So Remorseless A Havoc: Whaling in the Southern Ocean

Phil Clapham[1] & Yulia Ivashchenko[1,2]

1 National Marine Mammal Lab
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
Seattle, WA 98115
USA

2 Whale Research Centre
Southern Cross University
Lismore, NSW 2480
Australia

Soviet catcher, Antarctic

Populations recovering… or not

"I see them in hundreds and thousands"
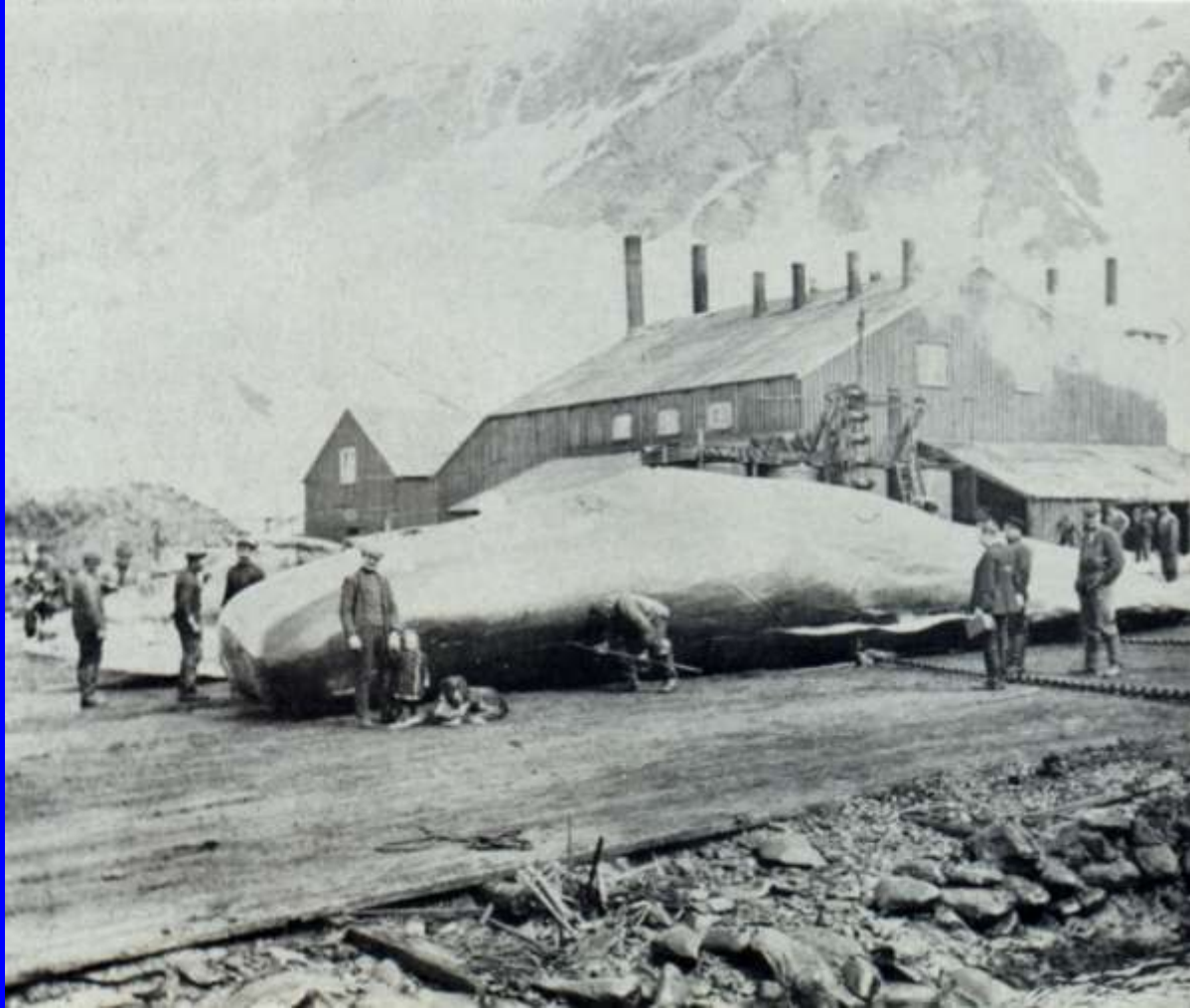## The Beginning: South Georgia, 1904

