



UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

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Media Release

**From the
Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW)**

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For Immediate Release:

Entanglement in fishing gear amongst whale welfare problems highlighted in journal papers

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) has published papers from an international Whale Welfare and Ethics Workshop in the latest edition of its journal *Animal Welfare*, highlighting serious whale welfare problems and approaches to addressing them.

The workshop, hosted by the UK government and supported by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), was held at the Eden Project, Cornwall in 2011 with the primary objective of providing input to improving the approach taken to the management of animal welfare and ethics within the International Whaling Commission (IWC). Over 30 experts from around the world spoke on whale welfare problems arising from human activities, in a framework of global developments in animal welfare science and ethics.

In addition to welfare problems arising from whaling and whale killing methods, and from inappropriately managed whale-watching operations, the serious problem of whales by-caught in fishing gear or struck by vessels was addressed in a presentation from a representative of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, USA. By-catch can cause severe chronic injury and long-term suffering, with whales sometimes dragging gear for months over thousands of miles before dying from injuries or drowning. Along the eastern US seaboard alone between 1970 and 2009, it was reported, a total of 323 whales were found and diagnosed dead or seriously injured from fishing gear entanglement and 174 killed or seriously injured by vessel strike. The problem is known to be serious worldwide, particularly in coastal waters – including those around the UK.

The workshop initiated a process which led in 2012 to the IWC agreeing to establish a working group to identify important issues to progress the promotion of good animal welfare and to agree a timetable of regular future technical workshops on these issues.

Animal Welfare is a quarterly animal welfare science and ethics journal published by UFAW. For details visit www.ufaw.org.uk or contact UFAW, The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Herts AL4 8AN. Telephone 01582 831818, email ufaw@ufaw.org.uk.

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SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

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Secretary: Donald C Davidson
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Note to Editors:

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) is an internationally recognised, independent scientific and educational animal welfare charity. It works to improve knowledge and understanding of animals' needs in order to achieve high standards of welfare for farm, companion, research, captive wild animals and those with which we interact in the wild.

UFAW improves animal welfare worldwide through its programme of awards, grants and scholarships; by educational initiatives, especially at university and college level; by providing information in books, videos, reports and in its scientific journal *Animal Welfare*; by providing expert advice to governments and others, including for legislation and 'best practice' guidelines and codes; and by working with animal keepers, scientists, vets, lawyers and all those who care about animals.

This work relies on the support of members, subscribers and donors.

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