Save The Whale!

Rules for
Naval "Wargames"
set in the Eco-Warrior Age

Save the Whale! - Tactical Rules

"Save the Whale" is a non-military wargame set against the apparently endless struggle between eco-warriors such as Greenpeace and commercial / "scientific" whaling operations. The inspiration was the 2005/06 confrontation between the Greenpeace protest ship "Arctic Sunrise" and the Japanese whaling fleet. Several dramatic incidents occurred during the various confrontations, including collisions between ships and daring do involving Zodiac inflatables playing dodgems and chicken with the whalers. As a result of an email "chat" with New Zealand wargamer Simon Dennan I decided to adapt one of my previous sets of rules to cover the conflict. The set chosen for adaptation also covered an ecological theme, namely the "Cod Wars" between Iceland and the UK.

The aim of the game is simple. One player controls the whaling ship (or ships). The second controls the Protest ship, which may be accompanied by, or may launch its own, inflatable boats. The whaling player wins if they successfully harpoon the whale within a specified number of game turns (typically 20). The Protest player wins if the whale escapes unharmed. The whale is controlled by the game system.

The main rules cover the basic Whalers vs. Protesters scenario. Additional notes at the end of the rules allow for expansion into more hypothetical territory, with the inclusion of warships protecting the rights of one or both sides.

Forces Engaged

The various confrontations viewed on national television tend to be fairly limited affairs. The whaling fleet typically consists of a factory ship and two to three harpoon carrying whalers. The whalers are the only ships that can fire harpoons at whales. Defending the rights of cetaceans everywhere are one, possibly two protest ships which may each carry one or two inflatable boats.

Ship Movement

Ships move at 1" per knot of speed. Ships may increase or decrease speed as follows:

Propulsion	Acceleration	Deceleration
Diesels	3 knots	3 knots
Steam Turbines	2 knots	3 knots
Gas Turbines, Inflatables	5 knots	5 knots

Unless stated it may be assumed that all ships are equipped with diesels.

Ships may move astern at up to 5 knots, but must decelerate to a stop and spend one turn stationary when changing from ahead to astern or vice versa.

Orders for movement must be written in advance using a recognisable notation. For example a ship doing 20 knots might be ordered thus:

5, P(4)3, 2

meaning ahead 5", turn to Port using turning circle 4, turning 3" around the circle, then go ahead 2"

Turning

Ships turn by moving around turning circles. Different circles are used depending on the manoeuvrability of the vessel:

Ship	Turn radius	
	<=12 knots	>12 knots
Inflatables	3"	5"
Protest Ships, Whalers	4"	6"
Warships	5"	7"
Factory Ships	6"	8"

Whale Movement

The whale swims at a random speed of 6-11 knots. Roll a d6 and add 5 for the total movement that turn. A d6 is also rolled for direction:

D6 Roll	Direction
1	Pivot 45 degrees left and move straight ahead
2-4	Move straight ahead
5	Pivot 45 degrees right and move straight ahead
6	Whale dives for 1d6 turns

If the whale dives roll a d6. Mark the position of the whale and remove the model. After the indicated number of turns replace the model at the point of the marker and then adjudicate all of the intervening turns to reveal the point at which the whale broaches the surface again.

Collisions

If the bow of a ship model (or the stern if moving astern) makes contact with any part of another vessel a collision has taken place. Collisions can cause anything from minor damage (scratches to paintwork) and deflecting the other ship from its course right up to major damage and even sinking.

Roll a d6 for each ship on the tables below depending on what ship is causing the ram and the ship they have hit. If the angle between the ramming ship and the target is within 45° of perpendicular add 2 to the die roll. If the ramming ship is travelling at more than 20 knots add 2 to the die roll.

Table 1. Whaler Rams Factory Ship Protest Ship Rams Whaler Protest Ship Rams Factory Ship		
Die Roll	Rammed Vessel	Ramming Vessel
1	NE	NE
2	NE	-1d6
3	Turn	Turn
4	Turn	-1d6, Turn
5	Lt	-2d6, Turn
6	Lt, Turn	-1d6, Turn, Lt
7	Med, Turn	-2d6, Turn, Med
8+	Heavy, Turn	Heavy, Stop

