

Rare albino dolphin captured in Japan's 'Cove'

November 25 2014



File phot shows two Risso's dolphins being herded by fishing boats near the village of Taiji, central Japan, on November 23, 2003

A rare albino dolphin has been captured by Japanese fishermen, according to a campaign group staging a protest against the sale or slaughter of the creatures.

The albino Risso's dolphin was driven into a cove over the weekend by fishermen at Taiji in Wakayama Prefecture, central Japan, said Sea Shepherd, which has teams of observers in the remote town.

Campaigners are trying to halt the annual slaughter of the dolphins in the town, as well as the sale of some to aquariums.

They complain that locals claiming to be upholding ancient traditions of killing and eating dolphins are actually more interested in the often-valuable sale of live specimens.

The latest catch was made on Sunday, Sea Shepherd said, adding that another albino was caught in Taiji some 10 months ago.

"It is horribly sad to see another [albino](#) dolphin taken by the killers here in Taiji," said Karen Hagen, a leader of the campaign group's "Cove Guardians" volunteers monitoring the hunting in Taiji.

"These rare, beautiful, and unique animals will spend the rest of their days confined to small tanks, where they will live out their shortened lives performing tricks for food," she said in a statement.

The group said Taiji fishermen have so far killed about 170 Risso's dolphins in the hunting season that stretches from September through late February.

The campaigners are streaming live footage of the secluded bay, into which local [fishermen](#) corral hundreds of [dolphins](#) for slaughter, a practice that thrust the small town into the global spotlight in 2010 when it became the subject of the Oscar-winning documentary "The Cove".

Defenders say it is a tradition and point out that the animals it targets are not endangered, a position echoed by the Japanese government.

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