

A VISUAL REPORT by RÁN FLYGENRING



A few things you
should know about

WHALING IN NORWAY

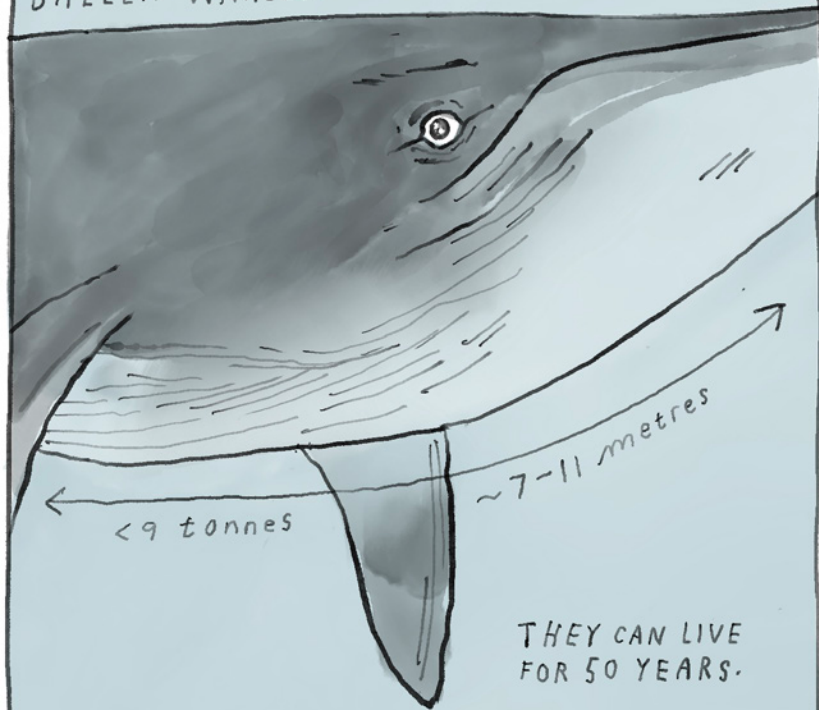


THE SEA AROUND NORWAY
IS FULL OF LIFE.

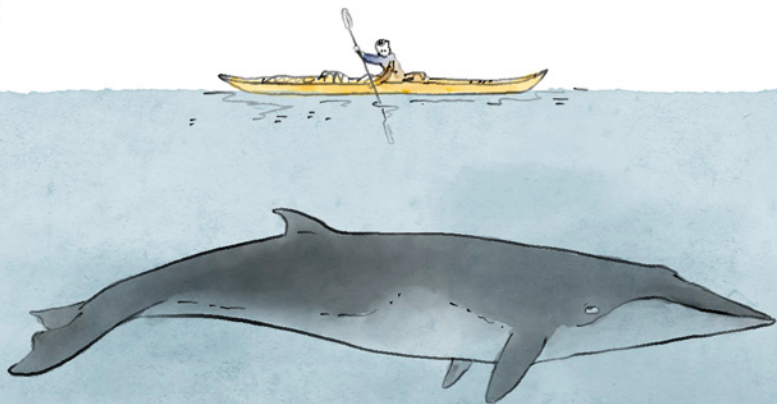
AMONG THOSE
WHO LIVE HERE
ARE THE MINKE
WHALES.



MINKE WHALES ARE THE SMALLEST
BALEEN WHALES.

