

# SAVE THE WHALES



Save The Whales' purpose is to educate children and adults about marine mammals, their environment and their preservation.

## Beluga Whales Get Endangered Species Protection

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) finally stopped its stalling and officially declared the imperiled beluga as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act.

The Alaska population of Cook Inlet was down to about 375 individuals from an estimated 1,300 in the early 1990s. This population unfortunately makes its home in a watershed that has been troubled with oil and gas dumping, sewage discharges, contaminated runoff and regular ship and pipeline spills that make much of its once-pristine estuary habitat uninhabitable. Other damaging massive infrastructure projects threaten additional damage such as the bridge to "somewhere," two port expansions and a coal strip mine.

The endangered species status is only the first step to help the population recover, with the hope that it will cause scientists and developers to reach agreement before there are further population declines.

## Ships Slowed Down to Save Very Endangered Right Whale

Beginning June 1, 2009, ships of 300 gross tons and above were asked to avoid an area from April through July in the Great South Channel when right whales face the highest chance of being struck by ships. Slow-moving North Atlantic Right Whales (see p. 5 - Top Ten Most Endangered Cetaceans) are highly vulnerable to ship collisions since the areas of added protection are their primary feeding and migration areas, and also overlap with major East Coast shipping lanes.

The Great South Channel is a prominent feature in the bathymetry of the Gulf of Maine. Along with the Northeast Channel, it is an oceanographic connection between the Gulf of Maine and the Northwest Atlantic Ocean and a transit route for the endangered North Atlantic Right Whale as it migrates between summer and winter habitats. Two measures, implementing the "Area To Be Avoided" and narrowing the "Traffic Separation Scheme" by one nautical mile, will reduce the relative risk of right whale ship strikes by an estimated 74 percent April-July (63 percent from the area to be avoided and 11 percent from the narrowing of the Traffic Separation Scheme). Ships transiting primarily from the south and entering Boston Harbor shipping lanes will travel a path that has been modified to reduce the threat of ship collisions.

Along with existing measures to prevent entanglement of right whales in fishing gear, these changes in vessel operations are a part of the comprehensive approach that National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has taken in its effort to help right whales recover. Every year, nearly 3,500 ships move through the Boston area shipping lanes, and more than half of the world's North Atlantic Right Whales are known to be in this area during the spring.

## Polar Bears Status as Threatened Species Upheld by Obama Administration

In a disappointing move, the Obama Administration, under its new Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, announced that it would keep the Bush rule in place. Therefore, polar bears will remain as threatened which doesn't give them the hoped-for protection from global warming that they would receive as an endangered species.

Secretary Salazar claims that the Endangered Species Act (ESA) wasn't meant to be used to cap carbon emissions. "When the ESA was passed, it was not contemplated it would be a tool to address the issue of climate change," he said.

His argument is that the ESA was meant to deal with local threats to species, not global ones, the same as his predecessors. Before he left office, one of President Bush's 11th hour decisions was to weaken protections for the polar bear by exempting greenhouse gas emissions from regulation under the ESA. These emissions are the principal threat to the polar bears' survival.

The Center for Biological Diversity will ask the judge in that case to dismiss this illogical and illegal rule. The Obama administration will be pressured to protect plants and animals on the edge of extinction under the ESA.

The rule severely undermines protection for the polar bear by exempting all activities that occur outside of the polar bears' range from review. The polar bear however is endangered precisely because of activities occurring outside the Arctic, namely emission of greenhouse gases and resulting warming that is leading to the rapid disappearance of summer sea ice. The polar bear needs the full protection of the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, the special rule reduces the protections the bear would otherwise receive in Alaska from oil industry activities in its habitat.

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# Hector's Dolphin

## *Cephalorhynchus hectori*

(van Beneden, 1881)

DERIVATION: Hector was a New Zealand zoologist who first collected the dolphin species in 1869.

Hector's dolphin is listed on Save The Whales' website as one of the ten most endangered cetaceans in the world at No. 6, and is designated as EN (facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild). See page 7 for a complete explanation of the designations.

It was named after Sir James Hector (1834-1907), the curator of the Colonial Museum in Wellington, which is now the Museum of New Zealand.

There are two subspecies recognized *C. hectori hectori* along the South Island of New Zealand, and *C. hectori maui* along the west coast of the North Island. It is only endemic to New Zealand which gives it one of the most restricted cetacean distributions. They are found in shallow coastal waters. In the summer, they are strongly concentrated in shallow, turbid waters close to shore; in the winter they are more widely dispersed.

