THE INSTITUTE OF CETACEAN RESEARCH

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Completion of the 2013 IWC/Japan Joint Cetacean Sighting Survey Cruise in the North Pacific - IWC-POWER

1. BACKGROUND

IWC-POWER, the IWC/Japan Joint Cetacean Sighting Survey in the North Pacific, is a research program commonly known at the International Whaling Commission (IWC) as the *Pacific Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research* (POWER).

IWC-POWER is based on and applies the achievements, know-how and expertise acquired during the most successful and highly appraised international collaborative research effort conducted under the auspice of the IWC, the IWC-SOWER (International Whaling Commission-Southern Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research, 1996/1997-2009/2010) research program which ended in 2009.

The 2013 survey was the fourth cruise since IWC-POWER began in 2010. The research plan of this program reflects the major research agenda of the IWC Scientific Committee. During the first three cruises, a number of fin, sei and humpback whales were sighted in the research area, where a large scale sighting survey had not been conducted for more than a half century.

2. OUTLINE OF THE 2013 RESEARCH CRUISE

The IWC-POWER program is conducted collaboratively by the IWC and the Government of Japan. The IWC Scientific Committee has developed the research program, and an actual survey cruise plan was jointly planned by associated

institutions such as the National Research Institute of Far Sea Fisheries (Fisheries Research Agency of Japan) and Alaska Fisheries Science Center (NOAA/NMFS, U.S.A.) under guidance of the IWC-POWER Steering Group (Convener, Dr. Hidehiro Kato, Professor of Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology, Japan), which was established under auspice of the IWC Scientific Committee. The Institute of Cetacean Research, under the commission of the Fisheries Agency of Japan, has completed the survey cruise. Followings are summary of research cruise plan and its results.

2.1 Objectives

(1) estimation of sei and fin whales abundance (and other species where possible, especially Bryde's whales);
(2) collection of information on stock structure, particularly biopsy samples, with priority given to sei, fin and sperm whales; and
(3) collection of photo-identification data and biopsy samples for rare species encountered, especially North Pacific right whales and blue whales.

2.2 Research Cruise Period

From July 12, 2013 to September 9, 2013 (60 days).

2.3 Research Area (Fig. 1)

The research area is north of 30° N, south of 40°N, between longitudes 160° W and 135°W (High Sea).

2.4 International Researchers

Koji Matsuoka (Cruise leader, Institute of Cetacean Research, Japan)
Hyun-Woo Kim (Cetacean Research Institute, NFRDI, Republic of Korea,)
Sergio Martinez-Aguilar (IWC nominated researcher, Mexico)
Saeko Kumagai (IWC nominated researcher, Japan)

2.5 Research Vessel

Yushin-maru No.3 (742 ton, Captain Yasuaki Sasaki)

2.6 Total Distance Covered

4,314 nautical miles (about 7,989km)

2.7 Main whale sightings

Fin whale: 3 schools; 3 animals
Sei whale: 4 schools; 4 animals
Bryde's whale: 54 schools; 64 animals
Sperm whale: 67 schools; 99 animals
Striped dolphin: 16 schools; 1,395 animals
Spotted dolphin: 6 schools; 455 animals
Risso's dolphin: 9 schools; 208 animals

Common dolphin: 3 schools 175 animals

2.8 Results of sample collections etc.

(1) Photo identification data

Fin whale: 3 animals

Sei whale: 2 animals

Bryde's whale: 6 animals

These photographs are valuable information to study life history and migration patterns of each species.

(2) Collection of biopsy samples

Fin whale: 1 animal

Sei whale: 1 animal

Bryde's whale: 6 animals.

These samples will be used for examination of stock structure of each species.

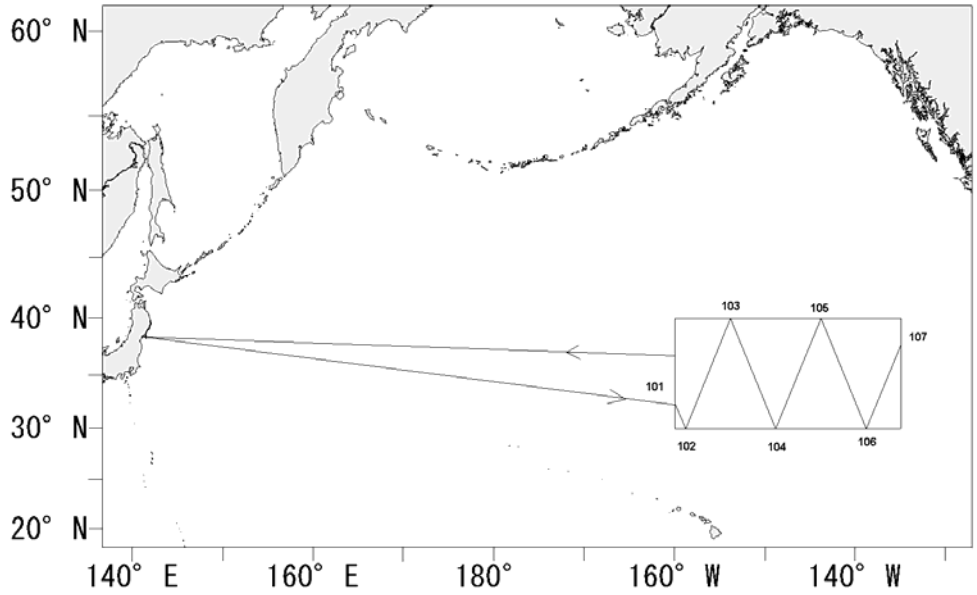

Fig.1 Research area for the 2013 IWC-POWER survey.