



REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

Copenhagen, Denmark, 29 August 2000

The Committee met at the Home Office of the Faroe Islands in Copenhagen on August 29 2000. Attending the meeting were Jústines Olsen, Chairman, (Faroe Islands), Mogens Møller Walsted (Greenland), Kristjan Loftsson (Iceland), Egil Ole Øen, and Kirsti Larsen, (Norway), Grete Hovelsrud-Broda, Tine Richardsen and Charlotte Winsnes from the Secretariat.

1. And 2. OPENING PROCEDURES

The Chairman of the Committee, Jústines Olsen, welcomed Committee members to the meeting. The draft agenda was adopted and members of the Secretariat were appointed as rapporteurs.

Two additional documents were presented:

- Report of the Committee's meeting on 6 September 1999
- Recommendations from the NAMMCO Workshop on Hunting Methods held February 9 – 11, 1999

3. UPDATE ON HUNTING METHODS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES

A list of laws and regulations in member countries (NAMMCO/HM-doc 1), and a list of references on hunting methods (NAMMCO/HM-doc 2), had been provided in advance. Updated versions are contained in Appendices 1 and 2.

Faroe Islands

Olsen (Faroe Islands) reported that there had been one new regulation in 2000 dealing with whaling. One new area where whaling can take place has been added. The seabed in the bay has been cleared in order to make it suitable for a drive hunt. The whale bay has been preliminary approved.

Øen (Norway) inquired about recent experiences with the new knife. Olsen explained that it is being developed as a new killing technique, intended to sever the blood supply to the brain and the spinal chord in one single incision and it seems to be very efficient, but it requires precision. The users must therefore be trained before using it. The plan is to give a demonstration to the hunters and then to develop an instruction manual. Because this knife requires a high level of precision it is important to proceed slowly in order to avoid faulty use.

Greenland

Large Cetaceans

Møller Walsted (Greenland) informed the Committee that the Greenland Home Rule Government has implemented a new legislation on hunting. However, the new hunting legislation passed in 1999 will not have a different impact on marine mammals compared to the legislation of 1997 it replaces. The Greenlandic Government has in principle decided that the rifle hunt of large whales will be further reduced in the future. In the long-term, guidelines are being developed that will provide compensation for the hunters who change from rifle to harpoon. The KNAPK does not consider this a positive development. One concern is that hunters from small villages do not have alternative

hunting methods. The government is planning a mini seminar with the hunters, where hunting techniques and equipment will be discussed.

Small Cetaceans

There are currently no changes in the regulations for small cetaceans. Efforts are being made to reduce the catches of beluga. In the short-term, beluga hunting will be limited to hunters with "erhvervsjagtbevis". While in the long-term restrictions will be enforced on this category as well. This will be discussed in the recently formed Hunting Council (Fangstrådet). This Council gives advice to the Greenlandic Government and consists of members from KNAPK (the hunting and fishers association), KANUKOKA (National Association of Municipalities), TPAK (sports hunters and fisher association) a representative from the Department of Industry and one from the Department of Health and Environment of the Home Rule Government. Apart from these permanent members to the Hunting Council, a number of representatives from other involved authorities and interested parties participate in the meetings. This latter group is not entitled to vote. The Hunting Council functions in relation to a wide range of issues pertaining to large mammals. The terms of reference for the Council would be circulated to the Committee members.

Møller Walsted further explained that there had been an increase in pilot whale sightings and that hunting regulations pertaining to these whales are being considered.

Iceland

Iceland had nothing to report since whaling is presently not taking place in this country.

Norway

Whaling

The minke whale hunt in Norway has been extended to the end of August, and the analysis of the results has not yet started. So far 487 whales had been taken.

This year all whaling vessels have been equipped with the new penthrite grenade, "Hvalgranat-99" and there have been no reports of any equipment malfunctioning. Last year (1999) five vessels were equipped with a prototype of this grenade. There was a positive marked difference between boats using the prototype of the new grenade and those using the "old" type as the new penthrite grenade showed an efficiency of instantaneous kills of 72% while the "old" only reached 58%. Preliminary analysis from the 2000 hunting season shows that the rate of instantaneous killed animals might be even higher this season. A few boats have reported more than 90% instantaneous kills using the new grenade and it therefore seems evident that further improvements in killing efficiency will depend on the hunters' competence and the quality of the rest of the hunting equipment used.

Øen (Norway) reported on an accident where a 50-mm Kongsberg harpoon cannon had fired accidentally during the process of loading. This incident was the second accidental firing with this type of harpoon guns over the last years. The canon will be carefully examined by weapons experts and when the expert report is completed, a meeting will be held between the weapons experts, the hunters' organisations and the producers of the canons to discuss how to prevent such accidents in the future. Recognising that it must be the hunters who have the full responsibility for the functioning of their equipment, it is important to also recognise that the Kongsberg canon has a complicated construction and most are very old. Some regulations should therefore be formalised with respect to the handling of the weapons.

