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World Whaling and Recent Whaling Research Trends

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1. Whales and Humans

The image of whales as huge creatures that swim calmly across oceans is well known throughout the world. The blue whale, which at a maximum size of 30 meters long and more than 170 tons is the largest animal on the earth, epitomizes this image. However, the harbor porpoise, with its maximum length of 1.9 meters and maximum weight of 76 kilograms (females) and 61 kilograms (males), is also classified as a whale. As an informal grouping within the infraclass Cetacea, whales include about 85 species or subspecies such as the blue whale, sperm whale, and beluga whale, among many others.

Whales can be classified into two kinds: toothed and baleen. Toothed whales (Odontoceti) have teeth and eat mainly fish. Baleen whales (Mysticeti) take in primarily plankton through their baleen (mouth filters). Among the 73 known species of toothed whales are the sperm whale (Physeter macrocephalus), Baird’s beaked whale (Berardius bairdii), Dall’s porpoise (Phocoenoides dalli), Pacific white-sided dolphin (Lagenorhynchus obliquidens), Atlantic bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus), false killer whale (Pseudorca crassidens), killer whale (Orcinus orca), finless porpoise (Neophocaena phocaenoides), narwhal (Monodon monoceros), and beluga whale (Delphinapterus leucas). Among the toothed whales, the baiji or Chinese river dolphin (Lipotes vexillifer) and the Amazon river dolphin (Inia geoffrensis) are near extinction owing to environmental degradation and loss of habitat caused by industrial and agricultural development.

Most baleen whales are relatively large in body length and weight. They include the blue whale (Balaenoptera musculus), bowhead whale (Balaena mysticetus), North Pacific right whale (Eubalaena japonica), fin whale (Balaenoptera physalus), grey whale (Eschrichtius robustus), sei whale (Balaenoptera borealis), minke whale (Balaenoptera acutorostrata), and humpback whale (Megaptera novaeangliae), among others.

Humans began their activities on the oceans about 50,000 years ago. Although many people might have seen or worshiped whales moving along coasts, and used whales that drifted ashore as food and other resources, they began to catch them on rare occasions intentionally about ten thousands years ago. To hunt a large animal even in coastal waters required a certain material, technological and social conditions, in addition to suitable ecological conditions (Savelle 2005). Humans in many places across the world began to
hunt whales actively around the 10th century A.D., during a marked warming period of the planet.

Hunting whales for food and industrial resources was common from the 10th to the mid-20th century, after which commercial whaling declined considerably due to the depletion of whale populations and the widespread uptake of petroleum as a fuel. Human relationships with whales have changed over time. Although a small number of the world’s local and indigenous people have continued hunting whales for food and other uses, many others see whales as symbols of the natural environment and regard them as beings worthy of protection and conservation. Currently, most whale-human interactions involve non-lethal pursuits such as whale-watching and oceanic research (Kishigami 2018c; 2019). Thus, historically speaking, humans’ relationships with whales can be expediently classified into three periods: (1) when humans seldom hunted whales (up to the 10th century); (2) when humans hunted and used whales as food and industrial resources (from the 10th to the late-20th century); and (3) when humans actively protected whales (from the late 20th century on). The historical trajectory can be described as a general transition from harvesting to hunting to protecting them (Kishigami 2019).

In this paper, I describe the history and current status of whaling in the world, including recent research trends.1)

2. History of Whaling

2.1 Medieval and Modern History of Whaling in the World

The history of human relationships with whales extends over several thousands of years. We can easily imagine that humans in the distant past used whales that drifted ashore. Archaeology tells us that people caught dolphins in the Mawaki Site (Jōmon period) in Japan’s Ishikawa Prefecture about 5,000 years ago (Hiraguchi 1989; 2003; 2009). People also hunted whales in Scandinavia and the southern Korean Peninsula several thousands of years ago (e.g., Kang 2020). Whale hunting was common among the Norse by the 9th century, and the coastal people of Alaska and the Basques of southern Europe began hunting bowhead and right whales, respectively, around the 10th century. The Basques initially caught whales near the coast, but they extended their whaling grounds into the Atlantic Ocean around the 13th century, and their whaling flourished for the next 300 years (Proulx 2010). During the Age of Discovery (15th–17th centuries), they began actively hunting whales commercially as industrial and fuel resources. They were one of many cultures and countries around the world that built whole industries around whale-based products. Whale oil derived from whale fat was an essential raw material for lamp fuel and soap. Whale baleen was used as raw material to make whips, springs, and body corsets. While the Basques and Norse ate whale meat, other Europeans seldom did so (Morita 1994: 398–400).

Whalers from England, the Netherlands, and Basque country began to catch bowhead and right whales in the sea off Labrador and Newfoundland and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in what is now Canada, in the 1540s. British and Dutch whalers began whaling around Spitsbergen Island, near Norway, around 1610 to 1660, and continued
whaling until the mid-18th century. The increasing size of whaling ships from the 16th to the 18th century expanded the whaling grounds all over the Atlantic Ocean. The period from the 17th to 19th centuries was characterized by large-scale pelagic whaling with the use of these large sailing ships.

