

Norwegian whale hunters satisfied with increased catch

October 2 2013



Whale hunting boats are pictured in Stiene, in northern Norway, on August 18, 2008

Norwegian whale hunters announced a big increase in their annual catch Wednesday but it remained less than half the limit set by the government.

"The hunt has been good this year. We had 17 boats involved and they

took 590 whales. That's 125 more than last year," Truls Soloey, leader of the whaling interest group Norges Smaahvalfangerlag, told AFP.

"There was higher demand for the meat, stronger interest from professionals and the weather conditions were good," he added.

Norway's whaling season began on April 1 and ended on September 30.

Anti-whaling groups point out that the catch is less than half the 1,286 limit set for rorqual whales by the Norwegian government.

They argue that consumers in oil-rich Norway are less interested in whale meat than previously, as it was traditionally seen as a meat for the poor.

Rorqual whales are the largest family of [baleen whales](#) and include [blue whales](#) and northern [minke whales](#).

Whale hunters blame their relatively modest catch on higher fuel prices, lack of capacity in processing plants and hunting waters that are too far apart, but they claim things are looking up for the industry.

"We notice a growing interest for [whale meat](#)," said Soloey.

Norway is the only country alongside Iceland which commercially hunts minke whales, despite the introduction of an international moratorium in 1986.

Both countries claim they are not covered by the agreement and claim their catches are modest compared to the high number of [whales](#) in the North Atlantic.

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