There are three genetically-separate populations in the South Island, and the one small North Island population that has recently been named as a separate subspecies (*C.h. maui*).

Hector's is predominantly a gray animal, but much of the face is dark gray to black. Its complex markings include a dark "collar," which extends from the area above the eyes to behind the blowhole. The throat and most of the lower jaw, as well as the belly, are white. The black marking of the face is continuous with that of the flippers. It continues in a line on the ventrum, making a V at the midline. Part of the head starting just behind the black lower jaw tip is white, as is the area from just behind the flippers to the urogenital area. White patches also extend up the sides.

The dorsal fin is low, but relatively broad and rounded and some people say that it reminds them of Mickey Mouse ears, with the leading edge rising at a shallow angle from the back and a notch at the posterior base. Flippers are small and rounded at the tips.

Hector's are active animals, readily bow-riding or porpoising next to vessels. When leaping from the sea, individuals will often land on their side, creating a loud splash (their vertical and horizontal dives are much less noisy).

### **Hector's Characteristics:**

- Have a blunt head with a slight beak, and its mouth contains 24-31 fine, pointed teeth in the upper and lower jaws.
- Reach lengths of 1.63 m (females); 1.46 m (males). Females are somewhat larger than the males. A meter is 3.281 feet.
- Engage in opportunistic feeding on several species of small fish and squid.
- Live in groups of 2-8 dolphins; occasionally, large groups of up to 50 animals have been noted.
- Gestation lasts 10-11 months. They reach sexual maturity between 5 and 9 years; adult females give birth every 2-4 years.
- Can live up to 20 years. ►

## 2009 International Whaling Commission Meeting in Madeira, Portugal

The biggest potential story circulating for over a year is that Dr. William Hogarth, U.S. representative to the International Whaling Commission (IWC), has "sold out" to Japan. Dr. Hogarth, a Bush-era appointee and current IWC chair, reportedly brokered a proposed



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deal that would allow Japan to do new "coastal whaling" in exchange for moderating their so-called "scientific" whaling over the next five years. If whaling nations are successful, the IWC will end the present so-called moratorium, a 1982 decision, and we will see a new era of whale slaughter.

But a slow decline in one type of whales being killed in exchange for opening a new group up for killing does not seem to be an acceptable compromise. The goal of the IWC should be the cessation of whaling without compromise.

If this does occur, we must urge President Obama - in the strongest manner possible - to declare that the U.S. is opposed to whaling in any form. Japan suggests that since the U.S. has indigenous whaling, it is only right that they be permitted the same.

### **IWC statistics for U.S.**

**Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock of bowhead whales (taken by native people of Alaska and Chukotka)** Total catch of up to 280 bowhead whales can be landed in the period 2008 - 2012, with no more than 67 whales struck in any year (and up to 15 unused strikes may be carried over each year).

**Eastern North Pacific gray whales (taken by native people of Chukotka and Washington State )** Total catch of 620 whales allowed for years 2008 -2012 with a maximum of 140 in any one year.

Madeira is an archipelago in the mid-Atlantic Ocean and is a part of Portugal. It ceased whaling and took up whale-watching, a good example for other countries.

### **Hector's (continued)**

Recent surveys show the South Island Hector's population numbers collectively about 7,300 individuals; the North Island population is estimated at no more than about 100 animals. Both populations have been declining rapidly over the last 30 years, as the species faces serious threats from humans. The most serious problem is recreational gillnet fishing. The number of animals killed has been reduced a bit with the establishment of two marine sanctuaries.

Sources: [JEFFERSON, T. A., M. A. WEBBER and R. L. PITMAN. 2008. Marine Mammals of the World: A Comprehensive Guide to Their Identification.](#) Academic Press/Elsevier, 573 pp.  
LEATHERWOOD, STEPHEN and RANDALL REAVES  
Sierra Club Handbook of Whales and Dolphins. Sierra Club Books

Save The Whales, A 501(c)(3) corporation  
1192 Waring Street, Seaside, CA 93955

Editor: Maris Sidenstecker I

Contributors: Dr. Thomas A. Jefferson

Thomas R. Kieckhefer

Graphic: Jake Burk

[www.savethewhales.org](http://www.savethewhales.org) Email: [maris@savethewhales.org](mailto:maris@savethewhales.org)

Phone: 1-831-899-9957 Fax: 1-831-394-5555

## Environmental Gains

President Obama announced plans to raise gas mileage standards and cut greenhouse gas emissions, standards that have been delayed for decades. He called it the start of the "clean energy economy." In a few years, better mileage will come at an average \$1,300 increase in the cost of a new car.

