

Opening Statement - Japan
31st meeting of the NAMMCO Council
19-21 March 2024, Reykjavík, Iceland

Mr Chair, Delegates, Observers – and Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan would like to thank the Government of Iceland in its capacity as the Chair and the NAMMCO Secretariat for hosting the 31st Council meeting. Before giving Japan's opening statement, Japan would like to express our utmost hope that Iceland overcome the current difficulties in the face of ongoing volcanic activities and earthquakes.

NAMMCO has contributed greatly to the conservation and management of marine mammals since its establishment in 1992. We pay tribute anew to all the NAMMCO Members that have made such a significant contribution for over 30 years. Today, we are honoured and privileged to attend the meeting and look forward to being part of the discussion.

Even after its withdrawal from the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) in 2019, Japan has remained committed to international cooperation for the proper management of cetaceans, working with relevant international organisations, including the NAMMCO as well as the IWC. As in the past, our delegation wishes to inform you of Japan's intention to make its best efforts to reaffirm the unity among countries supporting the sustainable use of marine living resources towards the IWC in 2024. To this end, Japan is currently organising a meeting in Tokyo in June 2024 on the Sustainable Use of Marine Living Resources including Cetaceans.

To further strengthen its science-based approach, Japan is willing to enhance collaboration with NAMMCO and its Members. From this perspective, Japan would like to continue scientific and financial contribution to the MINTAG Project, which aims at developing a new satellite tag to be used on fast swimming rorquals and pilot whales, species demanding a long-range deployment and a tag with as little drag as possible. In addition to that, at the 30th Meeting of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee, a collaborative research project between NAMMCO and Japan for understanding the factors behind annual changes in distribution and feeding ecology of North Pacific common minke whale, and comparison with the situation of this species in the North Atlantic was discussed. These kinds of scientific collaboration would further contribute to the proper management of marine living resources in the North Atlantic and the North Pacific oceans. As a token of our closer cooperation, Japan invited the General Secretary, Dr Geneviève DESPORTES, here we have, to Tokyo last December for a Dialogue on future cooperation. We are most willing to expand the scope of our cooperation with NAMMCO and its Members through specific projects in the field of scientific collaboration, including socioeconomic policy, across wider communication channels.

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.