INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

The Red House
135 Station Road
Impington, Cambridge
CB24 9NP, UK

tel: +44 (0) 1223 233971
email: secretariat@iwc.int
web: iwc.int

RJL/JAC/32626
01 July 2019

Withdrawal of the Government of Japan from the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling

Circular Communication to Commissioners, Contracting Governments and Members of the Scientific Committee

cc. Accredited observers to the IWC

IWC.ALL.351

This Circular confirms that Japan has withdrawn from the International Whaling Commission, effective today 1 July 2019.

Kindly note the attached letter below received today (1 July 2019) from Japan.

Rebecca Lent

Dr Rebecca Lent
Executive Secretary

FISHERIES AGENCY
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES,
GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN
1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8907, Japan
TEL: +81-3-3502-2443 FAX: +81-3-3504-2649

1 July 2019

Dear Dr. Suydam, (c.c. Dr, Rebecca Lent)

As Japan stated at the SC68A, I hereby submit to you the scientific information on the catch limits for Japan's commercial whaling. I cordially ask you to circulate, in your capacity as the Chair of the IWC Scientific Committee (SC), a copy of this communication to all Contracting Governments of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) and relevant SC members for their information. Japan remains willing to cooperate with and contribute to the SC for the conservation and management of cetaceans.

Background

Japan announced its withdrawal from the ICRW, which has come into effect on 30 June 2019. Japan also announced the resumption of commercial whaling from July 2019 within Japan's territorial sea and exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Catch limits for western North Pacific sei, Bryde's and common minke whales were calculated in line with the Revised Management Procedure (RMP) and the Norwegian Catch Limit Algorithm (CLA), with the tuning level of 0.6.

The application of the CLA was based on the best and latest scientific information, including stock structures and abundance estimates, which are essential for defining management areas and calculating catch limits. Discussions and findings on these topics at the IWC Scientific Committee were duly considered.

The technical aspects of the work conducted by Japanese scientists on the calculation of catch limits were reviewed by an independent panel of prominent six international experts in June 2019.

Management areas and abundance

For sei whale, a single management area was defined in the North Pacific on the basis of the scenario considered to be the most plausible at the IWC Scientific Committee, that a single stock distributes in this ocean basin. This management area coincides with the areas covered by the sighting surveys. The latest abundance estimate of the stock, based on JARPNII and IWC POWER surveys, is 34,718 animals.

Committee, two definitions of management areas were adopted. The latest estimate of abundance, based on the information derived from Japanese dedicated sighting surveys under JARPNII and IWC POWER surveys, is 34,473 animals.

For common minke whale, based on the best stock structure scenario recognized by the IWC Scientific Committee, a single management area was defined in the Pacific side of Japan and Okhotsk Sea. The latest estimate of abundance, based on the information derived from Japanese dedicated sighting surveys and JARPNII sighting surveys, is 20,513 animals.

Catch limits

Based on the CLA, and having duly taken into account the technical advice by the independent review panel, the catch limits for sei, Bryde's and common minke whales were calculated at 25, 187 and 171, respectively. In the case of the stock structure scenarios for Bryde's whales and minke whales, catch limits calculated by the CLA were examined for their robustness against considerable uncertainties through the Implementation Simulation Trials process. The robustness of the catch limits was confirmed for both whale species. It has been also confirmed that under the calculated catch limit, J-stock of minke whales will not be depleted. For sei whales, Japan has also adopted a precautionary approach, in calculating a catch limit for this species based on abundance west of 170°E.

Japan's calculation of catch limits will be reviewed from time to time in order to properly reflect the best and latest scientific information. To this end, Japan will continue its efforts to collect all relevant scientific information not only through its research programmes, but also through commercial whaling activities. Japan invites, as it has done in the past, international scientific observation of these activities.

Sincerely,

Hideki Moronuki
Director for Fisheries Negotiation (ex-Alternate IWC Commissioner for Japan)
Fisheries Agency of Japan