The Helsinki Group

The Helsinki Group was formed out of the Cetacean Rights: Fostering Moral and Legal Change Conference held in Helsinki, Finland in May 2010, which was the brainchild of philosopher Dott. Paola Cavalieri.

The Helsinki Group is formed of the founding signatories to the ‘Declaration of Rights for Cetaceans: Whales and Dolphins’ who now form the Steering Committee guiding the Declaration forward.

Public manifestation of the work of The Helsinki Group is through www.cetaceanrights.org
Administrative support for The Helsinki Group is currently provided by WDC, Whale and Dolphin Conservation.

The Helsinki Group can be formally contacted through the Group’s Secretariat:
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Helsinki Group Members

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“We affirm that all cetaceans as persons have the right to life, liberty and wellbeing.”
Ms Philippa Brakes: Philippa Brakes is a marine biologist, specialising in marine mammal welfare and the ethical issues associated with our interactions with cetaceans and their environments. She has served as an expert on cetacean welfare issues and whaling policy with the New Zealand Government delegation to the International Whaling Commission, as well as serving as an informal adviser to other Government and non-Government delegations; as a lecturer in Zoological Conservation Management; as Marine Advisor to the RSPCA; and as the Curator of a British Zoological Gardens. Philippa is co-editor of Cognition, Culture, Conservation and Human Perceptions (London: EarthScan, 2011)

Mr Chris Butler-Stroud: Chris Butler-Stroud has been the International Director, of WDC, Whale and Dolphin Conservation since 1999, developing the organization from being solely a funding body for conservation research into a global advocacy organization. During this time Chris has also activity participated in international process including the International Whaling Commission both as an Non-Government participant and also as a specialist adviser to the United Kingdom Government, in Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species, United Nations Environment Programme Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (Caribbean), the Convention on Migratory Species, Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Areas and the Agreement for the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas. Whilst with WDC, Chris has served for ten years as a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the United Kingdom based Wildlife and Countryside Link, a registered charity, coordinating the activities of over 38 wildlife and countryside non-Government organisations (collectively with a membership of over eight million supporters) in their policy delivery with the United Kingdom Government.


Dr. Sudhir Chopra: Professor Chopra is a Law Fellow at the Cambridge Central Asia Forum, Cambridge, UK since February 2007. Earlier he was with the Lauterpacht Centre for Research in International Law and Scott Polar Research Institute both 2004-2005; and Wolfson College and the Centre for International Studies 2005 -2007. In Europe he has held teaching appointments at the University of Luxembourg, the University of Newcastle upon Tyne – UK, Riga Graduate School of Law - Latvia, Central European University – Hungary and has also lectured at the Katholic University of Leuven, Belgium. In 2006 he was Piet Gilhuis Chair on the Future of Environmental Law in Tilburg University, Netherlands. In 2012 he has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of England.

In India he has been a Professor of Law at the Calcutta University (On leave) and National Law School of India Bangalore, and has been a Lecturer in Law at Delhi University. In North America he has taught at the University of California Irvine, Western State University College of Law, San Diego and Valparaiso University, Indiana. He has also taught at the University of West Indies.

Dr. Chopra worked for the Department of Environment Government of India as its first Environmental Law Officer and later worked for the United States Environmental Protection Agency in Dallas. During 1984-1986 he worked on the Union Carbide Bhopal Disaster Case for the law offices of Kelly Drye and Warren, New York.

Professor Chopra has been a Visiting Scholar at the University of Michigan and Australian National University and a Research Scholar at Tasmania University, Australia. He has lectured at many universities and UN/World Bank sponsored training programs. At the American Society of International Law he served at the Chairman of the Antarctica Group from 1984 to 1994 and Chairman of the Wildlife

His major publications are: The Antarctic Legal Regime, co-editor (Nijhoff – 1988); International Environmental Law, co-author (Lupas – 1993 and 1995); Whales Their Emerging Right to Life, co-author (American Journal of International Law , 1991). In May 1984 he raised the issue of Ozone Hole, Climate Change and melting of the Antarctic ice at Canberra ANZAS Congress.

