

Japan suspends humpback whaling

by UPI

TOKYO -- A top Japanese government official said the country is suspending humpback whaling during reform talks at the International Whaling Commission. Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura said Japan decided to halt the hunting of the aquatic mammals after IWC Chairman William Hogarth suggested the practice be suspended for one or two years while the IWC has reform discussions, Kyodo News reported Friday. "We will not change the plan to conduct research whaling itself. But the government has decided that, as long as the normalization process is under way, we will postpone humpback whaling," Machimura said. Japan, which is currently serving as vice chair of the whaling commission, halted commercial whaling after the IWC issued a moratorium in 1986, but began hunting whales again the following year, claiming the practice was part of scientific research.

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