

JWA NEWS

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4-5 Toyomi-cho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo (104-0055)
Tel: 03-5547-1940; fax:03-5547-1941
HOMEPAGE: <http://www.whaling.jp>

JAPAN WHALING ASSOCIATION

Increase in Pro-Sustainable Use Members Prompts the IWC to Move toward Dialogue

—the 56th IWC Annual Meeting in Sorrento, Italy—



56th IWC Plenary Session

The International Whaling Commission (IWC), bitterly torn apart by pro- and anti-whaling countries, edged toward dialogue for consensus at its 56th annual meeting held July 19-22 in Sorrento, southern Italy, as the number of members advocating sustainable use of whale resources increased to balance the power between the two opposing forces, according to a source close to the Japanese delegation to the meeting.

The meeting was attended by 56 of its 57 members, of which 6 were new members.

The 50-member Japanese delegation was led by its Commissioner Minoru Morimoto, and accompanied by Eiko Kanata, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Vice Minister, as well as officials of related ministries. Also among delegates were eight members of the Japanese Diet who actively exchanged views with delegates of other countries during the session.

Although no breakthrough was found in the deadlock that characterized the IWC over the last decades, the joining of four countries—Cote d’Ivoire, Mauritania, Suriname and Tuvalu—narrowed the gap in the balance between the two forces, opening a path toward possible

consensus on several issues.

What follows are the major results of the meeting as they mainly pertain Japan.

(1) The Revised Management Scheme (RMS)

There was heated discussion over the Chairman’s package for the completion of the Revised Management Scheme—a system that would enable rational management and sustainable harvesting of whale resources. Especially, the debate focused on the possible lifting of the current commercial whaling moratorium which might result from the completion of the RMS. As a result of the discussion, a resolution was adopted by consensus, that said that the IWC “agrees to proceed expeditiously towards

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the completion of both the drafting of text and technical details of the RMS ... with the aim of having the results ready for consideration, including for possible adoption, at IWC57, and/or to identify any outstanding policy and technical issues.” Japan, together with other members, is strongly urging the IWC to complete the RMS within next year.

(2) Expansion of Whale Research Catch Programs

Regarding the whale catch research program in the northwestern Pacific, Japan notified the IWC of its intention to increase the number of samples to be taken from the current 50 coastal minke whales to 120, and from 50 offshore sei whales to 100, with the aim to estimate with adequate statistical accuracy the predatory situation of cetaceans. Further, Japan said it will present its next-phase Antarctic whale research program at the 2005 IWC meeting, after winding up the current 16-year research in the 2004/2005 season. This year, resolutions accusing Japan’s whale catch research programs, previously tabled by Australia, New Zealand and other countries, were withdrawn voluntarily.

(3) Small-type Coastal Whaling

With the aim to alleviate the hardships of small whaling communities in Japan brought about by the IWC’s commercial whaling moratorium and to carry out the verification test of the RMS, Japan proposed catch of 100 heads of minke whales and 150 heads Bryde’s whales. This proposal was defeated with 24 in favor, 28 against and one abstention for minke whales and 22-29-2 for Bryde’s whales. (The support votes of 24 for this proposal was the highest ever since it was first made). Later, the Commission adopted by consensus a Japan-proposed resolution reaffirming “the Commission’s commitment to work expeditiously to alleviate the continued difficulties caused by the

cessation of minke whaling to the communities of Abashiri, Ayukawa, Wadoura and Taiji,” and encouraging “IWC members to co-operate towards a resolution of this matter.”

(4) Whale Sanctuaries

Japan proposed abolition of the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary, which marked the 10th anniversary of its introduction this year, on the basis of the conclusion of external scientists’ analysis that the sanctuary cannot be justified from ecological viewpoint. The proposal failed to gain a necessary three-fourth majority. In a similar vein, the Commission refused both the proposal by Australia and New Zealand to establish a new whale sanctuary in the South Pacific as well as the one by Brazil and Argentina to establish a new sanctuary in the South Atlantic.

(5) Conservation Committee

Japan and other pro-sustainable use countries have been opposed to the establishment of the Conservation Committee at last year’s meeting in Berlin because the new committee showed a unilateral leaning toward protection of whales alone. Japan had acted on various countries concerned to include the term “sustainable use” in the name of the Committee, but no agreement has been reached. Therefore, Japan refrained from attending the meeting of the Committee, together with about 20 members who are opposed to the establishment of the Committee.

(6) Election of Vice Chairman

Secret votes on election of the Commission’s vice chairman were cast between South African Commissioner Horst Kleinschmidt and Japanese Commissioner Minoru Morimoto. Although Morimoto was defeated by a margin of one vote, with 26 for South Africa, 25 for Japan and 2 abstentions, Japanese delegation sources see that this close difference in votes is an indication of the rising support to the sustainable use group within the Commission.

