



**Ulsan, Republic of Korea  
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## JAPAN WELCOMES REPORT OF THE IWC SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Dr Hiroshi Hatanaka, Director General of Japan's Institute of Cetacean Research, today welcomed the release of the International Whaling Commission's Scientific Committee report.

"The report of the Scientific Committee has provided statements of strong support from some members for our ongoing research, particularly our new proposal for the Antarctic. Japan provided data and analyses, research cruise reports and scientific papers that were extensively discussed by the Scientific Committee," Dr Hatanaka said.

The Scientific Committee met from May 30 to June 10 but their report was confidential until today's opening session of the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the IWC in Ulsan.

Dr Hatanaka and 22 other scientists from Japan attended the meeting. The report says: "Some members expressed the opinion that the research in the Antarctic had made a major contribution to the knowledge of the biology of Antarctic minke whales and that in the face of changing environmental conditions the value of this work would increase."

It continues: "Some other members stressed the importance of JARPA II [the proposed research for the Antarctic] as an approach towards ecosystem management in the Antarctic."

"Of course we acknowledge that these were not consensus views – a number of scientists decided not to participate in the review of our new research proposal for the Antarctic for political reasons and there are divided views within the Scientific Committee on the need for lethal sampling of whales. However, we believe that the value of our research has been demonstrated and that eventually scientific – rather than emotional or political views – will prevail," Dr Hatanaka said.

"We particularly appreciated the presentation of preliminary work on modeling the Antarctic ecosystem and the discussion of interspecies interactions."

"This is directly related to the objectives of Japan's research programs so we are pleased that the Scientific Committee noted that this is an important subject. Japanese scientists will cooperate in this work and provide research data that will be used for developing the models to examine the nature and effects of species interactions."

With regard to sanctuaries, Dr Hatanaka explained that the Scientific Committee reviewed a proposal by Argentina, Brazil and South Africa to establish a sanctuary in the South Atlantic and that the views of the Committee were divided. The Scientific Committee did not review the Australia and New Zealand proposal for a South Pacific sanctuary at this year's meeting as it had done so at a previous meeting.

Dr Hatanaka noted that last year the Scientific Committee had invited outside experts to examine the issue of IWC whale sanctuaries and that these experts had concluded they are not ecologically justified,

based on vague goals and objectives, lack a rigorous approach to design and operation, represent a “shotgun” approach to conservation, and are more prohibitive than precautionary.

“These strong criticisms of IWC sanctuaries based on a scientific review also apply to the sanctuary proposals for the South Atlantic and South Pacific,” he said.

Dr Hatanaka explained that the Scientific Committee had also made progress on the assessment of a number of stocks particularly for southern hemisphere humpback whales, which the Committee has already agreed is growing at a rate of more than 10% each year. “Japanese research has confirmed that stocks of humpback and fin whales in the Antarctic are growing rapidly so it is important for the Committee to agree on new abundance estimates.”

“Our new research program will continue to monitor these stocks. They are having an increasing role in the overall dynamics of the Antarctic ecosystem because of their population growth.”

Dr Hatanaka also noted that the Scientific Committee had made important progress on a number of other issues including improvements to the method for calculating catch quotas (the Revised Management Procedure or RMP) and advancement of the process for providing advice to the Commission of catch quotas for North Pacific Bryde’s whales and North Atlantic fin whales. “This is important because it means that the Commission will be able to provide safe quotas for these abundant stocks in the near future,” he said.

Finally, Dr Hatanaka expressed his appreciation to the Chairman of the Scientific Committee, Dr. Doug DeMaster from the U.S. “Our Chairman has worked hard to try to keep the science separate from the emotion and politics related to whales and we very much appreciate his efforts over the last three years. We also welcome the new Chair, Dr. Arne Bjorge from Norway and Vice Chair, Dr. Debbie Palka from the U.S. and look forward to working with them.”

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