Mr. Obama wants the effective date of the 35 mile per gallon (MPG) fuel economy standard to be 2016, instead of by 2020 that was approved by the Bush administration.

Smaller hybrids, such as the Toyota Prius and Ford Fusion, already meet the higher mileage standards which for their class of car will be 39 MPG. Getting large SUVs like the Chevy Suburban to average 30 MPG will be difficult and it will cost a considerable amount to increase their efficiency.

Mr. Obama used the 2007 Supreme Court ruling that carbon dioxide is a pollutant in order to give the EPA the authority to add it to the other auto tailpipe emissions it already regulates. The ruling also gives a single national standard to all states.

Some problems are foreseen in getting the standards up and running. As soon as gasoline prices drop, Americans return to gas guzzlers and it is somewhat difficult to predict future prices. When prices were in the \$4+ level, fuel efficient cars sold; when they went back to \$2-3, small trucks and SUVs returned to popularity. One suggestion is to give tax subsidies to purchasers. Another suggestion is to boost the price of gasoline to \$4 and keep it there. This works in Europe where they drive small cars.

## Environmental Problems

Beneath the azure waters of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques is an unexpected sight—a munitions graveyard in a Caribbean paradise. Corroding and unexploded bombs litter the ocean's floor and take a toll on marine life with their leaking toxins.

Marine ecologist James Porter, of the Odum School of Ecology at the University of Georgia, recently completed a research trip to Vieques and said that he knows that these munitions are leaking cancerous causing materials and endangering marine life.

He was responding to a request by the governor's office of Puerto Rico to test the waters surrounding the island for the presence of radioactive material from the sunken *USS Killeen*, a World War II era destroyer used as target practice for Navy missiles.

Feather duster worms, sea urchins and various types of coral found near bombs and bomb fragments contained high levels of carcinogenic material, in some cases 100,000 times more than what is considered safe for commercial edible seafood.

Mr. Porter said that "Any country that has a coastline and has ever had war is going to be a place where you can find this problem." Removing underwater munitions takes careful planning, he noted.

The island has a long history of U.S. military involvement, and the Navy used it as its main Atlantic training site for 60 years before leaving in 2003. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated portions of Vieques a Superfund site in 2005, thereby classifying it under the EPA program to clean up the nation's hazardous waste. The U.S. Navy has also allocated funds and an estimated \$350 million.

Some of the problems in cleaning up these toxic sites is that the U.S. and other countries would take munitions offshore and dispose of them. In 1982, the United Nations passed the Law of the Sea Treaty to make it illegal to dump excess weapons in open waters. Since there are no "munitions maps," the location of these sites is unknown.

## FLUKES UP

**To: North Coast Grower in Santa Cruz, CA** for receiving a jury award of \$1,000,000 in damages for pesticide drift. The jury concluded that a pesticide company violated the farmer's rights when chemicals drifted with the fog to his organic crops. The pesticide was used in neighboring fields of Brussels sprouts to fight cabbage maggots and other pests. Dill grown in 2006 on the property in question tested positive for organophosphate pesticide residue. The residue pesticide is not legally allowed on the herb, whether or not it is organic, and the entire \$500,000 crop was lost.

**To: Spanish Cemetery that Doubles as Solar Power Plant** for solving the town's space problem by using its cemetery as the primary source for solar power. Solar panels were attached to many of its mausoleums. A solar rep, whose company also runs the cemetery said, "The best tribute we can pay to our ancestors, whatever your religion may be, is to generate clean energy for new generations."

*Source: The Grist*

**To: Two Companies: Renewable Devices, Edinburgh, Scotland, and Cascade Engineering, Grand Rapids, MI** for offering a small wind turbine. The Swift turbine begins contributing electricity when the wind blows at 8 MPH and, as the wind increases, so does the turbine output. Electricity generated is sent to the home's circuit box. The cost is \$10,000-\$12,000 including installation, but state and federal incentives will bring the price down for many buyers. Check [swiftwindturbine.com](http://swiftwindturbine.com) for wind speed in your area.

## FLUKES DOWN

**To: America for Ranking as World's Least Green Consumer** according to the results of a National Geographic poll. The U.S. scored the lowest percentage on public transit use daily and also scored the highest percentage of people who have *never* taken public transit. We also have the lowest score on the green housing index, and the lowest in the list of countries eating locally grown food.

## Trash in the Ocean

The search for Air France Flight 447 that recently went down in the southern Atlantic ocean was complicated because of the massive amount of garbage in the ocean. Investigators originally said that they had located pieces of the plane, but later in the week Brazilian officials declared that what they had found was nothing more than trash. This event draws attention to the increasing amount of junk in the ocean, from refrigerators and abandoned yachts to plastic bottles.

