= Dolphin drive hunting =

Dolphin drive hunting , also called dolphin drive fishing , is a method of hunting dolphins and occasionally other small cetaceans by driving them together with boats and then usually into a bay or onto a beach . Their escape is prevented by closing off the route to the open sea or ocean with boats and nets . Dolphins are hunted this way in several places around the world , including the Solomon Islands , the Faroe Islands , Peru , and Japan , the most well @-@ known practitioner of this method . By numbers , dolphins are mostly hunted for their meat ; some end up in dolphinariums .

Despite the controversial nature of the hunt resulting in international criticism, and the possible health risk that the often polluted meat causes, thousands of dolphins are caught in drive hunts each year.

```
= = By country = =
= = = Faroe Islands = = =
```

On the Faroe Islands mainly Pilot Whales are killed by drive hunts for their meat and blubber . Other species are also killed on rare occasion such as the Northern bottlenose whale and Atlantic White @-@ sided Dolphin . The Northern bottlenose whale is mainly killed when it accidentally swims too close to the beach and cannot return to the water . When the locals find them stranded or nearly stranded on the beach , they kill them and share the meat to all the villagers .

The stranding of the Northern bottlenose whale mainly happens in two villages in the northern part of Suðuroy: Hvalba and Sandvík. It is believed that it happens because of a navigation problem of the whale, because there are isthmuses on these places, where the distance between the east and west coasts are short, around one kilometer or so. And for some reason it seems like the bottlenose whale want to take a short cut through what it thinks is a sound, and too late it discovers, that is on shallow ground and is unable to turn around again. It happened on 30 August 2012, when two Northern bottlenose whales swam ashore to the gorge Sigmundsgjógv in Sandvík. Two men who were working on the harbour noticed these whales, and some time later they had either died by themselves or were killed by the locals and then cut up for food for the people of Sandvík and Hvalba (Hvalba municipality).

The hunt of the pilot whale is known by the locals as the Grindadráp . There are no fixed hunting seasons . As soon as a pod close enough to land is spotted , the locals set out to begin the hunt , after approval from the sysselman . The animals are driven into a bay which is approved for whaling by the Faroese government , and then they try to make the whales to beach themselves . The only way out is being blocked off by some of the boats , which stay there until men who have been waiting on shore have slaughtered all the whales .

When on the beach , most of them get stuck . Those that have remained too far in the water are dragged onto the beach by putting a hook in their blowhole . When on land , they are killed by cutting down to the major arteries and spinal cord at the neck . The time it takes for a whale to die varies from a few seconds Up to half a minute , depending on the cut . If the locals fail to beach the animals altogether , they are let free again .

The pilot whale stock in the eastern and central North Atlantic is estimated to number 778 @,@ 000 . About a thousand pilot whales are killed this way each year on the Faroe Islands together with usually a few dozen up to a few hundred animals belonging to other small cetaceans species , but numbers vary greatly per year . The amount of Pilot Whales killed each year is not believed to be a threat to the sustainability of the population , but the brutal appearance of the hunt has resulted in international criticism especially from animal welfare organisations .

Due to pollution, consumption of the meat and blubber is considered unhealthy by some. Especially children and pregnant women are at risk, with prenatal exposure to methylmercury and PCBs primarily from the consumption of pilot whale meat has resulted in neuropsychological deficits

amongst children.

In November 2008, the New Scientist reported in an article that research done in the Faroe Islands lead to the recommendation by Faroese government that the consumption of Pilot Whale meat in the Faroes should stop as it had been proved to be too toxic. However, the Faroese government did not forbid people to eat Pilot Whale meat due to the contamination, but the advice from the Joensen and Weihe had an effect, it has resulted in reduced consumption, according to a senior Faroese health official.

In June 2011 the Faroese Food and Veterinary Authorities sent out an official recommendation regarding the consumption of meat and blubber from the pilot whale . They recommend that because of the pollution of the whale :

Adults should only eat one dinner with pilot whale meat and blubber per month.

