



TAF CAMPAIGN

Overfishing & Ghost Nets

How a lack of action could lead to the inevitable
extinction of marine species.

Overfishing

What is Overfishing?

→ When **more fish are removed than produced (via reproduction)**, fish populations decline. This is considered overfishing

→ Overfishing species will eventually lead to **extinction** as fish populations slowly decrease because **more species are removed** from bodies of water **than are replenished**.





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The Problem

80%

Of global fish stocks are **exploited, overfished, depleted or in a state of collapse...**

~15%

Or **26 million** tonnes of which are considered to be illegal or unregulated **including whaling...**

28.5

Billion tonnes of **bycatch** (the capture of unwanted sea life) results from fishing **every year*...**

Over the past five decades large fish populations (tuna, sharks, cod, marlin, etc) have dropped...

90%

What has been done to protect whales so far?

The United Nations

→ In 1946 the **International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling** was signed to address the overfishing of whales.

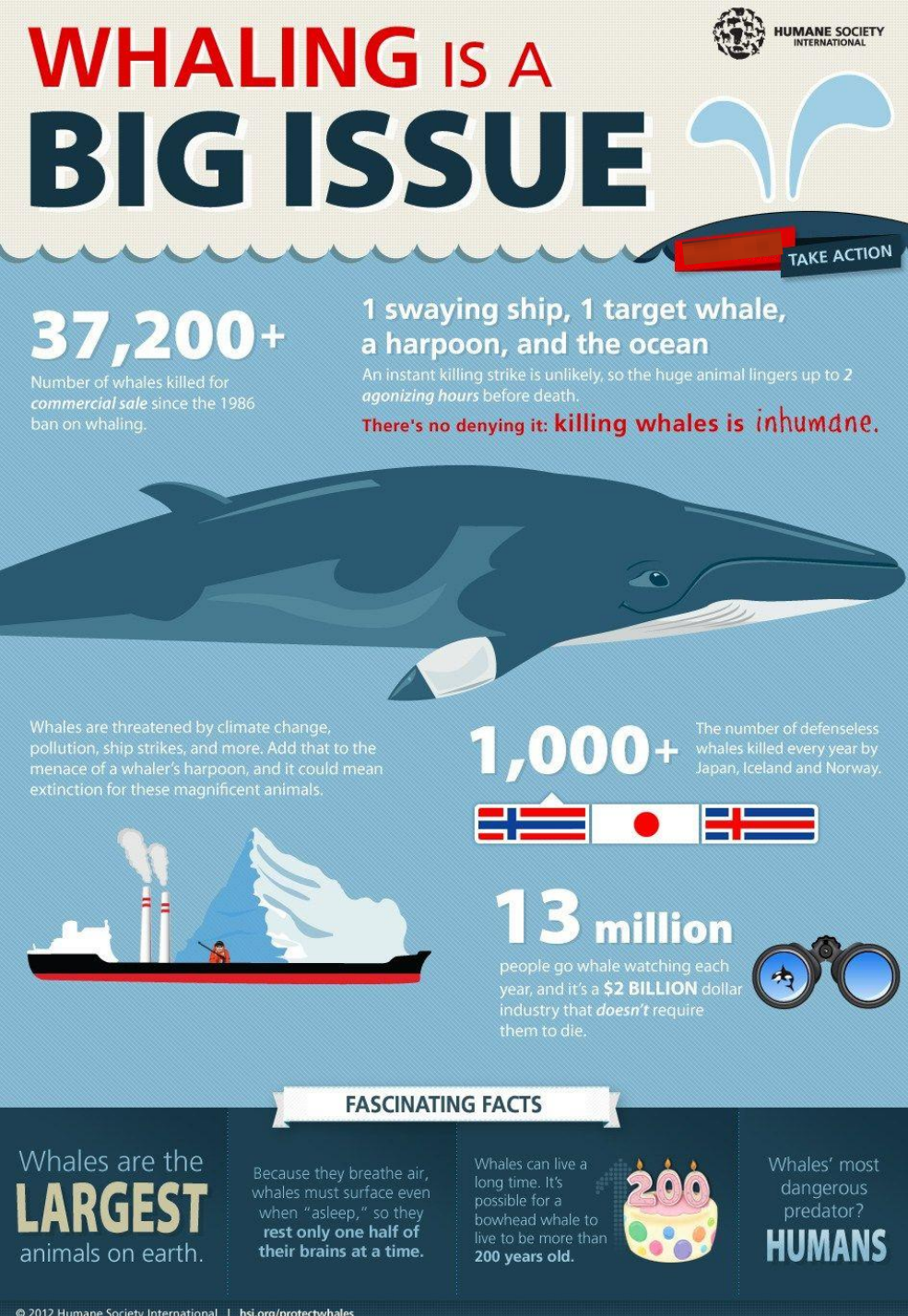
→ The convention set up the **International Whaling Commission** and a **legally binding agreement** that set whale **capture limits** for countries that signed the agreement (renewed occasionally for changes in populations).

