

# Who really threatens

Sidney Holt

The long-sought decision made by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 1982 to ban all commercial whaling after 1985 does not mean that conservationists can relax, confident of a safe future for the whales. The IWC was a source of anger or despair for conservationists for the first three decades of its existence according to Dr Sidney Holt who here describes its successes and failures, its reforms and near break-ups. It could, even now, if the 1982 decision is not upheld, preside over the near extinction of Bryde's and minke whales as it did of the blue and humpback whales. Dr Holt is hopeful for the future but insists that we must take the current threats to whales and seals seriously: pollution of several kinds; the unsound basis of scientific advice; commercial fisheries that regard some cetaceans as pests; and the utilitarianism that governs so many of our dealings with the natural world. He makes a plea for the preservation of these animals, not for their direct use to us as a source of food or foreign exchange, but because 'they can gently and profoundly please us and help us know ourselves'. The following is a shortened version of the author's address to the Society at its AGM in October 1982; Dr Holt is Vice-Chairman for marine matters of IUCN's

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When I was a student of zoology I joined the Scientific Book Club. Every week now I am invited by the Sunday magazines to subscribe to one book club or another—but none of them seem to be specifically scientific in their scope. I suppose the time has passed when eminent biologists such as J.B.S. Haldane and Julian Huxley could make science exciting through books. But they greatly influenced my generation of young biologists. The first book I received from the club was a collection of essays by Huxley entitled *The Uniqueness of Man*. He was then Secretary of the Zoological Society of London and he wrote the Preface while sitting in the Zoo's basement air-raid shelter. He was listening to a broadcast of Sibelius's *Voces Intimae* and he was also thinking about the need for a world organisation for science and culture.

While I was pondering this talk I started to re-read some of the essays in *The Uniqueness of Man*. I had remembered one in particular, 'The Size of Living Things'. I was impressed that Huxley didn't just think about animals or about plants, but about all living things, collectively. Other essays made it clear that he also thought about them in their environments. My immediate concern, in going back nearly half a century, was why whales are so big and plump, and why we

\*For acronyms and abbreviations used in this issue of *Oryx* see page 94.

# whales and seals?

supposedly unique apes are middle-sized and plump. Huxley often had something original to say about such questions. But my attention was taken by another essay, 'The Way of the Dodo' which appeared first in the *London Times*. Huxley wrote—it must have been late in 1939—that the sea-otter was 'on the verge of extinction, though a thriving colony has just been discovered off California'. (Now some clam fishermen, and some State agencies which purport to act in their interest, are saying that the sea-otter is a pest there.) Huxley was also encouraged that an international convention on whaling had just been concluded, though his satisfaction was tempered by the war. That convention was the precursor of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling 1946, under which the International Whaling Commission (IWC) is established, a commission that turned out to be, for three decades, a source of anger or despair for those of us who fought for the conservation of living systems.

The whaling agreements of the 1930s were the house rules of exclusive clubs. So was the 1946 Convention. The rules didn't actually say the club was exclusive, any more than usually do the rules of social clubs that exclude coloured people and women. Some things are just 'understood' and such 'understanding' can be effective for long periods. The IWC was a club of governments under whose flags whaling was conducted. Its critics have often called it a club of whalers—some national Commissioners were virtually appointed by the whaling industries, notably in Japan. It purported to act on behalf of the people of the world, and specifically of future generations, as self-appointed stewards of what the

