



Why were whales hunted?

For Oil contained in their bodies (uses ...lubricants, waxes, candles, soaps, lamps, plastics and also Whale meat)

Whaling History/Perano Whale station

Whaling started in NZ waters in 1827 (Tory Channel) & lasted 170 years.

Season was May-August
Perano whaling station started in 1911 (operated for 53 years)

During 53 years processed approx <4000 whales (Max 200/yr quota system - leave mothers & calves) - 3450 Humpbacks, 266 Sperm, 5 Blue, 5 Orca)

Employed 45 men at peak
Closed in Dec 1964 due to lack of whales - it was later found that Russians had decimated the population taking 1000's of whales in Antarctica.



Whale Hunting Process

Hill spotters use binoculars

Jump into fast whale chasing boats

Harpoon whales

Tow back to Whale station

Winched up slip

Lifted up onto the cutting floor

Blubber cut off

Loaded into Digesters to Extract oil (Pressure cookers)

Meat separated and canned (mainly pet food)

Oil stored in tanks then loaded into 44 gallon drums

First catch your whale.....

The whale chaser boats raced into the Cook Straight and when close enough would fire a harpoon into the whale. Compressed air was pumped into the whale to stop it sinking. The whale was then towed into the Station by the tug Tuatea.

The whale was winched onto the slipway and lifted to the upper floor of the factory where the cutting took place. Blubber was cut off with a sharp *flensing* knife and peeled off the body by steam winches and feed into the Kvaerner pressure digester. The 'steaks' weighing 2-3 tonnes each were removed and cut into slabs, frozen and stored in freezers.

Everything except the meat and lungs went into the digester and was ultimately reduced to oil, bonemeal and water. The average 25 tonne digester took three and half hours to process.



Southern Right Whales

12,000 population
 'Best' Whale to hunt - floated on surface, peaceful, predictable, easy target, good oil
 Baleen used for corsets & buggy whips



Sperm Whale (Moby Dick!)

360,000 population
 Called Sperm whale as emit white oil from Nose...thought to be sperm by whalers
 Spermaceti - is a 'fine' oil
 Last whale to be protected due to Spermaceti & Military applications
 Ambergris - Whale vomit used to make high value perfume
 Dangerous to hunt as they would attack and charge boats
 Longest breath holds at 2.15 hrs and can dive to 3000m
 Makes the loudest noise of any living creature (230 decibels...a jet plane is 160 decibels)



Blue Whales

5000 population
 Largest animal to exist on earth (larger than dinosaurs)
 33 meters long
 Weight 190 tonnes (160 cars)
 Eats 5-6 tonnes/day krill (40 million krill)
 Has a heart the size of car.. you can walk inside it!
 Spout 30 ft or 10 metres in the air



Orca or Killer Whales

200 in NZ and circumnavigate the coast
 Actually a Dolphin....Called 'Killer' whales as they known to hunt whales
 Largest Dolphin at 10m in length with a weight of 15t
 The fin on a male Orca can be over 2m in height
 In Marlborough Sound Orcas feed on Stingrays
 It is the fastest swimming 'whale' at up to 40 km/hr

