

Review of the Japanese Whale Research Program under Special Permit in the western North Pacific Phase-II (JARPN II)

In January 2009 an expert workshop was convened to review Japan's ongoing research in the western North Pacific (JARPN II) in accordance with new rules agreed by the IWC for the review of special permit proposals and research results from existing and completed permits¹. The report of the expert workshop is available on the IWC website as document JARPN II Review (JR) Rep. 1.

The following are quotes from The Report of the Expert Workshop:

“The Panel recognises that an enormous amount of scientific work has been undertaken in the field, laboratory and in analysis during the first six years of the programme.”

“The Panel appreciates the notable amount of effort undertaken and the generally high quality of the sampling programme, resultant data and information from JARPN II studies on whale food habits and prey preferences. These efforts have resulted in valuable datasets that have great potential for concerted analytical work on a broad range of topics, not all directly related to the JARPN II programme objectives.”

“The Panel **agrees** that resultant diet data have the potential to be of great value in determining whale prey preferences, for developing functional response curves when accompanied by simultaneous assessments of prey abundance, and for developing estimates of the impacts of whales on their prey.”

“The Panel **agrees** that the models as developed thus far are **not** yet at the stage where they can be used to draw even general conclusions and certainly cannot be used to reliably inform management advice. Nevertheless, they comprised a substantial and laudable effort, and an encouraging start to the necessary process of synthesising the data collected during the programme.”

“The Panel **concludes** that the JARPN II pollutant studies represent a valuable contribution to our knowledge in this area and acknowledged the considerable amount of work presented.”

“The Panel acknowledged the substantial scope of the genetic analyses undertaken under JARPN II, which provides a uniquely large data set for testing hypotheses regarding stock structure in the target species.”

“The Panel **congratulates** the Proponents for simultaneously collecting *in situ* sea surface and water column characteristics while conducting the whale and prey surveys, recognising the practical challenges of coordinating these sampling methods on the same ship at the same time. The Panel **welcomes** these analyses as a good initial attempt at investigating relations with oceanographic features and they encourage the analyses to be continued and expanded. The programme is addressing its objectives and continued work is recommended.”

“The Panel **agrees** that many of the objectives of JARPN II are relevant to Resolutions of the Commission and that scientific results have been submitted to the Scientific Committee, as requested in several of the Resolutions.”

“The Panel recognises that at present, certain data, primarily stomach content data, are only available via lethal sampling.”

Japanese scientists are of the view that in general, the workshop report produced by the Panel represents a fair and balanced evaluation of the work conducted by the JARPN II in its first six years. Most of their recommendations are considered useful and will contribute to improve the research output from the first six years as well as future research under the JARPN II.

Japanese scientists have already conducted additional analyses to address many of the workshop's recommendations. Other recommendations will be addressed as the program continues. The response of Japanese scientists is available on the IWC website as document SC/61/JR1 and a number of other papers.

¹ International Whaling Commission. 2009. Report of the Scientific Committee. Annex P. Process for the review of special permit proposals and research results for existing and completed permits. *J. Cetacean Res. Manage. (suppl.)* 11.