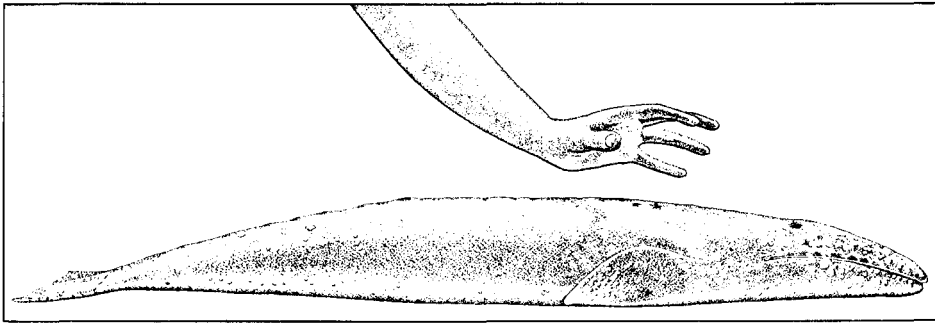
*Who threatens whales?*

Preamble to the 1946 Convention says are 'the great natural resources represented by the whale stocks'. Everyone now knows that in that guise IWC presided over the near extinction of the blue and humpback whales. As the 1950s turned into the 1960s there was alarm inside the club that this sort of behaviour would bring it into such disrepute that it would lose influence. A reform movement was started, and in the process a piece of the United Nations system became involved—the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Remedial actions suggested concerned only the Antarctic pelagic whaling and included setting species' quotas below sustainable yields.

## Pirate whaling begins

The IWC chugged through the 1960s, eventually banning the hunting by its members of the two most threatened species. But something else was going on, something that was barely noticed at the time. That was the arrangement by the Japanese whaling industry, facilitated by its Government, for a number of non-member countries to take up whaling or to expand existing small industries to supply the Japanese market with meat and oil. The era of organised so-called 'pirate whaling' began with the protection of the blue whale. And this activity came near to breaking up the club itself.

In this period some of the other club members stopped whaling. Led by the United States they joined with a number of non-members and succeeded in getting renewed pressure for reform of the IWC through the medium of the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, the precursor of UNEP. This time the proposed reforms were more substantial.



Beached California grey whale *Eschrichtius robustus*, drawn by Alfredo Meschini after a wax model by Larry Foster.

'Strengthening the IWC' was taken to mean establishing a full-time and scientifically competent Secretariat, conducting a vast ten-year research programme and re-writing the 1946 Convention to bring it more into accord with the times. The re-writing was tried, but didn't happen; it wasn't even possible to agree on a revised Preamble! The research programme actually undertaken was a very pale reflection of the original idea. The Secretariat was enlarged, but probably not enough. So, having failed to arrange adequately to enhance its scientific competence, or to strengthen its legal basis, the IWC over-loaded all its eggs into one fragile basket—a formal New Management Procedure (NMP) by which allowable catches would be set in strict accordance with scientific assessments about the state of each stock. That was in 1975. It was not until the annual meeting in 1982 that it was widely recognised, among scientists and among lawyers and administrators on national delegations, that the scientific basis does not exist for such assessment (or even for the clear identification of separate 'stocks') except where the whales have already been depleted and where that depletion has been well documented.

### Whale sanctuary at last

Meanwhile several more of its original members had stopped whaling. One or two old members which had let their membership lapse rejoined with new attitudes. Diplomatic pressures on non-members who were whaling, and on their sponsor, Japan, led to most of them joining the Commission. Pressure on the 'flag of convenience' countries, and on IWC members who were tolerating or even assisting their operations, made

the planned expansion of pirate whaling probably unprofitable and possibly hazardous. At the same time, starting with the Seychelles in 1979, and quickly followed by a number of other governments, countries that had never substantially been engaged in commercial whaling joined the IWC.

The first actions by the Seychelles, and by supporters, were to try to remove some of the eggs from the fragile NMP basket, and to attack the Achilles heel of the NMP itself. The first eggs for attention were the Indian Ocean stocks, and the alternative basket was the provision in the 1946 Convention, taken over from the pre-war agreements, for the creation of whale sanctuaries. The vulnerable heel was the sperm whale. Scientists were, and still are, particularly hazy about the dynamics of this species. The Indian Ocean Sanctuary was established immediately, in 1979, and pelagic sperm whaling was also stopped. It took another two years to off-load the rest of the sperm whale eggs from the NMP basket into the new 'moratorium' basket that had been woven by the Stockholm conference. Some people, notably again the Japanese Commissioner, said all these actions were illegal. Significantly, the same man had said, during the efforts to renegotiate the Convention, that the Preamble has no legal status, especially that nice bit that says the nations of the whole world are interested in safeguarding the whales for future generations. As a matter of fact he had been a colleague of mine in FAO before being called back to Tokyo to defend the Japan Whaling Association. I think he must have left his ghost behind in Rome judging by the policy statements that have emerged from FAO in the past year or so. FAO has taken to praising the

*Oryx* Vol 17 No 2

World Conservation Strategy—into the support of which it was somewhat reluctantly dragged by the combined efforts of UNEP, the IUCN and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)—and passing ammunition to the pro-whaling minority in the IWC. And giving specific advice to the governments and industries of Third World whaling countries to help them counter the growing opposition to whaling within some of them.