Table 3. Whaler Rams Whaler Factory Ship Rams Factory Ship Protest Ship Rams Protest Ship		
Die Roll	Rammed Vessel	Ramming Vessel
1	NE	NE
2	Turn	-1d6
3	Turn	Turn
4	Lt	-1d6, Turn
5	Lt, Turn	-2d6, Turn
6	Med, Turn	-1d6, Turn, Lt
7	Heavy, Turn	-2d6, Turn, Med
8+	Heavy, Turn, Withdraw	Heavy, Stop

Table 2. Factory Ship Rams Whaler Whaler Rams Protest Ship		
Die Roll	Rammed Vessel	Ramming Vessel
1	Turn	NE
2	Turn, Light	-1d6
3	Turn, Light	-1d6, Turn
4	Turn, Med	-1d6, Turn
5	Turn, Med	-1d6, Turn, Light
6	Turn, Heavy	-2d6, Med, Turn
7	Turn, Heavy, Withdraw	-2d6, Med, Turn
8+	Sinking	Med, Stop

Damage Definitions:

NE	No effect
Light	Reduce maximum speed by 1d6 knots
Medium	Reduce maximum speed by 1d6 knots, increase to next turning circle (max 5")
Heavy	Reduce maximum speed by 2d6 knots, increase to next turning circle (max 5")
Withdraw	Ship must withdraw from the area to make urgent repairs
Sinking	Fatal damage, ship stops and is in a sinking condition.
Turn	Vessel is turned away from the direction of impact, judged by relative position of models (if in doubt position two spare models close by, push the ramming vessel forwards and note in which direction the target vessel turns. Roll a d6: 1-2: - turn 30° 3-4: - turn 45° 5-6: - turn 60°

As well as the mandatory "Withdraw" damage a vessel will withdraw when its accumulated damage reaches the following level:

a)   Three Medium hits
b)   Two heavy hits
c)   One Heavy hits plus two Medium hits

Vessels may also withdraw at the controlling player's discretion.

Inflatables

These have a significant "nuisance" effect on the whaling player, who may counter them by playing the fire hoses upon them (bad for PR though!). Inflatables do not use the same movement rules as bigger ships. They are moved after the bigger ships have moved. They do not plot movement, instead moving up to 15" and using the smallest turning circle. If large vessel movement would appear to result in a collision it is assumed that the inflatable moves so as to avoid it. The exception is when the inflatable is unable to move (for example one that has been swamped). In this case, if a large vessel moves into contact with the inflatable roll a d6. On a 1-2 no contact occurs; on a 3-5 the inflatable grazes the side of the ship and is heavily damaged (permanently immobilised). On a roll of 6 the inflatable is hit and sunk.

The main use of inflatables is to distract the aim of harpoon gunners, for which they need to be close to the whale and the whaler.

Paint Attacks

Protesters can attempt to daub protest slogans on the side of the Factory Ship (if it is in play). To do this an inflatable must move in contact with the ship. Each turn that it is in contact roll a d6. On a roll of 1 the inflatable hits the side – roll again using the rule above to determine the effect. On a roll of 5 or 6 the slogan is successfully painted. On any other result a mess is made, but nothing worth recording for posterity.

Evasive Action

If a collision occurs either side may announce that they will try to take evasive action. Both may attempt to evade. Players who are attempting to evade roll a d6 and are successful on a roll of 5 or more. If they are successful the ship is moved back 4" along its course (or to the start of movement if this is less than 4"). The vessel is then moved 4" (or the distance just moved back) turning hard to port or starboard so as to avoid the other vessel. All other movement for the ship is cancelled and any unused movement becomes a move straight ahead. For example, a ship moving at 12 knots risks a serious impact after moving 5". It makes its evasion roll and moves 4" back, then 4" forward again, turning hard to avoid the other ship. Having completed this evasive movement the ship has only moved 5" of its 12" move - the extra 7" is moved straight ahead.

Harpoons

Harpoons may be fired out to a range of 6". Once a harpoon gun has been fired it takes 6 turns to reload. To score hit and a kill the whaler needs to roll 5+ on a d10. The die roll is modified as follows:

Range >4"	-1
Whaler rammed this turn	-4
Each inflatable within 2" of the line of sight between	-1

the whale and the whaler	
Water sprayed between whaler and the whale	-2

Additional Rules

1)   Fire Hoses

Fire hoses have a range of 6". They may only be used by whalers and protest ships. They are most effective the first time they are used; having declared an intention to use hoses most ship operators can take simple steps to counter their use.

