

Whaling: Good for the World, the Nation, and You

Nathan Hopson

Abstract: *This article explores the evolving rhetoric of commercial whaling advocates in Japan and Norway, who frame whaling as essential for global, national, and personal health. I show that proponents leverage sustainability discourse and health narratives to present whaling as beneficial for marine ecosystems, national food security, and individual well-being. By coopting the language of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and casting whaling as "healthy," the whaling industry and its backers challenge the anti-whaling hegemony, portraying it as irrational and unscientific. While the alleged environmental benefits of whaling have been significant to the rhetorical arsenal of the industry since at least the 1990s, a growing emphasis on the personal health benefits of whalemeat suggests the opening of a new front in struggles to influence public opinion.*

Keywords: *Whaling, Health, Sustainability, Food security, Discourse*

Introduction

"How can anyone take a stand against health? What could be wrong with health? Shouldn't we be for health?"

Thus opens the edited volume, *Against Health: How Health Became the New Morality* (2010, 1). While the book offers insightful and cogent critiques "against health," in this article I want to return to the commonsense rhetorical value of these provocations—How *can* anyone be against health? How can *you* oppose *my* health?—and consider the implications of labeling a practice "healthy." In this case, the practice is whaling.

For decades now, Japanese and Norwegian whaling advocates have constructed their discourse around two levels of "health": global/environmental and national. Whaling, they contend, is good—even necessary—for responsible marine resource management. In other words, the industry keeps the oceans "healthy." Rhetorically, this argument that whaling is environmentally "healthy" is founded on the principles of rational, scientific resource usage and ecosystem balance. Opposition, it follows, has been led by "irrational," "unscientific," and "emotional" Westerners (ABEMA Prime 2024). Especially since the 2015 adoption of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.), whaling industry backers have incorporated sustainability, sustainable development, and the language and iconography of the SDGs themselves directly into their arguments.

Whaling is good for individual nations, continues the argument. No country can be healthy without guaranteed access to adequate supplies of healthy, affordable food.¹ Whaling is necessary for the food security of countries such as Japan and Norway unable to survive on domestic food production alone. The same applies to developing nations—especially those referred to as "low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs)" in the technical literature—and even more so with climate change threatening local and global food production and distribution systems. Denying these nations access to whaling is denying their sovereignty and national health. This will lead

¹ The definition of food security currently used internationally rests on four pillars: availability, stability, access, and usability. The last encompasses the clean water, sanitation, and healthcare required in addition to adequate nutrition in order to meet physiological needs (de Oliveira Veras, Parenti, and Neiva 2020, 1).

to famines, lost opportunities, and more environmentally disastrous livestock farming and consumption.

To these arguments, the whaling industry and its backers have recently added a third level of health: personal health. The claim here is that whale is a low-fat, high-protein, immunity-boosting food suitable for weight and stress management, lifestyle-related disease prevention, improved athletic performance, and more. At this early stage, it appears that the personal health benefits of whale-eating are front and center in the Japanese market in a way they are not in the Norwegian. This likely reflects a combination of market, cultural, and legal factors around food and supplement marketing at least as much as it does any doubts about the supposed health upsides of whale consumption. This requires additional research.

Regardless, in summary, the adoption of a holistic “whaling is healthy” (or “whaling as healthy”) discourse reframes whaling as a net positive for individuals, nations, and the world rather than as a negative for Japan in particular, especially in the ongoing backlash against Japanese whaling practices inspired by the 2009 Hollywood “documentary,” *The Cove*, among others (Holm 2019). It also casts Japan, the whaling nation most in the international spotlight and with the largest bullhorn, as the hero of a scientific and rational approach to solving problems of environmental protection, resource management, hunger and nutrition, and so on. While it is also the official position of the Norwegian government (2023) that “Norwegian whaling is sustainable and legal [and] based on scientific criteria,” it is likely the case that defenders of this position in Japan take a certain glee in the “Uno-Reverse” discursive inversion of tired Orientalist stereotypes in support of Japanese political, economic, and soft-power aims.

In fact, this script-flipping is part of a much longer game played by anti-anti-whaling businesses, politicians, and other whaling proponents coopting and repurposing anti-whaling discourse. In Charlotte Epstein’s (2008, 231) words, the anti-anti-whaling

side “embraced the anti-whaling states’ own strategy of inscribing their discourses within broader meta-narratives and drawing on the play of positionings that occurs in other discursive fields.” Initially, the anti-whaling movement defined both regulation and discourse around whaling. Anti-whaling discourse began with the discursive construction of whales as exceptional and endangered animals. Science, as an “authoritative discourse on truth” was subsequently mobilized to further anti-whaling discourses (2008, 20, 220–23). The discourse of “sovereignty” (coded positive) became a leverage point for anti-anti-whaling actors who coopted the language and its power. This occurred specifically around articulations of political and cultural sovereignty, security, and “rational, science-based utilization.” Each of these concepts has a positive valence in the international discourses of and surrounding anti-whaling, so this reversal is a rhetorical triumph that challenges the logical and moral consistency of the anti-whaling movement. In other contexts, this sort of thing has been called “semantic infiltration, the process whereby language does the dirty work of politics” (Herbert Schmerz, quoted in Supran and Oreskes 2021, 711). Appropriating the loaded language of virtue is a key strategy of public affairs at worst neutralizing your opponent’s rhetoric, at best performing linguistic jujitsu, and often just “flooding the zone” enough to muddy the waters (Chesney and Citron 2018; Ulu-soy et al. 2021; Kang and Sheen 2024).