## Sperm whale catch banned

The nearly complete ban on catching of sperm whales was achieved in 1981 by a voting shift due only in part to the influx of non-whaling countries. The decisive actions were the agreements by Chile, Peru and Spain to stop taking sperm whales. For Chile that meant, in theory at least, ceasing commercial whaling altogether, although the whaling industry there, with its friends in Government, has been trying some tricks to continue, such as secret 'pirate' whaling, and saying sei whales (which are protected) are really Bryde's whales (which are not). But these counter-actions seem to be half-hearted. The sperm whale ban was reinforced by the decision in 1981 to include this species on Appendix 1 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); that is causing trouble for Portugal, not a member of the IWC and the only country apart from Japan that still catches sperm whales for commerce.

In 1982 the long-sought ban on all commercial whaling was achieved. Again the Seychelles led the way. Some of the opposition was disarmed by agreeing to a 'reasonable' delay in the application of the ban. Again an influx of new members played its part. But again a change of position by a whaling country was decisive; this time it was Spain. A rather heavy price was paid for this agreement: it became rather difficult to press successfully for lower catch limits or for full protection of several stocks that have been shown to merit it. Peru is allowed to continue catching Bryde's whales, when it should stop. Minke whale catches in 1983 everywhere will be much higher than scientific assessments can justify. Spain can go on taking too many fin whales for a couple of years more. The NMP, having served a purpose in giving overdue protection to the fin *Who threatens whales?*

and sei whales of the Southern Ocean, is now not seriously applied. In the only remaining case where assessments are clear, and when they show the need for protection status—the sperm whales of the north-west Pacific—Japan is permitted to continue to kill them. But the overall result of the 1982 meeting was positive from the point of view of conservation.

## Subversion

In the year before the IWC took this historic decision, Japan's Government and industry undertook a massive propaganda and diplomatic campaign to subvert the opposition to whaling in key member countries of the IWC. Almost all countries were approached. Key targets selected included the US, China, Peru, and the Seychelles. Millions of pounds worth of 'investments' were offered and the world's airlines did well from the travels of Japanese delegations. In some cases 'offers' were made which were difficult to refuse and personal attacks were made on key individuals. Publicly and privately, threats were made to leave the club and even to start a new one. Some client countries, such as Iceland, echoed those threats. We may continue to hear them. The big question is: should we take them seriously? Well, yes, we should, but we should not necessarily act as if they will be carried out. Japan found a receptive audience in The Netherlands, which has hitherto been a hard fighter for conservation. This year that delegation was beset by fears that the IWC would disintegrate if conservation measures were pressed too vigorously. I respect that concern but believe firmly that it is ill-founded. As a scientist, I will happily await the test of my hypothesis that Japan and others will not leave the IWC, particularly when there are clear rational arguments for its decisions, though not necessarily solely scientific ones.

There are two reasons why I hold this view. First, because its rules did not prohibit the entry of undesirables the IWC is now well on the way to being truly representative of the community of nations. And Japan, Norway and the other hitherto aggressively pro-whaling nations do not wish to be 'outsiders'. Second, there are at last signs of more public debate, more publication of dissenting opinion, in those countries than ever

before. And in the less 'democratic' of the remaining whaling countries some influential people are wondering if the positions into which they have been inveigled by Japanese emissaries are really worth holding.

