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A modern harpoon, employed on most Japanese whalers, used to cruelly slaughter minke whales each year  
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## [Japanese Ministry Imports First Whale Meat in 17 Years](#)

*The government approved of the import in September*

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) already placed some batches of whale meat on the market, as the first shipments arrived, and environmentalists say that there will be more to come. Whaling is strictly prohibited worldwide since 1986, as extensive culling led several species to extinction, but Japan still continues hunting the minke whales to this day, under the sketchy cover of a "scientific" program. &nbsp;More and more countries strengthen the ranks of those that already oppose Japan's policy, of catching as much as 900+ whales in the Southern Ocean each year. The United States and [Australia](#) are its biggest opponents, arguing that whaling is both cruel and totally unnecessary. Environmental groups such as Sea Shepard and Greenpeace have engaged in straight-out offensive actions against Japan's whaling fleet over the last few years.&nbsp;Several whalers were chased away from the Southern Oceans, by ships belonging to the two organizations, sometimes for months-on-end. As a result, last year, the whaling fleet returned to Japan with only half of its allotted catch limit, which made officials in governments opposed to whaling salute the two groups. Even Australia had a patrol ship near Antarctica last years, whose only purpose was to stop Japanese ships from catching their prey.&nbsp;Though government officials keep saying that the whales are being harvested for scientific purposes, everyone knows that these statements are simply a lie, as most meat is sold in markets soon after the ships return. And what kind of research will need some 1,000 whales each year? How exactly do you go about preserving the whales by killing them?&nbsp;Furthermore, Japanese authorities crack down on those who expose meat scandals, as it's currently the case with two Greenpeace activists, who confiscated large amounts of illegal whale meat and handed it to the authorities, for which they were arrested and charged with theft. This is the kind of behavior that countries worldwide are beginning to stand up against.