



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**August 30, 2016**

### **Completion of the 2016 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 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 2010.

The 2016 survey was the seventh 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 five 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 2016 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 South West Fisheries Science Center, NOAA/NMFS, USA 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 Bryde's, sei and fin whales abundance (and other species where possible);
- (2) collection of information on stock structure, particularly biopsy samples, with priority given to Bryde's, sei, fin, humpback 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 2 to August 30, 2016 (60 days).

## 2.3 Research Area (Fig. 1)

The research area is north of 20° N, south of 30°N, between longitudes 160° W and 135°W (High Sea including US-EEZ).

## 2.4 International Researchers

Koji Matsuoka (Cruise leader, Institute of Cetacean Research, Japan)

James Gilpatrick (South West Fisheries Science Center, NOAA/NMFS, USA)

JiHye Kim (Cetacean Research Institute, Republic of Korea)

Isamu Yoshimura (IWC nominated researcher, Japan)

## 2.5 Research Vessel

*Yushin-maru* No.3 (742 ton, Captain Hiroshi Eguchi)

## 2.6 Total Distance Covered

3,443.8 nautical miles (about 6,378 km)

## 2.7 Main whale sightings (including transit surveys)

Blue whale: 1 school; 1 animal

Sei whale: 1 school; 1 animal

Bryde's whale: 28 schools; 32 animals

Sperm whale: 32 schools; 115 animals

Cuvier's beaked whale: 2 schools; 5 animals

Risso's dolphin: 2 schools; 19 animals

Striped dolphin: 5 schools; 378 animals

Fraser's dolphin: 2 schools; 333 animals

## 2.8 Results of sample collections etc.

### (1) Photo identification data

Bryde's whale: 14 animals

Sperm whale: 7 animals

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

(2) Collection of biopsy samples

Blue whale: 1 animal

Sei whale: 1 animal

Bryde's whale: 16 animals

Sperm whale: 5 animals

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

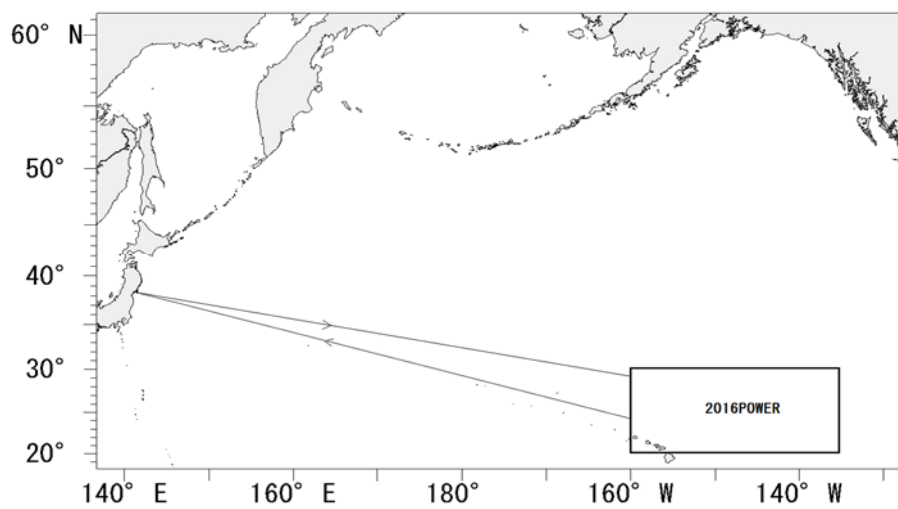


Fig.1 Research area for the 2016 IWC-POWER survey.