The Netherlands became the world’s largest whaling country in the 17th–18th century, but commercial whaling also thrived elsewhere, including in the Davis Strait (between Greenland and Baffin Island) from the early 18th century to the 19th century, as Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States competed for right and humpback whales. By the end of the 16th century, organized coastal whaling had begun around Chita Peninsula in Ise Bay, Japan. It spread to the Kanto, Kansai, western Chugoku, and Kyushu regions in the 17th century, peaking between the 17th and early 19th century.

The United States, with its well-known ‘Yankee whalers’ of the early 18th century, became the largest whaling country in the 19th century. Whaling was a major industry in the nation from the 17th to the 19th century. By the 19th century, both European and American whalers had advanced into the Pacific Ocean to hunt sperm whales as well as right whales. American whalers soon discovered the whale-rich waters off Japan. Their need for local suppliers of firewood, food and water for the whaling ships was the driving force behind America’s demand that the Japanese open the country to the world.

In the late 19th century, whalers from many countries adopted the Norwegian whaling style of using a high-speed whaling ship armed with whaling cannons (spear guns). With the discovery in 1848 of bowhead whales north of the Bering Sea, American whaling ships led a boom in bowhead whaling from 1849 to 1914 in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, off Alaska and along the coast of the western Canadian Arctic. This whaling depleted whale resources in the region.

When Japan joined commercial whaling in the Antarctic Ocean in 1934, whaling grounds had extended to the Antarctic and Indian Oceans in the 20th century. By then, whaling was already slipping towards an era of excessive hunting—enough so that many people expressed concern about the depletion of whale populations. This concern led to efforts to regulate commercial whaling. In 1931, Great Britain and Norway signed the Geneva Convention for the Regulation of Whaling within the framework of the League of Nations. Among other provisions, this prohibited the commercial hunting of right whales. In 1937, Great Britain, Norway, and other countries signed the original International Agreement for the Regulation of Whaling in London; the Agreement banned the commercial whaling of grey whales. During World War II, pelagic whaling was suspended. On December 2, 1946, 15 countries, including the United States, signed the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW), which led to the establishment of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 1948.

Since 1948, the IWC has regulated the commercial whaling of 13 large whale species. From 1949 to 1959, the IWC recognized the ‘Olympic system’ in whaling (‘first-come, first take’). However, this led increasingly to overfishing and the exhaustion of whale populations. ‘First come, first take’ was abolished in 1959 and replaced in 1962 with a country quota system.

Another turning point in whaling history occurred at the UN human-environment
conference held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972. Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of the conference, argued that we could not protect our environment without saving whales and proposed a ten-year moratorium on commercial whaling. Although his proposal was accepted, it was not approved at the General Meeting of the IWC in the same year. A decade later, the proposal was approved by the IWC, with the moratorium coming into effect in 1985–1986. The moratorium did not apply to all the whale species, only to the 13 of the large whale species: the blue, fin, bowhead, right, sei, sperm, humpback, grey, Bryde’s, common minke, Antarctic minke, bottlenose, and pygmy right whales. Further, specific categories of whaling were allowed to continue with the approval of the IWC: whaling for scientific research, Aboriginal (Indigenous) Subsistence Whaling, and commercial whaling under a special provision in cases where a formal objection had already been submitted when the moratorium went into effect. Countries that were not members of the IWC were not compelled to follow IWC regulations.

In 1986, the IWC’s Scientific Committee concluded that with the proper management of catches, sustaining the total number of grey and minke whales living was not a problem, and they proposed a revised management plan in 1990. However, because of uncertainty about the reliability of the data and formulas for determining allowable catches, the proposal was not approved, and the blanket moratorium remained in place. The IWC made similar decisions in 1992 and 1993. The issue of when commercial whaling could safely resume became a political problem rather than a scientific one in the 1990s. The member countries of the IWC were divided into roughly two groups—pro-whaling and anti-whaling—and neither could muster more than three-quarters of the member countries. The 1990s and early 21st century marked a period of confusion within the IWC and Japanese conflicts with several environment/animal protection NGOs and nations (Blok 2008, 2010; Komatsu 2012; Ohmagari 2002, 2005; Peace 2010a).

Norway and Iceland submitted formal objections to the IWC. Norway, a European whaling country that had stopped commercial whaling and carried out scientific research whaling under the IWC for a while, resumed minke whaling in 1993 under the IWC. Iceland withdrew from the IWC in 1992, and established the North Atlantic Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) to continue commercial whaling. However, Iceland re-joined the IWC in 2002 and restarted its hunting of minke and fin whales under the IWC regulations in 2006.

Although Japan stopped commercial whaling of the 13 large whale species after the IWC moratorium under US political pressures, it carried out scientific research whaling in the northwestern Pacific or/and Antarctic Oceans under the IWC from 1988 to 2019. Japan withdrew from the ICRW (that is, the IWC) at the end of June 2019; it resumed commercial whaling within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) on July 1 2019 (Morishita 2019).

