

Bid to introduce commercial whaling quotas fails

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International efforts to agree a new deal on whaling have collapsed, leaving in place the rules that allow whalers to kill around 1500 whales a year for so-called "scientific purposes".

An attempt to replace these existing loopholes with [a system of quotas](#) for the whaling nations Japan, Norway and Iceland collapsed at last week's [International Whaling Commission \(IWC\) meeting](#) in Agadir, Morocco.

All whaling nations and most of those opposed to whaling were willing to consider the quota system, which was proposed by IWC chair Cristián Maquieira and vice-chair Anthony Liverpool. Australia, however, was against it from the outset.

The plan would have allowed commercial whaling in the Southern Ocean, currently deemed a "sanctuary" by the IWC – although it's a sanctuary in which whale-killing is permitted when masquerading as scientific research. The status of whaling in the ocean was one of several sticking points on which consensus could not be reached at last week's meeting.

Breakdown coming?

A spokesman for the Australian government said his country welcomed the abandonment of the proposal. "The commission must move forward to embrace a contemporary approach that recognises that you don't need to kill whales to learn about them," he said.

Addressing the [conference on its fourth day](#), Yasue Funayama, Japanese vice-minister of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, said, "To continue to request the elimination of whaling and sticking to such positions would mean the breakdown of the future of the IWC process."

Many member nations, including Japan, expressed disappointment at the failure to reach a consensus. Despite the outcome, all members have pledged to continue supporting the IWC.