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AUSTRALIA'S WHALE RESEARCH

The Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) said today it looks forward to assessing the results of the whale research carried out by Australian scientists and how it might be applied towards improving a management scheme for commercial whaling.

“We haven’t seen any data or results yet, but we are hoping they will compliment our research findings to increase our understanding of the Antarctic ecosystem and to develop an improved regime for managing commercial whaling,” Director-General of the ICR Dr. Hiroshi Hatanaka said.

“Australia has long claimed that it can reproduce Japan’s results using non-lethal methods. We know this is simply not the case,” he said.

“Even where they have been collecting data similar to some aspects of the non-lethal components of our research program they have not had the extensive coverage or repetitive observations needed to detect trends.”

“Further, they certainly will not have important data on the age structure of whale populations, natural mortality or reproduction as well as trends in these important biological parameters that can only be obtained by lethal research,” Dr. Hatanaka said.

It is unfortunate that Australia deliberately mixes the science with political advocacy.

“So far all we have heard is the rhetoric and political blustering of Senator Campbell. I hope that both the findings from our research and Australia’s research can be dealt with on a more rational and scientific basis at the upcoming meeting of the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission,” he said.

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