(7) Venue of Future IWC Meetings

The next annual meeting will be held in Ulsan, the Republic of Korea, May 30-June 24, 2005. For the venue of the 2006 annual meeting, St. Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean won over France in secret votes.



View of City of Sorrento

SUPU Confirms Solidarity and Cooperation among Pro-use Countries

Solidarity and cooperation among pro-use countries was confirmed at the meeting of the Sustainable Use Parliamentarians Union (SUPU) at Sorrento Hilton Palace Hotel, Italy, on July 18, 2005, prior to opening of the 56th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

SUPU was founded in 2000 with the objectives of ensuring respect for the traditions and cultures of peoples in various countries and regions of the world and to promote the sustainable use of renewable wildlife and other resources, thereby contributing to food security and social and economic stability for mankind.

The meeting, chaired by Mr. Yoshimasa Hayashi, member of the House of Councillors of Japan, was attended by the members of SUPU as well as

representatives of the IWC member States that support the sustainable use of whale resources.

The countries sending representatives to the meeting were Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Grenada, Dominica, Japan, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Norway, Palau, Russia, Solomon Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and Suriname.

After actively exchanging views on the whaling issue and the current situation within the IWC, participants agreed to call on the IWC to:

1. IMPLEMENT a reasonable RMS by no later than the 57th Annual Meeting to provide for the sustainable use of whale resources based on scientific findings;
2. PROMOTE the continuation and prosperity of cultures and traditions of the peoples utilizing whale resources;
3. ENCOURAGE whale research programs such as those being conducted by Japan and Iceland which are providing valuable scientific information for the management of whales and are promoting the unanimously agreed high priority objective of the IWC to study the ecosystem-based interactions between cetaceans and fisheries; and
4. RECOGNIZE that whale sanctuaries do not provide any conservation benefits for whale stocks.



SUPU Meeting

Research Fleet Off to N.W. Pacific Ground --to clarify feeding ecology of whales--

Nisshin Maru, the research mothership, left Innoshima Pier, Hiroshima Prefecture, western Japan, on June 10, 2005, to engage in the second-phase northwestern Pacific Whale Research Catch Program.

Also on the same day, sighting and sampling vessels departed Japan to take part in the research. No.2 Yushin Maru left Setoda, Hiroshima Prefecture, and

Yushin Maru and No.1 Kyo Maru left Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi Prefecture.

The research will be carried out in the area from off Sanriku, northern Japan, to the area south of the Kamtchatka Peninsula until late September. One hundred each of minke whales and sei whales, 50 Bryde's whales and 10 sperm whales will be sampled.

The research envisage to collect data, among other

things, on (1) feeding ecology and the role in the ecosystem of whales, (2) impact of marine environment to whales and marine ecosystem, including impact of pollutants and sea conditions, and (3) clarification of stock structure of whales.



Yushin Maru Leaving Shimonoseki Port

ICR, Future University-Hakodate To Build Traceability System for Whale Meat

The Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) and the Future University-Hakodate have agreed on working to build up a traceability system for whale meat—by-product of Japan's whale research programs.

The system, originally developed by the university for fishery food products, is designed to use a kind of 1-square-centimeter barcode, called QR code, at the time of shipment. Data such as producing places, producer, weight, item and distributor are accumulated in the computer server of the university, and information is made public from access anywhere.

The ICR hopes that transparency of the distribution of by-products from the research will be enhanced by the introduction of this system.

Japan, ROK Confirm Collaboration in Whaling Issue

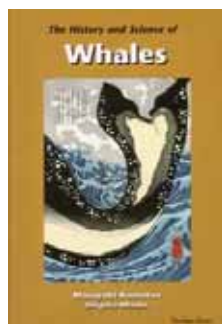
—Bilateral High-level Fisheries Talks in Tokyo—

Japan and the Republic of Korea agreed at their bilateral high-level consultations held in Tokyo on June 11, 2004 that they will continue to cooperate in multilateral consultations including the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

On the whaling issue, the ROK delegation requested Japan's cooperation toward the success of the 57th IWC annual meeting scheduled to be held in Ulsan, Korea, next May to June. Japan responded it will cooperate to the best possible extent.

Other issues discussed at the meeting included cooperation for conservation of fishery resources among Japan, China and the ROK, the state of implementation of the Japan-ROK Fisheries Agreement, and the negotiations on trade in fishery products at the World Trade Organization.

NEW PUBLICATION:



Title: The History and Science of Whales

Authors: Masayuki Komatsu and Shigeko Misaki

Publisher: The Japan Times

Date of Publication: June 2004

Price: 2,000 yen

From the foreword by the authors

“This book is intended to give comprehensive information on biology, conservation strategy, history of Japan and the world on the whales, and up-date of the global situation surrounding the whaling dispute. Ultimate hope of the authors is to provide information useful for the public around the world to make judgement on the whaling dispute.”

The authors hope that apart from the information on whaling, the book provides interesting information on the history of Japanese culture in relation to the whales.”