

Consider the Whales

By Captain Paul Watson

In the ocean dwells a wondrous creature possessed of intelligence, moving through the deep blue serene waters with quiet grace, living in highly complex socially interdependent communities, communicating in a flowing orchestra of sounds that range above, and below the lesser auditory perceptions of humanity.

Leviathans, the largest life forms to have ever evolved on this planet, the largest most complex brains to have ever evolved in the three and a half billion years of life on this blue watery world.

The Great Whales – the minds in the waters, whose numbers and songs once filled the seven seas.

There is much that we fail to perceive when we look upon a whale with an eye prejudiced by our anthropocentric priorities.

We fail to perceive that the world of the whales is fast disappearing and may well fade completely from the living flowing fabric of our oceans.

The mighty Cachalot, the immense Blue, the incredible Humpback, the Beaked Whales, the wandering Grays, the Tropic whales and the smaller Piked whales have suffered in unimaginable agony for centuries as our cruel harpoons ripped through their bodies, shattered their organs, splintered their bones and spilt their hot blood into the cold tomb of the silent sea.

Our relentless slaughter of these gentle giants has diminished their numbers, decimated their populations, exterminated the Atlantic Gray and the Biscayan Right and brought most species to the very brink of extinction.

In our insane quest to translate life into base profit, we have disrupted the very life support systems in the sea and negatively transformed entire marine ecosystems.

And despite the immense scale of the loss, the killing continues and escalates as nations like Norway and Japan ruthlessly escalate their mindless slaughter, pursuing their helpless prey to the ends of the Earth, spilling their steaming blood onto the south polar ice or into the cold inky darkness of the North Atlantic.

In 1975, a dying whale, a Cachalot spared my life although he was suffering unspeakable agony from an exploded harpoon to the head. When I looked into his dying eye, within arm's reach of me as I sat in a small inflatable boat, I saw a spirit in that large intelligent orb that changed my life forever.

The whale had initially attacked my boat after being struck in the head with a Soviet grenade tipped harpoon. His body angled out of the water and towered above me preparing to bring his enormous weight down upon me. But in his solitary eye, I caught a glimpse of recognition. We had just attempted to block that deadly harpoon that had savaged his pod and I believe he knew this. With a tremendous effort, he fell back into the sea and I saw his eye disappear beneath the surface and he was no more.

It was at that moment that the full realization of the insanity of whaling hit me. What despicable blasphemy were we as a species involved in that we could so arrogantly take such a life, that we could so ignorantly snuff out such an intelligence, and so thoughtlessly extinguish such poetic beauty.

From that day of sadness and awakening, I have dedicated myself to protecting these great minds in the sea. The great Cachalot spared my life for a purpose and that purpose was to help save his species and to redeem my species.

The whaling that we oppose today is a willful and arrogant violation of international law, a crime against nature and humanity that survives because of the political, commercial and diplomatic bullying of Japan.

This illegal trade in pirated whale flesh also survives because of the lack of political will of nations to stand up against Japan to uphold the rule of law.

The Japanese whalers make a mockery of international conservation law.

The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has protected whales around the globe, from shutting down the most notorious pirate whaler of them all, the Sierra in 1979, to ending Icelandic whaling in 1986, from challenging the Norwegian whalers on the high seas to documenting illegal whaling in Soviet Siberia, from defending whales from the illegal harpoons of the Makah Indians of the United States to opposing the awesome power of the Japanese whaling fleet in the Antarctic Whale Sanctuary.

Cetologist Dr. Roger Payne once told me that he could not imagine living in a world without whales. Nor can I.

What a lonely place the oceans would be without the whales. How much more alienated we will be from nature if we exterminate these unique gentle giants.

The truth is that if we cannot save the whales, we will not save ourselves.

Ask not for whom the bells of extinction toll, they toll for we.

Captain Paul Watson is Master of the R/V Farley Mowat and Founder (1977) and President of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. He was a founding director of the Greenpeace Foundation

and is currently a national director of the Sierra Club of the United States. He is presently in the Tasman Sea preparing to intercept the Japanese whaling fleet. www.seashepherd.org

Donations to support the Farley Mowat campaign to oppose the illegal Japanese whaling fleet can be sent to:

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

P.O. Box 2616

Friday Harbor, Wa 98250 U.S.A.

or

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

P.O. Box 48446

Vancouver, B.C. Canada V7X 1 A2

This message has been sent from the M/Y Farley Mowat

This message has been authorized by Captain Paul Watson and/or First Officer Alex Cornelissen.

For further information on the voyages of the Farley Mowat refer to <http://www.seashepherd.org>