

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

The Committee on Hunting Methods met on 13 February 2008 from 9:30 to 17:30 in the Faroe Islands Representation in Copenhagen. Present were Egil Ole Øen, Chair and Hild Ynnesdal (Norway), Jústines Olsen, (Faroe Islands), Ole Heinrich and Amalie Jessen (Greenland) (Jessen attended agenda items 5 to 7), Kristjan Loftsson (Iceland), and Christina Lockyer, Mario Aquarone and Charlotte Winsnes from the Secretariat.

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

The Chair of the Committee, Egil Ole Øen, welcomed the Committee members to the meeting. The agenda was adopted with the addition of item 7.1 "A request from the Heads of Delegation meeting regarding a possible follow-up on best practises in sealing. Charlotte Winsnes acted as rapporteur.

2. Updates on hunting methods in member countries

The lists of references on hunting methods (NAMMCO/HM-February 2008-2), and laws and regulations in member countries (NAMMCO/HM-February 2008-3) were updated (see Appendices 1 and 2 of this report).

Faroe Islands

Olsen (Faroe Islands) reported that there had been one addition to the regulations for pilot whale hunting in the Faroe Islands, Executive Order No. 87 of 20 September 2007 on protections of whales. The idea is to prevent whales which have or will be tagged with satellite transmitters to be harvested.

Greenland

Heinrich (Greenland) reported that there have been reduced sightings of minke whales in East Greenland. As a consequence the hunters have requested the Home Rule Government to give permission to catch fin whales as they are sighted frequently. This request has so far been denied due to lack of adequate hunting equipment.

Iceland

Loftsson (Iceland) had no new information to report under this item.

Norway

Ynnesdal (Norway) noted that in Norway quota regulations on seal and whale hunting are revised every year, and that the regulations for 2008 are still under preparation.

The "Blue Box" system - the new electronic monitoring system for electronic surveillance of the Norwegian minke whaling (for description see the 2005 Committee report) seems to be well functioning. An evaluation of the system will be undertaken after the 2008 season at which time the system has been operative for three seasons.

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

Prior to the meeting the Chair had asked Jústines Olsen to prepare some points for discussion (appendix 3). Also the report from the last meeting was presented as background documentation.

The Committee agreed on the following:

- ❖ The Workshop will be held in Sandefjord, Norway at Hotel Atlantic in week 45 (2 – 6 November) or 46 (9 – 13 November) in 2009. This was also the venue for the 2nd workshop on ballistics. Sandefjord is fairly easy to reach (Torp airport and Gardemoen + train). Various artefacts that might be useful to exhibit may be found at the Whaling museum and also at the hotel itself which has a renowned display of hunting objects.
- ❖ The WS will be a three day event with focus on whales and seals and a mixture of lectures and discussions.

Day 1:

- General introduction – common aspects for all types of hunt, how are hunting conducted – generally what kind of impact the various hunts have on meat and skin quality - cultural differences in treatments. Important to emphasis that this overview of hunting methods should only take note of the impact a certain method has on the product.
- how and where to slaughter the animal from a hygienically point of view

Day 2:

Species specific sessions running parallel or in sequence:

- Whales; large and small
- Seals; young or grown up

Day 3:

Conclusions and Recommendations

- ❖ Olsen's programme input to be a possible introduction lecture at the WS
- ❖ Heinrich mentioned that Greenland could nominate a person who could talk about product development.
- ❖ If possible it would be very good to have visual documentation on topics such as treatment of meat from seals and whales. Some raised the issue that power point presentations often took priority to filming because of the time control aspect.
- ❖ The Steering Committee for the WS will be the Hunting Committee. In addition Glenn Williams from Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. will be asked to participate in the planning and implementation of the WS, as he did in the last two workshops.
- ❖ The WS will be open as in previous workshops. Special invitations will be sent to Chukotka and Alaska, and in general all participants from earlier meetings will be notified. The Secretariat will prepare a list of possible participants that will be circulated to the Committee for comments.
- ❖ The WS has been allocated NOK 100 000 from NAMMCO but will need to seek external funding.
- ❖ The next meeting in the Steering Committee will be a telephone meeting in April, and it is envisaged that a second telephone meeting will be held before the summer holidays.

- ❖ The Chair in cooperation with the Secretariat will prepare a more detailed programme for discussion prior to the next telephone meeting.

