

Japan to resume whaling hunt despite IWC warning

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The International Whaling Commission (IWC) on Friday demanded that Japan provide more information to prove that its revised Antarctic whaling programme was for scientific research

Japan said it would resume its controversial annual whale hunt despite the International Whaling Commission demanding the country provide more information to prove the programme is really for scientific

research.

The IWC said Friday that Japan had failed to provide enough detail to explain the scientific basis of its "NEWREP-A proposal", which would target 3,996 [minke whales](#) in the Antarctic over 12 years.

Joji Morishita, Tokyo's commissioner to the global conservation body, responded late Friday telling reporters that the country would answer the queries from the IWC but its intentions would not be altered.

"There has been no change to our plan," Morishita said.

"As far as scientific points being raised (by the IWC), we would like to respond with sincerity as much as possible," he said, according to Jiji Press.

He added Japan would "conduct additional analyses" to gain more support for the new programme, Kyodo News said.

Regardless of the ruling by IWC, Japan can still press ahead with the "lethal sampling" hunt in the Southern Ocean, scheduled to begin in December, as it is ultimately up to individual countries to issue permits for whaling on scientific grounds.

Tokyo was told last year by the United Nations' top legal body that the programme of "lethal research whaling" it has carried out in the Southern Ocean for nearly two decades was a fig leaf for a commercial hunt.

Japan believes the world's whale population, especially the minke stock, is sizeable enough to accommodate a return to sustainable whaling, putting it at odds with campaigners and anti-whaling nations.

Japan has hunted whales for a few hundred years, but the industry really took off after World War II to help feed a hungry country.

While other leading industrial nations—including the United States and Britain—once hunted whales, the practice fell out of favour, and by the 1980s, [commercial whaling](#) was banned.

Norway and Iceland ignore the ban, but Japan uses a loophole that allows for so-called "lethal research".

Morishita is scheduled to address foreign media on Monday in Tokyo.

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