

**OPENING STATEMENT BY COMARINO  
64th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission  
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Conservación de Mamíferos Marinos de México, COMARINO (Marine Mammal Conservation Society) congratulates the Government of Panama for hosting the 64 meeting of the International Whaling Commission

We respectfully address the parties to maintain the moratorium of commercial whaling and stop any whaling disguised as aboriginal or scientific activities.

Also we call on all parties to apply the best scientific knowledge in the decisions taken about whales.

The best scientific knowledge available shows that whales are highly developed species with big brains, developed intelligence and cognitive capacities only compared with great primates, including human primates. Modern science has thrown away the myths that the human being is the only rational species on Earth. Theories from only 60 years ago cannot be sustained any longer. Cetaceans are recognized as the primates of the oceans.

As far as anthropological science can understand, whales live in complex social structures, based on families, with mother-calf relation typical from mammals based on attachment as a survival strategy for the offspring, just the way we (humans) do.

Based on that fact, whales, including small cetaceans, have developed strategies for each and every challenge of their own environment shows. In this sense familiar bonds have the function to teach offspring to learn techniques of hunting and feeding that are transmitted to one generation to next, such as the stranding technique that southern orcas use to catch sea lions, and that some dolphins have developed to catch fish. They even use tools for feeding, reminding us we are not the only species to develop the use of tools.

The transmission from one generation to other of types of sounds, new strategies, and knowledge is known both in Social Anthropology and Ethology as cultural patterns, which are only possible in highly structured societies.

Besides, the self recognition before the mirror, the clear identification of the parts of the body, just the way chimpanzees and humans do, draw the attention to their self consciousness, and the self recognition as individuals, different from the others.

The use of language to communicate to each other is well known among linguistic anthropologists, and although languages in marine species are different from humans ones they definitely qualify

The more Science improves our knowledge, less barriers and frontiers can be supported between species, and therefore the justification to see difference as inferiority.

All species have mental tools to resolve the specific obstacles environment provides.

And so when the best science is taken into account, the pure quantitative biological data vanish when the time comes to decide whether or not to kill other highly developed species.

Ethical considerations arise from the best scientific knowledge leading our minds to ascertain that in the so-called “moral consideration” whales must be seen as intelligent individuals, with social life and self recognition.

Though more science is needed the available data is enough to treat whales as sentient intelligent beings

Respectfully, but strongly COMARINO calls upon the parties and decision makers to apply the best scientific knowledge in any decision taken, and recognize, beyond the mere meddling of quantitative data that plagues scientific discussion at the IWC, that a broader evaluation of both Science and policy evolution demand an end to all killing of cetaceans worldwide.