

## Iceland signals an end to its commercial whaling enterprise due to lack of consumer demand

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**(Reykjavik, Iceland – 24 August 2007) –**

Good news for whales arrives this week as an Icelandic government official was quoted as saying there is no reason to continue commercial whaling in Iceland if there is no demand for the product. This message, coming from fisheries minister Einar K. Gudfinnsson signals a possible end to commercial whaling in the country. IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare – [www.ifaw.org](http://www.ifaw.org)), which campaigns globally to protect the world's whales, welcomes this forward step towards whale conservation in Iceland.

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IFAW opposes whaling on the grounds that it is cruel and unnecessary. Economic studies in Iceland commissioned by IFAW and the Iceland Nature Conservation Association (INCA), have also revealed very little demand for the meat in Iceland or elsewhere, in contrast to the country's successful whale watching industry, which generates more than US\$20 million in revenue each year.

"This is fantastic news for whales and for Iceland," said Robbie Marsland, Director of IFAW's UK office. "Whaling is cruel and unnecessary, and all of our studies have also shown there is little appetite for whale meat in Iceland or internationally."

"We welcome the minister's comments and congratulate him for recognizing the lack of market and choosing not to press ahead with the pointless killing of more whales. We hope that Iceland's successful whale watching industry will continue to grow without the country's image being further tarnished by whaling."

The Icelandic government issued permits last year for the commercial hunting of nine endangered fin whales and 30 minke whales, sparking unprecedented outcry around the world, as well as drawing criticism from Icelandic business and tourism operators, who feared damage to the Icelandic economy.

So far whalers have killed seven fin whales and seven minkes from this quota, with much of the meat remaining unsold in frozen storage. This quota period expires at the end of this month and plans to sell the fin whale meat to Japan have so far failed. Iceland also resumed whaling for so-called "scientific" research in 2003, setting a quota of 200 minke whales. Only six

more minke whales can be harpooned under this self-allocated quota.

To learn more about IFAW's global campaign to protect whales, and how you can join this important campaign, visit

[www.ifaw.org](http://www.ifaw.org) today.

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