

Sustainable eNews

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Promoting Sustainable Use

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IWMC

World Conservation Trust

Editorial: Pet Deception

by Eugene Lapointe

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is brazenly deceiving the American public in its latest fundraising campaign. Many Americans already donate money to HSUS in the mistaken belief that, by doing so, they are supporting the local humane societies that provide shelters and care for unwanted pets.

In its new campaign, potential new HSUS members – taken from the mailing lists of other animal welfare and animal rights groups – receive a letter from Wayne Pacelle, President and CEO, stuffed in a mug. Both are adorned with a heart-warming illustration that Pacelle describes in the letter as “an adorable picture of a dog and cats”.

In his letter, Pacelle never mentions the animal rights campaigns his organization promotes, instead giving the reader the clear impression that a donation to HSUS is going to help abandoned or abused pets. The word “pets” appears four times in the letter and the donating envelope contains a list of seven ways to make a pet happier. “Dogs” gets three mentions on the first page and “cats” gets two. There are even two references to the local humane societies that have nothing to do with HSUS!



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The local humane societies are unlikely to take any legal action against HSUS for this clear misrepresentation, not least because they have no centrally organized structure that can put together a lawsuit. But it is clear that HSUS is cashing in unfairly on the work and reputation of the local humane societies that provide such an important service to

abandoned pets in America. These local groups will lose out financially as money is unwittingly diverted to the animal rights group that shares a similar name. Through its deception, HSUS will starve the local humane societies of the funds they need and, ultimately, aid cruelty to American pets.

Seal Time Approaches Once Again

In the western north Atlantic, harp seals are going to be born about the 1st of March. On the ice fields off Norway, it's apparently somewhat earlier, since the Norwegian seal hunt begins before that in Canada opens. It is apparent that the seals have been managed more intensively in Norwegian waters than near Canada, because the size of the quota for them is so vastly different; Canadian fishermen will be taking the last third of a huge 3 year quota that is close to a million animals. Norwegian sealers and some foreign tourist seal hunters will be allowed to take only 2100 animals this season.

In each case, the nation's fishermen are glad that their governments are taking steps to control seals for the sake of ecosystem balance among seals, fish, whales, sea birds, and fishermen. The trend is now to "make it right" so that the abnormal ups and downs of seals and fish are smoothed out. Of course, critics of sealing debunk this as nonsense, because they want the world to believe their claims that seals wouldn't harm the fisheries and should be left alone, to thrive until nature "herself" causes them to crash catastrophically. This, they claim, is preferable in order to avoid inhumane



treatment. One question for them would be "is hunger and starvation preferable?"

During World War II, seals were not hunted much, compared to the pre-war years when the seas were safe from foreign threats. Seals grew to herds that began to outstrip fish resources. After the war, they were hunted again on a regular basis, and in Canada, the herd was holding steady at 1.8 million in 1983. At that time, Brian Davies of IFAW instigated the ban in Europe of the import of the products of seals under the age of one year. The Canadian seal fishery collapsed without that major market. Seals went forth and multiplied, unimpeded. Fish stocks did suffer, as did fishermen. Since the "humane" IFAW intervention, the harp seal population off eastern Canada grew to more than five million animals. (Please note that seals are not vegetarians.) Something had to be done. Canada declared that a three year quota of nearly one million animals would be taken over the next three years. This is the third year. Now there is a willing market for seal pelts and seal fat and oil, in places other than the EU. Russia, China, South Korea and Japan all consume seal products.

What do the critics say? This is interesting. First, many outright lie, and give their readers and web site visitors the impression that “innocent babies” are being “slaughtered” in the various seal hunts. In actuality, the more mature animals are worth more than whitecoats would be, so that old standby of seal hunt protest is an egregious lie. Whitecoats are not targeted. Some of those more mature animals are still young of the year, but that is no reason not to take them. They are active swimmers and fish eaters, and the environmental argument for controlling them is to prevent further ecological imbalance. They were whitecoats six weeks ago. They matured rapidly, after having been nursed for only ten days. They are fish eaters, and if not hunted, they will be breeders.

Most seals are shot in the head with centerfire rifles while they lie on the ice. Death is instant. Seals are not skinned alive, and indeed, this was never the practice. Such a feat would be next to impossible, since movement would ruin the pelt. Bravo to the

Norwegian government for opening the seal hunt to foreign hunters.

Greenpeace Norway has tried the laughable ploy of insisting that tourists “would be frightened” of the idea of a sporting seal hunt. This weak-kneed claim is entirely unfounded. Environmentalists tried a similar line regarding Iceland and their whaling resumption. Last year, Iceland had more EU tourists than any time in history. It’s even possible that hunters, knowing the blow they can deliver to the animal rights faction, may be signing up for the Norwegian hunt just to prove them wrong.

