

Foreword

Remarkable evolution in cetacean studies in recent decades owes much to major journals that have made significant contribution to the development of modern cetology: Discovery Reports, published by the National Institute of Oceanography in the United Kingdom, and Norwegian Whaling Gazette in Norway, as well as The Scientific Reports of the Whales Research Institute in Japan.

The Scientific Reports of the Whales Research Institute was first published in 1948, a year after the Whales Research Institute was established. Aiming to share valuable research findings and scientific knowledge worldwide, the publication was formatted in English since its beginning, quite an ambitious attempt in Japan still recovering from the devastation of World War II.

Since its first publication, a total of 246 scientists contributed 419 scientific papers to The Scientific Reports of the Whales Research Institute. It is widely acknowledged and appreciated that these scientific papers were the foundation for the development of cetacean studies worldwide, and in today's terms, it was a research journal that had a significant impact factor, or high number of citations. Regrettably, however, The Scientific Reports of the Whales Research Institute was discontinued in 1988 with the 39th volume after the institute was reorganized into the Institute of Cetacean Research.

In the 30 years since then, various types of journals on cetacean studies have been published globally, each offering different perspectives on scientific research outcomes. As for Japan, no research journal matching The Scientific Reports of the Whales Research Institute in its quality has been published. It is probably because many domestic cetologists have sought to publish their papers in international research journals based outside Japan.

As the global environment surrounding the issue of whaling became increasingly complex, we have observed a shift in publishing policies among these journals, rejecting papers whose findings are based on specific research methods such as lethal sampling. Because of this, no small numbers of papers submitted by biological scientists using samples collected through lethal surveys, even just for some parts, have been denied proper reviews. While we agree that animal ethics should be given high priority when writing a research paper, if a paper, the research method of which is allowed under domestic and international rules, is rejected, it is a decision made beyond scientific judgment.

Our new journal for cetacean population studies intends to follow the scientific policy of The Scientific Reports of the Whales Research Institute, that is, to contribute to global development of cetacean studies. As long as submitted papers conform to scientifically-accepted animal ethics, we do not make distinctions based on research methods. At the same time, to maintain the journal's neutrality in the complex global environment surrounding whaling issues, the journal will be published from a newly organized committee, rather than as a bulletin type scientific report from a specific research institute. The title of the new journal will be Cetacean Population Studies to be abbreviated CPOPS, and we aim to keep our door wide-open for researchers worldwide, contribute to the scientific development of resource studies for marine mammals especially focusing on cetaceans, and nurture many aspiring scientists.

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