

Keiko—the First Real Whale Ambassador

When I first saw Keiko, he was slowly dying. He had been violently taken from his family in Iceland and flown to Ontario Marineland, where he languished in a cinderblock warehouse with Junior, perhaps his brother. Junior never again saw the light of day, but Keiko was sold to the Mexico City amusement park Reino Aventura. If there were ever a place unsuited for a wide-ranging Icelandic whale accustomed to chilly water and lots of orca company, it was the tepid isolation of his new home. He stayed alive in the 70 degree water by starving himself, shrinking his blubber so as to regulate the unnatural heat. He ground his teeth down to bloody nubbins by chewing on the concrete rim of his shallow pool. Papilloma virus spread under and onto his pectoral fins. Exposed to the hot sun and the gravity of long stays on the surface, his dorsal fin took on the trademark droop of captive male orcas.

I was visiting Keiko as part of a small group determined to get Keiko out of Mexico City. Even the management of Reino Aventura knew that his days were numbered.

To our amazement, we struck a deal with the board, giving us the whale and them the merchandizing rights. Three days later, after a conversation with Sea World, the park renigged and our plans for a rapid rescue disintegrated.

Two years later, fueled by a two million dollar grant from Warner Brothers (at the urging of Free Willy producers Richard and Lauren Schuler-Donner), Dave Phillips of Earth Island Institute made another deal with the park board. This one stuck, and Keiko was airlifted amid much fanfare to a new tank in the Oregon Coast Aquarium.

Many of us worried that Keiko would stay there, his release stymied by the same market forces that keep Sea World's doors open after countless protests against the cruelty of captivity. He was a boon for the local economy of Newport. The aquarium predictably launched a campaign

to discredit the Free Willy/Keiko Foundation and their plans to make good on their promise of freedom.

Driven by the resources of telecommunications billionaire Craig McCaw and the determination of Earth Island, Keiko healed, gained weight and began to pursue live fish. The best news came last week: Iceland has given the green light for Keiko to be relocated into a sea pen in the Westmann Islands. When he is ready, the fences will drop and Keiko will be the first orca in history deliberately rehabilitated and released back to the wild.

For years, the public display industry has said that captive whales and dolphins were "ambassadors of their kind"; sacrifices brought into tanks so as to introduce human beings to the wonders of their species. I often thought that if we were to obtain human ambassadors in a comparable way, we would grab some unfortunate off the sidewalk, lock him in the trunk of a car and drive away.

Iceland's decision to allow Keiko to come back home makes him truly an ambassador of his kind, bringing a measure of peace between species. His repatriation appears to have happily resolved a long-standing debate within the Icelandic government about

whether to resume whaling. Since whaling stopped in Iceland almost a decade ago, whale watching has caught on and now brings in far more money than whaling ever did. But strong forces in Iceland didn't want Keiko back for fear he would convince people to cherish whales instead of exploit them. Opposition to the move also came from Sea World's Brad Andrews, who warned that Iceland is dark and cold.

Three cheers for Keiko, who dramatized opposition to whaling in Iceland. Congratulations to Earth Island, on the verge of doing what many said couldn't be done. May the giving back of a life to the most famous whale in the world serve to unravel the arrogant rationale of captivity, and eventually lead to the return the rest of our captive entertainers to their homes and families. 🐾



Keiko will soon be on his way home—perhaps to the family he was separated from 17 years ago.

IWC Report: Amid Deadlock, the Chance for a New Role

The 50th meeting of the International Whaling Commission was held from May 16-21 near Muscat, Oman. Although this country of serene desert peaks and isolated oases may seem like a strange venue, the Arabian Sea that laps its shores is rich in sea life, including many species of whales and dolphins. Commissioners from 35 countries met in plenary session, along with representatives of all persuasions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and media from around the world. Dozens of resolutions spelling life or death for whales were presented, debated, and voted upon. Surprisingly, many delegates come to the meeting either without firm instructions or with malleable points of view, giving opportunity to those that wish to persuade. As AWI's official observer, my job is to convince delegates that the best course is always one of increased protection.

Overshadowing the meeting was the continued push for the slippery

"Irish Proposal," the brainchild of new IWC chair Michael Canny. On the presumption that the IWC is hopelessly deadlocked between nations wanting whales left alone and those wanting to kill them, the proposal offers an ominous compromise: ban Japan's bogus "scientific" whaling in the Antarctic plus all deep-water pelagic whaling and the international sale of whalemeat, in exchange for opening up whaling in all coastal waters up to 200 miles from land. Mr. Canny was so eager to promote his "compromise" that he specifically asked that no resolutions be introduced that criticized Japan and Norway, the only countries that consistently thumb their noses at IWC rulings.

Despite Mr. Canny's efforts at turning the meeting into a love-fest of reconciliation, the plenary quickly split along well-established faultlines. Japan was unwilling to give an inch and immediately caused a ruckus by

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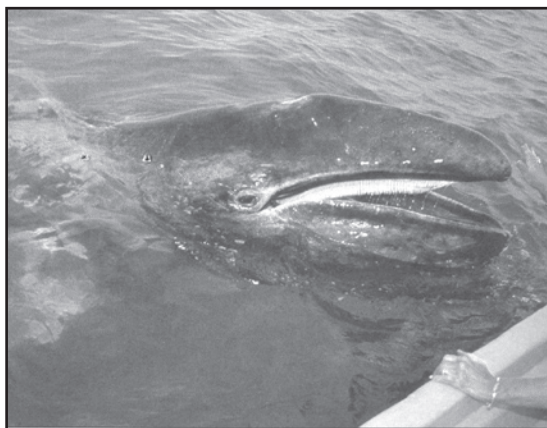
Makah Whaling Confrontation

After years of international debate, the Makah Indian tribe of northwest Washington state is preparing to kill a California gray whale in the month of November. If executed as planned, a harpoon will be thrown from a traditional whaling canoe at the same instant a gunman opens fire with a fifty caliber (armor piercing) rifle. It would be the first whale deliberately killed from the mainland US in over forty years and institute a deadly precedent of whaling based on cultural desire instead of nutritional need.

