

The Pew Whales Commission Meeting

FLAD Headquarters, Lisbon
9th & 10th February, 2009.



Special permit and coastal whaling

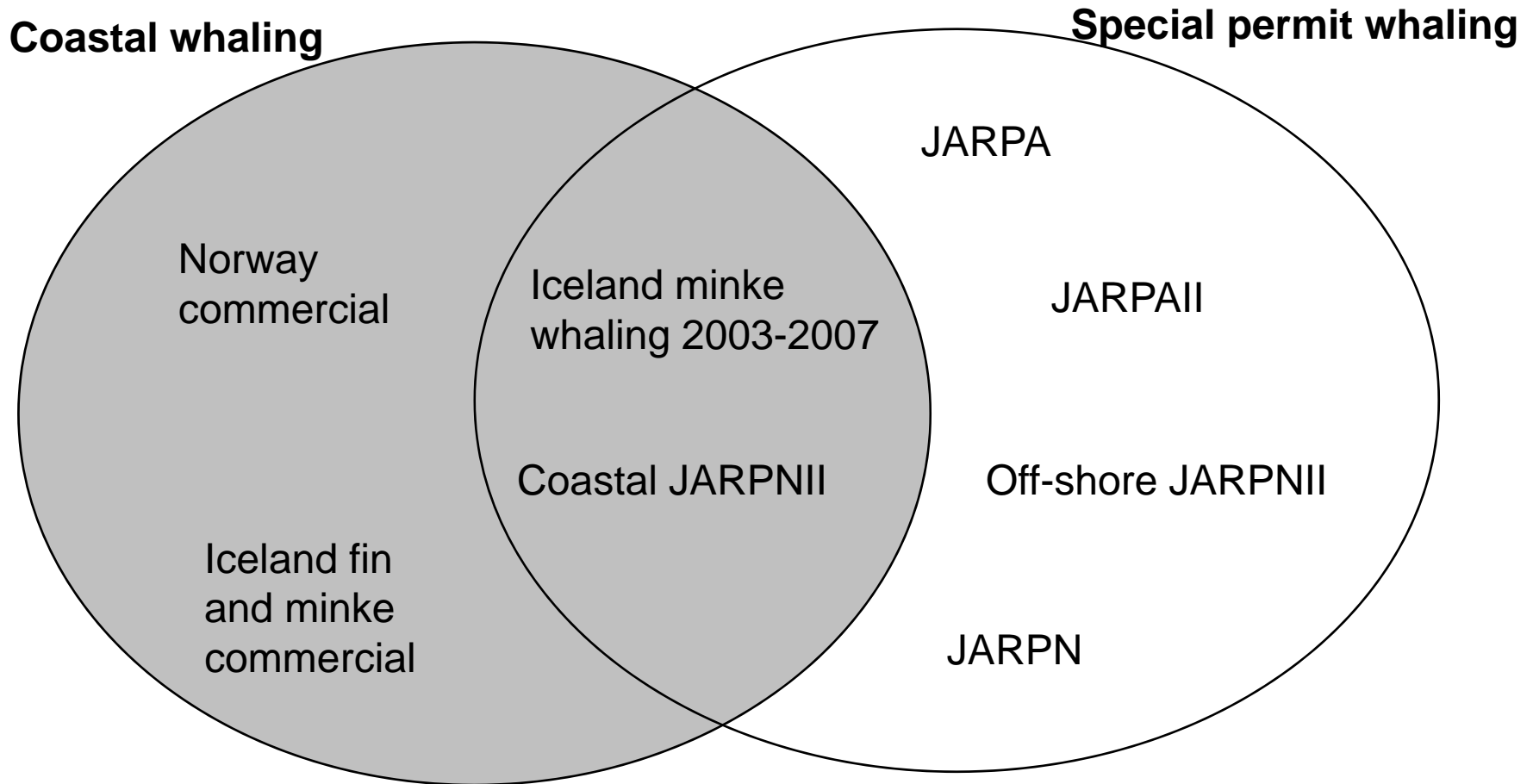
Presenter: Russell Leaper

The IWC and Sustainability

- SWG says long-term sustainability of whale stocks is an objective
- RMP is closely related to sustainability
- The RMP has been extensively tested by simulation and incorporates feedback mechanisms and uncertainty into the procedure
- IWC agreed in 1994 that no commercial whaling be allowed except where catch limits have been calculated according to the RMP
- SWG now proposing the IWC Scientific Committee provides *ad hoc* advice on catch limits without the safeguards of the RMP