→ In 1982 the Commission established a **moratorium of commercial whaling** in the 1985-86 year.

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Whales in the tens of thousands have been killed despite the ban... so what had changed?

→ In 2010 countries that practice whaling advocated for a **controversial amendment** rolling back the 1985 ban.

→ The amendment **permitted “small scale” whaling** (but was really used for countries like Japan and the Faroe Islands to continue the commercial **whaling tradition**).

→ Between 1985 and 2012 more than **37,200 Whales were killed**, these values have increased in almost a decade preceding 2012.

Infographic from: hsi.org/?s=whales or hsi.org/protectwhales

Our Campaigns to End The Ruthless Slaughter Following the 2010 Amendments



Our Whale Interventions:

- Greenland
- Iceland
- Norway
- The Faroe Islands

Our Dolphin Interventions:

- Japan
- Peru
- The Faroe Islands



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Faroe Islands: The gruesome “Grindadráp” Tradition

- While the Faroese believe in continuing the tradition and culture of slaughtering hundreds of Pilot Whales each year, we continue to advocate against it.

WHY?

- Pilot Whales are on the **IUCN Redlist of threatened species**, as there is no known data on the population sizes left for these species. Overfishing these species may soon drive them into **extinction**.
- The Faroese while practicing their abhorrent tradition also **kill** bottlenose, white beaked, and white-sided **dolphins**.
- The Faroese are **killing more whales than can be consumed** thus they are overkilling these whales with **no reasonable justification**.

What have we done?

→ TAF visited all **23 whaling bays** in the Faroe Islands and engaged in several interventions during the visit through discussions with locals and by entering whale slaughter houses.

→ TAF has written several special reports highlighting the visit that are open to the public; click [the link](#) to read more about TAF's visit.

→ TAF advocated and will continue to advocate for **tighter regulations** by **pressuring governance**.

→ TAF continues to **change public opinion** by means of educating.



YOU can Write a Letter to Government Officials

To whom it may concern,

I write to express my deepest concerns about the continuous slaughter of pilot whales. It is unacceptable for a highly modern society to continue the slaughters when your country has sufficient, sustainable and less harsh alternatives to food. I ask why the killings of such large numbers of whales take place when surmounting evidence shows that it is highly likely that the whales will be exposed to unacceptable cruelty, that the consumption of pilot whales pose a significant threat to human health, and that killing these keystone species will cause irreversible damage to marine ecosystems and chains that will not only kill marine species/whales, but also inevitably kill humanity.

I urge you to consult your experts, notable organizations, and much of the outside world that are similarly expressing concerns for pilot whale hunts and slaughters.

Sincerely, (Your Name)

→ **Write a letter** (like the one on the left) to support our fight against the massacre of dolphin and whale species (both vital to marine ecosystems). *Click the [link](#) to check out the full letter and who to send the letter to*

→ Support us directly by [volunteering your time](#) or [donating on our website](#).

→ Help **spread awareness** by following and sharing our posts on social media.

Iceland's Commercial Whaling

→ Iceland is home to **20 whale species** including then Minke Whale and the **endangered Fin Whale**.

→ Although the IWC instituted an **international ban on whaling in 1986** the country continued its whaling traditions well into the 21st century.

→ While Iceland's biggest export was Japan, minke whale meat **was usually served to tourists** even though it is **not a traditional Icelandic dish**.

→ Supermarkets like Nettó, Bónus and Krambúð **sold whale products, while novelty whale beers, whale oil, biodiesel and animal feed** were also produced highlighting the large and prominent presence of a **commercial industry**.



