

# Japan's Scientific Progress report on Small Cetaceans in the fiscal year 2021(April 2021 to March 2022), with statistical data for the *calendar year* 2021

COMPILED BY SHINGO MINAMIKAWA

*Fisheries Resources Institute\**,

*Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency*

*2-12-4 Fukuura, Kanazawa-ku, Yokohama, Kanagawa 236-8648, Japan*

This report summarizes statistical data on small cetacean fisheries in 2021 (calendar year) as well as research conducted during the fiscal year 2021 (April 2021 to March 2022) by the Fisheries Resources Institute (hereafter FRI) of the Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency (hereafter FRA) and the Fisheries Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Government of Japan (hereafter FAJ) with the cooperation of other organizations concerned.

## 1. SPECIES AND STOCKS STUDIED

Common name	Scientific name	Area/stock(s)	Items referred to
Dall's porpoise	<i>Phocoenoides dalli</i>	Off Pacific coast, Okhotsk Sea and Japan Sea	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 5.1, 5.2.2, 5.3, 8.1
Finless porpoise	<i>Neophocaena asiaeorientalis</i>	Coastal waters of Japan	5.2.2, 5.3, 8.1
Pacific white-sided dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus obliquidens</i>	Off Pacific coast, and Japan Sea	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 5.1, 5.3
Striped dolphin	<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>	Off Pacific coast	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 4.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.3
Pantropical spotted dolphin	<i>Stenella attenuate</i>	Off Pacific coast	2.1.1, 5.1
Bottlenose dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	Off Pacific coast and East China Sea	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.2, 4.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.3
Rough-toothed dolphin	<i>Steno bredanensis</i>	Off Pacific coast	5.1, 5.2.2, 5.3
Melon-headed whale	<i>Peponocephala electra</i>	Off Pacific coast	2.1.1, 4.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.3
Risso's dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>	Off Pacific coast and Japan Sea	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 4.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2.2, 5.3
Short-finned pilot whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>	Off Pacific coast and East China Sea	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 4.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2.2, 5.3
False killer whale	<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>	Off Pacific coast	4.2, 5.1, 5.3
Killer whale	<i>Orcinus orca</i>	Off Pacific coast	8.1
Baird's beaked whale	<i>Berardius bairdii</i>	Off Pacific coast, Okhotsk Sea and Okhotsk Sea	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2, 3.1.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.3, 8.1
Additional species	-	Around Japan, others	5.2.2, 5.3

## 2. SIGHTINGS DATA

### 2.1 Field work

#### 2.1.1 Systematic

\* National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries (NRIFSF) was reorganized into Fisheries Resources Institute (FRI) in July 2020.

The FRI and FAJ conducted a dedicated shipboard sighting survey in the North Pacific, using a research vessel with a top barrel. During the survey, the following small cetaceans were sighted.

Table 1. Small cetaceans sighted in the dedicated shipboard survey conducted during the fiscal year 2021 (April 2021 to March 2022).

Species	Date	Area	No. of sightings	Contact institute
Baird's beaked whale	01/06/21- 23/07/21	Pacific	23	FRI
	21/09/21- 14/10/21		2	
Bottlenose dolphin	01/06/21- 23/07/21		2	
	21/09/21- 14/10/21		1	
Pantropical spotted dolphin	01/06/21- 23/07/21		4	
Striped dolphin	01/06/21- 23/07/21		40	
	21/09/21- 14/10/21		5	
Short-beaked common dolphin	01/06/21- 23/07/21		21	
	21/09/21- 14/10/21		2	
Fraiser's dolphin	01/06/21- 23/07/21		2	
Pacific white-sided dolphin	01/06/21- 23/07/21		7	
Dall's porpoise	01/06/21- 23/07/21		5	
	21/09/21- 14/10/21		4	
Risso's dolphin	01/06/21- 23/07/21		26	
Southern form Short-finned pilot whale	01/06/21- 23/07/21		3	
Northern form Short-finned pilot whale	21/09/21- 14/10/21	7		
Melon-headed whale	01/06/21- 23/07/21	1		
Blainville's beaked whale	01/06/21- 23/07/21	1		

"No. of sightings" indicates the numbers of schools sighted. These sightings were made during the sighting survey for small cetacean conducted in Pacific (from 1 June to 23 July 2021) and the sighting survey for Northern form Short-finned pilot whale (from 21 September to 14 October 2021), using the research vessel Kaiyo-maru No.7.

