

Completion of Japanese Abundance and Stock-structure Surveys in the Antarctic (JASS-A) 2020/2021 Research Cruise

March, 2021

Fisheries Agency of Japan

1. Background

This survey is a continuation of the Japanese government's research program (non-lethal research) aimed at the sustainable use of whale resources in the Antarctic Ocean. This year's research was conducted by a research vessel in the Antarctic Ocean including a sighting survey, biopsy sampling, satellite tagging, oceanographic observation and collection of other relevant information on cetaceans. The scientific information obtained from this research will be provided to Scientific Committees of relevant international organizations such as IWC.

2. Research implementing body

The Institute of Cetacean Research

3. Research Cruise Period

From December 4, 2020 to March 22, 2021.

4. Research Area

Antarctic Ocean

5. Main Research Objectives

The main research objectives of JASS-A are:

- (1) Study of abundance and their trends of large whale species in the Indo-Pacific region of the Antarctic Ocean.
- (2) Study of the distribution, movement and stock structure of large whale species in the Indo-Pacific region of the Antarctic Ocean.

6. Research Vessel

Yushin-Maru No. 2, (747 tons).

7. Summary of results

- (1) Main whale sightings

Antarctic minke whale: 53 schools; 122 animals

Humpback whale: 384 schools; 739 animals

Fin whale: 153 schools; 257 animals

Blue whale: 24 schools; 29 animals

(2) Individual identification photo shooting (number of individuals)

Humpback whale (41 animals), blue whale (20 animals), killer whale (1 animal).

(3) Biopsy sample collection (number of individuals)

Antarctic minke whale (14 animals), humpback whale (16 animals), fin whale (15 animals), Blue whale (8 animals), Bryde's whale (1 animal).

(4) Satellite tag attachment experiment

We fitted 10 Antarctic minke whales and 7 fin whales with satellite tags.

(5) Oceanographic observation by XCTD (Expendable Conductivity-Temperature-Depth probe)

Water temperature and salinity were measured at 99 stations from 0 to 1,850m depth.

For further information, please check the English media release posted on the Institute of Cetacean Research website:

<https://www.icrwhale.org/210322ReleaseENG.html>