

## Foreword

It is a pleasure for me to introduce the seventh issue of the Technical Reports of the Institute of Cetacean Research (TEREP-ICR-7). As stated previously, TEREP-ICR describes and reports on the process, progress, and results of technical or scientific research on whales and their environment, as well as the field activities and state of current research surveys conducted by the ICR, both in the central-western North Pacific and the Antarctic.

The strict sanitary measures taken previously in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have been relaxed in 2023, which can be considered as the post-pandemic year. This relaxation of sanitary measures has facilitated enormously the implementation of the several research activities by the ICR, including preparation and implementation of sighting surveys and participation in national and international scientific meetings, which are now being conducted in-person or in a combination of in-person and online approaches. During 2023 the ICR has been able to conduct field surveys, laboratory works and analyses, write papers and participates safely and successfully in national and international meetings. These efforts enabled the ICR to make significant contribution to whale science during 2023 as shown in this issue of TEREP-ICR.

Similar as in previous TEREP-ICR issues, TEREP-ICR-6 was widely distributed in Japan and in foreign countries and I feel TEREP-ICR is on course towards achieving its objectives. At the same time, TEREP-ICR has been a good opportunity for our scientists to compile and summarize their research conducted over the years, as a precursor to submitting their works for publication in peer-review journals.

I sincerely hope that this seventh issue of the TEREP-ICR will contribute further to an increased understanding among national and international scientific communities of the technical and research activities on whales and the ecosystem conducted by the ICR.

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