In this article, after briefly explaining why a comparative analysis of Japanese and Norwegian whaling discourse is useful, I sketch out some ways that whaling has been marketed by both Japan and Norway as healthy for the oceans and nations since 2015, with specific reference to coopting the SDGs. Then, I examine the emerging discourse of whaling as healthy for *individuals* in Japan, though I speculate that this new strategy will spread over time. In doing so, I avoid taking a stance on the ontological, scientific, or other claims of either whaling’s proponents or opponents. My purpose is to build on Epstein’s research to understand how the discourse and rhetoric around whaling has changed in recent

years, not to support a particular position within the debate. Overall, I argue that the three-tiered, unified messaging identifying whaling with “health” is noteworthy because, as I asked at the outset, “How can anyone take a stand against health? What could be wrong with health? Shouldn’t we be for health?” In other words, if whaling is “healthy,” or at least if it becomes difficult for a sizable plurality of people to conclusively state that it is not, the whaling industry and its allies benefit from at least the dilution and weakening of the hegemonic anti-whaling public opinion.

Why Norway and Japan?

Norway, Japan, and Iceland are the only three nations with commercial whaling industries. Norway has been a member of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) since 1960. Japan was a member 1951–2019. Iceland joined the IWC in 2022 after a three-decade hiatus. Iceland’s whaling industry has dwindled to just a single company, Hvalur. With no real domestic market, despite a resumption of exports to Japan in 2023 and renewal of Hvalur’s licensure in 2024, the future of whaling in Iceland is far from clear (Imaizumi 2023; Lukiv 2024). Moreover, Iceland has been largely on the sidelines of discourses about whaling, both as protagonist and antagonist. For these reasons, it is excluded from this analysis. In contrast, Norway and Japan have consistently been at the center of international discourses about whaling for many years and there is no sign that this will change anytime soon. Neither does it seem likely that the significant annual whale harvests in both countries will slow down. If anything, recent years suggest the opposite. Norway catches over 500 minke whales annually. Some of this meat is sold on to Japan. In 2020, for instance, 220 of the 533 total tons of harvested meat were sold to Japan, far more than the 164 that found its way to shops and restaurants in-country (Skjelvik 2021). Japan resumed commercial whaling after withdrawing from the IWC in 2019. Shimonoseki-based Kyōdō Senpaku, Japan’s largest whaling concern, launched whalemeat vending machines in 2023 and a brand-

new 9300-ton flagship in 2024 to capitalize on this opportunity (*Shokuhin Sangyō Shinbunsha Nyūsu Web* 2023; Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai 2024).

Continued large-scale whaling—whether classified as scientific or commercial—has been a public relations problem for Norway and Japan since the IWC moratorium on commercial whaling was adopted in 1982 and implemented in 1986. Both countries lodged a formal objection at the time releasing them from compliance. Japan, however, withdrew this objection in 1987, preferring at least the appearance of working within the rules-based international order represented by the IWC (Burgess 2016). This contrasts (rhetorically) with the unilateral Norwegian resumption of explicitly commercial whaling in 1993, but Japanese “scientific” whaling was always seen by critics as a way to circumvent its treaty obligations. Since then, both countries have struggled to justify their whaling industries. From this struggle emerged consistent messaging, particularly around the idea that whaling is a rational and sustainable use of marine resources (Fullem 1995; McNeill 2007). In recent years, this shared messaging has grown and transformed such that it is now possible to identify a three-part discourse associating whaling with the “health” of the planet and its oceans, sovereign nations, and individuals.

Global-Environmental Health

The idea of “science-based, sustainable” whaling as a part of overall marine resource usage and management is not new. Its emergence as a rhetorical device stretches back at least to the International Conference on the Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security in Kyoto (1995) organized by the Japanese government and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which affirmed the need for responsible fisheries development and management. Thereafter, this idea became a permanent feature of advocacy for whaling, which was positioned as simply a normal and integral part of a responsible fisheries industry (Tamura 2003; Diaz 2004; see also Barclay and Epstein 2013). Since the

Act for Ensuring Sustainable Use of Whales was passed in 2017, it became law, policy, and a frequently repeated mantra in Japan (*Geirui no jizokuteki na riyō no kakuho ni kansuru hōritsu* 2017; *Geirui no Jizokuteki na Riyō no Kakuho no Arikata ni kansuru Kentōkai* 2023). The timing of this law, two years after the SDGs were created, is probably not coincidental. The SDGs established sustainable development as a new discursive paradigm for addressing “poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation,” and so on, for “a better and more sustainable future for all.” Since then, Japanese and Norwegian whaling supporters have tailored their messaging around this new paradigm.

For example, kujiraniku.com, the Japanese subsidiary of Norway’s Myklebust Hvalprodukter uses the SDGs framework and iconography in press releases and promotions (kujiraniku.com 2019; Myklebust Japan 2019). Norwegian parent company Myklebust (2017) emphasizes its efforts to make use of the entire animal as meat in the Norwegian and Japanese markets and as ingredients for health and wellness dietary supplements for both people and pets. This is not just true for individual companies; Norsk Hval (2021a), a Norwegian whaling industry association, promotes whale consumption as “sustainable.” Indeed, sustainability is itself “why we should eat more whale.”

