



For Immediate Release

Boston Joins Worldwide Protest of Annual Slaughter of Dolphins in Japan
International animal protection groups gather in front of Japanese Consulate for 4th annual “Japan Dolphin Day” demonstration

Boston, MA--September 25, 2007 –Supporters of the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), Massachusetts Animal Rights Coalition (MARC) and Cetacean Society International (CSI) will join a worldwide protest to denounce Japan’s annual slaughter of thousands of dolphins during today’s 4th annual “Japan Dolphin Day.” **The noon demonstration will be held in front of the Japanese Consulate at Federal Reserve Plaza, 600 Atlantic Ave. in Boston**, and at other Japanese embassies and consulates in dozens of cities around the world.

Dolphins are hunted in Japan for their meat, to be processed as fertilizer, and because they are considered competition for fish. A growing number are also captured live for sale to aquaria and marine parks including “swim with dolphin” tourist attractions patronized by many Americans.

Known as “drive fisheries,” these hunts take place from September to April off the shores of remote Japanese port towns, primarily Taiji and Futo. “The cruelty endured by dolphins and whales caught in drive hunts is immense. Aboard motorized boats, drive hunt fishers loudly bang metal pipes over the side of their boats to disorient the animals and drive them toward shore where they are trapped by nets and brutally stabbed,” explains Courtney S. Vail, US Campaigns Officer for WDCS. “Fishers sometimes use cranes to haul them out of the water by their tails, often while still alive, to transport them to a nearby slaughterhouse where they are butchered away from public view. Those selected for live capture are held days and are then taken out by sling or stretcher and transported to cramped sea pens while they await their sale.”

With a growing demand from the marine park industry, the fisheries have found a very lucrative business in the live capture of dolphins and set aside several of the animals for sale to aquaria and marine parks in Japan, and the rest to Asia. More recently, proposals to import dolphins from the drive hunts have surfaced in the Caribbean and Middle East. Each dolphin caught and sold can eventually bring in tens of thousands of dollars when adapted to captivity and trained to perform.

“Obtaining dolphins in this manner for our entertainment and pleasure is not only a crime against nature, but a betrayal of the public sentiment that seeks the protection and welfare of these intelligent and special animals,” says Vail. “Zoos and aquariums that source animals from these brutal hunts are complicit in providing a financial incentive for their unfortunate continuation, and are in direct violation of their own codes of ethics.”

Despite growing international outcry, the Japanese government has turned a deaf ear to the criticism and allows the cruelty to continue. Clearly, though, authorities are aware of the negative public relations surrounding their actions as local authorities in both Taiji and Futo post “Keep Out” and “No Photography Allowed” signs near the killing shores in an effort to keep activists from witnessing and filming the slaughter.

“The Japanese ‘drive fishery’ has generated international opposition from more than thirty animal welfare organizations, but most Americans have no idea of the cruelty involved in capturing and exhibiting dolphins, or the brutal slaughter of thousands of dolphins and small whales that is taking place off the coast of Japan right now,” adds Sharanya Prasad, Marine Mammal Program Officer for the World Society for the Protection of Animals in the United States. “The WSPA hopes this worldwide protest will increase public awareness, and urges the Japanese government to heed the voices of the global community and end these cruel, unsustainable drive hunts immediately.”

Helen Rayshick, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Animal Rights Coalition, agrees: "Dolphins are among the most intelligent, loyal, and fascinating animals on the planet. They are not pests and deserve better than to be ruthlessly slaughtered. It is time for the Japanese government to listen to world opinion and stop the killings.”

“Today’s annual demonstration to protest the largest slaughter of dolphins in the world will be held at the nearest Japanese embassy or consulate office in cities worldwide, including Boston, Washington, New York, Toronto, Los Angeles, San Francisco, London, Rome, Paris, Brussels, Hong Kong, and Manila,” points out William Rossiter, President of Cetacean Society International. “Participants will include animal welfare groups, environmentalists, average citizens, school students, dolphin trainers, and patrons of aquaria and zoos. Anyone interested in protecting animals who lives or works near the Japanese embassy or consulate in any of the cities where demonstrations will be held are encouraged to join us by participating in the protest and speaking out on behalf of dolphins.”

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For more information about the Whale Dolphin Conservation Society: www.whales.org or www.wdcs.org

For more information about the World Society for the Protection of Animals: www.wspa-usa.org or www.wspa-international.org

For more information about the Massachusetts Animal Rights Coalition: www.MassAnimalRights.org

For more information about the Cetacean Society International: www.csiwhalesalive.org