

SC/68A/04

Statement regarding Japan's Withdrawal from IWC

Japan



INTERNATIONAL
WHALING COMMISSION

**Statement regarding Japan's Withdrawal from IWC
IWC Scientific Committee Meeting (SC/68A),
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Last December, Japan notified its withdrawal from the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) in accordance with Article 11 of the Convention. The withdrawal will become effective on 30 June this year, and Japan will resume sustainable whaling from 1 July in its exclusive economic zone and coastal waters.

This statement explains the background for the withdrawal and Japan's future involvement in the work of the Scientific Committee.

1. Background for the Withdrawal

Since the adoption of 10(e) of the Schedule, so-called "commercial whaling moratorium" in 1982, IWC had been engaged in numerous negotiations in order to find some solutions for resolving the conflicts caused by the different positions among its members regarding whales and whaling. However, such efforts have all failed. Japan has been engaged in the negotiations with a spirit of compromise and science-based discussions. Japan regrets that the sincere attempts was met with the absolute position of zero tolerance to whaling insisted by some Member States. At the last IWC Commission meeting held in Brazil last year, Japan submitted a proposal for co-existence of different positions within IWC. This was substantial compromise by Japan but it was denied. It was clearly demonstrated that the co-existence of Member States with different views on whales and whaling cannot be materialized at the current IWC. After thorough examination of the result of the IWC67 meeting, Japan made a difficult decision of the withdrawal.

2. Japan's future involvement in the work of the Scientific Committee

Japan remains committed to international cooperation for the proper conservation and management of marine living resources including cetaceans, and in this regard, will continue its participation in and scientific contribution to SC as an observer.

Following the resumption of commercial whaling within its EEZ and coastal waters, Japan will cease its two whale research programs: NEWREP-A and NEWREP-NP. Japan will however continue research programs with non-lethal methods in both the North Pacific and the Antarctic Oceans, collect fisheries-dependent scientific data through commercial whaling, and provide SC with scientific findings derived therefrom. In addition to those scientific data, standard statistics in relation to commercial whaling will be duly provided. As for the data collected through its special permit programs (JARPA I & II, NEWREP-A, JARPN I & II and NEWREP-NP), Japan will continue to be engaged in their analyses and provide SC with scientific findings thereon. Japan will maintain provision of access to those data and samples in accordance with relevant protocols.

Japan is prepared to continue the IWC-POWER Program which has long provided SC with critical scientific information. A research vessel and crew will be provided as was in the past.

Japan will only harvest those species whose populations have been assessed by the SC as abundant: i.e. minke, Brydes and sei whales. The catch limits will be calculated in accordance with the Revised Management Procedure (RMP), taking into account relevant scientific progress achieved by SC such as outputs from the *Implementation Reviews* and *In-depth Assessment*. Japan reiterates its intention to continue to engage with SC in the conservation and management of cetaceans. Japan will duly provide SC with scientific information of the catch limits by July 2019.

Finally, Japan has long been contributing to SC's activities through the provision of the wide range of scientific findings including those from its whale research programs.

It is Japan's strong belief that its contribution to SC will continue to be essential for the materialization of the very basic objective of ICRW: promotion of proper conservation and sustainable use of whale resources.