Special advice for women and girls:

Girls and women should not eat blubber at all until they have finished given birth to children.

Women who plan to get pregnant within 3 months, pregnant women and women who breastfeed should probably not eat whale meat at all.

The kidneys and liver of the pilot whales should not be eaten .

= = = Iceland = = =

In mid @-@ 1950s , fishermen in Iceland requested assistance from the government to remove Killer Whales from Icelandic waters as they damaged fishing equipment . With fisheries accounting for 20 % of Iceland 's employment at the time , the perceived economic impact was significant . The Icelandic government asked the United States for assistance . As a NATO ally with an air base in Iceland , the US Navy deployed Patrol Squadrons VP @-@ 18 and VP @-@ 7 to achieve this task . According to the US Navy , hundreds of animals were killed with machineguns , rockets and depth charges .

In the late 1970s , after the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the ban on hunting Killer Whales in Washington in 1976 as discussed later in this article , the hunting of Killer Whales in Iceland resumed , this time aiming to capture live animals for the entertainment industry . The first two Killer Whales captured went to Dolfinarium Harderwijk in the Netherlands . One of these animals was soon after transferred to SeaWorld . These captures continued until 1989 , with the additional animals going to SeaWorld , Marineland Antibes , Marineland Canada , Kamogawa Sea World , Ocean Park Hong Kong and Conny @-@ Land .

Although commercial whaling does still take place in Icelandic waters today, dolphins are no longer hunted and whale watching is popular amongst tourists.

= = = Japan = = = =

In Japan , Striped , Spotted , Risso 's , and Bottlenose dolphins are most commonly hunted , but several other species such as the False Killer Whale are also occasionally caught . A small number of Orcas have been caught in the past as well . Relatively few Striped Dolphins are found in the coastal waters , probably due to hunting (65 Striped Dolphin were caught and killed on January 28 , 2014 . Despite their rarity , the entire pod was killed using a painful and inhumane method that causes severe distress .)

Catches in 2007 amounted to 384 Striped Dolphins , 300 Bottlenose Dolphins , 312 Risso 's Dolphins and 243 Southern Short Finned Pilot Whales , for a total of 1 @,@ 239 animals . These numbers do not include dolphins or other small whale species killed using various other methods , such as offshore harpoon hunts , in which mainly porpoises are killed . Another 77 Bottlenose Dolphins , 8 Risso Dolphins , 5 Southern Short Finned Pilot Whales were captured for use in the entertainment industry in Japan , China , Korea , and Taiwan . The quota set by the government for the species that were targeted in drive hunts that year allowed for the capture of 685 Striped Dolphins , 1 @,@ 018 Bottlenose Dolphins , 541 Risso 's Dolphins , and 369 Southern Short Finned Pilot Whales . The quota applies to all hunting methods .

Taiji , Wakayama Prefecture is the only town in Japan where drive hunting still takes place on a large scale . Captive dolphin are now sold to aquariums and swim programs all over the world . The animals that are captured often die within days due to shock and injury . Many die during transport . The rest will live out their considerably shortened lives in captivity . A hunt took place in the Futo area of It? , Shizuoka in 2004 . In 2007 , Taiji wanted to step up its dolphin hunting programs , approving an estimated ¥ 330 million for the construction of a massive cetacean slaughterhouse in an effort to popularize the consumption of dolphins in the country .

An increase in criticism and the considerable toxicity of the meat appears to be achieving the opposite. During the first hunt of the season in Taiji in 2009, an estimated 50 Pilot Whales and 100 Bottlenose Dolphins were captured. Although all the Pilot Whales were killed, and 30 Bottlenose Dolphins were taken for use in dolphinariums, the 70 remaining animals were set free again instead of being killed for consumption.

A number of dolphin welfare advocacy groups such as Earth Island Institute, Surfers for Cetaceans and Dolphin Project Inc., dispute these official Japanese claims. These groups assert that the number of dolphins and porpoises killed is much higher, estimated at 25 @,@ 000 per year.

