



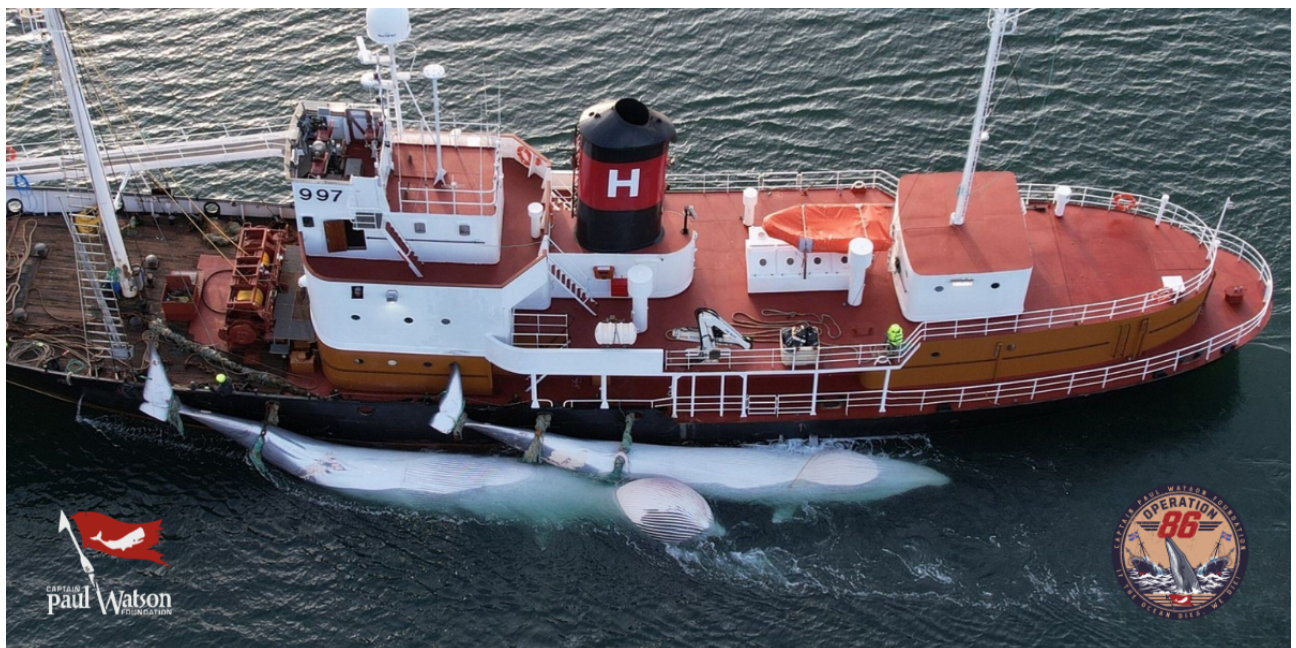
The Captain Paul Watson Foundation Launches “Operation 86” to End Icelandic Whaling

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New York, United States - For nearly four decades, the battle between anti-whaling activists and Iceland’s most infamous whaler has simmered across the North Atlantic. Now, in what could become the final confrontation in Iceland’s commercial whaling era, the Captain Paul Watson Foundation has announced it will return to Iceland this summer to directly confront Icelandic whaler Kristján Loftsson and his company, Hvalur hf, during a campaign named *Operation 86*.

The foundation confirmed that its crew aboard the *Bandero* will sail to Icelandic waters as pressure mounts against the nation’s last remaining commercial whaling operation. The announcement follows weeks of global headlines surrounding the foundation’s recent Antarctic campaign targeting industrial krill trawling, including a dramatic collision with Aker QRILL’s vessel.

