

**Report of the
Working Group on Inspection and Observation¹**

Copenhagen, 8 November 1994

¹ This report of the NAMMCO Working Group on Inspection and Observation does not necessarily reflect the views of the Council and should not be quoted without first consulting the Secretary of NAMMCO.

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The Working Group met in the offices of the Greenland Home Rule Government, Copenhagen, 8 November 1994. The meeting was attended by Einar Lemche, Amalie Jessen and Henrik Nielsen (Greenland), Jústines Olsen (Faroe Islands), Arnór Halldórsson (Iceland), Egil Ole Øen (Norway) and Halvard P. Johansen (Chairman, Norway). The Secretary was rapporteur.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda is contained in Appendix 1.

2. Election of Chairman

Halvard P. Johansen, Norway, was elected Chairman of the Working Group.

3. Update on national regulations

Working group members presented brief updates on changes to national regulations for whaling and sealing. The Working Group also agreed that the Secretariat should be provided with copies of all relevant national legislation and the latest changes in specific regulations for whaling and sealing operations in member countries.

Norway provided copies of the most recent Norwegian regulations for minke whaling from 1994 (*Forskrift om utøvelse av fangst av vågehval i 1994*). These had been circulated to Working Group members for reference, as had the Norwegian inspection form for minke whaling (*Inspeksjonsskjema- vågehvalfangst* - Appendix 2). Norway would also forward copies of the latest directives on sealing to the Secretariat.

Greenland reported that regulations for beluga and narwhal hunting, as well as for the hunting of large whales, were currently being revised. Copies of recent legislation on polar bear and walrus hunting were also provided by Greenland. The Faroes reported that revised regulations for pilot whaling were complete, but had not as yet come into effect. Iceland would undertake to provide the Secretariat with copies of relevant Icelandic legislation on whaling.

4. Development of a common inspection scheme for coastal minke whaling

The Working Group returned to the discussion from the first meeting concerning the possible development of a common inspection scheme for coastal minke whaling. Noting the terms of reference of the Working Group, as proposed by the Management Committee (*Report of the Third Meeting of the Council of NAMMCO*, 1-2 July 1993, p.6), the Working Group clarified the reasons for establishing a common inspection scheme. It was considered important to ensure that the basic data collected in the course of inspection schemes on a national basis

were compatible for scientific purposes (see also under item 8, p.7). Furthermore, it was agreed that, while minke whaling operations differed from country to country, it was worthwhile to determine the necessary basic elements for effective control and inspection which were common to all forms of coastal minke whaling in the region, and which could be applied and built upon by national authorities as appropriate.

The Working Group reviewed the preliminary list of basic elements for a common inspection scheme which had been outlined at its last meeting (*Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Council*, Appendix 12, p. 116). These elements were discussed in more detail, and related to the specific inspection and control requirements currently implemented in individual countries in order to determine whether there was a basis for establishing them as common minimum requirements.

4.1 Check of hunting equipment (quality control)

Working Group members from Greenland and Norway outlined their respective current regulations and procedures for the quality control of hunting equipment. It was noted in general that quality control was an important requirement for ensuring the efficiency of equipment and the safety of those involved in its use.

Greenland explained that the authorities had implemented a general overhaul of all harpoon equipment used in minke and fin whaling in order to improve the safety and efficiency of the hunt. It was noted that, of the two methods of minke whaling used in Greenland, quality control was easier to undertake for penthrite grenade harpoons than for rifle hunting from dinghies. Although a special working group had been set up to look into a number of aspects of the rifle hunting of minke whales, it was also noted that systematic quality control of rifles in Greenland would be very difficult to implement.

Norway explained that, unlike in Greenland, where the initiative had come from the government authorities, it was the responsibility of individual minke whalers in Norway to maintain and check the quality of their equipment. Whalers risked legal action if their equipment was found to be faulty. It was further pointed out that Norwegian whalers would not pass the requisite shooters test with faulty equipment. As such, this test also provided a form of indirect quality control. All boats were required to take a shooters test every year and whalers decided themselves when to take the test. This was not only an important way to test the skill of the harpoon operator, but was also a means of controlling the proper functioning of the equipment in use, rather than just checking correct installation.

Greenland pointed out that there was no such shooting test in Greenland as it would be very difficult and expensive to arrange along the extensive Greenland coastline. There is, however, a requirement that equipment be checked on an annual basis.

It was noted that Greenland had more stringent requirements than Norway with respect to the technical checking of equipment. Norway referred to the idea of having the manufacturer of the equipment produce a system of certification for weapons, and it was hoped that the manufacturers Henriksen in Norway could prepare a proposal for such a certification system.

It was noted that it was important for any overhauling work to be carried out on the local level by qualified people.

On the question of the use of rifles, and requirements for quality control of these, Norway pointed out that rifles were used as a secondary method of killing in minke whaling, and that shooting tests were also applied to rifles to ensure that whalers were familiar with the type of ammunition appropriate for use at sea and were also properly trained in where to shoot the whale accurately.

