'The Cove' worked! Dolphin slaughter stops in Taiji

by Adam B. Vary
Categories: Animals, Documentaries, Movies, Things That Are Awesome!

It is all too rare when filmmakers can know they’ve directly caused a major change in the world, but that is exactly what the team behind the most excellent documentary The Cove can claim today. The film, which has been making some small waves on the art-house circuit this summer, focuses a bright spotlight on the annual slaughter of thousands of dolphins in the small fishing town of Taiji, Japan. The practice had gone on for years unseen inside an isolated cove until director Louie Psihoyos — inspired by the work of Flipper trainer-turned-activist Ric O’Barry — put together a crack team to capture the killing via hidden cameras and underwater microphones.

Yesterday, O’Barry returned to Taiji for the start of the dolphin killing season, but this time, he says, “there were no dolphin killers in sight.” Granted, this time he came with a small entourage of international journalists, including members of the Japanese press, so only time will tell whether the practice is over for good. But like Super Size Me (which seemingly got fast food restaurants to offer more healthy choices on their menus), and An Inconvenient Truth (which injected global warming into the mainstream discussion in a big way), the makers of The Cove can feel proud that at the very least several dozen dolphins are alive today thanks to their efforts.

Doesn’t that just make y’all feel warm and fuzzy inside? What other movies — non-fiction or otherwise — have gotten you to change your life in a big way?
izikavazo
Wed 09/02/09 5:41 PM
Absolutely shocking. Who knew something like this could get through to people like that.

Reply

film4future
Wed 09/02/09 6:52 PM
Yippee! This is fantastic news. I cried through The Cove when I watched it and then took action. Great film. Plenty of other films have caused me to think about my life and the world around me. That’s why I love documentaries. At Silverdocs this year, No Impact Man was thought provoking.

Reply

sbl
Thu 09/03/09 12:21 AM
Four words: passion of the christ

Reply

jt
Thu 09/03/09 12:45 AM
Thank you VERY much for making this film and exposing this one site of atrocities. This same sort of slaughter still happens with R. Whales and others in different places all over the world. IT MUST BE STOPPED!

Reply

Weayaya
Thu 09/03/09 3:44 AM
This story shows the power that individuals can have, particularly those who can harness a medium like film in such an effective way. Ric o’Barry is to be congratulated on his excellent work and for his commitment to a cause worth fighting for.

My own blog – The End of the World… (http://weayaya.wordpress.com) deals with issues of peace, inequality, the environment and animal welfare and I hope you don’t mind if I make reference to your story there.

Reply

Melinda
Thu 09/03/09 5:07 AM
Its so tragic what these beautiful animals have the endure- too upsetting to watch the footgate but just reading about the slaughter is upsetting. I just hope the killing will finally stop soon.
Reply

• Graham
Thu 09/03/09 5:12 AM

Such an idiotic news! Blatantly racist, if you ask me. Bullfighting has existed for many years in Spain/Portugal, and there is no outcry. Why? Slaughter?? Atrocity?? How do you think your eggs are prepared? So ignorant of people to not realize how mistreated farm animals are! Anyways, aren’t there many issues we should be looking into and tackling, besides dolphins being killed for FOOD?? Like we kill cow for food?? What about kids being mistreated in third world country in sweatshops?? Or are they not cute enough like dolphins are? Bunch of hypocrites

Reply

° Jen
Thu 09/03/09 5:45 PM

Great Graham–now go make your film.

Reply

° halv
Sun 09/06/09 7:13 AM

Or we could work together on all of these issues including the dolphin slaughter. It’s so easy to have a compassionate world. All it takes is each of us to change our lives. Go vegan, be kind and respectful to all humans, live green.

Reply

• weayaya
Thu 09/03/09 5:53 AM

Graham, you seem to have a strange idea of what racism is. Exposing such a cruel practice in Japan doesn’t mean that the perpetrators are being singled out for criticism or treated differently to others carrying out similar atrocities in other countries; simply that this was a particular event that the film maker wanted to bring to the attention of the world… and quite rightly, he did.

I agree that there are many other cruel practices in the world and that most people know very little about how mistreated animals are (particularly those that are destined to become food) but this fact alone certainly doesn’t mean that Ric O’Barry is a hypocrite. He should be congratulated for his part in bringing this cruel practice to an end… if only for one year.

Reply

• Imforthewhales
Thu 09/03/09 6:31 AM

A truly fantastic result and shows what can be acheived when people with spirit show other people with spirit what goes on in the world.

Graham…when you have sold your car and your house and sent all proceeds to feed third world children in third world countries, as well as stopping yourself from forming any other children and adopting other less fortunate children, then you may call others hypocritical.

Reply

• gina
Thu 09/03/09 9:44 AM

this is great news! such a good film, too.
@graham-how is this blatantly racist? just because an activity is deemed “cultural” or “traditional” doesn’t make it automatically ok. And many of the people who care about what has been happening in Taiji do also care about bullfighting, farm animals and yes-prepare to be shocked- even human children. Unfortunately, not all of these problems can be solved at once, however this is a great victory and an important step in shedding light on cruelty of all kinds.

Reply
• Joy
Thu 09/03/09 10:01 AM

Bullfight protests are quite common around the world. They are close to banning them in Mexico. So there, Graham.

And the attitude that people are more worthy than other living creatures will only lead to a world depleted of its natural resources. Oh wait, we’re almost already there.

Reply
• Diggerama
Thu 09/03/09 10:47 AM

What a terribly deceiving headline – 3 days of a 7 month hunting season have gone by and whilst no dolphins have died there is nothing to say that they will not start to hunt as soon as the media leaves. The dolphins are a long way from being a safe. Your article would indicate that it has ended, this is simply not the case. Furthermore Taiji takes about 10-15% of Japan's total dolphin kills annually with the Nth killing 1000's more than Taiji

Reply
• Mark B
Thu 09/03/09 10:51 AM

What a terribly deceiving headline – 3 days of a 7 month hunting season have gone by and whilst no dolphins have died there is nothing to say that they will not start to hunt as soon as the media leaves. The dolphins are a long way from being a safe. Your article would indicate that it has ended, this is simply not the case. Furthermore Taiji takes about 10-15% of Japan's total dolphin kills annually with the Nth killing 1000's more than Taiji

Reply
• Sharon
Thu 09/03/09 10:52 AM

Thank goodness for the documentary filmmaker. Their work is often dangerous, certainly not lucrative and a service to those of us looking for quality films. On that note, another notable film about to be released is Crude, a important story of environmental peril and HUMAN suffering — and one of the largest and most controversial legal cases on the planet. Check out their site: crudethemovie.com. I had the privilege of seeing it at Sundance and I was shocked that I hadn’t heard about what Chevron/Texaco has done to the Amazon. It must have been grueling to make. Hats off to all you doc. filmmakers!

Reply
• Simon
Thu 09/03/09 10:54 AM

Graham

Bull fighting is also not acceptable, BUT the biggest differance is the fact that the Bulls are not captured from the wild. Get your analogies in order !! Can you Imagine if they captured wild lions and fought them in the Lionfighting ring !! No of course you can’t because they are
1: beautiful wild animals
2: the Lionfighter may get seriously hurt.

So I guess at least the Bull has a chance to hurt or kill the matador.

They should make the matador fight the bull with his bare hands.

PS, Last time I was in Barcelona there were protesters in front of the bullfighting stadium, which I applauded and supported. These protesters were Spanish, and opposed to their own “culture” because it is no longer morally accepted.
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