Shipwreck, mutiny, massacre and imprisonment. With all the hallmarks of a maritime adventure story, North to Matsumae: Australian Whalers to Japan retrace the perilous voyages of two nineteenth century Australian whaling ships as they harvest whales off the Japanese coast.

Drawing on previously unpublished journals of the Lady Rowena’s ship master and supplemented by Japanese historical accounts, this well-researched account provides a historical context to the current whaling debate.

The book also charts an unexplored chapter in Australian–Japanese relations, documenting the first known contact between the two countries on Japanese soil in 1831.

For anyone interested in Japan’s highly controversial whaling industry, North to Matsumae: Australian Whalers to Japan, is a fascinating read about a time when there was a very different Australian attitude toward the practice of whaling.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Noreen Jones was born in Kalgoorlie and has variously worked as a lecturer for Aboriginal Education in remote Western Australian communities and as a professional textile artist in the state’s southwest. Noreen is a frequent visitor to Japan, where she has extensively studied Japanese art, history and culture. Recipient of a 2003 Asialink Writing Residency in Japan, her previous works include Number 2 Home: A Story of Japanese Pioneers in Australia (Fremantle Press, 2002), which has been translated into Japanese. She is married with three adult children.