



## IWC 69: Why a Whale Sanctuary? A brief

The biennial meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) will take place in Lima, Peru, from September 22 to 27. Among the items on the agenda is the proposed approval of the "South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary." The project, which has its origins in a Brazilian proposal from 1998, is presented by the governments of Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. It is noteworthy that:

1. The South Atlantic is an area where whales have not been hunted for 50 years.
2. The coastal countries have strict regulations for the protection of whales.
3. The majority of whale populations have recovered.
4. There is already a Law for the protection of Marine Mammals (MMPA\*).
5. No scientific justification has ever been presented.
6. There is currently a ban on capturing whales except for Aboriginal peoples of the USA, Russia, Greenland (Denmark), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, among others.
7. The extension of the Sanctuary would be 8 million square miles.
8. Why does it include the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay? Who would be responsible for enforcement? NGOs?
9. Why would cargo ships be re-routed and slowed down (85 percent of world trade is via sea) when there are already serious problems with the Panama Canal and the Red Sea/Suez? Fuel and insurance prices would increase, and it would have a polluting effect.
10. To whom would the price increase be passed on? To the consumer?
11. What would be the benefit for any country?

What is the point of creating a "Sanctuary" in an area where whales are not in danger? What is the point of doing so under the auspices of an organization (IWC) that has recently been called a "zombie" institution by one of its former presidents (Peter Bridgewater) and has recommended its dissolution when its objectives have been met? Why does Carlos Mazal, Uruguayan, elected by the Ministers of Fisheries of Latin America as former Director of the Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development (OLDEPESCA) calls the IWC a "dysfunctional" organization?

The "Sanctuary," it is reiterated, includes potential measures such as the reduction of the speed of vessels and changes in trade routes, both with potential effects of hundreds (if not thousands) of millions of dollars of losses in the already complex coastal economies of the South Atlantic. Let us not even talk about the threat to the fishing sector, a source of food for millions of people and constantly defamed and vilified. Who benefits from this? Why is it not on the public agenda? Is this not just another "scam" of bureaucrats and NGOs with the capacity to cause harm to the productive sectors and to our societies as a whole?

A lot of work has been and is being done (and successfully) at national and international level, but under the cloak of conservationism, various interests are often hidden and the damage to human rights, food security and livelihoods that certain actions can cause is not fully assessed.

#### MMPA (Marine Mammal Protection Act)

When a foreign country violates the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the United States can take several actions to enforce compliance:

1. **Import Restrictions:** The U.S. can ban the import of fish and fish products from countries that do not meet U.S. standards for marine mammal protection. This includes ensuring that their fishing practices do not result in excessive bycatch of marine mammals;
2. **Diplomatic Measures:** The U.S. may engage in diplomatic discussions with the offending country to encourage them to adopt better marine mammal protection measures;
3. **Legal Actions:** Conservation and animal protection groups can file lawsuits to enforce the import provisions of the MMPA, compelling the U.S. government to act against countries that fail to comply;

These measures aim to protect marine mammals globally by holding countries accountable for their fishing practices and ensuring that imported seafood meets U.S. conservation standards.