While anti-whaling countries currently hold the majority among IWC members, pro-whaling countries comprise more than a quarter of the membership. Revising the schedule of the ICRW requires approval from three-quarters or more of the member countries, so right now, either group can reject any proposal but cannot approve one. The IWC cannot revise the ICRW or resume commercial whaling as long as this deadlock
continues (Komatsu 2012; Morishita 2019; Ohmagari 2002, 2005).

In the 1970s, several environmental NGOs, including Greenpeace and World Wildlife Fund (WWF), began anti-whaling campaigns to stop commercial whaling. These campaigns have moulded public opinion considerably. Whales have become symbols of the international environmental protection movement, and today, people are more likely to think of whales not as food or industrial resources but as symbols of creatures to be protected globally. Nevertheless, several indigenous groups such as the Iñupiat, Yupiit, and Chukchi, among others, hope to continue subsistence whaling, and Japan, Iceland, and Norway are eager to resume commercial whaling and seek consensus among the IWC member countries.

Historical developments, political shifts, and the decline of commercial whaling have exerted a considerable socioeconomic influence worldwide on both the national and local level. Drawing on these influences, in the next section, I will show the current status of various whaling around the world.

3. Current Whaling Activities

Except for Norway, Iceland, Japan, and few other countries, no nation engages in commercial whaling of 13 species large whales as of July 2019. However, whaling activities by various groups have continued around the world, and there are several ways they can be classified (see Reeves and Smith 2003). Here, I will distinguish whaling under the IWC from other whaling to describe the contemporary state of whaling activities in the world.

As described in the previous section, the IWC regulated the commercial whaling of 13 species of large whales, with a moratorium placed among the IWC whaling member countries since 1982. However, the IWC did not suspend all whaling of the large whales. From the 1980s to 2019, there were exceptions under the IWC for commercial whaling in cases involving formal objections to the moratorium, Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling, and scientific research whaling, and many places outside the IWC conducted both commercial and non-commercial whale and dolphin hunts.

3.1 Whaling under the IWC System

Table 1 shows a summary of whaling under the IWC system as of July 2018. Currently, annual catch quotas and other matters are discussed and decided every six to seven years at the IWC General Meeting.

Aboriginal subsistence whaling currently approved by the IWC includes whale hunts by the Iñupiat and Yupiit of Alaska; the Chukchi and Yupiit of the Chukotka Peninsula of Russia; the Makah of US state of Washington; the Kalaallit (Inuit) of Greenland; and the Bequia Islanders of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The whale hunt of the Makah remains suspended pending the completion and public announcement by the US government of an environmental impact assessment (EIA), and animal protection and environmental NGOs have repeatedly sued to prevent the resumption of the Makah whaling hunts (Beldo 2019; Sullivan 2010).
The United States, the former USSR, Norway, Iceland, and Japan used to conduct research whaling under the IWC (Sanada 2008). Japan stopped its research whaling in June 2019. Japan’s Institute of Cetacean Research used to conduct research whaling in the Antarctic Ocean, the northwestern Pacific Ocean, and along the coast of the Japanese archipelago to investigate the age, feeding habits, nutritional condition, accumulated contaminants, and phyletic groups of some species of whales. Whale meat and other edible whale parts were sold in Japan after the research in compliance with IWC regulations (Wakamatsu 2013).

Norway, as a member country of the IWC, made a formal objection to the moratorium and restarted its commercial whaling of minke whales in 1993. Iceland resumed commercial whaling in 2006 under the IWC, which it re-joined in 2002.

### 3.2 Whale Hunts Outside the IWC

Among the non-ICW member countries, Inuit hunt bowhead whales in the Arctic of Canada and some Indonesians hunt sperm whales near that country’s Lembata Island (Egami and Kojima 2012, 2013, 2014; Kishigami 2013b, 2016b; Kojima and Egami 2019). Locals also hunt small cetaceans in other places around the world outside the IWC system. For example, the Inuit in Canada and the Kalaallit in Greenland hunt beluga whales and narwhals. The local people hunt pilot whales in the Faroe Islands and several Caribbean countries; the Solomon Islanders and others hunt dolphins.

Locals along the coast of Japan also conduct small-scale whaling and dolphin hunts outside the IWC system (Ishikawa 2019). In Japan, small-scale whale hunting requires permits from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Small-scale whaling herein refers to whale hunting using whaling ships less than 50 tons equipped with harpoon guns with a bore of 50 millimetres or smaller. In Japan, such ships are based in Abashiri and Hakodate of Hokkaido Prefecture, Ayukawa of Miyagi Prefecture, Wadaura of Chiba Prefecture, and Taiji of Wakayama Prefecture. Japan’s small-scale whaling ships are used to hunt the Baird’s beaked whale, long-finned pilot whale, and pilot whale.

