

## **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS**

The Committee on Hunting Methods met on 31 January 2007 from 9:00 to 18:00 in the Faroe Islands Representation in Copenhagen. Present were Egil Ole Øen, Chair and Hild Ynnesdal (Norway), Jústines Olsen, (Faroe Islands), Ole Heinrich and Fernando Ugarte (Greenland), Kristjan Loftsson (Iceland), and Christina Lockyer 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, especially Hild Ynnesdal who participated for the first time. The draft agenda was adopted and Charlotte Winsnes was appointed as rapporteur.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, expressed deep regrets in connection with the recent death of Knud Nielsen. Nielsen was a good colleague and had, under his able chairmanship, contributed to the success of the first two Workshops organised by the Committee in 1999 and 2001.

### **2. Updates on hunting methods in member countries**

The lists of references on hunting methods (NAMMCO/HM-January 2007-2), and laws and regulations in member countries (NAMMCO/HM-January 2007-3) were updated (see Appendices 1 and 2 of this report).

#### **Faroe Islands**

Olsen (Faroe Islands) reported that there had been no changes in the regulations for pilot whale hunting in the Faroe Islands. The new longer knife had been used several times during 2006 with great success. It is now up to the authorities to revise current regulations to also incorporate the knife, if this is desired.

The Committee saw it as beneficial for NAMMCO to receive a report describing and evaluating the method and the knife, and recommended that such work be undertaken by the Faroe Islands.

#### **Greenland**

Ugarte (Greenland) reported on the new Executive Order no. 20 of 27 October 2006 on protection and hunting of walrus, replacing no 7 of 26 February 1998. The new Executive Order is more restrictive and also gives direct references to the hunting method i.e. the animal should be harpooned before firing the final lethal shot. It was noted that the new Executive Order was inspired and influenced by the work carried out by the Committee on Hunting Methods. As such it is very much a result of the Workshop held in 2004, and has also proven to be in line with the recommendations that evolved from the recent November 2006 Workshop.

In December 2006 the quota on Narwhal was raised by 100 animals resulting in a total quota of 385 animals for the 2006/2007 season. The question of the Narwhal quota is a

difficult issue in Greenland as the hunters and the scientists hold opposing views on the abundance estimates of the Narwhal stocks hunted by the Greenlanders.

A new Executive Order on seal hunting is underway and will probably be ready in 2007. Heinrich (Greenland) reported that there is an application for consideration at the “Landsstyret” for sealing at the ice-edge in March/April.

Attention was also drawn to the information brochure “Management and utilisation of seals in Greenland” that had been published in November 2006 by the Ministry. This had been produced in conjunction with the work that was done to counteract the suggested import ban on seal products that members of EU had tried to introduce in 2006.

### **Iceland**

Loftsson (Iceland) informed the Committee that 60 minke whales had been taken in 2006 under the scientific whaling programme that had started in 2003. Furthermore in connection with Iceland’s decision to resume commercial whaling on 17 October 2006, a quota of 9 fin whales and 30 minke whales was given until 31 August 2007 of which 7 fin and 1 minke whale had been caught so far.

No new regulations have been issued regarding method and performance. The method used in the minke whale hunt is the same as in Norway. In the fin whale hunt the grenade is the same but with 100 gr explosives as compared to 30 gr when used in the minke whale hunt.

Iceland has taken steps to modify the minke whale grenade to also embrace fin whale hunting. The Committee commended Iceland for undertaking this development work that would be beneficial for all fin whale hunting in the North Atlantic.

### **Norway**

Ynnesdal (Norway) noted that in Norway quota regulations on seal and whale hunting are revised every year, and that the regulations for 2007 are still under preparation. No changes of substance are foreseen though for 2007.

The only anticipated new regulation in 2007 is the regulation on the “Blue Box” system - the new electronic monitoring system for electronic surveillance of the Norwegian minke whaling (for description see the 2005 Committee report).

### **3. Updates on recommendations from previous workshops (1999, 2001 and 2004)**

In introducing this agenda item the Chair noted the slightly unproductive process of going through the status of the follow-up of recommendations that were not finalised at the previous meeting. Apart from the somewhat tedious work, it totally deludes the fact that the Workshops have produced several recommendations that have been successfully implemented. Moreover some of the recommendations are so comprehensive that a follow-up is not easily achievable.

The Committee tasked the Secretariat to prepare an overview of all recommendations from all workshops also stating follow-ups in member countries. In this connection member countries were asked to review the various recommendations to check whether those pertaining to a certain country have actually been implemented in that country's laws and regulations and supply this information to the Secretariat.