In other words, the argument is that whaling is a sustainable, ergo virtuous, practice. The language of environmentalism and social justice, once the purview of whaling’s opponents, is used to reposition whaling as a responsible, even necessary industry. Myklebust Japan (2019) claims that developing whale products and promoting whaling regions contributes to Target 8.5, “full and productive employment and decent work” with equal pay and that dissemination of information about whaling cultures reduces stigmatization and prejudice, contributing to Goal 10.2, “social, economic and political inclusion.” Scientific harvest by small, mostly family-owned whaling concerns is in line, continues the website, with Targets 14b and 14.4, to provide

resource and market access to “artisanal fishers” and “regulate harvesting and end overfishing [and] produce maximum sustainable yield,” respectively. Similar assertions of sustainability are made in Norwegian fishing industry publications (Bjørge and Winsnes 2022; Hopmark 2023; Nordbø 2023), for example, though direct appeals to the SDGs lexicon and iconography are not as prominent.

Similarly, the Japan Whaling Association produced a series of YouTube videos in 2022 whose titles are all some variation of “Eat whale to contribute to marine SDGs!” This includes an animated version pitched to schoolchildren (Nihon Hoge Kyōkai 2022b). Other JWA videos also sprinkle in references to SDGs, sometimes, in case the point was not sufficiently clear, with the added context of reference to Yagi Keiko’s *Behind the Cove*, an anti-anti-whaling riposte to *The Cove* (Nihon Hoge Kyōkai 2020). The argument goes even further in other Association videos (2022a; 2022b): it is in fact irresponsible *not* to continue whaling. This position is built on the foundation laid decades ago (e.g. Tamura and Ohsumi 2000) that whaling maintains the balance of the marine ecosystem. Whales are profligate overconsumers who threaten the oceans’ sustainability. To the question, “Who’s eating all the fish?” (Swartz and Pauly 2008), whaling’s answer is: whales. It is most definitely not the rapidly expanding global fishing industry. Rather, just the 300-or-so whales harvested by Japan from three species of rorquals in 2022 (Sei, Bryde’s, and minke) would have eaten a whopping 60,000 tons of sea life. In other words, that year’s harvest “protected 60,000 tons of marine resources,” evidence that “whaling preserves the balance of the marine ecosystem,” contributing to Goal 14 of the SDGs and to the health of the planet (Nihon Hoge Kyōkai 2022b).

National Health and Food Security

Whaling is not just good (“healthy”) for the planet. It is also good for the nation. Food security has been a serious concern for Japan throughout its modern history. Norway also struggles with food

self-sufficiency. Protein is a significant concern for Japan. Industry backers assert that coastal whaling in particular is a critical hedge against high-impact low-probability (HILP) events such as food blockades, market collapses, or other crises unexpectedly cutting Japan off from food imports. Like the argument that whaling is necessary for the health of the oceans, the messaging is remarkably consistent. Commercial interests such as Japan's largest whaling concern, Kyōdō Senpaku (2023), unsurprisingly use the language of self-sufficiency and food security to justify the continuation of whaling. Politicians and ministers from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) promote this view in press conferences and traditional and online media junkets (ABEMA Prime 2024; Sankei Shinbun 2024). Morishita Jōji (2022; 2023), a former Japanese IWC representative with a long career in food policy and academia, recently argued that whalemeat should be part of a strategy to diversify Japan's protein self-sufficiency away from overreliance on domesticated terrestrial animals. Industrial agriculture is vulnerable not just to disease outbreaks such as BSE, foot-and-mouth disease, and avian flu, but also to the effects of pandemics and wars, as demonstrated by covid and the war in Ukraine, for example. Moreover, meat production is environmentally unsound, a problem exacerbated by food mileage, since most of Japan's meat supply is imported. Near-coastal so-called "small-type coastal whaling" (*engan kogata hōgei*) has none of these disadvantages.²

Moreover, it is an oft-repeated talking point that, with the world's population nearing ten billion, failure to adopt "science-based, sustainable" whaling will lead to increased malnutrition, famine, and so on, especially in the developing world (Diaz 2004; Kita 2008, 22–25; Suisanchō 2017, sec. 1.1.1). This position appears to be gaining support in Africa and the Caribbean, as evidenced by a draft resolution on food security (IWC/68/8.2/01) introduced by Ghana, Cambodia, The Gambia, the Republic of Guinea, and Antigua and Barbuda to the 68th Meet-

² This position (e.g. Yagi 2019) assumes a world in which Japan might be cut off from food but not from the petroleum to fuel its fishing and whaling fleets. This may reflect a misappropriation of rhetoric crafted in Norway, a major petroleum producer.

ing of the IWC (2022). Not incidentally, Norway was one of the resolution's supporters, along with Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Kiribati, Liberia, St. Lucia, Morocco, and the Solomon Islands. Other than Norway, none of these sponsoring and supporting nations are engaged in commercial whaling. All, however, are island or coastal lands with low food self-sufficiency. Whether or not backroom politicking or a shared sense of resentment vis-à-vis cultural or economic imperialism were at work, it is not difficult to see the appeal of SDG 14, namely to "sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development," and, in accordance with this goal, to pursue "the sustainable use of marine living resources, including whales" to ensure a secure food supply, and with it "preservation of cultural identity and security of livelihoods" (2024, 2). This resolution was scheduled for debate at the IWC's next biennial meeting in Lima, September 2024, but was "withdrawn for further discussion in [the] intersessional period" (International Whaling Commission 2024) leading up to IWC70.