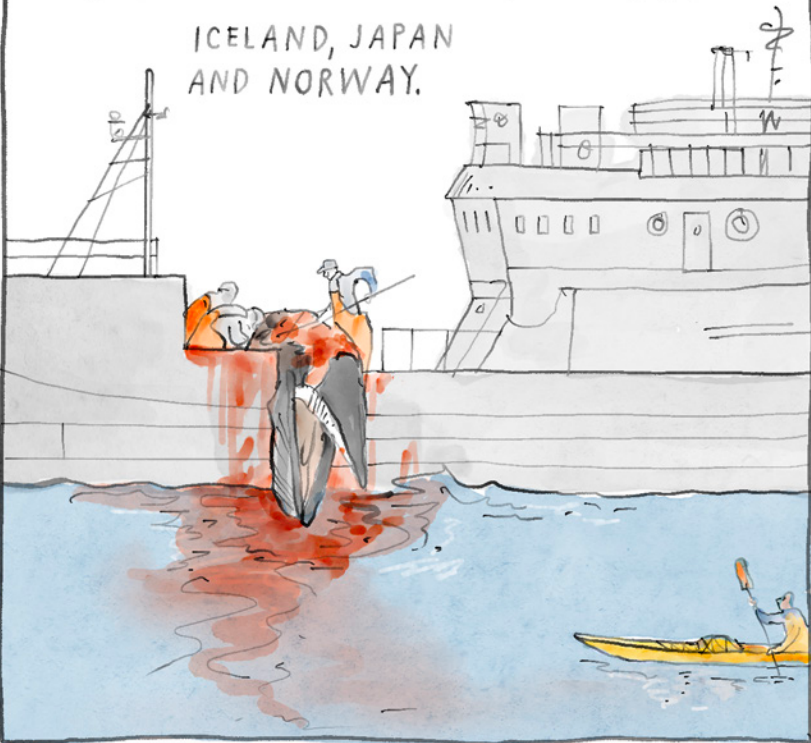


IN THEORY, WHALES HAVE BEEN PROTECTED
FROM INDUSTRIAL WHALING SINCE 1986
UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING
COMMISSION'S MORATORIUM.

