

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

# CLOSE-UP REPORT

## SAVING THE DOLPHINS

Victories  
and a  
New Threat

Thousands of dolphins have been spared a grisly death in tuna-fishing nets thanks to two recent landmark victories in our ongoing fight to save the dolphins: the adoption of dolphin-safe policies by major U.S. tuna canners and the passage of the Dolphin Protection Con-

canned tuna began to gain momentum, there has been an unprecedented public outcry against the slaughter. That outcry led to the two major victories in the campaign to save the dolphins.

By last April the consumer boycott had forced the H. J.

barbaric practice began, approximately thirty years ago, more than 7 million dolphins have died in purse-seine nets—drowned, mutilated, dismembered, or crushed in net-hauling machinery.

Hours after the StarKist announcement, the producers of two other major American brands of tuna, Chicken of the Sea and Bumble Bee, announced that they too were going dolphin safe. Bumble Bee, however, failed to meet the dolphin-safe standards set by the dolphin-protection community until March of this year. After numerous meetings with the company's representatives and careful monitoring of its purchasing practices, The HSUS and other members of the dolphin-protection community are now satisfied that Bumble Bee tuna is dolphin safe. The canners of Deep Sea tuna and Ocean Light tuna have also satisfied the dolphin-safe standards.

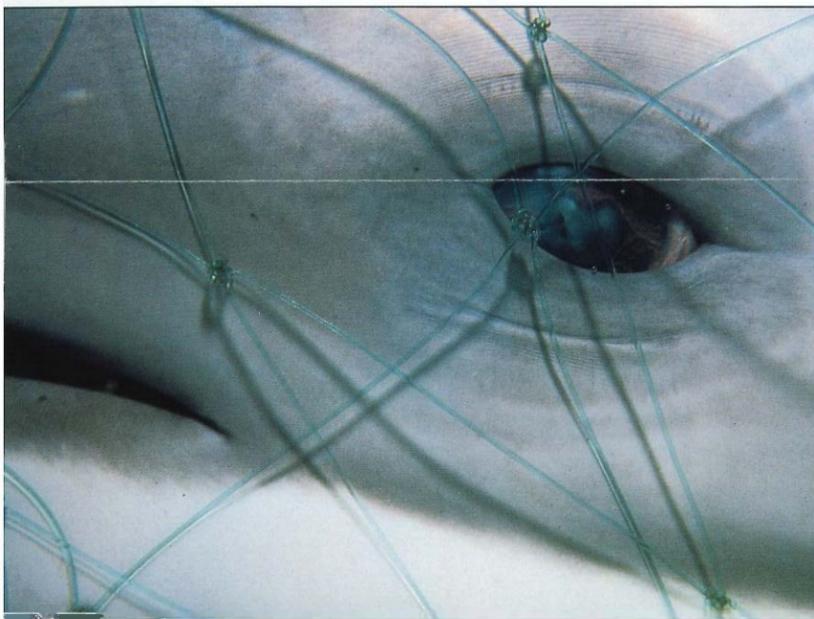
We cheered our second great victory for the dolphins at the end of 1990, when Congress passed the Dolphin Protection Consumer Information Act. The legislation establishes a definition of *dolphin safe*, regulates the use of the "Dolphin Safe" label on tuna cans, and provides for enforcement through penalties for false claims.

Many dolphins have been saved, and many more will be saved, through the adoption of dolphin-safe policies and the regulation of dolphin-safe labeling. Those victories were achieved by all those that joined in the boycott of dolphin-deadly tuna—school and business cafeterias, restaurants, markets, and, most important, caring consumers such as you. Through your commitment, you did it; you made the difference!

Along with the victories, however, came a serious setback. After the major American tuna canners announced that they would no longer buy tuna caught by setting nets on dolphins, Italian and Spanish canners took advantage of the resulting crash in the price of such tuna and began buying large quantities of it from Mexico, Venezuela, and Vanuatu. In recent years those three countries have been primarily responsible for the dolphin slaughter in the ETP. Mexico, which maintains the largest fishing fleet still setting its nets on dolphins in the ETP, fifty-eight vessels, is by far the worst offender; it has been estimated that by engaging in dolphin-deadly fishing practices, Mexican crews are killing 80,000 dolphins each year—out of a total annual kill of 100,000 in purse-seine fishery.

Those three nations and the Italian and Spanish canners buying their tuna have failed to respond to appeals from concerned consumers around the world. At a meeting attended by HSUS representatives, a representative of the Italian tuna-canners' association made it clear that the canners did not intend to change their purchasing policies to protect dolphins. There are other forces we can bring to bear, however. The HSUS is working to get the European Commission to stop Italy and Spain from buying dolphin-deadly tuna and distributing it to stores and restaurants throughout the European Community.

Mexico, Venezuela, and Vanuatu, meanwhile, have been slapped with a U.S. trade embargo against their yellowfin tuna, as mandated by the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The MMPA forbids U.S. and foreign fleets to sell yellowfin tuna in the United States if they kill more dolphins than the law allows. All three of those countries are currently ex-



R. GRACE/GREENPEACE

This dead dolphin was the victim of a drift net, a devastating killer of marine mammals. Tuna canners that adopt dolphin-safe policies will no longer buy tuna that was caught with drift nets.

sumer Information Act.