The hunt is fully backed by the armed might of the American government. The Coast Guard has declared a 1500 foot "exclusion zone" around the whalers and will have at least three ships on hand to keep protesters away. The issue has become white-hot in the misty northwest, so much so that the Washington governor called up the National Guard to defend the recent Makah Days annual celebration just on the rumor that anti-whaling protesters might show up. None did, but dozens of groups have vowed to try to stop the upcoming whaling with every tool available including an ultralight aircraft, a submarine, armored boats, orca sounds played underwater, and lawsuits.

For two years running, the most controversial proposal considered by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) was the US-backed Makah whaling plan. Many delegations said that the plan failed three historical prerequisites of the category of aboriginal subsistence whaling: that there be an unbroken tradition of whaling, that there be a demonstrable nutritional need, and that there be no commercial component. The Makah have not whaled in seventy years, do not claim a nutritional need, and have argued from their first letter of intent the right to commercially trade in whale products as they once did. When the IWC finally voted on the issue in Monaco in 1997, language was inserted into the North Pacific gray whale quota reserving the whales for aboriginal people "whose cultural and *nutritional* needs have been recognized (emphasis added)." Even though this wording was intended specifically to disqualify the Makah, the US

delegation immediately claimed victory. The Makah are proceeding under the assumption that they won the permission of the IWC to kill up to four gray whales a year. They also insist they are a sovereign nation and need permission from neither the US government nor the IWC to whale and sell whale parts as they wish.



Friendly gray whale approaches whale-watching boat.

The Makah have declared that they will eat all of any whale caught, but when a gray whale was caught in fishing nets about four years ago and parceled out to the tribe, most of it wound up in the dump. It turns out that very few people on earth eat gray whale meat. Inuits who kill bowhead whales avoid the much more numerous grays on the grounds that they are inedible from their habit of bottom-feeding all along the California Coast. The Russian natives who kill 140 gray whales yearly feed the meat almost entirely to foxes in Siberian fur farms.

There is strong evidence that the original idea for the Makah resumption of whaling came from Japanese trading partners who buy logs and sea urchin roe from the tribe. The idea of encouraging aboriginal people to resume long-dormant whaling traditions was laid out about ten years ago as a way to instigate international

sympathy for native people to the unpopular practice of whaling. It appears that the first Makahs contacted were convinced that Makah-caught gray whales could be sold on the Tokyo market for a million dollars each. They in turn sold the idea to other Makahs as a way to reinvigorate their culture. Once the IWC ruling was finished, arguably relaxing the aboriginal whaling category and facilitating the resumption of Japanese shore-based (cultural) whaling, the Makah discovered that there is no market for gray whale meat.

It is a sad irony that one of the tribes that barely escaped extermination by European newcomers now intends to kill a representative of another tribe (gray whales) with a similar history. In an odd inversion of values, many native leaders now regard whales (and sea lions, and salmon) as "resources" while many non-natives like myself see these creatures as many traditional elders taught: as independent and self-aware tribes with their own purpose separate from any perceived human use. 🐾

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pushing a vote on instituting the secret ballot. This method of allowing governments to hide their votes has already caused great damage at CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) by facilitating the buying of votes without public repercussions. The Japanese attempt to protect the five Caribbean countries that support their whaling from facing criticism failed badly after vigorous lobbying. The IWC chose to keep their deliberations transparent and open to review.

The Omani meeting saw the return of the United States delegation to their traditional role as whale champions. Under American leadership, a proposal was passed to actually allocate funding for a study of environmental threats facing whales. Combining an analysis of the threats from toxic proliferation, climate change and noise pollution, the study represents

a dramatic step forward in changing the IWC from a whaler's club into a conservation body.

The IWC was established in 1946 with the dual mandate of encouraging the "orderly development of whaling" and the conservation of whale "stocks." With whale-watching now far surpassing whale killing in generating income, some argue that the definition of "whaling" includes this benign use, just as birding means bird-watching. Therefore, the IWC could stay true to its mandate, transform itself into a conservation body that actually follows the will of the people of the world, and work to protect whales from all threats, including dumped poisons, loud sounds, habitat destruction and, yes, even harpoons. 🐾

AWI Opposes Invasive Research on Dolphins—Offers Alternative

Over seven million dolphins have died in the tuna fishery of the Eastern Tropical Pacific. The US National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is planning on intentionally stressing these same populations to determine if the practice of chasing and surrounding dolphins with nets to catch the tuna beneath causes “significant adverse impact.” NMFS is planning on hiring a “dedicated vessel” to simulate tuna fishing by chasing down pods of spinner and spotted dolphins with helicopters and speedboats. Once surrounded by the fishing nets, the dolphins would be restrained, plugs of flesh punched from their dorsal fins, a transmitter attached, blood taken, and released. Then they would be chased, captured and sampled again and again and again.

To add insult to injury, there is no conceivable benefit from all of this cruelty. The NMFS stress study is not even planned to begin until the year 2000. In March of 1999, the Secretary of Commerce is directed to make an initial finding whether or not the setting of nets on dolphins causes “significant adverse impact on depleted populations.” Without proof of such impact, the Secretary is directed to change the definition of the “dolphin-safe” label on a can of tuna to include tuna caught “on dolphin” in those net sets where no dolphin are *actually observed* to be killed. This amazing consumer fraud is a result of the overturning of the Dolphin Protection Act in favor of the misleadingly labeled International Dolphin Conservation Program Act in 1997. The change in law also raises the number of dolphins that can be killed yearly from the 1997 level of 3,005 to a static level of 5,000 in perpetuity.