4. New Hunting equipment in the Faroes Islands

At its January 2007 the Committee expressed its interest in receiving a report describing and evaluating the new "knife" and the method used in the Faroes Islands. Document HM-February/2008-4 " *Development and testing of new whale killing equipment in Faroese whaling*" had been prepared by Olsen for consideration by the Committee.

The Committee congratulated and commended Olsen for his successful work on developing this new tool. They recommended that more work be done with respect to documentation on method and use before a possible publication. It was noted that although the new killing equipment had been developed from the traditional knife it is no longer a knife but a spinal lance. It was generally thought that the spinal lance represents an improvement with respect to killing time and suffering.

5. Bowhead whales Future

At the last IWC meeting in 2007, Greenland was allocated a quota of 2 bowhead whales. The bowhead was put under total protection in 1938 thus Greenland has no up to date experience on hunting of this species. To ensure the best possible hunt Greenland has sent a request for advice to Alaska where they do hunt the bowheads, and in addition asked for NAMMCO's input through the Committee on Hunting Methods on conceivable methods for the hunting of bowhead whales.

Jessen distributed a draft project outline for consideration and information. The project outline is intended for the next IWC and gives a thorough description of background, biology, legal frame in the past, today and in the future (laws and regulations), hunting methods, utilisation, health aspects and also references to the bowhead recovery program in Nunavut and Alaska.

Greenland's intention is to use a harpoon canon with a fin whale grenade. The Committee pointed out that there are two main target areas on the bowhead whale: neck and thorax?, and that one should always shoot on the side and never from behind the animal. It was recommended to initiate i. e. a 3-year trial period in which the hunting methods could be developed. Furthermore it was agreed that it would be important to identify a small number of vessels (2 – 3) with a license to hunt the quota under monitored and controlled circumstances and thus gain the necessary experience to adapt the best possible hunting methods.

The Committee agreed to review the draft plan for hunt when this was ready.

6. Next meeting

The next ordinary meeting will be held in Copenhagen in January/February 2009.

7. Any other business

7.1 Evaluation of best practices in sealing

The Heads of Delegation had forwarded a request to the Committee to identify main issues for a possible Workshop on best practices in sealing. The work should build upon the knowledge and experiences already gathered in previous workshops organized by the Committee and possible new developments emerging since the last workshop held in 2006.

The Committee was also asked to consider whether this should be an open forum or an expert meeting with attendance by invitation only. Tentatively NOK 50 000 were set aside for this work.

The Committee agreed to suggest focusing the work on best applicable methods, i.e. to critically assess the various hunting methods within their context. Given the legal framework is the preferred hunting method and equipment the best possible practice in a particular setting? Consideration should also be given to control and monitoring aspects as well as training of the hunters. The work should end up with recommendations on best practices based on state of the art in sealing today.

The Committee further recommends that the work be undertaken by a smaller more focused working group rather than through a workshop. Participation would be by invitation only and would encompass hunters and experts from all NAMMCO member countries. In addition invitations should be sent to sealing nations like Sweden, Finland and Canada.

The first step would be for the NAMMCO Secretariat to collect all relevant information from the previous workshops and draft a summary report to be used as a working document. Manuals and reports from other sealing counties will also be included.

Tentatively a first meeting of the Working Group was scheduled in connection with NAMMCO 17 in September 2008.

8. Approval of the Report

The report was approved through correspondence on 31 March 2008.

**Appendix 3: Workshop on handling, processing and utilisation of marine mammals:
points for programme planning
Prepared by Jústines Olsen**

The Hunt itself:

Reasons for hunting:

- human consumption
- other (skin, teeth)

Human use:

- Hunting technique:
 - o Shooting
 - o Driving
 - o Netting
 - o Duration, speed, stress and physical conditions
- Hunting methods:
 - o Rifle, shotgun, number of shots, target place on the animal
 - o Harpoon/grenade
 - o Knife/spear
- Hunting site:
 - o Open sea, ice, land, beach
 - o The site's hygienic status
- Bleeding:
 - o Immediately after death
 - o Later than at death
 - o Lack of bleeding
- Evisceration:
 - o Sequence of events after killing, transport
 - o The locality's facilities
- Parting/cutting:
 - o Facilities on site
 - o Hygiene
 - o Instruments
- Preservation:
 - o Shelf life (durability)
- Preparation:
 - o Cooling
 - o Freezing
 - o Drying
 - o Salting
- Transfer of risk (and responsibility):
 - o Hunt for private use
 - o Hunt that is transferred to others