Recent whaling by Iceland, Japan and Norway

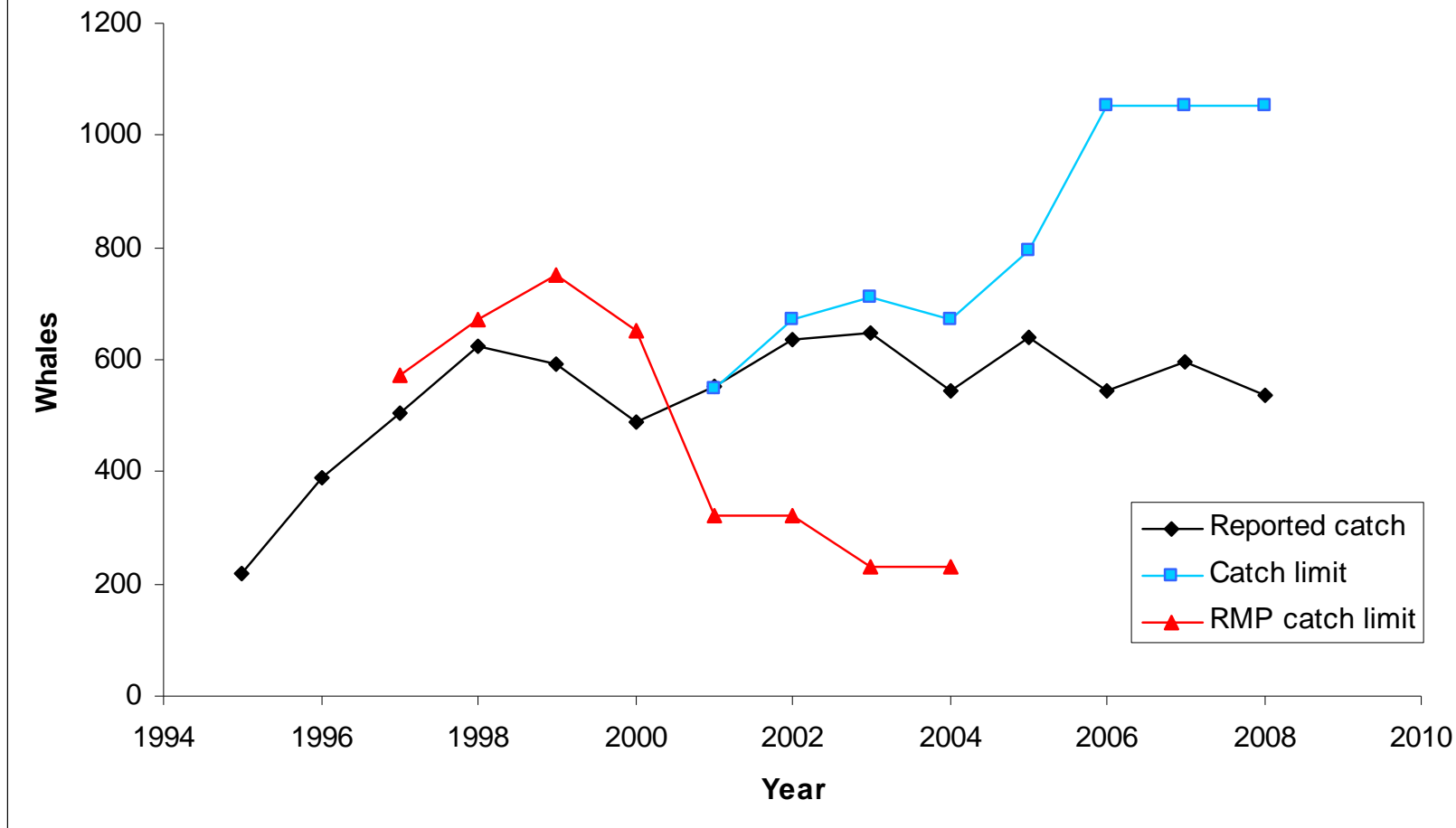
The IWC has not defined coastal whaling. In this presentation, coastal whaling is taken to be all whaling that does not involve a separate factory vessel.



'Coastal' whaling by Norway

- Sets catch limits for minke whales unilaterally without involving IWC Scientific Committee
- Norway used the agreed version of the RMP till 2001 - but has since tuned it to justify higher catches.
- 2004 Government policy: *“Seek to increase the harvest of minke whales within the framework of the IWC. If this goal proves to be impossible to achieve in the longer term, the Government may consider whether Norway should support management of minke whales through NAMMCO.”*
- Norway is seeking major changes to the RMP to allow higher catches. To be discussed at IWC61.
- Desired catch level determines the choice of management procedure rather than vice versa

Catches of minke whales by Norway since 1995



Norwegian whaling between 1988 and 1992 was all special permit, 1993-1994 combined commercial and special permit, and since 1995 has been all commercial under objection to moratorium.