In response to the highly invasive stress studies proposed by NMFS, AWI has consulted with some of the foremost authorities of stress in the world to offer an alternative study. At this moment we are asking other groups to endorse our alternative and are presenting it to members of Congress and the Marine Mammal Commission for consideration.

We believe that a properly conducted study will demonstrate that the depleted populations of spinner and spotted dolphins involved in the tuna fishery are indeed suffering extreme adverse impact. A “significant impact” finding would foreclose the flood of new vessels expected to begin setting upon dolphins again if their product can be sold as “dolphin-safe” on the US market. Millions of dolphins’ lives hang in the balance of this decision.

In the AWI alternative stress study we suggest that three

research teams, comprised of a diver, a behaviorist, and a physiologist, board three tuna purse-seiners engaged in their regular fishing practices. Every facet of the chase and encirclement would be filmed for later study. Once the dolphins and tuna are caught in the huge purse seine nets, the behaviorist would select those animals “rafting,” “sleeping,” or sinking to the bottom of the net. Observers have long noted these unusual behaviors, along with evidence that the majority of dolphins killed in tuna nets die not from entanglement or drowning, but by suffocation.

Our study would test the hypothesis that dolphins under chronic stress suffer extreme physiological changes that are indicated by their blood and their behaviors. Dolphins’ adrenal glands respond to repeated chase and harassment by flooding their bodies with glucocorticoids.

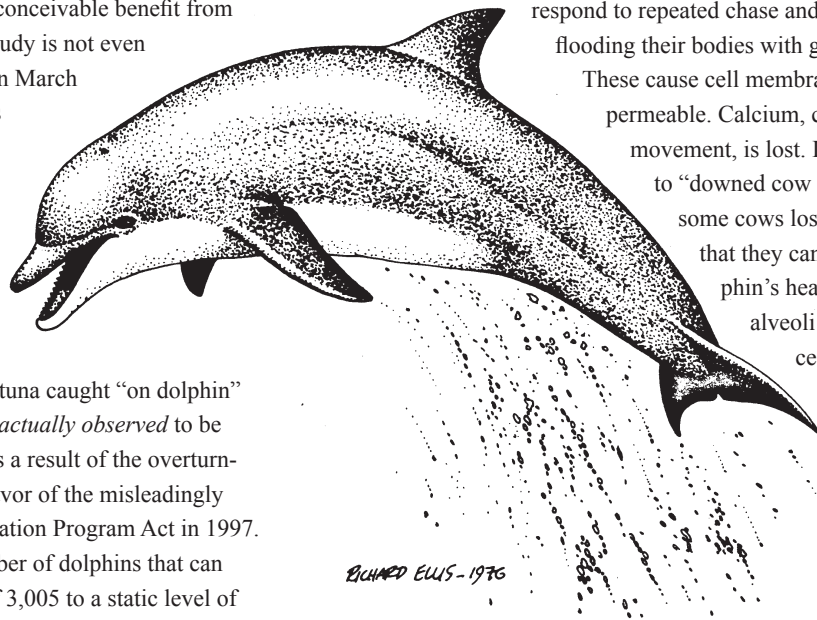
These cause cell membranes to become more permeable. Calcium, critical to muscle movement, is lost. In a situation similar to “downed cow syndrome” where some cows lose so much calcium that they cannot stand, the dolphin’s heart, diaphragm, and alveoli sphincter muscles cease to function. The

animal becomes semicomatose. Another response aggravated by the flood of glucocorticoids is

the release of natural opiate painkillers. Preparing for a painful death, these function as a general anesthetic. Dolphins and whales are unique in the animal world in that they are obligate conscious breathers. Under general anesthesia, they stop breathing and suffocate.

We recommend that blood samples be taken from one hundred and fifty semicomatose dolphins caught in the tuna nets. This blood would be centrifuged and frozen on board for later analysis of those hormones, gasses and chemicals that are known to indicate stress. The Secretary of Commerce is required by March of 1999 to decide which tuna meet the dolphin-safe requirement. To enable him to make an informed decision, it is urgent that the stress study begin immediately.

If, in spite of our efforts, the Secretary decides to go ahead with changing the definition of the “dolphin-safe” label to include tuna caught by setting nets around dolphins, we see no alternative to cranking up the full-scale canned tuna boycott once again. 🐬



US IWC PRESENTATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO CETACEANS

On the third day of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) conference, US Undersecretary of Commerce and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) chief Dr. James Baker flew in just to deliver a presentation on global environmental threats facing whales and dolphins. Following the US lead, the IWC voted for the first time to allocate 125,000 pounds sterling to study this interconnecting web of threats over and above the harpoon. Just to consider such a direction signals a potential change in the IWC, moving away from managing the killing of whales to actually crafting their protection.

The dramatic slide show was summed up in its opening quote from newly retired IWC chief Peter Bridgewater:

“Global climate change, pollution, and the hole in the ozone layer are greater threats to the world’s whale populations than whaling.” Punctuated by grisly pictures of stranded whales and charts with ominously climbing lines, Dr. Baker’s presentation listed a long litany of layered dangers including chemical contamination, global warming, disease, and harmful algae blooms.

All of these severe and long-term threats facing life in the oceans serve to strengthen our case as to why the unnecessary killing of whales must cease. We applaud the careful presentation by the American delegation at the IWC, and their successful effort at convincing the body that the dangers are real and worth exploring.

At the risk of appearing ungrateful, however, it is important to point out one glaring omission in the presentation’s catalog of environmental threats: noise pollution. In this arena it is the US government that is one of the worst offenders, with several incredibly loud devices being tested both by the military (ATOC and Low-frequency Active Sonar) and by the National Marine Fisheries Service (devices aimed at driving seals and sealions away from sport fishing boats).