### 2.1.2 Opportunistic, platforms of opportunity

Opportunistic sighting data have been collected during coastal base type whaling (renamed from "small-type whaling" due to the amendment 2.1.1 of the Fishery Act on December 1st, 2020, hereafter coastal base type whaling) and dolphin fishery operations. The data mainly consist of sightings of target species at the fishing grounds (e.g. the Baird's beaked whale, the short-finned pilot whale, and the Risso's, bottlenose, striped, spotted and Pacific white-sided dolphin).

During the survey conducted in October 2021, 3 schools (95 animals) of Baird's beaked whale, one school (200 animals) of Pacific white-sided dolphin and three schools (Number of animals is unknown) of Dall's porpoise sighted by small whale watching ship.

## 2.2 Analyses/development of techniques

Kanaji and Maeda have worked on developing stock assessment models to combine the data from multiple sources such as absolute abundance estimates, historical catch statistics, and fisher's logbook.

Kanaji and Sasaki have continued to analyse shipboard sighting survey data in 2019-2021 to estimate abundance of fishery-targeted cetacean species and rarely-seen species.

Sasaki and Kanaji have continued to analyse shipboard sighting survey data in 2008, 2009, 2015, 2016 and 2017 to estimate abundance of Baird's beaked whales.

## 3. MARKING DATA

### 3.1 Field work

#### 3.1.1 Natural marking data

Natural marking data were not collected.

#### 3.1.2 Artificial marking data

With the cooperation of the Taiji Whale Museum, the Mie University, and the University of Tokyo, FRI attached plastic tags to the dorsal fins of five southern forms of short-finned pilot whales and 26 common bottlenose dolphins caught by the Taiji dolphin drive fishery from September 2021 to February 2022, and animals were released to the sea soon after the tagging.

#### 3.1.3 Telemetry data

The FRI deployed a smart position and temperature transmitting tag (SPOT tag, Wildlife Computers) on one Baird's beaked whale by using LK-Arts system from the small ship at Abashiri, Hokkaido, October 2021. The data had derived from for 58 days. Under the joint project among NRIFSF (or FRI), the Taiji Whale Museum and the Mie University, a satellite tag (SPOT tag, Wildlife Computers) was attached to the dorsal fin of two bottlenose dolphins, and a MiniPAT tag was attached to two bottlenose dolphins. Former two dolphins were caught by fishers in Taiji in November 2021. After released to the sea, their movements were tracked up to 66 and 68 days, respectively. The tags attached to the latter two dolphins pop-upped 2 and 29 days after release.

Table 2.1. Telemetry data of small cetaceans collected during the period from April 2021 to March 2022.

Species	Tag type	No. deployed	No. data available	No. popped up	No. retrieved	Contact institute
Bottlenose dolphin	SPOT	2	2	-	0	FRI
Bottlenose dolphin	miniPAT	2	2	2	0	FRI
Baird's beaked whale	SPOT	1	1	-	0	FRI

## 3.2 Analyses/development of techniques

Kanaji and Sasaki has applied state-space models to the satellite-tracking data of 12 bottlenose dolphins and estimated their movement patterns.

## 4. TISSUE/BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES COLLECTED

### 4.1 Biopsy samples

The FRI collected each one biopsy samples from short-beaked common dolphin and Baird's beaked whale during the fiscal year 2021 (April 2021 to March 2022). In addition, one biopsy sample was collected from a

Baird's beaked whale during a satellite tagging and biopsy collection survey conducted by the small ship off Abashiri.

#### 4.2 Samples from directed catches or bycatches

The national quota of Baird's beaked whales for the mentioned period was 76 animals for the coastal base type whaling (includes 10 animal carryover from the last year's quota). Whaling operation was conducted from 11 July to 5 August and from 28 October to 22 November at the land station in Wadoura on the Pacific coast, and from 29 May to 12 June and from 23 August to 21 November at the land station in Ayukawa on the Pacific coast. The operation at the Sea of Japan and at the Okhotsk coast was not conducted. A total of 33 Baird's beaked whales (off the Pacific coast) were taken by four catcher boats (*Kohei-maru* #8, *Taisho-maru* #3, *Katsumaru* #7, and *Sumitomo-maru* #51). All the animals were examined and biological samples were taken by two researchers.

