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Years-Old Whale Meat Remains Unsold

26.12.2011

Words by [Paul Fontaine](#)

The surplus of unsold whale meat in cold storage is growing exponentially and, according to Statistics Iceland, only 450 kilogrammes of whale meat have been exported since 2006.

Kristján Loftsson, director of the whaling company Hvalur hf, told [Fréttatíminn](#) that there is approximately 2.4 billion ISK's worth of whale meat in cold storage, "based on hunting done in the summer of 2010, and partly from 2009."

Kristján says that the lack of exports is due in part to the tsunami which devastated Japan earlier this year. However, the surplus figures are based on counts made in September 2010. At that time, the surplus had more than doubled from 2009.

Furthermore, figures compiled from [Statistics Iceland](#) show that since 1999, no whale meat has been exported for sale to any country, apart from 650 kilos sold to the Faeroe Islands in 2006 for 325,000 ISK.

The figures are a reflection of questions raised by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) about the economics of whale hunting. As IFAW UK director Rob Marsland told the [Grapevine](#) last September:

"Economics of whaling has always been a mystery," he says. ... "We were perplexed, because in 2008, the amount of fin whale meat being eaten in Japan was in decline, there is no fin whale meat being eaten in Iceland, and yet here's [Kristján] Loftsson [the head of Iceland's sole whaling company] saying he's going to make lots of money. So it

was confusing to us.”

How does he do it? Essentially, it works like this: every few months, Kristján sends fin whale meat to Japan, where it sits in customs for 3 months while undergoing toxicity tests. Then it is sold to a company that Kristján himself owns. “I don't use the word 'exporting' for what he does with the whale meat,” Rob says. “I call it 'transferring'.”

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Don Freeman · Top Commenter

So, Loftsson has transferred whale meat from his business in Iceland to his business in Japan in order to create a market for the endangered whales he kills. All with government support and in violation of several international conventions. Shameful.

Reply · 12 · Like · December 26, 2011 at 3:59pm



Dave Rideough · Top Commenter · 29 years old

Which international conventions?

Reply · Like · December 28, 2011 at 3:20am



Don Freeman · Top Commenter

Dave Rideough Iceland lost the vote on whaling in 1982 and since 1986 the International Whaling Commission has set all commercial whaling quotas to zero. The Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species also prohibits the trade of whale products. Furthermore the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea declares states shall cooperate with international conservation efforts.

Reply · 5 · Like · December 28, 2011 at 5:17am



Chris Beal

Sounds like the same form of economics that precipitated the current financial crisis ie betting on the non existent and theoretical value of nothing and then being bailed out by the taxpayer at huge expense. Japan's Government is apparently, according to reports quite happy to use funds donated to help tsunami victims to subsidize their cruel, brutal and unnecessary whale hunting. Iceland is a fine example of the product of financial mismanagement in it's banking industry so is one surprised at the activities of a whale hunting business using the same flawed economics of greed and deception! Sadly the victims of this scam are sentient beings with far more intelligence than the average human!

Reply · 3 · Like · December 28, 2011 at 1:41am



Dave Rideough · Top Commenter · 29 years old

“Japan's Government is apparently, according to reports quite happy to use funds donated to help tsunami victims to subsidize their cruel, brutal and unnecessary whale hunting.”

Those reports were debunked by the government and even Greenpeace almost as quickly as they came out.

The Japanese government is *not* redirecting tsunami relief donations to fund whaling. They're using their own (i.e. taxpayers') money.

Reply · 1 · Like · December 28, 2011 at 6:34am



Chris Beal

Using taxpayers money to subsidize an unwanted and barbaric practice is no justification for that practice. Clearly the Japanese Government would not want us to know the truth anymore than any other Government around the world. If they have spare funds for such uses they clearly do not need donations for tsunami victims!

Reply · Like · December 28, 2011 at 8:34am

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · December 20, 2011 at 6:57am



Dave Rideough · Top Commenter · 29 years old

@Chris: Wow, do you have some sort of psychiatric issue we should know about?

"Using taxpayers money to subsidize an unwanted and barbaric practice is no justification for that practice."

Maybe, but whaling is increasingly popular in Japan thanks to the publicity Sea Shepherd has given it. About half the population of Japan has eaten whale meat in recent memory. So much for "unwanted". As for the barbaric part, that's just your throwaway personal opinion.

"Clearly the Japanese Government would not want us to know the truth anymore than any other Government around the world."

What truth? The Japanese government is perfectly open about the fact that they allow and oversee whale hunting.

