

Activists rally in Tokyo against Japan's dolphin hunt

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Protestors rally against the start of Japan's annual dolphin hunt in Tokyo on August 31, 2013. The rally organiser, Action for Marine Mammals, said it was one of a number of demonstrations taking place around the world this weekend ahead of the season's hunt in the Japanese fishing village of Taiji.

Environmentalists staged a rally in Tokyo Saturday to protest the start of Japan's annual dolphin hunt, which was made infamous by an Academy Award-winning documentary.

The rally organiser, Action for Marine Mammals, said it was one a number of demonstrations taking place around the world this weekend ahead of the season's hunt in the Japanese fishing village of Taiji.

About 50 activists gathered in central Tokyo carrying banners that read: "Stop the slaughter."

"Japanese people are responsible for stopping our country's barbarian dolphin hunt," said Toshiaki Morioka, head of the group, adding that some of his members planned to travel Taiji later.

The village drew global attention after "The Cove",

a hard-hitting film about the annual dolphin hunt, won the Academy Award for best documentary in 2010.

Fishermen corral hundreds of dolphins into a secluded bay, select a few dozen for sale to aquariums and slaughter the rest for meat. The dolphin hunt takes place over a period of months.

Marching side by side with the environmentalists, a dozen of Japanese nationalists shouted through loudhailers: "Get out of Japan! Hypocrites!"

The nationalists accused the [environmentalists](#) of undermining Japanese culture and traditions, labelling the demonstrators as "environmental terrorists".

Some tried to break up the march, but police separated them from the procession to avoid a possible skirmish.

Japanese rightwing activists have recently increased their presence, stirring nationalistic sentiment amid territorial disputes with China and South Korea.

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