There are about five or six major trash collection areas called gyres in the world's oceans. The most well known is located in the Pacific Ocean approximately midway between North America and Asia.

A great deal of trash biodegrades slowly and ends up in the ocean where sea animals become entangled in discarded fishing line and also ingest plastic bags. For more information, go to <http://www.environmentalleader.com/2009/06/10/top-un-environmental-official-ban-plastic-bags>



# Songs to Heal Our Planet Released



To help ensure they inherit a healthy, beautiful planet, Save the Whales has released a special CD: *"Songs to Heal Our Planet: Children Singing to Save The Earth."* Proceeds will support Save The Whales' educational programs

The CD features 16 fun and inspiring songs that promise

to delight listeners, while at the same time raising awareness about a variety of environmental issues. Music is used to engage young people in learning more about the natural world.

The CD project began five years ago when Joan Cobb—song-writer and music teacher—wrote "Save The Whales" for Save The Whales' website ([savethewhales.org](http://savethewhales.org)). It can still be heard there sung by 11-year old MaggyMay Trout.

That song inspired worldwide requests for the Save The Whales song and the creation of the popular Sing to Save The Whales Day, now held each May. This year on May 14, children from around the world raised their voices in song for the whales and other inhabitants of the planet.

It begins with a rousing "Earth Day" song featuring MaggyMay—now a high school junior, backed up by the Beluga Children's Chorus, a group of eight girls between the ages 6 and 12. Justin Gaudoin is the rapper and Tyler Tolles, the percussionist, on "Whale Rap." Justin will enter his senior year in the fall and Tyler graduated in June and will pursue a career in music. He is the percussionist on most of the CD tracks. Ryan Hogans, age 18, solos on "Earth Day" and "Keep It Green." All the performers live in the Monterey Bay, CA area.

"People Want Peace" features the Beluga Chorus singing the theme in 17 languages. Other compositions include the haunting "Condor, Condor" with words and music written by an 11-year old girl, and "Whales Are Chubby" based on a poem written by an 8-year old Kansas boy and set to music by Joan.

Save The Whales founders, Maris Sidenstecker I and II—mother and daughter—wrote "Vaquita Chiquita" to highlight the plight of the vaquita, a small porpoise in the Sea of Cortez. There are fewer than 200, making them the world's most endangered cetacean. Joan wrote the music and the song features a beautiful guitar accompaniment by Stephen Krilanovich.

"Songs to Heal Our Planet" has already garnered praise. Nathalie Plotkin, Music and Drama Critic, Monterey County Herald says:

"After hearing 'Songs to Heal Our Planet,' I recommend it for children of all ages. The songs are upbeat and very pleasing to the ear. The lyrics give children good instructions for helping our planet's environment."

Suggested retail price is **\$14.98**. The CD may be ordered on the website [www.savethewhales.org](http://www.savethewhales.org), and individual songs may be downloaded. Special rates will apply for schools ordering in bulk.

## In Memory of Kathleen Valladao Long Silveira October 28, 1934 to March 24, 2009

In memory of Kathleen, a loving person to all who knew her, and a fervent admirer of whales and all things oceanic.

**Bruce Long and Lorraine Gibbs  
Son and Daughter-in-law**

### FUNDRAISERS EXTRAORDINAIRE

**Katrina Cooley** of Virginia asked for donations in lieu of gifts for her 11<sup>th</sup> birthday and raised an impressive \$165. Thank you for your selfless effort on behalf of whales and other marine mammals.

**Elisa McGovern** of New Jersey raised a notable \$170 on her 12<sup>th</sup> birthday by requesting donations instead of gifts. Thank you for your meaningful contribution to helping marine life.

**Rita Feder** from New York City raised an inspiring \$114 on her eighth birthday. Thank you Rita for your selfless generosity by donating to Save The Whales in lieu of receiving gifts.

**Some innovative students at the OB Whaley Elementary School** in East San Jose, CA are involved with Project Cornerstone. By saving pennies throughout the year, they raised roughly \$500 which they contributed to Save The Whales. Thank you Whaley students!

## The Cove, A Dolphin Documentary

*The Cove* was submitted to this year's Sundance Film Festival where it was awarded The Audience Award 2009. The "cove" refers to a secluded and naturally fortified lagoon in the town of Taiji in Japan, well-known for its dolphin killings. Every year, thousands of dolphins are cruelly slaughtered over a six-month period.

