

Report of the Working Group on Hunting Methods

Fourth Meeting, Copenhagen, 23 January 1996

The Working Group met at the offices of the Greenland Home Rule Government, Copenhagen on 23 January 1996. The meeting was chaired by Amalie Jessen (Greenland) and also attended by Jústines Olsen (Faroe Islands), Kristján Loftsson and Arnór Halldórsson (Iceland) and Egil Ole Øen (Norway). The Working Group accepted the attendance of Steinar Bastesen (The Norwegian Minke Whalers' Association) and Hansi Kreutzmann (The Association of Hunters and Fishermen in Greenland).

Jens Paulsen (Assistant Secretary) acted as Rapporteur.

1. Welcome by the Chairman

The Chairman welcomed the members of the Working Group to its fourth meeting.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda, as contained in Appendix 1, was adopted.

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

This item was included on the Agenda with reference to the Rules of Procedure for the Working Group, Article II, Paragraph 2.

Olsen (Faroes) was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman for the next two years. It was noted that a new Chairman will be elected in 1997.

4. Review of the Third Working Group Report

The Chairman reviewed the report of the Third Meeting of the Working Group. The question of wastage of meat with use of the penthrite grenade in Greenland was raised. It was noted that the question had been discussed at the Third Meeting of the Working Group, and it was also noted that the Working Group on Inspection and Observation had discussed the matter at its third meeting (see NAMMCO/6/MC/3: 2-3).

It was agreed that the relevant section of the report of that meeting should be circulated to the members of the Working Group on Hunting Methods.

5. Update of Reference List

The Assistant Secretary briefly reviewed the "References on Hunting Methods", compiled in connection with the Second Meeting of the Working Group. The Chairman requested the members of the group to inform the Secretariat of further relevant articles which should be added to the list. An updated reference list is included as Appendix 2

Olsen submitted the unpublished paper, "Note on the pilot whale killing method" that had been prepared for the meeting by Jústines Olsen and Dorete Bloch (see also Agenda Item 6). Olsen also mentioned that a paper on the influence of abiotic factors prior to drives, drive techniques and humane

killing of pilot whales was under preparation.

6. Update of development of the work on hunting methods by each member country

The Faroes

Olsen presented a note in Danish on developments in the Faroes on killing methods. Olsen informed the Working Group about a new regulation on Grind (No 55 of 16 May 1995), of which the Secretariat has received a Faroese and a Danish version. Olsen confirmed that an English version was under preparation and would also be sent to the Secretariat.

The new regulations are more specific in defining the rules governing the pilot whale drive. Furthermore, rules on the killing methods have been amended according to results from research carried out by Olsen.

The above mentioned research is described in the paper, "Note on the pilot whale killing method", which Olsen discussed, also circulating photographs from the research at the meeting.

Olsen also explained the function of a new gaff that is under construction and which allows the hunters to secure pilot whales without wounding them by inserting a blunt hook into the blowhole of the animal. Olsen informed the Group that the gaff has been tested in a few cases, and that experiences thus far have been positive.

Olsen further explained that research has shown that as the blood supply to the brain in pilot whales is not through the carotids, as in terrestrial mammals, but through large arteries encircling the spinal cord that enter the cranial cavity, the most efficient way to kill the whales is to make a deep cut behind the blowhole and sever the spinal cord. The whale will be paralysed and die of anoxia within 5-10 seconds.

Furthermore, Olsen mentioned that monitoring times-to-death has been undertaken in connection with three pilot whale drives.

Norway

Øen (Norway) informed the Working Group of the following:

- *Norwegian Defence Research Establishment* now produces penthrite grenades. The institute will produce a new batch of grenades during spring 1996.
- Minke whale gunners must pass a course every year, including a shooting test for harpoon guns and for rifles. The regulations for the harpoon test were changed in 1994 while those governing the rifle test were changed in 1995.
- New regulations are under preparation related to hygiene standards on board whaling vessels.
- Other regulations that will be presented at a later stage include rules on maintenance of harpoon guns. A checklist for maintenance of harpoon guns has been drawn up in this connection.
- New sights for the harpoon guns are under consideration with the intention of increasing the precision of shooting.
- A fully standardized propellant charge has been developed in 1995 for the 60 mm harpoon gun. It will be tested on land-based proving grounds in 1996 before being certified for hunting.
- In 1995 an informal reference group with four whalers and Øen was established by the Norwegian Minke Whalers' Association as a forum for discussions of technical issues related to hunting equipment.

