

# Whale quota increased by IWC for 84

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Inuit whalers on the North Slope will be able to strike 27 whales during the 1984 whaling season, up six from 1983, as a result of an agreement hammered out this week between Alaska whaling representatives and members of the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

The compromise agreement was less than Alaska whaling representatives wanted but considerably more than some countries opposed to whaling of any kind wanted.

The agreement was worked out after the IWC technical committee proposed allocating a three-year block of 42 strikes for North Slope villages.

That proposal was opposed by Eugene Brower, North Slope Mayor and chairman of the Barrow Whaling Captains who said, "That would have been one whale for each of our nine whaling villages. Then, which one is going to get the 10th whale?"

The North Slope representatives were able to block the 42-strike for three-year proposal in the full IWC meeting and begin negotiations on increasing the strike limit.

"We proved to the IWC that we are a resource-oriented people, even though we don't have a set of rules and guidelines, we have been conservative

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# Whaling quota increased to 27 strikes in 1984

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tionists for thousands of years.

"Even though we have the knowledge (of whales) we are proving what we knew all along through the scientific method."

Brower also expressed confidence that the quotas will increase as people learn more and he said that by the end of the century subsistence whalers will not have the problems that they have now.

North Slope representatives gave much credit for the increased strike limit to the United States IWC representatives including John Byrne, administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens from Alaska who travelled to Brighton, England to support the Inuit whalers.

Stevens hosted several events designed to help the IWC delegates become acquainted with the subsistence whalers.

"It is a unique way that this group does business. I sponsored two receptions, two dinners and one lunch, where I invited, as the official U.S. Senate observer, the commissioners and members of other delegations to meet with our Eskimo people and the U.S. delegate. We were able to meet one-on-one in a less formal circumstance. I think that's worthwhile," said Stevens.

Such meetings perhaps led to the solid support found for the Inuit whalers. According to a statement released by the whalers after the vote, the compromise was reached "after 10 nations sensitive to aboriginal whaling rights lined up solidly with the Eskimo whalers to block attempts to reduce the bowhead quota below the number authorized in previous years."

The previous years' quota allowed a 45-strike limit for the years 1981 through 1983

with the stipulation that no more than 17 whales be killed in any one of those years.

Brower and the other North Slope representatives, had vowed to defy a rumored total ban on subsistence whaling if it would have occurred. The IWC can make recommendations on whaling limits but has no authority to enforce that limit.

Brower said prior to the IWC meeting "Whaling feeds us and holds our communities together in triumph and hard work when a kill is made. We cannot give up our history. If the commission sets our quota at zero we say all right, now come and enforce it."

The commission has decided to ban commercial whaling starting in 1986 but the ban doesn't cover subsistence whal-

ing. Conservationists, however, have continuously pressured the IWC to ban all whaling, contending many species, including the bowhead, are nearing extinction.

The Inuit whalers counter that the bowhead is not so threatened and they propose to bring scientific evidence to the 1984 IWC meeting to prove that.

With such evidence, they hope to increase the 1985 whale harvest.

The quota comes in the shadow of an international incident provoked by the Greenpeace environmental group which landed seven members on Siberian shores to prove that Russian trawlers are har-

vesting the California grey whale to feed commercial mink farms on the Siberian shore.

The Greenpeace members were captured and eventually returned to the United States but the film they took which they say shows the whaling operations was not captured.

The film was presented to delegates at the IWC meeting.

North Slope representatives attending the IWC meeting include Roger Silook of Gambell, chairman of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission; Rossman Peetok of Wainwright, vice-chairman of the AEWC; Marie Adams of Barrow, executive director of the AEWC, and Eben Hopson Jr., of Barrow, and Brower.

