



**Opening Statement to the 63rd annual meeting  
of the International Whaling Commission  
St Helier, Jersey, July 11th-14th 2011**

**The Future of Whales and the IWC**

Campaign Whale is extremely grateful to the Government of Jersey and the people of St Helier for their warm welcome to their beautiful island.

Campaign Whale believes that the case for the existing moratorium on commercial whaling is stronger today than ever before. Rampant commercial whaling has devastated many whale populations and huge scientific uncertainty remains over the size and status of the world's remnant whale populations, as well as the threats they face. We believe the IWC can only meet its responsibilities to conserve and allow for the recovery of the world's remnant whale populations by upholding and strengthening the moratorium on commercial whaling for decades to come. Times and attitudes have changed. The IWC must evolve from an organisation dedicated to killing whales into a modern convention that will research and reverse the impact of climate change and other serious and growing environmental threats to their survival.

Campaign Whale does not support any proposal for the future work of the IWC that:

- Does not commit the whalers to phase out commercial whaling permanently
- effectively legitimises commercial whaling by countries that have defied the IWC's moratorium on commercial whaling
- does not address the inherent cruelty of killing methods
- cannot legally prevent international trade in whale products
- is limited to the three nations currently whaling and so will encourage excluded nations to resume commercial whaling also
- removes the essential distinction between commercial and subsistence whaling
- does not fully commit the whaling nations to engage in vital conservation work needed for the recovery of seriously endangered whale populations
- does not address the slaughter of smaller whales, dolphins and porpoises that are being hunted commercially in the tens of thousands
- does not close loopholes that whaling nations exploit to continue commercial and so-called 'scientific' whaling
- does not take into account the mounting environmental threats to whales
- does not use agreed scientific procedures to calculate the catch limits
- does not address the serious health risks to people eating whale products increasingly contaminated with toxic pollutants (see below)

- requires non and anti-whaling countries to pay the costs of a renewed whaling regime and surveys for calculating population estimates and whaling quotas
- would legitimise whaling in a designated whale sanctuaries now or in the future
- disregards the only benign and sustainable use of whales through responsibly conducted commercial whale-watching operations.

Campaign Whale is extremely concerned over the serious health risks posed to people that consume whale products because they are increasingly contaminated with highly toxic chemical compounds caused by human pollution of the environment. People regularly eating whale and dolphin meat, blubber and other organs are seriously jeopardising their health and that of their children. Additionally, the threat to cetaceans and the marine environment from our toxic pollution is truly alarming. We simply cannot accurately predict the combined impact of increasing levels of dangerous pollutants and accelerating environmental decline upon whales and marine ecosystems. Consequently, no-one can responsibly claim that consumption of whale products is safe, or that any level of whaling can be verifiably sustainable.

Campaign Whale is founder member of the *Global Whale Alliance (GWA)*. We strongly support the GWA's founding statement currently supported by over 120 non-governmental organisations worldwide, calling for:

*'..a coalition of non-governmental organisations, governments, scientists and members of the public to support the continuation and strengthening of the commercial whaling moratorium; and support the vital research necessary to quantify and address both the serious environmental threats to whales and the health risks to people that eat whale products'*

The GWA believes that:

- Commercial whaling must be permanently ended
- Commercial whaling serves no critical human nutritional need
- Current killing methods remain inherently cruel
- Mounting scientific evidence provides unequivocal evidence of potentially catastrophic environmental change that will harm whales
- Consumption of contaminated whale meat poses a serious risk to human health
- We do not know enough to manage whales sustainably even if this were necessary or desirable
- Most whale populations have not recovered from many decades of gross over-hunting and may not do so, if at all, for decades to come
- The IWC moratorium on commercial whaling must be properly enforced by the international community as the vital conservation agreement it remains
- The IWC must instigate a long-term comprehensive programme of non-lethal research in to the growing environmental threats to all cetaceans
- The growing global whale-watching industry, attracting over 9 million people and worth in excess of \$2 billion each year, is clearly a more ethical, humane and sustainable use of whales