IWMC supports any nation that takes control of the future of sustainable resource management in its waters and on its territory. The world’s nations are eating more and more marine fish and other seafood. This indisputable fact leads us to believe that more and more nations are going to take steps to protect the sustainability of the ecosystems from which their main resources are derived. And this is as it should be.

The Use of Science as a Negotiating Aid

The January issue of Science Magazine contains an article ostensibly about the relevance of present whale sanctuaries to the issue of global whale conservation. The authors, Leah R. Gerber, K. David Hyrenbach, and Mark A. Zacharias, are all US scientists who were appointed by the IWC Scientific Committee “to review the SOS (Southern Ocean Sanctuary) and to evaluate how approaches in marine protected areas might be integrated into the IWC sanctuary program.” The authors rather immediately conclude that “the SOS in particular, and the IWC sanctuary program in general, are currently not scientifically justified.”

Of course, the sustainable use community has said this for years, recognizing that the Indian Ocean and the SOS were created merely to prevent traditional harvesting within those arbitrary boundaries. The SOS was created as a safeguard as soon as the RMP was adopted, in 1994. It was a redundant move because all whale stocks would be appropriately protected under the RMP, and it was a futile one, because Japan took a reservation to the SOS regarding Antarctic minke whales.



The authors discuss why current sanctuaries are inappropriate to conservation and further note that final passage of the RMP/RMS package would be preferable to the current situation, in which there is an impasse caused by extreme political polarity, in the midst of which, the Japanese scientific research programs are being conducted (under the ICRW Article VIII) as “unregulated scientific permit whaling”. They advocate “the elimination of unregulated scientific permit



whaling and the application of the RMP/RMS, alongside a system of IWC sanctuaries designed to protect populations of whales during certain time periods...or throughout their entire ranges”. They believe that “the adherence to a quota system would enhance whale conservation by restricting the times and areas of whale harvesting, and by restricting the total catch.”

In the place of “unregulated” scientific research as it is now conducted legally under Article VIII, they advocate IWC controlled research within the newly designated IWC sanctuary areas, so as to “reinstate the research value of IWC sanctuaries, by facilitating the monitoring and comparative study of harvested and unharvested stocks.”

IWMC notes that “correction” of the rules of the ICRW to accommodate these suggestions by US scientists would entail two significant changes. The first would be to eliminate Article VIII of the Convention, even though such research must now be reported annually to the Scientific Committee for its review. The point that the US scientists object to, is that Article VIII calls for this to go on, without a prior approval from the IWC. Such approval would never be given in the present political climate, because the high quality of

research that has been conducted by Norway, Japan and Iceland, has consistently demonstrated that certain stocks can sustain a harvest under the conditions of the RMP. Science is the enemy of whale preservationists, whose only strength in recent years, has been their strength in numbers.

Once the door to changing the Convention was opened by the precedent of elimination of the Article VIII, then also, possibly, there would be an effort to remove the right of member nations to take reservations to Schedule amendments.

IWMC feels that the editors of the prestigious Science Magazine have been duped into publishing an article that has real, not pseudoscientific, advice on the integration of better science into the IWC sanctuary system, while at the same time, opening the door for a politically biased lobbying environment that would work to change the Convention itself through the above amendments. We believe that this may be the actual intent of this Science Magazine article.

It may be that anti-whaling Parties to the ICRW have realized that the game they initiated, (vote recruitment through encouragement of new members) has come to the final inning; the pro-whaling, pro-sustainable use, pro-ecosystem research and management faction of the IWC may very soon have the required $\frac{3}{4}$ majority with which to amend the Schedule to adopt an acceptable RMP/RMS package that shall mean the quota for at least minke whales shall be greater than zero. The like minded faction can not face this reality, and this is the reason why there may be a move to once again, move the goal posts. The adoption of the RMP/RMS would open the door to greater than zero quotas for other stocks, as well, and this is something that the like minded faction simply can not accept.

IWMC strongly advocates the continuation of dedicated scientific research into the marine ecosystem and into the lives and health of large cetaceans. This process must be driven by scientists for the sake of science, not directed by politically motivated cultural biases.

WE must keep the ICRW intact as it was originally written, because we believe that it is an appropriate safeguard for the welfare and health of cetacean stocks and of those societies whose people wish to sustainably use this resource, now and in generations to come.

Hunting is Under the Gun Again

Thousands of rural people in the UK have been thwarted by an urban inspired vote to ban all hunting of game with dogs. The British Parliament outlawed rabbit and fox hunting with hounds, which went into effect by February 20, 2005. The issue was lobbied and campaigned as an anti-cruelty measure, and now that it has become law, the result is loss of a cultural tradition, and loss of management of those species of game in the UK.



