

**Joint Statement on Iceland's Whaling Programme**

Issued: 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2003.

On the day that Iceland is scheduled to start a new two-year whaling programme, a coalition of seven major UK environmental and animal welfare organisations issued a joint statement expressing outrage at the move.

Despite an internationally agreed moratorium on whaling, Iceland has declared its intention to kill 38 Minke whales over the next two months as the start of a new whaling programme.

Iceland was the first nation to begin a so-called 'scientific' whaling programme in 1986 in defiance of the moratorium on commercial whaling introduced by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) that year. Japan followed suit and began its ongoing 'scientific' whaling program the next year. Following sustained international pressure, Iceland stopped whaling in 1989 and left the IWC in 1992 in protest at the continuing moratorium. Iceland re-joined the IWC in October 2002, stating that it would not conduct commercial whaling before 2006. Just eight months later, in June 2003, Iceland submitted a proposal to the 55<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the IWC to commence 'scientific' whaling.

Many members of the IWC's Scientific Committee viewed Iceland's proposal to hunt 500 minke, sei and fin whales as technically and scientifically deficient. They concluded that, "*information relevant to management of these stocks of whales can be obtained with considerably more efficiency by well-established, non-lethal methods.*"

The IWC has repeatedly passed resolutions condemning 'scientific' whaling and calling for the use of non-lethal methods of research. At this year's annual meeting, the IWC adopted a strongly worded resolution that calls on Iceland to abandon its lethal scientific whaling proposal, and states clearly that the provision in the treaty which allows whaling for scientific research "*...is not intended to be exploited in order to provide whale meat for commercial purposes and shall not be so used*". It states



further that “...*scientific whaling operations represent an act contrary to the spirit of the moratorium on commercial whaling and to the will of the Commission*”.

Iceland announced in August 2003 that it would kill 38 minke whales this August and September. The primary stated purpose of the hunt is to examine the contents of the whales' stomachs. We anticipate that the data collected will be used to support the spurious argument that whales are destroying fish stocks needed by humans, when clearly commercial overfishing is the cause of global declines in fisheries.

*We, the undersigned organisations, believe that Iceland's plan to resume 'scientific' whaling is a cynical ploy to circumvent the IWC's moratorium on commercial whaling that will seriously undermine conservation efforts. Even if the meat from these first 38 whales is not exported, we believe that, as it has done in the past, Iceland will seek overseas markets for future exports as the programme continues.*

*The success of Iceland's growing whale watching industry shows that whales are worth more alive than dead.*

*We call on Iceland to abandon its whaling programme immediately.*

This statement is supported by the following organisations:

Campaign Whale, Environmental Investigation Agency, IFAW - International Fund for Animal Welfare, Greenpeace, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, World Society for the Protection of Animals

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