Local fishermen in Japan also hunt dolphins, including Dall’s porpoises, striped dolphins, Risso’s dolphins (which have been replaced by false killer whales since 2008),

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### Table 1  Whaling of large whales under the IWC system (as of July 1, 2018)

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<td>commercial whaling with the formal objection</td>
<td>minke whaling by Norway; minke and fin whaling by Iceland</td>
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<td>to the moratorium in 1982</td>
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<tr>
<td>scientific research whaling by Japan (1988–June 2019)</td>
<td>minke and fin whaling in the Antarctic Ocean; minke, minke, Bryde’s,</td>
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<td>and sperm whaling in the Northern Pacific Ocean and along the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Japanese archipelago; sei whaling in the Northern Pacific Ocean</td>
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<tr>
<td>aboriginal subsistence whaling</td>
<td>grey whale hunts by the Chukchi in Chukotka Peninsula, Russia;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>bowhead whale hunts by the Yupiit in Chukotka Peninsula, Russia;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bowhead whale hunts by the Iñupiat and Yupiit in Alaska, United</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>States; grey whale hunts by the Makah in Washington state, United</td>
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<td></td>
<td>States (discontinued temporarily); fin, humpback, minke, and bowhead</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>whale hunts by the Kalaallit in Greenland; humpback whale hunts in</td>
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<td>Bequia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
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pilot whales, and bottlenose dolphins in Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Chiba, and Okinawa Prefectures (Ohsumi 2003: 148–154). Dolphin hunting requires a permit from the relevant prefectural governor. Dolphin hunting methods include drive, hand-harpoon, and crossbow. In the drive method, herds of dolphins are driven together into nets and harpooned from the boats; this method is currently used by hunters in Taiji in the Wakayama Prefecture. In the hand-harpoon method, the dolphins are killed with harpoons thrown manually from small fishing boats; this method is currently used in the Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, and Chiba Prefectures. In the crossbow method, dolphins are killed with elastic-launch crossbows in Okinawa Prefecture, a method that falls under the administrative classification of hand-harpoon hunting.

Japan’s dolphin hunting and small-scale whale hunting in the Tohoku area were scaled back significantly by the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011. These fisheries have been gradually recovering (Holm 2019).

When whales get caught unintentionally in fixed fishing nets along with other fish, this is called bycatch. Meat and other edible parts of several kinds of whales killed in bycatch along Japan’s coast are often distributed to fish markets through local fishery cooperative associations. Bycatch whale meat and other parts are also eaten in the southern region of South Korea (Ii 2012; 2013).

4. Rise and Expansion of Anti-Whaling Campaigns

In the 1970s, especially after 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human-Environment in Stockholm, several environmental and animal protection NGOs started to organize and develop extensive anti-whaling campaigns. Leading anti-whaling organizations have included the groups such as Friends of the Earth (FoE), Greenpeace, WWF, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS), Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDC), the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), among others (Akimichi 2009; Ishikawa 2012; Kalland 1993a, 1993b; Kawashima 2011, 2012, 2013; Morita 1994).

Greenpeace became well known to the world through its direct actions against the USSR’s whaling in the Northern Pacific Ocean. FoE began its anti-whaling campaign in 1971, before Greenpeace. While the headquarters of WWF opposes all commercial whaling, WWF Japan and WWF Norway have taken the stance of accepting the commercial whaling of species of whales that are abundant enough to consider sustainable. IFAW financed several anti-whaling research projects. The SSCS has used anti-whaling tactics that many consider radical, such as crippling and even sinking whaling ships. They have also used physical interventions against dolphin hunting in Taiji, Japan; Japanese research whaling in the Antarctic Ocean; the Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling of the Makah in Washington state; and the local dolphin fishery in the Faroe Islands. The Environmental Investigation Agency has run a series of campaigns against pilot whale hunting in the Faroe Islands (Fielding 2018). These organizations’ anti-whaling PR campaigns, which employ television, the internet, and other mass media,
have increasingly influenced public opinion and several governmental policies.

Many anti-whaling NGOs find it acceptable for indigenous groups to hunt whales for subsistence purposes. Some groups, such as the Iruka & Kujira Action Network (the Japanese words for dolphin and whale, respectively) and Greenpeace Japan, generally oppose whale and dolphin hunts, but they do not completely deny traditional whale food and tend to approve the sustainable use of whale resources. However, a few groups, such as the SSCS, have opposed all whaling activities.

The governments of the United States, EU countries, South American countries, Australia, and New Zealand, among others, now oppose all commercial whaling, and some are hesitant to approve even Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling. A majority of countries and environmental and animal protection NGOs/NPOs support the latter because they regard indigenous rights and human rights as paramount.

5. Recent Research Trends in Cultural Anthropology and Other Disciplines

In previous papers (Kishigami 2008, 2011b, 2012b; Savelle and Kishigami 2013), I have introduced and discussed Japanese and international trends in whaling research up to 2010. Here I will review several publications of cultural anthropological and other research on whaling, primarily those published after 2010.

5.1 Research Projects

Research on whaling is not actively conducted in the humanities and social sciences, including cultural anthropology and archaeology. Instead, active research on whales is conducted in the natural sciences, including biology and marine sciences. The human relationship to whales, however, has been the focus of research in the humanities and social sciences, and this summary primarily covers research trends in those fields, especially cultural anthropology.

