

Norway fishermen post record-breaking whale haul

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File picture shows a whale hunter demonstrating how to harpoon whales in the port of Svolvær, Norway on August 20, 2008

Fishermen in Norway have caught 729 whales this year, the highest number since it resumed the controversial practice in defiance of international pressure, industry sources said on Monday.

"The season is more or less finished and it's been very good," said Svein

Ove Haugland, deputy director of the Norwegian Fishermen's Sales Organization.

The eventual figure may increase slightly before the season's end but is already the highest since 1993, when Norway resumed whaling despite a worldwide moratorium, which Oslo officially rejected.

In 2013, Norway caught 590 rorqual whales, far higher than the previous year.

The yield for 2014 remains far below the country's annual quota of 1,286 whales.

"There's a bottleneck in the market and the distribution. We must rebuild demand for whale [meat](#), subject to tough competition from meat (from land animals) and fish," Haugland said.

"But the fact that there have been two strong consecutive rises in annual catches shows that we're on the right track."

Greenpeace believes whaling in Norway is bound to die out due to lack of demand.

"The weather this summer has been very good, which favoured significant whale meat demand for grilling in northern Norway, but also made hunting easier thanks to clear skies and calm waters," Greenpeace leader in Norway Truls Gulowsen told AFP.

"But this is not a shift in the trend."

Norway is the only country alongside Iceland which commercially hunts whales.

Whaling in Japan is officially for scientific purposes, but large amounts of the meat ends up in markets.

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