

Taiji Dolphin Campaign

Sea Shepherd Exposes & Stops the Slaughter

Sea Shepherd, with the support of many activists, held protests in 28 cities around the world over the brutal annual killing of 22,000 dolphins and small whales in coastal towns in southern Japan. The thousands of letters, faxes and emails delivered a powerful global message to the Japanese Embassies and Consulates, that the insane slaughter of these gentle, intelligent marine mammals must stop. Future protests and direct intervention against these "dolphin roundups" will only escalate, unless these hunts are banned by the Japanese government.

Fishermen capture these dolphins by working in small boats, using sounding rods below the water's surface to interfere with the dolphin's sonar and navigational abilities. Once located, the dolphins are penned overnight then smaller skiffs drive the pods onto the beach where they are slaughtered and bled to death in the



There are times when a photo doesn't need a caption. Photo credit: Brooke McDonald/Sea Shepherd

bay, staining the water blood red.

Sea Shepherd's arrival in Taiji, Japan to document the annual October to April "Dolphin Roundup" exposed to the international media a 'horrific' hunt almost unknown to the

citizens of Japan and to the rest of the world.

On October 6, 2003, crewmembers of Sea Shepherd's Taiji Dolphin Campaign, after hiding out for several weeks in the cliffs overlooking the bay, filmed and photographed fishermen

slaughtering dolphins in Taiji Harbor. The world was stunned by the imagery when our story hit international front pages focusing condemnation and outrage against the Japanese government. Sea Shepherd crew were attacked, intimidated and their lives



This scenic cove near Taiji, Japan will soon become a deathtrap for 60 dolphins on Oct 6, 2003. A couple hours later, the scenic cove is red with the blood of dead and dying dolphins.

Photo credit: Brooke McDonald/Sea Shepherd



threatened by local community members for their daring exposé. The Japanese authorities reaction to this was to post signs in the village and along the cliffs making it illegal to film or photograph the dolphin slaughter.

Sea Shepherd remained strong in Taiji for the next month and a half in spite of growing hostilities and tension directed at them by local fishermen.

They filmed and photographed at every opportunity, and continued their watch over the harbor.

Frustrated that they were still under orders by the Japanese government to avoid being filmed killing dolphins, fishermen started spearing the dolphins in the middle of the bay using their fishing boats as a shield.

On November 18, 2003, unable to endure



Whale Meat can be easily found in Japanese food markets.

Photo credit: Brooke McDonald/Sea Shepherd



On November 18th, Sea Shepherd crewmembers Allison Lance-Watson and Alex Cornelissen dove into the frigid waters of Taiji Harbor to free 15 dolphins rounded up and destined for slaughter by local fishermen. Swimming for over an hour, they untied and brought down areas of the net encircling the dolphins creating escape routes.

Photo credit: Brooke McDonald/Sea Shepherd

another brutal slaying of dolphins, two crewmembers dove into the bay and swam out to free 15 dolphins penned in for slaughter for the next morning. Allison Lance-Watson and Alex Cornelissen swam for over an hour untying and bringing down sections of the net creating escape routes for the dolphins. A passerby on shore observed their activities and immediately reported it to the Taiji police who contacted several fishing boats out in the harbor. After a valiant struggle in the water, see video below, they swam to shore and were immediately arrested and held, in separate jails, for 22 days without charges, bail or communication with the outside world. Letters,