Two research projects on whaling cultures were conducted at the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan in the early 21st century. One was the JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A) “An Anthropological Study of Whaling Cultures in the Globalizing World: Conflicts between the Succession of Whaling Tradition and Anti-whaling Movement” (KAKENHI Grant Number: JP15H02617) (fiscal years 2015–2018). The other was a joint research project of the National Museum of Ethnology, called “Whaling and Environmental Ethics” (fiscal years 2016–2019). Japanese researchers have also conducted field research in various countries, publishing papers and books and making oral presentations at academic meetings (Ikeya, Kishigami, Sasaki, and Toda 2018: 339–342; Kishigami ed. 2012; Kishigami, Hamaguchi, and Savelle eds. 2013). These researchers have examined and compared the history and current state of whaling cultures in North America, Greenland, Bequia Island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Japan, Iceland, Norway, the Faroe Islands, and Lembata Island (Indonesia). They have taken an inter-disciplinary approach to consider the issues that many whalers have faced and have studied anti-whaling movements and whaling in terms of environmental ethics, animal ethics, and animal welfare.
5.2 Studies on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling

Hisashi Hamaguchi (2012a; 2013a; 2016b) and Masami Iwasaki (2011) have described the general history and current status of Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling. The former discussed the current status of whaling in Bequia Island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines after outlining the international politics of Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling under the IWC. Iwasaki (2011) argued that because cash is necessary for indigenous whalers to run their whaling activities, cash transactions for whale products among local people should be recognized and accepted as a component of their whaling.

Drawing on multiple studies of whale hunts, sharing of whale products, and community feasts and festivals related to successful whale hunts among the Inupiat of Barrow, Alaska, Kishigami has pointed out the social, cultural, and political importance of those activities. Following the definition from an essay from 1925 by Marcel Mauss entitled ‘The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies’, Kishigami has argued that the Inupiat’s whaling and related activities should be considered what Mauss termed ‘total social facts’ (Kishigami 2010a; 2011a; 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2012d; 2013b; 2013c; 2013d; 2013e; 2013f; 2014a; 2014b; 2014c; 2015; 2018a; 2018b). Kishigami also studied the influences of climate change on the Inupiat bowhead whale hunts (2010b), contemporary whale hunts by the Inupiat in Alaska and Inuit in Arctic Canada (2010b; 2016a), and indigenous whaling in relation to animal welfare (2017).

Hiroko Ikuta has conducted field research of indigenous dance, whaling, and cultural identities in Barrow and St. Lawrence Island, Alaska (Ikuta 2011, 2018; Mikow and Ikuta 2016). Chie Sakakibara has studied Inupiat whaling and cultural identity in communities along the North Slope Borough of Alaska (e.g., Utqiaġvik, Point Hope) (Sakakibara 2010; 2011a; 2011b; 2017a; 2017b). For example, she investigated the way the Inupiat are dealing with environmental uncertainty and the effects of climate change through cultural practices, demonstrating how they retain and strengthen their cultural identities in an unpredictable environment by reinforcing their cultural relationship with bowhead whales (Sakakibara 2010; 2017a; 2017b).

The state of Alaska has been active in research concerning indigenous whaling. In 2014, researchers from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence, have conducted a systematic survey of the procurement and uses of wild resources among four interior Alaska communities and three arctic Alaska communities in 2014 (Brown et al. 2016). In addition, the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission received a comprehensive report on the current sharing system of Indigenous Alaskan whaling (Stephan R. Braund and Associates 2018).

A few anthropologists have studied the whale hunts of the Chukchi and Yupiit along the Chukotka coast since the beginning of the 21st century. Kazunobu Ikeya (2013) reported on grey whale hunts and use of the whale products among the Chukchi. Also, local people have made visual records of their own whaling activities (e.g. RT Documentary’s YouTube video, ‘I Am Hunter: Traditional Whaling in Russia’s Chukotka Peninsula’). Lyudmila Bogoslovskaya and other researchers have reported on recent hunts for grey, bowhead, and beluga whales by the Chukchi (Bogoslovskaya, Krupnik, Slugin, and Chukaev 2016). Eduard Zdor (2018), a former Chukchi hunter and PhD Candidate at
the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, has been researching indigenous whaling along the Chukotka Peninsula.

Shunwa Honda (2019) and Minori Takahashi (2016; 2018; 2019) have conducted field research in Greenland, reporting on the contemporary status of whaling in Greenland (Kishigami 2016c). Hisashi Hamaguchi (2016a) described and analyzed the process through which a humpback whale hunt was approved by the IWC. For the past 20 years, Hamaguchi has actively conducted field research on humpback whaling off the Bequia Island of St. Vincent and Grenadines, resulting in several papers (Hamaguchi 2012b; 2013b) and one important book (Hamaguchi 2016b). He has also described how the spread of mobile phones has led to a new way of whaling, changing communication among whalers at sea (Hamaguchi 2011). Hamaguchi (2015a; 2015b) has also written about conflicts between whaling activities and whale-watching, noting that whale watching is only possible during the season when humpback whales migrate around the island and discussed how the decline in whaling might lead to a decline in the local culture.