Greenland informed the Working Group that although there was no shooting test for rifle use or ownership in Greenland, there were requirements for a minimum calibre of 7.6 mm. This was compared with the Norwegian required minimum of 9mm. The Working Group noted the importance of addressing the question of minimum rifle calibers for diverse whaling activities, but agreed that this was a more appropriate matter for discussion under the terms of reference of the Working Group on Hunting Methods. The matter was therefore referred to the Working Group on Hunting Methods.

In summing up, the Working Group noted that the difference in quality control requirements currently implemented in Greenland and Norway was that in Greenland it was obligatory to have harpoons checked, while this was voluntary in Norway, although quality checks were an implicit part of the annual shooting required of Norwegian minke whalers. It had been proposed that a weapons certification system be implemented in Norway to facilitate a more systematic approach to the quality control of whaling equipment.

After comparing and noting the different requirements in respective countries, as outlined above, the Working Group agreed that a minimum common requirement for quality control would be the regular control of harpoon equipment, both in terms of safety and efficiency.

4.2 Reporting beginning of the hunt, catch from sea & intended landing destination

Working Group members discussed the various requirements for, and feasibility of, reporting the beginning of the hunt, the catch from sea and the intended landing destination of the catch in their respective whaling activities.

Greenland informed the Working Group that it would be relatively easy for hunters in Greenland to report the beginning of the hunt of minke whales, although such a requirement did not at present exist in Greenland. Norway pointed out that it was a requirement in Norway that once boats embarked on whaling they should not change back to fishing activities until their whaling was complete. They were also required to keep a logbook of their activities, which included information on the date, time and port of departure, time, position and other details of each catch, and date, time and port of landing (see Appendix 3).

The purpose of reporting the beginning of the hunt (ie departure of the vessel) and the catch from sea was seen to be in order to alert land-based inspectors that whaling was taking place so that suitable arrangements could be made to inspect the catch at the point of landing.

The Working Group noted that this was relevant for Greenland and for previous Icelandic whaling operations, but at present in Norway this was not necessary as there was an inspector on board every whaling boat. It was noted that in Greenland whaling and in Icelandic minke whaling, boats were used for more than one activity, and that there may be a certain interest from the point of view of the hunters to have a record of the time of the commencement of whaling activities.

With regard to the reporting of the catch from sea, Greenland noted that this might be important in the high season when the total quota is close to being filled.

On the question of reporting the intended landing destination, the Working Group noted that in general, inspection could be carried out more efficiently and effectively if the number of landing sites was limited to only a few.

Greenland reported that there was an initiative in Greenland to designate a specific number of flensing sites, also for hygienic purposes. In present Norwegian operations, whales are flensed on board. Norway agreed, however, that it would be possible to designate certain harbours as landing sites for whale meat. At present, with inspectors on board every boat, this was not considered important.

Iceland added that if transshipment were likely to be a problem as a means of avoiding inspection, then regulations would also need to take this into account.

The reporting of the beginning of the hunt, the catch from sea and the intended landing destination were agreed by the Working Group as important elements for consideration in any land-based inspection scheme, other than those in which an inspector is present on board every boat. Greenland pointed out that there was a lack of manpower to cover all these elements in Greenland. The Working Group agreed that these should be up to the national authorities and would depend on the availability of the appropriate control schemes.

4.3 Check that exploding grenades have been used

The Working Group agreed on the need to check the use of exploding grenades. The purpose of this element of inspection is to check that the correct equipment has been used. It was noted that the most obvious way of checking whether grenades had been used was by counting the grenade heads. As well as on board inspection, as is presently the case in Norwegian minke whaling, this could also be an element of land-based inspection when whales are inspected at landing stations.

There would also be the possibility for inspectors to check for illegal equipment on board boats, both as a part of on-board and land-based inspection schemes.

Recommendation: *While noting that the cold harpoon was no longer used in any whaling operations, the Working Group agreed to recommend that the use of such equipment and its presence on board all vessels be officially prohibited in relevant national regulations, where not already done so.*

4.4 *Register number of shots in logbook*

Greenland pointed out that its hunt report forms required information on failed shots and the reasons for these. The Working Group discussed the idea of using serial numbers on grenades as a way of controlling their use and agreed that this was something which should be considered in the future.

4.5 *Licences for catcher boats*

The Working Group agreed that the requirement of a licence was common to all. In Greenland licences are issued per whale. A minimum size of boat is stipulated for fin whaling. In Norway licences are issued to boats, with a set catch quota per boat. Boats have to meet certain conditions, including conditions of ownership, before they are issued with licences.

4.6 *Common elements*

In summary, the Working Group refined the common elements which could be applied in all national inspection schemes, depending on available resources, as follows:

- regular control of equipment
- direct reporting of position/status of whaling operations
- landing at specially designated landing stations
- checking use of exploding grenades
- checking number of shots fired
- licences for whaling vessels

The Working Group noted that there may be other, more specific requirements from country to country, depending on the particular circumstances and national regulations.