Carl Anton Larsen

Grytviken, South Georgia, 1914

Larsen's South Georgia

Grytviken, 1916

First year
184 whales

1904-1914
1,738 blue whales
4,776 fin whales
21,894 humpbacks

More numbers

Abandoned catchers, South Georgia

S Georgia, 1931-1966

Blue: 36,771
Fin: 39,760
Humpback: 26,067
Sei: 1,791
Other: 1,028
Total: 105,417

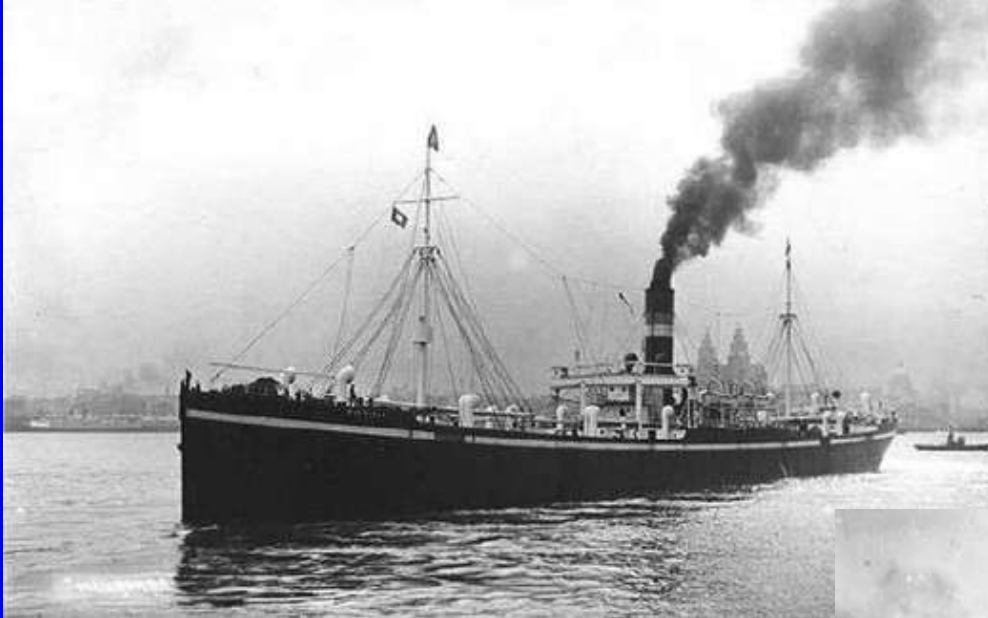## S Shetland, 1905-1931

Blue: 33,016
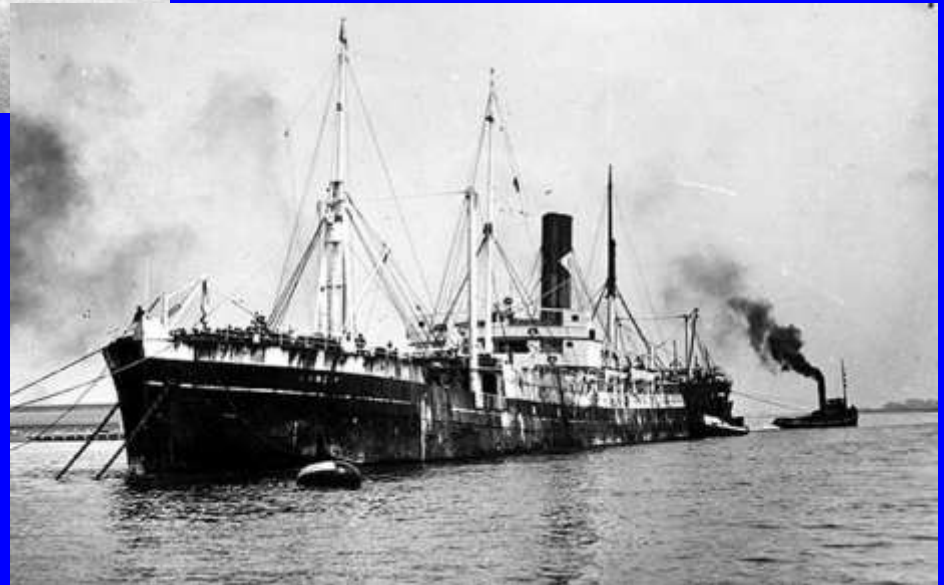Fin: 38,617
Humpback: 11,412
Other: 1,696
Total: 84,741

Source: Hart 2006
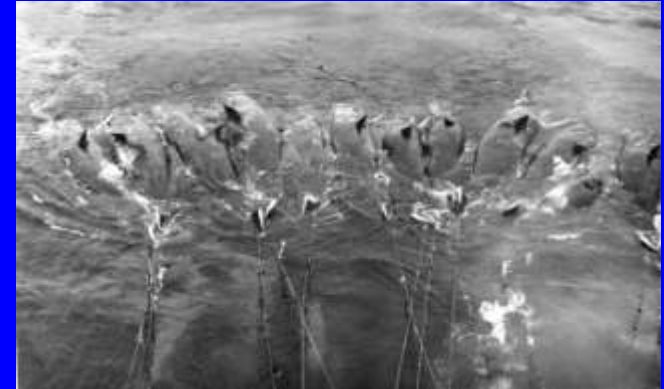
Freed from ties to land

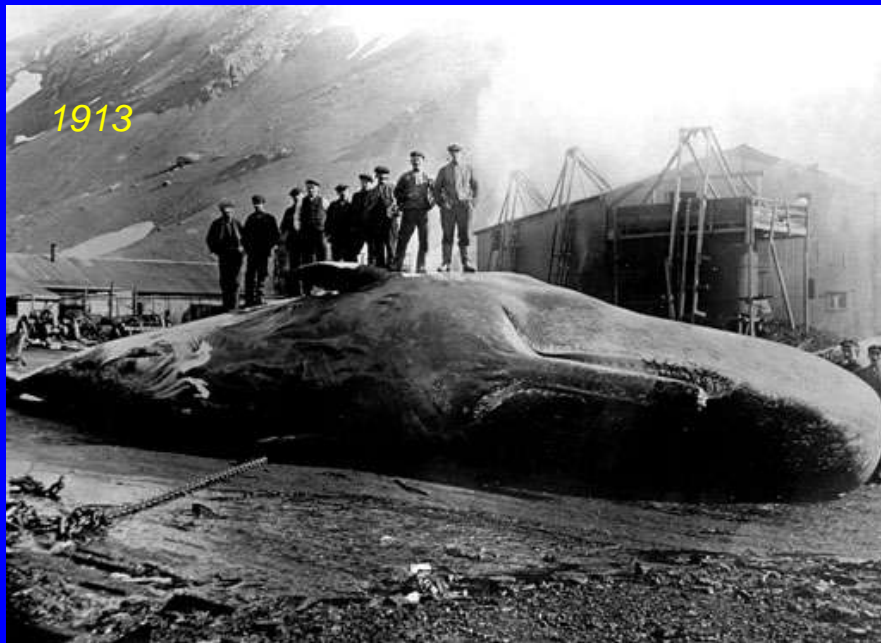*FF Sir James Clark Ross (1923)*

FF Lancing (1925)

Timeline

- 1904: Beginning of modern whaling in the Southern Ocean region
- 1923: First factory ship introduced
- 1925: First stern slip factory ship
- 1929: Total catch 40,201 whales
- 1930: Factory ships operating = 38 (with 184 catchers)
- 1931: Geneva Convention for the Regulation of Whaling signed… 29,410 blue whales killed
- 1934: First Japanese factory ship, *Tonan Maru,* works in the Antarctic
- 1937: International Agreement for the Regulation of Whaling signed… 46,039 whales killed

Timeline (cont.)

- 1946: Intl Convention for the Regulation of Whaling signed
- 1947: *Slava* becomes the first Soviet factory ship to work in the Antarctic
- 1964: Total blue whale catch... 20 animals

1913

South Georgia

Timeline (cont.)