Members of the Countryside Alliance note that it is still legal to go forth with dogs and horses, when the dogs are given a scent trail laid down previously through artificial means. When that was done today, a fox was (perhaps inadvertently) shot twice and killed sometime while the packs were afield. Two arrests were reportedly made for breaking the anti-hunting legislation, but it is not yet known if they were related to the incident of the fox shooting. Country people are extremely bitter and feeling defiant.

Meantime, in the US, there are many pending legislative attempts to put an end to sport hunting of various kinds. These range from the HSUS objection to so called “canned hunts” to the ultimate fantasy for animal rights advocates; a New York bill in each the Senate and Assembly that would make the killing of wild game and wild birds a criminal

act on grounds that such is “animal cruelty”. The bills cover both hunting and trapping.

In New York State, the Assembly bill is introduced through the Agriculture Committee, and in the Senate, while it has another name, it is the same measure; both are supported by New York City and Long Island legislators who feel secure in backing this legislation. Their constituents are ignorant of the environmental, public

health, tax base and agricultural ramifications of these measures. Without legal hunting and trapping, New York’s environment would surely deteriorate very quickly, and millions of people would be harmed, fiscally and physically, to say nothing of the damage to their homes, livestock, pets, water supply, and automobiles. The bill is in no one’s best interest, and benefits only the selfish, antisocial agenda of protectionism.

Other states have similar legislative initiatives that mimic the UK disaster, but in the US, the environmental scope is more universal than in the UK, where only two wild species are directly involved, while others such as livestock and pets are secondarily affected. We can only hope that rabies never enters the UK, given that hunting as an option for management of foxes is now a criminal act.

IWMC deplors this trend to thwart the efficient management of wildlife through abolishing sport hunting. Sport hunting is the most efficient and cost effective manner through which numbers of wildlife are kept in check in an environment that is increasingly crowded with people. Yes, we all have to live together on the earth. And no, people should not have to experience a trend of confrontations with wildlife until they regard them all as menaces and nuisances, instead of valued resources. That very situation occurs

in France, where the government outlawed trapping and use of the pelts of foxes. And still, lessons learned in one country have to be repeated in all the others, until people finally realize that animal rights advocates do not have the best interests of mankind at heart, and that the original human instinct to use animals may be the best one, after all. Good luck, UK, Good luck, New York, and all other jurisdictions where animal rights advocates have more legislative friends than do rural people.

Where the Whales (and the Buffalo) Roam It Makes Sense to Restore and Conserve Ecosystems

The February issue of the Smithsonian Magazine includes an article by Leslie Allen on the efforts of American Plains Indian tribes to restore the American prairie ecosystem as they increase the numbers of bison to graze upon it. Fred DeBray is executive director of the InterTribal Bison Cooperative. Thanks to his dedication and efforts, fifty three tribes in 18 states now manage 15,000 bison. According to author Allen, the project has concentrated on restoring the ecosystem through reintroduction of not only bison, but also prairie dogs, and encouraging native plants in place of ploughed fields of grain crops. This is not a “don’t touch the bison” project. The tribes sell the meat and use it themselves. There is an effort to encourage people to eat bison instead of beef, and to avoid confining animals inside fences. The restoration of the prairie ecosystem pleases some, and worries others. As in other matters, politics plays a role in acceptance of this approach to living in a traditional manner in harmony with the environment.

This general effort is similar to the new approach to whale conservation, in which

scientists gather data on whale feeding habits at different times and in different places, and calculate the impact that an unhunted stock of whales may have on ocean ecosystems and seafood resources.



The effort to convince the world that whales and seals and fishermen all need to be in balance with those resources that exist farther down on the food chain, is finally gaining a foothold in the general fund of human knowledge. Recent years of feeding ecology research have indicated that cetaceans consume five times the amount of seafood that the human fishing industry does – the numbers are nearly 500 million tons annually, consumed by cetaceans worldwide, to only 90 million tons consumed by humans. It should be obvious to everyone that it is ludicrous to exempt whales from the harvest that man enjoys, because the impact of a growing number of whale stocks on the ecosystem is only going to increase. Fishermen and their consumers will inevitably suffer unless cetaceans are kept in balance with fish stocks and with the people who share that resource.

IWMC applauds the InterTribal Bison Cooperative for their foresight and environmentally sensitive vision. They are treating the land and its resources with respect through the wisdom of their elders. IWMC urges all nations with an interest in the health of marine ecosystems to consider the most holistic of approaches



in marine resource management, and to open their minds to the suggestion that for the sake of sustainability and environmental welfare, all parts of the environment must be better utilized and conserved through on-going research. To avoid management by refusal to

use an entire class of top predators in a system, is to court disaster in the long term.

