

Cruise Report of the Japanese Whale Research Program under Special Permit in the Antarctic (JARPA) Area IV and Eastern Part of Area III in 2001/2002

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ABSTRACT

The fifteenth year of the Japanese Whale Research Program under Special Permit in the Antarctic (JARPA) was conducted in Area IV and eastern part of Area III (Area IIIE) from 29 November 2001 to 9 March 2002. One sighting vessel (SV), three sighting and sampling vessels (SSVs) and one research base ship were engaged in the research. The SV covered 5,970.2 nautical miles of searching distance and made primary sightings of 745 schools / 1,751 individual of Antarctic minke whales *Balaenoptera bonaerensis*. Three SSVs searched a total of 13,797.2 n. miles and sighted 1,122 schools / 2,623 individual of Antarctic minke whales as primary sightings. Antarctic minke whale was the most dominant species and followed by humpback whale *Megaptera novaeangliae*. Antarctic minke whale occurred in extremely high density in the East-south stratum and the Prydz Bay in Area IV. Sightings of humpback whales were much higher than those of Antarctic minke whales in the north strata and the West-south stratum in Area IV. Distribution of humpback whales showed clear segregation from Antarctic minke whales except for some areas near the ice edge where both species were highly concentrated. The sighting number for Antarctic minke whale was a match with the highest record observed in the previous research in Areas IIIE and IV. The sighting number for both humpback whale and fin whale was higher than the past JARPA survey records. The recent increase of humpback whales may result in inter species competition with Antarctic minke whale. A total of 493 Antarctic minke whales was targeted for sampling resulting in the catch of 440 individuals (110 from Area IIIE and 330 from Area IV). A total of 52 biopsy samples was obtained from humpback, blue, fin and right whales by the SV and SSVs. The SV conducted an oceanographic survey using a passive acoustic system, Electric Particle Counting and Sizing System (EPCS), CTD and XCTD. One of the SSVs also conducted an oceanographic survey using EPCS.

KEYWORDS: JARPA, CRUISE REPORT, ANTARCTIC MINKE WHALE, HUMPBACK WHALE

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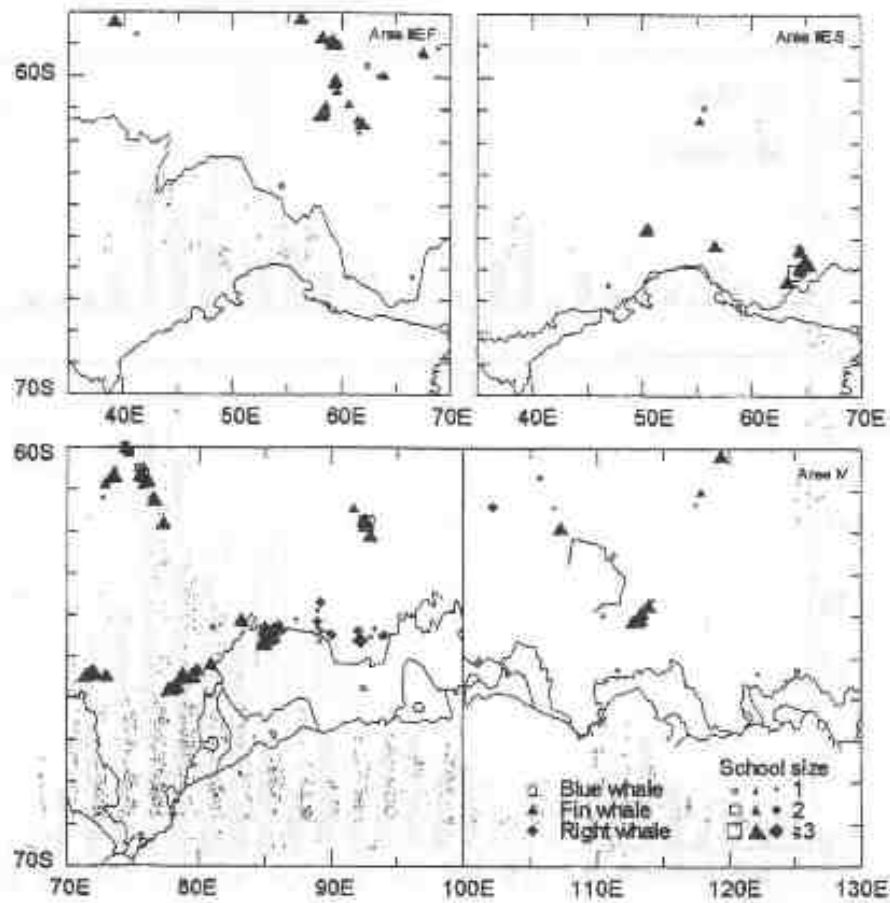