What are now the threats to whales and seals? First, I would mention the unknown things. We may guess that pollution of several kinds could be having deleterious effects on all cetaceans, and on other marine mammals, which have not yet been recognised. We have only inconclusive circumstantial evidence of such effects in a few cases; but then there has been remarkably little search for them. It is often said to be unscientific to hypothesise about such things, as it were in a vacuum. In the absence of diligent search it then is a short mental step to the assumption that where no effect has been noticed none has occurred. I suggest, on the contrary, that it is unscientific to assume that if humans have by their actions changed a natural system in any way, there are no effects on specific parts of that system. Since, from what little is known, one can more readily envisage deleterious effects of some types of additions, such as sound energy and biocides, it is reasonable and entirely scientific to presume, as a basis for political action, that such additions are more likely to be deleterious than advantageous. So it seems to me that if ignorance is not in itself a threat to whales and seals, an inappropriate response to awareness of ignorance can be such a threat. One inappropriate response is the one by which it is said that when we have not detected and confirmed deleterious effects of environmental changes we should not restrain the activities that cause those changes. Yet that is precisely the response of some of the scientists now advising the IWC.

### **Scientific advice excessively optimistic**

If whales and other living things are not to be threatened by arrogance in the face of ignorance, then a closer look at the ideology of scientific advice-giving is urgently needed. We have good, concrete examples of the problem in the efforts of IWC scientists to implement the NMP. When the size of an animal population is drastically changed, as by hunting, we expect a number of factors to change: the pregnancy rate; the survival rates of the foetus, the newborn and the juveniles;

the ages at maturity and at first parturition; the geographic area of distribution, and so on. With luck we will have the techniques to identify some such changes, but never all of them. The orthodox practice is to take into account those changes we can observe with present methods and assume that changes in other factors not observed have not occurred. This has led again and again to excessive optimism in the scientific advice and in fact the situation is worse than I have indicated because a change can sometimes be detected but not quantified. And if it cannot be quantified it cannot be fitted into the computer models and so is ignored.

Numbers, and the models, give an appearance of rigour to scientific advice which may be wholly spurious. In the 1950s the scientists said year after year that they could not properly count or assess whales but they had reason to worry about the effects of whaling and they advised great caution. There was little pressure then to act on scientific advice. Now the IWC is constrained so to act, and one consequence is that scientists are now extremely cautious about giving any advice at all, and particularly about giving advice that may be construed as 'emotional', that is tending to push in the direction of animal protection. It is not usually regarded as 'emotional' to give support to those who wish to continue to make fortunes out of killing wild animals, yet the emotional drive to make more money than one needs for a reasonably comfortable life seems enormously powerful compared with the need some people feel to let living things stay living.

We face the same problem of cautious advice, whose political effect is to favour exploitation and the status quo, in the implementation of CITES. In trying to establish working guidelines the Conference of Parties to CITES adopted the so-called Berne Criteria. These give great weight to quantitative scientific evidence and in such a manner that the burden of proof seems to be wholly on those who would control trade and reduce or eliminate it. There is good reason to believe that that was not what the Parties intended, but that is how some experts are seeking to interpret the Criteria. As a matter of fact the strictly scientific basis for application of the Criteria with regard to assessing probabilities of

*Oryx* Vol 17 No 2

extinction is even weaker than the basis for estimating maximum sustainable yields. If this particular brand of 'scientism' is permitted to influence CITES decisions, CITES will be quickly reduced to presiding over the depletion of species through weakly regulated trade as the IWC presided over the depletion of blue, humpback, fin and sei whales. (And will so preside over the depletion of Bryde's and minke whales too if the 1982 decision is not upheld.)

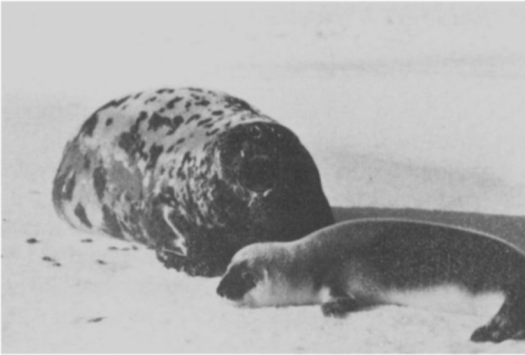
### **No reason for optimism in Antarctica**

