



## More Channels

[News](#)  
[Business](#)  
[Sports](#)  
[Entertainment](#)  
[Health](#)  
[Technology](#)  
[Education](#)  
[Classifieds](#)  
[Directory](#)  
[e-Cards](#)  
[Member](#)  
[30-Day Archives](#)  
[Chat](#)  
[Clubs](#)  
[Contests](#)  
[Games](#)  
[WebMail](#)  
[Extras](#)  
[Property](#)  
[Motoring](#)  
[Purple Sofa](#)  
[Comics](#)  
[AudioFile](#)  
[Maritime](#)  
[Jobs](#)  
[CyberKuali](#)  
[Clove](#)  
[Weather](#)  
[Specials](#)  
[Online](#)  
[exclusives](#)  
[Columnists](#)  
[Millennium](#)  
[Markers](#)  
[Penang Story](#)  
[Honours lists](#)

Tuesday July 27, 2004 Ads by Google

## Whales are no competition

WHALES and dolphins are not depleting the world's fish stocks despite the sea mammals' enormous appetites, according to a scientific study unveiled at the International Whaling Commission (IWC) conference in Italy.

The study counters arguments put forward by pro-whaling nations that whales, protected under international law, devour valuable fish stocks that could be used to feed humans. Some whaling countries like Japan, Norway, and Iceland, have suggested controlled killing of such animals would help reduce the growing strain on the fishing industry.

Cetaceans – a category of sea creatures that includes whales and dolphins – and other sea mammals like seals, consume vast quantities of food, an estimated 500 million tons, at least four times the annual human catch of fish.

But the report by Daniel Pauly, professor of fisheries at the University of British Columbia in Canada and his colleague Kristin Kaschner, which mapped the globe's fisheries and compared that with the fish consumption of sea mammals, found little overlap between the two. "Only about 1% of what marine mammals eat is in high conflict areas," Kaschner says.

The research found that whales and other species were mainly feeding either in seas where there was little human fishing, such as Arctic and Antarctic zones, or the whales were eating organisms humans do not catch, such as tiny plankton and organisms which live out of reach of trawl nets. – Reuters

### Climate lawsuit

EIGHT states and New York city have launched an unprecedented civil action against five of United States' largest power companies, demanding that they cut carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions because of global warming.

Attorney-Generals from California, Connecticut, Iowa, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont and Wisconsin, as well as New York City's corporation counsel, filed a public nuisance lawsuit on July 21 in the federal court in Manhattan.

### Emissions Trading Experts

Cantor Environmental Brokerage. To trade or consult: 800-228-2955 [www.emissionstrading.co](http://www.emissionstrading.co)

### Emissions trading.

Oil market, UK gas & Network Code. 1-day seminars now in Aberdeen! [www.energytrainingnetwc](http://www.energytrainingnetwc)

### Global Warming Solution

One solution to help stop global warming - plant hardwood trees! [tropicaltreefarms.com](http://tropicaltreefarms.com)

### Emissions Trading

Article in BusinessWeek Read it online. Free Trial! [www.KeepMedia.com](http://www.KeepMedia.com)

They contend that CO2 emissions can be reduced by increasing efficiency at coal-burning plants, switching from coal to cleaner-burning fuels, investing in energy conservation, and using clean energy sources such as wind and solar power. The case is part of a growing movement among state authorities in the United States to challenge George Bush's refusal to take action on climate change.

The companies being sued are American Electric Power Co, Southern Co, Xcel Energy, Cinergy and the Federal Tennessee Valley Authority. Together they own 174 fossil fuel-burning power plants which produce 646 million tonnes of CO2 a year – about 10% of the nation's total.

Jeffrey Marks of the US National Association of Manufacturers countered that regulating CO2 emissions would severely depress the US economy, limit the use of fossil fuels and hinder environmental improvements. – Guardian Newspaper Limited

### **Mercury falling**

MERCURY levels in the Florida Everglades have fallen sharply since authorities curtailed waste incinerators and battery manufacturers reduced their use of the heavy metal.

After analysing nearly a century of data from bird feathers, University of Florida researchers said they had proved that dangerously high levels of mercury found in the wetlands in the early 1990s had been caused by local waste incineration.

Mercury levels found in the feathers of birds last year were 90% lower than in 1994, following the introduction of new regulations demanding waste incinerators install pollution-cutting scrubbers on their smoke stacks, says wildlife ecology professor Peter Frederick.

The study found it took about seven years for mercury levels in the birds to decline after emissions were curtailed. The fall in mercury levels also coincided with the voluntary phasing out in the 1980s of the use of mercury by some major battery manufacturers, which cut the amount of toxins in household waste, the researchers said.

Mercury is a toxin that causes reproductive and behavioural problems in birds. The metal also is toxic to humans and can cause serious neurological damage. – Reuters

### **Fishy sex change**

BRITISH fish are changing sex due to sewage in rivers that contains large amounts of female hormones. In a report on the latest stage of 20 years of research, the British Environment Agency says in a survey of 1,500 fish at 50 locations, one-third of the males showed female characteristics.

The agency which monitors environmental pollution says the sex changes were a result of the fish being exposed to treated sewage

which still contained hormones produced naturally by women or as a result of them taking the contraceptive pill.

“There is sufficient evidence of harm to fish caused by sewage effluent that action needs to be taken now to find out how to control this,” says Andrew Skinner, director of environmental protection at the agency. “We need to find out what is the best and most cost-effective way to remove these chemicals from sewage,” he adds.

It named the offending natural hormones as oestradiol and oestrone, and the synthetic culprit as ethinyloestradiol. It said the findings had serious implication for future fish populations because anything more than a moderate change in a fish’s sexual organs made it more difficult to reproduce.

The agency noted that while the phenomenon was being seen worldwide, Britain had the most comprehensive data on it. – Reuters

### **Disappearing savanna**

BRAZIL’s vast tropical savanna will disappear by 2030 if an area nearly the size of New Jersey continues to be cleared each year to transform it into the world’s biggest grain growing area.

Covered with stunted trees, palm-studded grassland and gallery forests, up to 70% of the savanna or cerrado has already been levelled, according to environmental group Conservation International (CI).

The ancient savanna wilderness resembles the safari lands of Africa. It is the world’s most biodiverse savanna and home to around 5% of the world’s animal and plant species.

The cerrado is also considered the only continuous agricultural area in the world that can be expanded to meet growing global food demands.

The savanna is disappearing at a faster rate than Brazil’s Amazon and Atlantic rain forests. It is cleared for crops like soya, corn, and cotton, settlements and hydroelectric dams. Around 1.5% or 20,000sqkm are being cleared annually, according to the study that used satellite images from 2002.

Environmentalists recognise the savanna’s economic importance but want to protect animal and plant species that have yet to be studied and could provide medical cures. The savanna is also a vital source of water for agricultural production, human consumption, and production of electric energy. Without adequate control, its rivers, lakes, and reservoirs could silt up, environmentalists say. – Reuters

[Printer Friendly](#) | [Email This](#)



More @ [The Star Online](#):

[News](#) · [Business](#) · [Sports](#) · [Entertainment](#) · [Lifestyle](#) · [Technology](#) · [Education](#) · [Archives](#)  
[Classifieds](#) · [Directory](#) · [e-Cards](#) · [Motoring](#) · [Property](#) · [Jobs](#) · [Kuali](#) · [Sitemap](#)

Copyright © 1995-2004 [Star Publications \(Malaysia\) Bhd](#) (Co No 10894-D)  
Managed by I.Star.