Fig. 6. Distribution of sightings of blue, fin and right whales sighted by SV and SSVs in 2001/2002 JARPA.

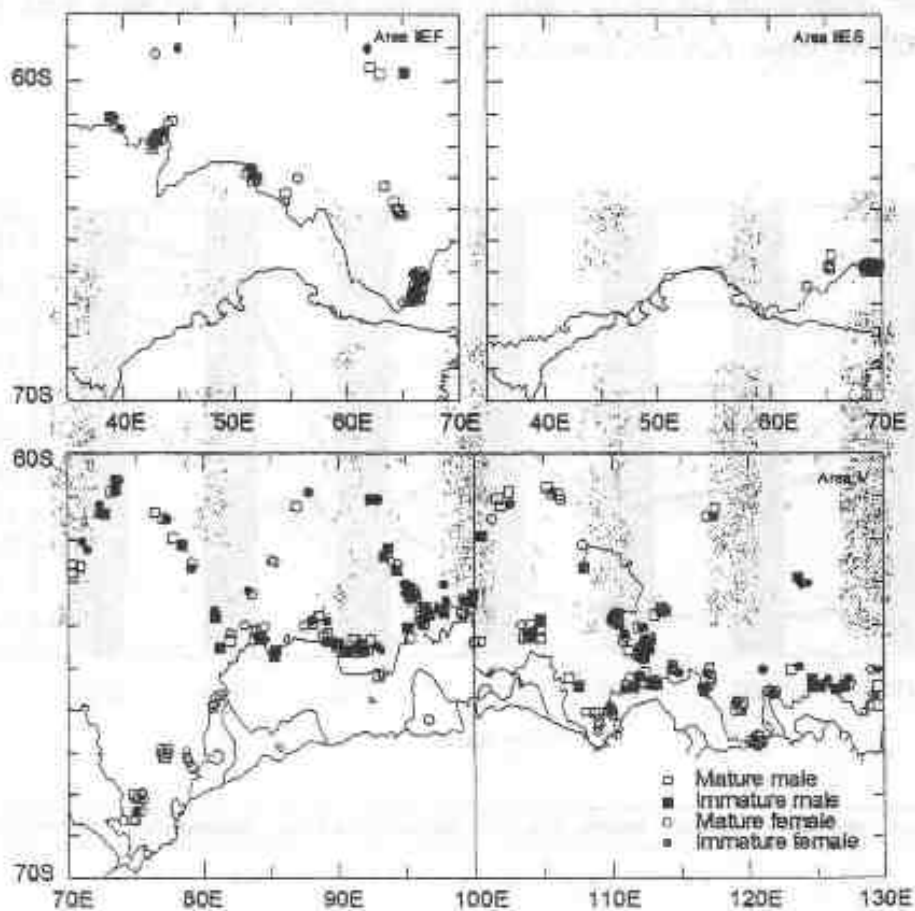


Fig. 7. Sighted position of sampled Antarctic minke whales by sex and reproductive status in 2001/2002 JARPA.