Select the target vessel and roll a d6 (or a d10 if using against whalers or protest ships, and this is the second or subsequent time they have been used):

Die Roll	Against Whalers and Protest Ships (d6 or d10)	Against Inflatables (d6)
1	Engine room vents hit, engines stall. Roll again - 1-3 reduce speed by 1d6" 4-6 engines stall, vessel decelerates to a halt, roll 5+ on d6 to restart	Boat heavily swamped. Roll a d6. On a roll of 1-4 the inflatable stops a number of turns equal to TWICE the die roll. On a roll of 5 the engine is damaged; the inflatable stops and drifts for the rest of the game (remains immobile). On a 6 the inflatable capsizes and is lost.
2	Bridge hit - no change of speed or heading next turn	Boat swamped – stops for 1d6 turns
3+	Missed - No effect (other than to p**s off the opposition)	Missed - No effect (other than to p**s off the opposition)

2)   Water Sprays

Protest ships may spray fire hoses between whalers and their target in an attempt to throw off the harpoon gunner's aim. To do this the protest ship must be within 4" of the whale and the whaler. Each time the spray is used for this purpose roll a d6. On a 6 the spray heads become clogged or the pump fails and the ship loses the capability to use water sprays.

3) Trailing Mooring Lines

Another protest ship tactic (which could, I suppose, be used by whalers as well) is to trail a mooring line astern of the ship in the hope that the propellers of an opponent's vessel passing astern will foul the line and become entangled.

A ship may declare that it is trailing a mooring line at the beginning of a turn. Deploying the line takes 1 complete turn. The mooring line becomes a hazard to all ships (not inflatables) at the start of the following turn. If a ship passes within 4" of the stern of a ship trailing a mooring line roll a d6. On a roll of 5 the moving ship tangles the line and partially fouls its propeller; speed is reduced by 1d6. On a 6 the propellers are heavily fouled, reducing speed by 2d6". Fouled propellers may not be cleared within the confines of the game.

In both cases the mooring line is broken and lost. A ship may only deploy one mooring line in a game.

Each turn that a mooring line is trailed there is a chance that it will snap. Roll a d6. On a roll of 1 the line parts and is lost.

3)   "Morale" (Optional)

There are no morale rules as such, but if using this rule, both players will have to roll to maintain commitment following serious attempts to interfere with whaling activities. After each Protester action (whether successful or not) roll a d6 for the ships involved (modified as shown). If the score is 7 or more the ship decides to up sticks and withdraw. An action is defined as a collision or fire hose attack.

Modifiers
+1   each successive action.
+1   for each time the ship has rammed or been rammed in the game
+1   ship has suffered Medium damage or worse.

Chance Cards (tbc)

Make up cards (3" x 5" index cards are good, else photocopy onto card). Deal out 4 cards to each player at the start of the game. Cards may be blank. Cards can be played at any time, but once played they are gone.

Whose?	Effect	No in deck
B	Good Luck- Reroll the previous die roll	4
B	Touché – counteracts the result of the previous card (must be played immediately)	4
B	Engine trouble – play on an opponent's ship, which immediately makes maximum deceleration	2
B	Second Whale – another whale appears, 2d6+12" from the centre of the table. Random direction from centre, pointed in random direction. Will not appear within 6" of a ship (move to nearest clear position)	1
B	The Engines Cannae Take it! – One vessel can make an extra move of 1d6 inches.	3
G	Blank Charge – Harpoon fails to fire	2
G	Deathwish – play if an inflatable is within 2" of the bow of a harpoon ship. The inflatable crew charge the harpoon ship. Roll a d6: 1= Inflatable hits ship and is lost. Crew are dunked in the sea 2-3 = no effect; place the inflatable astern of the harpoon ship 4,5 = harpoon ship turns away 6 = harpoon ship withdraws	2
G	Big Wave – one whaler's speed is reduced by 1d6 next turn	3
W	Low fuel - one of the Greenpeace inflatables runs low on fuel and must withdraw to the parent ship (may simply be removed from play)	3
W	"Sorry mate, battery's flat" – the protester's video camera is down. Alters victory conditions in favour of the Whalers.	1
W	Big Wave – the protest ship's speed is reduced by 1d6 next turn	3
G	"Hey, I've got a spare" – protesters are carrying two working cameras (this negates the effect of "Sorry Mate, battery's flat")	1
B	Blank cards – no effect (keep hold to spook the opposition)	12

The first column indicates which side can play the card. If a player holds a card that they cannot use they treat it as a blank card (and after all, it does stop the opposition using it)

Victory Conditions

Unless agreed between the players the game ends after 20 turns. If the whalers manage to kill any whales during a game they win. If the protesters prevent the death of any whales they may win, but the level of their victory may be diminished to the point of a draw or even defeat through the various activities that take place in the game.