The Men Behind Iceland's Whaling Industry



→ between the years 2003 and 2017 after a 14 year pause, the Island Nation of Iceland has **recorded killing upwards of 1900 whales**. Who is responsible for killing these whales?

→ **Kristian Loftsson**: Owner of the company **Hvalur H/F**. While “official” fin whale hunting has ended, TAF’s visit to the Icelandic city Hvalfjordur in 2017 - where his factory is located - unveiled a different story... **refrigeration units were fully functioning** in his whale processing plant. A local cited that there **is often activity in Loftsson’s facility**.



→ **Gunnar Bergmann Jónsson**: Manager at the whaling company **IP Útgerð ehf**. Jónsson is said to be sponsored by Loftsson and often has a presence in government.



The Decline of Whaling and the Rise of Tourism

→ Anti-whaling advocacy and education by organizations like TAF ended up proving **successful** in Iceland as the **industry has collapsed**.

→ In an interview conducted by the National Geographic, Árni Finnsson, chairman of the Iceland Nature Conservation Association said “What has changed is that the **fishing industry is not willing to support him [Loftsson] anymore**. They feel that Iceland needs to be able to export fish to the U.S. market, and **they don’t want to continue defending whaling**. I think he’s [Loftsson is] done.”

→ The Covid **pandemic restrictions**, along with a **declining demand** in Japan (a main importing country of Icelandic whale meat) have also influences the declining whaling industry in Iceland.

→ The industry has been taken over by **whale watching**, a friendlier alternative, generating an annual revenue of **26.5 million dollars in 2017**.

HOWEVER...

Whale watching is not a simple solution to being “eco-friendly”

- It is vital that whaling ships **maintain safe distances** to **avoid collisions** (which is a major contributor to whale deaths after commercial killing).
- Whale watching ships **emit noise and chemical pollutants**, if the company is not chosen with caution **YOU** could be contributing to harming whales and their environments.
- In other words, **think twice before selecting your whale watching ship**, and make sure the whaling business does not disturb or disorientate whales with the pollution they emit!





Thus it is imperative that...

01

Iceland **continues ban on whaling**. Not only would it be **counterintuitive to kill whales** (a source for a rising, more profitable whale-watching industry), **whale meat** has proven to be **dangerous for consumption**.

02

Iceland **tightly regulates** whale watching to truly be “whale-friendly”. Whale-watching guidelines require a distance between **50-100m, which is TOO CLOSE** to ensure the safety of whales. **Regulation of noise and other pollutants** are also vital to ensuring the **best environment** for whales.

03

Organizations like **TAF**, citizens, and concerned peoples should continue to **advocate, educate, volunteer, lobby, and demand for the end of whaling and tighter regulation**.

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What have we done and continue to do?

- TAF visited Iceland in 2017 to **inspect** the two whaling companies responsible for whaling, **to hold whalers accountable** and **engage with the local populations/organizations** to support their fight against whaling.
- TAF has written several **special reports** and **a journal** highlighting the visit that are open to the public; click [the link](#) to read more about TAF's visit.
- TAF advocated and will continue to advocate for **tighter regulations** by **pressuring governance**. TAF has engaged with local organizations like International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and their **“Meet Us Don't Eat Us”** campaign promoting whale watching.



Norway: Returning to a pre-ban state

→ **Since 1993** Norway has killed over **12,000 whales** and in previous years have augmented whaling quotas by **30% - a 30 year high** almost returning to its pre-ban state.

→ Between **2000-2015** about **68% of the Minke whales killed were female** with more than **40% of them being pregnant** because they are considered “easier targets”. Killing the young has had a massive effect on **the generational populations** of these whales.



