

No Mercy for Dolphins

I had imagined how it would be to witness a drive hunt. I knew it was going to be hard to watch. And it was. Today, on my fifth day as a Cove Monitor, 10-15 Risso's dolphins were killed in an unusually long drive.

The dolphin hunters left port at 5.50am this morning and fanned out towards the morning sun in search for a pod. That is their routine. There is no day off, except in case of bad weather. For almost three hours the 12 hunting boats were beyond the horizon, but then it got more and more clear that a drive formation was beginning to take place. Very slowly the hunters approached land, struggling to keep the small pod under control. It took more than five hours to drive the dolphins into the cove.

The Taiji hunts used to be very bloody, like the ones you see on the Faroe Islands. The sea colored red with blood from the innocent lives taken. About five years ago the hunters in Taiji stopped bleeding the whales so that images of the massacre would not be shared around the world. At the same time they began to cover the killing cove with tarp during a hunt, making it impossible to record the scene. In today's hunt I could see no blood but it was still a horrific sight.

The dolphins were trying so hard to escape through the net that seals off the cove, desperate to get away from the danger and loud noises that had been following them for more than five hours. I saw one smashing against the hard rocks in pure confusion or despair. Men in wetsuits pushed and pulled dolphins in order to tie ropes around their flukes and boats hauled them in under the tarp to be killed. The hunters show absolutely no regard to the suffering of these beings. They know not of compassion for animals.

Knowing that the dolphinarium industry is the main motivator behind these brutal hunts is a very disturbing factor to me. People go see dolphins perform tricks because they *like* dolphins, right? Trainers work with these animals because they know they are sociable and smart beings, well able to learn all sorts of tricks that look like fun in the naive spectator's eyes. It's a money machine and people are fooled.

By supporting CSI you are supporting dolphins around the world. By not buying a ticket to a dolphin show and by informing the uninformed you are making a difference. Thank you for what you do for dolphins.