5. Formulation of a standard inspection checklist

Working Group members agreed that, with reference to the recommendation from the last meeting of the Working Group on the formulation of a standard checklist for inspectors, it was not the task of the Working Group to produce an actual checklist form, but rather to identify those common elements which inspectors in all countries should be responsible for checking.

The Working Group referred to the Norwegian minke whaling inspection scheme (Appendix 2) and it was noted that this was used only in connection with breaches of the regulations. Inspectors on board Norwegian whaling vessels were also required to submit full written reports to the authorities after each trip. Working Group members also reviewed the hunt report form which hunters in Greenland are required to complete and deliver (Appendix 4).

Reference was made to the NAFO system in which standard inspection forms were filled out, whether or not there was a breach of the regulations. This provided a valuable overview of fishing activities in general.

In formulating the checklist, the Working Group agreed that the already existing forms used on a national basis (eg. the hunt report form required in Greenland and the catch logbook required for Norwegian minke whaling) should form the basis for the inspection checklist, and that it should be the responsibility of the inspector to certify that the required national report forms have been filled out fully and accurately. It was therefore agreed that an inspection checklist could be comprised of the following elements:

- 1) Details of inspector/vessel/licence/owner; date of inspection / position
- 2) Certification that the national catch logbook/report form is correctly filled out with all the required information
- 3) Indication of any breaches of regulations - separate report on these

It was understood by Working Group members that the national catch forms should contain information covering the agreed basic elements of inspection (see above, p. 6). The Working Group noted that regular quality control and the control of use of correct equipment were not currently a part of the existing catch reporting procedures. It was also noted that the national forms would have to be adjusted to allow a section for the signature of the inspector.

6. Development of a common system for recording data on seals

The Working Group referred to the recommendation from the last meeting for using a common system for recording data on the number and species of seals taken in each NAMMCO member country.

Greenland informed the Working Group that data was collected in Greenland on the number, species and hunting method. Iceland reported that reports on seal catches in Iceland were good as these were based on a bounty system whereby Icelanders were subsidised to cull seals. The Faroes reported that there was no systematic recording of seal numbers killed, but that a rifle permit was necessary to shoot seals, and that such rifle permits were only issued to salmon farmers for the culling of seals which interfere with salmon farming. Norway reported that it had a full inspection scheme and full annual catch reports from its sealing operations.

It was noted that the question of data on seal catches was not a matter for the Working Group on Inspection and Observation, but that there was a need to report data on the level of catches to NAMMCO. The Working Group agreed that as a minimum, each individual country should report their seals catches to the NAMMCO Secretariat. How this should be done would be a matter for the Scientific Committee to determine in connection with the development of a database and the standardisation of national reports to the Secretariat.

7. Role and Function of International Observers

The Working Group referred to the discussion from the last meeting concerning the role and function of international observers and the points left open for further discussion.

Greenland pointed to IWC discussions on observers and the relations between sovereign states in fisheries management, where it was the clear position of Denmark, for example, that jurisdictional authority of international observers in national waters could not be accepted. Working Group members were all in agreement with this. Iceland suggested that the word observer itself alludes to a passive role rather than any regulatory competence.

The Working Group discussed the possibility of a reciprocal observation scheme between NAMMCO countries. It was noted that in such a scheme, the credentials and training of observers would be very important. It was agreed that NAMMCO observers should, as a minimum, be qualified as national inspectors or trained as veterinarians (as were Norwegian inspectors). The task of the observer would be to oversee that the regulations were upheld, but would not have the jurisdiction of an inspector. National inspectors should have the authority to sign the observer's report. The practical questions of communication and accommodation on board small vessels should also be taken into consideration. For safety and efficiency, it was considered very important that observers be able to communicate effectively with the crew, and that they were well-trained in safety requirements at sea.

Recommendation: *With these considerations in mind, the Working Group agreed to recommend to the Management Committee that the establishment of some kind of reciprocal observation scheme between NAMMCO countries be considered, with the basic principle that the observer country pays the expenses. Observers reports would be sent to the respective countries and the NAMMCO Secretariat.*

8. Standardisation of data collection

The Working Group noted the basic elements of data to be collected during whaling operations, as outlined in the Report of the Second Meeting of the Scientific Committee. These included position and date of catch and length and sex of animal. The Scientific Committee had recommended that "for the time being ... such information be included in the National Progress Reports submitted to the Scientific Committee." (p.16).

The Working Group also noted that the Scientific Committee had not yet determined a standard format for the submission and content of National Progress reports. The Working Group therefore referred the matter of standardised data collection to the Scientific Committee, awaiting further guidelines on how such data should be submitted in the form of National Reports to the Scientific Committee

10. Adoption of report

The draft report was circulated to Working Group members by fax two weeks after the meeting, and the final report was adopted on 16 December.

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3. Logbook for minke whaling in Norway
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