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While whaling rises demand falls

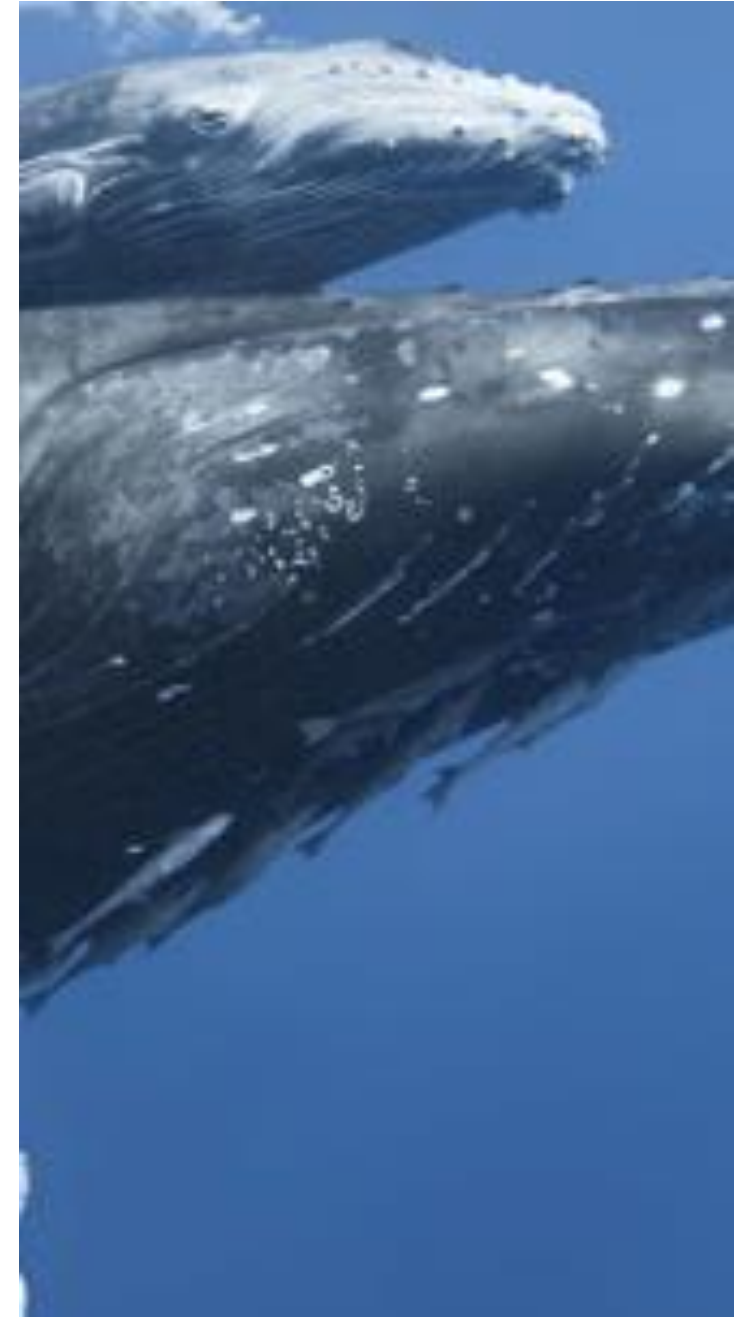
→ **Less than 5% of the Norwegian population consumes whale meat**, while tourist demand for whale meat has similarly declined dramatically.