Sealing

Meat has always played a secondary role with respect to the seal hunt in Norway. New efforts aim to alter this with developing methods of processing seal on board. And work to develop new regulations pertaining to the processing of meat and the hygiene on board has started.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chairman asked the member countries to present the status of each country's follow-up to the recommendations resulting from the NAMMCO Workshop on Hunting Methods (Nuuk, 9 –11 February 1999) and adopted by the Council in the 9th NAMMCO Annual Meeting (Akureyri, 1999).

There were two recommendations pertaining to the Faroe Islands.

1. The first pertained to the new blunt hook. In the long-finned pilot whale drive hunt, the new blunt hook for securing the animals is increasingly being used. A proposal regarding the production of 500 such hooks is being presented to the politicians for consideration this fall. One issue is the funding of the production of such equipment.

2. The other recommendation pertained to the killing of stranded northern bottlenose whales. Olsen (Faroe Islands) explained that adequate rifles and ammunition have been ordered and are expected to arrive in the Faroes shortly. The Faroe Islands has no tradition in rifle hunting. The rifles will therefore be tested on the heads of already dead long-finned pilot whales.

Øen (Norway) commented that a description of the shooting process and an autopsy of the carcass would be useful for others in order to understand how the ammunition and rifle function on such animals. He pointed out that no precise anatomical description of the northern bottlenose whale exists today. When the next stranded animal is killed it is therefore important that an autopsy is performed and external features like eyes, blowhole etc. is recorded as co-ordinates for future killing.

There were a number of recommendations pertaining to hunting of small cetaceans in Greenland. Møller Walsted (Greenland) reported that an update would be forthcoming. He was new to the job and had not yet been able to investigate the follow-up on the recommendations.

Recommendation 4. Baleen whale hunting

a) Øen (Norway) informed that the new whale harpoon, adjustable for each individual harpoon canon is being commercially produced and its use is increasing.

b) Regarding Greenland's use of rifles in minke whale hunting Møller Walsted (Greenland) explained that a seminar is planned focusing on the rifle hunt. There are however conflicting interests regarding this type of hunting in Greenland.

One of the arguments is economic, because the grenades are very expensive in Greenland and priced at a much higher level than in Norway. In an effort to assist the planned transition from rifle hunting to the use of harpoon canons, the Hunting Method Committee considered whether the harpoon grenades could be sold at the same price in Greenland as in Norway. (See also item 4c in the Workshop Recommendations).

In conclusion the Chairman pointed out that the follow-up of the recommendations from the workshop would be an item on the agenda for the next committee meeting.

5. FUTURE WORK

Weapons and Ammunition Workshop

With reference to the discussion at the last Committee meeting the members of committee agreed to organise a workshop focussing on the following.

Draft Program

Goal of Workshop

The goal would be to increase the understanding of weapon types, ammunition and ballistics for hunters, administrators and other personnel, and to develop a set of minimum requirements pertaining to weapons and ammunition types with regard to the different species.

Target Groups

The target groups of the workshop would be hunters, government officials and the Hunting Method Committee members.

Topics for the Workshop

- 1) An introduction of different killing-methods that in general pertain to whales and seals
- 2) Weapon types and ammunition in combination with terminal ballistics
- 3) The impact of weapon types and ammunition on different marine mammal species
- 4) Safety for the hunters with respect to weapon use.

Results from Workshop

In order to obtain the goals of the workshop it is imperative to secure the broadest possible involvement from the hunters. One possibility would be to initiate a process prior to the workshop where hunters and their organisations engage in an internal process addressing the issues.

Following the workshop there should also be a process whereby hunters in general benefit from the findings of the workshop. One method of disseminating the result would be through a report translated into the relevant languages in the NAMMCO member countries.

Practical Arrangements

Attendance: approximately 40-60 participants

Workshop language: Nordic

Venue: Reykjavik, Iceland, September/October 2001, 2-3 days duration

Tentative budget: NOK 100,000

6. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Jústines Olsen and Egil Ole Øen were re-elected as chair and vice-chair respectively.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Øen (Norway) informed the committee that the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science had received an inquiry from Mannetron, a US company, producing a 5 meters static display Killer Whale. They are looking for internal organs needed as originals to produce silicon organ replicas. Norway does not hunt killer whales and such organs are not available in Norway. The inquiry was therefore distributed to the Committee members in case other member countries could provide the company with such organs.

8. ADOPTION OF REPORT

The final report of the meeting was adopted by correspondence.