But we can't rest easy. Tens of thousands of dolphins are still dying each year because the tuna fleets of a few renegade nations persist in the cruel and wasteful practice of setting nets on herds of dolphins in order to catch the tuna that swim under them. While mindful of the progress that has been made, we must continue our efforts to attain a total ban on fishing methods that harm the gentle and intelligent dolphins.

Since 1988, when biologist Sam LaBudde's shocking videotape documenting the deaths of thousands of dolphins in the tuna nets of a Panamanian fishing vessel stunned Americans and the HSUS consumer-backed national boycott of

Heinz Company, which owns StarKist, the largest tuna canner in the world, to change its policies radically. H. J. Heinz suddenly announced that it would no longer purchase tuna caught by setting purse-seine nets on dolphins or by using gill and drift nets, which also kill large numbers of marine mammals. The company pledged to fulfill that policy by buying only tuna that had been certified dolphin safe by government observers on board fishing vessels in the Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETP) Ocean.

It is in the ETP, which extends from the coast of southern California to the coast of Chile, that the practice of setting purse-seine nets on dolphins in order to catch the tuna that swim under them occurs. Since that



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Dolphins are deliberately trapped in nets with tuna (large photo). Hundreds drown (top inset) or are dragged through net-hauling machinery (bottom inset). Although major American tuna canners have adopted dolphin-safe policies, Mexican, Venezuelan, and Vanuatuan vessels continue to slaughter dolphins and sell their tuna catch to European canners. HSUS representatives are in contact with the European Community, working to have these markets for dolphin-deadly tuna closed.

ceeding U.S. quotas.

Mexico is contesting the embargo by claiming that it violates international free-trade agreements and has filed a formal complaint with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The embargo also faces another, more serious threat: the Bush administration may try to amend the MMPA in order to forge a free-trade agreement with Mexico and Canada. The HSUS, however, is committed to seeing that the embargo is not lifted or weakened in any way until Mexico, Venezuela, and Vanuatu stop killing dolphins.

**T**he HSUS worked hard to win the passage of the MMPA in 1972 and has been in the forefront of the fight to save the dolphins ever since. The consumer boycott that we, along with other members of the dol-

phin-protection community, promoted was pivotal in forcing tuna canners to adopt dolphin-safe policies. We spearheaded legislative efforts to enact the federal regulations that now govern tuna-labeling practices, and we're continuing to work for legislation that would require all tuna to be dolphin safe and labeled as such.

Now we, along with other dolphin-protection groups, are contacting major grocery-store chains and asking them to adopt a policy of stocking only dolphin-safe tuna. Our goal is to make all tuna sold in the United States dolphin safe!

In all the victories on behalf of the dolphins, consumers have had the most powerful voice. Consumers must continue to use that voice to save these unique, intelligent, and gentle-hearted creatures. ■



**More than 7 million dolphins have died in purse-seine tuna nets since the barbaric practice of setting such nets on dolphin herds became widespread. How many more must die before global efforts to ban this cruel and wasteful fishery are successful?**

**WE NEED YOUR HELP**

### Top Priority

•Send the two enclosed postcards—one to Gustavo Petricoli, Mexico's ambassador to the United States, protesting Mexican fleets' continuing dolphin slaughter and one to Manuel Marín, vice president of the European Commission, expressing concern over the commission's failure to stop Italian and Spanish canneries from turning Europe into a dumping ground for tuna caught in the ETP by dolphin-deadly means. Use the enclosed order form to request additional postcards.

•Boycott all tuna that is not dolphin safe. Purchase only tuna whose can displays a "Dolphin Safe" label, and ask your grocer to stock only dolphin-safe tuna. Urge the managers of restaurants and cafeterias to buy and serve only dolphin-safe tuna as well. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, explaining why consumers should purchase only dolphin-safe tuna.

### To Do More to Help the Dolphins

•Write to President George Bush at the White House, Washington, DC 20500, expressing your outrage at the unconscionable fishing practices of Mexico, Venezuela, and Vanuatu. Ask him to enforce the MMPA strictly, maintain the MMPA-mandated embargo against Mexican, Venezuelan, and Vanuatuan tuna imports, and stay firm

on the issue during free-trade negotiations with Mexico and Canada.

•Write to His Excellency Rinaldo Petrignani, Ambassador of Italy, Italian Embassy, 1601 Fuller St., NW, Washington, DC 20009, and His Excellency Jaime de Ojeda, Ambassador of Spain, Spanish Embassy, 2700 15th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009. Urge each one to take immediate action to stop Italian or Spanish canneries from purchasing tuna caught by setting purse-seine nets on dolphins. Point out that by buying dolphin-deadly tuna, canneries are perpetuating a needless slaughter and undermining global efforts to ban the use of that destructive fishery.

•Finally, help The HSUS in its fight to save the dolphins and all the other animals that suffer at the hands of human beings. Please send your tax-deductible contribution today. ■

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