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For Promotion of Sustainable Use of Whale Resources for Mankind

2005 JARPNII Offshore Research Completed

Important Knowledge on N.W. Pacific Whales Obtained

Japan's offshore Whale Research Catch Program in the western North Pacific - Phase II (JARPNII) for 2005 was completed in August by obtaining further important information of the feeding ecology of the whales in the region.

The research fleet consisted of a mothership, "Nisshin-maru," and three sampling/sighting vessels, "Yushin-maru," "No.1 Kyo-maru," and "No. 2 Yushin-maru."

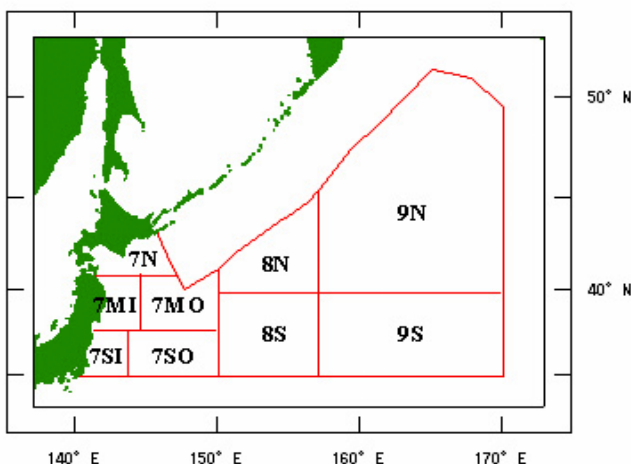
JARPNII, started in 2000 following JARPN (1994-1999), has been carried out in accordance with Article VIII of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) with the aim to elucidate the competitive relations between whales and fisheries, and contribute to achieving the comprehensive and sustainable management of marine living resources in the North Pacific.

Despite relatively unfavorable weather and sea conditions during the research period, the research fleet succeeded in collecting the planned number of samples



Nisshin-maru back to Ishinomaki, Miyagi (Photo by courtesy of the Institute of Cetacean Research)

2005 JARPNII Offshore Research Area



Data: The Institute of Cetacean Research

(100 minke whales, 100 sei whales, 50 Bryde's whales and 5 sperm whales) and sighting many whales.

This year's research covered Areas 7, 8 and 9 of the western North Pacific (see chart), obtaining the following important information on the feeding ecology of whales.

(1) Minke whales

In the previous JARPNII research cruises, it had been clarified that the species consumed by the minke whale differed from area to area and season to season. In the offshore area, and minke whales were found to be feeding mainly on anchovy in early summer (May-June) and Pacific saury (July-September), while in the coastal area, they were consuming a variety of feed species including krill, sand lance, anchovy, Pacific saury and pollock. This year, anchovy, which had been a predominant portion of the feed for the minke in previous years, was found in very few quantities in the offshore area

during early summer, while, on the other hand, minke were feeding mainly on krill. Although anchovy came to be observed in their stomach contents, along with Pacific saury, in the mid-summer, the research result showed that the importance of anchovy for the minke this year was relatively low compared with previous years. In the coastal area, the minke mainly feed on pollock--a similar result as in previous research cruises.

A survey on the distribution of prey species for whales was also concurrently conducted in August, and the changes in feeding patterns of the minke whale, observed in this year's research, will be examined along with the distribution and size of feed species.

(2) Sei whales

This year's research showed that this species is widely distributed up to the area near 170 degree east- the eastern border of the research area. The sei whale was found to be mainly feeding on zooplankton, such as copepod and krill, in the southern part of Area 9 (south of 40 degrees north) in the research conducted in June and July. In the northern part of Area 9 (north of 40 degrees north) in August, on the other hand, this species was found to be feeding on fish, such as Pacific saury, in addition to zooplankton, such as copepod and krill, thus showing that the sei whale is also using different types of feed by season and area.

(3) Bryde's whales

Although Bryde's whales were sighted in the southern part (south of 38 degrees north) in the offshore area (Areas 8 and 9) in May and June, the number of individuals sighted was small. Their stomach contents showed relatively a lower proportion of fullness as compared with previous years, with krill being the main feed species as in previous research cruises. By contrast, in the southern part (south of 38 degrees north) in Area 7 in July, a relatively large number of Bryde's whales were sighted and the presence of krill and anchovy was confirmed in their stomach contents. The distribution of Bryde's whales, as observed this year, showed a larger proportion in the western part.

(4) Sperm whales

Sampling was conducted mainly in the offshore area (Areas 8 and 9) where information has been scarce. A total of 5 animals was sampled. The research result showed that sperm whales mainly prey on squid in intermediate sea depths, contributing to the elucidation of feeding pattern of this species.

The research results will be analyzed and presented to the IWC's Scientific Committee.

Pro-use Votes Close to Simple Majority at the 57th IWC Meeting in Korea

--Japan to Carry out 2nd Phase Antarctic Whale Catch Research Program--

The 57th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) was held for five days from June 20 to 24 in Ulsan, South Korea.

This meeting was characterized by the fact that the votes of pro-use countries and anti-whaling countries almost equaled as a result of the increase in membership in the pro-use bloc. The total number of IWC members increased from 57 last year to 66. Although the countries supporting sustainable use of whale resources did not succeed in obtaining a simple majority in the voting on important agenda items, sources close to the meeting say that there was a visible change in the atmosphere of the meeting. Notably, pro-use countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the South Pacific presented their active and persuasive arguments on many issues.



A conspicuous change was observed on the second day of the meeting when a proposal by Australia, a leading anti-whaling country, on administrative matters



Replay of ancient whaling in Korea

was defeated with 28 against, 20 in support and 9 abstentions. Since then, the pro-sustainable use bloc gained momentum and took the lead in the discussion, expanding the mood for dialogue mainly with moderate anti-whaling countries.

