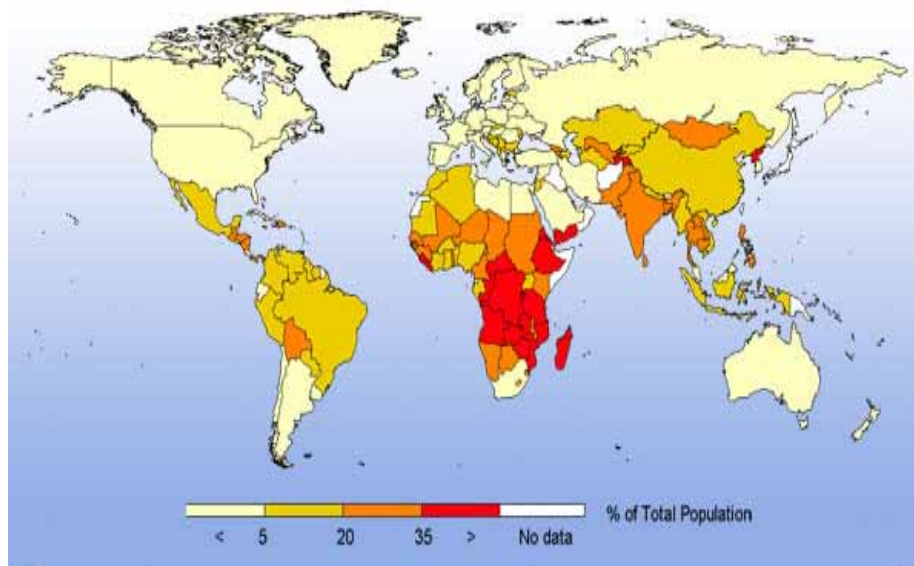
African countries' Argument:

Expensive fish is exported to rich countries, while other fish consumed by a large number of marine mammals (dolphins and whales) is detrimental to the African people.

Following are two important points in support of the above argument advanced by the leaders of the African Group, such as the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Republic of Guinea at the 2002

Annual Meeting in Shimonoseki, Japan, and the Minister of Animal Production and Fisheries Resources of the Ivory Coast at the 2004 Annual Meeting in Sorrento, Italy. At the 2005 meeting in Ulsan, Korea, several African commissioners (Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Benin, Cameroon and Gabon) unanimously emphasized the vital importance for their countries of the principle of sustainable use of marine living resources including whales.

Millions of Africans are starving



FAO Statistics Division, FAO Statistics Yearbook 2004 Vol.1

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(1) In many African countries millions of people are suffering from starvation or famine even today. Such a phenomenon is closely related to the general deterioration of the environment which puts in jeopardy the human habitat through global warming and desertification, the disappearance of rain forests, and meadows and pastures rendered to wasteland. All these elements lead to the obvious lack of animal protein for the local population. Now that we are reaching the limit of land exploitation, it is our obligation to pay more and more attention to marine living

resources.

In African coastal countries, in effect, we are improving our production of fish by concentrating our efforts to the fisheries sector. Expensive species are exported to the markets of developed countries (USA, EU and Japan) while local inhabitants must be content with the small pelagic species (mackerel, horse mackerel, sardine, etc.) which can be harvested in large quantities. But the fact that we witness very often, along the coastline of our continent, appearances of a large number of cetaceans including dolphins makes us easily imagine that the resources of these small pelagic species are partly but steadily consumed by those cetaceans. In order for us to get rid of such a negative impact by whales on our fish resources, it is urgent to implement a series of research programs. For this purpose, only Japan is helping us effectively for the time being (i.e. cetacean research programs by means of sighting surveys off the coast of West Africa, in particular the Republic of Guinea).

(2) In case the research discovers and proves the negative impact of whales on fish resources, we would like to reserve our right to catch whales in a sustainable manner for ourselves and our future generations who might have the necessity of exploiting whale resources. If we can rationally use certain abundant resources of whale species which eat so much fish, we can kill two birds with one stone: we can protect fish resources against the attacks by whales and we can get direct benefits from whale products.

Importance of lowering the language barrier for assuring fair discussions in IWC meetings

The above mentioned progress of the African delegates has been made thanks to their better and clear understanding realized by means of translation.

Up until 2 years ago, in all the meetings organized by the IWC one was supposed to speak English, and English only. The Secretariat did not provide any simultaneous translation service which is usually considered as a formal obligation for international meetings of UN specialized organizations such as the FAO and its related regional commissions (ICCAT, IOTC, CCAMLR, etc.)

