

Gesellschaft zur Rettung der Delphine (GRD)
(*Society for Dolphin Conservation, Germany*)

DELPHINPOST

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Kornwegerstr. 37
81375 Munich
Germany

Telephone ++49 (0) 89-74 16 04 10
Facsimile ++49 (0) 89-74 16 04 11

E-mail:

info@delphinschutz.org

Web: www.delphinschutz.org

Our bank details for donations:

Gesellschaft zur Rettung der Delphine
Bank: Stadtparkasse Munich, Germany
Account No. 109 138 388
Bank Code: 701 500 00
IBAN: DE47 7015 0000 0109 1383 88
BIC: SSKMDEMXXX

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Translation: Ulrike Kirsch

Pilot Whales: Rescued in Australia – Massacred in Europe

The sad fate of nearly 200 pilot whales that stranded off the Australian coast early March has moved people around the world. Hundreds of volunteers came to King Island, located between Australia and Tasmania, to help rescue the whales in distress. The rescue team managed to return 48 pilot whales and six dolphins into the water.

At the same time, several hundreds of pilot whales are being butchered on the other side of the globe in Europe by Faroese fishermen. Hardly ever have empathy and deep hatred for a marine mammal species been lying as closely next to each other as in these two scenarios.

In what they call “tradition”, fishermen of the Faroes, a group of islands belonging to Denmark, drive schools of pilot whales and dolphins, including Atlantic Whitesided and Bottlenose dolphins, into small bays. There, the hunters ram iron hooks into the marine mammals’ blowholes to disorientate them and haul them ashore. They sever the animals’ backbones and head arteries with knives. Still alive, the marine mammals are bleeding to death.

The opportunistic hunts take place all year round. The whale meat is distributed for free around the island in spite of the fact that it is highly contaminated. Being at the upper end of the food chain, toothed whales accumulate high levels of toxins including mercury, PCB, cadmium and pesticides such as dieldrin. In late 2008, the Faroese Health Authority issued a health advisory – the first of its kind – recommending against eating pilot whale meat due to the intolerable health risks associated with its consumption.

Please support our online campaign to stop the cruel dolphin and whale slaughter on the Faroe Islands: <http://www.delphinschutz.org/forms/faroerprotest/petition.html>

Ulrich Karlowski

Dolphin Conservation in Peru

The support from many GRD members and dolphin adopters, the funds provided by the “Hand in Hand Fund” (a joint initiative by the German NGO “Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.” and the German organic food company “Rapunzel”), and the support by the theme restaurant “The Cruise Café”, where the proceeds from a special dish go toward our Peru project, have helped our partners at ACOREMA and school students in the Paracas region at least to a certain degree to cope with the aftermath of the strong earthquake that struck Southern Peru in 2007.

The project has been saved. Our adoption dolphins have been sighted again, the school projects continue and the efforts for re-establishing the Environmental Interpretative Center in Pisco have proven successful.

School activities: In spite of the difficult conditions, ACOREMA staff have continued their important dolphin conservation work in 2008, including 120 presentations in 14 schools in the entire Paracas region to teach 3000 students about topics such as conservation and ecology, giving them something at hand to contribute to shaping their own future.

Adoption dolphins in good health: Monthly trips to our adoption dolphins in the Paracas Bay have been resumed after the destroyed pier had been rebuilt. Fortunately, our initial fears of whether the bottlenose dolphins would return to the Bay were dispelled: four new-born dolphins were sighted swimming side by side with

their mothers and three calves born in 2007 were seen with their mothers Chaco, Silver and Pegs.

Beginning of the construction work for the Marine Conservation Center:

The first steps for rebuilding the Environmental Interpretative Center have been taken. The adjoining pieces of land necessary for its construction were bought; an architect is currently preparing the drawings for the building as well as the museography plan, including the concept for the exhibit. For further information please check: www.delphinschutz.org/grd-english/peru.html

The precious support provided by many people has made all this possible and we would like to thank our sponsors, donors, members and dolphin adopters from the depths of our hearts! Schools, private persons living in Peru and other NGOs like the AVINA Foundation have also helped. Thanks to these joint efforts the reconstruction of the Environmental Interpretative Center can start. "Yes we can!" – the famous quote by US president Barack Obama is an encouraging motto in difficult times which can serve us well, too. Yes, together we can! We thank you and appreciate your continued support: www.delphinschutz.org/grd-english/donation.html

Denise Wenger

Our Peru project is supported by the German environmental organization *Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.* (DUH) and the German organic food company *Rapunzel* with funds from the "Hand in Hand Fund", and by the theme restaurant THE CRUISE CAFÉ.

**Fisheries Scandal:
 Mutilated Harbor Porpoises Washed Ashore on Dutch Coast!**

At press time, we received the shocking news that more than 100 harbor porpoises had been washed ashore at beaches in the north of Holland and around the islands of Texel and Vlieland since December 2008, thirty of them being totally mutilated or bearing clear signs of knife cuts on their skins and blubber – the fins were partly cut off, and the meat taken off professionally. Staff of the IMARES Research Center in the Netherlands assume that fishermen have tried to get rid of porpoise bycatch. Dead harbor porpoises sink faster to the bottom of the sea and are faster eaten up by crabs if taken apart. However, the cruel plan did not work out, western winds washing ashore at least some of the dead marine mammals.

It is not known who did this and which fishery is responsible for this extremely high level of marine mammal bycatch. Net marks of 8 cm mesh size on the porpoises' skins suggest that plaice fishery is at cause. However, it seems that the set gillnet plaice fishery only plays a minor role off the Dutch coast according to the authorities. Neither Dutch fishermen nor official observers aboard Dutch set gillnet vessels have reported particularly high bycatch levels. This suggests that foreign fishermen or illegally operating pirate fishermen have been at work.

It is a scandal that no details on the extent and distribution of the fishery are recorded and published, making it almost impossible to identify the culprits.

Interestingly, the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Agriculture until today denies that plaice nets produce harbor porpoise bycatch at all and allows plaice nets to be set in the whale sanctuary west of the island of Sylt!

GRD press