One of the human activities that has unmeasured but likely deleterious effects on the quality of the marine environment from the point of view of marine mammals is commercial fishing. Theoretically most fishing is regulated to prevent over-fishing—from the human point of view that is. In practice, over-fishing continues nearly everywhere it has occurred, and it is occurring each year on more stocks in more places. We have little more than circumstantial evidence of the consequences of this. So can we say, for example, that fishing for krill in the Southern Ocean threatens whales, seals, penguins and krill-eating fishes? Perhaps not yet; the catches are not big enough in relation to the presumed but as yet inadequately estimated sizes of the krill populations. The new Convention for the Conservation of the Living Resources of the Southern Ocean has been widely acclaimed as a triumph of negotiation for a fisheries convention that treats the ecosystem as a whole. Whether it will prove useful in preventing that ecosystem from being more comprehensively depleted is another matter. I believe the Convention has two structural weaknesses. First, not only is it an exclusive club with high membership fees, but the exclusivity is written firmly into its rules. So the exploiters are expected to govern themselves for the benefit of all of us, and we have seen that that did not happen in the IWC. I see no reason for optimism in the Antarctic. For many years economic theorists wrote that, provided mutually destructive competition between participants could be regulated, it was in the best long-term interest of participants in fisheries to exploit the fish stocks sustainably. So conservative practice was primarily a problem of enlightenment and internal control. A mathematician, Colin Clark, at the University of British Columbia, exploded that

*Who threatens whales?*

myth more than a decade ago, but the lesson seems to be taking a long time to sink in. It never has been good business practice to leave live whales in the sea for future use, or slow-growing trees standing. As our economic system moves into short-term gear, and discount rates rise, it is decreasingly good business practice to exploit other renewable resources sustainably. So we need economically disinterested participants in essential control of decision-making if social decisions involving the notion of sustainability are to be made.

Another defect of the Southern Ocean Convention is that the club members must reach decisions through consensus. Given the differences among them—and the similarities, too—we can expect with confidence that the natural resources will be made to pay the cost of failure to reach sufficiently restraining decisions. So, in the light of this example I will add complacency about human institutions to ignorance and arrogance in my list of threats to whales and seals. And as far as the IWC is concerned, we should not be complacent about 1982's decisions. Those who continue to whale for profit have not changed. We must not underestimate their ability to subvert decisions which restrain them. We may expect frontal assaults on those decisions. We can expect cheating: by seeking too high quotas; by catching more legally under-sized animals, as Spain and Peru were caught doing; by falsification of some data and concealment of others. We must also be prepared for flanking movements and for infiltration. Norwegian whalers and the fishing industry and their intellectual supporters are increasingly saying that some cetaceans threaten 'their' fish stocks by eating too much fish. The Canadian and Norwegian Governments say the same thing about the harp and hooded seals, despite scientific evaluations which show little if any evidence for such accusations. Around the world marine animals are becoming scapegoats for human failures properly to regulate fisheries. Japanese scientists and others have tried to convince the rest of us that they are helping the recovery of the blue whale by catching huge numbers of its relatively small competitor for krill, the minke whale (at the same time helping to develop the krill fishing by humans!); it took three years of effort to show there was no scientific evidence for or plausibility in this. It will take



Female and young hooded seal (*Robert E.A. Stewart*).

several more years to rectify the wide public acceptance of such false arguments.

The idea that whales and seals are pests illustrates a fourth general threat to those animals—the prevalence of naive utilitarianism. The World Conservation Strategy is a 99 per cent utilitarian document. It was written that way partly to appease the ruling elites in some Third World countries who wish to make money from the exploitation of renewable resources. It presupposes the need for scientific knowledge so that such exploitation can be carried on without long-term destruction of the resources and of the environment as a whole. In one case—that of the whales—it says exploitation should cease until we know how to do it sustainably and until depleted resources have recovered. For the Southern Ocean it says there should be baseline areas set aside where no krill or other living resources may be taken, this for the purpose solely of monitoring. The Strategy thus legitimises the complete or partial moratorium as a management technique for specific purposes. It is in very many ways an admirable document. But it is also a rather dangerous one—like a good weapon in wrong or unsteady hands. Like the Bible it can be selectively quoted to support many opinions.