Why? Because the IWC was established in application of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, signed in 1946 by the leading whaling countries at that time who were mainly English speaking countries, so no claims were made as to the choice of the official working languages.

For decades since its establishment, the IWC member countries were not aware of the problem of linguistic



Anchovy found in the stomach of a Brydes whale
(Photo: The Institute of Cetacean Research)

handicap. They thought it was natural to impose English only as a working language to all the representatives gathering mainly from developed countries.

In recent years, many developing countries whose mother tongues are not English joined the IWC as full members. Some commissioners of these new member countries became conscious of the seriousness of the language barrier. They asked the IWC Secretariat to facilitate the mutual communication among its participants by installing equipment for simultaneous translation services in this modern Tower of Babel.

Time for French, at least, to be an Official Language

At present, we count 10 French speaking countries from Africa as members of the IWC deprived of fair participation.

Last year in Ulsan, the African Group called experienced Moroccan interpreters to work as simultaneous interpreters at the IWC meeting. Obviously, their contribution was so great that almost all French speaking delegates could enhance the quality of their argument, because they could understand much better the discussions in course and thus express their proper opinions with all the logical articulations and, sometimes, very intricate nuances.

The French Commissioner seemed to have promised that from the next year's meeting (2006) the French Government would make a substantial contribution to support the efforts of the African Group. This was very good news finally obtained after many years of negotiations between this Group and France.

Since the beginning of its participation in 2000, the African Group repeatedly asked the French Commissioner to comply with the tradition of French diplomacy (as is defined by the doctrine of General De Gaulle) which consists in spreading the French language and culture all over the world, keeping a safe distance from the Anglo-Saxon's sphere of influence.

Japan's Whale Research Program Is Legal Activity

—Sustainable Use NGO Rebutts Greenpeace's Criticism—

The Beneficiaries of the Sea Coalition, a non-governmental organization (NGO) promoting sustainable use of marine living resources, rebutted Greenpeace's criticism of Japan's whale research catch programs in an open letter addressed to Jun Hoshikawa, the new secretary general of Greenpeace Japan.

In the letter, sent under the name of its President, Kunio Yonezawa, the Coalition said that the obstruction activities by Greenpeace, in cooperation with the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, against Japan's whale research fleet in the Antarctic during this past December and January was **"an act of violence putting the lives of crewmembers at risk and of illegal terrorism going beyond the boundaries of ordinary protest."** "It was a despicable act—one that was criticized even by the Australian Environment Minister who is known for his active anti-whaling position," it said.

In an earlier press conference, Hoshikawa stressed that, in its protest activities, Greenpeace gives first priority to not causing any risk to human lives but also said that Japan's whale research program "cannot gain the understanding of the international society."

The Coalition disproved those remarks as being far removed from the truth. It said that the results of Japan's research have been highly valued by whale scientists throughout the world. At present many members of the International Whaling Commission

(IWC) are working for an early completion and implementation of the Revised Management Scheme (RMS), a risk-averse scientific management system ensuring sustainable use of whale resources, and the countries supporting the RMS will eventually gain a majority at the Commission. **Japan's research is a fully legal activity complying with Article VIII of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. It is carried out in accordance with international law, including the freedom to engage in scientific research as stipulated by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).**

The Coalition said that the Greenpeace representative's remarks are misleading as they ignore the present work and trend in the IWC. The scale of Japan's research will have no direct impact on the population of whales and the environment. Greenpeace's assertion is nothing but a scientific fantasy. The Coalition advised that it would be more effective for Greenpeace to tackle more serious problems of the world, such as global warming.



Yonezawa

FAO Fisheries Official Hopes Japan Will Promote Responsible Fisheries

Ichiro Nomura, Assistant Director General of the Fisheries Department of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), delivered a lecture under the theme of "the present state of world fisheries and aquaculture and the role of the FAO" at a meeting of the Japan Fisheries Journalists' Association in Tokyo on December 20, 2005.

In the lecture, Nomura outlined the world's fisheries on the basis of the "State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture" (SOFIA 2004) developed by the FAO. He explained about the FAO's organization and activities and expressed the hope for Japan to assume a greater role in promoting responsible fisheries and aquaculture.

