

S. Korea formally dumps 'scientific' whaling plan

December 5 2012



A Taean Coast Guard image of a minke whale accidentally caught in nets cast by South Korean fishermen off the west coast and hung in the port of Taean in June 2012. South Korea confirmed Wednesday that it had formally dropped its fiercely criticised plan to resume "scientific" whaling and adopted non-lethal means to study the mammals in its waters.

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Under International Whaling Commission (IWC) rules, a formal proposal for the hunt was required by 3 December, but none was filed.

"We've decided to carry out 'no-kill' scientific research and, therefore, it became unnecessary to submit such a request," an official at the fisheries ministry told AFP.

South Korea had unveiled its plan to resume whaling at an IWC meeting in Panama in July, saying it would use a [loophole](#) in a global moratorium that permits killing of [whales](#) for "scientific" research.

At the time, Seoul cited what it called a significant increase in whale stocks in its waters.

But the move was condemned by many countries and environmental groups and reports emerged just weeks later that the government was reconsidering.

Greenpeace on Wednesday welcomed South Korea's decision as a victory for tens of thousands of people who had sent individual letters to Prime Minister Kim Hwang-Sik, urging his government to drop the plan.

"The world does not support [commercial whaling](#), even when it is disguised as scientific research," said Greenpeace International oceans campaigner John Frizell.

"The decision by South Korea to listen to its own people and the [global community](#) and abandon a whaling programme modelled on that of Japan is a huge win for the world's whales," Frizell said.

Japan uses the same loophole considered by [South Korea](#), killing whales for "scientific research" even though the meat is later sold openly in shops and restaurants.

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