We congratulate the US government for their efforts, and look forward to the inclusion of the sonic war on whales in their analysis of steps that can be taken to make the world’s oceans more hospitable to sustaining all life, including the highly sensitive cetaceans. 🐾

Save the Beluga Whales in Alaska’s Cook Inlet



Ben White

This oil rig releases toxic waste directly into Cook Inlet, poisoning the belugas’ habitat.

Even though the population of beluga whales living in Alaska’s Cook Inlet has plummeted from over a thousand to about two hundred, it appears that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) lacks the backbone to follow through with an endangered species listing. They are leaning instead toward the far less protective “depleted” listing under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The reasons for the agency’s reticence have everything to do with big oil and big business and nothing to do with the whale itself, or the requirement that the government obey the Endangered Species Act.

It’s easy to fall in love with belugas. One of the smallest of whales, pure white when mature and possessing flexible neck vertebrae; they can turn their head and look at you. Called the canary of the deep, belugas have an amazing repertoire of songs and calls, most of which can be heard by humans. If we are ever able to verbally communicate with a whale, it will probably be with a beluga. We had better act quickly or there won’t be anyone left to talk to in Alaska’s Cook Inlet.

The main reason for the decline of this genetically distinct

tribe of whales is the native hunting over the last decade—about a hundred a year have been killed with untold numbers struck and lost. The whales have been butchered and their meat sold at a local Anchorage market.

Now some native former hunters are petitioning for the NMFS to list the whales as endangered, which will trigger all sorts of habitat protections. Those protections are exactly what is causing big business in Anchorage to barrage NMFS with calls and letters, all demanding that the whale not be listed as endangered. Why? Anchorage has one of the few permits in the country allowing the city to dump municipal sewage into Cook Inlet with only partial treatment. The fifteen oil rigs dotting the inlet are apparently the only ones out of fifteen hundred on the US continental shelf given a variance to the zero-discharge rule. As part of their normal operations, the rigs are allowed by the Environmental Protection Agency to dribble lead, mercury, arsenic and other toxins directly into beluga habitat.

To stop the poisoning of the last of this unique population of belugas, there is but one legal remedy that will give them a chance to recover. They need to be listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

Dr. Baker, who just made such a splendid presentation on environmental threats to cetaceans (see page 10 and box to the left) is a humane scientist in a powerful position to help.

ACTION: Please write, fax, or phone. Dr. James Baker, Undersecretary of Commerce, Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20230. Phone: (202) 482-3436, Fax: (202) 408-9674. Tell him that the Cook Inlet belugas desperately need to be listed under the Endangered Species Act and ask him to do everything possible to achieve this. 🐾

Turtles Dance, WTO Stumbles

In the months leading up to the summit of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle my challenge as AWI's international coordinator was to put animal issues on the map. Even though many of the most flagrant cases of WTO rules superseding national laws involve hormone treated beef, genetically modified organisms, dolphin-caught tuna and turtle-caught shrimp, there was a real danger of animal protection being lost amidst thousands of labor justice, human rights and environmental protection groups scrambling to be heard.



Robert Weissman

Turtles and teamsters marching together to fight the World Trade Organization in Seattle, Washington.

So, I latched on one crazy idea to make the animal message loud and clear: putting 240 people in sea turtle costumes on the streets. Without the foggiest idea what it would take to make that many costumes and fill them with volunteers, I began holding evening meetings to get the word out about the effect of the World Trade Organization on animal protection laws. Many didn't believe that any international trade group could actually kill hard-fought domestic legislation designed to make the consequences of our trade kinder: on sea turtles, on dolphins, on the environment and on workers around the world. It was only when the details were explained—that the WTO forbids the restriction of any product based on how it's obtained that



Mac Hawley and Jen Rinick were active anti-WTO marchers. Hawley filmed the marchers and other significant events in Seattle.

people came to grips with the organization's deadly embrace of child labor, slave labor, unsafe food and cruel fishing practices.

From these meetings grew turtle making parties in Seattle and Lopez Island, Washington. Lisa Wathne of HSUS, grassroots organizer par excellence, did an amazing job coordinating Seattle volunteers, generating about twenty workers for each manufacturing party. All hands were needed.

Each turtle costume began its life as a sheet of scrounged appliance carton. Patterns were traced on the flattened cardboard and cut out, one for the plastron (belly), one for the back (carapace) and one for the head. Then pleats were cut, hot-glued, stapled and taped, giving the backs the convex curve of a green sea turtle. All edges were taped in hopes of keeping the omnipresent Seattle rain out a little longer. Then everything was given a thick coat of exterior latex paint, inside and out. With 240+ costumes, that amounted to almost 1,000 sides painted, not including the heads. Then we brought in artists to paint the final designs. AWI associate Jen Rinick was sent out from Washington to provide invaluable help in the last stages. We were still stapling and painting the turtle heads at 11:00 PM on the Sunday night before the first rally.

Until volunteers started showing up at the

First United Methodist Church in Seattle that Monday morning, we were never sure we would actually have the bodies to fill the turtle suits. But they just kept coming. Everybody was issued a front, back, head and a flag. The flag was modeled on the early American Gadsden flag with a coiled rattlesnake and the slogan "Don't Tread on Me". In redrawing the design for silk-screening, I changed the motto slightly to Don't Trade on Me, and added NO/WTO SEATTLE 1999, ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE. Soon we had over 240 people ranging in age from 13-80, suited up and in a festive mood. I gave a brief speech exacting the promise from all that we would behave in a manner that would honor sea turtles – the pacifists of the animal kingdom: we would march peacefully for our sovereign right to make national laws protecting sea turtles.