Personal Health

In addition to being healthy for the planet and the nation-states of the world, whale is healthy for the individual. This is the new argument being made in Japan, and to a lesser extent in Norway, to encourage individuals to consume whale products and also, I argue, to make that choice harder to critique. After all, "How can anyone take a stand against health? What could be wrong with health?" If environmental and national health claims about whaling frame personal consumption choices as consonant with enlightened self-interest, whale's health benefits appeal to more *banal* self-interest.

Whalemeat is, nutritionally, described by its purveyors as surf-and-turf-in-one: high in protein, low in fat and cholesterol, rich in collagen, and with the healthy omega fatty acids found in fish.³ This has been the basis for industry claims that eating whale instead of meat can lower the risk of hypertension,

³ It is also sometimes described as hypoallergenic, at least compared with meat (Okuno Suisan 2023).

myocardial infarction, and adult-onset diabetes; and improve cognitive function. These assertions are boilerplate for whaling's backers in both Norway and Japan (Kyōdō Senpaku 2020; Merkevarforeningen for Norsk Hval 2021b; iTromsø 2023; kujiraniku.com 2024).

However, Japan and Norway part ways here, at least for now, in one interesting way. Japan's whaling industry has made far more aggressive and stronger claims for the health benefits of balenine. Balenine is an imidazole dipeptide described by the industry as the secret of the great whales' tireless global circumnavigation. This has led to advertising promoting balenine's alleged anti-fatigue and recovery-promoting properties for humans, too—some specifically for athletic performance, others generalized to the overworked “salaryman” and “office lady (OL).”⁴ This is a relatively recent development. A dozen years ago, a popular science article (*Nikkei Herusu* 2012) expounded on the benefits for “tired women” of a range of imidazole dipeptides in tuna, bonito, migratory birds, *and* whales. This is quite different from the more recent trend of promoting whale balenine specifically and exclusively, which seems to have its roots around this same time. References to balenine began appearing in Fisheries Agency white papers that year (2012, 124), and with concentrated promotion, balenine has become a top selling point for whalemeat in the intervening years, as illustrated by the Japan Whaling Association's use of Barenin-chan (fig. 1) as a promotional mascot.

The Japan Whaling Association has advertised the health benefits of balenine since at least its 2018 annual “factbook” on whaling, which was almost entirely devoted to the topic (Nihon Hoge Kyōkai 2018). Around the same time, videos extolling balenine began to appear on YouTube (Mame Chishiki Channeru 2019). While it does not appear that social media has become a particularly successful marketing channel for balenine, a small number of can now be found on other platforms such as Instagram, X, Facebook, and TikTok. Early videos were

⁴ Laboratory studies of balenine's effects have produced mixed results (Yang et al. 2022; de Jager et al. 2023).



Fig. 1: Barenin-chan

mostly industry produced. More recently, influencers have joined the fray. There are also industry-influencer collaborations portraying whalemeat as part of a high-performance, healthy diet for athletes (Kujira Japan 2023). The Kujira Town website (2019) features a series of interviews with athletes, nutritionists, and others extolling the positive effects of whalemeat on athletic performance. Rajikku (2018), another online whale product retailer, headlines its website, “Recommended for athletes and those pursuing beauty,” a recommendation it supports with charts of data on the balenine content of whale and favorable comparisons of whale's macronutrient and fatty acid content to beef, pork, and chicken.

And if *your* health, beauty, and work and athletic performance are not enough motivation to consume whale, the whaling industry would like to remind you that whale fed a generation of children after World War II, fending off starvation and producing the strong, healthy, productive workers who resurrected Japan. Whale, as one retailer (Okuno Suisan 2023) puts it, is “a superfood indispensable for children, too,” and must return to school lunches for the health of future generations. This return to whale in the command economy of the school lunch program

is, this argument continues, in line with the government's post-2005 "food and nutrition education" (*shokuiku*) policy teaching "proper" eating habits for lifelong health.⁵

Concluding Remarks

As I suggested at the beginning of this article, this three-part "whaling is healthy, whaling is good" discourse reframes whaling as a net positive for individuals, nations, and the world rather than as a negative for whaling nations. There are certainly counterclaims questioning or outright denying the "healthiness" of whaling, some of which come from within the whaling nations themselves. Among the most obvious are the concerns raised by scientists, activists, and government health authorities about the high levels of neurotoxic methylmercury (MeHg) in some cetaceans.⁶ In a sense, this actually supports my central argument that the veracity of arguments about whaling as "healthy" is less important than their framing and resultant resonance or emotional plausibility (Hopson 2017, 66). We backfill and retcon and use motivated reasoning not to come to conclusions, but to justify the conclusions we've already reached. It helps, though, when you can feel good about them, and this narrative of health may go a long way here. At the very least, the new claim that whale is healthy for individuals adds an additional layer to the structural script-flipping backlash politics of anti-anti-whaling that Epstein analyzed. That layer is founded on the broadly shared value of an individual's right to health, which may make it an effective weapon in the ongoing battles over whaling's future.

⁵ On *shokuiku*, see, for example, Kimura (2011), Yotova (2016), Assmann (Assmann 2017).