He received B.Sc. (1973), M.A. History (1975), LL.B. (1976), Ph.D. (1994) from Lucknow University, India; LL.M. (1979) from Dalhousie University Canada; and J.D. (Jan. 1989) from Northwestern University, Chicago, USA. He was admitted as a Member of the Institute of Charted Arbitrators, UK in 2001 and as an Advocate of the Uttar Pradesh Bar in India in 1976.


Mr Nicholas Entrup: Nicolas Entrup is the Founder and Director of Shifting Values, an agency established to implement campaigns and projects that promote and advance a shift of values within societies. Nicolas has more than 20 years of experience in developing concepts, strategies and plans, while also coordinating, supervising and implementing teams and national and international multi-lingual campaigns predominantly addressing animal welfare and species conservation issues, including the threats posed by direct takes to whales and dolphins, the trade with whale products and/or live dolphins, military noise pollution caused by the militaries and the oil and gas industry, the captive display of small whales and dolphins, the display of wild animals in circuses. During this time he has attended more than 20 international conferences of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, established cooperation with international creative agencies, such as Aimaq, Rapp & Stolle (today “Aimaq von Lobenstein”), Denkwerk, Jung von Matt, LLR - Lukas, Lindemann, Rosinski, Opium Effect, Treibenreif.com, developed media cooperation and engaged in cross-marketing cooperation and initiatives involving large corporates and/or international players.

Dr Matti Häyry: Matti Häyry is Professor of Bioethics and Philosophy of Law at the University of Manchester, United Kingdom; and during 2009-2011 Professorial Fellow at the University of Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, Finland. In Manchester, he is the founder and director of the Doctoral Programme in Bioethics and Medical Jurisprudence. Matti is a founder member of the International Association of Bioethics, and he served on its Board of Directors during 2001-2009, most recently as the Association’s President in 2007-2009. He is the author, co-author, and co-editor of 26 books and volumes, including Liberal Utilitarianism and Applied Ethics (Routledge 1994), The Ethics and Governance of Human Genetic Databases (Cambridge University Press 2007), and Rationality and the Genetic Challenge: Making People Better? (Cambridge University Press 2010). Matti Häyry was one of the original signatories of the Declaration on Great Apes in 1993.

Dr Lori Marino: Lori Marino is Senior Lecturer in Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology and an affiliate of the Center for Ethics, both at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. She is also Co-founder and Director of The Aurelia Center for Animals and Cultural Change, a new non-profit organization focused on the application of science and scholarship to animal advocacy to promote change in how we perceive other animals. Her research interests include the evolution of brain, intelligence and self-awareness in cetaceans (dolphins and whales) and other species, human-nonhuman animal relationships, and animal welfare/rights and ethics. She is the author of over 80 publications in the areas of cetacean neuroanatomy and brain evolution, comparative behavioral ecology and evolution in cetaceans and primates, and the ethical dimensions of human-nonhuman relationships. In 2001, she and Diana Reiss published the first definitive evidence for mirror self-recognition in bottlenose dolphins in the Proceedings of the National...
Dr Margi Prideaux: Margi Prideaux is Co-founder and Policy and Negotiations Director for the Migratory Wildlife Network – an organization established to support civil society to progress migratory wildlife conservation through international processes. Margi is a specialist in migratory species protection, with over 20 years of international policy and negotiation experience, working with a number of international conservation organisations, she has participated in over a dozen different international legal processes including the International Whaling Commission, the Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species, and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and has also been a marine species advisor to CMS. Working with CMS she successfully negotiated an inter-Governmental marine mammal conservation agreement in the Pacific Islands Region and supported the negotiation of another in Western Africa. She has a PhD in International Relations and the development of migratory wildlife protection policy & law and has been an Associate Fellow and Adjunct Lecturer with the School of International Studies at the University of South Australia. She has authored numerous reports, papers and formal conference presentations on migratory species protection, regional agreement development, marine protected areas and the role of global civil society in track one and two international diplomacy.