The results on major issues were as follows:

Japan presented a plan for **the 2nd phase of its whale catch research program in the Antarctic (JARPA2)**. Against this proposal, a draft resolution calling for the withdrawal of the research plan was tabled by anti-whaling members, including Australia, and was adopted by a small margin of 30-27 with one abstention. This resolution has no binding force as a decision of the IWC. On the strength of this voting result, Akira Nakamae, Japan's alternate Commissioner, expressed Japan's strong determination to carry out the planned research, by noting the importance of the continuation of the research and substantial support given to Japan's plan from many countries.

With respect to the **completion of the Revised Management Scheme (RMS)**, which would open the way to the resumption of commercial whaling, no substantial progress was achieved as some anti-whaling countries held fast to their position that the completion of the RMS would not entail the lifting of the current commercial whaling moratorium.

The Japanese proposal to abolish **the Antarctic whale sanctuary** was defeated with 25 supporting votes, 30 against and 2 abstentions. Similarly, the proposal to create a **new whale sanctuary in the South Atlantic**, put forth by anti-whaling groups, also failed to gain a necessary three-fourth majority (voting result: 29 in support, 26 against and 2 abstentions).

Japan's request for the establishment of catch quotas for its **small-type coastal whaling** was not adopted, with 26 in support, 29 against and 3 abstentions.

As in last year, Japan, together with a number of pro-use countries, decided not to take part in the discussion of the **Conservation Committee** because the com-

mittee excludes the concept of sustainable utilization of whale resources in its terms of reference.

Further, Japan's proposal to introduce **the secret voting system** for all agenda items to avoid undesirable pressures on small countries was voted down with 30 opposing votes against 27 in support.

Despite the above results, Japan and other pro-use countries generally strengthened their confidence as the difference in votes narrowed visibly. IWC watchers observe that the moves of additional new members and existing middle-of-the-road members will hold the key to the direction of future IWC meeting.

The 58th Annual Meeting is scheduled to be held in Saint Kitts and Nevis from May 26 to June 20, 2006 (including meetings of committees and subcommittees.). The IWC delegates also agreed to hold the 2007 meeting in Anchorage, the U.S.A.

SUPU Urges IWC to Lift Whaling Moratorium

The 6th meeting of the Sustainable Use Parliamentarians' Union (SUPU; Chairman, Denny Rehberg, member of the U.S. House of Representatives) was held on June 19 at Ulsan, Korea, prior to the annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission. The meeting was attended by representatives from 23 countries.

SUPU was established in 2000 with the purpose to promote sustainable utilization of renewable wildlife resources and to ensure due respect of traditional cultures in various countries and regions.

Participants from Japan were Yutaka Takeyama, member of the House of Councilors (vice-chairman of SUPU and Chairman of SUPU-Japan), Yoshito Kajiya, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and Yoshimasa Hayashi, member of the House of Councilors, who served as chairperson of this meeting.

After exchanges of views on the whaling issue and



the present state of the IWC, SUPU adopted a statement which called on the IWC, among other things, to:

(1) ENSURE that the fundamental principle of science based policy and rule making as the primary paradigm of resource management is applied to its work;

(2) IMPLEMENT a reasonable RMS and lift the commercial whaling moratorium at this Annual Meeting;

(3) ENCOURAGE whale research in order to provide valuable scientific knowledge for the sustainable use and management of whales; and

(4) PROMOTE the continuation and prosperity of cultures and traditions of peoples utilizing whale resources.

LDP to Step Up Parliamentarians' Diplomacy for the Solution of Whaling Issue

Shunichi Suzuki, Chairman of the LDP General Research Committee on Fisheries, highly rated the outcome of the recent IWC meeting in Ulsan, saying "the difference in votes between pro-sustainable use members and anti-whaling members has narrowed."

He was speaking at a combined meeting of three fisheries-related groups of Japan's ruling Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) held at the LDP Headquarters on June 29.

Suzuki, also Chairman of the LDP's Parliamentary Group for the Promotion of Whaling, said that "if the pro-use bloc succeeds in obtaining a simple majority, the atmosphere in the IWC will change for their favor."

Many of the Diet members present at the meeting voiced their view that stepped-up efforts in the area of diplomacy by individual Diet members are needed to further expand the number of countries supporting the sustainable use of whale resources.

Iceland Rebuts Australia's Criticism on Its Whale Research Program --Australia Should Submit Data on Killing of Camels and Kangaroos--

Icelandic Minister of Fisheries Arni Mathiesen argued against Australia's criticisms of Iceland's whale research catch programs and whaling method. He was responding to the letter from Australia's Minister for the Environment & Heritage, Ian Cambell, dated July 20, in which he criticized Iceland's research whaling as unnecessary slaughter.

Mathiesen responded that his country's research program is an exercise of their legitimate right in accordance with the provisions of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. The IWC's Scientific Committee agreed that over 44,000 minke whales inhabit the Icelandic waters during the summer season and there is no concern for the depletion of the resources, he said.

The minister further noted cetaceans constitute an important part of Iceland's marine research, and the absence of a whale research program could lead to a misleading conclusion on the continuation of sustainable fisheries and the use of marine living resources, resulting in inadequate fishery management measures.

In the research, Iceland is using the most humane whale killing techniques now available, he added.

Mathiesen also pointed out that the Australian government is culling thousands of wild camels and kangaroos each year by using helicopters. An IWC resolution calls on its members States to present data on the killing method for large mammals other than whales, and Iceland looks forward to the submission of such data from Australia to the meeting of the relevant IWC Working Group next year, the minister said.

Iceland completed this year's research program on August 17 by sampling a total of 39 minke whales.