

For immediate release

NZ author speaks out against whaling

19 January 2007, Nelson, NZ--New Zealand wildlife biologist and prize-winning novelist C. George Muller has announced the release of a new book heavily critical of Japanese whaling in the Southern Ocean.

Echoes in the Blue is a factual eco-thriller which takes aim at the Japanese 'scientific' whaling programme.

Every summer Japan send its whaling fleet deep into the Antarctic where it plans to kill over 1000 whales annually for what it refers to as "scientific research" – a claim that Muller refutes. "This kill is illegal. Many of the whales Japan targets are listed as endangered species. The kill takes place in violation of both the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary, and the 1986 Moratorium on commercial whaling."

Whalemeat from Japan's research programme ends up for sale in markets and restaurants where it can be worth over US\$16,500 per tonne – making even the smallest whale worth hundreds of thousands of dollars dead.

Muller is critical not only of the kill itself, but also of Japan's claims it is for science.

"As a scientist myself, I can tell you what they are doing in definitely not science. It's just a cynical front for commercial whaling."

Japan exploits a loophole in the International Whaling Commission (IWC) that allows the killing of whales for the purposes of scientific research.

However, as Muller points out, "In twenty years Japan's so-called research has not resulted in any significant published findings and has been roundly condemned by international scientists. What they are doing is an insult and a threat to the reputation of good science worldwide."

Muller wrote *Echoes in the Blue* to raise awareness and speak out against what he calls, "The illegal slaughter happening just out of sight over the horizon." His campaign includes a donation to 'Save the Whales' causes for every book sold. He has also set up the website www.cgeorgemuller.com to highlight the issue of illegal whaling and publicise the fight against it.

Echoes in the Blue has already received high praise from a Scientific Advisor to New Zealand's IWC Commissioner, who described it as, "Very well researched including some extremely insightful observations about the nature of international politicking in the ongoing fight to protect whales."

C. George Muller gave up a well-paying career in the corporate world to follow his heart and become a professional wildlife biologist. He has a Masters degree in biology, and has been involved in marine mammal research for the past 8 years – with findings published in several scientific papers. He has worked on projects for the US National Park Service, the New Zealand Department of Conservation, and more than one university. *Echoes in the Blue* was inspired by his experiences on the frontlines of wildlife research and conservation and was written while living and working in Kaikoura, the whale watching capital of New Zealand. He has also lived in Auckland, Christchurch, Nelson, and the Bay of Plenty. Muller's first novel won the 2005 Richard Webster Popular Fiction Award.

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Echoes in the Blue is distributed in New Zealand by Nationwide Book Distributors and internationally by Ingram and Baker & Taylor. It is available directly from Amazon.com.