For each of the following activities score 1 point
- Slogans painted on factory ship
- Whaler rams protest ship (any collision where the whaler is the ramming vessel)
- Whaler uses fire hoses (score once only regardless of the number of times it is used)
- Mooring line "attack" is successful
- Whalers use fire hoses on inflatables

For each of the following activities deduct 1 point
- Protest Ship rams Whaler or Factory ship (any collision where the protest ship is the ramming vessel)
- Protest ship suffers Light, Medium or Heavy Damage
- Protest ship deploys mooring lines
- Protest ship uses fire hoses on whalers or factory ship

For each of the following activities deduct 3 points
- Protest ship forced to withdraw

If the final score is positive the protesters have won. If the results are negative the whalers have won. If the result is zero it's a draw.

Of course in all of these cases the winner is the whale!

Alternative Scenarios

At several times during the recent confrontations there were rumours that Australia, New Zealand and Japan would all be sending warships to support the protesters or the whalers. If warships are used they are rather more restricted in their actions than protesters and whalers:

- Warships may only use manoeuvre tactics to frustrate their opponents.
- Warships are not allowed to make ramming attempts
- Warships may not trail mooring lines, nor may they use fire hoses or water sprays

No more than one warship may be deployed by each side. Warships will ideally be managed by a separate player, since their operations are constrained. It also introduces a degree of un-coordination between players.

Victory conditions remain the same.

Name: Yokosuka

Type: Factory Ship

Max. Speed: 15kts   **Acc/Dec: +2/-3**

Turn Radius: 3   4   5   6   7

D A M A G E

L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L

MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM

HEAVY	HEAVY

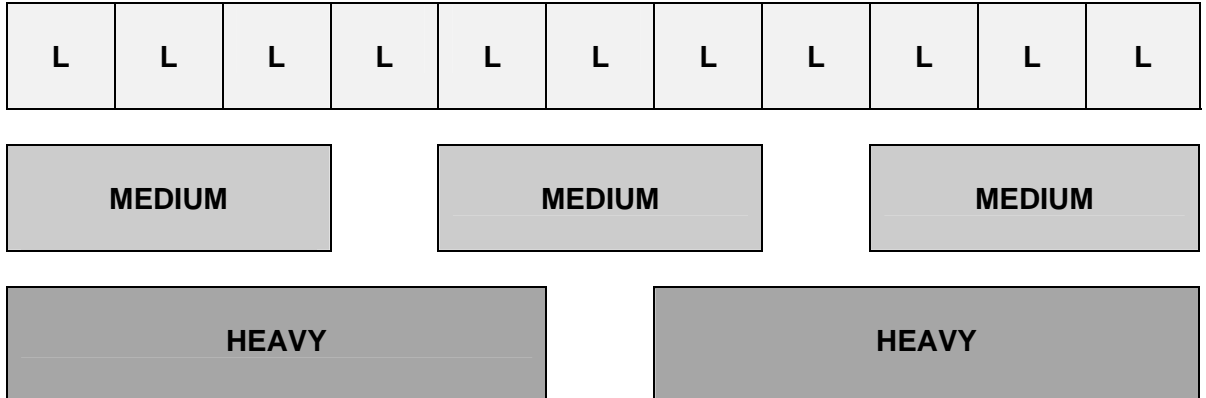| Turn	Starting Speed	Movement	Final Speed
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4			
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14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			

Name: Nisshin

Type: Whaler

Max. Speed: 16kts   **Acc/Dec: +3/-3**

Turn Radius: 3   4   5   6   7

**D
A
M
A
G
E**

L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L

MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM

HEAVY	HEAVY

Turn	Starting Speed	Movement	Final Speed
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Name: Arctic Sunrise

Type: Protest Ship

Max.Speed: 14kts   **Acc/Dec: +3/-3**

Turn Radius: 3   4   5   6   7

D A M A G E

L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L

MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM

HEAVY	HEAVY

Turn	Starting Speed	Movement	Final Speed
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