The national quota of northern form short-finned pilot whales for small-type whaling was 36 animals. During the operation for common minke whales off Sanriku coast, catcher boats encountered northern form short-finned pilot whales, but no whales were caught because fishermen prioritized operation for common minke whales. The national quota of 33 southern form short-finned pilot whales was set for the coastal base type whaling at the Taiji and Wadoura land stations. No pilot whales were encountered during the operation at the Wadoura land station. The operation at the Taiji station was not conducted, thus false killer whales allocated a quota of 20 animals and southern form short-finned pilot whales were not caught.

The surveys for animals caught by the drive fishery at Taiji were conducted to collect data and samples for life history and genetic studies, by 6 researchers during the periods from 1 September to 29 September 2021, from 10 November to 25 December 2021, and from 5 January to 28 February 2022. They examined 43 southern form short-finned pilot whales, 54 melon-headed whales, and 212 striped dolphins, 133 Risso's and one bottlenose.

Of the individuals surveyed, the samples obtained from the base type whaling and the drive fishery at Taiji during the period of April 2021 to March 2022 are shown in Table 4. In addition, in February 2022, Hiroshi Oizumi (Tokai University) collected stomach contents from 18 striped dolphins and 21 melon headed whales for the feeding habit studies from among the individuals surveyed.

Furthermore, among the individuals surveyed in Taiji, Ohizumi (Tokai University) collected stomach contents of 21 melon headed whales and 18 striped dolphins caught in February 2022 to study their feeding habit.

Okinawa Prefectural Government requested fishermen to collect teeth and skin samples as a part of supervision of the fishery, from small cetaceans caught by hand harpoon fishery (crossbow fishery) in Okinawa in 2021 season. These samples will be sent to FRI for age determination and genetic examinations.

Table 4. Samples collected from small cetaceans caught by the small-type whaling and driven fishery during the fiscal year 2021 (April 2021 to March 2022).

Species	Area	Tissue type(s)	No. Collected	Archived (Y/N)	Contact Institute
Baird's beaked whale	Western North Pacific	To, Ma, O, U, Te, E, V, Sk and C	33	Y	NRIFS (FRI)
Southern form short-finned pilot whale	Western North Pacific	To, Ma, O, U, Te, and sk	43	Y	
Bottlenose dolphin	Western North Pacific	To, Ma, O, U, Te, C, and sk	1	Y	
Risso's dolphin	Western North Pacific	To, Ma, O, U, Te, C, and sk	132	Y	
Striped dolphin	Western North Pacific	To, Ma, O, U, Te, C, and sk	166	Y	
Melon-headed whale	Western North Pacific	To, Ma, O, U, Te, C, and sk	51	Y	

E: epididymis, Ma: mammary gland, O: ovaries, Sk: skin, Te: testis, To: tooth, U: uterine horn, V: vertebral epiphysis, C: crystalline lens.

#### 4.3 Samples from stranded animals

Sample collection from stranded small cetaceans by the NRIFS/FRA was not conducted during the fiscal year 2021 (April 2021 to March 2022).

#### 4.4 Analyses/development of techniques

Maeda determined ages of a total of 115 animals (southern form short-finned pilot and melon-headed whales, and bottlenose, Risso's and striped dolphins) taken by the drive fishery at Taiji. Maeda also examined ovaries of 58 animals (southern form short-finned pilot and melon-headed whales and bottlenose, Risso's and striped dolphins) caught by the drive fishery and investigated histological samples of testis, mammary gland, and uterine horn of a total of 208 animals (Melon-headed whales and bottlenose and Risso's dolphins) taken by drive fishery at Taiji, for studies on sexual maturity.

Maeda measured the racemization rate of aspartic acid in the ocular lens of 60 Baird's beaked whale to examine a method for age estimation using aspartic acid racemization.

Yoshida conducted SNPs analysis, to advance the stock structure study of small cetaceans around Japan.