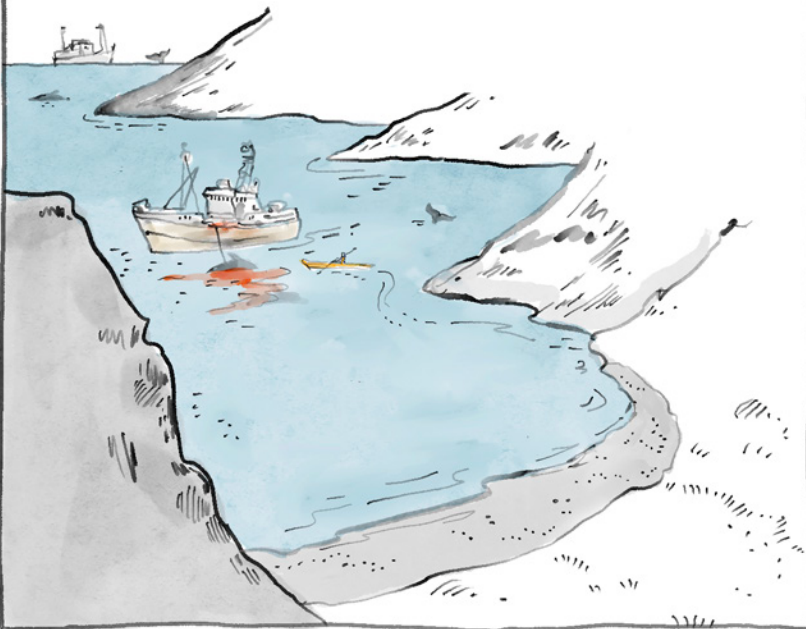


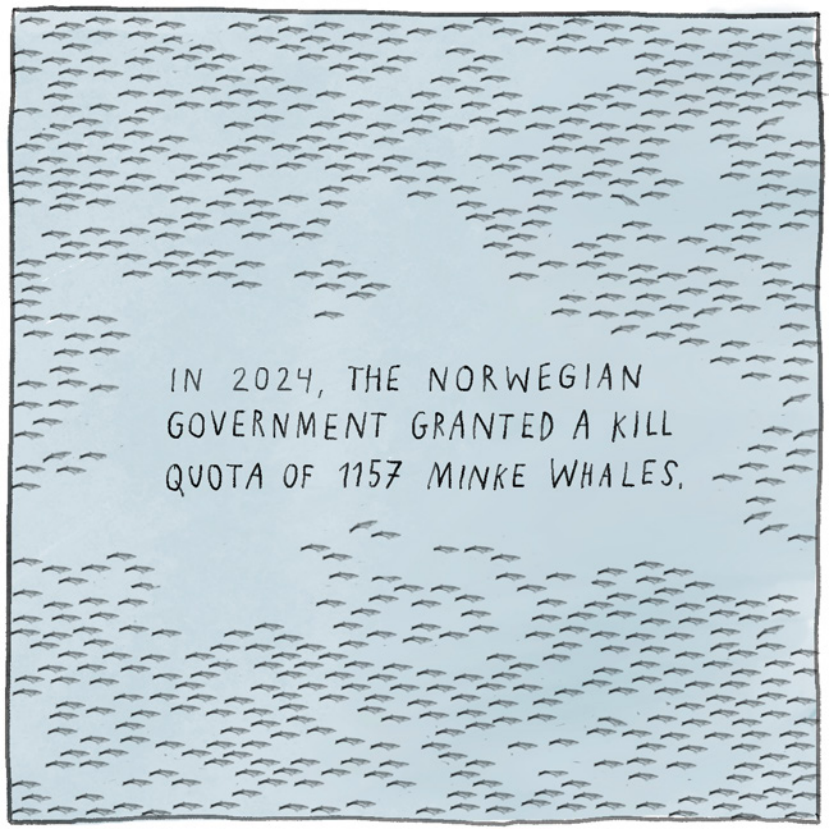
BUT 3 COUNTRIES REJECT THIS BAN:

ICELAND, JAPAN
AND NORWAY.

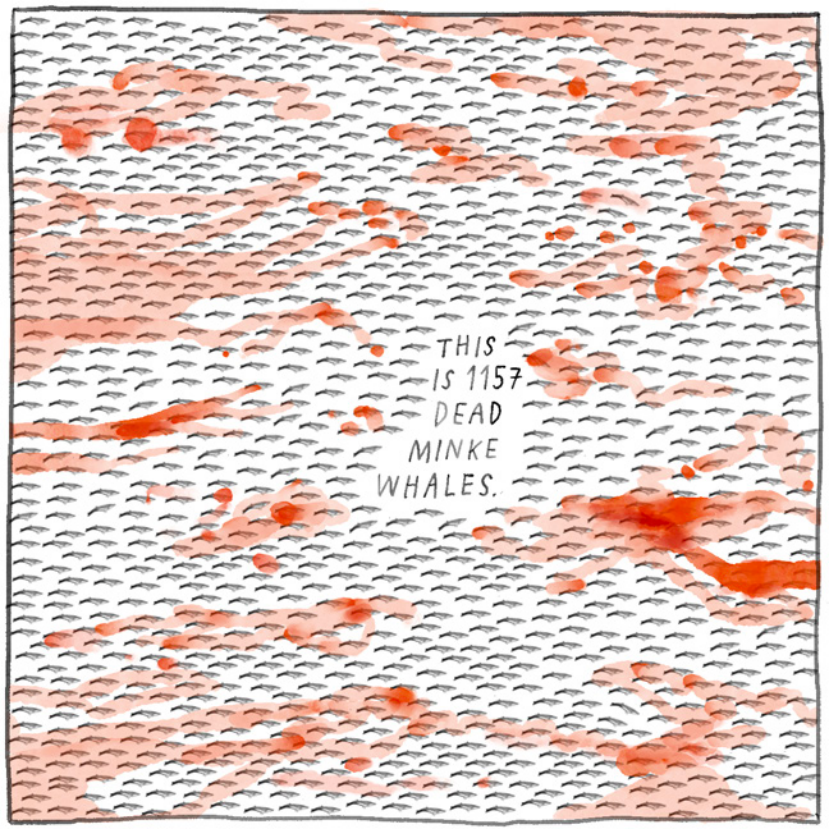


THE WHALING SEASON IN NORWAY
RUNS FROM APRIL TO SEPTEMBER.





IN 2024, THE NORWEGIAN
GOVERNMENT GRANTED A KILL
QUOTA OF 1157 MINKE WHALES.