So despite the specific mention of a cessation of whaling, the Strategy has been quoted by Japan, by FAO and by others to defend the idea that the 1982 decision by the IWC is not only ‘unscientific’ but also contrary to the utilitarian ideology of the Strategy itself. The absence of reference to

moratoria with respect to sealing has been used by the Canadian and Norwegian Governments to oppose actions to halt trade in skins of harp and hooded seals, although the scientific evidence as to the status of populations of those species is even weaker than it is for most whales. And, although something is said in the Strategy about the need to ensure continuation of local human cultures based on renewable resources (largely ignoring the virtually overwhelming influences of multinational corporations in this matter), broader reasons for conservation action are neglected. For example, virtually no guidance is given as to how to behave in the face of uncertainty, yet that is the key feature of humanity in environmental matters. And there is no mention whatever of aesthetics, cruelty, other ethical and moral aspects of our treatment of living systems, nor of the cultural values inherent in the whole scientific enterprise on which humanity embarked centuries ago. Yet ecologists, composers of the Strategy, claim to be holistic in their approach to Nature!

Another illustration of the dangers of utilitarianism comes from an attempt, of which I have been part, to show that there are important so-called ‘low-consumptive’ uses of cetaceans, and that at least in some circumstances the economic values that can be realised from them exceed the values from ‘consumptive’ uses. Charging people to go out in boats and see whales is a case in point. Such arguments have their uses, but they can backfire on conservationists. The IWC has agreed to co-sponsor a meeting in spring 1983 in the Seychelles on low-consumptive uses of whales. I am much concerned that the meeting should give more attention to broader cultural values of live whales in the sea than to whale-watching, although we shall certainly have to show where and in what ways economic benefits can accrue from not killing them.

### **New reasons for studying whales**

What positive actions can be taken to counter the current and new threats to whales and seals? Let’s start by picking up the thread of low-consumptive use. One of the very important developments in recent years has been the invention of ways of studying the biology and sociology of whales and dolphins without killing them: listening to them

with hydrophones, trying to converse with them and watching them closely under water. The freedom to catch whales for scientific purposes over and above quotas, and even despite species protection, which is allowed under the 1946 Convention, has long been a point of controversy in the IWC. A current controversial question is whether whales 'need' to be killed for scientific purposes within the Indian Ocean Sanctuary and possible future ones. Some of us have been saying that it is now possible to find out most of what we need to know to manage whaling by benign studies, or at least as much as can be found out by taking specimens, as scientific killing is euphemistically called. Furthermore, if specimen taking is not permitted there is greater incentive to devise and use benign methods. But these arguments must not lead us into believing for one moment that this is the prime purpose of studying the living whale. The purpose may not even be the discovery of how cetacean populations, and the ecosystems of which they are part, function.

I believe marine science has got much more to offer humanity than that. It may reveal in totally unexpected ways how we evolved, where we now stand in the living universe, and even where we might be going. When, in 1960, Alistair Hardy suggested that *Homo sapiens* may have descended from a marine ancestor, his hypothesis was received with scepticism in the biological profession. Perhaps it did not help that Hardy offered the hypothesis not to a meeting of a learned society but to a Conference of the British Sub-Aqua Club, that he published it in a popular journal—the *New Scientist*—and then elaborated it on the radio! He was doing in the modern way what Huxley did in books, by bringing new ideas directly to a wide public.

Since Hardy, a few others have looked seriously at his hypothesis; most recently Elaine Morgan attempted a synthesis of arguments in her book *The Aquatic Ape*. The hypothesis remains unproven but begins to look very plausible. It meets Karl Popper's criterion for being scientific in that it leads to suggestions for investigations likely to prove or disprove it—specifically exploration of the Afar Triangle for pre-human fossils. But to put together a scenario for human aquatic evolution we need to know much more about secondary *Who threatens whales?*

mammalian adaptation to aquatic habitats. That is where the benign study of cetaceans and seals comes in.