## 5. STATISTICS FOR SMALL CETACEANS

### 5.1 For the calendar year 2021

Target species, fishing season, quota, catcher boats and actual catches for the coastal base type whaling are provided in section 4.2.

Regarding the dolphin fisheries, management season has been set from 1 August to 31 July of the following year for Dall's porpoise fisheries, and from 1 October to 30 September of the following year for other species, since 1996. The management season for fisheries in Wakayama Prefecture has been set from 1 September to 31 August of the following year. The statistics on dolphin fisheries covers catches of the calendar year (1 January to 31 December), while FAJ manages dolphin fisheries by their own fishing season aforementioned. Thus, in some cases, catches aggregated by calendar year may exceed the seasonal (fishing yearly) catch in appearance, but the actual seasonal catch is below the allocated catch quota. Direct small cetacean catches are given in Table 5 in this section by prefecture and by type of fisheries. The data have been collected by the International Affairs Division of the FAJ based on reports from the prefectural governments.

Catch quota for dolphin fisheries for the 2021/2022 season was 4,137 animals for *dalli*-type Dall's porpoises, 4,398 for *truei*-type Dall's porpoises, 398 for Risso's dolphins, 374 for bottlenose dolphins, 329 for pantropical spotted dolphins, 521 for striped dolphins, 127 for southern form short-finned pilot whales, 70 for false killer whales, 260 for Pacific white-sided dolphins, 30 for rough-toothed dolphins, and 363 for melon-headed whales.

Corresponding operational months by prefecture in 2021 were as follows: hand harpoon fishery was permitted for nine months (1 January to 31 August and 1-31 December) in Okinawa prefecture, for eight months (1 January to 31 August) in Wakayama, for six months (1 January to 30 April and 1 November to 31 December) in Aomori, Miyagi, Iwate, and Chiba, and for 4.5 months (1 May to 15 June and 1 August to 31 October) in Hokkaido. Drive fishery was permitted for nine months in Wakayama (1 January to 31 May and 1 September to 31 December) and for seven months in Shizuoka (1 January to 31 March and 1 September to 31 December).

Table 5. Direct catch of small cetacean in 2021.

Species	Type of fishery	Prefecture <sup>1)</sup>	Total landed <sup>2)</sup>
Baird's beaked whale	Coastal base type whaling	Miyagi	24
		Chiba	9
<i>truei</i> -type Dall' porpoise	Hand harpoon	Iwate	502
		Miyagi	9
Pacific white-sided dolphin	Drive	Wakayama	13
Striped dolphin	Drive	Wakayama	265
Bottlenose dolphin	Hand harpoon	Wakayama	5

	Drive		56
	Hand harpoon	Okinawa	1
Melon-headed whale	Drive	Wakayama	67
Risso's dolphin	Drive	Wakayama	171
Southern form short-finned pilot whale	Drive	Wakayama	45
	Hand harpoon	Okinawa	5

1) Catches by the coastal base type whaling and the drive fishery were recorded at the place of landing of products. Catches by the hand harpoon fishery were recorded at the place of registration of vessels.

2) Statistics of the coastal base type whaling are based on reports of researchers and gunners. Those of other fisheries are based on reports of prefectural governments to the Fisheries Agency. They are a compilation of landing slips (hand harpoon fisheries in Iwate and Hokkaido) or reports from individual fishermen or fishermen cooperatives (other prefectures).

## 5.2 Non-natural mortality for the calendar year 2021

### 5.2.1 Observed or reported ship strikes

We do not have data collecting system for ship strike incidence of small cetaceans.

### 5.2.2 Fishery bycatch

Provisional figures for incidental mortality of small cetaceans (bycatch) by Japanese fisheries, by Prefecture in January-December 2021, are shown in Table 6. Species and figures are based on the reports of prefecture governments to the FAJ, which are reports from individual fishermen or fishermen cooperatives.

Table 6. Fishery bycatch of small cetaceans in 2021.

