

SC/J17/O03

Response to the New Zealand Statement
to the NEWREP-NP Special Permit Expert
Panel Review Workshop (SC/J17/O01)

The NEWREP-NP Proponents



INTERNATIONAL
WHALING COMMISSION

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INTRODUCTION

This document responds briefly to the three aspects of the research plan for NEWREP-NP about which New Zealand expressed reservations. For the reasons given below, the proponents consider that such reservations do not have a strong foundation.

RESPONSE AND CLARIFICATION OF THE CONCERNS IN SC/J17/O01

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.....'*

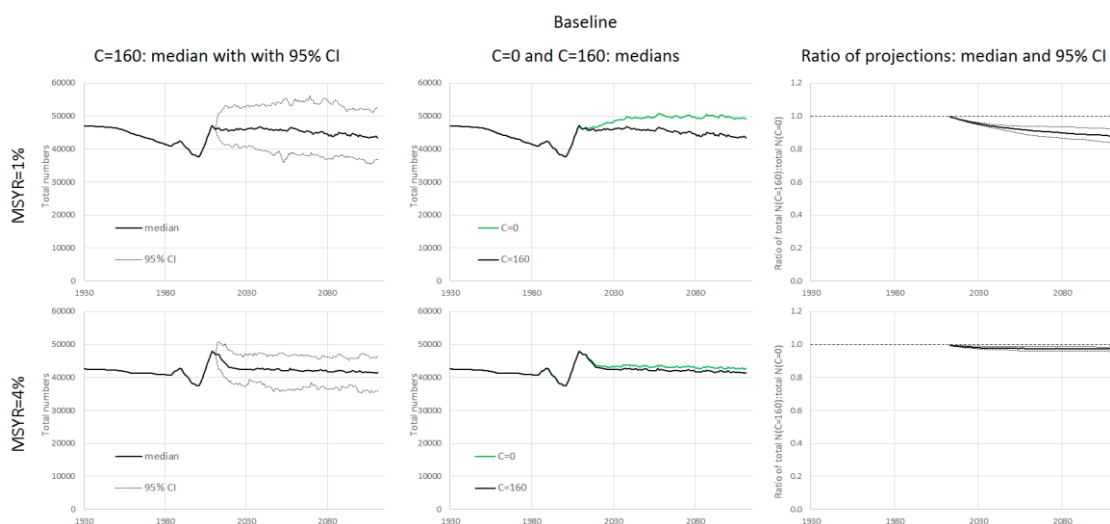
- Lethal sampling is required to obtain information on age and sexual maturity under the Secondary Objectives I (iv) and II (ii), and to obtain information on stomach content and nutritional conditions under Secondary Objectives I (v) and II (v). A detailed analyses of the utility of current non-lethal techniques to fulfill these objectives was made, and the conclusion was that at this stage the available non-lethal techniques cannot replace the lethal techniques (see sections 3.1.1 and 3.2.1 of the research plan). NEWREP-NP will conduct further feasibility experiments to investigate the utility of new non-lethal techniques to fulfill the objectives of NEWREP-NP
- The intent under the objectives I (iv) and II (ii) is to determine whether and how well, using the SCAA methodology to analyse the future age data generated, it is possible to detect changes in recruitment (strictly in the number of recruits per adult female) and other biological parameters. For minke whales this was stated in Annex 12 of the research plan for NEWREP-NP, but the point applies to sei whales as well. Such use of age data is generally recognized (e.g. in fisheries) as important for detection of environmental effects (e.g. related to climate change), improved management, etc. by providing information on recruitment. The original results in Annex 12 did indicate that level of age data to be collected by NEWREP-NP might not lead to enormous improvements in precision, but the refined approach applied in the Addendum to that Annex forwarded subsequently does show that marked improvements are achievable. Nevertheless the key point to emphasise, which the results in Annex 12 show, is that without the age data it is hopeless to expect any ability to detect such effects.
- The research objectives of NEWREP-NP are different from those in JARPNII. In the latter program the main objective was related to feeding ecology and ecosystem modeling. This objective was progressed to the extent possible by the time of the JARPNII final review workshop, and scientists have subsequently been making further progress following the recommendations from that workshop (see Tamura *et al.*, this workshop).

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.....'*

- One of the Secondary Objective under Primary Objective I is to obtain additional data to better elucidate the current status of the J stock. Several lines of argument put forward in the research plan for NEWREP-NP (see Annex 7) suggest that the J stock may not be as heavily depleted as previously considered to be the case.
- The population dynamics analyses carried out to investigate the effect of the NEWREP-NP catches on the J stock indicate that the effect is likely to be negligible (see section 4.1 of the research plan for NEWREP-NP).

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 ignore the 33 animals estimated to be taken from the O-stock in sub-areas 7-9.....'*

- '....in sub-areas 7-9..' should be corrected to 'sub-area 11'.
- As explained in the research plan, the analysis on the effect of the NEWREP-NP catches on the O stock was also conducted for a sample size of n=160 and the results were the same: the effect of the catch on the stock is negligible. The Figures below shows those results.



4) *Other concern: '...It is uncertain whether this level of sampling will results in genuine improvement to the performance of the RMP....'*

- As regards specific results for improvement to the RMP one must await the IWC SC agreeing the next set of *ISTs* for North Pacific minke whale. However, the analogy that follows from Antarctic minke whale analyses should be noted; the proponents have already demonstrated that improvements are possible when age data are included (GOJ, 2016; Kitakado and Butterworth, 2016).

References

Government of Japan. Results of the analytical work on NEWREP-A recommendations on sample size and relevance of age information for the RMP. Paper SC/66b/SP10 presented to the IWC Scientific Committee. June 2016 (unpublished). 24pp.

Kitakado, T. and Butterworth, D. 2016. On the role of age data in the performance of the modified CLA introduced in SC/66b/SP10. Annex T3 of the 2016 IWC SC Annual Meeting Report.