## Whales, elephants and men—what have they in common?

The aquatic origin hypothesis has also led to another intriguing suggestion—that the elephant had a similar origin. And that brings me to another idea. Elephants, hominids and toothed cetaceans all have big brains, long memories, extended parental care of offspring and conscious control of complex vocalisations. Baleen whales perhaps also have these qualities. Is the evolution of intelligent communication and cultural transmission on this planet tightly linked with apprenticeships in the sea? In another essay Julian Huxley wrote of 'The Intelligence of Birds' and what he thought was the greatest difference between birds and ourselves:

'We, whether we want to or not, cannot help living within the framework of a continuing life. The bird's life is almost wholly a patchwork, a series of self-sufficing moments. Our powers of thought and imagination bind up the present with the future and the past.'

I don't know about birds, but I think in these respects humans are unlikely to be unique, as Huxley sought to show. Perhaps even if we no longer threaten sperm whales with extinction, we are already well on the way to destroying their culture as surely as the European invaders destroyed the cultures of the Maya and the Aztec, without entirely exterminating the people.

Perhaps it is UNESCO rather than FAO or UNEP which, in the United Nations family, should now be taking the leading interest in cetaceans. Perhaps it is a pity that in those great endeavours, the International Biological Programme followed by the Man and Biosphere Programme, too much emphasis was given, as in the World Conservation Strategy, to utilitarian matters.

Now a second type of positive action, the improvement and use of law. In the IWC it has been important for preservationists to use all the tools put in our hands by the Convention. Not, for example, to accept the argument—as we were urged to do—that when the NMP had been agreed, other tools than the setting of catch limits should not be brought into use, and specifically



the provision for protected areas. We do also need to use all the other instruments provided by other treaties and by the explicit recognition of a special status for marine mammals, which are particularly vulnerable creatures, in new laws of several nations. One of the most important international instruments now is CITES, since virtually all catching of whales and seals is done for purposes of international trade, that is, not merely to make money, but to make foreign money. It seems to me natural now to reinforce the IWC decision for a ban on whaling through CITES, by securing a ban on trade in products from all species of whales. If a narrow interpretation of the Berne Convention Criteria stands in the way of this, then the Criteria must not be interpreted narrowly. We have two important factors on our side. The membership of CITES is more nearly representative of the human species than is even the expanded IWC. And the representatives to CITES have shown by their past actions that they are not very tolerant of finer academic points if these look like impeding progress towards the goals of the Convention.

Broadening the scope of the discussion is helpful in other ways. Thus we should welcome the fact that the issue of the status of harp and hooded seals of the NW Atlantic, once considered to be only in the area of Canadian jurisdiction and the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO), is being looked at keenly now also by the International Council for Exploration of the

Seas (ICES), the EEC and Europarliament, by IUCN and by other independent groups with little direct economic or prestige stake in the outcome. The new Law of the Sea Convention can also help in that its Articles 65 and 120 give special consideration to marine mammals.