THIS
IS 1157
DEAD
MINKE
WHALES.

Oh, that is
a lot of dead
whales...

I assume
it must be extremely
profitable?
And important?



ONLY ABOUT
2% OF NORWEGIANS
EAT WHALES ON A
REGULAR BASIS

WHALE MEAT
IS NOT EXACTLY
POPULAR GLOBALLY
EITHER

JAPAN USED TO
BE A BIG MARKET
FOR WHALE MEAT
FROM NORWAY,
BUT INTEREST
THERE IS RAPIDLY
DECLINING

SOME OF IT
IS SAMPLED
BY TOURISTS
WANTING A
'TASTE OF
NORWAY'



A LOT OF WHALE MEAT
ENDS UP AS DOG FOOD.



So why kill
1157 Whales, then?

Surely there is
a good reason?



NO. BUT THE GOVERNMENT STANDS BY IT:

If We are to meet the UN sustainability goals, we have to eat more food from the sea. Norwegian whaling is a small but important contribution to healthy & local seafood.

CECILIE
MYRSETH,
minister,
of fisheries
2.2.'24



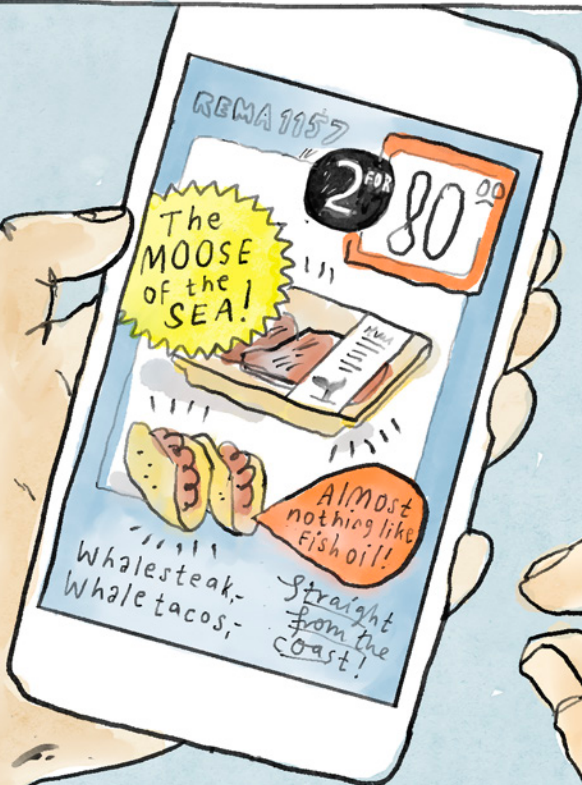
HOWEVER, DUE TO A LACK OF DEMAND,
THE INDUSTRY IS STRUGGLING.

AND GUESS WHAT?



IN ORDER TO KEEP IT AFLOAT
HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF
NORWEGIAN KRONER ARE POURED
INTO GETTING YOU TO ADD
WHALE TO YOUR DIET.







Whale meat
isn't always
tough like
shoe leather!

If it
tastes
like fish oil,
soak it
in milk!

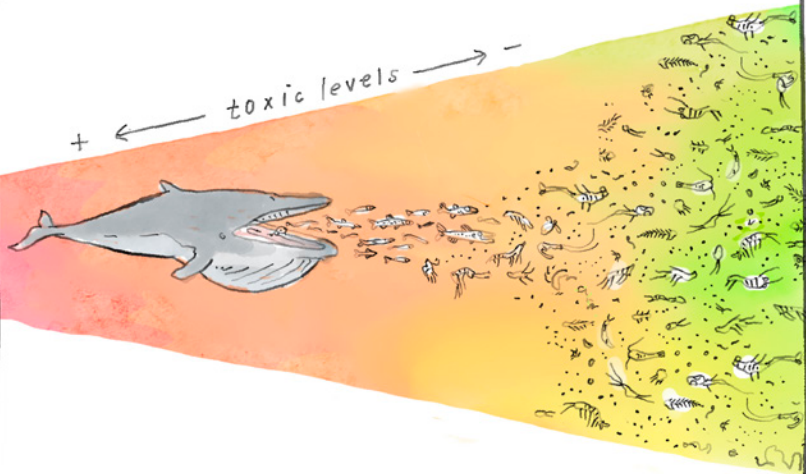


WELL, BEFORE YOU FIRE UP
YOUR BARBEQUE, THERE ARE
SOME QUESTIONS YOU
SHOULD ASK.