Species	No. of animals	Location <sup>1)</sup>	Fate <sup>2)</sup>	Gear <sup>3)</sup>	Target fish species <sup>4)</sup>	Source or contact
Harbor porpoise	3	Hokkaido	K	GNS	NA	FAJ
<i>dalli</i> -type Dall's porpoise	2	Hokkaido	K	FPN		
Finless porpoise	2	Mie	K	GNS		
	2	Osaka	R	MIS		
	1		K			
	3	Okayama	K	MIS		
	7	Kagawa	R	GNS		
	1		R	MIS		
	1	Fukuoka	K	GNS		
	2	Nagasaki	K	GNS		
	1		K	MIS		
2	Oita	K	GNS			
Rough-toothed dolphin	8	Okinawa	R	FPN		
Risso's dolphin	1	Iwate	K	FPN		
	2	Wakayama	R			
Short-finned pilot whale	14	Wakayama	R	FPN		
	1		D			

1) Recorded at the place of fishing gears.

2) Fate of whale: D = discarded dead or seriously injured, K = (use or possession for academic purposes), R = released alive

3) Described using “FAO FISHING DESCRIPTION AND CODES”, that is, stationary uncovered pound nets (FPN), set gillnets (GNS) and miscellaneous gear (MIS).

4) Target fish species: NA = not available

### 5.3 Strandings of small cetaceans

Provisional figures for strandings of small cetaceans in Japan, for the period January-December 2021, are shown in Table 7. Species and figures are based on reports of prefecture governments to the FAJ, which compile information from individual fishermen, fishermen cooperatives or the general public. Number of postmortems in Table 7 indicate the numbers of dead animals when they stranded.

Table 7. Strandings of small cetaceans in 2021.

Species	No. strandings	No. postmortems	Contact person(s)/ Institute(s)	In
<i>dalli</i> -type Dall’s porpoise	6	6	FAJ	
Harbor porpoise	5	5		
Finless porpoise	146	146		
Pacific white-sided dolphin	35	35		
Striped dolphin	68	68		
Common dolphin	3	3		
Rough-toothed dolphin	6	4		
Bottlenose dolphin	7	7		
Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin	1	1		
Fraser’s dolphin	2	2		
Risso’s dolphin	15	15		
Short-finned pilot whale	1	1		
False killer whale	1	1		
Melon-headed whale	5	5		
Pygmy killer whale	2	2		
Baird’s beaked whale	2	2		
Cuvier’s beaked whale	2	2		
Stejneger’s beaked whale	6	6		
Blainville’s beaked whale	2	2		
Ginkgo-toothed beaked whale	1	1		
Longman’s beaked whale	1	1		
Dwarf sperm whale	9	9		
Pygmy sperm whale	4	4		
Unidentified delphinid cetacean	10	10		
Unidentified ziphiid cetacean	2	2		
Unidentified small cetacean	21	21		

In addition, the Institute of Cetacean Research (4-5 Toyomi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0055, Japan), and the National Science Museum (4-1-1, Amakubo, Tsukuba, Ibaragi 305-0005, Japan) voluntarily collected relevant information on strandings.

#### 5.4 Earlier years' statistics

There are no changes in earlier years' statistics.

### 6. OTHER STUDIES AND ANALYSES

No other study nor analysis on small cetaceans was conducted during the fiscal year 2021 (April 2021 to March 2022).

### 7. LITERATURE CITED

None.

### 8. PUBLICATION ON SMALL CETACEANS

#### 8.1 Published or In Press' papers only

Kanaji, Y. 2022. Killer whale. The Current status of international fishery stocks. Fisheries Agency and Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency. [https://kokushi.fra.go.jp/R03/R03\\_57\\_KIW.pdf](https://kokushi.fra.go.jp/R03/R03_57_KIW.pdf). 3pp. (in Japanese)

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Kanaji, Y., Maeda, H., Okamura, H., Punt, A. E., and Branch, T. 2023. Multiple - model stock assessment frameworks for precautionary management and conservation on fishery - targeted coastal dolphin populations off Japan. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 58 2479-2492.

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Yoshida, H. 2022. Narrow-ridged finless porpoise. The Current status of international fishery stocks. Fisheries Agency and Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency. [https://kokushi.fra.go.jp/R03/R03\\_56\\_PFI.pdf](https://kokushi.fra.go.jp/R03/R03_56_PFI.pdf) . 6pp. (in Japanese)

#### 8.2 Unpublished literature

None.