

SC/J17/O01

New Zealand Statement to the
NEWREP-NP Special Permit Expert Panel
Review Workshop

Government of New Zealand



INTERNATIONAL
WHALING COMMISSION

New Zealand Statement to the NEWREP-NP Special Permit Expert Panel Review Workshop

The Government of New Zealand expresses thanks for the opportunity to comment on Japan's Proposed Research Plan for "New Scientific Whale Research Program in the western North Pacific" (NEWREP-NP).

New Zealand has significant reservations about the design of the NEWREP-NP proposal, from both a scientific perspective, as well as for the purposes of conservation and management. New Zealand considers that NEWREP-NP suffers from the same fundamental problems as JARPN, JARPA II and NEWREP-A. In particular, New Zealand expresses concern about the following aspects:

- 1) New Zealand believes strongly that the objectives listed in this proposal can either be achieved using non-lethal methods, or are unlikely to result in a significant improvement in the management of whales. Furthermore, most of the objectives of NEWREP-NP are substantively equivalent to the objectives of JARPN II. Given that JARPN II was completed in 2013¹ without significant progress being made toward many of its primary objectives, it is difficult to understand why these objectives have not been amended to address the insufficiencies of JARPN II. This suggests to New Zealand that the objective of the NEWREP-NP proposal is not genuine scientific research for the management of whales.
- 2) New Zealand has significant reservations about the effect the proposed level of lethal sampling will have on the J-stock of common minke whales. The NEWREP-NP proposal proposes a level of take which significantly exceeds that which is considered sustainable for this stock. The 2013 RMP Implementation for western North Pacific common minke whales produced catch limits for coastal waters on the Pacific side of Japan which are substantially less than those proposed in NEWREP-NP. The catch numbers (estimated and proposed) for the RMP Implementation and NEWREP-NP are below, highlighting the high numbers proposed under NEWREP-NP:

Sub-Area	Average commercial catch for years 1-10 from RMP Implementation	NEWREP-NP	
		J-stock	Total
7CS + 7CN	0-11	20	127
11	0-6	14	47

These concerns have been dismissed by the proponents based on past commercial catch history for the region and objections to the stock structure hypotheses included in the Implementation. Whether or not these concerns are realistic is

¹ Noting that data was also collected from 2014-16 under the auspices of JARPN II, but has not yet been reviewed.

irrelevant; the fact is that the proposal rejects the best advice of the IWC Scientific Committee and proposes a level of take which significantly exceeds that which is considered sustainable for this stock.

- 3) Analyses of the proposed lethal sampling on O-stock minke whales are insufficient to determine the likely effect of this programme. The analyses were conducted for a lethal sample of $n=107$, which ignores the 33 animals estimated to be taken from the O-stock in sub-areas 7-9. While passing reference is made to an additional analysis which was performed for a lethal sample of $n=160$, no results were shown.

Even if stocks of minke whales were unlikely to be affected by the proposed level of lethal sampling, it is uncertain whether this level of sampling will result in genuine improvement to the performance of the RMP. As this is the basis upon which the entire programme is justified, it is reasonable to expect the proponents to have clearly demonstrated this outcome.

Annex 12 attempts to demonstrate that the proposed programme will have enough statistical power to detect a 30% reduction in recruitment. Notwithstanding the likelihood of such a reduction in recruitment occurring (compared to a much smaller, and therefore more difficult to detect, reduction), Annex 12 merely demonstrates that all of the sample sizes considered for this programme are very unlikely to detect such a reduction within the timeframe of the proposed programme. It is almost certain, therefore, that this programme would fail to detect a large reduction in recruitment during its lifespan, and would require many decades of subsequent sampling to detect a change.

In addition to the comments above, New Zealand also wishes to convey its full support for the statement submitted by Australia (de la Mare, McKinlay). New Zealand wholly endorses the assessments made in the Australian statement.

New Zealand will work with other IWC members in the IWC's consideration of this proposal in accordance with the procedures of the IWC Scientific Committee, the 2014 decision of the International Court of Justice and IWC Resolutions 2014-5 and 2016-2.