Dott. Franco Salanga: Franco Salanga is a certified public accountant working in Milan, Italy. He has co-authored the history books ‘L’Italia della resistenza’ and ‘La formazione del movimento sindacale a Varese (1860-1902)’. He is the coordinator of the philosophy journal ‘Etica & Animali.’

Dr Thomas White: Thomas I. White is the Conrad N. Hilton Professor in Business Ethics and Director of the Center for Ethics and Business at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California. Professor White received his doctorate in philosophy from Columbia University and taught at Upsala College and Rider University in New Jersey, before moving to California in 1994. Professor White is the author of five books (Right and Wrong, Discovering Philosophy, Business Ethics, Men and Women at Work and In Defense of Dolphins: The New Moral Frontier) and numerous articles on topics ranging from sixteenth-century Renaissance humanism to business ethics. His most recent research has focused on the philosophical implications — especially the ethical implications — of the scientific research on dolphins. Professor White’s latest book, In Defense of Dolphins, addresses the ethical issues connected with human/dolphin interaction — for example, the deaths and injuries of dolphins in connection with the human fishing industry and the captivity of dolphins in the entertainment industry. He is currently working on a book that extends the analysis of In Defense of Dolphins to orcas and the larger whales. Professor White is a Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics in the United Kingdom and served as U.S. Ambassador for the United Nations’ Year of the Dolphin program. He is also a Scientific Advisor to the Wild Dolphin Project, the research organization supporting Dr. Denise Herzing’s long-term study of a community of Atlantic spotted dolphins in the Bahamas.

Dr Hal Whitehead: Hal Whitehead is the Killam Professor in the Department of Biology at Dalhousie University in Canada. Dr Whitehead was educated at Cambridge University. His research focuses on social organization and cultural transmission in the deep-water whales, but he also works on their ecology, population biology and conservation. Field work is mainly carried out in the North Atlantic and South Pacific Oceans. He has developed statistical tools and software for analyzing vertebrate social systems. He uses individual-based stochastic computer models to study cultural evolution, gene-culture coevolution and mating strategies. Hal Whitehead, who has published numerous refereed journal articles and book chapters, is the author, among other books, of Analyzing Animal Societies: Quantitative Methods for Vertebrate Social Analysis (University of Chicago Press, 2008) and of Sperm Whales: Social Evolution in the Ocean (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003). He is also co-editor of Cetacean Societies: Field Studies of Dolphins and Whales (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).
Declaration of Rights for Cetaceans: Whales and Dolphins

Based on the principle of the equal treatment of all persons;

Recognizing that scientific research gives us deeper insights into the complexities of cetacean minds, societies and cultures;

Noting that the progressive development of international law manifests an entitlement to life by cetaceans;

We affirm that all cetaceans as persons have the right to life, liberty and wellbeing.

We conclude that:

1. Every individual cetacean has the right to life.
2. No cetacean should be held in captivity or servitude; be subject to cruel treatment; or be removed from their natural environment.
3. All cetaceans have the right to freedom of movement and residence within their natural environment.
4. No cetacean is the property of any State, corporation, human group or individual.
5. Cetaceans have the right to the protection of their natural environment.
6. Cetaceans have the right not to be subject to the disruption of their cultures.
7. The rights, freedoms and norms set forth in this Declaration should be protected under international and domestic law.
8. Cetaceans are entitled to an international order in which these rights, freedoms and norms can be fully realized.
9. No State, corporation, human group or individual should engage in any activity that undermines these rights, freedoms and norms.
10. Nothing in this Declaration shall prevent a State from enacting stricter provisions for the protection of cetacean rights.

Done, 22nd May 2010,
Helsinki, Finland