Part of the movie tells about the efforts of a group of activists to infiltrate the cove in order to film what goes on during the slaughter. They are led by Richard O'Barry, a long-time dolphin activist, who began his career with dolphins when he trained the animals for the TV program, *Flipper*.

*The Cove* is also the tale of O'Barry's journey and documents how he became a self-described "abolitionist" for dolphins. In the 1960's, O'Barry was the world's leading authority on dolphin training and worked day in and day out on the set of *Flipper*. He kept the dolphins working and "smiling," but one day it came to a tragic end when Kathy, the dolphin who played Flipper most of the time, died in his arms. O'Barry knew then that capturing dolphins and training them to perform silly tricks was wrong.

He knew what he must do with his life and, in 1970, he founded the Dolphin Project, dedicated to freeing captive dolphins and educating people throughout the world to the plight of dolphins in captivity. He campaigned against the multi-billion dollar dolphin captivity industry, and told the public what was really going on at dolphin shows. They were urged not to buy tickets to see dolphins play the fool.

With more than 45 years of experience with dolphins and first-hand knowledge about the methods used to capture and train them, O'Barry has rescued and released more than 25 captive dolphins in Haiti, Colombia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Brazil, the Bahamas Islands and the United States.

## The Most-Endangered Cetacean Species

Thomas A. Jefferson, PhD

(Tom is a Visiting Scientist at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center in La Jolla, CA)

**C**etaceans have long been highly prized by humans looking for a good source of food, oil and a whole host of other products. Cetaceans are attractive subjects for human exploitation because of their enormous size. Until the last few hundred years, their relatively inaccessible habitats made them difficult to hunt. Although there is evidence that prehistoric humans may have taken advantage of the fortuitous stranding of a fresh whale or dolphin on their shores, most cetacean species were relatively safe from large-scale human exploitation until recently.

The first known large-scale hunting of whales was by the Basques, starting in the first millennium AD. They hunted in the Bay of Biscay bounded on the east by the west coast of France and on the south by the north coast of Spain. They mainly targeted the North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*), and were so effective in killing many of this species that their recovery is in doubt today. Norse and Icelandic whalers also hunted in the North Atlantic, and the Japanese began their culture of whale hunting in the 1600s.

In the 1700s, the “Yankee whaling” era began, focusing largely on sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*). This led to the United States becoming a major player in the commercial whaling game. In the late 1800s, the development of steam-powered vessels and the exploding harpoon ushered in the modern era of commercial whaling. Fast-swimming *Balaenoptera* species, such as the rorquals (blue, fin, sei, Bryde’s and minke whales) were now within the realm of commercial whalers. It did not take long for whalers to *decimate* species after species, starting with the largest and working their way down the list, to “commercial extinction” (the point at which it is no longer financially viable to continue the hunt).

However, the public perception that all large whales are endangered is wrong. The truth is that most large whales are no longer commercially hunted and many are recovering from past exploitation—with major exceptions being the North Atlantic and North Pacific right whale (*E. japonica*) species. The real serious conservation problems now lie with several of the smaller cetacean species. The vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*), Indus susu (*Platanista gangetica minor*), North Island Hector’s dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus hectori mau*) and Atlantic humpback dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) are some of the most severely endangered species.

In recent decades, the direct killing of whales and dolphins has become much less important, and the indirect deaths of dolphins and porpoises in particular have increased dramatically. There is now no doubt that more cetaceans die incidentally in fishing nets each year than from any other threat, including whale and dolphin hunting.

In the last few decades, we have also seen the development of other major threats to these animals in the form of habitat degradation, environmental contamination, noise pollution (including naval sonars), and even live captures for captive display and research.

## Top 10 Most-Endangered Species of Cetaceans

(in order, with the most endangered first, and their IUCN status listed):

- 1) Vaquita (Gulf of California harbor porpoise - *Phocoena sinus*) **CR**
- 2) North Pacific right whale (*Eubalaena japonica*) **EN**
- 3) North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) **EN**
- 4) South Asian River dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) **EN**
- 5) Atlantic humpback dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) **VU**
- 6) Hector’s dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus hectori*) **EN**
- 7) Chilean dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus eutropia*) **NT**
- 8) Franciscana (*Pontoporia blainvillei*) **VU**
- 9) Australian snubfin dolphin (*Orcaella heinsohni*) **NT**
- 10) Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (*Sousa chinensis*) **NT**



Despite a number of populations of cetaceans in specific regions being annihilated by humans (e.g., the Atlantic gray whale by commercial whaling), it is only recently that an entire cetacean species has gone extinct at the hands of humans. However, several other species, such as the vaquita in Mexico and Northern Hemisphere right whales, are now on the verge of that same fate.

