



THE INSTITUTE OF CETACEAN RESEARCH

4-5 TOYOMI-CHO, CHUO-KU, TOKYO 104-0055 JAPAN

PHONE: +81-3-3536-6521 FAX: +81-3536-6522

MEDIA RELEASE

September 1, 2014

Completion of the 2014 IWC/Japan Joint Cetacean Sighting Survey Cruise in the North Pacific - IWC-POWER

1. BACKGROUND

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

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 2014 survey was the fifth 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 2014 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 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, 2014 to August 30, 2014 (60 days).

2.3 Research Area (Fig. 1)

The research area is north of 30° N, south of 40°N, between longitudes 170° E and 160°W (High Seas and US-EEZ).

2.4 International Researchers

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

Sally Mizroch (Researcher, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), USA)

Jessica Taylor (IWC nominated researcher, UK)

Isamu Yoshimura (IWC nominated researcher, Japan)

2.5 Research Vessel

Yushin-maru No.3 (742 ton, Captain: Yoshiyuki Yamauchi)

2.6 Total Distance Covered

3,762 nautical miles (about 6,967km)

2.7 Main whale sightings

Blue whale: 1 school; 1 animal

Sei whale: 1 school; 1 animal

Bryde's whale: 118 schools; 140 animals

Sperm whale: 78 schools; 155 animals

Killer whale: 1 school; 3 animals

Risso's dolphin: 8 schools; 140 animals

Striped dolphin: 5 schools; 420 animals

Spotted dolphin: 6 schools; 436 animals

Common dolphin: 42 schools 1,747 animals

2.8 Results of sample collections etc.

(1) Photo identification data

Blue whale: 1 animal

Bryde's whale: 69 animals

Killer whale: 3 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

Bryde's whale: 78 animals

Killer whale: 1 animal

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

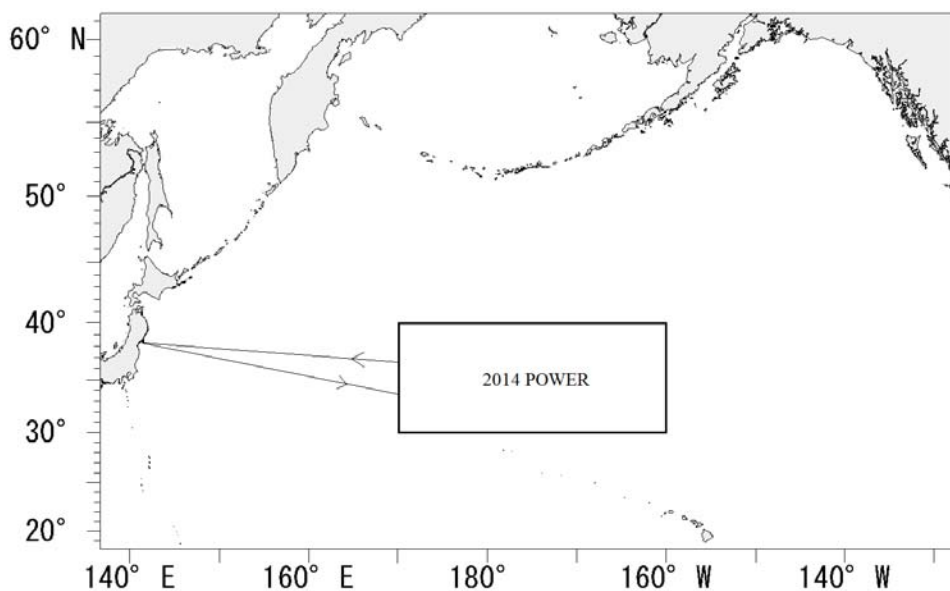


Fig.1 Research area for the 2014 IWC-POWER survey.