The Position of the Japanese Government on Whaling

Science-based management and sustainable use

- Japan strongly supports the idea of the protection of endangered species.
- At the same time, Japan holds the view that abundant species could be utilized in a sustainable manner on the basis of scientific data.

Scientific Research whaling is legal (1)

- The purpose of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling Research (ICRW)
  - the proper conservation of whale stocks
  - the orderly development of the whaling industry

- ICRW Preamble
  - “Having decided to conclude a convention to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry”.

Scientific Research whaling is legal (2)

- Scientific Research whaling is a fundamental right of each Member State of the IWC in accordance with ArticleⅧ of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW)
  - ICRW ArticleⅧ 1.
    - “…., any Contracting Government may grant to any of its nationals a special permit authorizing that national to kill, take, and treat whales for purposes of scientific research……”

Scientific Research whaling is legal (3)

- The article Ⅷ of ICRW also requires that the by-products of the research be processed.
  - ICRW ArticleⅧ 2.
    - “Any whales taken under these special permits shall so far as practicable be processed and the proceeds shall be dealt with in accordance with directions issued by the Government by which the permit was granted”

The purpose of Japan's whale research program

The purpose of Japan's program is to conduct scientific research

- To collect and analyze scientific data necessary for the proper management and the sustainable use of whales

Research base vessel, Nisshin Maru

Survey Items

- The various biological data or parameters are fundamental to stock assessment.

Stocks

Diet

Age

Pollutant

Maturity

Parasites

Reproductive status

Sex hormones

Research Methods

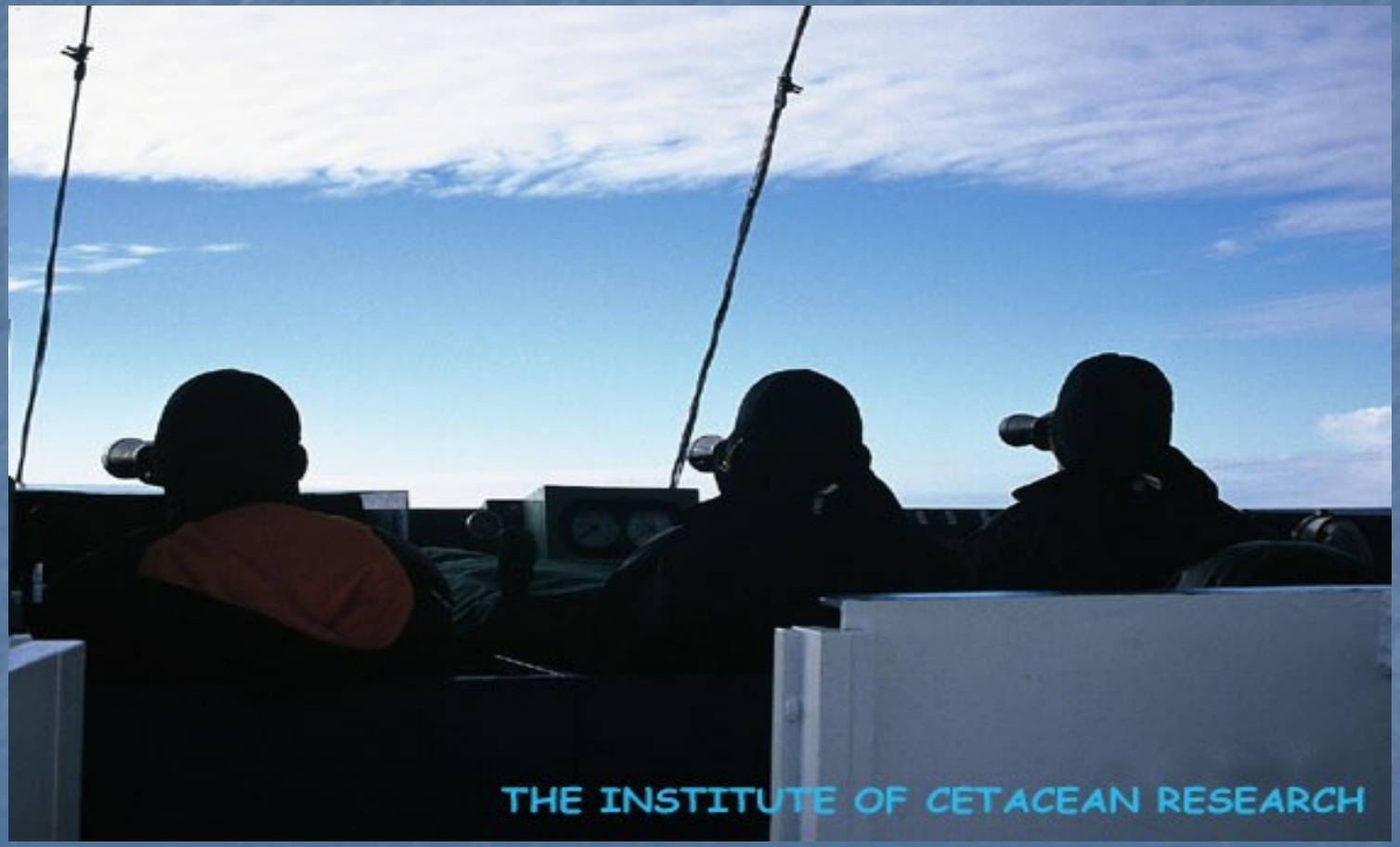
The research program consists of non-lethal and lethal methods.