The baiji, found only in the Yangtze River and some connected lakes in China, was declared to be *probably* extinct in 2007, after an extensive survey of nearly their entire known range turned up no sightings or acoustic detections. Besides incidental deaths in fishing gear and problems of severe pollution, the baiji suffered from general habitat loss and degradation. Their environment was severely degraded from rapid modification of the river for human use, with little or no concern for its original inhabitants. The Chinese Government had been warned of this for decades and ignored the pleas of the outside world.

Closer to home for those of us in the U.S., the vaquita seeks a precarious existence in the northern Gulf of California, Mexico. This small porpoise species has serious problems with incidental catches in gillnets (and much less, so trawls). There are other potential threats as well, but they probably pale in comparison to the fishery entanglement problems. (continued on p. 7)

*\*The above Vaquita photo was taken under permit (Oficio No. DR/488/08) from the Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT), within a natural protected area subject to special management and decreed as such by the Mexican Government.*

## Pygmy Whale Rescued in Florida

A pygmy sperm whale beached on a Florida beach in early May. It was surrounded by people wanting to help before it was taken by truck to Marineland. A sheriff's deputy who went to the scene said "Pygmy whales are fairly rare." He stated that it was the first one he had seen, even though he had previously worked for Marine Rescue.

The whale was loaded onto a sling and then into an open truck by rescue personnel and transferred into a larger covered truck specially designed for moving marine mammals. Both vehicles are from the newly-opened Georgia Aquarium/Dolphin Conservation Field Station at Marineland.

The whale was estimated to be between 800-1000 pounds and about 13 feet long. It was bleeding from several scrapes that most likely occurred while it was beached on the sand. Rescue workers poured water on the whale, as it is very important to keep stranded cetaceans hydrated. If the whale recovers, it will be released back into the wild.

## Pygmy Killer Whale Rescue Efforts in Hawaii Fail

Valiant efforts were made by experts and volunteers to rescue a small whale off Maui in May. Efforts failed and pygmy killer whale had to be euthanized, but before his death, new information regarding the species was learned.

When a pod of five pygmy killer whales appeared off Kihei on May 1, it was thought they were just disoriented or that one with huge red soft barnacles blocking its mouth may have been dying. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) mammal expert David Schofield paddled out to investigate. "... We see healthy animals trying to help sick animals and the healthy animals going to shore," said Schofield. The other whales rallied around the male, but eventually left him alone and then he stranded on the beach. Volunteers moved the whale to the whale sanctuary complex at Kihei where it was clear that the whale was diseased, elderly and dying. After a Hawaiian prayer, he was euthanized.

Pygmy killer whales are not an endangered species, but because they live far offshore in deep water not much is known about them. A 22-year study based on photos taken off the island of Hawai'i indicates that there is a small resident population. It further reveals that the species forms long-lasting bonds similar to those of pilot whales and killer whales. This was demonstrated by the other members of the pod who stayed with the dying individual. When it was close to dying, they left.

Because of its very small population size human impacts could be of great danger, such as naval sonar exercises.

## Wayward Sperm Whale Escapes from Inlet in Japan

TANABE, Wakayama Prefecture

A 16-meter wayward sperm whale appeared to be heading back to the high seas after getting stuck in an Tanabe inlet for more than two weeks. The adult male sperm whale was spotted in Uchinoura Bay on May 14. Efforts to guide the whale to safety failed. After two weeks, the 50-ton mammal was found about 1 kilometer outside the bay. It was later seen in Tanabe Bay, a larger body of water that opens to the ocean.

## Sei Whale Killed by Boat Strike

A sei whale with a weight estimated at 27.5 tons washed ashore in late May on the Delaware coast. The juvenile male measured 41 feet, 9 inches. A necropsy confirmed that it had been struck by a "very large ship" and suffered skull and jaw fractures. Sei whales migrate northward along the edge of the continental shelf as summer approaches.

## Save The Whales' WOW™ Programs Make a Big Splash in Schools

The educators in Save The Whales' WOW™ (Whales On Wheels) programs can't quite wheel a whale into a school classroom, but they manage to haul out the next best thing: a boat load of instructional material about whales, dolphins, sea otters, and other marine mammals. WOW™ programs bring exotic hands-on artifacts such as baleen, dolphin skulls, whale lice, sea otter skulls and pelts, multi-media demonstrations with video and sound recording bites, and the ever-



Tom Kieckhefer with gray whale costume

popular gray whale or sea otter costumes. Over the past year, STW educators have been very busy teaching more than 250 programs in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties in California.