- 1972: IWC introduces International Observer Scheme

- 1982: IWC passes the Moratorium

- 1994: IWC adopts the Southern Ocean Sanctuary

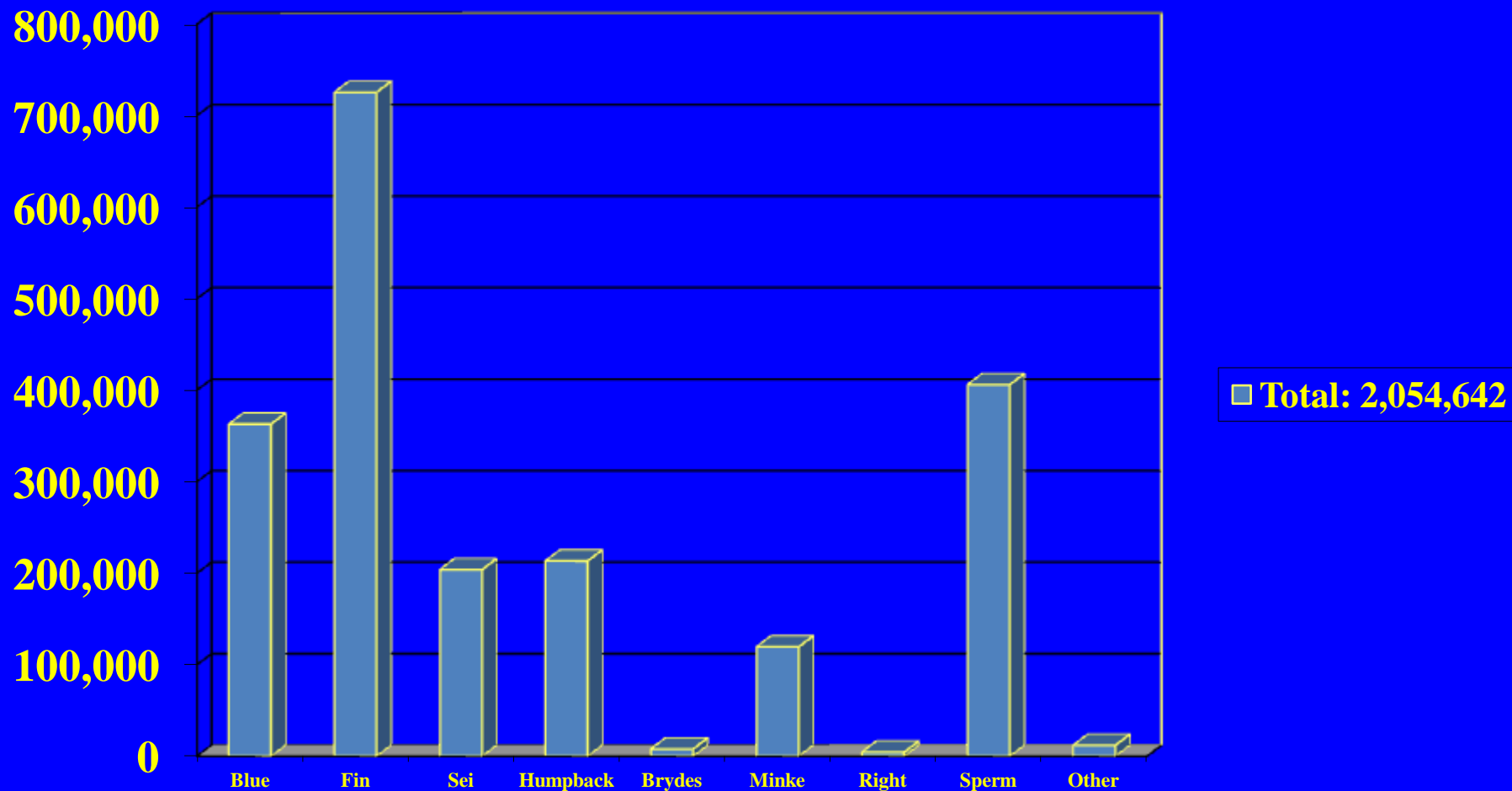- Today: Only "Special Permit" whaling by Japan (mostly minke whales)

So remorseless a havoc

Catcher boat in ice, Antarctic

- 1930's: >150,000 blue whales
- 1950's: >250,000 fin whales

- Total 20th century S. Hemisphere catch: 2 million whales

Southern Hemisphere catch totals 1904-2000

	Total:	2,054,642

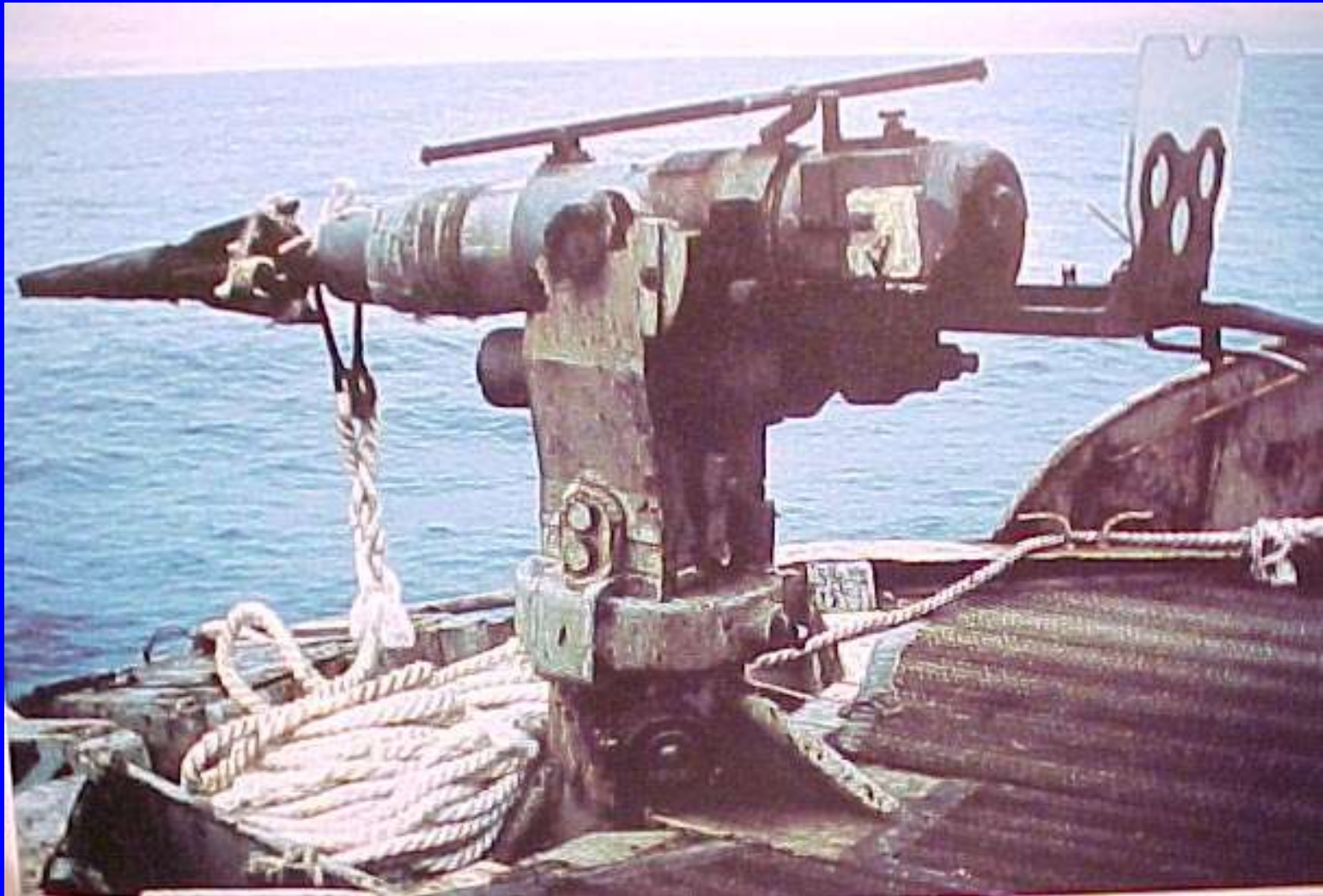Blue, Fin, Sei, Humpback, Brydes, Minke, Right, Sperm, Other