The turtles were an instant hit. Everywhere we went people cheered us. The lightheartedness of our approach combined with the beautiful hand made costumes won us huge popular support. We marched with about 3-4,000 other supporters of animals and the environment to a rally right next to the WTO venue. There I briefly joined Congressman George Miller, Senator Paul Wellstone, Carl Pope of the Sierra Club, and Patti Forkan of HSUS on the speaker platform to rally the turtles in a rousing cheer.

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On Monday volunteers were given a choice of actions for Tuesday, the official opening day of the WTO. One group met at 6:00 AM to join a massive civil disobedience demonstration designed to peacefully shut down the WTO by blocking all of the major streets around the Washington Trade and Convention Center. Another group of turtles met at 9:00 AM and marched with a mammoth inflatable turtle into the big labor march organized by AFL-CIO, the Steelworkers and the Teamsters.

7:00 AM Tuesday saw about forty turtles walking arm in arm down the middle of Seventh Avenue in a light rain as the gray skies slowly lightened. Flags flapping, we marched directly to the intersection we had been assigned to obstruct. Soon, a line of turtles stretched across Eighth and Olive. Behind us, the entire block was beribboned with about four miles of yellow "crime scene" tape that said UNSEEN CRIMES. At about 8:30 we were met by over seven thousand people organized by the Ruckus Society, Art and Revolution and the Direct

edged success. A handful of very tired turtles, a little surprised not to have been arrested, waited alongside the parade route of the massive labor march. The feeling of joy and unity was unlike anything I have seen. Steelworkers marched with Filipino workers, native rights advocates with child labor activists, Teamsters with organic farmers, monster puppets from Art and Revolution walked alongside AFL-CIO officials. "Where are the turtles?" I kept asking. "Oh, there are a bunch of them coming," I was reassured.

Finally, three blocks away I see an enormous green bubble coming towards me. As it came closer I saw dozens of absolutely ebullient turtles holding up the 20' long inflatable mama turtle. They told me that when they had marched into Memorial Stadium, already packed with tens of thousands of organized labor supporters, an enormous cheer went up for the turtles.

As upwards of forty thousand people marched peacefully through



Mac Hawley

"We would march peacefully for our sovereign right to make national laws protecting sea turtles." – Ben White

Action Network. The antithesis of an angry mob, it was truly the "pageant of resistance" it was meant to be: huge puppets, dancers, cheerleaders, jugglers, turtles and "trees" danced in the streets and celebrated the suspension of the WTO's morning activities.

All morning, the direct action turtles moved to plug gaps in the protest lines that were keeping WTO delegates from the meetings. Even the police were glad to see us show up, throwing a peaceful line between themselves and other protesters. At one point I looked around and realized that at 48 years old, as a veteran of dozens of often violent antiwar protests, I was one of the few people among either the police or protest lines who had been through this before. I spent most of my time trying to calm people down, telling them not to be afraid.

By early afternoon, the blocking of the entrances was an acknowl-

downtown Seattle, a few dozen self-avowed Anarchists from Eugene, Oregon went on a rampage breaking store windows and spraying graffiti everywhere. They specifically targeted certain large corporations: Nike, Banana Republic, Starbucks, Nordstroms. Oddly, some police just watched it happen. When they finally responded it was against peaceful protesters. By Tuesday afternoon, the police were attacking with huge clouds of teargas and barrages of wooden and rubber bullets. Tuesday night saw a general curfew extended over all of downtown Seattle. Only those with WTO credentials were allowed on the streets.

Early the next morning seven volunteers showed up wanting to join ongoing protests in turtle suits. After they promised to stay together and stay peaceful, I handed out the suits. One hour later, watching news coverage as I waited for another wave of volunteers due at 9:00,

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I saw the volunteers cuffed in a circle with a pile of turtle costumes alongside. I decided then that organized peaceful protest had been foreclosed and that it was time to pack up. Some turtles remained, however, until the end of the conference on Friday. Not one ever engaged in any angry or violent behavior.

Writing this a few days after the conference closed, I can report on just the first fallout of the WTO protests in Seattle. On Saturday, the Seattle papers carried the banner headlines: WTO Talks Collapse. One of our major objectives, that there be no new round of talks to increase the power of the WTO over our lives, had been achieved. Delegates from small third world countries said they were emboldened by the protesters to refuse to accept decisions made by a few powerful countries meeting behind closed doors. Delegates now are at such a fundamental impasse it appears they will have difficulty getting back on track next year at their planned mini-meeting in Geneva.



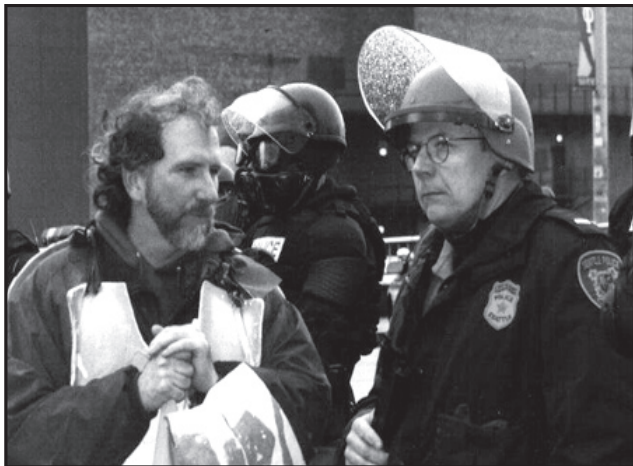
Jen Rinnick / AWI

The mother turtle leads baby turtles to the Memorial Station for AFC-CIO rally

By the time the smoke and gas cleared, over 600 protesters had been arrested. Almost all had been exercising their constitutional right to peaceful protest and freedom of speech. The Chief of Police has resigned and the Mayor may follow him, both very embarrassed by police overreaction and their blind welcome of the WTO in the first place.

