

Foreword

It is a pleasure for me to introduce the fourth issue of the Technical Reports of the Institute of Cetacean Research (TEREP-ICR-4). Following the change in Japan's whaling policy last year, the ICR has been designing and implementing whale research programs based on non-lethal methods. In the North Pacific, ICR scientists have contributed to the design and implementation of national dedicated sighting surveys and of the IWC-sponsored Pacific Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research (POWER) surveys. In the Antarctic, ICR scientists designed the new program called 'Japanese Abundance and Stock structure Surveys in the Antarctic' (JASS-A), and the first survey under this program was completed successfully during the 2019/20 austral summer season. In addition, ICR scientists commenced the collection of biological samples and data based on whales caught for commercial purposes in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone since 1 July 2019.

Consistent with its stated objectives, TEREP-ICR describes and reports on the process, progress, and results of technical or scientific research, or the state of technical or scientific research programs conducted by the ICR, including those commenced recently.

ICR scientists were preparing for their participation in several national and international meetings planned for 2020. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic affecting the world, these meetings were either cancelled or replaced by virtual meetings (or e-mail discussions), and our scientists participated in those virtual meetings and discussions as much as possible, given the circumstances.

Similar to previous TEREP-ICR issues, TEREP-ICR-3 was widely distributed to approximately 120 individual scientists from Japan and 30 foreign countries. It was also distributed to approximately 190 research institutions (including universities, research institutes, public libraries, museums and aquariums), both in Japan and foreign countries. As a result of disseminating information on ICR's research activities through the TEREP-ICR, an increasing number of international scientists are showing interest in conducting research in collaboration with the ICR. Based on this, I believe that TEREP-ICR is making contribution toward achieving its stated objectives. Furthermore, TEREP has been a good opportunity for our scientists to compile and summarize their research, conducted over the years, as a prior step before submitting their works for peer-review publications.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the reports published in TEREP are now indexed in the Japan Science and Technology Agency's J-GLOBAL, which aims to link, expand and spark scientific information in Japan and the world.

I sincerely hope that this fourth issue of the TEREP-ICR will continue to contribute to an increased understanding of the technical and research activities conducted by the ICR among the national and international scientific communities.

Dr. Yoshihiro Fujise
Director General ICR
Tokyo, December 2020