The International Whaling Commission

- Convention signed 2nd December 1946

- Aim: *"to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry"*

- Scientific Committee oversees research on whale populations, provides advice to the Commission on catches etc.
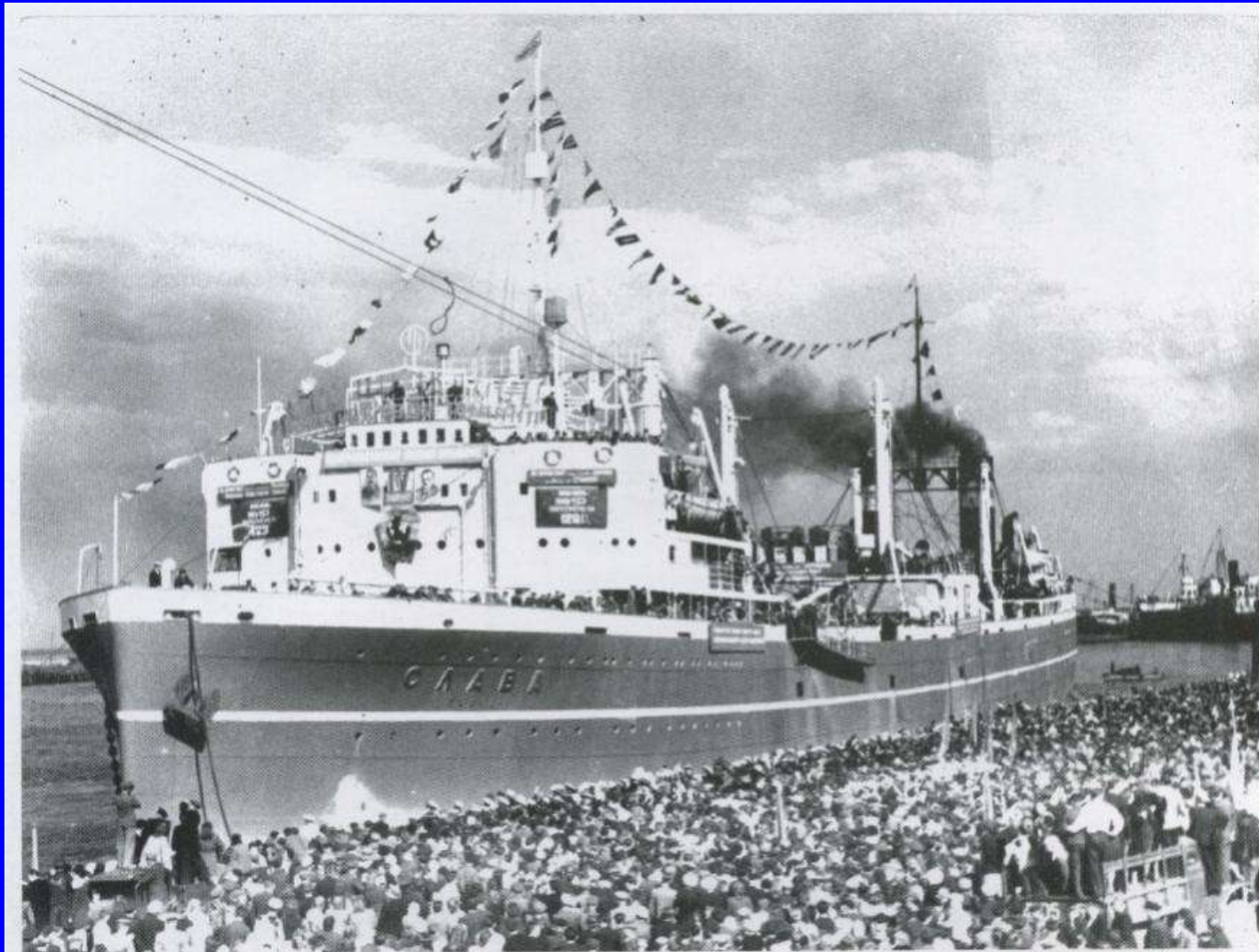
- Everyone signs (including the USSR)

The 1950's: Over-capitalization, Declining stocks... and sustained high catches

1965: Something's wrong...
Let's ignore it

Soviet illegal whaling, 1947-78

Slava returns to Odessa

1993: A Secret Revealed

Dmitriy Tormosov, Yuriy Mikhalev, Nikolay Doroshenko

Alexey Yablokov

Bob Brownell

The Antarctic Fleets

Slava

Sovetskaya Ukraina

Yuri Dolgorukiy

Sovetskaya Rossiya

Industrial Planning Was Everything!

We met our target, did you?