⁶ There is a decades-long debate on the subject, fueled by data collected from areas of high whale consumption such as Taiji, Wakayama (Taijichō, n.d.; Endo and Haraguchi 2010; Nakamura et al. 2014) and the Faroe Islands (Weihe and Joensen 2012; Mathisen 2014), and predictable clashes between locals and activists (iTromsø 2023; Martinsen and Maria 2024), and in Japan, at least, resulting mostly in cautious recommendations from national and local governments that perinatal women limit consumption of toothed-whale products (Suisanchō, n.d.; Kōseirōdōshō Shokuhin Hokenbu 2003; Kōseirōdōshō Iyaku Shokuhinkyoku Shokuhin Anzenbu Kijun Shinsaka 2005).

Acknowledgements: *An early version of this paper was presented at Japan: Pre-Modern, Modern, Contemporary (hosted by the Bucharest University of Economic Studies Centre for Japanese Studies, September 2024). In addition to the journal's anonymous reviewer, the author would like to thank audience members at the conference for their constructive feedback and Frank Clements for helpful comments on a subsequent draft.*

References

- ABEMA Prime. 2024. 【クジラ】捕鯨は必要?日本古来の食文化?食料資源&栄養素として?そもそもなぜ食べる?自民議員と考える [[Whales] Is whaling necessary? Is it ancient Japanese food culture? As a food resource and nutrient? Why do we eat them in the first place? Considering with an LDP lawmaker]. <https://youtu.be/yUNGuoN-bgs>.
- Assmann, Stephanie. 2017. "Culinary Politics in Japan: The Shokuiku Campaign." *Gastronomica* 17 (3): 15–23. <https://doi.org/10/gmchpb>.
- Barclay, Kate, and Charlotte Epstein. 2013. "Securing Fish for the Nation: Food Security and Governmentality in Japan." *Asian Studies Review* 37 (2): 215–33. <https://doi.org/10/gr6t7p>.
- Bjørge, Arne, and Charlotte Winsnes. 2022. "Høsting av sjøpattedyr bidrar til å oppfylle FN's bærekraftsmål [Harvesting marine mammals contributes to meeting the UN's SDGs]." *Fiskeribladet* [The Fisheries Magazine], August 31, 2022. <https://www.fiskeribladet.no/debatt/hosting-av-sjopattedyr-bidrar-til-a-oppfylle-fns-barekraftsmal/2-1-1286773>.
- Burgess, Chris. 2016. "'Killing the Practice of Whale Hunting Is the Same as Killing the Japanese People': Identity, National Pride, and Nationalism in Japan's Resistance to International Pressure to Curb Whaling." *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 15 (Issue 8, Number 2, Article ID 4881): 1–17.

Chesney, Robert, and Danielle Keats Citron. 2018. “Deep Fakes: A Looming Challenge for Privacy, Democracy, and National Security.” *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3213954>.

Diaz Gabriel Gomez. 2004. “食料安全保障と鯨 [Food security and whales].” 鯨研通信 [Geiken tsūshin] 424:1–8.

Endo, Tetsuya, and Koichi Haraguchi. 2010. “High Mercury Levels in Hair Samples from Residents of Taiji, a Japanese Whaling Town.” *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 60 (5): 743–47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2009.11.020>.

Epstein, Charlotte. 2008. *The Power of Words in International Relations: Birth of an Anti-Whaling Discourse*. Politics, Science, and the Environment. MIT Press.

Fullem, Gregory D. 1995. “Norway, the International Whaling Moratorium, and Sustainable Use: A Modern Environmental Policy Conundrum.” *Willamette Bulletin of International Law and Policy* 3 (1): 79–115.

鯨類の持続的な利用の確保に関する法律[Act for Ensuring Sustainable Use of Whales]. 2017. <https://laws.e-gov.go.jp/law/429AC0100000076>.

鯨類の持続的な利用の確保の在り方に関する検討会 [Committee to Review Methods to Ensure Sustainable Cetacean Use]. 2023. “鯨類の持続的な利用の確保の在り方に関する検討会取りまとめ [Committee to Review Methods to Ensure Sustainable Cetacean Use summary].” <https://www.jfa.maff.go.jp/j/study/attach/pdf/230328-49.pdf>.

Government.no. 2023. “Whaling.” [regjeringen.no](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/food-fisheries-and-agriculture/fishing-and-aquaculture/kval-og-sel/whaling/id2001553/). January 9, 2023. <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/food-fisheries-and-agriculture/fishing-and-aquaculture/kval-og-sel/whaling/id2001553/>.

Holm, Fynn. 2019. “After Withdrawal from the IWC: The Future of Japanese Whaling.” *The*

Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus 17 (4) (4). <https://apjif.org/2019/04/holm>.

Hopmark, Lars. 2023. “Jeg spiser min hvalbiff med god samvittighet [I eat my whale steak with a clear conscience].” *Fiskeribladet* [The Fisheries Magazine], May 23, 2023. <https://www.fiskeribladet.no/debatt/jeg-spiser-min-hvalbiff-med-god-samvittighet/2-1-1454741>.

Hopson, Nathan. 2017. *Ennobling Japan's Savage Northeast: Tōhoku as Postwar Thought, 1945-2011*. Harvard University Asia Center.

Imaizumi Ryō 今泉遼. 2023. “大型鯨肉輸入本格再開、4年ぶり供給量回復消費増へ [Imports of meat from large whales resume for the first time in four years, toward supply recovery and consumption increases].” 読売新聞 [Yomiuri Shinbun], May 13, 2023.

International Conference on the Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security. 1995. “The Kyoto Declaration and Plan of Action.” Kyoto: Fisheries Agency. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ac442e>.