Resource use must be demonstrably more than just sustainable in itself; it must be consistently justified through science and must contribute to the welfare of the entire system of which it is an integral part. Modern commercial whaling is being designed to fit this model of an ideal balance of sustainable use and on-going scientific research of local ecosystems in order to assure long term food security. IWMC hopes the world will soon accept this modern vision of conservation for the sake of the world's marine habitats, and all those societies that depend upon them.

The Gray Whale and the Makah People Duel Pawns in a Continuing Power Play

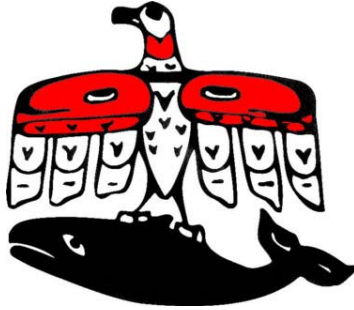
In 1999 the Makah tribe successfully ventured onto the open ocean and took a mature gray whale for the first time in seventy years. They celebrated this accomplishment as a cultural triumph. They distributed the products of their whale among the Neah Bay community and preserved its skeleton for display in the tribal cultural center in the middle of town. Since that time, further hunts have been thwarted by legal maneuvers of the protectionist community, who regarded that hunt as a glaring loss in a string of victories against legal, traditional resource use.

At this time, the Makah tribe is under orders not to whale again until NOAA and they together submit to the Federal Court a plan to complete an environmental assessment of the impact of further hunts, and a request for a waiver of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. There is no scientifically justified reason why the Makah hunt would be a threat to gray whales. The species is more than fully recovered from historic overexploitation. The

species is now perhaps even over extended in its habitat, as in past years some 300 animals have washed up onshore, exhibiting evidence of starvation. Their stomachs were empty and their blubber was woefully thin. Those deaths and strandings appear to have abated for the time being.

The Makah people were granted aboriginal subsistence whaling status by the IWC, on the basis of their demonstrated cultural and nutritional need. They complied with the ASW requirement that the products of their whale be consumed entirely in the local community. There was no commercial use of the animal or trade with anyone outside the community, although some other aboriginal subsistence whaling communities sometimes send their excess product to markets inside the country. No laws were broken by the Makah, but an animal rights network has sued to prevent further hunts on the basis of the restrictions of the MMPA.

IWC scientists predict that the environmental assessment of the effects of the hunt of five animals a year under the IWC program shall demonstrate no adverse impact on the stock. The so-called resident grays that hang near the coast in the Strait of Juan de Fuca are being avoided by the Makah, simply because these animals were the hang-up that the protectionists wanted to use to stop further hunts. They claimed those animals constituted a separate, endangered stock. When the 1999 hunt took place, the canoe swung out into the open Pacific, and took a migrating animal, thus avoiding the allegedly separate stock entirely. By heading into the open sea, the Makah people also avoided the legions of press and the bullies on the Sea Shepherd vessel, so that their sacred hunt was not tainted by the cameras and the



bullhorns and the hoopla of “civilized” outsiders.

The Treaty of Neah Bay gave the Makah people the right to take whales and seals forever. The precedents in case law up to now have always given primacy to treaties over conflicting domestic law. We at IWMC wish the Makah people the very best as they cooperate with the US government in their quest to continue their cultural traditions in the manner intended. They will do no harm to the whales or to the environment in this traditional hunt and they have the IWC aboriginal subsistence

whaling regime’s agreement of their need. Good Luck to the Makah Nation and to their Neah Bay community as they go forward in a respectful, patient manner to secure the rights that are theirs.

World Conservation Trust (WCTF)



IWMC has established the World Conservation Trust Foundation (WCTF) to raise money for the sustainable use of wildlife. WCTF is registered in Washington, DC and has charitable status. We invite you to visit: www.conservingswildlife.org

Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC, said: “The problem is that the animal rights groups have extensive resources, which gives them a disproportionate amount of power and

influence. We have to move forward and WCTF is a way of ensuring that we can continue to promote sustainable use as a conservation mechanism in an effective way in the future.”

Supporters of sustainable use will receive copies of this newsletter and regular updates on what is happening to our wildlife, the people whose livelihoods depend on using it sustainably, and wildlife campaigns around the world.

Noteworthy: Thesis Award on Migratory Species Conservation

The Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species has launched the UNEP/CMS Thesis Award on Migratory Species Conservation to promote scientific research and conservation of migratory species. The award of 10,000 EURO will be offered every three years at the Conference of

Parties to CMS at alternating locations, and for the first time at the 8th meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties (COP8) in November 2005. Online Application on the CMS website www.cms.int for the COP8 Award is now open until 30 April 2005.

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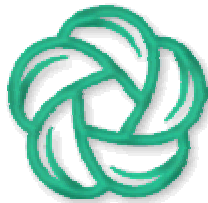
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IWMC World Conservation Trust

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