



FISHERIES AGENCY
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES, GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

2-1, 1-Chome, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100, Japan TEL:03-3502-8111 EXT:

MEDIA RELEASE

16 March 2002

STRONG SUPPORT FOR WHALING

The Prime Minister's office and the Fisheries Agency of the Government of Japan today released the results of a public opinion survey showing strong support for whaling.

Mr. Masayuki Komatsu, Councillor at the Fisheries Agency said, "Whaling and whale meat are an integral part of the culture of a number of locations in Japan. It is therefore no surprise that the strong public support for whaling shown in past surveys has been reconfirmed."

The survey conducted in December 2001 by the Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan showed more than 75% support for whaling managed in a rational and sustainable way.

When asked whether scientific research was required to study the impact of whales on fisheries 81.3% said that such research was necessary or may be necessary while only 6.9% said that such research was not necessary or might not be necessary.

More than 87% of respondents said that they had eaten whale meat.

Mr. Komatsu said, "These results show a continuing high level of public support for the Government's position on whaling and strengthens our resolve to work within the International Whaling Commission for the resumption of commercial whaling and to continue with our research programs to study the impact of whales on fisheries." "This is why we are looking forward to positive results from this year's meeting of the IWC to be held in Shimonoseki in May", he added.

(more to come)

Mr. Komatsu also explained that last year, the IWC unanimously adopted a resolution making the study of the interaction between whales and fisheries a priority. Many international fisheries organizations including the FAO have made similar decisions. “This is exactly what our whale research programs are doing. We are studying what whales eat, where and how much.” “Marine mammal interactions with fisheries have become a major issue worldwide. It is an important issue in the context of world food security since the estimates are that cetaceans consume 3 to 5 times the amount of marine resources harvested for human consumption”, he added.

Mr. Komatsu also said, “The results of this survey clearly demonstrate the sham that Greenpeace and the International Fund for Animal Welfare have been using for more than a year claiming that the Japanese public does not support whaling or consume whale meat.” “Their survey failed to meet minimum survey standards or any other test of credibility. It should simply be dismissed as nothing more than a continuation of their deliberate attempt to misinform the public”, he added.

Mr. Komatsu said the public should start to question Greenpeace’s motives for its anti-whaling campaigns. “Greenpeace uses the whaling issue to gain membership donations and most of the money is spent on high profile photogenic protests that are simply designed to raise more money.” “If they were truly concerned about whales Greenpeace would be spending money on research”, he said.

For more information contact:

Masayuki Komatsu, Counsellor, Resources Management Department, Fisheries Agency, Government of Japan (Tel: +81-3-3591-1086)

or

Joji Morishita, Deputy Director General, Far Seas Fisheries Division, Fisheries Agency, Government of Japan (Tel: +81-3-3502-2443).

See also

<http://www.jfa.maff.go.jp/whale/index.htm>