

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 21st 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 Serengeti 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