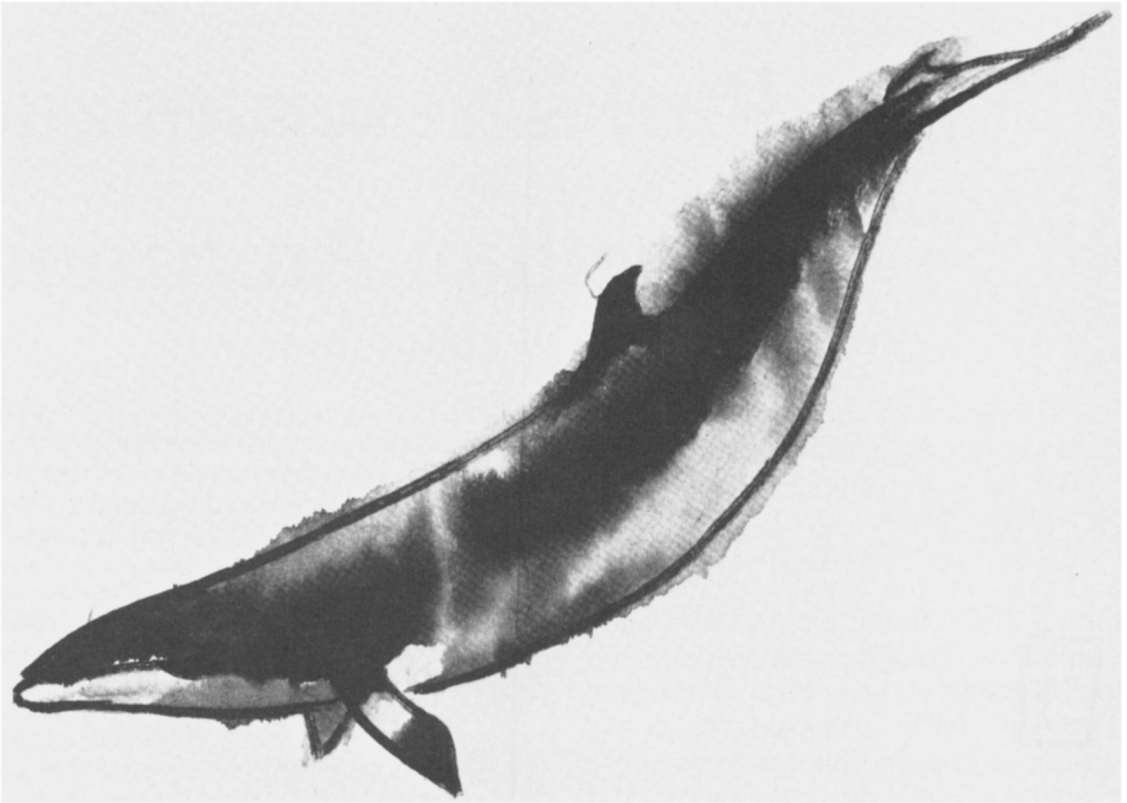
### UNESCO should be involved

I believe that a formal association of the IWC with the UN system would be advantageous for the preservation of cetaceans. The idea was mooted in 1946: it was even included in a special article of the original Convention, since deleted by the original club members. FAO was then thought of as the appropriate UN 'umbrella'. Few people except the whalers would now like to see that umbrella used—it has proved leaky. When fisheries' activities and attitudes are becoming a major threat for cetaceans we wonder if FAO could be objective about them, or effectively shelter them from accusations of pestial behaviour. Around 1972 the new UNEP was thought of as a possible umbrella. But it is not structured for such a function and perhaps even its terms of reference, though much wider than those of FAO, are still too narrow. The UN itself is somewhat cumbersome, and the secretariat to deal with the new Law of the Sea will have much else on its hands as well as being charged firmly with management of the use of non-renewable resources—the sea-bed minerals. My present preference is for UNESCO: it is structured as an



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 Marine Mammals

Issued on the first day of the Symposium on Marine Mammals of the Indian Ocean, 22–25 February 1983, Colombo, Sri Lanka. It is signed by the Minister of Fisheries and the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications.



Minke whale, a brush painting by Lyall Watson, Seychelles Deputy Commissioner, IWC.

umbrella for other bodies, of which the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission is an important example: it is firmly committed to science as a cultural activity, not merely as a tool for the exploitation of resources. UNESCO is also committed to other aspects of our culture than the scientific aspect, such as the protection of the interests of future human generations and of the world's natural and cultural heritage.

In everything I have touched upon, voluntary bodies—non-governmental organisations—have played an enormously important, often crucial role. They have supported science, they have influenced public opinion and helped change attitudes, including official attitudes. They have taken specific actions in the field. They have exposed corruption and malpractice. They have pushed governments. And they have monitored governments and civil servants and tried to keep *Who threatens whales?*

them awake and honest. NGOs must continue to do those things, even when governments say, 'OK, we've got your point, now you leave it to us.' ffPS is one of the oldest of those private organisations, and it has a distinguished record. I hope it will continue to help counter the threats to whales and seals.

Huxley, as I said, was writing and listening in an air-raid shelter here. One way and another we still seem to be in a state of war. All of us have more immediate priorities, survival needs to be met. But it is important that we continue to listen to our music, and to the music of the dolphins. Not because they enrich us materially, nor solve our daily problems. But because they can gently and profoundly please us, and help us know ourselves.

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