

Class notes, Oct 7, On Cetaceans

(sorry for the differently sized bullet points...)

A key point to keep in mind (from Cavalieri): “how alien the acoustic-aquatic cetacean cognitive environment [must be] for beings like us, whose natural environment is visual-terrestrial”

What are the range of **anthropogenic** (human-created) activities that put cetaceans at risk?

Highly migratory species and the role of **international environmental law**

- customary international law and *opinio juris*

Hal Whitehead et al, “Culture and Conservation of Non-Humans with Reference to Whales and Dolphins”

- Integrating cultural diversity into the preservation of nonhuman animal biodiversity preservation
- Defining 'culture'
- **horizontal** versus **vertical** culture transmission
- What are some examples Whitehead gives of cetacean culture?

Mark Peter Simmonds, “Into the Brains of Whales” [summary of insights on 200]

- What are some of the reasons it is especially difficult to understand cetacean behavior and ‘culture’? (191)
- The challenge of **anthropogenic ocean noise** (we’ll revisit this issue when we discuss MFA Sonar, the Navy, and beaked whales near the end of the semester)
- Why is it significant that “the musculature of [cetacean] heads prohibits facial expressions”?
- Evidence
 - Brain size/complexity (**encephalization**)
 - Self-awareness
 - Language (various forms—and long-range acoustic communication)
 - Group living
- From ‘living natural resources’ to ‘unique individuals’?

Paola Cavalieri, “Whales as Persons”

- The story of the entangled humpback...
- D’Amato and Chopra’s five stages of the ‘whaling’ **regime**: free resource, regulation, conservation, protection, preservation (and a sixth proposed: entitlement)
 - The fascinating case of old songs and new songs (207)
- Do you agree that we should grant whales the ‘right to life’? In US waters? Around the world? At what cost, economic or otherwise?