International Whaling Commission. 2024. “IWC69 2024.” 2024. <https://iwc.int/events-and-workshops/iwc69-2024>.

iTromsø. 2023. “Norsk hvalfangst er sunt og bra [Norwegian whaling is healthy and good].” [itromso.no](https://www.itromso.no/meninger/i/xgX51G/norsk-hvalfangst-er-sunt-og-bra), May 24, 2023. <https://www.itromso.no/meninger/i/xgX51G/norsk-hvalfangst-er-sunt-og-bra>.

Jager, Sarah de, Stefaan Van Damme, Siegrid De Baere, Siska Croubels, Ralf Jäger, Martin Purpura, Eline Lievens, Jan G. Bourgois, and Wim Derave. 2023. “No Effect of Acute Balenine Supplementation on Maximal and Submaximal Exercise Performance in Recreational Cyclists.” *International Journal of Sport Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism*

33 (2): 84–92. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ijs-nem.2022-0115>.

Kang, Myunghoon, and Greg Chih-Hsin Sheen. 2024. “The Making of the Boy Who Cried Wolf: Fake News and Media Skepticism.” *Political Science Research and Methods*, March, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2024.7>.

Kimura, Aya Hirata. 2011. “Nationalism, Patriarchy, and Moralism: The Government-Led Food Reform in Contemporary Japan.” *Food and Foodways* 19 (3): 201–27. <https://doi.org/10/dsc5wv>.

Kita Yoshito 喜多義人. 2008. “国際捕鯨問題と日本 [The international whaling issue and Japan].” In 代日本の法と政治 粕谷進先生古稀記念 [*Japanese law and politics in the 1980s: Festschrift to commemorate the 70th birthday of Professor Kasuya Susumu*], edited by 須藤英章 [Sudō Hideaki], 11–29. 信山社 [Shinzansha].

Kōseirōdōshō Iyaku Shokuhinkyoku Shokuhin Anzenbu Kijun Shinsaka 厚生労働省医薬食品局 食品安全部基準審査課. 2005. “妊婦への魚介類の摂食と水銀に関する注意事項の見直しについて (Q&A) [Regarding the review of precautions for pregnant women regarding the consumption of seafood and mercury (Q&A)].” November 2, 2005. <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/topics/bukyoku/iyaku/syoku-anzen/qa/051102-1.html>.

Kōseirōdōshō Shokuhin Hokenbu 厚生労働省食品保健部. 2003. “鯨由来食品のPCB・水銀の汚染実態調査結果について [Survey results on PCB and mercury contamination of whale-derived food products].” January 16, 2003. <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/houdou/2003/01/h0116-4.html>.

Kujira Japan. 2023. ボディビルダーkatochanに聞く 栄養摂取・身体作りの極意…そして鯨肉の健康効果! [Asking bodybuilder katochan about the secrets of nutrition and bodybuilding... and the health benefits of whale meat!] <https://youtu.be/Ygig5Wf232w>.

Kujira Town くじらタウン. 2019. “くじらタウン [Kujira Town].” くじらタウン [Kujira Town]. <https://www.kujira-town.jp/>.

kujiraniku.com. 2019. “くじらSDGs [Whale SDGs].” kujiraniku.com. 2019. <https://www.kujiraniku.com/blog/category/sdgs/geiniku.com/category/sdgs/>.

———. 2024. “kujiraniku.com.” kujiraniku.com. 2024. [kujiraniku.com](https://www.kujiraniku.com).

Kyōdō Senpaku 共同船舶. 2020. “くじらを食べ、受験にし”くじら”ない! [Eat whale and don’t make a whale of a mess on exams!]” January 28, 2020. <http://www.kyodo-senpaku.co.jp/wordpress/archives/3665>.

———. 2023. “Company.” November 25, 2023. <https://www.kyodo-senpaku.co.jp/company/>.

Lukiv, Jaroslav. 2024. “Iceland Permits Whale Hunting amid Sharp Criticism.” *BBC News*. June 11, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2ll8d-00kzgo>.

Mame Chishiki Channeru 豆ちしきちゃんねる. 2019. 調べてみたら『鯨肉』には驚くような効能がありました [When we looked into it, it turned out that whale-meat has surprising health benefits]. <https://youtu.be/VQokcKAdBq0>.

Martinsen, Siri, and Lien Maria. 2024. “Nei, regjeringen – hvalkjøtt er ikke «sunt» [No, government: whalemeat is not ‘healthy’].” itromso.no, June 17, 2024. <https://www.itromso.no/meninger/i/W0jO3r/nei-regjeringen-hvalkjott-er-ikke-sunt>.

Mathisen, Georg. 2014. “Spiser hval, får Parkinson [Eat whale, get Parkinson’s].” forskning.no, February 18, 2014. <https://www.forskning.no/sykdommer-mat-fangst/spiser-hval-far-parkinson/580115>.

McNeill, David. 2007. “Japan and the Whaling Ban: Siege Mentality Fuels ‘Sustainability’ Claims.” *The*

Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus 5 (2). <https://apjjf.org/david-mcneill/2353/article>.

Merkevareforeningen for Norsk Hval [Brand Association for Norwegian Whale]. 2021a. “Derfor bør vi spise mer hval [Therefore we should eat more whale].” 2021. <https://www.norskhval.no/artikler/baerekraftig-derfor-bor-vi-spise-mer-hval>.

