

Humpbacks get allies in the South Pacific

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A group of South Pacific nations is fighting to protect the humpback whale by creating a number of sanctuaries in the region.

The countries are gathering in Auckland before the next International Whaling Commission (IWC) meeting in Morocco in June.

There are now 11 countries, including Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa, whose waters form part of the whale sanctuary which bans whaling in a 290,000-square kilometre exclusion zone.

They say these safe havens are critical for whales as many migrate south each year through these sanctuaries.

Tokelau, a territory of New Zealand which consists of three tropical coral atolls, is the latest country to join.

It has gone against New Zealand, which is not part of the whale sanctuary.

New Zealand says all marine mammals are protected in its waters under legislation, but recently declared it would consider allowing the whaling nations like Japan to kill some whales in an attempt to save others.

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A noisier ocean could have a profound effect on the humpback whale's annual migration (iStockphoto)

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