In 2014 an Australian non @-@ profit organisation called Australia for Dolphins (featured in the documentary The Killing Cove) launched a world @-@ first lawsuit against the brokers of the drive hunts, the Taiji Whale Museum. The lawsuit, known as the Action for Angel case, alleges that the museum illegally refused entry to dolphin welfare observers, and aims to open the museum up to public scrutiny. The lawsuit, which is ongoing, is expected to reach an outcome in 2015.

In 2014, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe asked for understanding of Japanese dolphin hunting in a small town (Taiji) in western Japan responding to U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy. He said "The dolphin hunting is an ancient practice rooted in their culture and supports their livelihood. In every country and region, there are practices and ways of living and culture that have been handed down from ancestors. Naturally, I feel that they should be respected. ".

= = = = Method = = = = =

In Japan , the hunting is done by a select group of fishermen . When a pod of dolphins has been spotted , they 're driven into a bay by the fishermen while banging on metal rods in the water to scare and confuse the dolphins . When the dolphins are in the bay , it is quickly closed off with nets so the dolphins cannot escape . The dolphins are usually not caught and killed immediately , but instead left to calm down over night . The following day , the dolphins are caught one by one and killed .

The killing of the animals used to be done by slitting their throats, but the Japanese government banned this method and now dolphins may officially only be killed by driving a metal pin into the neck of the dolphin, which causes them to die within seconds according to a memo from Senzo Uchida, the executive secretary of the Japan Cetacean Conference on Zoological Gardens and Aquariums. A veterinary team 's analysis of 2011 video footage of a Japanese hunters killing striped dolphins using this method suggested that in one case death took over four minutes.

= = = Entertainment industry = = = =

As briefly mentioned above, occasionally, some of the captured dolphins are left alive and taken to mainly, but not exclusively, Japanese dolphinariums. Prior to the practice being banned in 1993, dolphins were exported to the United States to several parks.

The US National Marine Fisheries Service has refused a permit for Marine World Africa USA on one occasion to import four False Killer Whales caught in a Japanese drive hunt . In recent years , dolphins from the Japanese drive hunts have been exported to China , Taiwan and to Egypt . On multiple occasions , members of the International Marine Animal Trainers Association (IMATA) have also been observed at the drive hunts in Japan .

= = = = Human health risks = = = =

The meat and blubber of the dolphins caught has been found to have high levels of mercury , cadmium , the pesticide DDT , and organic contaminants like PCBs . The levels are high enough to pose a health risk for those frequently eating the meat and researchers warn that children and pregnant women shouldn 't eat the meat at all . Because of the health concerns , the price of dolphin meat has decreased significantly .

In 2010 , hair samples from 1 @,@ 137 Taiji residents were tested for mercury by the National Institute for Minamata Disease . The average amount of methyl mercury found in the hair samples was 11 @.@ 0 parts per million for men and 6 @.@ 63 ppm for women , compared with an average of 2 @.@ 47 ppm for men and 1 @.@ 64 ppm for women in tests conducted in 14 other locations in Japan . One hundred eighty @-@ two Taiji residents showing extremely high mercury levels underwent further medical testing to check for symptoms of mercury poisoning . None of the Taiji residents displayed any of the traditional symptoms of mercury poisoning , according to the Institute

Japan 's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research , however , reports that the mortality rate for Taiji and nearby Koazagawa , where dolphin meat is also consumed , is over 50 % higher than the rate for similarly @-@ sized villages throughout Japan . The chief of the NIMD , Koji Okamoto , said , " We presume that the high mercury concentrations are due to the intake of dolphin and whale meat . There were not any particular cases of damaged health , but seeing as how there were some especially high concentration levels found , we would like to continue conducting surveys here . "

Due to its low food self @-@ sufficiency rate, around 40 %, Japan relies on stockpiling to secure a stable food supply. As of 2009, Japan 's 1 @.@ 2 million ton seafood stockpile included nearly 5000 tons of whale meat. Japan has started to serve whale meat in school lunches as part of a government initiative to reduce the amounts. However, there has been criticism of serving whale meat to school children due to allegations of toxic methyl mercury levels.