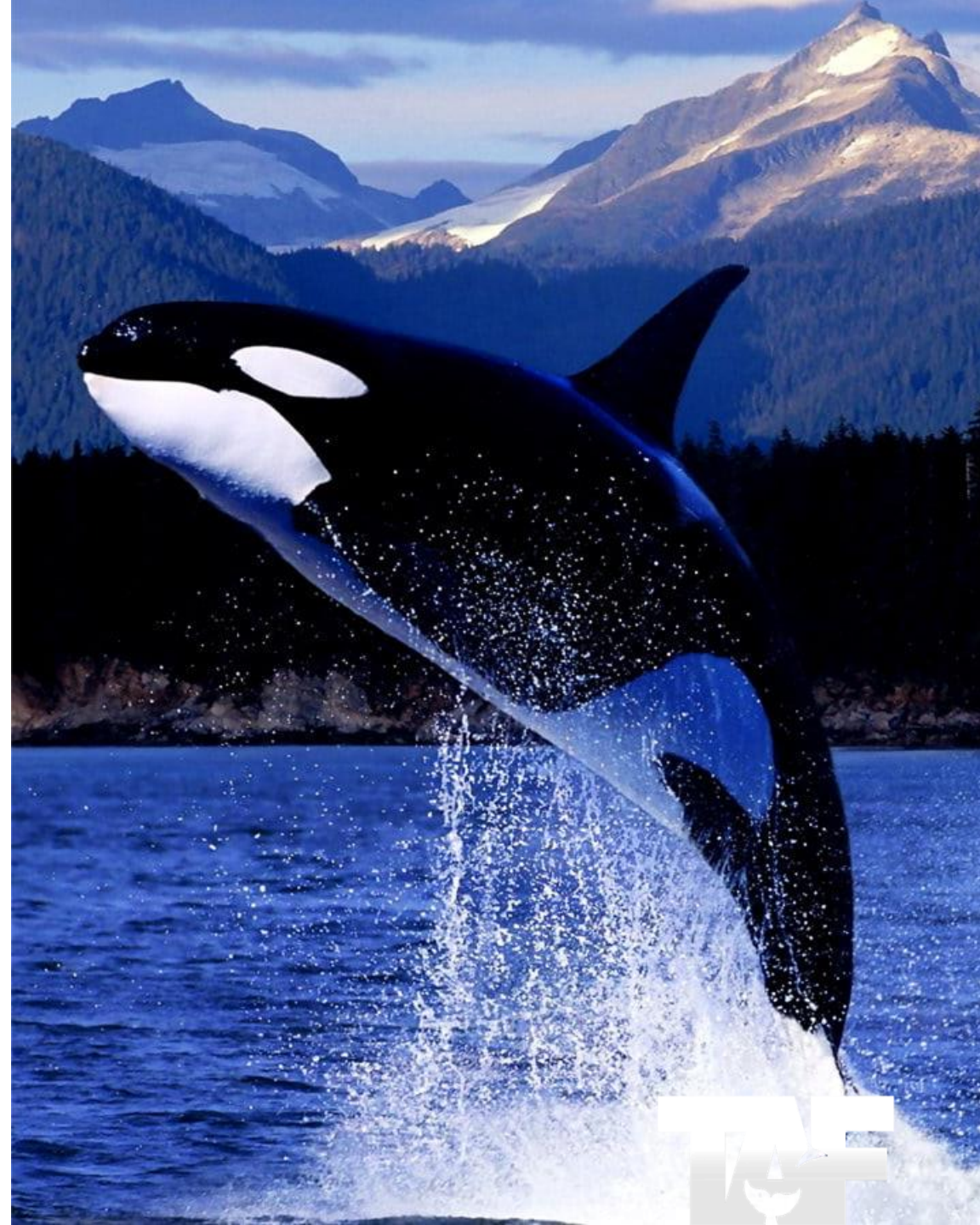
→ Today whale meat is **exported**, used as **animal feed** and **manufactured** into other products like creams or protein power, all of which have cheaper, environmentally friendly alternatives

→ The **biggest whaling company** responsible for killings in Norway is **Myklebust**.



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TAF's Visit to Norway

→ TAF visited Oslo, Norway in 2018 and met with **Norway-based animal rights group NOAH** which was actively working against the whaling industry.

→ TAF also went to the **University of Troms and the Norwegian Polar institute**, both of which reinforced that **Orcas face considerable danger** in Norwegian waters not only from whaling but also the surrounding boating activity that damaged, as there is little to no enforcement whale watching guidelines.

TAF's Visit to Norway Continued

→ To learn more about the whale watching industry we interviewed **“Active Explorer”** (an industry leader in Norway) which reinforced the notion that **boating traffic and un-enforced whale-watching have pushed away Orcas and their prey (herrings)** farther from their familiar environments.

→ TAF also visited Skjervoy and accommodated **Wild Seas on a whale watching trip**. TAF witnessed several boats disobey whale-watching guidelines including distance, which proved to be the most **distressing for the pod of whales** as they were clearly trying to steer clear from the whale watching vessels but were continuously harassed.