5.3 Commercial Whaling and Research Whaling of Large Whales
In Norway, Hajime Ishikawa and Jun Akamine conducted field research on whaling. Akamine (2019) discussed the modern history of Norwegian large-scale whaling, whereas Ishikawa (2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2019) has reported on contemporary small-type coastal whaling. Hisashi Hamaguchi (2017a; 2017b; 2019) carried out field research on commercial whaling in Iceland and wrote about conflicts with the whale-watching business.

Australia and New Zealand instituted proceedings against Japan, claiming that the Japan Whale Research Program (JARPA II) in the Antarctic Ocean was in breach of the ICRW, alleging that the scientific research was cover for the resumption of commercial whaling. On March 31, 2014, the International Court of Justice in the Hague agreed that and ordered Japan to cease operations (ICJ 2014). Ishii and Sanada (2015) followed the trial. They analyzed the issues, considered the position of Japanese society, and proposed a solution: the Japanese government should establish an impartial “Scientific Evaluation Department” as a formal organization of the Diet to examine the validity of any proposed research whaling plan and to report directly to the Diet for deliberations and a final decision.

Japan was one of the few nations that caught and consumed whales as food under the aegis of an IWC-approved permit for scientific research from 1987 to 2019 (Wakamatsu 2013). Fumitaka Wakamatsu (2019) studied Japan’s research whaling,
examining the historical transition of whale meat from a common diet item in Japan to a luxurious delicacy. He has described how the whaling industry capitalized on scarcity by promoting the symbolic and economic values of whale meat as a traditional Japanese food.

5.4 Local Whaling

Indigenous whaling in the Arctic regions outside the IWC system includes bowhead whale hunts by the Inuit in Canada, as well as beluga whale and/or narwhal hunts in Alaska, the Canadian Arctic, and Greenland. Robert Fréchette (2013) and others have recorded the 2008 revival of bowhead whale hunts by the Nunavik Inuit. Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten (2013) examined the relationships and historical continuity between contemporary Inuit whaling and the traditional Inuit world view. Kishigami (2013a; 2016b) discussed the resumption process and current status of Inuvialuit and Inuit bowhead whale hunts in the Canadian Arctic. Inuk writer Teevi Mackay (2014) offered his indigenous perspective on the significance of whaling in current Inuit culture.

Arima and Hoover (2011) revised an ethnography on the whaling culture of the Nuu-chah-nulth people on Vancouver Island and the neighboring peoples on the mainland of northwestern North America who do not currently hunt whales. In other studies focused on the Nuu-chah-nulth, Kishigami (2014d) showed the current status and history of Nuu-chah-nulth whaling, its revival movement at the end of the 20th and early 21st centuries, and its relationships with indigenous rights.

From Alan McMillan’s (2015) archaeological, historical, and ethnological research on whaling activities on the southwestern region of Vancouver Island, we learned that the people there were actively whaling 2,500 to 3,000 years ago. They killed more humpback whales than grey whales. McMillan (2015) argued that a driving force to develop whaling in this region was competition because the local chiefs gained prestige through the success of their whaling and by sharing its products.

It is well known that several peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast, including the Nuu-chah-nulth, Ditidaht, and Makah, conducted whale hunts. Whaling was an important sociocultural activity related to the prestige of the whaling chiefs there, and the people often depicted orcas and other whales on petrographs, house plank screens, and ritual tools. McMillan (2019) pointed out that wolves and orca whales are the land and sea variants of the same being who can transform into each other, and both are successful at hunting whales. The people of the Pacific Northwest Coast also believed that thunderbirds, mythical beings of supernatural power, were excellent whalers. McMillan (2019) argued that the Nuu-chah-nulth and others depicted images of thunderbirds, wolves, and orcas on rocks, house plank screens, and ritual tools because they associated the non-human beings with successful whaling and whaling chiefs.

Ruth Kirk (2015) studied the Ozette Indian Village Archaeological Site, where the ancestors of contemporary Makah people lived and engaged in whaling. Robert Losey and Dongya Yang (2007) criticized Northwest Coast archeologists for ignoring whaling activities other than those of the Nuu-cha-nulth and Makah, noting that finds from the Par-Tee site in northern Oregon coast provide archeological evidence of whaling from
1,300 to 1,600 years ago. Similarly, based on ethnohistorical data, Clapperton (2018; 2019) argued that the Salish people caught killer whales and dolphins in Puget Sound in the US state of Washington.

David Lee and George Wenzel (2017) and Keiichi Omura (2016), respectively, reported on narwhal hunts in Pond Inlet and Kugaaruk in Nunavut, Canada. Local Inuit of Nunavut reported their knowledge of narwhals (Nweeia et al. 2017). Kishigami (2013c) discussed the concept of ‘subsistence’ using the example of beluga whaling by the Inuit in the Canadian Arctic.

