

Whaling ships **set sail** as Japan resumes commercial hunts

Japan began its first commercial whale hunts in more than three decades on Monday, brushing aside outrage over its **resumption** of a practice that conservationists say is cruel and outdated.

set sail 启航

resumption 恢复; 重新开始

The hunts come after Japan decided to withdraw from the International Whaling Commission, a move **slammed** by activists and anti-whaling countries but welcomed by Japanese whaling communities.

Whaling has long proved a rare diplomatic **flashpoint** for Tokyo, which says the practice is a Japanese tradition that should not be subject to international interference.

slam 碰撞; 猛击

flashpoint 一触即发

With its withdrawal from the IWC, Tokyo will carry out whale hunting off Japan, but will end the most controversial hunts in the **Antarctic**.

Some believe that Japan's return to commercial whale hunting will effectively sound the **death knell** for the industry.

Antarctic 南极洲

death knell 丧钟

"Japan is quitting **high-seas** whaling... that is a huge step towards the end of killing whales for their meat and other products," said Patrick Ramage, director of marine conservation at the International Fund for Animal Welfare. He said commercial whaling in Japanese waters was unlikely to have much of a future given **dwindling** subsidies and the shrinking market for whale meat.

high seas 公海

dwindle 减少; 变小

"What we are seeing is the beginning of the end of Japanese whaling."