

S A V E D O L P H I N S F R O M S L A U G H T E R

By Delaney Stevens

As a teenager, we live in a world that feels jam-packed with promising adventures. We could travel to exotic and ancient lands, be a part of new cultures and religion, or taste mysterious foods and meet the most interesting people. It all seems so intriguing, and the world is our playground. Though I am only seventeen, I have had my fair share of the World, and I plan to see much more of it. But what I want to write about, and hopefully expand or inform to a few, is on a much greater topic.

"In Japan, fishermen round up and slaughter hundreds and even thousands of dolphins and other small whales each year. In the small fishing village of Taiji, entire schools of dolphins are driven into a hidden cove after a prolonged chase. Once trapped inside the cove, the fishermen kill the dolphins, slashing their throats with knives or stabbing them with spears. The water turns red with their blood, and the air fills with their screams."
– An excerpt from *SaveJapanDolphins.org*

Taiji, Japan is one of the top ten fish exporters in the World. With their industrialized land and huge consumer societies, the demand for

fish is very high. The fish harvest in Taiji has been happening for decades, so why should it concern me, or the rest of today's youth? The answer lies within dolphin slaughter.

The Taiji dolphin slaughter has been happening for over 400 years, though the fish harvesting has only been going on for the past 70 years or so. The annual dolphin slaughter, which runs from September first to around March, targets mainly bottlenose dolphins and porpoises. Some of the dolphins caught who are not desirable to dolphin trainers from aquariums or dolphinariums, including the misleading pilot whale, will end up in the freezers or fridges of the town's only supermarket. A 200 gram block of dolphin meat would be priced at about \$13. As to a more prized variety, like the bottlenose dolphin, are reported to be sold at an average \$150,000 per head.

Although there are several other catch sites in Japan, Taiji has been put into the spotlight due to the documentary "The Cove", which unleashes the secrets of the notorious catch-and-slaughter method fishermen practice and their attempts to cover it up. 23,000 permits are granted each year to fishermen by the government of Japan to complete this atrocity, or "pest control" as some may call it. By "pest control", I mean that various Japanese government officials believe that dolphins and whales are consuming too much of the oceans' fish. Therefore, they think that it would be best to control their growing population. In other words, it is an excuse for preserving the oceans' fish for themselves and their own benefit. If the government of Japan and the fishermen of Taiji think that they are justly and humanely controlling the ocean by killing 1,800 dolphins each year, it is an outright lie.

"...The Japanese government recently introduced pilot whale meat to children's school lunch programs, despite the fact that the meat is tainted with mercury and not fit for human consumption. The Japanese government and the dolphin hunters do not warn the Japanese people of this danger,

although the dolphin meat should be labeled as toxic," states www.SaveJapanDolphins.org/.

Though this world issue is not a pleasant one, it is one of many that are undeniably and inevitably controversial. Japan has rights of religion and belief, and I have absolutely no authority to question any of that. All I want to achieve by writing this article is to urge youth to take part, sign petitions if you're passionate about it, and educate yourselves about our World. We spend too much time enclosed in our little bubbles of life, only seeing the facade of new experiences, when there is a whole planet of suffering and distress just outside our door. We are the next generation, and only we can determine what kind of world we want to live in.

Here are some informational web sites:

- www.SaveJapanDolphins.org
- www.TakePart.com/issues
- www.BlueVoice.org