Tomoko Egami and Kotaro Kojima continued their research on sperm whale hunts off Lembata Island, Indonesia (Egami and Kojima 2012, 2013, 2014; Kojima and Egami 2019). They have analyzed the village of Lamalera’s fish and whale catch statistics and the current status of whaling and fishing there. The local people have continued whaling despite unstable socioeconomic conditions, so social continuity and cultural traditions have been mostly maintained. However, their society has also been changed by the introduction of net fishing with powerboats. Bon Ishikawa (2011) reported on social changes in Lamalera village caused by the development of a regional road and transportation system and by the campaign by an international anti-whaling NGO to get local people to switch from whaling to net fishing. Similarly, Doug Clark (2019) reported on the rapidly changing lives of Lamalera whalers.

Motohiro Kawashima (2017; 2019) conducted field research on pilot whale hunts in Denmark’s Faroe Islands, reporting history and current status of the whaling, the development of an anti-whaling campaign there, and the environmental contamination whale meat. Russell Fielding studied pilot whale hunting in St. Vincent in the West Indies and the Faroe Islands in Denmark (Fielding 2013a, 2013b, 2014, 2018; Fielding and Evans 2014; Fielding, Davis, and Singleton 2015; Singleton and Fielding 2017). He also compared whaling in Alaska and St. Vincent (Fielding 2017).

Examining the indigenous beluga whale hunt along Kamchatka Peninsula, Russia, Watanabe (2012; 2013) discussed the hunts in relation to the marine mammal hunts in the Northeastern Asia region.

Numerous researchers have studied local whaling cultures and dolphin fishing in Japan. Nakazono (2012) outlined historical changes in the whaling methods in Japan. Iwasaki(-Goodman) and Nomoto (2012; 2013) surveyed whaling and the use of whale products by the Ainu as well as small-type coastal whaling in the Tohoku and Hokkaido regions. Takao Kojima (2012) reported on the current state and problems of small-type coastal whaling in Wadaura in Chiba Prefecture. Similarly, Hajime Ishikawa (2019) described the history and current state of Japanese small-scale commercial whaling, arguing that for local whalers to survive economically, Japan should resume commercial whaling within Japan’s Exclusive Economic Zone.

Yoichiro Nakamura analyzed detailed data on the current conditions and historical changes of dolphin drive-fishing in several places in Japan, examining the social organisations in dolphin fishing villages and humans’ relationships with dolphins. He then broadly considered how to preserve all creatures, including whales and dolphins, from extinction and how to manage them (Nakamura 2017: 254). Koji Asano, an applied
ethicist, examined dolphin drive-fishing in Taiji in Japan’s Wakayama Prefecture; he maintained informed deliberations on the pros and cons of dolphin fishing, jurisdiction for all marine mammals should be transferred from the Fisheries Agency to Ministry of the Environment. Because he believes that wild animals should be protected, he thinks that dolphin hunting methods are cruel and should be stopped (Asano 2016).

Jun Akamine discussed historical changes in Japan’s whale-related food culture, in which whale meat has become a rare delicacy. From 1950 to the 1960s, when it was commonly used as raw material for fish sausage and provided in school lunches all over Japan, whale meat was a comfort food beloved by all Japanese citizens (Akamine 2012; 2013). Akamine (2017) recorded the life histories of six people who caught whales, processed, sold, or cooked whale meat, expanding our understanding of Japan’s whale meat food culture. His analysis elucidated the changes of the practice in the context of the complexities of the Japanese culture.

Dai Tanno and Toshihide Hamazaki (2012; 2013) noted the factors promoting and inhibiting the spread of whale-meat eating among the Japanese, including gender and age differences, analyzing data collected from the Tokyo Metropolitan area in 2008. Aiko Endo (2012; 2013) analyzed in detail recent changes and issues in the future of Japan’s whale meat distribution channels.4)

Although large whales are not currently harvested in Korea, whale meat from bycatch is eaten in the Ulsan area in the southern part of South Korea. Sun-ae Ii (2012; 2013) described the history of whaling and whale meat distribution in the Ulsan area, describing efforts to revitalize the local economy by holding whale festivals and featuring whale dishes of the region. She also studied whale god beliefs in Korea and Vietnam (Ii 2019).

5.5 Other Research Related to Whaling and Whaling Culture
Whales have become symbol of environmental protection and animal welfare movements (Kalland 1993a, 1993b; Morita 1994; Peace 2010b; Yamashita 2004). Motohiro Kawashima (2011; 2012; 2013) and Hajime Ishikawa (2011) analyzed the modern-day version of the deification of whales by anti-whaling movements and international environmental NGOs. Ishikawa (2012), who studied animal welfare issues in relation to anti-whaling movements, pointed out that animal welfare advocates do not universally condemn all forms of whaling. Yasushi Nomura (2016) examined how the anti-whaling movement was constrained by the political culture and political environment peculiar to Japan. He pointed out several factors in Japan’s failure to kindle an anti-whaling movement spontaneously among the people: (1) Japanese anti-whaling NGOs lost many people’s trust by employing or supporting others’ radical strategies; (2) for many Japanese people, their identity as Japanese citizens is associated with whaling; and (3) many Japanese people did not fully sympathize with the discourse of the anti-whaling activists (Nomura 2016: 86).