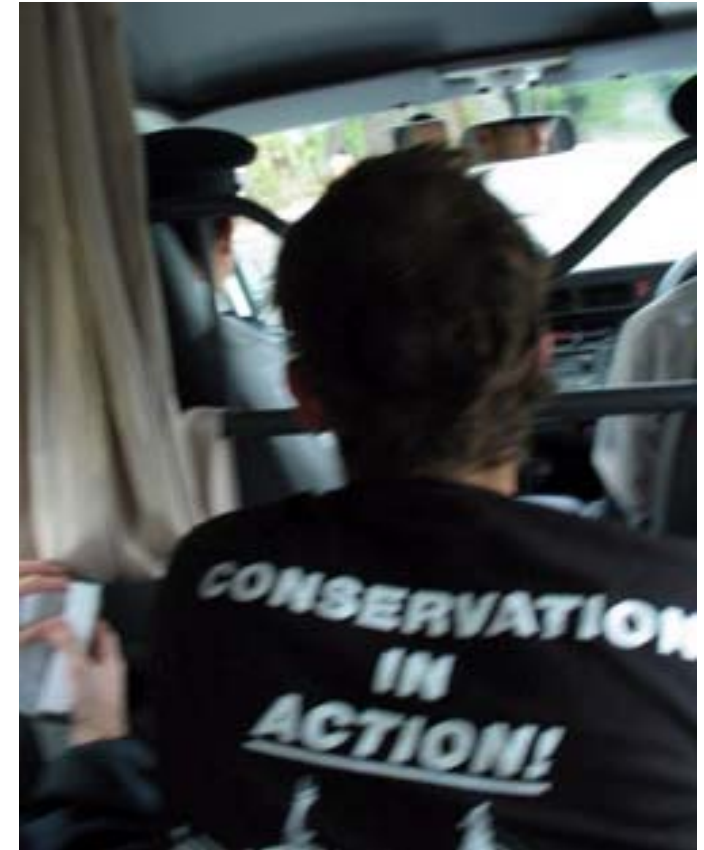


The fisherman, realizing their butchering has been documented, start threatening and moving towards the Sea Shepherd crew, who call the police when they are assaulted by the angry mob.

Photo credit: Brooke McDonald/Sea Shepherd

telephone calls, emails and faxes poured into the police stations, the Prime Minister's office, the Taiji Fishing Cooperative, and most importantly the office of the Governor of Wakayama. This is the office that gives fishermen annual approval to "roundup" and kill dolphins for the markets of Japan.

The overwhelming international support Allison and Alex received proved to be a powerful point of argument for our lawyer, as he negotiated with the Prosecutor of Wakayama for their release from jail on December 9th. In addition, Sea Shepherd was fined 800,000 yen (\$8,000US). Taken directly from jail, an entourage of police boarded



Rather than arrest the fishermen, the police arrest and carry away the Sea Shepherd crew on bogus charges.

Photo credit: Brooke McDonald/Sea Shepherd

them onto a plane in Osaka bound for Seattle and home to Sea Shepherd's flagship the R/V Farley Mowat berthed in Lake Union Drydock.

As they flew into Seattle on December 10th, the International Day of Protest Against the Japanese Slaughter of Dolphins, supporters were holding demonstrations in front of Japanese Embassies and Consulates in 28 cities around the world.



(Above) Japanese fishermen work in concert to load butchered dolphins into one of the catch boats. Over 60 are slaughtered in one day.

(Below) Some of the fisherman get into the water to assist the hunt. Baby dolphins, like the one here, are killed along with their families. Photo credit: Brooke McDonald/Sea Shepherd



Taiji has not seen the last of Sea Shepherd. We will continue our campaign to put pressure on the Japanese government to stop the killing of dolphins and small whales in the fishing villages of southern Japan.

www.seashepherd.com

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society



Please support Sea Shepherd's Taiji Dolphin Campaign, as we continue to focus world wide attention on the slaughter of defenseless dolphins and small whales in the coastal villages of southern Japan. To make a secure, confidential online donation with your credit card, please go to our on-line donation page:

<http://www.seashepherd.org/donate.shtml>

Approximately 20,000 dolphins are killed each year in round-ups like the one Sea Shepherd documented in Taiji. To voice your outrage, send a message by completing the form on this web page:

http://www.voice.maff.go.jp/maff-interactive/people/ShowWebFormAction.do?FORM_NO=5

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