The turtles were covered very favorably in the New York Times, The LA Times, the Christian Science Monitor, USA Today and many other media. They have somehow become an icon for “flamboyant” protests of the nineties. We now are making plans to put them on the streets of Geneva if and when the WTO decides to raise its ugly head again.

The real success coming out of the Battle of Seattle is the empowerment of civil society and the alliances made between groups that previously had little to do with each other. The corporate power grab of the WTO is so egregious it has galvanized activists of every social movement around the world. Suddenly it has become clear that it is the same people who are working globally against animal protection, against human rights



Michael Reppy

Ben White discussing WTO policies with the Seattle police.

and labor justice. Suddenly teenage kids are debating trade issues. And one image came through crystal clear: the turtles.

My favorite quote of the week was from the Seattle Province-Intelligencer. A reporter overheard two elderly ladies in Seattle talking. One said, “What is all of this fuss about WTO anyway?” Her friend replied, “Oh, I don’t know, something about sea turtles.”

That’s when I knew that we had succeeded in putting animal issues in the forefront of the now international debate over the group that assumes to speak on our behalf: the WTO. 🐢



Jen Rinnick / AWI

Like the precious free roaming sea turtles, each turtle was unique in his or her own design.





William Rossiter

Although the International Whaling Commission (IWC) has a moratorium on commercial killing of gray whales, illegal whale meat has been uncovered for sale in Japanese markets. Japan, which is not a range state for the species, is again proposing to downlist the Eastern North Pacific stock of gray whales from Appendix I to Appendix II of CITES.

Whales Threatened by Japan and Norway

Japan has proposed the downlisting of the Antarctic population of minke whales, one North Pacific population of minke whales, and one North Pacific population of gray whales. Norway has proposed the downlisting of the Northeast Atlantic and the North Atlantic Central minke whale populations. Downlisting would remove the whales from Appendix I, which prohibits all commercial trade, and place them on Appendix II, which allows limited trade.

The Secretariat of CITES recommends rejection of all the whale downlisting proposals.

Final authority for all whaling matters is now in the hands of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which has an indefinite moratorium in place forbidding all commercial whaling and the sale of whale products between countries. The downlisting effort at CITES is spurred by Norway's and Japan's frustration at their inability to defeat the IWC moratorium. They are hoping for a friendlier reception from CITES in order to execute an "end run" around the IWC prohibition. They will need more than two thirds of the countries present at CITES to vote in favor of the downlisting for it to succeed. The position of the United States is that any decision on international sale of whale meat, whether or not it is cloaked in the temporary guise of a "zero quota", should remain the responsibility of the IWC, not CITES. 🐾

US Navy Kills Whales In The Bahamas

In early 1998, the US Navy was testing an anti-submarine device called Low Frequency Active (LFA) sonar off the Kona coast of Hawaii, intentionally hitting humpback whales with up to 155 decibels. AWI led the interference to the testing for a month, putting human swimmers in the water to force the Navy to turn off its huge noisemaker. We warned that the consequences of bombarding sensitive sonic creatures with intense sound could be devastating, even though not necessarily readily apparent.

In 1999, the Navy issued a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) covering its LFA sonar. The thick document announced that the Navy was in the process of building four ships that would carry LFA sonar into 80% of the world's oceans for thousands of hours a year, ostensibly to find quiet enemy submarines. The operational limit of the LFA sonar would be about 240 decibels, over a hundred million times more intense than the level used on the Hawaiian humpbacks. And this would be completely safe, the Navy asserts, because it would keep a close lookout for passing whales and turn off the LFA sonar if whales swam within 1.5 kilometers of the vessel. Outside that distance, the whales would "only" receive 180 decibels or less, a level the Navy argued caused no damage at all. This was a staggering assertion, since the well-established level at which whales start avoiding an area is about 120 decibels—a million times less intense. Based on tests on its own divers, the Navy has set 140 decibels as the maximum level to which a human can safely be subjected.

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Dead spotted dolphin stranded March 15, 2000, Powell Cay, Abaco. Photo: Ken Balcomb

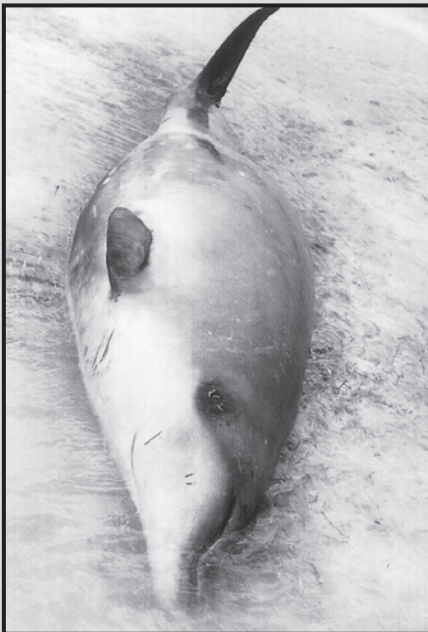
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In researching active sonar devices, AWI and others discovered that they had been tested for at least a decade, often without the required “incidental take” permits, and that on several occasions mass strandings of cetaceans occurred just on the heels of Navy exercises. Dr. Alexandros Frantzis of the University of Athens has tied a very unusual stranding of Cuvier’s Beaked Whales along the coast of Greece in 1995 directly to the coincidental NATO testing of LFA sonar. Similar incidents occurred in the Canary Islands and off Bonaire. But there was never a trained biologist on hand to inspect immediately the stranded whales and preserve evidence of their cause of death.

That is why the mass stranding of four different species of whales and dolphins that began on March 15 in the Bahamas is so critical. Biologist Ken Balcomb, who not only has studied whales for more than three decades, but also worked with passive sonar in the Navy for five years, just happened to be on hand when beaked whales started washing ashore. These were not anonymous victims. For nine years Ken and his colleague Dianne Claridge had been studying these extremely rare deep diving whales and had developed a data base of photo identification.