Is Minke whale
meat truly healthy?



WHALE MEAT DOES HAVE NUTRIENTS.
BUT AS WHALES ARE AT THE TOP OF THE
FOOD CHAIN, HEAVY METALS & TOXINS
ACCUMULATE IN THEIR MEAT & BLUBBER.



WHALE MEAT FROM NORWAY HAS
REPEATEDLY TESTED UNFIT FOR HUMAN
CONSUMPTION DUE TO HIGH LEVELS OF TOXINS.



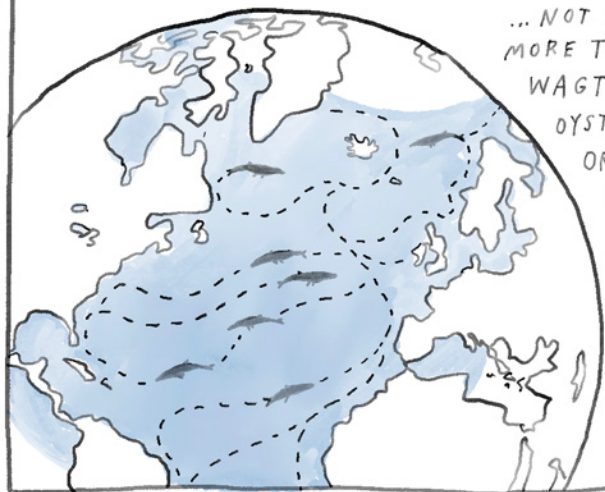
In 2015,
the Japanese government
rejected tonnes of whale meat
from Norway because samples
contained pesticides at twice
the limit Japan imposes on its imports.

Does whale meat
count as a 'local'
source of food?



MOST MINKE WHALES MIGRATE,
MEANING THEY TRAVEL GREAT
DISTANCES TO FEED AND BREED.
MINKE WHALES ARE THEREFORE
NOT A 'LOCAL RESOURCE'...

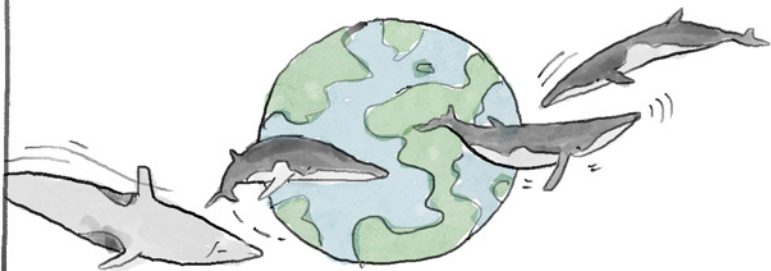
... NOT ANY
MORE THAN THE
WAGTAIL OR THE
OYSTERCATCHER,
OR SUMMER
TOURISTS
FOR THAT
MATTER!



Is Whaling
sustainable?

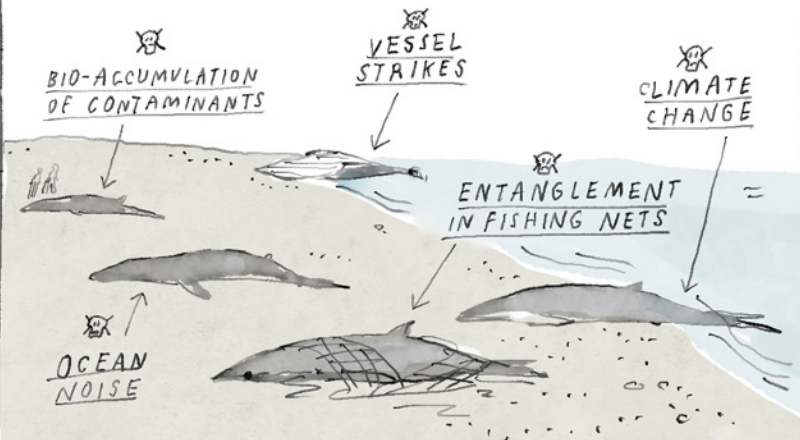


THE MINKE WHALE POPULATION
HAS DROPPED DRASTICALLY FROM
ITS ORIGINAL PRE-INDUSTRIAL
WHALING NUMBERS.