RMP catch limits from Papastavrou and Cooke (2006)

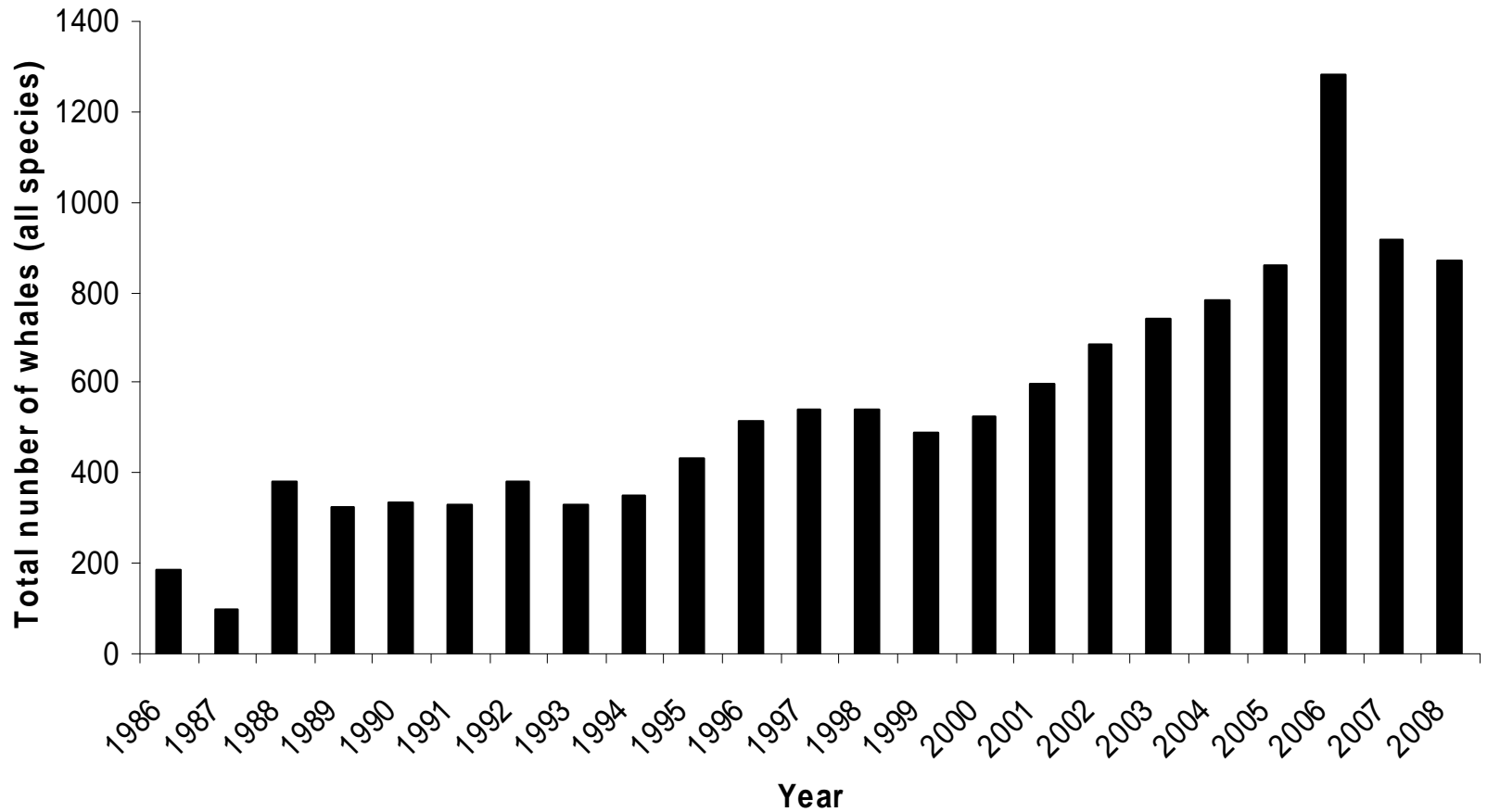
Whaling by Iceland

1986-1989	Special permit whaling for fin and sei whales
2003-2007	Special permit whaling for 200 minke whales (proposed takes of fin and sei whales were put on hold)
2006	Resumed commercial whaling having rejoined IWC in 2002 with a reservation to the moratorium. Since then, 7 fin whales and 44 minke whales have been taken.
2009	Situation now highly uncertain due to changes in government but annual catch limits of 100 minke and 150 fin whales for five years have been issued

