

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

The Committee on Hunting Methods met on 23 April 2009 at Hotel Odinsve in Reykjavik. Present were Egil Ole Øen, chair and Hild Ynnesdal (Norway), Jústines Olsen, (Faroe Islands), Ole Heinrich and Helga Jakobsen (Greenland), and Christina Lockyer and Charlotte Winsnes from the Secretariat. Kristjan Loftsson (Iceland) was unable to attend the meeting.

1. Introductory Remarks, Adoption of Agenda and Appointment of Rapporteur

The Chair of the Committee, Egil Ole Øen, welcomed Committee members and especially Helga Jacobsen who met for the first time. The agenda was adopted with the addition of item 7.1 "A request from Japan for the evaluation of killing data in the whale hunt". Charlotte Winsnes acted as rapporteur.

2. Updates on hunting methods in member countries

The lists of references on hunting methods (NAMMCO/HM-April 2009-2), and laws and regulations in member countries (NAMMCO/HM-April 2009-3) were updated (see Appendices 1 and 2 of this report).

Faroe Islands

Olsen (Faroe Islands) reported that there had been no changes in regulation on pilot whale hunting. It was also noted that for the first time since 1927 in a calendar year there had been no pilot whale hunting in 2008.

Greenland

Heinrich (Greenland) reported that two new Executive Orders regulating the taking of large whales in Greenland had been implemented:

- No. 9 of 17 April 2009 on Hunting of Large Whales, replacing No. 10 of 13 April 2005 on Hunting of Large Whales, and
- No. 10 of 17 April 2009 on Reporting of Hunting and Strike of Large Whales, replacing No. 13 of 3 April 1998 on Reporting of Hunting and Strike of Large Whales.

The changes made are mainly of a technical nature in order to include the taking of Bowhead Whales.

Iceland (information under this agenda item was added after the meeting)

The Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture has given quotas for fin and minke whales for 2009. The Ministry has also issued new regulations for the hunting of whales.

Norway

Ynnesdal (Norway) reported that the Act of 3 June 1983 no. 40 relating to Seawater Fisheries had been replaced by a new Act of 6 June 2008 no. 37 relating to the management of wild living marine resources. It was noted that the new Act did not represent any changes with

respect to regulating the marine mammal hunt. She furthermore reiterated that quota regulations on seal and whale hunting in Norway are revised every year.

3. Expert Group Meeting on best practises of killing of seals

The Expert Group on best practises in the hunting and killing of seals was held in Copenhagen 24 – 26 February 2009.

The Council at its 17th annual meeting in September 2008, tasked the Committee on Hunting Methods to organise an Expert Group on best practices in sealing giving the following terms of reference: .

- *The work should build upon the knowledge and experiences already gathered in previous workshops organised by the Committee on Hunting Methods and possible new developments emerging since the last workshop held in 2006.*
- *The work should be undertaken in a focussed group of specially invited experts with experience in seal hunting practices both from NAMMCO member countries as well as from other sealing nations and communities.*
- *The expert group will critically assess different seal hunting methods within their contexts, addressing such questions as:*
 - *The use of specific hunting methods and equipment in particular settings*
 - *Training requirements for hunters*
 - *Control and monitoring of hunting methods*
 - *Research needs to improve the basis for further assessment*
- *The expert group will develop recommendations on best practices based on state of the art in sealing today and identify where and how specific improvements can be made.*
- *As background information for the work of the expert group, the Secretariat, in cooperation with the Committee on Hunting Methods, will prepare a collation of relevant information and recommendations on seal hunting methods from previous NAMMCO workshops and other relevant and up-to-date sources of information on sealing practices.*

In setting up the Expert Group, the Committee on Hunting Methods had identified a small group of qualified persons with extended experience and knowledge in general and/or marine mammal specific biology, physiology, anatomy and pathology and effects of different methods of killing animals in slaughterhouses, as wild game or in hunting.

The Committee had delimited the scope of work of the Expert Group as originally outlined by Council, to seal hunting today in the North Atlantic including the Baltic Sea. Moreover the Committee had decided that walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus rosmarus*) hunting would not be considered, and that the issues of control and monitoring would not be discussed as these fell outside the competence of the Expert Group.

All members of the Expert Group were invited in a personal capacity as experts in fields related to the issue of killing mammals. No stakeholders or NGO's were invited because

focus was on the scientific and technical aspects of the killing process and not on the politics of sealing i.e. whether seals should be killed or not.

Prior to the present meeting a draft report had been distributed including all submitted comments from members of the Expert Group.

The Committee did the final editing of the report incorporating all comments. The Committee expressed its satisfaction with the process and commended all participants for their valuable inputs.

The report will be circulated to Council after which it will be made available on the NAMMCO web page and also distributed to interested parties.

4. Workshop on "Handling, processing and utilisation of hunted marine mammals"

In March 2007, the Council approved the Committee's idea to organise a workshop (WS) with the working title "Handling, processing and utilisation of hunted marine mammals" with the following terms of reference:

- To maximise the quality and quantity of products obtained from hunting through exchange of information regarding handling, processing and utilisation.
- To make recommendations which are relevant to the workshop topic.

The dates for the WS have been set to 3 – 5 November 2009 in Sandefjord, Norway. Meeting venue and hotel accommodation has been booked at the Hotel Atlantic, and an announcement is placed on the NAMMCO web site. Glenn Williams (NTI Inc.) has accepted to act as co-chair.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that applications for funding had been sent to NORA (NOK 50 000) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NOK 100 000). It is anticipated that both bodies will make their decision on funding before the summer. It was agreed to sponsor possible participation from Chukotka. The WS language will be English and there will be no interpretation to other languages.

The Committee discussed the preliminary programme for the WS in detail. It was agreed to put more emphasis on the general introductions, and on product development and to reduce the number of species discussed and have one introduction per species. The chair of the WS, Jústines Olsen, and the Secretariat, were tasked with developing the programme further based on the Committee's discussion.

5. Election of officers

Egil Øen and Kristján Loftsson were both re-elected for the period 2009 and 2010 as chair and vice-chair.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting in the Committee will be prior to the NAMMCO Annual Meeting in Tromsø 8 - 10 September 2009.

7. Any other business

7.1 A request from Japan for the evaluation of whale killing data

Hiroto Murase (Japan) presented the document “ JAPAN: Progress Report on the Killing Method of Whales in the Second Phase of the Japanese Whale Research Program in the Antarctic Sea (JARPAII) and the Northwestern Pacific Ocean (JARPNII)” by Hajime Ishikawa D.V.M., JAPAN. The document was submitted to the Committee from the Fisheries Agency of Japan requesting a review of the killing data.

The NAMMCO Council in 2007 agreed that the Committee on Hunting Methods would undertake a review of submitted whale killing data should Japan forward such a request. In response to the request from Japan and in line with the approved procedure the Committee on Hunting Methods agreed to organise a working group to evaluate and assess the Japanese data. The working group will consist of members of the Committee extended with expert participation from hunters and scientists such as veterinarians, physiologists and biologists with an expertise and experience in whaling, killing methods and animal welfare issues. It is anticipated that the working group will have a duration of two days.

The Chair of the Committee will contact Dr Ishikawa with the aim of defining data needs and timing of the working group. Based on this dialogue the Chair in cooperation with the Secretariat will then make a proposal to be presented to Council at its meeting in September 2009.

7. Approval of the Report

The report was approved by correspondence on 3 June 2009.