



INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

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RESEARCH PROPOSAL REQUEST

1. RELEVANT AGENDA ITEM (NO. AND TITLE)

This item is relevant to item X under IA but is also relevant to work being undertaken by other sub-committees including BRG (for right and gray whales), RMP (for Bryde's whales), E (for marine debris and potential spatial modelling and identification of 'hotspots').

2. PROJECT TITLE

IWC-POWER cruises 2015 and 2016

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND WHY IT IS NECESSARY

This international programme was initially discussed and recommended by the Committee and endorsed by the Commission in 2009. The Committee has held a major international workshop to determine the important knowledge gaps in the North Pacific with the aim of meeting the Commission-endorsed long-term objective:

'will provide information to allow determination of the status of populations (and thus stock structure is inherently important) of large whales that are found in North Pacific waters and provide the necessary scientific background for appropriate conservation and management actions. The programme will primarily contribute information on abundance and trends in abundance of populations of large whales and try to identify the causes of any trends should these occur. The programme will learn from both the successes and weaknesses of past national and international programmes and cruises, including the IDCR/SOWER programme.'

The Scientific Committee has also worked to determine medium-term priorities as shown in SC/65b/Rep 9. It has agreed that the first phase of the programme was to conduct a series of surveys to cover those areas that have never been well covered or have not been covered for decades. This is essential to properly determine survey strategy and effort required to detect trends and to obtain associated information that may help to evaluate threats. The first five such areas have now been covered and analytical work has begun to obtain the necessary information to plan the medium-term programme.

The cruises proposed for 2015 and 2016 will cover two of the few remaining poorly covered areas. The cruise in 2015 will cover the southern region below the 2014 survey area; the expected primary species in this area will be blue, sperm and Bryde's whales. The choice for 2016 will depend *inter alia* on the permit situation for the northern area within the Bering Sea north of the Aleutians as the lead time for permits in Russian Federation waters is up to two years. The final choice of area will depend on the results of this process. The expected primary species in this area will include humpback, fin, sei, gray, and possibly bowhead whales.

The information from these cruises are relevant to the work of a number of the sub-committees within the Committee including IA, BRG, RMP and potentially E. The cruises themselves have been designed by the Committee and are providing valuable baseline information for poorly covered high seas areas. Such information will be valuable for the Committee in future in-depth assessments of a number of North Pacific species.

This is a multi-national programme under the auspices of the IWC that has benefited from the participation of scientists from *inter alia* Japan, USA, Korea, Australia, the UK and the IWC Secretariat in the research, detailed design and planning. The programme is under the control of the Scientific Committee.

4. TIMETABLE

These two cruises will be held for a period of 60 days each in the summer of 2015 and 2016. Cruise reports and preliminary analyses of the data will be submitted to the Scientific Committee meetings following the Cruises.

The data and materials obtained from the cruises will be submitted to the IWC Secretariat within one month of the end of each cruise for: (1) inclusion into the central sightings database (sightings and effort data); (2) the photographic database; and (3) the biopsy database.

Biopsy samples themselves will be stored on behalf of the IWC at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center; they will be transmitted as soon as possible after completion of the cruise given CITES requirements.

As noted earlier, these two cruises are part of an intended long-term programme designed by the Scientific Committee.

5. RESEARCHERS' NAME(S)

The Cruise Leader recommended is Koji Matsuoka (Japan). A US scientist will participate as required under US license conditions for operating in US waters. An open application system will apply for remaining research places. The Secretariat of the IWC will send out notification and details of how to apply and final decisions will be taken by the POWER Steering Group.

6. ESTIMATED TOTAL COST (WITH BREAKDOWN)

Cruise Participants (includes, grant, subsistence, insurance, travel)

Item	In-kind	Request
Cruise leader	*£10,300	£1,500
Scientist 1 (US)	**£6,200	£3,200
Scientist 3		£9,400
Scientist 4		£9,400
Sub-total	£16,500	£25,500

In kind support from *Japan **USA

Approximate Vessel costs

60 days: vessel, fuel, crew	£1.5-2m	£0
Communications		£1,200
Sub-total	£1.5-2m	£1,200

Scientific equipment costs

Maintenance/servicing 4 guns, 4 cameras, logging system		£1,600
Expendables (ammunition and darts for the biopsy guns)		£1,400
Transportation of equipment to IWC		£300
Sub-total		£3,300

Planning and Technical advisory meetings (travel and subsistence)

3 non-Japanese participants for 4 days, 2 for 5 days		£6,000
Sub-total		£6,000

Total

Budget as above for each of two years	£1.5-2m	£36,000
Grand total over two years	£3-4m	£72,000

7. OUTCOMES

(1) Cruise reports submitted to IWC Secretariat and Scientific Committee

(2) Photographs and videos (including photographs for photo-ID)

(3) Biopsy samples (IWC set archived at SWFSC) for no cost

(4) Data validated and entered into the relevant IWC databases

Data, once validated, are freely available under the IWC's data agreements and applications form to access data and samples are available on the IWC website. The Scientific Committee has established a group to review such requests. Data from the related IDCR/SOWER programme have been requested and used in many studies within and outside the Committee.