Soviet planning system

Plan Target

Catches

120%

Bonus
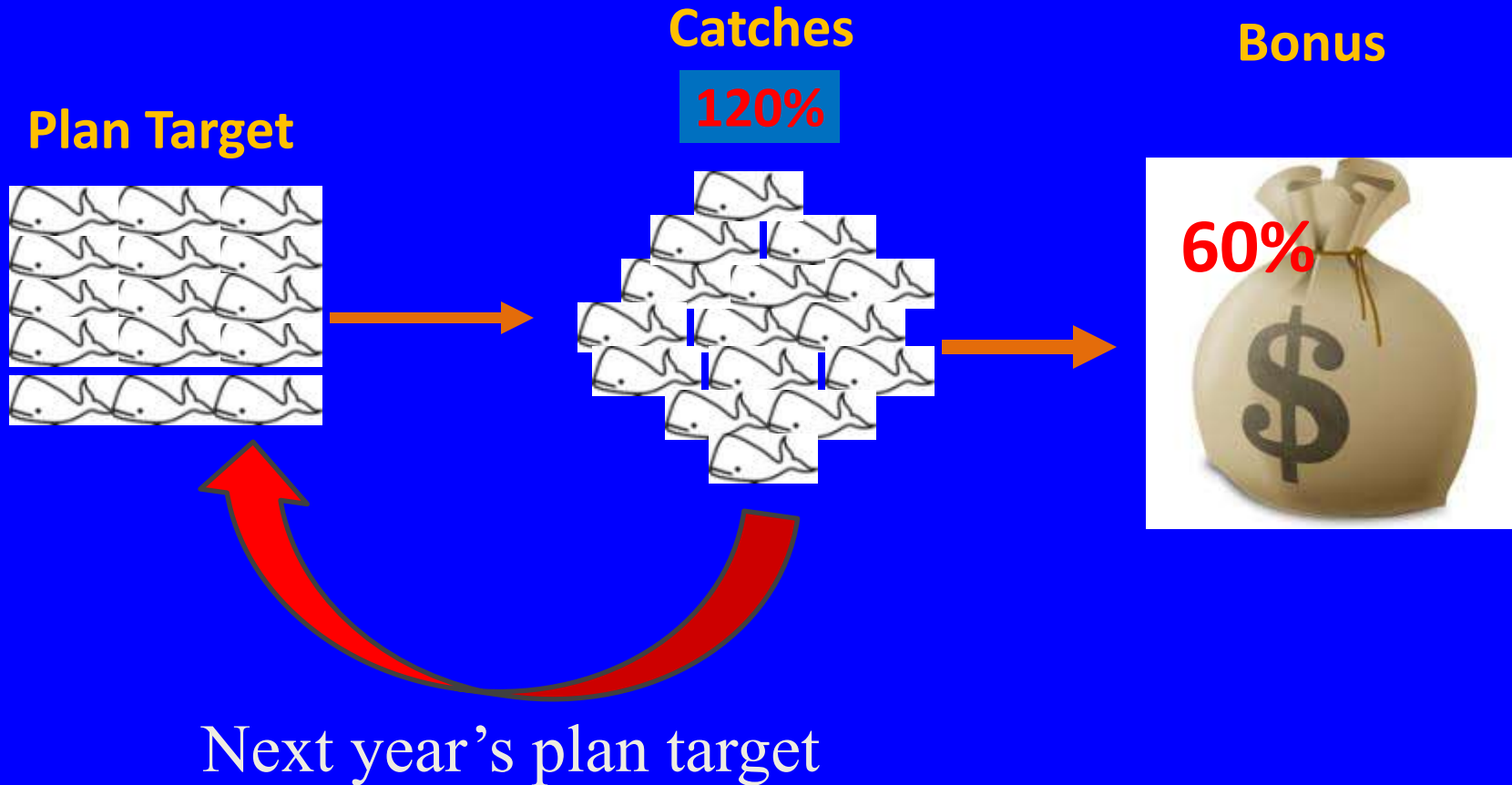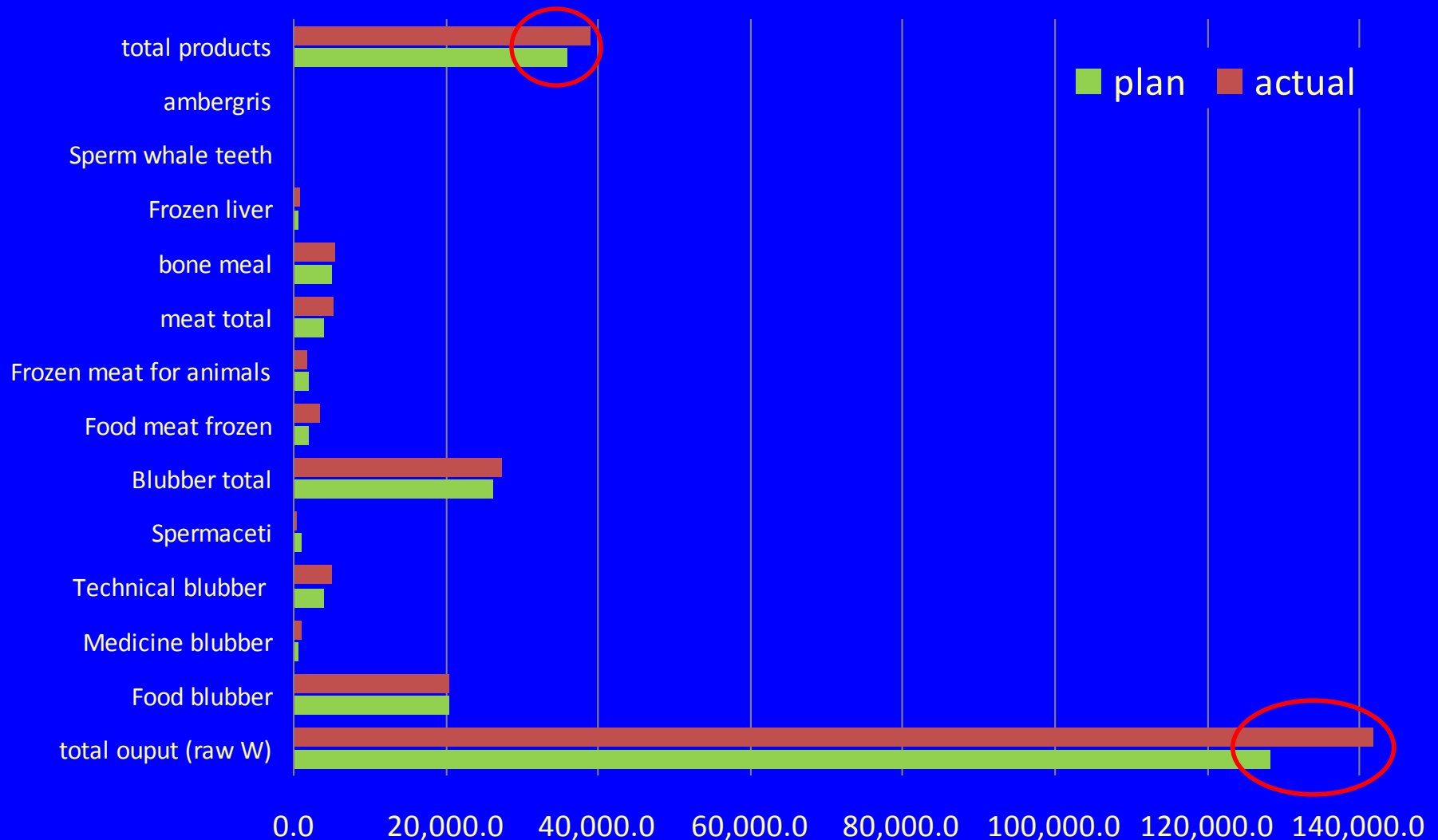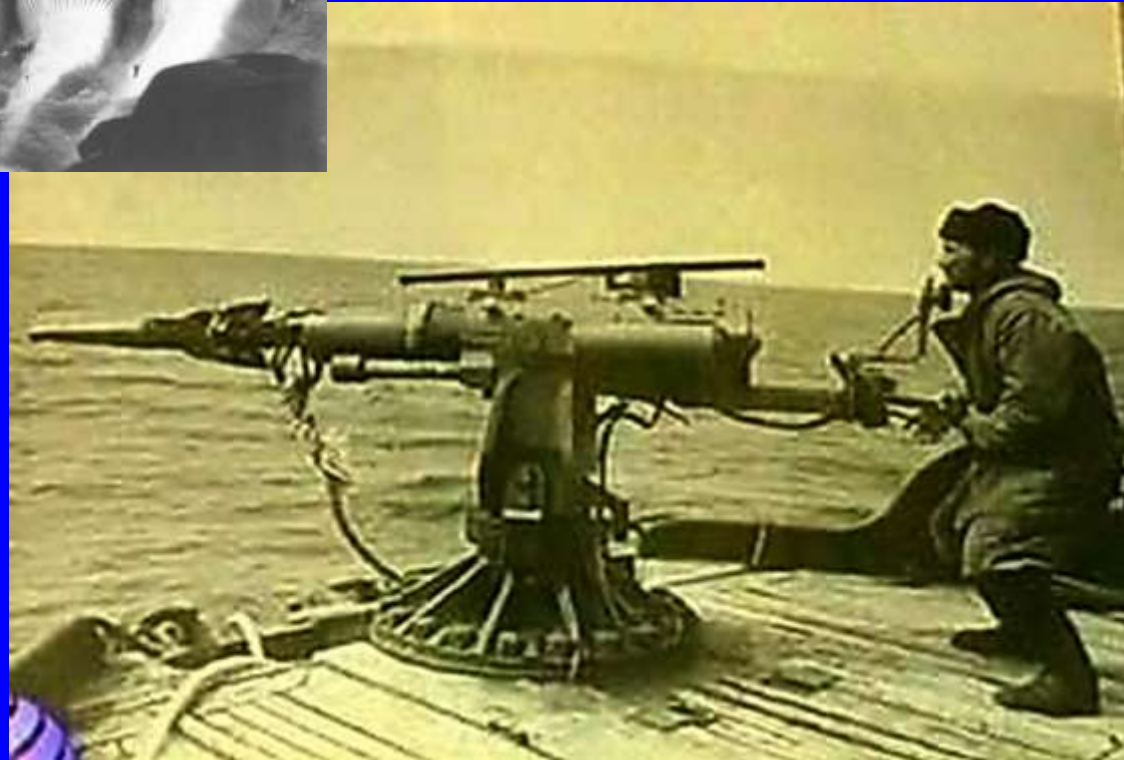
60%