Consequently , Taiji 's bid to expand their school lunch programs to include dolphin and whale meat brought about much controversy . An estimated 150 kg (330 lbs) of dolphin meat was served in Taiji school lunches in 2006 . In 2009 , dolphin meat was taken off school menus because of the contamination . The levels of mercury and methylmercury taken from samples of dolphin and whale meat sold at supermarkets most likely to be providing the schools ' lunch programs was 10 times that advised by the Japanese Health Ministry . The mercury levels were so high that the Okuwa Co. supermarket chain in Japan permanently removed dolphin meat from its shelves .

= = = = Protests = = =

Protests and campaigns are now common in Taiji . In 2003 , two activists were arrested for cutting fishing nets to release captured dolphins . They were detained for 23 days . In 2007 , American actress Hayden Panettiere was involved in a confrontation with Japanese fishermen as she tried to disrupt the hunt . She paddled out on a surfboard , with five other surfers from Australia and the United States , in an attempt to reach a pod of dolphins that had been captured . The following confrontation lasted more than 10 minutes before the surfers were forced to return to the beach . The surfers drove straight to Osaka airport and left the country to avoid being arrested for trespassing by the Japanese police .

Taiji 's fishery cooperative union argues that these protesters " continue willfully to distort the facts about this fishery " and that protester 's agendas are " based neither on international law nor on science but rather on emotion for economic self @-@ interest . " Some of the animal welfare organizations campaigning against the drive hunts are Ric O 'Barry 's Dolphin Project , Sea Shepherd Conservation Society , One Voice , Blue Voice , the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society , and World Animal Protection .

Since much of the criticism is the result of photos and videos taken during the hunt and slaughter, it is now common for the final capture and slaughter to take place on site inside a tent or under a plastic cover, out of sight from the public. The most circulated footage is probably that of the drive

and subsequent capture and slaughter process taken in Futo in October 1999 (a still of which can be seen on the right), shot by the Japanese animal welfare organization Elsa Nature Conservancy. Part of this footage was, amongst others, shown on CNN.

In recent years , the video has also become widespread on the internet and was featured in the animal welfare documentary Earthlings , though the method of killing dolphins as shown in this video is now officially banned . In 2009 , a critical documentary on the hunts in Japan titled The Cove was released and shown amongst others at the Sundance Film Festival . Well known are also the images from Iki Island taken in 1979 of a Japanese fisherman stabbing dolphins to death with spears in shallow water .

```
= = = Kiribati = = =
```

Similar drive hunting existed in Kiribati at least until the mid 20th century.

```
= = = Peru = = = =
```

Though it is forbidden under Peruvian law to hunt dolphins or eat their meat (sold as chancho marino , or sea pork in English) , a large number of dolphins are still killed illegally by fishermen each year . To catch the dolphins , they are driven together with boats and encircled with nets , then harpooned , dragged on to the boat , and clubbed to death if still alive . Various species are hunted , such as the Bottlenose and Dusky Dolphin .

According to estimates from local animal welfare organisation Mundo Azul released in October 2013 , between 1 @,@ 000 and 2 @,@ 000 dolphins are killed annually for consumption , with a further 5 @,@ 000 to 15 @,@ 000 being killed for use as shark bait . Sharks are captured primarily for use in shark fin soup .

```
= = = Solomon Islands = = =
```

On a smaller scale, drive hunting for dolphins also takes place in the Solomon Islands, more specifically on South Malaita Island. After capture, the meat is shared equally between households. Dolphin 's teeth are also used in jewelry and as currency on the island. The dolphins are hunted in a similar fashion as in Japan, using stones instead of metal rods to produce sounds to scare and confuse the dolphins. Various species are hunted, such as Spotted and Spinner dolphins.

The amount of dolphins killed each year is not known, but anecdotal information suggests between 600 and 1500 dolphins per hunting season. The hunting season lasts roughly from December to April, when the dolphins are closest to shore. As in Japan, some dolphins (exclusively Bottlenoses) from the Solomon Islands have also been sold to the entertainment industry.

