

To: All press agencies, Indonesia
From: the Secretariat of the International Whaling Commission

Whale Research Ship Coming to Bali, Indonesia

The research ship, *Kaiko Maru* will enter the Indonesian EEZ on 21 February 2010 after completing the 2009/2010 International Whaling Commission-Southern Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research (IWC-SOWER) cruise. The 60-day research cruise in Antarctic waters started when the ship departed from the outside of the Indonesian territorial water, on 23 Dec 2009. After all four researchers and research equipments are transferred to Benoa by tugboat Abasa No.2, the *Kaiko Maru* will depart to her home port in Japan on the same day without a portcall.

The research conducted during the cruise was part of a 32-year study of the whale populations of the Southern Ocean directed by the IWC's Scientific Committee, that has so far included three circumnavigations of the Antarctic continent. The ship was provided to the IWC by the Government of Japan and the research was conducted by a team of four scientists of three nationalities. Keiko Sekiguchi (Japan) is the cruise leader, with Kazuki Fukutome (Japan), Laura Morse (USA) and Cornelia Oedekoven (Germany), completing the research team.

The research programme is unanimously supported by the 88 member nations of the Commission. The research does not involve the capture or killing of animals, and is conducted independently of any whaling operations.

Up until now, although collecting data for all whale species observed, the main focus of the cruises has been to obtain data to: (1) estimate the population size and distribution of Antarctic minke whales, primarily south of 60°S; and (2) develop an 'at sea' method to distinguish between the 'true' and 'pygmy' subspecies of blue whale.

The main objectives for the 2009/2010 cruise were to:

- 1) undertake a sightings survey in collaboration with an Australian Antarctic Division aerial survey designed to investigate and compare minke whale densities from within the pack ice and from the ice-free water north of the pack ice;
- 2) continue research on the priority species: southern right, blue, fin, and humpback whales (biopsy sampling and photo-identification and additionally for blue whales identification of sub-species).

Observations of whales during the entire cruise included 9 fin, 1 sei, 38 southern right, 355 humpback, 152 minke, 41 sperm, 57 southern bottlenose whales and 91 killer whales. Skin samples for genetic analyses were collected from 22 southern right whales and 21 humpback whales. Photos for identifying individuals included images of 26 southern right whales and 42 humpback whales.

Results of the study will be presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission to be held in Morocco in May-June 2010.

For additional information, please see the IWC website (<http://www.iwcoffice.org>) or contact one of the following:

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