Next year's plan target

Table of targets and actual results for different products from the w/f Sovetskaya Rossia 1961-62 season
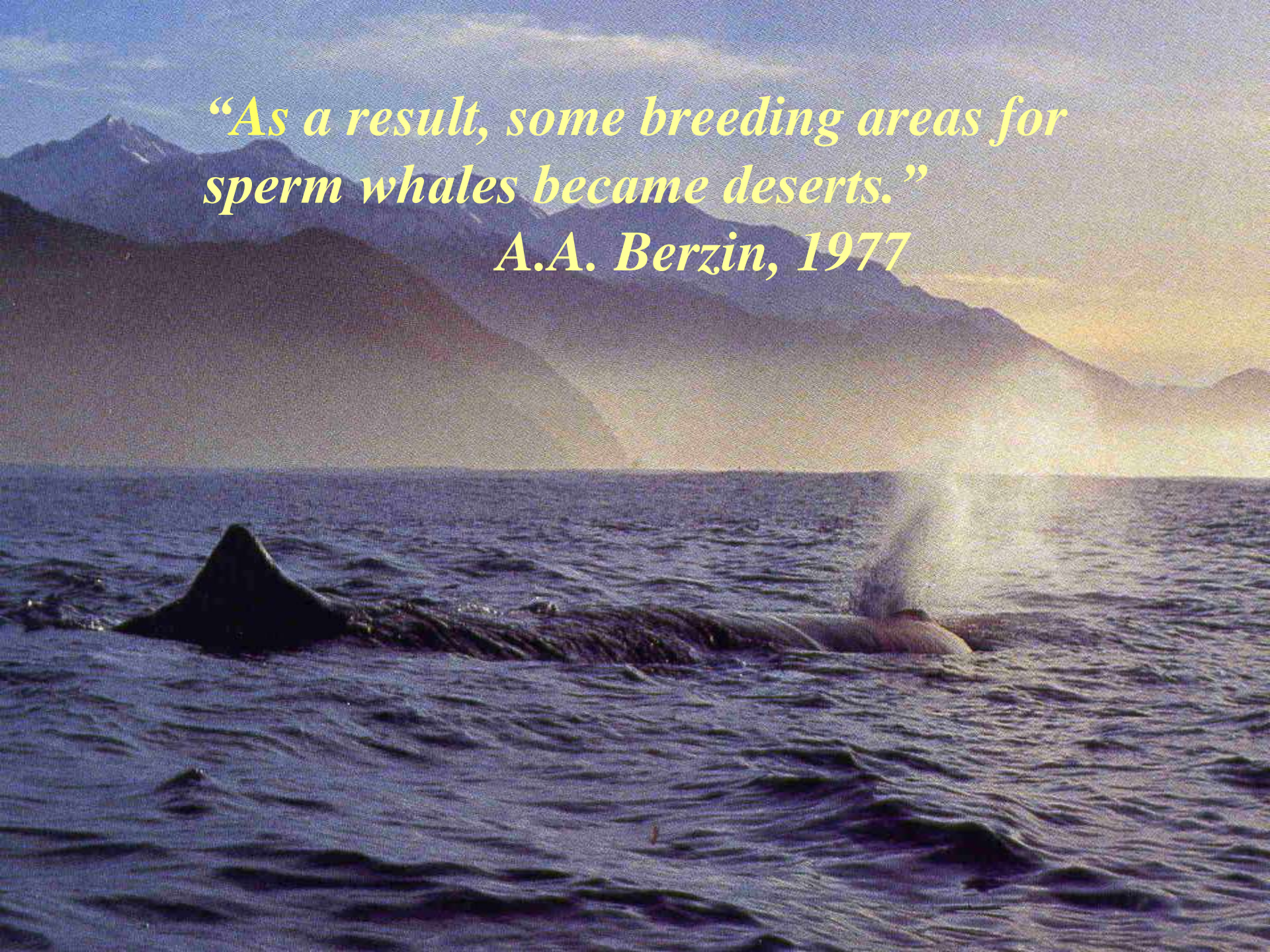
Efficiency

Inefficiency & Waste

"How long will we continue to discard in the sea such great wealth? Evidently we have too great an abundance of natural resources, that we can waste them and manage them so poorly."