Many countries in Europe, South America, Central America, New Zealand, and Australia protect whales and hold anti-whaling principles in their governmental policies. Joji Morishita and Dan Goodman have both examined the contradictions of the
moratorium on commercial whaling (Goodman 2013; Morishita 2012, 2013). Michael Heazle (2013) considered whaling and diplomatic relationships between Japan and Australia. Mayuko Maekawa (2017) found that protection of whales or an anti-whaling idea in Australia was closely associated with Australians’ views of nature, ideal image of the nation, and identity, by analysis of several politicians’ statements of Australian anti-whaling ideas. Jon Holtzman found that anti-whaling activists used an anthropological concept “culture” to approve indigenous whaling and consumption of whale meat while criticizing Japanese commercial whaling. He emphasized that approval or disapproval of whaling depends on decisions by persons who have political power (Holtzman 2017).

Increasingly, the whale watching has been discussed as a profitable alternative to lethal whaling (Hoyt 2007; O’Connor et al. 2009; WDC 2013). Accordingly, many researchers of anthropology have studied several whale watching business cases and how the business of whale-watching has affected whaling overall (Hamaguchi 2016c, 2017a; Kishigami 2018c; Peace 2005). Marine biologists have recognized the harmful influences of whale watching on the ecology and migration patterns of whales (Arias et al. 2018; New et al. 2015; Parsons 2012; Senigaglia et al. 2016; Sullivan and Torress 2018).

One welcome trend in whaling research has been the increasing interdisciplinary collaboration with local people. For example, Carin Ashjian et al. (2010) explored the connections between indigenous whaling, global warming, and natural phenomena.

Yet another trend is the increasing number of archeological studies of whaling cultures in the Canadian Arctic, Alaska, and the Japanese archipelago (e.g., Yamaura 2012; Jensen 2012; Savelle 2010; Savelle and Vadnais 2011). Recently, The AAS Archaeological Record published a special archeological issue on whales and whaling (see Bernal-Casasola 2018; Evans and Mulville 2018; Keighley 2018; Robertson and Trites 2018; Speller 2018). Susan Lebo (2013) published a historical research paper from the Hawaiian perspective on how native Hawaiians participated in Euro-American commercial whaling. Further, Kamrul Hossain (2008) examined indigenous whaling from a legal perspective. Recently Kishigami discussed historical changes in human relationships with whales in relation to the rise and decline of whaling from a global perspective (Kishigami 2019).

6. Conclusion

This paper has described the current status of whaling around the world, within and outside the IWC system. Whale and dolphin hunts continue in many places, despite the suspension of the commercial whaling of 13 kinds of large whales, with a few exceptions under the IWC. Although there have been multiple studies on whaling or whaling cultures, whaling is still not a common research topic among contemporary cultural anthropologists.

A significant development is that several Japanese researchers have begun field studies of whaling activities in Norway, Iceland, the Danish Faroe Islands, Greenland, Alaska, and other places. The past decade has seen an increasing number of studies on whale watching, animal welfare or animal rights relative to whales, making this a
promising area for potential new research (Kishigami 2011b: 451; 2012e). There have been few studies on the relationship between modern cash economies and Indigenous (Aboriginal) Subsistence Whaling.

Only a handful of cultural anthropological studies of whaling and whales have been published in the last 10 years. New interdisciplinary research on the relationships among climate change, the ecology of whales, and whaling have emerged. I would argue that we should increase our interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research on the genesis of current global whaling problems through a complex network of interactions among the environment, climate change, governments, and assorted human and nonhuman actors, including but not limited to whales, whalers, scientists, local people, environmental and animal protection NGOs, the IWC, and international enterprises.

Acknowledgments

This paper is a result of the Minpaku Joint Research Project “Whaling and Environmental Ethics” (2016.10–2020.3). This work was also supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP19H00565 (2019–2020), “A Comparative Study of Emergence, Current Status and Future of Indigenous Cultures in Alaska and Northwest Coast Regions of North America”, and by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP15H02617 (2015–2018), “An Anthropological Study of Whaling Cultures in the Globalizing World: Conflicts between the Succession of Whaling Traditions and the Anti-whaling Movement”. I thank all the participants in these projects, as well as the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan. I also thank Professor Hisashi Hamaguchi and two anonymous reviewers for their comments on my initial draft. Finally, I would like to thank Editage (www.editage.com) for English language editing.

Notes

1) I rewrote my previous papers (Kishigami 2011b; 2012b) and added new information to them to create this volume chapter. Concerning the history of whaling and human relationships with whales, please read Akimichi (1994; 2012), Ohsumi (2003), Kishigami (2012b), Morita (1994), Yamashita (2004), and Savelle and Kishigami (2013), among others.
2) Robert C. Rocha and others (2016) have summarised industrial whaling catches in the 20th century.
3) For more about Chukchi whaling, see Krupnik (1989; 1993) and Krupnik and Kan (1993).
4) For more about Japanese whale dishes, see Food Life (2012).
5) Recently Jones and Wanhalla (2019) edited and published New Histories of Pacific Whaling, which includes several papers on commercial and indigenous whale hunts and their histories in the Pacific Ocean.
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