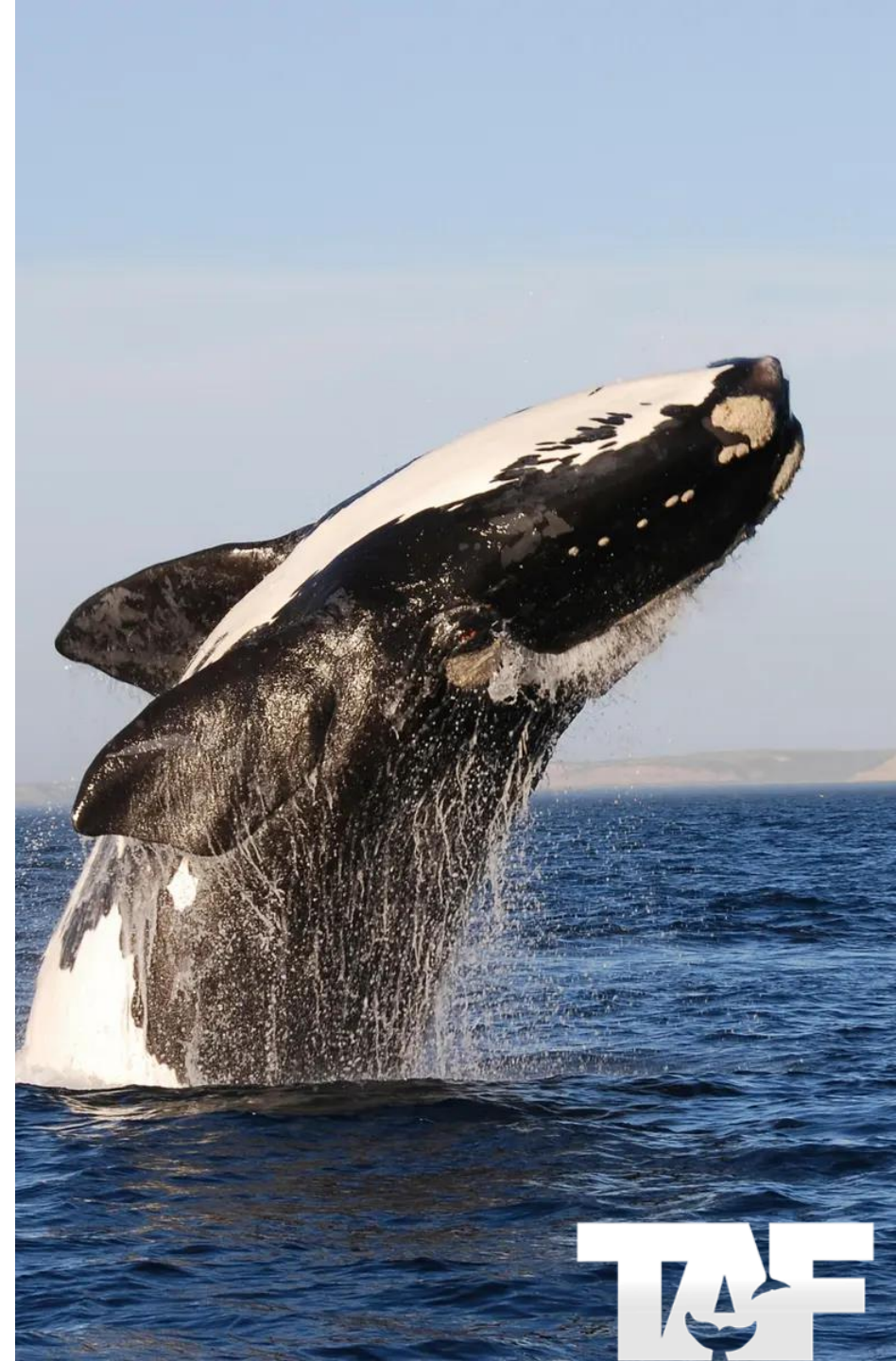
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What we aim to do in Norway?

- **Norway continues to revive and grow its whaling industry** despite lower local and international demand for whale products. **TAF looks to end whaling in Norway altogether by working with local organizations, Norwegians, and the whale watching industry.**
- TAF, along with other actors, looks to **transform the declining whaling industry** into a whale-friendly alternative (**whale watching**) by educating the public to make environmentally friendly decisions about marine life and by advocating for tighter whaling regulations in government.
- While whale watching is a more profitable and environmentally friendly industry TAF will additionally **advocate for whale watching regulations that ensure the safety of whales.**

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What Can You Do?



Support

Volunteer your time or make a donation to organizations like TAF.



