

Opening Statement - Japan
28th meeting of the NAMMCO Council
22- 25 March 2021 Online

At the outset, Japan would like to thank the Secretariat of NAMMCO for preparing the NAMMCO Council meeting, with great efficiency overcoming challenges of online meetings. We are always happy to find a series of achievements of this organization in the conservation and management of marine mammals including cetaceans, and in this regard, Japan once again confirms its full support of the “NUUK DECLARATION” adopted at the NAMMCO 25 in 2017, which reaffirms NAMMCO’s fulfilment of its role as an appropriate international organization in accordance with the UNCLOS.

Japan is proud of having contributed to NAMMCO with its scientific inputs including scientific data and findings from Japan’s whale research programs and resumed commercial whaling. Japan wishes to further contribute to and strengthen cooperation with this organization.

As you all are aware, Japan withdrew from the ICRW on 30 June 2019, and since July 2019 has resumed commercial whaling for sei, Bryde’s and common minke whales in the western North Pacific.

The catch limits were calculated in line with the Revised Management Procedure (RMP), based on the Norwegian Catch Limit Algorithm (CLA). The application of the CLA was based on the best and latest scientific information, including stock structures and abundance estimates. Detailed calculation methods and its results are available on the website of the Fisheries Agency.

Technical aspects of the work conducted by Japanese scientists on the calculation of catch limits were reviewed by an independent panel composed of six foreign experts in June 2019.

Consequently, the annual catch limits were calculated at 171 for Minke whale, 187 for Bryde’s whale and 25 for Sei whale, and I am very happy to inform you that whaling operations in 2019 and 2020 were successfully completed.

Even since its withdrawal from ICRW in 2019, Japan has remained committed to international cooperation for the proper management of cetaceans, through cooperation with relevant international organizations, including NAMMCO and IWC.

Japan has also continued to collect scientific data through commercial whaling and its research programs with non-lethal methods in the Antarctic Ocean and the North Pacific. I would like to stress that such efforts by Japan have received wide welcomes from various international fora such as IWC-SC, CCAMLR-SC and of course NAMMCO-SC.

In order to strengthen its science-based approach, Japan is eager to enhance collaboration with NAMMCO and its Member States. From such perspective, Japan wishes to make a financial contribution to this organization in order to jointly work on various activities of common interest, which could specifically promote our collaboration in scientific activities for conservation and management of marine mammals including cetaceans.

Finally, Japan would like to reiterate its conviction that the collaboration between NAMMCO and Japan is a vital force in international fora to promote conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources based on science.

Thank you for your attention.