

Save the Whale, save the planet?

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Save the Whale, save the planet? This is the bizarre claim that I read the other day. For many people saving the Whale was the first environmental campaign they came across (Yes "Don't kill the Whale" and all that). Could they have been onto something more important? It might be so. Scientists have worked out that Whales really could mop up enormous quantities of carbon. So the claim goes from the IMF. The reason is prosaic. Whales poo. Clearly quite a lot. This poo is used by plankton. Lots of Whales eat plankton, but they cannot eat the lot. This plankton is either eaten by other creatures, or escapes predation and sinks to the ocean floor. Anyway either whale poo, or creatures that have eaten the poo or the whales themselves, after they died end up on the ocean floor. Since all living things are carbon based then the carbon is locked up basically for all eternity. The IMF reckons the effect of letting the phytoplankton numbers increase by 1% numbers would be the same as 2 billion trees. There's something almost too good to be true about all this. All we have to do is pretty much do nothing (although other man made activities at sea do inadvertently kill whales). There is a strange link between Whale hunting and oil. Originally Whales were hunted for their oil (amongst other things) that was used to power lamps. The coming of the oil industry largely put a stop to that. Oil has produced climate change, would it not be ironic if the poor whale was part of the solution? The IMF article can be seen [here](#). Neil

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