"If they have spare funds for such uses they clearly do not need donations for tsunami victims!"

Why are you getting so butthurt? You obviously didn't donate after the tsunami, or you would know that the government hasn't even been taking donations – people have been donating to charities like the Red Cross and earmarking their donations for tsunami relief in Japan. The government never touches them.

And your logic is bullshit. It's a multi-billion dollar budget that the Japanese government drew funds for whaling from. \$30M is just a drop in the bucket.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · December 28, 2011 at 11:25am

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Rob Read

Icelandic whale meat sat in freezers unwanted just like Japanese whale meat - there is almost no demand for it - the whaling industry is dead already....

[Reply](#) · [3](#) · [Like](#) · December 27, 2011 at 2:41pm



Claudia Peters · Advocate at Support Wild Orcas · 397 subscribers

Yey, they still go out whaling, both of them. Ugh

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · December 27, 2011 at 2:44pm



Robert Douglas · On-Shore Volunteer at Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

Hopefully all will come to end soon...

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · December 27, 2011 at 4:04pm



Dave Rideough · Top Commenter · 29 years old

I think it's hilarious how all of you are members of Sea Shepherd.

[Reply](#) · [1](#) · [Like](#) · December 28, 2011 at 3:24am

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Peppe Fryou

Greed

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · March 5 at 11:49am



Jean Bird · Top Commenter

But it is against the law to hunt the endangered humpback whales for meat! However the Japanese get round this by saying they are for research, how many whales does that take to do their research? It is all a guise.

[Reply](#) · [1](#) · [Like](#) · December 28, 2011 at 7:27am



Dave Rideough · Top Commenter · 29 years old

Jean, humpbacks aren't endangered (<http://>



www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/13006/0 and the Japanese aren't hunting them anyway. They're hunting minkes, which aren't endangered either.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · December 28, 2011 at 11:27am



Don Freeman · Top Commenter

Dave Rideough some humpbacks are endangered. Specifically the Arabian Sea Humpback Whale and the Oceania Humpback Whale...

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · December 29, 2011 at 9:07am



Dave Rideough · Top Commenter · 29 years old

Don Freeman, neither of which the Japanese are hunting.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · December 29, 2011 at 9:21am

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Maurizio Carmignani · Rome, Italy

la balena non tira piu'.

[Reply](#) · [1 Like](#) · December 26, 2011 at 2:19am



Mariana Almeida · International School of Fighting Government Corruption, Far Far Away

The end of whaling is coming soon. We have to be sure of it.

[Reply](#) · [7 Likes](#) · December 27, 2011 at 7:48pm



Ursula Tscherter · University of St Andrews

I am studying minke whales in Eastern Canada where this species (like in Iceland) generates much more \$ than the 325000 ISK this company made in 2006... I have lots of stories to tell about this amazing species... I strongly support minke whale watching and research instead of whaling... it's more fun, generates more money and it is sustainable if done correctly... visit www.ores.org

I thought it is all about producing economically? That's at least what the big companies keep telling us? But this still doesn't seem to apply for whaling companies... when do these people understand that times can & do change... & minds should too?

[Reply](#) · [6 Likes](#) · December 27, 2011 at 8:31am



Christiane Loch · Inhaberin at 3buero

your work is providing a hope for this species - and i really hope that your research will accelerate the ending of whaling under the cloak of research ...

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · December 27, 2011 at 10:05am



Dave Rideough · Top Commenter · 29 years old

Since when does it have to be either-or? I like whales, but I'm not going to deny people their right to eat them if their hunt numbers are sustainable.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · December 28, 2011 at 3:25am



Ursula Tscherter · University of St Andrews

I agree on this to some extent... however the commercial whaling issue is highly complex and a different issue... we simply don't know enough about the whales to decide on sustainability... especially in the light of increasing environmental threats with mostly unknown effects on whale populations... overfishing, entanglements, pollution, collisions, habitat loss, disturbance and unknown consequences from climate change... so how can we honestly decide what's sustainable? Another problem is an ethical issue... one can't kill a whale humanely...

Again, the issue is complex... however, the limited knowledge of e.g. the IWC on minke whales lead to wrong decisions and assumptions... and my work shows new insights into the biology and ecology of e.g. minke whales... if we talk about sustainable then we need profound scientific knowledge... and this is not the case today... by far

Reply · 1 · Like · December 28, 2011 at 3:48am

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Penny Lenny

VAN Y LEAN ESTO

Reply · Like · December 27, 2011 at 3:17pm

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