

H.E. Mr. Minoru Shibuya
Ambassador of Japan
Embassy of Japan
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Dolphin hunt in Japan			

_____ Your Excellency,

At the request of the Standing Committee for Agriculture of the House of Representatives I would like to draw your attention to your country's hunting of dolphins in Taiji.

I understand the dolphins are surrounded by a small fleet of boats where fishermen lower metal poles into the water and bang them to frighten the animals and disrupt their sonar. I understand they are then herded into drift nets and transported, while still alive, to the place where they are killed. The Netherlands, as you know, is not in favour of the hunting of cetaceans. And this whole process is too protracted and unethical from an animal welfare perspective.

I would like to ask you if you can confirm that this process takes place as I described, and if so, to stop it, to prevent further suffering. Earlier, the Netherlands put this to the IWC delegation in Alaska in 2007. The Japanese delegation then said that this issue would have to be decided bilaterally as dolphins do not come under IWC management. I therefore put the question to you with this letter.

I would ask you to raise this issue with the Ministry of Fisheries, to improve the welfare of dolphins in Japanese waters.

Gerda Verburg
Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

Cc to Mr. M. Takemota