— — —. 2021b. “Derfor er norsk hval sunt [Therefore Norwegian whale is healthy].” 2021. <https://www.norskhval.no/artikler/derfor-er-norsk-hval-sunt>.

Metzl, Jonathan Michel. 2010. “Introduction: Why Against Health?” In *Against Health: How Health Became the New Morality*, edited by Jonathan Michel Metzl and Anna Kirkland, 1–11. New York University Press.

Morishita Jōji 森下丈二. 2022. “捕鯨問題の背景を改めて考える—持続可能な利用と環境保護、人間と自然に関する世界観— [Reconsidering the background of the whaling issue: Sustainable use, environmental protection, and a worldview regarding humans and nature].” 鯨研通信 [*Geiken tsūshin*], no. 493 (March), 9–14.

— — —. 2023. “鯨と食料安全保障 [Whales and food security].” 鯨研通信 [*Geiken tsūshin*], no. 498 (June), 1–5.

Myklebust Japan. 2019. “日本初! 捕鯨会社が「くじらSDGs」を宣言! [A first in Japan! Whaling company declares ‘Whale SDGs!’]” <https://prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000004.000046160.html>.

Myklebust, Ole Mindor. 2017. “Hvalfangst, bærekraft og utnyttelse av råstoff [Whaling, sustainability, and the utilization of raw materials].” https://www.moreforsk.no/download.aspx?object_id=FB990D10D1674016AA44E2AC6A08D390.pdf.

Nakamura, Masaaki, Noriyuki Hachiya, Ken-ya Murata, Ichiro Nakanishi, Tomoyoshi Kondo, Akira

Yasutake, Ken-ichiro Miyamoto, et al. 2014. “Methylmercury Exposure and Neurological Outcomes in Taiji Residents Accustomed to Consuming Whale Meat.” *Environment International* 68 (July): 25–32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2014.03.005>.

Nihon Hoge Kyōkai 日本捕鯨協会. 2018. 「バレニンで、みんな元気!」 [“Everyone healthy with balenine!”] 日本捕鯨協会[Nihon Hoge Kyōkai]. <https://www.whaling.jp/pdf/factbook2018.pdf>.

— — —. 2020. 1 The Japanese and Whales (Nihonjin to kujira). <https://youtu.be/RgFkwx2n1XU>.

— — —. 2022a. 鯨を食べて海の生態系のバランスを守り「海のSDGs」に貢献しよう [Let’s eat whale to protect marine ecosystem balance and contribute to ‘Ocean SDGs’]. https://youtu.be/0pOpeex_gRg.

— — —. 2022b. クジラを食べて海の生態系を守り「海のSDGs」に貢献しよう(アニメ) [Let’s eat whale to protect the marine ecosystem and contribute to ‘Ocean SDGs’ (animated)]. <https://youtu.be/OI4gFf-0hPSE>.

Nikkei Herusu 日経ヘルス. 2012. “疲れをためにくい食品成分に注目! [Focus on a food ingredient that helps prevent fatigue],” October 2012.

Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai 日本放送協会. 2024. “新しい捕鯨母船「関鯨丸」今シーズンの漁に向け出漁式下関 [Ceremony for new whaling ship ‘Kangeimaru’ setting off for fishing season, Shimonoseki].” NHK NEWS WEB. September 19, 2024. <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/lnews/yamaguchi/20240521/4060020119.html>.

Nordbø, Dagfinn. 2023. “Hval er verdens beste sjømat! [Whale is the world’s best seafood!].” *Fiskeribladet* [The Fisheries Magazine], October 5, 2023. <https://www.fiskeribladet.no/kommentar/hval-er-verdens-beste-sjomat-/2-1-1448176>.

Okuno Suisan 奥野水産. 2023. “学校給食に鯨肉をおすすめする理由は驚異的な抗疲労成分「バ

レニン」があるから(食育バンザイ!) [Whalemeat recommended for school lunches because it contains amazing anti-fatigue compound ‘balenine’ (*Shokuiku banzai!*)].” June 16, 2023. <https://okunosuisan.base.shop/blog/2023/06/16/114344>.

Oliveira Veras, Manoela de, Emanuelle Parenti, and Samara da Silva Neiva. 2020. “Food Security: Conceptual History and Pillars.” In *Zero Hunger*, edited by Walter Leal Filho, Anabela Marisa Azul, Luciana Brandli, Pinar Gökcin Özuyar, and Tony Wall, 1–10. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69626-3_21-1.

Rajikku らじっく. 2018. “くじら肉について [On whalemeat].” August 23, 2018. <https://www.a-rajic.com/kujira/>.

Sankei Shinbun. 2024. “林芳正官房長官、捕鯨文化尊重の立場を強調「わが国の伝統的な食文化の継承は重要」 [Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi emphasizes respect for whaling culture: ‘Passing down our country’s traditional food culture is important’].” 産経新聞 [*Sankei Shinbun*], May 9, 2024. <https://www.sankei.com/article/20240509-X6H3DF7ZWRMI5DPJNUSKH-47LGM/>.

Shokuhin Sangyō Shinbunsha Nyūsu Web 食品産業新聞社ニュースWEB. 2023. “共同船舶、くじら肉無人販売店「くじらストア」本店オープン、月島もんじゃストリートにて冷凍自販機でくじら製品販売、5年以内に100店舗目指す [Kyōdō Senpaku opens flagship unmanned whalemeat store ‘Kujira Store,’ sells whale products in refrigerated vending machines at Tsukishima Monja Street, aims for 100 stores within five years],” August 22, 2023. <https://www.ssnpc.co.jp/frozen/518821/>.

