

Editorial

Welcome to the seventh issue of the Technical Reports of the Institute of Cetacean Research (TEREP-ICR-7).

This issue contains eight technical reports and one commentary article. In TEREP-ICR-7, we completed the series of reports summarizing the research findings on whales and the ecosystem in the western North Pacific Ocean. Yasunaga and Fujise (Part 4) focused on the studies on chemical pollution in large baleen whale species and their prey. Tamura and colleagues (Part 5) summarized the results of large whale's ecology, including feeding habits and ecosystem modelling.

Results of three important dedicated sighting surveys were presented in this issue: Isoda and colleagues summarized the results of the 2022/23 austral summer season survey of the Japanese Abundance and Stock structure Surveys in the Antarctic (JASS-A) conducted in a Pacific sector of the Antarctic; Kim and colleagues summarized the results of sighting surveys conducted in the western North Pacific in 2022; and Katsumata and Matsuoka summarized the results of the 2022 International Whaling Commission-Pacific Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research (IWC-POWER) survey conducted south of the western Aleutian Islands.

Inoue and colleagues presented an update of the study on age at sexual maturity trends in the Antarctic minke whale and interpreted the results in the context of other biological and ecological results for this species and hypotheses on Antarctic marine ecosystem changes. Katsumata and colleagues examined the utility of data logger for obtaining diving time data of Antarctic minke whales for the estimation of availability bias during dedicated sighting surveys. Finally, Konishi and Kleivane used the data logger techniques for studying the feeding ecology of fin whales in the southern Okhotsk Sea.

In the commentary article, Pastene presented his view on the current and future utility of data and samples from former Japanese whale research programs under special scientific permit.

TEREP-ICR-7 issue also included sections that outline the contribution of ICR scientists to international and national meetings in 2023, as well as their contribution in terms of peer-reviewed publications up to December 2023.

We trust that you will find this seventh TEREP-ICR issue informative and useful.

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