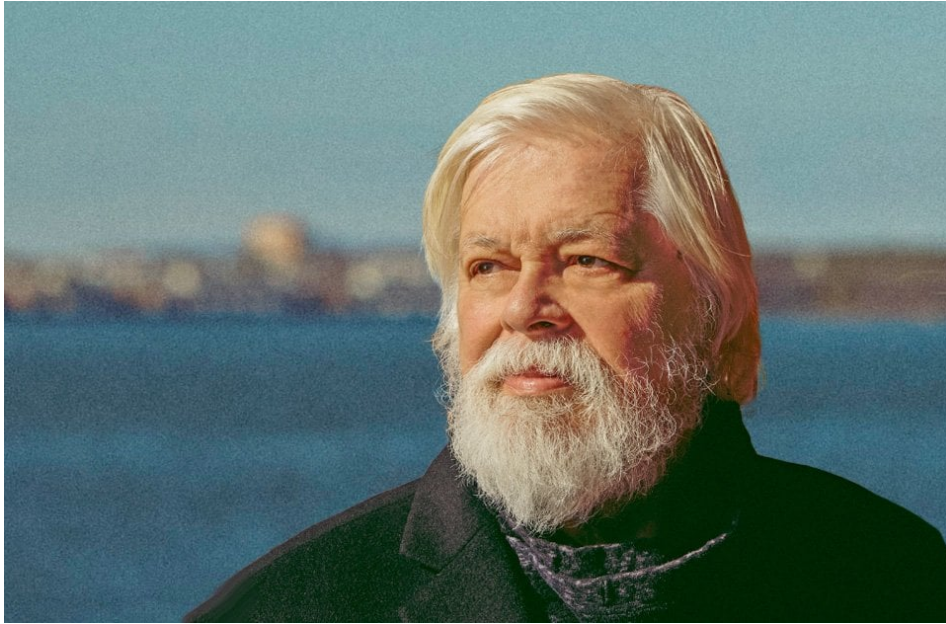


Kristjan Loftsson’s Ship, Hvalur 9 Drags Two Dead Whales in Iceland

At the center of the campaign is Loftsson, whose company has been issued a quota of 150 fin whales for the 2026 season, a 28 percent reduction from the previous year. Loftsson has suspended whaling operations for the past two seasons, citing worsening economic conditions. In comments published by Icelandic newspaper *Morgunblaðið* in April 2025, Loftsson acknowledged that the market price for whale meat in Japan, the primary destination for Icelandic whale exports, was deteriorating and continuing to decline.

Political pressure within Iceland is also intensifying. Iceland's Minister of Industries and Innovation, Hanna Katrín Friðriksson, has indicated "a bill to ban whaling is likely to be introduced in the autumn parliamentary session."

For Captain Paul Watson and his crew, however, the mission represents far more than another protest at sea. It is the continuation of a conflict that has shaped the modern anti-whaling movement for generations.



Captain Paul Watson

The campaign's name, *Operation 86*, deliberately invokes a controversial moment in conservation history. In 1986, the same year the International Whaling Commission enacted its global moratorium on commercial whaling, two whaling vessels belonging to Loftsson were sunk in Reykjavík harbor in an act that became synonymous with the anti-whaling movement of the era.

Now, nearly forty years later, Watson says the confrontation may finally be approaching its conclusion. "What we began in 1986, we intend to end in 2026," said Captain Paul Watson.

The mission comes amid growing international attention on ocean conservation campaigns led by Watson and his organization. Earlier this year, the foundation's Antarctic operation targeting industrial krill trawling drew worldwide attention, after campaign vessels confronted ships operating in the Southern Ocean.

"This is not about science, sustainability, or tradition," said Robert Read of the Captain Paul Watson Foundation UK. "It is about an industry refusing to accept that its time has passed. If these vessels leave port, they will be met with scrutiny, exposure, and direct action." Since 2018, CPWF UK has been the only organization to document every fin whale landed, revealing the extent of suffering experienced by individual whales and forcing major regulatory changes, but they still haven't stopped. It's time to end Icelandic whaling for good.

Conservation groups argue that modern commercial whaling has become economically unsustainable, ethically indefensible, and increasingly isolated from international public opinion. For Watson's crew, *Operation 86* is not simply another campaign, it is a final challenge to end an industry they believe has survived decades longer than history intended.

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