

# Half of live dolphins caught in Japan exported despite hunt outcry: report

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Game of Thrones actress Maisie Williams takes part in a march in London in January 2015, against the annual slaughter of dolphins in the Japanese town of Taiji

About half of live dolphins caught in the Japanese coastal town of Taiji were exported to China and other countries despite global criticism of the hunting technique used, a news report has said.

The so-called "drive [hunt](#)" method has been criticised overseas as cruel and Japanese zoos and aquariums were recently forced to vow not to buy animals caught with the controversial fishing.

A total of 760 live dolphins were sold between September 2009 and August 2014 in Japan, Kyodo News said Saturday, quoting data from Japan's Fisheries Research Agency and other statistics.

They show that 354 were exported to 12 countries, including 216 to China, 36 to Ukraine, 35 to South Korea and 15 to Russia. One dolphin was exported to the United States.

Eleven dolphins were also exported to Thailand, followed by 10 each to Vietnam and Saudi Arabia, seven to Georgia, five to Tunisia and four each to Egypt and the Philippines, Kyodo said.

UN data showed the export of live dolphins from Japan between 2009 and 2013 was almost entirely to zoos or aquariums, Kyodo added.

All live dolphins are only supplied from Taiji which came to worldwide attention after the Oscar-winning 2009 documentary "The Cove" showed pods forced into a bay and slaughtered with knives, in a mass killing that turned the water red with blood.

Some are captured alive and sold to aquariums, fetching about 1 million yen (\$8,030) each.

Last month, Japan's zoos and aquariums voted to stop using dolphins caught by the method, as demanded by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA).

The vote was prompted by WAZA's suspension of the Japanese chapter (JAZA) in April over the issue.

WAZA regards drive hunt fishing—where pods of cetaceans are herded into a bay by a wall of sound—as "cruel", a charge local fishermen reject.

Many of the dolphins are butchered for food, but campaigners claim there is insufficient demand for their relatively unpopular meat to make the hunt economically worthwhile.

They charge that the high prices live animals fetch when sold to aquariums and dolphin shows is the only thing that sustains the hunt.

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