Special permit whaling by Japan

JARPA 1987/88-2004/05	- 6800 Antarctic minke whales
JARPA II (ongoing)	Annual target up to 935 Antarctic minke whales and 50 fin whales (proposed take of 50 humpback whales has been put on hold)
JARPN (1994-1999)	- 498 North Pacific minke whales
JARPNII (ongoing)	annual target of 220 North Pacific minke (100 off-shore, 120 coastal), 50 Bryde's, 100 sei and 10 sperm whales

All special permit catches since 1986



Antarctic catches are included in the later year i.e. 2004/05 season is included in 2005

Discussions of special permit whaling in IWC Scientific Committee

- One of the most difficult issues for the Scientific Committee e.g.
 - whether the whaling addresses critically important research needs
 - whether more information could be gathered by non-lethal research
- JARPAII and JARPNII: new programmes started before the SC had reviewed the previous results
- Opinions of the scientists involved were also included in the reports of reviews of results and new proposals

IWC review of JARPA in 2007

6800 minke whales over 18 years in the Southern Ocean.

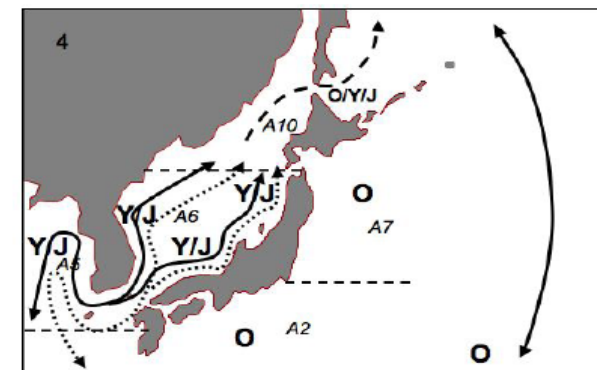
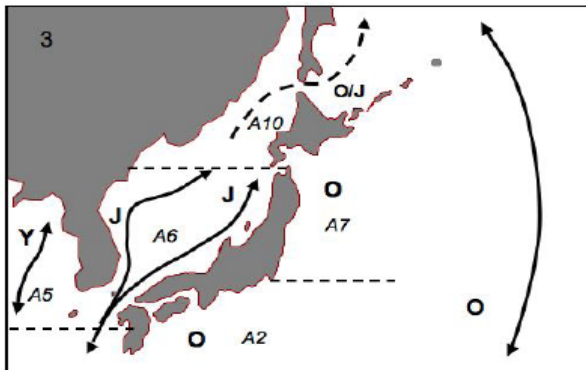
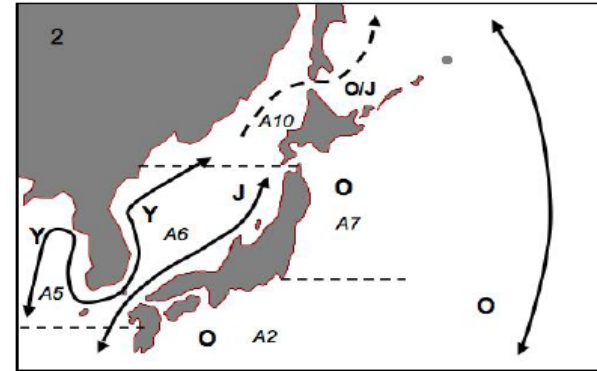
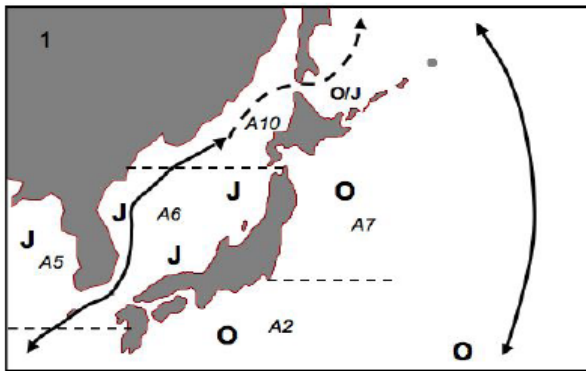
The review agreed that the main specific objectives **not** met:

