

S. Korea dumps whaling plan: report

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South Korea has decided to scrap its fiercely criticised plan to resume "scientific" whaling, apparently because of international pressure, a report said Tuesday.

"Discussions between government ministries have been concluded in a way that effectively scraps the plan to allow whaling in [coastal waters](#)," an unnamed senior government official told Yonhap news agency.

"Even if it is for scientific research, we have to take into consideration that this has emerged as a sensitive issue at home and abroad."

The Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries declined to confirm the report.

Kang Joon-Suk, a senior ministry official, said last week that South Korea may scrap its plan if experts come up with non-lethal means to study the mammals.

South Korea unveiled its plan to resume whaling at an International Whaling Commission meeting this month in Panama, sparking an international outcry.

It said it would use a loophole in a global moratorium that permits killing of whales for "scientific" research.

Greenpeace described scientific whaling as "thinly disguised commercial whaling". France, the United States, Australia and New Zealand also spoke out strongly against Seoul's plan.

[South Korea](#) cited what it called a significant increase in whale stocks in its waters and consequent damage to fisheries.

If it went ahead, it would be the fourth country to kill whales, excluding allowances for [indigenous groups](#). Norway and Iceland openly defy the 1986 moratorium on [commercial whaling](#), saying they believe stocks are healthy.

Japan already uses the [loophole](#) for scientific research, with the meat then going to the dinner plate.

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