From the first stranded whale that washed up in front of their research station, it was clear that something was very wrong. They pushed the whale back out into deep water but it was clearly unbalanced and disoriented. All day, reports of additional stranded whales came in. By the time it was

over, at least fifteen whales and dolphins had stranded and nine were dead, including two species of beaked whales, a minke whale and a spotted dolphin. With



Above: Dead male dense-beaked whale bruised and internally damaged; found March 16, 2000, Cross Harbor, Abaco.

Photo: Ken Balcomb

Harvard biologist Dr. Darlene Ketton, Ken performed necropsies on several of the whales, immediately noticing ears full of blood and, in one case, hemorrhages striping the lungs consistent with pressure from the ribs. Upon inspection of a beaked whale head with a CAT-SCAN machine at Harvard, it was discovered that the creature had suffered a concussion, further proof of an acute trauma brought on by a pressure wave.

Those of us fighting the Navy’s testing and deployment of active sonar knew almost immediately that it was involved in some sort of exercises exactly at the same place and time as the Bahamas strandings. The Navy at first denied any link whatsoever. Subsequently the Navy has been very careful with its response, issuing a statement asserting that seven Navy ships and three submarines were in the area, five of which were operating “their normal array of active sonar” as they passed the Bahamas, not LFA sonar.

On May 10, AWI held a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., to blow the whistle on the Navy for killing the whales and dolphins in the Bahamas and to call for an immediate halt in further testing or deployment of active sonar devices until Congress convenes oversight hearings into the safety and necessity of these very real threats to ocean life. Speakers were Joel Reynolds of the Natural Resources Defense Council, Ken Balcomb of the Center for Whale Research, Dr. Naomi Rose of the Humane Society of the United States, Dr. Marsha Green of the Ocean Mammal Institute, and Dr. Charles Bernard, retired Navy officer and designer of weapons systems for thirty years. The message was delivered to a bank of TV cameras and a packed room: active sonar, especially LFA, is reckless, unnecessary, and is already killing whales at a level far less intense than that planned for a globally deployed LFA sonar.

Just In At Press Time:

The Navy, bowing to pressure from the environmental and animal protection community, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Marine Mammal Commission, cancelled the testing of active sonar devices as part of its LWAD (Littoral Warfare Advanced Development) trial off New Jersey. This is the first time the Navy has altered its schedule for active sonar development.

We have also just learned, in papers the Navy filed in a new Hawaii LFA court challenge to be heard on June 13, that the planned testing of the LFA on sperm whales in the Azores “will not be carried out this year.” This obviously leaves open the possibility of next year, but for now, both of the immediate demands of our press conference have been met. 🐾

“The Voice of the Turtle is Heard in Our Land”

— Song of Solomon 2:12 (King James Version Bible)

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund—What They Do

Just at the close of World War II, a conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire created the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the monster that eventually morphed into the more binding World Trade Organization (WTO).

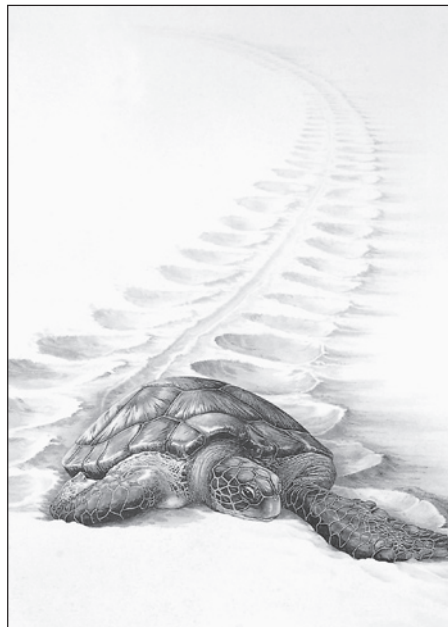
The World Bank is the largest lender in the world to poor countries, supported in part by almost a billion dollars a year of US tax dollars. The type of development funded is often disastrous: megaprojects such as dams that flood habitats, villages and fertile valleys, huge deforestation schemes, and the conversion of grasslands to trampled cattle farms. When countries cannot meet their payments on the World Bank loans, they borrow from the IMF. The IMF is very willing to make the payments if, and only if, the countries are willing to take its “advice” on how to “improve” their economies. This advice comes in the form of “SAP’s,” short for Structural Adjustment Programs, in exchange for helping meet their payments. Thus the IMF is able to dictate the economic policies of the debtor countries. Its influence is vast and draconian. If the debtor countries refuse to go along, all international sources of money dry up.

Once in the debt cycle, very few countries are ever able to pay off their debts. Almost two-thirds of the recipients have become more dependent. From 1984 to 1990 alone, the cash flow from third world countries to commercial banks was over 178 billion dollars, prompting one former World Bank official to say: “Not since the Conquistadors plundered Latin America has the world experienced a flow in the direction we see today.”

The World Bank and the IMF and Wildlife

This is where animal suffering comes in. Beside the damage wreaked by the megaprojects funded by the World Bank, the “austerity measures” imposed by SAP’s continue the pain. The IMF conditions are oriented to opening up the country to foreign investment and development, converting farmland from subsistence agriculture to export crops and cashing in any “resource” available that can earn money on the global market. These “expendable resources” include ancient forests, fisheries and wildlife for the exotic food and pet trade.

The World Bank funded Livestock 1, 2 and 3 to encourage the construction of new cattle farms in Botswana. To sell the meat to the European market it had to be certified as free of hoof-and-mouth disease. Over 900 miles of fencing were strung across Botswana to separate the cattle from indigenous fauna. Tens of



Gary Hodges

thousands of wildebeest died of thirst along the fences trying to reach their traditional watering places.