Some indispensable data can be collected only by lethal methods.

- The purpose of Non-lethal research
  - Distribution and abundance of whales, migration/movement, observation of behavior
- The purpose of Lethal research
  - age, maturity, pollutant level, diet, reproduction rate,etc.

Oceanographic/Environment Survey

Sighting Survey



A Reason for Lethal Methods

Certain information cannot be obtained without killing whales.

For instance, ear plugs are essential for age determination.

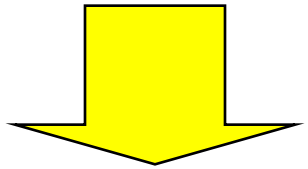
Morphological Survey

Sample Collection

Diet Composition Survey

The results of research program

- competition between whales and fisheries (food web)
- trend of abundance of whale resources (many whale species show the trend of increase of the stock.)
- elucidation of stock structure
- effects of changes in the marine environment on cetaceans etc.



We know more about the status of whale stocks, whale biology, and so forth.

The results of research programs

The research programs make valuable contributions.

- Japan's scientific research provides us with valuable data on whales and their ecosystem, which are essential for the proper management of whales as resources.
- Extensive data provided from Japan's scientific research have been submitted to the IWC Scientific Committee.

Japan's Institute of Cetacean Research submitted more than 180 papers to the IWC Scientific Committee, and contributed more than 90 papers to peer-reviewed scientific journals, many of which are written in English.

Some examples of the Important papers

- Fukui, Y., Mogoe, T., Ishikawa, H. and Ohsumi, S. 1997a. Factors affecting in vitro maturation of minke whale (Balaenoptera acutorostrata) follicular oocytes. Biology of Reproduction 56: 523-528.
- Ichii, T., Shinohara, N., Fujise, Y., Nishiwaki, S. and Matsuoka, K.1998. Interannual changes in body fat condition index of minke whales in the Antarctic. Marine Ecology Progress Series 175: 1-12.
- Honda, K., Aoki, M. and Fujise, Y. 2006. Ecochemical Approach Using Mercury Accumulation of Antarctic Minke Whale, Balaenoptera bonaerensis, as Tracer of Historical Change of Antarctic Marine Ecosystem During 1980-1999. Bull. Environ. Contam. Toxicol 76: 140-147.
- Pastene, L.A., Goto, M., Itoh, S. and Numachi, K. 1996. Spatial and temporal patterns of mitochondrial DNA variation in minke whale from Antarctic Areas IV and V. Rep. int. Whal. Commn 46: 305-314.

Limited number of samples

- Japan's scientific research is conducted on a limited scale, calculated by scientifically established methods, so as not to affect the recovering stocks of those species.
- The Scientific Committee of the IWC confirmed that the Minke whales were abundant and that the number of Humpback whales and Fin whales in the Antarctic Ocean had been rapidly increasing.

Some species of whales are overabundant

- The IWC Scientific Committee agreed in 1990 that there were
- 761,000 Minke whales.

MInke Whale

Estimate Whale Population and the Planned Catch Size by JARPAⅡ

Species	Population	Annual Catch Size	Ratio
Minke	761,000	850±10%	0.1%
Fin	47,000	50 (10 in each of the first two years)	0.1%(0.02%)
Humpback	35,500	50 (None in the first two years)	0.1%(None)

How to find a solution

"impasse" or "dysfunctional nature" of the IWC

calm, rational and constructive discussion

Sustainable and regulated whaling within the IWC

- For Further information on the results of the scientific research visit the following website;
  - Institute of Cetacean Research http://www.icrwhale.org