MEDIA RELEASE
Designated Corporation for Scientific Whale Research
THE INSTITUTE OF CETACEAN RESEARCH

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2026/2027 Japanese Abundance and Stock-structure Surveys in the Antarctic (JASS-A) – Departure of Research Vessels

1. Background

This survey is the continuation of the Japanese government's research program (non-lethal research) aimed at sustainable use of whale resources in the Antarctic Ocean, and the eighth research cruise in the Antarctic after Japan's withdrawal from the International Whaling Commission (IWC) on June 30, 2019. The scientific validity and the value of this research have been confirmed by the IWC Scientific Committee.

The scientific information obtained from the research is provided to the IWC Scientific Committee, the Ecosystem Monitoring and Management Working Group of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and the Scientific Committee of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) and thus contributes to the appropriate management of whale resources in the Antarctic Ocean. In this year's research, we will continue to conduct sighting surveys, mounting satellite tags and collecting biopsy samples of cetaceans in the Antarctic Ocean.

The two research vessels *Yushin Maru No. 3* and *Yushin Maru No. 2* are departing from the Shiogama Port (Miyagi Prefecture) on 3 December 2026 and scheduled to return to Shiogama Port on 12 March 2027 after conducting non-lethal research in the Antarctic Ocean.

2. Outline of the 2026/2027 Research Cruise

This survey is financially supported by the Fisheries Agency of Japan, and the Institute takes the lead in planning, implementing and conducting analyses of data to be obtained from the survey.

2.1 Main research objectives

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

2.2 Research Cruise Period

From 3 December 2026 to 12 March 2027 (100 days).

2.3 Research Area

Antarctic Ocean.

2.4 Researchers

Yushin Maru No. 3

Four researchers* led by Tatsuya Isoda (Cruise Leader, Deputy Director, Research Department I, The Institute of Cetacean Research).

* One researcher from Chile on board.

Yushin Maru No. 2

Three researchers led by Minato Kawasaki (Researcher, Research Department I, The Institute of Cetacean Research).

2.5 Research Vessels

Yushin Maru No. 3, (742 tons, Captain Hidenori Kasai, 16 crews in total).
Yushin Maru No. 2, (747 tons, Captain Shigeru Nojima, 16 crews in total).

Thirty-nine members led by the Cruise Leader Isoda, Captain Kasai, and Captain Nojima will be on board to engage in the research.

2.6 Implementing Body

Designated Corporation for Scientific Whale Research – The Institute of Cetacean Research.

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