

Whaling in US Compared To Japan

Did you know that in the last 50 years over two million whales have been killed? The United States views whaling very differently than Japan does. It is a complicated and controversial topic. Many people have opinions about whale hunting. However, everyone should know both sides of the whale hunting issues before they act on the issue.

To start out I am going to tell you a little about whaling. The first whale hunters were in the prehistoric times. At first they would just kill and eat beached whales. That became such a habit that they started hunting them. Most whale hunters use harpoons, guns, lances, or bombs that blow up inside the whale. They use catcher boats, or kayaks. In 1925, whalers developed factory ships that could hold 12 catcher boats and a crew of about 400. These ships had radar under the boat that could detect where the whales were. These boats are what made it so easy to hunt whales. In 1931, the International Whaling Convention began. The major whaling countries formed the IWC to protect whales from being over hunted and to regulate the whaling industries. The main duty of the IWC is to keep under review and revise the measures laid down in the Schedule to Convention, which governs the conduct of whaling throughout the world. These measures provide for the protection of certain species; designate specified areas as whale sanctuaries; set limits on the numbers and size of whales which can be taken; have open and closed seasons and areas for whaling; and prohibit the capture of female whales accompanied by calves.

The United States stopped whale hunting in 1940 because of the International Whaling Convention and also because Congress made an U.S. code on whale hunting. The United States never depended on whale meat like Japan. They mostly whale hunted for a hobby. The Congress feels that whales are a unique resource of great scientific interest to mankind and are a vital part of the marine ecosystem. Man has overexploited whales for many years, highly reducing species and endangering others. The United States has extended its responsibilities to protect all marine animals. They think that whales are a particular interest to citizens of the United States.

Japan started whaling way back in the 2nd Century BC. They whale because they have whale meat as part of their diet. In 1946, whale meat was not considered special food anymore but was necessary to keep the Japanese healthy and alive because they depended on it for so long. People ate whale meat as a source of protein whether they liked it or not. In 1947, about 47% of the total animal protein was whale meat. Until the 1960's, whale meat continued to be their main source of protein. In 1962, the whaling industry recorded 226,000 tons of whale Page 5 Writing Center Application – page 5 meat; this was the highest amount throughout the history of the Japanese whaling. The percentage of whale meat consumption compared to the total animal meat consumption was 23% in 1964. (whalenet 1) Whale meat was the only meat served in school lunches, which began in 1947 and continued until the mid-1950. After that, pork and chicken began to be served in school lunches and the amount of whale meat decreased. In the mid-1970's, whale meat was used more than any other meat and today it still is but has reduced highly since then.

In the United States there is an Indian Tribe that is still whaling. This Tribe is called the Makah Indians. They are from the western state of Washington. They are allowed to hunt because the IWC believes that whaling has been in their tradition for so long that it is all right. Whaling has been a tradition of the Makah for more than 2000 years. They had to stop in the 1920's due to there not being many gray whales still alive. The gray whales' abundance now makes it possible for them to hunt again. One Makah Indian says, "I feel that our health problems result, in some degree, to the loss of our traditional diet of seafood and sea mammal meat. We would like to restore the meat of the whale to our diet." (Whalenet 1) And another one said in an interview, "Whaling and whales have remained central to our culture. They are in our songs, our dances, our designs, and our basketry. Our social structure is based on traditional whaling families. The conduct of a whale hunt requires rituals and ceremonies, which are deeply spiritual. Whale hunting imposes a purpose and a discipline which we believe will benefit our entire community." (Makah 1) Many of them also believe that a problem with their young people is from the lack of discipline and pride. They believe that the restoration of whaling will help to restore that discipline and pride. Not like Japan, they are only legally permitted to take up to five whales per year. They can only if there is a traditional subsistence or cultural need for the whale in the community. So it is possible that as little as one whale per year will suffice. Also they can only hunt the Eastern Pacific or California Gray whales, because there are a lot of that kind of whale.

What do you think is in store for the future of whales? Many larger kinds of whales face an uncertain future. Whalers have killed so many different species and most of them are threatened with extinction. Do you think that Japan should continue having whale meat as their diet and kill whales, or do you think that the U.S is correct for stopping? Well you can think what you feel is right. I hope that you learned as much as I have about the differences and likes on Whaling in the United States compared to Japan.

(The above essay was taken from an online paper mill—it is spread widely over the internet, but I got it specifically from www.freeessay.com/creative/animal_science/alw62.shtml.)