ALTHOUGH IT IS THOUGHT TO BE
RELATIVELY STABLE NOW. WITH AROUND
500.000 INDIVIDUALS GLOBALLY, A LOT
ABOUT THEIR NUMBERS IS UNKNOWN.

THE LIVES OF MINKE WHALES ARE ALSO THREATENED BY:

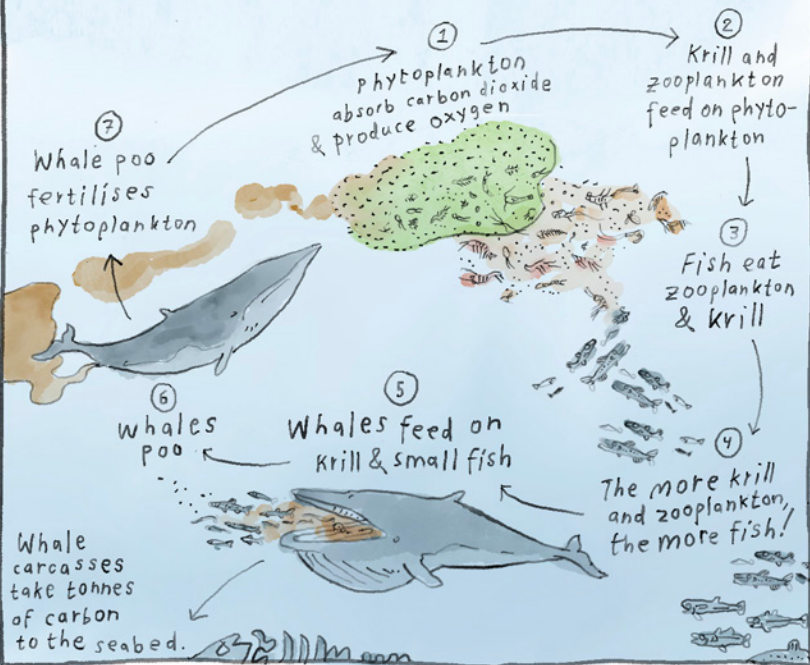


CONSIDERING THIS, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF
WHALES IN THE OCEAN ECOSYSTEMS, IT IS NOT
POSSIBLE TO CLAIM WHALING AS SUSTAINABLE.

Surely whaling
isn't as bad for
the environment as
factory farming?



WHALES ARE A VITAL PART OF THE EARTH'S NUTRIENT CYCLE:



WHALE POO ACTS AS FERTILISER FOR
PHYTOPLANKTON. PHYTOPLANKTON ABSORB
MORE CARBON DIOXIDE AND PRODUCE MORE
OXYGEN THAN ALL OF EARTH'S FORESTS COMBINED.



WHALES ALSO STORE
CARBON IN THEIR BODIES.

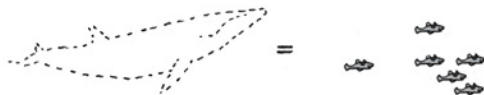
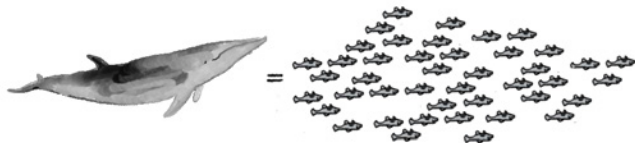
KILLING WHALES IS THEREFORE
TERRIBLE FOR THE OCEAN
AND THE PLANET.
IT IS BASICALLY ECOCIDE.