There was much controversy in July 2003, when 28 Indo @-@ Pacific bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops trancatus aduncus) were exported to Parque Nizuc, a water park in Cancun. A large portion of the animals were later transported to Cozumel, to do interaction programs. Though the export of dolphins had been banned in 2005, the export of dolphins was resumed in October 2007 when the ban was lifted following a court decision, allowing for 28 dolphins to be sent to a dolphinarium in Dubai. A further three dolphins were found dead near the holding pens.

The dealer that exported these dolphins has stated that they intend to release their 17 remaining dolphins back into the wild in the future . In 2015 the tourism minister visited Bita 'ama community and announced the government would financially support the development of eco @-@ tourism dolphin swimming if they stopped killing dolphins .

In April 2009 it was decided by CITES that an in @-@ depth review of the commercial dolphin trade conducted from the Solomon Islands should take place , this after the IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group came to the conclusion that insufficient population data exists to prove the sustainability of the wild captures and the current export quota of 100 animals per year . The Solomon Island Dolphin Abundance Project was established to provide data on the size of the local Indo @-@ Pacific Bottlenose population and the sustainability of the dolphin hunts . A report published in

March 2013 as a result of this effort indicated that the capture of dolphins in the Solomon Islands can only be sustainable at a very low rate and that previous rates of capture as seen between 2003 and 2013 would not be sustainable in the future .

The Solomon Islands signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region under the Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species in 2007, which is a commitment to improve conservation efforts, reduce threats and undertake research and monitoring of cetaceans and provide reports. Gordon Lilo, the prime minister of the Solomon Islands, announced in 2014 that he opposes export of live dolphins, but defends the traditional hunting of dolphin. The capture and trade of wild dolphins is prohibited in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands.

In recent years only villages in South Malaita Island have continued to hunt dolphin . In 2010 , the villages of Fanalei , Walende , and Bitamae signed a MoU with the non @-@ governmental organization , Earth Island Institute , to stop hunting dolphin . However , in early 2013 the agreement broke down and some men in Fanalei resumed hunting . The hunting of dolphin continued in early 2014 .

Tourism minister Bartholomew Parapolo visited the Bita 'ama community in 2015 and offered to fund eco @-@ tourism business project involving swimming with dolphins, if they ceased killing.

```
= = = Taiwan = = =
```

On the Penghu Islands in Taiwan, drive fishing of Bottlenose Dolphins was practiced until 1990, when the practice was outlawed by the government. Mainly Indian Ocean Bottlenose Dolphins but also common Bottlenose Dolphins were captured in these hunts.

In ancient Hawaii , fishermen occasionally hunted dolphins for their meat by driving them onto the beach and killing them . In their ancient legal system , dolphin meat was considered to be kapu (forbidden) for women together with several other kinds of food . Today , dolphin drive hunting no longer takes place in Hawaii .

Hunting dolphins (at the time still often incorrectly referred to as fish or porpoises) , primarily using harpoons and firearms , was considered a form of recreational hunting along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico in Texas in the late 19th and early 20th century . Pleasure dolphin hunting cruises could be booked in Corpus Christi in the 1920s , with a promise to tourists that if no successful dolphin kill was made , the excursion would be free of charge . The brutality of the practice started to spark animal welfare concerns and there is no reference of this practice still occurring in Texas after the Second World War .

```
= = = = Washington = = =
```

Drive hunting methods were used to capture Orcas in the Puget Sound in the 1960s and 1970s. These hunts were led by aquarium owner and entrepreneur Edward " Ted " Griffin and his partner Don Goldsberry. After Edward purchased an Orca that was caught by accident by fishermen in Namu, British Columbia, in 1965, Edward and Don used drive hunting techniques in the Puget Sound area to capture Orcas for the entertainment industry. Others followed and despite the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 the practice continued until 1976 when the state of Washington ordered the release of a number of Orcas that were being held in Budd Inlet and subsequently

