

MEDIA RELEASE

Designated Corporation for Scientific Whale Research
THE INSTITUTE OF CETACEAN RESEARCH

December 4, 2020

2020/2021 Japanese Abundance and Stock-structure Surveys in the Antarctic (JASS-A) – Departure of Research Vessel

1. Background

This survey is a continuation of the Japanese government's research program (non-lethal research) aimed at the sustainable use of whale resources in the Antarctic Ocean, and the second research cruise in the Antarctic after Japan's withdrawal from the International Whaling Commission (IWC) on June 30, 2019. This year's research will be conducted by a research vessel in the Antarctic Ocean including a sighting survey, satellite tagging, biopsy sampling and collection of other relevant information on cetaceans.

The objectives of the research are to collect sighting data necessary for the estimation of the abundance of large whales. We will also record natural markings (taking individual identification photos), attach satellite tags and collect biopsy samples for elucidating movement of large whales, detecting breeding area and identifying individuals and stocks, all of which are useful for stock management of those whales. The scientific information obtained from this research will be provided to Scientific Committees of relevant international organizations such as IWC and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). Scientific information obtained through last year's research cruise were provided to the IWC Scientific Committee in May this year and were highly acclaimed.

The research vessel *Yushin-Maru No. 2* is scheduled to depart from Shiogama, Miyagi Prefecture, on December 4, 2020, and return to Shiogama on March 22, 2021 after conducting research in the south of 60 degrees south latitude from the middle of January to early February.

2. Outline of the 2020/2021 Research Cruise

The Institute of Cetacean Research will take the lead in planning, implementing and conducting analyses of data obtained from the survey.

2.1 Main research objectives

The main research objectives of the JASS-A are:

- (1) Study of abundance and their trends of large whale species in the Indo-Pacific region of the Antarctic Ocean.
- (2) Study of the distribution, movement and stock structure of large whale species in the Indo-Pacific region of the Antarctic Ocean.

2.2 Research Cruise Period

From December 4, 2020 to March 22, 2021 (109 days).

2.3 Research Area

Within the western part of one of the IWC management areas, Area III, south of 60 degrees south latitude and between 15 and 35 degrees east longitude (Figure 1).

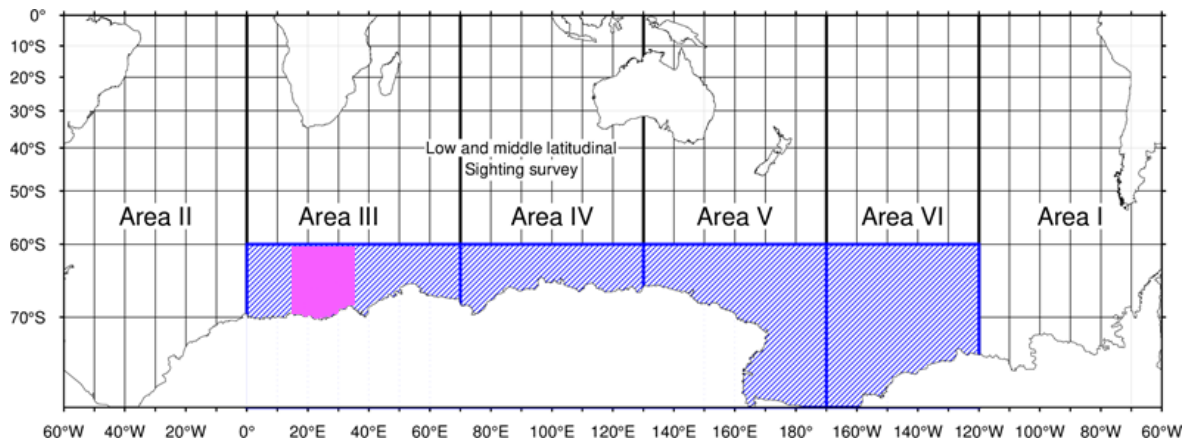


Figure 1. JASS-A Research Area. The 2020/2021 survey area is shown in pink. The blue box indicates all research areas.

2.4 Researchers

Five researchers led by Tatsuya Isoda (Cruise leader, Institute of Cetacean Research)

2.5 Research Vessel

Yushin-Maru No. 2, (747 tons, Captain Nobuo Abe, 17 crews in total)

Twenty-two members led by the Cruise Leader Isoda and the Captain Abe will be on board to engage in the research.

2.6 Implementing body

The Institute of Cetacean Research.

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