

Japan's demand for whale meat declining

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Whale meat, a cheap source of protein that helped Japan ward off malnutrition after World War II, has dropped in popularity.

Commercial freezers that store whale meat in Japan have 2,700 tons of uneaten stock, while whale burgers and whale spaghetti bologna are being served in school lunch cafeterias, distributed to old people's homes and some whale meat is ending up in pet food, the Times of London reported Friday.

Despite the lack of demand, the Japanese whaling ships say they hope to bring in a haul of almost 1,000 minke whales, a 40 percent increase from last year, when they return this spring.

The Japanese government, which has endured international condemnation for its whale fishing, has begun a campaign to promote the gastronomic delights of the "scrumptious whale."

Japanese officials have argued that it allows killing whales for scientific, not cultural or commercial, reasons.

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