Specifically, Nomura stated that the FAO Fisheries Department is: (1) promoting responsible fisheries and

aquaculture to ensure food supply in the world; (2) developing the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and International Plans of Action to achieve that goal; and (3) collecting and analyzing information regarding the world's fisheries and aquaculture.

Nomura noted that coastal fisheries in Japan present a model case of responsible fishing practices over a long span of time as an example of community-managed fisheries. They can provide a showcase for the development of responsible fisheries throughout the world, he said.

Regarding distant-water fisheries, he expressed the hope that Japan, as a responsible high seas fishing nation, will continue to fulfill its leadership through such forums as the Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries (OPRT), regional fisheries

management organizations and the FAO Committee on Fisheries.

(Note: OPRT was established in 2000, representing all stakeholders in tuna fisheries, including major tuna fishing organizations around the world, traders, distributors and consumers in Japan, the world's largest sashimi tuna market. OPRT's objective is to contribute to the development of responsible tuna fisheries in line with international and social responsibility, as well

as to promote the sustainable use of tuna through the cooperation of all stakeholders. Its first major project is to work toward the elimination of IUU tuna fishing. OPRT has extended the scope of its work ensuring responsible tuna fisheries by addressing other issues, such as excessive fishing capacity and the incidental catch of sea turtles and seabirds. (For more information, visit www.oprt.or.jp)

Household fresh fish demand in Japan likely to fall to a record low

Demand for fresh fish for household use in Japan has been on a continuous decline, very likely hitting the record low level this year. According to an estimate based on a survey on household finances conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the amount of fresh fish purchased per household is likely to fall below 40kg a year, the lowest level since the survey started in 1975.

In the course of this time, a decrease in the birth rate and a decline in the number of extended family households has led to a record low of 3.14 persons per household in October 2005. This pushed fresh fish demand per household member down to the lowest level. According to analysts, this downward trend reflects the increasing number of people who do not bother to cook fresh fish at their homes even though they know that fish is good for their health. If this trend persists, the scale of the market for fish for cooking could dwindle even further.

Cooking fish at home should be the basics of a fish diet

In contrast to the continued shrinkage of demand for fresh fish for household use, demand for fish for the so-called "home-meal replacement" (HMR), such as prepared foods and home-delivered sushi, is increasing. Also demand for the restaurant industry remains firm, helped by the spread of family-type restaurants serving Japanese foods as well as fast-food sushi restaurant chains. Some

industry observers argue that increases in demand for HMR and the restaurant industry are offsetting the decline in household demand. However, the shift in demand from household cooking to HMR and restaurants could, in the longer range, lead to a decline in demand for fishery products as a whole because home cooking skills and the techniques to judge the quality of fish at the time of purchase are not handed down to the next generation.

The downward trend shows an average value for all age groups. Seen in terms of the age composition of the heads of households, decline is conspicuous among relatively young people.

There exists a persistent view that ordinary Japanese people may return to a fish diet when they get older. But this applies only to middle-aged and elderly people who accustomed themselves to a fish diet in their youth. It may not necessarily apply to young people who have had a lower exposure to cooking fish at home. Some analysts point out that there is no way of returning to a fish diet if one is not accustomed to eating fish from childhood. In this respect, declining opportunities of cooking fish at home may prove critical in maintaining the tradition of a fish diet.

Household Consumption Expenditures and Purchase of Fresh Fish							
	Household	Expenditures (yen)			Purchase of Fresh Fish		
	members	total	food	fish	amount (g)	value (yen)	100g unit
1975	3.89	1,895,786	649,887	90,392	60,436	54,569	90.29
80	3.82	2,766,812	867,393	121,515	55,938	72,324	129.29
85	3.71	3,277,373	957,528	130,100	52,564	75,481	143.60
90	3.56	3,734,084	1,030,125	134,482	47,304	77,979	164.84
95	2.42	3,948,741	1,024,518	126,332	47,841	76,086	159.04
2000	3.24	3,805,600	972,424	110,147	43,634	67,367	154.39
1	3.22	3,704,298	943,313	106,101	42,508	64,339	151.36
2	3.19	3,673,550	940,040	104,141	43,889	64,158	146.18
3	3.21	3,631,473	923,295	98,475	42,327	60,239	142.32
4	3.19	3,650,436	919,970	94,809	40,918	57,487	140.49
5	3.14	3,612,567	907,337	92,382	39,642	55,527	140.07

The 2005 figures represent cumulative total for Jan-Oct plus values for Nov-Dec 2004.
Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications