

Two anti-whaling activists arrested in the Faroe Islands

July 22 2015



The Island of Koltur is pictured from the Streymoy Island on October 13, 2012 in the Faroe Islands

Militant conservation group Sea Shepherd said Wednesday that two of its volunteers had been arrested in the Faroe Islands for allegedly interfering with the territory's traditional whale hunt.

"The Sea Shepherd volunteers were arrested on Monday morning

following an attempted grindadrap—the infamous drive hunt of cetaceans in the Faroe Islands," the group said in a statement.

Susan Larsen of San Francisco and Tom Strerath of Bremen, Germany could face up to two years in prison if they are found guilty of breaching the Faroese pilot whaling act.

Two Sea Shepherd vessels had been "investigating" a group of 15 local boats they believed were involved in a grindadrap when police boarded the smaller boat and arrested the two activists.

A spokesman for the Faroese government said the two had been released shortly afterwards and that a court date had been set for Thursday.

"The police are doing their research and the public prosecutor will decide shortly if the case will be submitted to a Faroese court," he told AFP.

Earlier this year the Faroese parliament made it harder for activists to prevent the North Atlantic islands' whale hunt by amending the territory's whaling act.

Sea Shepherd launched its latest anti-whaling action in the Faroes in June by sending two vessels and dozens of activists to the area.

During the [whale hunt](#), the three-to-six metre (10-to-20 foot) sea mammals are driven by a flotilla of small boats into a bay or the mouth of a fjord before being killed by hand—a "grind" that many locals defend as a cultural right.

The whale meat and blubber are consumed by locals and considered delicacies.

The timing of the killing depends on when the cetaceans are spotted offshore, and Sea Shepherd activists have intervened in the Faroes several times in the past.

Whaling in the archipelago stretches back to the earliest Norse settlements more than 1,000 years ago, and community-organised hunts date to at least the 16th century.

The Faroe Islands, situated between Norway, Iceland and Scotland, are home to just under 50,000 people and have been an autonomous Danish province since 1948.

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Citation: Two anti-whaling activists arrested in the Faroe Islands (2015, July 22) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-07-anti-whaling-activists-faroe-islands.html>

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