

A former Kaikoura man has released an "eco-thriller" on what he calls Japan's "cynical front for commercial whaling".

Echoes in the Blue was written by biologist George Muller to raise awareness on whaling and is inspired by Mr Muller's own experiences in the frontlines of wildlife research and conservation.

"I choose to present the facts within the pages of an eco-thriller novel in the hopes of reaching a wider audience than my scientific papers could."

The book follows the journey of Richard Major, an "unlikely hero", who is sailing from New Zealand with a whale research expedition. During his journey he must confront the "ruthless fishing industrialists and massive multinational conglomerates who would wipe out entire species".

Mr Muller says the journey mirrors a real life tragedy looming in our own lifetimes and describes the book as a haunting exploration of mankind's continual conflict with nature.

Every summer Japan sends its whaling fleet into the Antarctic where it plans to kill over 1000 whales annually for what it refers to as "scientific research".

In *Echoes in the Blue*, Mr Muller refutes this claim.

"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.

"As a marine biologist I am well qualified to tackle this subject. I have a masters degree in biology and have spent the past eight years working as a wildlife biologist around the world."

Mr Muller lived in Kaikoura for some years working for the University of Canterbury's Marine Mammal research group at the Edward Percival field station and was also a member of the Kaikoura Volunteer Fire Brigade.

He moved to Nelson last year and achieved recognition in 2005 after he won the Richard Webster Popular Fiction Award, given annually by Christchurch publishers Hazard Press for his unpublished novel *Into The Shadows*.

Echoes in the Blue should be available in NZ bookstores from mid-February.

Mr Muller has set up a website to provide more information on whaling including an online petition. He is donating a portion of the book's proceeds to save the whales.

- www.cgeorgemuller.com

By Alice Cowdrey, Kaikoura Star/Marlborough Express