As a final exercise the Committee reviewed the remaining recommendations from the three workshops that were not finalised at the last meeting.

**From the 1999 Workshop in Nuuk:**

Recommendation 3a: *“The workshop recommends that Greenland initiates studies in co-operation with the hunters, testing both pointed and blunt bullets on whale carcasses to determine the best ammunition for use in the hunt.”*

The Committee noted that the guidelines developed by Olsen and Øen in 2006 and presented to the NAMMCO Council at its last meeting may function as a model on how to perform the shooting tests in a standardised way. A prerequisite would be to have enough heads of small cetaceans for the trials.

Finland (through the Kvärken Council) tried to initiate a similar shooting test on seals in September 2006, but had to abort due to lack of sufficient number of sample heads. Nunavut in Canada has also signalled that they would be interested in doing tests. In Greenland there are presently no specific plans to carry out such a test, but it might be interesting to do it in cooperation with other regions or countries.

As was clearly stated in the Workshop on Struck and Lost one must bear in mind that the most efficient ammunition will not always be the preferred or best type, depending on the hunting method in use, due to a higher risk of struck and lost.

Recommendation 3b: *“The Workshop recommends that Greenland develop objective descriptions of hunting methods, equipment and how efficient these are in small cetacean hunting, considering regional variations.”*

The Committee's previous comments may be found in NAMMCO Annual Report 2002, page 64, NAMMCO Annual Report 2004, page 51 and NAMMCO Annual Report 2005, page 53.

The Committee noted that this would encompass an extensive study and therefore might be more suitable as a topic for a Master's thesis, and encouraged NAMMCO to work towards finding the necessary funding.

**From the 2001 Workshop in Sandefjord:**

Recommendation:

- 1) *To develop guidelines for methods used to undertake more controlled and standardised studies of the effect of different weapons and ammunition on different species.*

The paper “ Shooting trials on heads of dead pilot whales – Guidelines to test the efficiency of rifle ammunition used for hunting and euthanasia of small whales” by Olsen and Øen was presented to the NAMMCO Council at its annual meeting in March 2007.

**From the 2004 Workshop in Copenhagen:**

The recommendations from this workshop were very general, and as such not easily convertible into action. One direct result was however, the Workshop on Struck and Lost that was held in Copenhagen in November 2006.

**4. Workshop to address the problems of Struck and Lost, Copenhagen 14 – 16 November 2006.**

A draft report from the Workshop was presented as document NAMMCO/HM-January 2007-4.

The Committee reviewed the draft report. In addition to some minor changes, the Committee suggested the inclusion of an Executive Summary at the beginning of the report. It was agreed that the final version of the report should be circulated to the members on Monday 12 February with a deadline of 2-3 days for feedback.

The Chair will present the report to the Council at its meeting in Tromsø in 2007.

**5. Future**

The Committee, with the Council’s endorsement, has previously suggested collecting all Workshop proceedings into one publication. However, after a lengthy discussion the Committee decided to postpone the publication. The Workshop reports are already published and a new publication would have to be something more and different than just a collection of the various reports. Several alternatives were discussed and it was agreed that regardless of alternative it would entail a substantial amount of work for a group of people to undertake such an endeavour. The Committee therefore decided to recommend to the Council that the publication be postponed with the possibility of returning to the issue at some time in the future.

The Committee has mainly organised its work through the convening of Workshops. Judging by participation and feedback, this series of workshops has been highly successful. Over the years an atmosphere of trust and openness has evolved making the workshops a very constructive meeting arena for hunters, scientists, managers and others with an interest in the subject matter. The Committee felt that it would be important to continue this open dialogue and suggested the convening of a new Workshop. Several possible topics were discussed such as equipment, hunters training and safety, utilisation and handling and communication including monitoring and sharing of knowledge.

The Committee agreed that it would be very timely and interesting to organise a Workshop focusing on issues related to the products from the hunt and suggested the working title “Handling, processing and utilisation of hunted marine mammals”.

Furthermore the Committee agreed to the following terms of reference for the Workshop:

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

Suggested time was first half of September 2008 in one of the member countries.

The Committee agreed to recommend convening a new workshop as described above to the Council.

**6. Election of Officers**

The Committee re-elected Egil Ole Øen (Norway) as its Chair and Kristjan Loftsson (Iceland) as Vice-Chair, both for the next two years (2007/2008).

**7. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held in Copenhagen in January 2008 if not before, pending the decision of the Council regarding the suggested Workshop.

**8. Any other business**

There was no other business.

**9. Approval of the Report**

The report was approved through correspondence on 19 February 2007.