S.K. Klumov, 1956

"As a result, some breeding areas for sperm whales became deserts."
A.A. Berzin, 1977

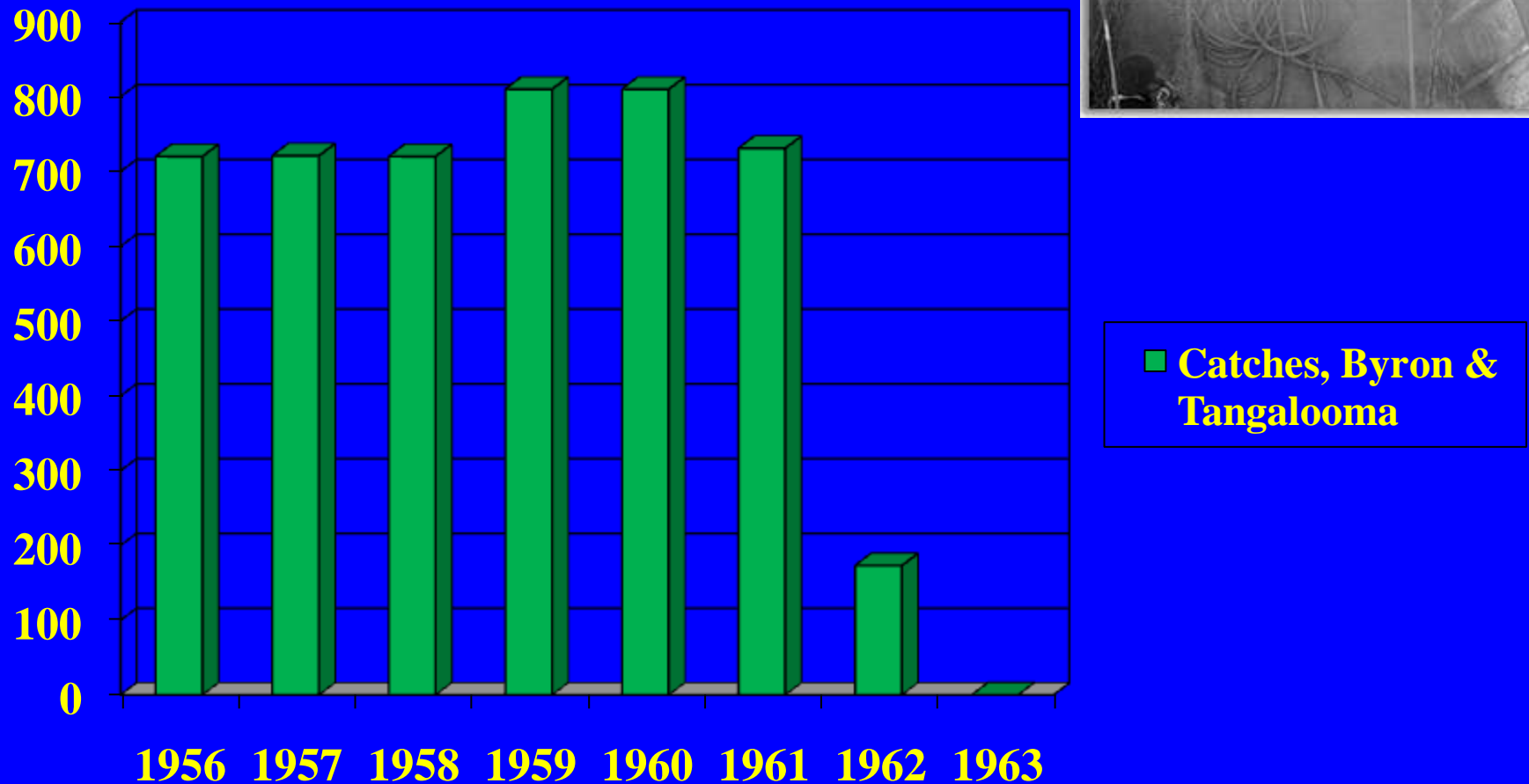# Soviet catches of humpback whales in the Southern Hemisphere

All years: **48,721**

1959/60-1960/61: **25,890**

Reported to IWC: **2,710**

Impact of Soviet catches: the Australian fishery

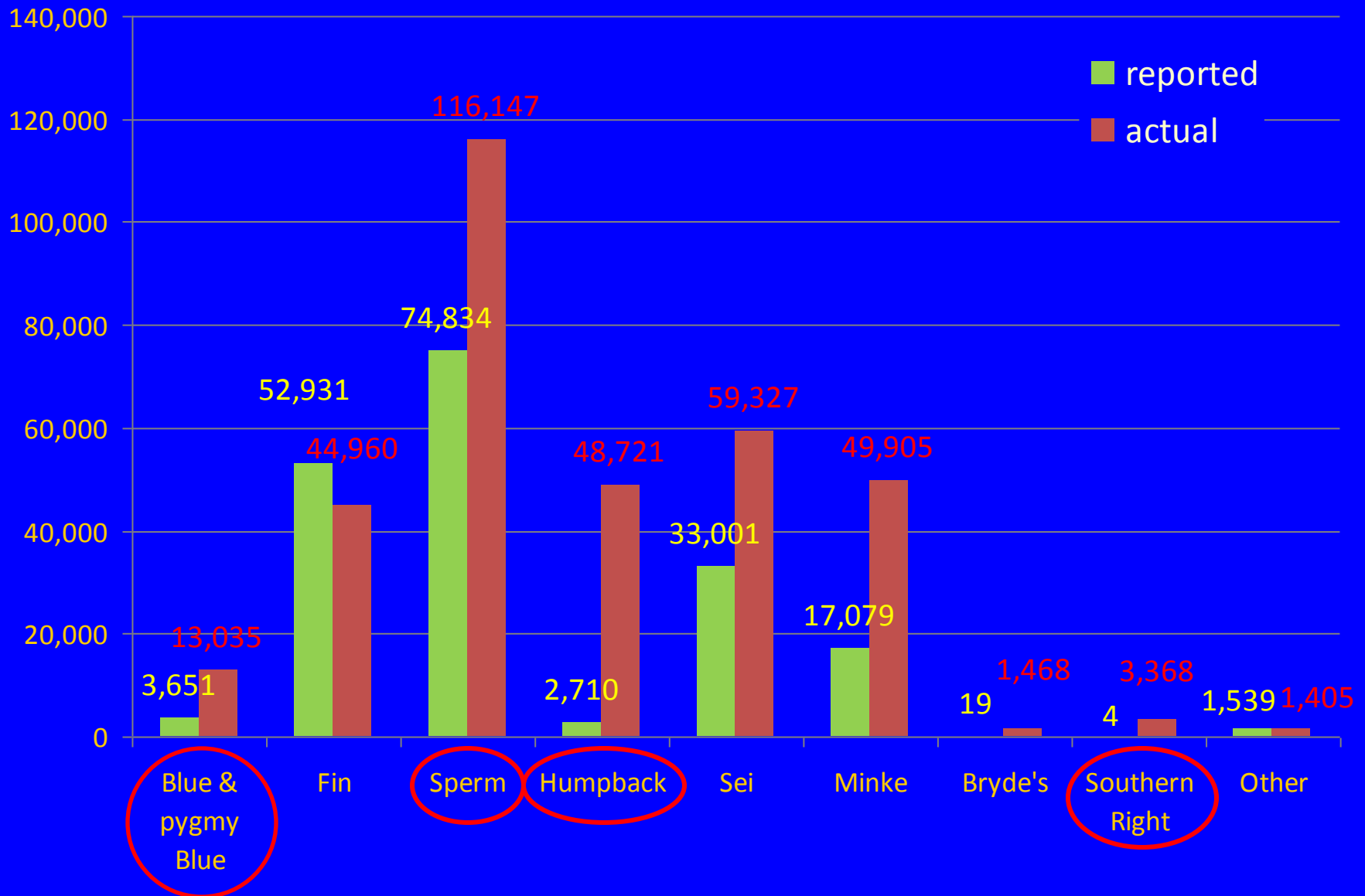Catches, Byron & Tangalooma (y-axis 0–900, years 1956–1963)