Pressure

Demand local or national government officials to prevent the overfishing of these precious marine animals.



Habit

Limit or avoid seafood consumption from controversial suppliers or avoid consumption all together.



Educate

Spread the word, encourage sustainable habits, and more importantly educate people around you about the importance of overfishing.

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Ghost Nets

What are Ghost Nets? (and what is ghost fishing?)

→ Ghost fishing is the process where fishing equipment that remains in the environment (lost, abandoned or discarded) **continues to kill and trap wildlife.**

→ Ghost fishing is otherwise known as **ALDFG**, or Abandoned, Lost or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear. It includes fishing nets, long lines, and fish traps that are still able to catch wildlife when no longer in human control.



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The Problem

640,000

tonnes of ghost fishing gear are introduced into the ocean **every** year...

1 tonne

of ghost gear is left in the ocean for **every 125 tonnes of fish caught...**

1 million

tonnes of fishing gear is lost each year, accounting for **approximately 10% of total annual plastic pollution...**

Why does this happen?

→ Fishing gear ends up in the ocean as a result of many reasons:

- **Lost** during storms/strong currents, **escape** when anchors/floats corrode, neglected as a result of **poor maintenance**, or are **knowingly thrown overboard**.

→ In the 1950s natural materials were used for nets, which degrade quickly if lost, but as the **development of synthetic gear using plastics grew**, these nets were more durable and therefore more economically viable for fishermen.

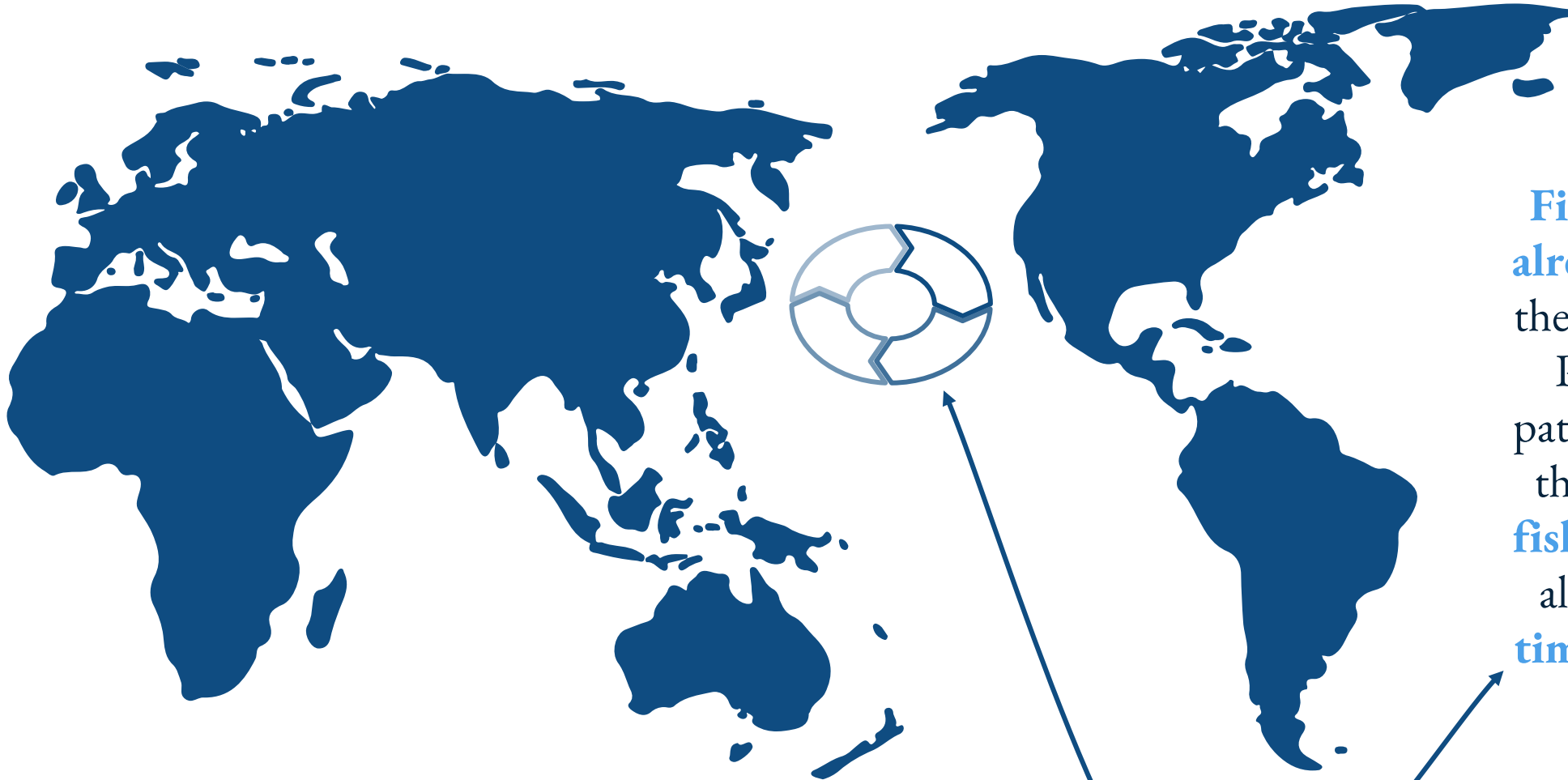
→ Unfortunately, due to the increased production of synthetic fishing gear, **ghost nets have accrued** in the ocean creating what we know as **the world's greatest silent mass slaughter**.

