

Editorial

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Technical Reports of the Institute of Cetacean Research (TEREP-ICR-4).

This issue contains eight technical reports and one commentary article. We continue with the series of reports summarizing the research findings on whales and the ecosystem in the Indo-Pacific sector of the Antarctic. This time, Tamura and colleagues focus on the findings of the ecological research on whales and their environment. Outlines of two important whale research programs, including results of the latest surveys, are included in this issue. Isoda and colleagues explain the program 'Japanese Abundance and Stock structure Surveys in the Antarctic (JASS-A)', while Matsuoka explains the IWC-sponsored program 'Pacific Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research (IWC-POWER)'. The basic concept of genetic tagging, and its application for abundance estimates in whales, are explained in the reports by Taguchi and Takahashi, respectively. Works on earplug-based age determination and the estimation of biological parameters have continued, based on the samples and data collected during the former whale research programs under special scientific permit. This time, Bando and Maeda show the results of age determination and biological parameter estimates of North Pacific sei whales. The first Note by Goto and Oikawa describes Japan's system for monitoring of whale products sold in its domestic market through DNA registration, and the second Note by Konishi and colleagues focuses on the preliminary results of satellite-monitored tracking of Antarctic minke and fin whales during the first JASS-A survey.

In the commentary article, Yasunaga presents his views on the use of lethal and nonlethal techniques for the research of large whales.

This fourth TEREP-ICR issue also includes sections to outline the contribution of ICR scientists to international meetings in 2020, as well as their contribution in terms of peer-reviewed publications up to December 2020.

I hope you will find this fourth issue informative and useful.

Dr. Luis A. Pastene
Editor TEREP-ICR
Tokyo, December 2020