Jay Marden, Carmel River School Principal, was impressed with the high quality, marine-based educational programs and observed how the students were intently focused and excited about the content. He also added, "Save The Whales has contributed significantly to raise our students' awareness of the role the ocean plays on our lives and promoted a 'stewardship' for the ocean, which has been one of our school's primary goals as it participates annually in an intensive ocean study period."

While Dianna Higginbotham, Principal of Valencia Elementary School and Karin Kerber-Smith, Science Assembly Chair Valencia Home and School Club, thought "...the touch stations proved to be the ultimate prize!" They liked the whale costume and its step-by-step process of adding each individual "body part" (blubber, flukes, baleen, etc.) that engaged the whole class and lent itself to yet another fun way to explore these magnificent creatures.



Maris Sidenstecker gives talk

"The whale and sea otter programs are incredible," said Judy Wills, a second grade teacher at Robert Down Elementary School. Ms. Wills is planning to call upon WOW™ instructors every year to "spread their wealth of information to our future marine biologists and caring citizens." She commented that her school, like schools in most districts, is strapped for funds, and she appreciated the "low cost but high quality instruction" provided by WOW™.

Save The Whales partially underwrites WOW™ classes to keep them affordable, financing them through grants, donations, and memberships. Although the Monterey Bay area is becoming a center of marine science, education, and technology, there are few education programs that bring the marine environment and its life forms directly to youth and the public.

Tom Kieckhefer, WOW™ instructor, and Maris Sidenstecker, co-founder of STW and WOW™ instructor, have taught many outreach programs. They especially enjoy hearing calls of "Hey, Whale Man or Woman!" across the playgrounds as students approach. They are anxious to ask Tom or Maris more questions or tell them new and exciting things they have recently learned about marine mammals.

The vaquita population numbers no more than a few hundred (the current best estimate is about 150). The Mexican government appears to be taking the situation very seriously, and is making an attempt to remove gillnets from the vaquita's range. Although the

Dr. Jefferson states:

*"The gray, sei, blue, and fin whale species are not endangered on a global scale, but isolated populations of these species have been severely depleted and face some danger of extinction. Sadly, there have probably been several cetacean populations that have been exterminated by humans before they were even documented by scientists. In fact, even today for most species of cetaceans, global population structure is very poorly known."*

species is still in serious trouble, there is some reason for cautious optimism about the vaquita's future, but we must move fast to avoid a repeat of the baiji tragedy. One thing that is important to remember about endangered species is that some "Endangered Species Lists" include species mainly for political reasons, and their legal status listing may not be accurate. Thus, there is a difference between Endangered (the official status listing, with a capital **E**) and endangered (the true status of a species, with a lower-case **e**). For example, the sperm whale is listed as Vulnerable by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Endangered by the US Government, yet it is globally distributed, numbers in the hundreds of thousands and many populations are quite healthy. Thus, the sperm whale is not really endangered. Nonetheless, several cetacean species, and many other populations, are genuinely in danger of extinction in the next

decade or two. This is a sad statement on the depths of human greed and carelessness for the natural environment. It is my hope that this article will help people appreciate the diversity and fragility of the world's marine mammals, and will inspire them to work towards their long-term protection.

*Thomas A. Jefferson, PhD*

### **IUCN Classifications of Degrees of Threat**

By classifying species into categories of threat, conservation recommendations can be made based on the status of the species, its abundance, and distribution.

**Extinct (EX):** There is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died.

**Extinct in the Wild (EW):** Known only to survive in captivity or as a naturalized population well outside the past range.

**Critically Endangered (CR):** Facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.

**Endangered (EN):** Facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.

**Vulnerable (VU):** Facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

**Near Threatened (NT):** Not in one of the categories above, but is close to qualifying for or is likely to be in a threatened category in the near future.

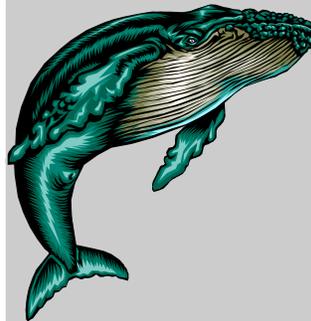
**Least Concern (LC):** Not in one of the categories above. Widespread and abundant taxa are included in this category.

## **Whale Heroes** **Who're you gonna call?**

Mackie Green saves whales in the waters off New Brunswick, Canada. He heads the Campobello Whale Rescue Team, comprised of three island fisherman who have been trained in the skill of freeing whales from ropes and nets.

