

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

Copenhagen, Denmark September 6, 1999

The Committee met at the Home Office of the Faroe Islands in Copenhagen on September 6, 1999. Attending the meeting were Jústines Olsen, Faroe Islands (Chairman), Amalie Jessen, Greenland, Kristjan Loftsson, Iceland, Egil Ole Øen, Norway, Kirsti Larsen, Norway, and Grete Hovelsrud-Broda from the Secretariat.

1. And 2. OPENING PROCEDURES

The Chairman of the Committee, Jústines Olsen, welcomed Committee members to the meeting. The present meeting was called in order to a) review the report (both the Norwegian and the English versions) from the Hunting Method Workshop held in Nuuk, Greenland, February 1999, b) to review updated information from member countries and c) to discuss the future work of the Committee.

The draft agenda was adopted and the General Secretary, Grete Hovelsrud-Broda, functioned as rapporteur.

In connection with Item 6 on the agenda, the Chairman pointed out that it had been agreed last year that the group should be referred to as the Committee, rather than the Working Group as it was previously called.

3. UPDATES ON HUNTING METHODS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES

The Chairman invited members of the Committee to provide updated information on developments with respect to hunting methods in their respective areas and types of hunting. An updated list of laws and regulations in member countries, as well as a list of references on hunting methods, had been provided in advance, as NAMMCO/HM/doc-1 and NAMMCO/HM/doc-2, and some additions to these would be made after the meeting. Updated versions are contained in Appendices 1 and 2.

Greenland

Jessen (Greenland) reported that the Home Rule Government has given dispensation to hunters for the use of a thinner harpoon line in the rifle hunt. The new thinner lines are stronger than the old thicker lines. However, the ultimate break strength of the thinner line is not known, although this type of information is important to the hunters in order for them to follow the regulations.

There have been a number of incidents where the grenades have not detonated when fired. The Greenland Trade Company (KNI Pilersuisoq), who sells the grenades, does not provide a warranty for these. All coastal communities have been informed about the possibilities for encountering unexploded grenades. The government and the KNI are planning to hold courses for the hunters in handling harpoon grenades. KNI Pilersuisoq

has prepared a brochure, written in a clear language, with handling instructions. This brochure is included with the purchase of the grenades.

A manual, in the Greenlandic and the Danish languages, has been developed by KIS, the vessel inspection agency, describing how to renovate and maintain harpoon guns. The folder has been distributed to the harpoon gun owners.

The government has increased the subsidies for the grenades with 50 percent since 1998, including all shot grenades.

The minke whale hunt has been slow this year, and there are fewer whales caught compared to last year. One fin whale has been caught. Royal Greenland and now NuKa Inc., which process Greenlandic foods, have enough fin whale meat stored from last years catches and do not have the capacity to buy more from the hunters. This is in part because people prefer fresh to frozen meat.

The hunters are satisfied with the new Danish-made flensing knives.

Faroe Islands

Olsen (Faroe Islands) reported that there are no new regulations or executive orders in connection with pilot whaling in the Faroe Islands, since the last update in 1998.

This year, a new longer knife, developed by a whaler for use in the pilot whale hunt, has been tested on 8 – 10 animals. The knife was found to work well.

Island

Loftsson (Iceland) explained that there is presently no whaling in Iceland and therefore no updates to report. In connection with seal hunting Loftsson referred to the document contained in the report from the Hunting Method Workshop (NAMMCO/99/WS-13).

Norway

Øen (Norway) reported that minke whaling had been slow this year, mostly due to bad weather conditions. Of a quota of 753 minke whales, 589 were caught. Two Greenpeace demonstrations stalled the hunt for one of the vessels. In one incidence the demonstrators positioned themselves, in a rubber boat, between the harpooned whale and the whaling vessel. The demonstrators claim that the whaling crew shot at their boat. The case will be tried in the courts in October, this year.

A new regulation this year stipulates that whaling captains are responsible for instructing the crew in how to process meat, and in the hygiene on board the whaling vessels.

The minimum calibre, permitted in whaling, has been changed from 9-mm to 9.3-mm. It is expected that 9.5-mm (.375) will eventually replace 9.3-mm as the minimum calibre.

Norway has since 1997 been experimenting with a new grenade, which is safer to use and with fewer blind shots. This year, five vessels were equipped with this grenade, and it is

possible that production will begin this fall. A problem with the current grenades is that they do not always fire. There are no time warranties for these grenades, because it is not possible to check whether they have been used properly or not.

Tests of the new grenade show that if they miss the target, they can be fired into the water up to 12 times, and still remain functional. With proper use these grenades may last 50 years or more.

In comparing the new and the current grenades, Øen concluded that the field trials in 1997-99 showed that the new grenades perform better than the current ones. The cost of production may be lower for the new, but with the added development costs; it is likely to be priced at the same level as the current grenades.

Several of the 60mm guns have been rebuilt with new firing mechanisms. These were exchanged six years ago, but did not function properly. The defunct triggers are being replaced by mechanisms from old Remington rifles.

In response to Jessen's inquiry regarding prices, Øen informed the Committee that the retailers in Greenland and Norway pay a similar price for the grenades. The difference in the prices to the users in the two countries may be attributed to the high profit margins the importers and retailers in Greenland operate with.

Larsen (Norway) explained that the seal hunting regulations in Norway are updated yearly basis. The most recent regulations are included in Appendix 5.

The sealing season was not successful this year. Boats from both Vestisen and Østisen returned with small catches. A research vessel was permitted to catch part of the quota for Østisen. The Norwegian inspectors aboard the vessels reported of no violations.

A discussion is underway focussing on the weak economy of the ship owners. The general feeling is that something must be done to improve the economy of sealing.

4. THE WORKSHOP ON HUNTING METHODS, NUUK, 1999

The Committee discussed the report (both the English and the Norwegian version) from the Hunting Method Workshop in Nuuk. The additions made to the report during the meeting are included in the final version. The Committee **agreed** that the recommendations prepared by the Workshop would be included as an item in the report.

The Committee also **agreed** to include a list of marine mammal names in several languages, as an appendix to the report.

The Committee **agreed** that it was obvious from the discussions at the Workshop in Nuuk that further clarification and increased knowledge about various ammunition types and ballistics would be necessary. See Item 6 in this report, for further elaboration on this topic.

5. IWC-WORKSHOP ON WHALE KILLING METHODS 1999

Norway and Greenland were both participating in the Workshop held at the IWC meeting in Grenada, in May 1999.

Egil Ole Øen and Amalie Jessen reported to the Committee from the IWC Workshop.

6. FUTURE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In considering plans for future work, the Committee discussed ballistics, weapon types and ammunition. These are topics that have proven to be of great interest and a cause for confusion in discussions pertaining to hunting methods. The Committee **agreed** that it was evident from the Workshop in Nuuk in February 1999, that basic knowledge and understanding of weapon-types, ammunition and ballistics is lacking.

The Committee **agreed** to pursue this topic further with the goal of increasing the understanding of ammunition types and ballistics for the hunters, administrators and other personnel.

Further planning is necessary before the Committee will be able to propose how the topic can best be addressed. The question is whether the topic should be addressed in the form of a Workshop, a Seminar or through other venues.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No concerns were raised under items.

8.

ADOPTION OF REPORT

The final report of the meeting was adopted by correspondence.