Whales eat a lot of fish
which could be food for other
marine species – and humans.
Don't we need to hunt
whales to help keep the balance
in the ocean and make sure
there is enough food for us?



THIS IS AN OLD MYTH.

WHALES ARE A VITAL PART OF A HEALTHY
ECOSYSTEM AND HELP BIODIVERSITY FLOURISH.



WITHOUT THEM THERE
WOULD BE FEWER FISH.

Is it true that
Norway's hunting techniques
are at the forefront
when it comes to
animal welfare?

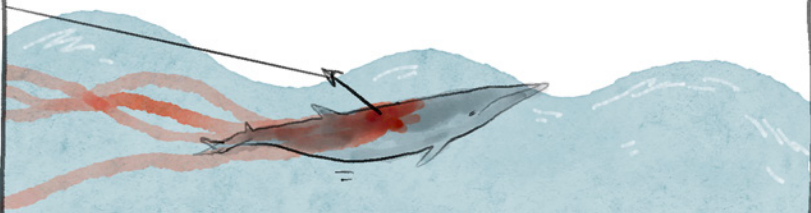


TO KILL A WHALE, HUNTERS USE A GRENADE-
TIPPED HARPOON. IT SHOULD KILL A WHALE
INSTANTLY.

SHOULD.



BUT INSTANT DEATH IS NOT CERTAIN.
A WHALE IS A MOVING TARGET,
SHOT FROM A MOVING SHIP,
ON A MOVING SEA.



SOME WHALES HAVE TO BE SHOT TWICE
OR MORE. 20% OF ALL WHALES KILLED
SUFFER FOR 6-25 MINUTES BEFORE DYING.

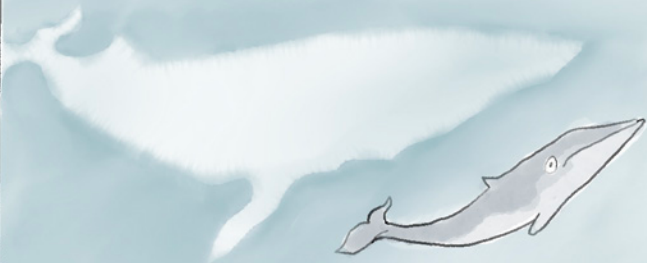
JUST TO BE CLEAR, MINKE
WHALES ARE INTELLIGENT BEINGS.

THEY CAN THINK & FEEL,
THEY CAN COMMUNICATE,
AND THEY CAN REMEMBER.



MOST FEMALE WHALES ARE PREGNANT IN THE MONTHS THAT THE WHALE HUNT TAKES PLACE. PREGNANT FEMALES ARE SLOWER, MAKING THEM EASIER TARGETS.

THE MAJORITY OF MINKE WHALES KILLED IN NORWAY ARE FEMALE, ABOUT 40% OF THEM PREGNANT.



SOME WILL ALREADY HAVE HAD THEIR CALF. A CALF WITHOUT A MOTHER WILL NOT SURVIVE.

THIS WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED IN ANY
OTHER INDUSTRY,

What's
with those
pregnant
sheep?

Don't you
worry! We are
at the forefront
when it comes
to killing
techniques!

It'll be
over in 6-25
minutes



Hang on! Anti-whaling
attitudes are based on
irrational feelings and
misunderstandings among
city people who
know nothing
about the reality
of life and death!





THIS STORY WAS RESEARCHED,
WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY ME,
RÁN FLYGENRING FOR WDC-
WHALE AND DOLPHIN CONSERVATION.
LIST OF SOURCES CAN BE FOUND
ON RANFLYGENRING.COM/SOURCES.

I AM A HALF-NORWEGIAN,
HALF-ICELANDIC AUTHOR &
ARTIST LIVING IN REYKJAVÍK.
I HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN THE
END-WHALING-ONCE-AND-FOR-ALL
PROTEST IN ICELAND.

TO DISCOVER MORE & GET INVOLVED,
VISIT WHALES.ORG/NORWAYFORWHALES