But everything stopped in 1972 - right?

Sovetskaya Ukraina, Turkey, 1995 (prior to breaking up)

Total Soviet catches in the Antarctic
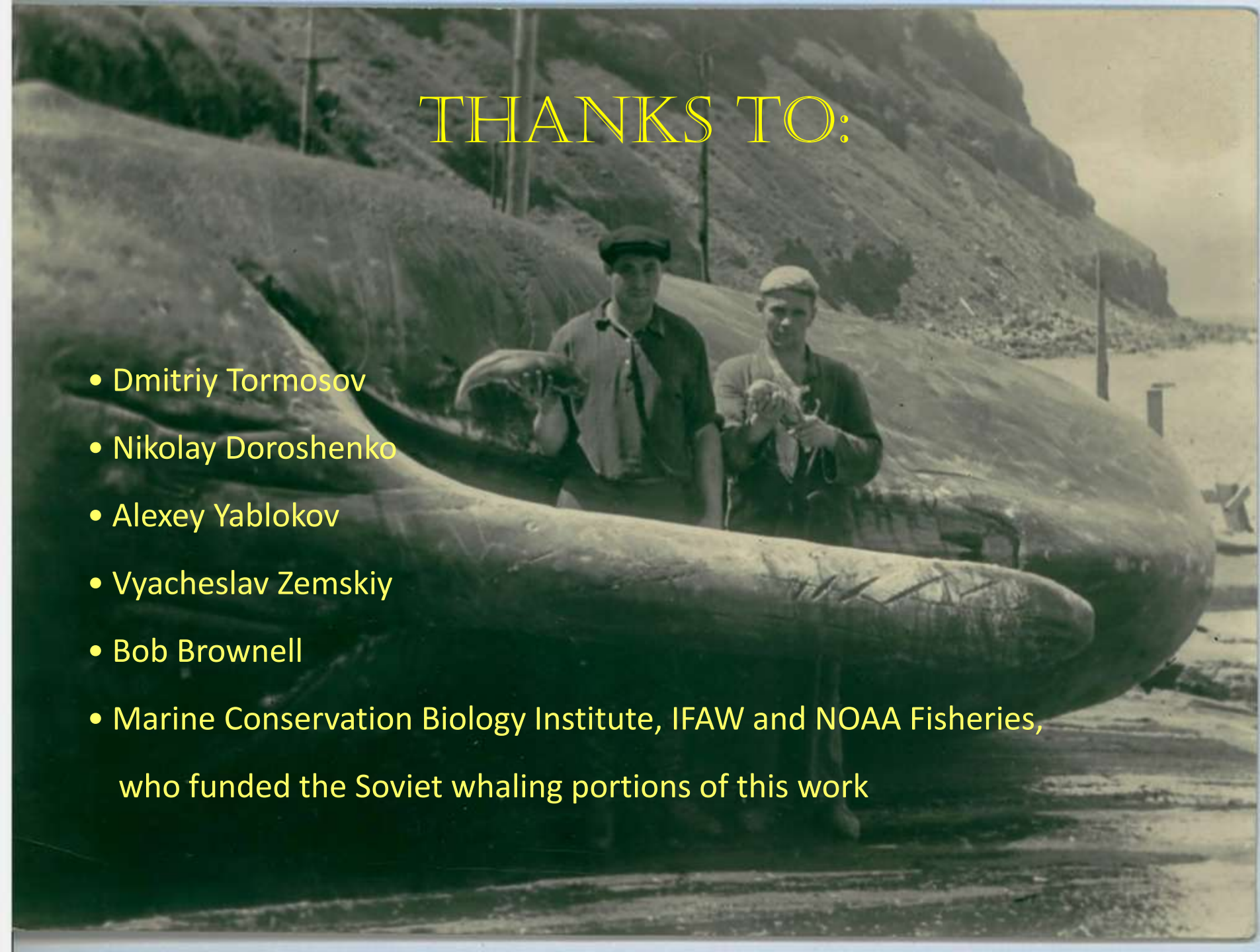
Soviet Catches: Southern Hemisphere

Total reported: 185,778
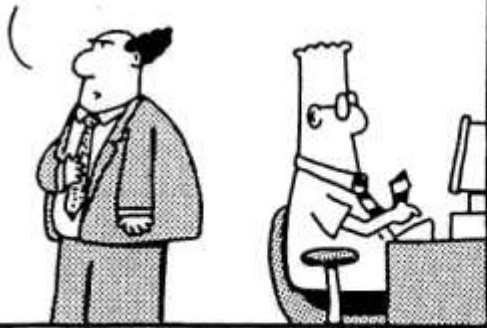
Actually taken: 338,336

THANKS TO:

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  who funded the Soviet whaling portions of this work

Further (depressing) reading...

Soviet Whaling

Soviet Illegal Whaling: The Devil and the Details

A Whale of a Deception

PHIL CLAPHAM and YULIA IVASHCHENKO

Ivashchenko, Y.V., Clapham, P.J. & Brownell, R.L. Jr. (eds.) 2008.
The Truth About Soviet Whaling: A Memoir, by A.A. Berzin
[Translation: Y.V. Ivashchenko].
Marine Fisheries Review 70: 1-59.

Ivashchenko, Y.V., Clapham, P.J. & Brownell, R.L. Jr. 2011.
Soviet Illegal whaling: The Devil and the Details.
Marine Fisheries Review 73: 1-19.

Clapham, P. & Ivashchenko, Y. 2009. A whale of a deception.
Marine Fisheries Review 71: 44-52.

www.moscowproject.org

Thank you