

Our View on Commercial Whaling

Commercial whaling has some close associations with the fishing industry. Both are engaged in the hunting of wild animals in their natural marine environment – for food and for other commercial by-products. Because of these similarities it is difficult to completely disassociate fishing from whaling in every respect, although the two industries do have distinct institutions, governance, markets and commercial structures.

Our business respects the right of countries to carry out whaling, but only when that activity is properly controlled and regulated within the guidelines set by the International Whaling Commission (IWC). We fully support the IWC's work to regulate the worldwide whaling industry, which is based on legitimate scientific research and takes into account the vulnerability of some whale species and the importance of these mammals within the overall marine environment.

We do purchase fish products from some nations which also engage in legal commercial whaling, most notably Iceland, Norway (and to a lesser extent) the Faeroe Islands. These countries have large and well-managed stocks of many important commercial fish species such as cod, haddock and prawns that are widely sold in the UK. They also contend that their whaling activity is legal under the terms of the Convention of the IWC.

We do not buy or sell whale meat products, nor do we trade with businesses which are directly engaged in commercial whaling activities (for instance we do not buy processed fish products from companies which are also involved with the butchery and processing of whale meat).

Nevertheless, we do not believe that it is our role to make moral or ethical judgments on behalf of our customers. We promote the 'right to choose' through the provision of clear information regarding the provenance of the fish in our products - so that consumers can make their own informed purchasing decisions.

We do encourage all whaling nations to comply fully with the IWC guidelines. We are clear about the need for proper regulation and will exert our influence where we can, although our Group is not a political organisation and does not lobby on issues not directly related to seafood or the day to day operation of our business.

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