Iceland

There was nothing new to report from Iceland at this meeting on developments in hunting methods.

Greenland

Jessen informed the Working Group about the implementation of the reparation program for the 63 harpoons in use. The program is described in detail in the Report of the Third Meeting of the Working Group (NAMMCO/5/8). The Greenland Home Rule Government covers 2/3 of the costs involved, while the hunters cover 1/3. A total of 63 harpoon guns are under reparation, 8 of which have been sent to the manufacturer, Kongsberg, in Norway.

Furthermore, it was reported that a maintenance manual is now being prepared and that the Home Rule Government is considering producing a video tape as a supplement to the manual.

The Home Rule Government, KNAPK (the Hunters' and Fishermen's Association) and KANUKOKA (The Association of Municipalities in Greenland) are in the process of establishing a model for reducing the rifle hunt in line with the completion of the reparation program.

Jessen informed the Working Group that the Home Rule Government is preparing a document describing the improvements that have been made in Greenland regarding whaling equipment. The document is expected to be presented at the 1997 meeting of the IWC.

Øen commended the work done in Greenland to improve the standard of the harpoon guns. Øen considered that expenditures in connection with the use of penthrite grenades in Greenland were rather large, and questioned whether it would be possible to reduce potentially unnecessary links in the distribution chain.

Jessen informed the Working Group that 25% of the price goes to the agent (KNI) in Greenland and that transportation costs are added on top of this. The result is a dramatic increase in the total price of the grenades, compared with the price in Norway.

7. Possible tasks of the Working Group

The Chairman noted that until this stage the Working Group had mainly functioned as forum for the exchange of information. She raised the question as to whether the function of the group should be expanded according to the purpose of the Working Group.

Halldórsson (Iceland) responded that it could be a relevant task for the Group to discuss possible standards of equipment in connection with similar forms of hunting of marine mammals that occur in two or more member countries.

Øen mentioned the possibility of compiling a list of hunting equipment and methods used in member countries as a basis for which to consider potential coordination initiatives.

It was agreed that the Secretariat should compile a list of existing rules on equipment, hunting and hunters. The list would then be used as the basis for a discussion in the Working Group to create a greater degree of mutual knowledge which would be an important improvement. The discussions might then lead to coordination initiatives, potentially including sealing as well as hunting of fin, minke and pilot whales.

8. Outcome of 1995 IWC Workshop on Whale Killing Methods

The Working Group discussed the IWC Workshop on Whale Killing Methods that was held in Dublin, 23-25 May 1995.

Jessen reported that Greenland had taken steps to improve its documentation of developments on

hunting equipment. The documentation mentioned above under item 6 was initiated on this basis.

Øen informed the Working Group that the IWC Workshop on Whale Killing Methods had recognized and agreed that the criteria used to indicate death in whales were incomplete and under some circumstances misleading. The Workshop identified the need for better criteria for determining the time of onset of permanent insensibility in whales. The Workshop also recommended continued cooperation between scientists from the member countries of Norway and Japan to refine the design of penthrite grenades as far as possible. USA and Denmark are also involved with this work.

In this connection it was suggested that the Secretariat should monitor developments of this kind in international fora, and that circulation of material would be appreciated.

Jessen furthermore informed the Working Group that the Home Rule Government, in co-operation with a Danish standardisation institute (*Dansk Standard*) and an animal protection group (*Dyrenes Beskyttelse i Danmark*), has implemented scientific research on seals caught in nets. The aim of the research is to clarify the physiological cause of death.

9. Any other business

Jessen informed the Working Group that Working Group members had been participating in the meetings of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). The question of trapping of semi-aquatic animals is under consideration in Technical Committee 191. A technical Working Group has been established to consider testing standards of traps.

It was agreed that members of the Working Group should distribute information of interest to the Working Group to other members and/or the Secretariat.

10. Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Working Group should be held prior to the Seventh Meeting of the Council - allowing sufficient time to prepare a report to the Council.

11. Adoption of report

The final report was adopted by correspondence.

*Fourth Meeting of the
Working Group on Hunting Methods*

Agenda

1. Welcome by the Chairman
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Election of Vice Chairman
4. Review of the Third Working Group Report
5. Update of Document List
6. Update of development of the work on hunting methods by each member country
7. Possible tasks of the Working Group
8. Outcome of 1995 IWC Workshop on Humane Killing Methods
9. Any other business
10. Next meeting
11. Adoption of Report

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