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International Marine Mammal Project: Saving Dolphins

Surfer's Demo Gets Worldwide Publicity

Thanks to recent worldwide publicity, the truth about the Taiji dolphin slaughter is now reaching millions of people.

Last November, a group of committed surfers, actresses, and filmmakers joined Save Japan Dolphins Coalition's director Richard O'Barry in the remote Japanese fishing village of Taiji to pray for the world's original surfers—the thousands of dolphins that are slaughtered here every year. Japan allows more than 20,000 dolphins to be killed every year off its coast, but the Japanese people and the world at large have been ignorant of this slaughter until O'Barry and the Save Japan Dolphins Coalition began a concerted international campaign to bring the story to the public and to stop the slaughter.

Dave Rastovich of Surfers for Cetaceans, Hannah Mermaid, Hayden Panettiere of the popular TV show "Heroes," and Karina Petroni were just some of the heroes participating in the "paddle out." A paddle out is a surfer ritual that takes place when a fellow surfer dies. Everyone paddled out past the surf line and formed a circle, holding hands while praying for the departed. The surfers each carried a flower into the killing cove to offer up to the departed dolphins. Puzzled dolphin killers remained onshore during the demonstration and did not interfere.

The next day, several surfers paddled out toward a group of pilot whales that had been trapped in nets and were slated for slaughter. But, in a dramatic incident caught on camera, dolphin killers confronted the surfers, pushing them back using the dangerous prop of their outboard motor and boat

hooks. The surfers' photos and film footage and the violent actions of the Taiji dolphin killers revealed the shocking secret slaughter of Taiji as never before. The footage of Hayden Panettiere crying on the beach, knowing the pilot whales were doomed, captured the world's reaction to the brutality and the unbelievable cruelty of this hunt.

The Save Japan Dolphins Coalition consists of Earth Island Institute, Elsa Nature Conservancy of Japan, Animal Welfare Institute, and In Defense of Animals.

Information on the dolphin slaughter and what you can do to help can be found on IMMP's Coalition Web site: www.SaveJapanDolphins.org

European Tuna Giant Rejoins Dolphin Safe Program

In a major coup for IMMP, Calvo, the largest tuna processor in Europe, has rejoined the Earth Island Institute Dolphin Safe tuna program, pledging to buy and sell tuna that has been caught only by methods that do not harm dolphins.

Calvo is based in Spain and sells tuna throughout European markets, dwarfing the sales of most other brands. They recently completed construction of a new tuna-processing cannery in El Salvador, but have had trouble selling tuna in the US due to their lack of verification of Dolphin Safe status.

Calvo withdrew from Earth Island's program four years ago in response to efforts by the governments of Mexico and Colombia to replace the Earth Island Dolphin Safe standards with the much weaker Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) standards. Earth Island standards prohibit the

chasing and netting of dolphins during any fishing operations, whereas IATTC standards allow the chasing and netting of dolphins, causing thousands of dolphins to drown annually. If an onboard observer does not see any dolphins die, then under IATTC rules the tuna can be labeled as dolphin safe. Scientists have shown that this weak standard results in deaths of dolphins that are not reported, and, despite promotion efforts by Mexico and the IATTC in Europe, 90 percent of the world's tuna industry continues to follow Earth Island standards.

"We are pleased that Calvo has rejoined Earth Island's program," says David Phillips, director of IMMP. "Consumers demand that dolphins are



Champion surfer Dave Rastovich led a "paddle out" in Taiji, Japan, to protest the killing of dolphins.

protected during tuna fishing operations. Calvo will provide consumers in Europe and other markets with a great tuna product while protecting dolphins and other marine life in keeping with Earth Island's international Dolphin Safe standards."

A current listing of dolphin safe companies is on IMMP's Web site: www.DolphinSafeTuna.org ■

— MARK J. PALMER