The World Bank is currently funding construction of an oil pipeline between Chad and Cameroon, through pristine elephant and gorilla forest habitat. To comply with IMF pressure to raise export revenue, Indonesia clearcut and burnt millions of acres of ancient forests to convert into farmland for palm oil and other export crops. Great expanses of forest that the orangutans depend upon have been destroyed.

The World Bank funded construction of a fishing jetty and prawn culture area in the Bhitarkanika Sanctuary, home of the largest population of Olive Ridley sea turtles in India and refuge for sea eagles, and smooth-coated Indian otters.

The shocking result of this World Bank largesse was reported by *Reuters*, February 18, 2000, as a “Major Endangered Turtle Die Off.” The article states that hundreds of endangered

Olive Ridley turtles mysteriously died after crawling onto East Indian beaches to nest.

Why We Marched as Turtles

At the WTO meeting in Seattle, AWI helped lead 240 people dressed as sea turtles in protest against the WTO’s rejection of US law requiring turtle excluder devices on boats of any country wishing to export shrimp to America. Several countries refused employing these inexpensive devices, insisting that our law unfairly restricted trade. The WTO struck down our law.

Turtles are also globally imperiled by rapacious development and fishing policies promoted by the IMF and World Bank. So, the turtle demonstrators resurfaced for a protest in D.C against these institutions. The turtles have been a tremendous hit—symbolically protesting the WTO’s usurpation of American sovereignty, including enforcement of our animal protection laws, and the ecological destruction wrought by the World Bank and IMF. 🐢



Jenny Pike

Sea turtles march against the World Bank and IMF in Washington, D.C.



Despite overwhelming evidence that the world's whales are struggling against a huge array of new threats, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) voted in Adelaide, Australia, July 3-6, to fast track a scheme designed to legitimize commercial whaling. Inexplicably, many formerly pro-whale groups and nations (including the US) assisted this process, offering ways to strengthen the "Revised Management Scheme" (RMS) even though its adoption will lead directly to the abandonment of the fourteen-year-old moratorium on commercial whaling. The resolution, introduced by Sweden and nine other countries, set a timetable for completing the RMS and voting on its structure at next year's full IWC meeting in London. It was passed by consensus.

The push to hasten the renewal of commercial whaling couldn't have come at a worse time. Papers presented at the IWC conference show that whales are threatened by toxic pollution, global warming, the collapse of food sources and the bombardment by intense man-made sounds as never before. Just a sampling of these papers revealed that:

- Emaciated gray whales are washing up along the Pacific Coast of North America by the hundreds (278 in 1999, over 300 so far in 2000). The number of new calves added to the population has shrunk from a high of 1520 in 1997 to 282 last year. Scientists are mystified as to the cause of either event.
- Orca families living off the San Juan Islands of Washington State are dying off. Biopsy assays show some of the highest levels of PCBs ever found in any wildlife.
- Dolphin meat labeled and sold as whale meat in Tokyo has levels of mercury and other heavy metals in concentrations hundreds of times higher than the maximum safe levels for human consumption.
- Sea otter populations in some parts of the Bering Sea are collapsing under pressure from predation from orca whales. This has never been seen before and it is thought to reflect a dramatic shift in food regimes in the North Pacific.
- The US Navy, in cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service, is studying the rare mass stranding of four species of whales and dolphins which occurred in the Bahamas immediately after a series of military exercises in March. The stud-

ies are concentrating on the effect of sonar on beaked whales. These extremely deep diving whales died not only after the Bahamas exercises but following tests of Low Frequency Active Sonar by NATO forces in Greece in 1996.

The seeds of many of these threats were planted long ago. The chemicals developed during and soon after World War II are just now finding their way into the tissues of marine mammals. Heavy metals and organochlorines bio-accumulate with each step up the food chain. After decades of being eaten by small creatures, then in turn by fish of increasing size, these toxic time bombs are beginning to reach lethal levels of concentration in whales and dolphins.

Given these concerns, the idea of accepting the intentional slaughter of whales is outrageous, but the concept is gaining momentum. The premise behind this scheme is the fantasy that we can take everything we know about whales: abundance, recruitment rate (number of babies added each year), mortality rate, environmental threats, number of whales being accidentally or deliberately killed; feed all of these numbers into an algorithm, and out will pop a number of whales that can be "harvested" each year without collapsing the populations.

The problems of this approach are myriad. First is the difficulty of counting whales. Whale populations are estimated from ships that cruise on a certain pattern, count all of the whales seen, and extrapolate based on a formula which guesses

how many whales are unseen. Primarily, because of the difficulty in seeing and correctly identifying species of these usually hidden ocean creatures, this method has always failed. Highlighting this inherent uncertainty, the Scientific Committee at this year's IWC meeting found that the long-held number of minke whales in the Southern Oceans is far less than the 760,000 estimated by the Japanese. Even though this number has been used for years to justify the Japanese killing of over four hundred of these whales a year, the Committee found that the actual number may be as low as a third of that estimate.

The second most obvious problem is the fact that whalers have historically lied about the numbers and species of whales they kill. And not just a little. During the sixties and seventies, the Japanese, working with the Russian whalers, underreported their catch of sperm and blue whales by tens of thousands. The presence of observers, highly dependent on the goodwill of the ship's crew and captain, has never been a barrier to cheating.

Besides the slide back into allowing commercial whaling, the pivotal issue at this year's meeting, was the proposal by Australia, New Zealand and other Pacific nations to establish a South Pacific Ocean Sanctuary that would ban any killing of whales in a wide area, forever. Major initiatives within the IWC require a 3/4 majority of the 35 member countries. Supposedly, each country has one vote. But the defeat of this popular proposal (with fourteen votes

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