Slaughter on the High Seas
A minke whale breaches on the open sea. Norway plans to defy international accords and hunt hundreds of these magnificent mammals annually.

Will the seas continue to redden with blood? Will the great whales’ mysterious songs, which echo through the unfathomable deep, continue to be replaced by cries of agony and death? Will thousands of whales be brutally hunted down, their families destroyed? They will if Norway has its way!

Once again Norway is killing whales, and it plans to kill thousands more, in flagrant disregard of the world’s whaling regulatory body and vociferous international criticism. Because whales are dying, and will die in large numbers unless we act now, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has launched an ambitious effort to stop the Norwegian whaling juggernaut. After decades of struggle to save the whales, large-scale whaling must not re-surface.

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The impact from our boycott announcement was felt almost immediately. Within weeks, Kloster Cruise, Ltd., had contacted us and pledged support for our position. Other companies, too, have already responded to our demand that they take action to stop Norway’s whaling or risk economic pressure.

We’re targeting Norwegian fish products, such as salmon and sardines; Farlsberg and gouda cheeses from Norway; and Norwegian crude petroleum.

On November 18, 1992, in conjunction with Earth Island Institute, we held a Washington, D.C., press conference at which HSUS Executive Vice President Patricia Forkan and HSUS Vice President, Investigations, David K. Wills targeted Norwegian Cruise Lines and Royal Viking Cruise Lines, both owned by Kloster Cruise, Ltd., one of the largest Norwegian-owned companies operating in the United States. The wealthy Kloster family stands in a powerful position to influence the Norwegian government by pointing out how Norway could suffer economically from its misguided decision.

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A whale carcass is hosed down prior to butchering at a whaling station. Whale meat sells for upwards of $200 a pound in Japanese markets.

THE CRUELTY OF KILLING

Whalers have long insisted that modern grenade-tipped harpoons kill whales quickly and with little pain by causing internal concussion, unconsciousness, and a fairly rapid death through shock. Norway’s notorious 1992 “scientific” whale hunt, however, provided chilling evidence to the contrary. Several of the minke whales killed during the hunt were shot by harpoon whalers whose attached grenades failed to explode; others continued to live for more than ten minutes even after they were hit by a harpoon whose grenade did explode. One large minke was hit more than half an hour to die. Numerous whales were towed to the ships by the harpoons that pierced their sides; at close range, they were shot to death with rifles.

This catastrophe is only the most recent proof of what The HSUS has long contended: it is impossible to hunt whales humanely. Whales hunted with cold harpoons (those not tipped with explosives but are shot to death and must suffer excruciating pain. Grenade-tipped harpoons commonly malfunction and fail to explode. There have been documented instances in which harpooned whales have taken nearly an hour to die.

HSUS research, presented in a scientific paper at the 1992 IWC meeting, shows that exploding harpoons are ineffective. Even when they do explode, they apparently rarely (if ever) induce a concussion as intended.

Not only is whaling grossly inhumane, it’s also completely unnecessary. Whales were once hunted for meat, oils, and other products, but all such uses have been rendered obsolete by cheaper and more plentiful substances. Norway has a small domestic market for whale meat, but it’s likely that part of its catch would find its way to Japan, where whale hunting has continued under the guise of scientific research, despite the IWC ban, and where whale meat sells for up to $200 a pound.
leum imports. Use your purchasing power to send a strong message to Norway: "Stop killing whales!"

WHAT THE HSUS IS DOING

Our current efforts to hit Norway economically so that it will reverse its whaling decision are only the most recent in a long history of HSUS work to stop whaling. The HSUS has always opposed whaling, on ethical as well as humane grounds. For nineteen years Executive Vice President Patricia Forkan has attended IWC meetings as an official observer, and she has participated in several important decisions for the whales, including the 1986 moratorium. Our influence has extended to groups worldwide and to the U.S. delegation to the IWC. We’re also working closely with other official observers to establish a unified, global voice for the whales.

In the 1980s our boycott of Norwegian and Icelandic products helped pressure those countries to stop whaling. Now we’re calling on our members and supporters to use their consumer power again, before Norway destroys safeguards we’ve spent years working to achieve.

Currently we’re focusing our efforts on the 1993 meeting of the IWC, which will take place in Japan in May. Norway is expected to begin its full-scale commercial whaling immediately after the meeting; if Norway’s hunt succeeds, Japan and Iceland may follow suit, until we again have unrestrained slaughter on the high seas.

It’s vitally important that the IWC adopt the French Antarctic sanctuary proposal, and it’s time the United States took a leadership role in its passage. Whales have been inhumanely hunted for centuries; they deserve a place where they can be free from deadly harpoons. Over the next decade, the sanctuary could save 50,000 to 100,000 whales who would otherwise perish in agony.

It’s also vital that Norway gets the message that the world won’t stand by and allow it to circumvent international agreements; if Norway successfully defies the IWC, other international environmental laws and protections could unravel.

That’s why we’ve launched an all-out effort and have targeted companies and products that can have the greatest impact on Norway. The whales need your help! Please send the enclosed coupons today. Join our boycott to help persuade Norway to abandon its whaling plans. Our efforts must surpass all that have gone before!

-- Patricia Forkan, executive vice president

A humpback whale dives beneath the ocean surface. Whaling decimated the species, which is now endangered.

We Need Your Help

- Clip, sign, and mail the enclosed coupons immediately. Let President Clinton know that you want the United States to be a leader on the Antarctic sanctuary proposal and strongly oppose any resumption of commercial whaling. Let Norway’s Prime Minister Brundtland know that Norway can’t turn back the clock to a time when the massive slaughter of whales reddened the oceans. Let the business companies know you won’t be buying Norwegian products as long as Norway persists in its whaling schemes. If companies respond that they do not support Norway’s whaling, press them as to what action they’re taking to stop it. Other companies may try to rationalize Norway’s plan or accuse letter writers of “economic terrorism,” but the bottom line is that there is no justification for the cruel inhumanity of commercial whaling.
- Order more sheets of coupons and have as many sent out as you can. We don’t have much time before the 1993 IWC meeting in May, so we need to flood our targets with protests.
- Don’t buy Norwegian. Shun Norwegian salmon (fresh, frozen, or canned), Norwegian sardines, and other Norwegian fish products. If you buy cheese—another major Norwegian import—check the label. If it’s from Norway, just say no way!
- Photocopy the coupon for retailers and grocers and hand it to managers at grocery stores, restaurants, and cafeterias. Let merchants know you aren’t buying Norwegian products and why. Urge them to join the boycott and help persuade Norway to change its whaling policy.
- Spread the word. Order reprints of this Close-Up Report and pass them out to your friends and coworkers, and in your community. Urge others to reject Norwegian products. Help convince Norway to stop whaling!
- Finally, help us continue our long-standing efforts to save the whales. In the past your financial support has made it possible for us to establish aggressive and effective programs to protect marine mammals and millions of other animals from unnecessary pain and suffering. Now we need your support more than ever. Please place your tax-deductible contribution in the enclosed envelope and send it today.

The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037; (202) 452-1100

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