If not helped out of their entanglement, the whales run the risk of dying from infection as a result of the ropes cutting into their skin, or malnutrition because the entanglement prevents them from obtaining enough food for sustenance.

Mackie is one of five people on the Atlantic Seaboard who are qualified to lead missions to free whales from entrapment. When a call



comes in, he drops everything else and speeds to the whale in distress with his team.

After the animal surfaces, Mackie says that they have to rush and get satellite and VHF radio tags attached to the gear so that they can track it if the whale continues moving. Getting a whale disentangled can take up to three days. He says that fin whales

are fairly easy. With humpbacks, "once you cut one part of the fishing line, they stop and roll over and let you do the rest."

Because they were hunted so much, Mackie believes that North Atlantic right whales, a critically endangered species (see article on pg.5), don't trust people and don't want you to get close to them. Freeing trapped whales is risky because they are so large, powerful and capable of overturning a boat or injuring a person with a flick of their fin or tail.

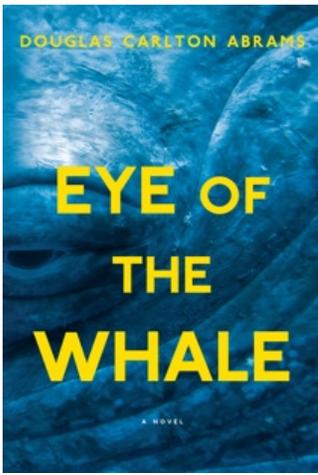
Mackie started as a fisherman, but as the industry collapsed he utilized other skills such as running a whale watching company, piloting boats for scientific researchers and teaching navigation and marine safety at the local community college. Because he has worked as a fisherman, he gets support from fishermen, who he points out are also endangered. By saving a whale, he is also helping his fellow fishermen who are afraid of running into trouble with the government. They help Mackie by reporting whales in need of assistance. Support is provided by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).

### **Bones found in California Beach May be Rare, Extinct Whale**

Fossilized bones that are possibly the remains of an extinct whale have been found on a beach in Central California. Experts think they could be the remains of an ancient whale dating back five million years. At that time, a shallow ocean covered the area where walrus and long-snouted dolphins lived.

The whale is believed to be between 15 and 20 feet long, and is positioned on a rock that comes from the end of the Miocene Epoch which helped to isolate its age.

Paleontologists had hoped to find the animal's skull in order to determine if it was a plankton-feeding whale or a meat-eating toothed whale. Even though the skull was not found, scientists believe that they will learn a great deal from the skeleton.



# Eye of the Whale

National bestseller Douglas Carlton Abrams' new novel, *Eye of the Whale*, dramatizes and brings to vivid life the crucial issues that motivate our work here at the Save The Whales. This is a captivating ecological thriller about a marine biologist whose fate is altered after the un-

expected appearance of a humpback whale sends her on a race to discover the meaning of its mysterious song and its implications for human survival.

In this page-turning adventure story, Elizabeth discovers the true impact of toxins and the danger they pose to all marine and terrestrial life. As her research captures the media's interest and the world's imagination, powerful forces emerge that do not want the whale's secrets to be revealed. Soon, Elizabeth is forced to decide if her discoveries are worth losing her marriage, her career, and possibly her life.

In writing *Eye of the Whale*, Abrams worked closely with leading scientists to uncover the shockingly true facts on which it is based. This powerful story will transform how readers see their relationship to other species and the fragile world in which we live.

Through a special arrangement with the author, Save The Whales is delighted to offer its members a free sample of the book at

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/14773116/Eye-of-the-Whale-Sample-Chapters>.

Read it to inspire your own work with us, then share it with your friends and family so that they will recognize the dangers we face and join you in your support.

For more on Doug, his books, and his research, please visit

<http://douglascarltonabrams.com>.

Ken Cook, President of the Environmental Working Group, says,

***Eye of the Whale, is a page-turning blend of great storytelling, characters you'll quickly care a great deal about (some are human), and the latest insights of the world's leading environmental scientists--from the complex behaviors of whales, to the chemical pollution that threatens our entire biosphere, from sea life to breast cells. You'll race to the end of Doug Abrams' tense, heart-rending, fast-paced mystery. When you finally put his novel down, what you'll pick up, I predict, is fresh resolve for the fight to save planet Earth."***

**Save The Whales**  
**A Nonprofit Organization**  
**1192 Waring Street**  
**Seaside, CA 93955**  
[www.savethewhales.org](http://www.savethewhales.org)

