

Consumers



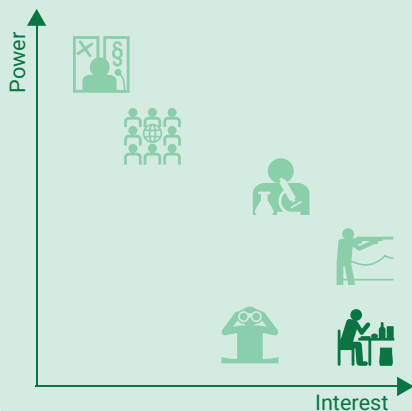
Cutting mattak with an Ulu © Lola Akinmade Åkerström / Visit Greenland

Marine mammals are consumed by people all around the world. For some people, marine mammals are the most important food resource for survival, while for

others it is a nutritious addition to their diet, or even a culinary delicacy. Food choices are an important part of the culture and rights of peoples.



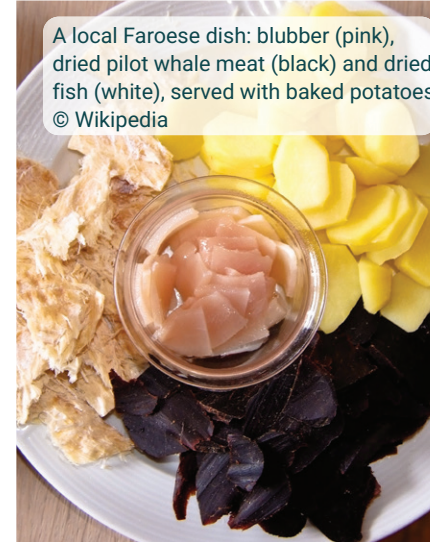
Discuss: Does the matrix reflect each stakeholder's interest and influence in marine mammal management decisions?



Did you know that...

- It is estimated that people in 114 countries (out of 195 worldwide) have eaten marine mammals between 1990-2009 [1].
- 4% of Norwegians eat whale meat often. This percentage is higher in the North [2].
- Meat from the pilot whale drive hunts in the Faroe Islands is shared freely among the communities.
- 70% of Inuit preschoolers experience food insecurity [3].

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A local Faroese dish: blubber (pink), dried pilot whale meat (black) and dried fish (white), served with baked potatoes © Wikipedia

In many regions, people began consuming marine mammals because they were abundant, accessible, and thus, a logical food source. In other areas, marine mammals were eaten out of necessity due to limited alternative food options. Regardless of the reason, the right to have enough food and be food secure is a well-established international human right that many countries support [4]. Food security means being able to feed yourself with dignity. It is not just about having enough food, but also having the kind of food you like to eat. This shows that personal food preferences are important when we talk about food security.

Only a small percentage of Icelanders say they eat whale meat regularly [5]. Instead, it is the roughly 2 million tourists that visit the country each year that are the biggest eaters of whale meat, saying they believe it is an Icelandic specialty they need to try [6]. Sales of whale meat have increased recently, especially as more tourists from the US visited, even though eating marine mammals is highly controversial in the US [7]. Many tourists would go on a whale-watching tour, and ask where they could eat them after. This is not just happening in Iceland; it is also seen in Norway and Greenland. Many consumers see eating wild, free-roaming animals as more respectful and sustainable than industrial farming.



Norwegian minke whale hamburger © Norskhval