Skjelvik, Sondre. 2021. “Billigdisken, søppeldynga og Japan – her ender det norske hvalkjøttet [The discount counter, the rubbish heap, and Japan: Here is where Norwegian whalemeat ends up].” NRK. September 30, 2021. [https://www.nrk.no/nordland/hvalfangst-mesteparten-av-norsk-hvalkjott-gar-](https://www.nrk.no/nordland/hvalfangst-mesteparten-av-norsk-hvalkjott-gar-til-japan--resten-ender-opp-forskjellige-steder-1.15672206)

[til-japan--resten-ender-opp-forskjellige-steder-1.15672206](https://www.nrk.no/nordland/hvalfangst-mesteparten-av-norsk-hvalkjott-gar-til-japan--resten-ender-opp-forskjellige-steder-1.15672206).

Submitted by Gambia, Rep of Guinea, Cambodia, and Antigua and Barbuda. 2022. “Draft Resolution of Food Security.” IWC/68/8.2/01/EN. 19633. IWC. <https://archive.iwc.int/pages/view.php?ref=19633&k=>.

Submitted by The Republic of Guinea and co-sponsored by Cambodia, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Republic of Congo, Senegal, St. Kitts and Nevis. 2024. “Draft Resolution on Food Security.” IWC/69/9.1/01/EN. 22246. IWC. <https://archive.iwc.int/pages/view.php?ref=22246&k=>.

Suisanchō 水産庁. 2012. “平成23年度 水産白書 [Fisheries white paper 2011].” <https://www.jfa.aff.go.jp/j/kikaku/wpaper/h23/>.

———. 2017. “平成28年度 水産白書 [Fisheries white paper 2017].” https://www.jfa.aff.go.jp/j/kikaku/wpaper/h28_h/index.html.

———. n.d. “捕鯨の部屋 [The whaling room].” Accessed May 21, 2024. <https://www.jfa.aff.go.jp/j/whale/>.

Supran, Geoffrey, and Naomi Oreskes. 2021. “Rhetoric and Frame Analysis of ExxonMobil’s Climate Change Communications.” *One Earth* 4 (5): 696–719. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2021.04.014>.

Swartz, Wilf, and Daniel Pauly. 2008. “Who’s Eating All the Fish? The Food Security Rationale for Culling Cetaceans.” Report, presented at IWC60, Santiago, Chile. https://www.hsi.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/pdfs/whos_eating_all_the_fish.pdf.

Taijichō 太地町. n.d. “水銀と住民の健康影響に関する調査結果 [Results of survey on mercury and its effects on residents’ health].” Accessed October 22, 2024. <https://www.town.taiji.wakayama.jp/tyousei/suigin/index.html>.

Tamura, Tsutomu. 2003. “Regional Assessments of Prey Consumption and Competition by Marine Cetaceans in the World.” In *Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem*, edited by Michael Sinclair and Grimur Valdimarsson, 143–70. Rome: CABI publishing FAO.

Tamura, Tsutomu, and Seiji Ohsumi. 2000. “Regional Assessments of Prey Consumption by Marine Cetaceans in the World.” SC/52/E6. [www.icrwhale.org](http://www.icrwhale.org/pdf/SC-52-E6.pdf). <http://www.icrwhale.org/pdf/SC-52-E6.pdf>.

Ulusoy, Ezgi, Dustin Carnahan, Daniel E Bergan, Rachel C Barry, Siyuan Ma, Suhwoo Ahn, and Johnny McGraw. 2021. “Flooding the Zone: How Exposure to Implausible Statements Shapes Subsequent Belief Judgments.” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 33 (4): 856–72. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edab022>.

United Nations. n.d. “The 17 Goals (Sustainable Development).” Accessed September 19, 2024. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

Weihe, Pál, and Høgni Debes Joensen. 2012. “Dietary Recommendations Regarding Pilot Whale Meat and Blubber in the Faroe Islands.” *International Journal of Circumpolar Health* 71 (July): 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.3402/ijch.v71i0.18594>.

Yagi Keiko 八木景子. 2019. “商業捕鯨が再開したけれど、「クジラの肉が圧倒的に足りない」、「高い」の理由 [Causes of massive whalemeat shortage and high prices despite resumption of commercial whaling].” Yahoo! Nyūsu [Yahoo! News], December 28, 2019. <https://news.yahoo.co.jp/expert/articles/be55ae5e8879544d9099047bb47d7a562aa1061d>.

Yang, Min, Luchuan yang Sun, Yasunosuke Kawabata, Fumihito Murayama, Takahiro Maegawa, Takeshi Nikawa, and Katsuya Hirasaka. 2022. “Balentine, Imidazole Dipeptide Promotes Skeletal Muscle Regeneration by Regulating Phagocytosis Properties of Immune Cells.” *Marine Drugs* 20 (5): 313. <https://doi.org/10.3390/md20050313>.

Yotova, Maria. 2016. “‘Right’ Food, ‘Responsible’ Citizens: State-promoted Food Education and a Food Dilemma in Japan.” *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 57 (3): 326–37. <https://doi.org/10/gjgm6s>.

About the Author

Nathan Hopson is an associate professor at the University of Bergen, Norway. His research focuses on the social history of nutrition science in modern and contemporary Japan and whaling discourses in Japan and Norway.