→ Despite the financial benefits, the synthetic nets once lost do not degrade as easily so remains lethal to marine wildlife for **as long as 600 years**.

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Putting Things into Perspective



Fishing nets are said to **already make up 46%** of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch (1 of 5 garbage patches that is three times the size of France). The **fishing nets** in this patch alone are said to be **1.5 times the size of france.**



300,000 Cetaceans (sea mammals like whales dolphins) die to entanglements each year.

Glimmers of Hope

Retrieval (Field Efforts)

- Divers attempt to remove ghost nets from the seas as a direct way of saving marine species.
- Since individual ghost nets may weigh upwards of **5000 kg** it may take diver trips and boats rides to resolve a single ghost net.
- Continually retrieving nets, however, is not a solution to the roots of the problem.
- Irrespective of how many nets are removed, fishing habits continue; Ghost nets will persist, and so will the by-products (killing marine species).



Image from UNEP Regional Seas Report ([link](#))

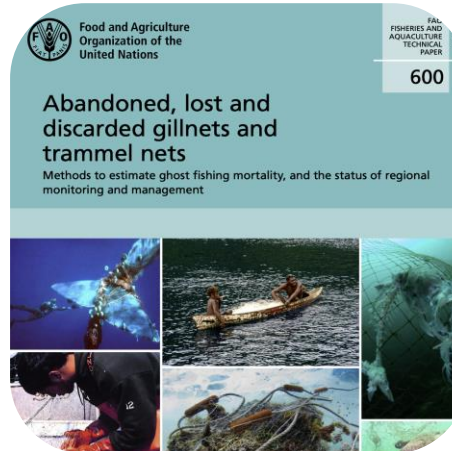


Image from UN FAO Report ([link](#))

Policy Efforts (Prevention)

- Policy change strategies target the future of netting.
- The World Animal Protection successfully lobbied in the UN FAO (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization) to implement **fishing net tags**.
- Tighter policies on commercial fishing and government incentives supporting **biodegradable fishing nets** may help change fishing habits and prevent ghost nets.



What do we do?

- 1) **Pressure** local, regional and national executives to enforce fishing regulations and advocate for all-encompassing penal codes that tackle the root causes of ghost nets.
- 1) **Encourage** the use of “pingers” or electronic/acoustic fishing net tags that help track the location of nets so as to prevent lost nets and hold those who discard them in the ocean more accountable.
- 1) **Raise awareness** to the general public on what the consumption of fish means to the future condition of our marine environment.

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What Can You Do?



Support

Volunteer your time or make a donation to organizations like TAF so we can be better equipped to challenge large industries.



Pressure

Demand local or national government officials to better regulate whaling and the fishing industry.



Habit

Find plant-based alternatives to cosmetic or skincare products that use the ingredients listed in this the previous slides.



Educate

Spread the word, encourage sustainable habits, and more importantly educate younger generations. About the dangers of unsustainable industries.

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BEHIND THE SCENES