- Estimates of population trend arising from JARPA were uninformative
- Natural mortality rate effectively unknown
- Stomach contents analyses had not narrowed the estimates of consumption rates

Minke whales in the NW Pacific

- SC recognises four stock structure hypotheses: at least two recognised stocks (O and J). Population structure may be much more complex
- O stock is more numerous and occurs off-shore and in the Sea of Okhotsk
- J stock mainly in the East Sea/Sea of Japan. Declared a Protection Stock in 1983. Currently depleted, threatened by bycatch and whaling
- Sub-populations have complex mixing and migration patterns which has made Implementation of RMP difficult, but SC discussions have progressed over more than 10 years

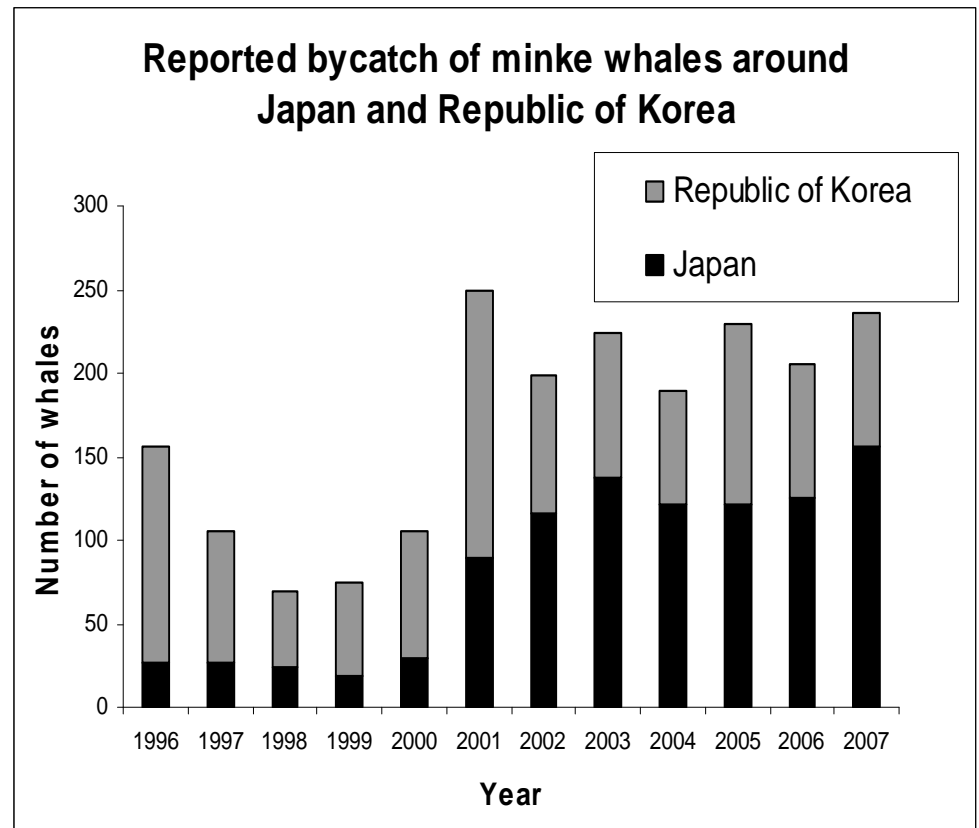
Stock structure hypotheses agreed by Scientific Committee related to J-stock



Data from Area 7 for 2001-2006 indicated 53% of whales within 3 nm of the coast were J-stock decreasing to around 8% from 20nm off-shore (SC/59/NMP5)

Bycatch

- A global problem. Very difficult to get accurate estimates of the numbers of whales involved.
- Market surveys in South Korea indicated around double the number of whales entering the market than were reported.
- Japan argues bycatch reporting is accurate.
- 2001 new regulations led to fourfold increase in reported bycatch



Management advice from IWC Scientific Committee

- RMP provides the basic framework which the Scientific Committee can use to provide management advice
- The Scientific Committee has repeatedly expressed concerns about being asked to provide *ad hoc* interim advice
- Committee has not conducted recent assessments for some populations e.g. western North Pacific sei whale stock last assessed 1974.
- Coastal whaling focussed around specific ports raises additional conservation concerns for localised depletion (e.g. minke whales return to the same areas over several years)

Current situation for minke whales in NW Pacific

- 2007: around 445 North Pacific minke whales reported entering the markets of Japan and Korea
- Around half likely to be J stock
- The Scientific Committee has repeatedly expressed its concerns over the continued high levels of reported catches from J-stock and other coastal populations
- Japan reluctant to share genetic data