

Opening Statement - Japan  
32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the NAMMCO Council  
25-27 March 2025, Tromsø, Norway

First of all, Japan would like to express its sincere respect to the Government of Norway for hosting the NAMMCO Council meeting with great hospitality and efficiency. NAMMCO has made remarkable achievements in the conservation and management of marine mammals since its establishment in 1992, and we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all NAMMCO Members for their significant contributions over the past three decades. It is an honor for us to attend this Council meeting and we stand ready to contribute to discussions as an observer.

Even after its withdrawal from the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) in 2019, Japan remains steadfast in its commitment to international cooperation for the proper management of cetaceans, working with relevant international organizations, including NAMMCO and IWC. Japan will continue to make every effort to reaffirm the unity of countries that support the sustainable use of marine living resources. As part of these efforts, this year, Japan plans to host the “Meeting on Sustainable Use of Aquatic Living Resources” in Tokyo around the end of September.

Japan will not stop its efforts to enhance collaboration with NAMMCO and its Members in order to further strengthen the science-based approach.

In this context, before anything else, Japan remains committed to continuing its scientific and financial contributions to the MINTAG Project, which aims to develop new satellite tags for fast-swimming rorquals and pilot whales.

Furthermore, at the 31st Meeting of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee held this year, it was decided that NAMMCO and Japan would continue collaboration on the research project which aims to elucidate factors which cause annual changes in the distribution and the feeding ecology of North Pacific common minke whales. Discussions also covered comparisons between the situation of this species in the North Atlantic and that in the North Pacific. It is expected that such scientific collaborations contribute to the proper management of marine living resources both in the North Atlantic and in the North Pacific. In 2024, an international workshop on the use of genetic data for the identification of whale stocks was organized by the Institute of Cetacean Research in Taiji, Wakayama Prefecture, Japan. Participants included geneticists from Norway and Iceland, and other members of the NAMMCO Genetics Working Group.

Our cooperation doesn't stop there. Yesterday, NAMMCO and the Fisheries Agency of Japan co-organized the “Animal Welfare Workshop in the context of marine mammal hunting.”

Japan would like to continue expanding its cooperation with NAMMCO beyond scientific areas to broader communication, and specific joint projects. Through these initiatives, we hope that NAMMCO's knowledge and best practices will serve the global community beyond a single region.

Finally, Japan would like to reiterate its strong belief that the collaboration between NAMMCO and Japan be a driving force in international fora to promote conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources based on scientific evidence.

Thank you.