

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON INSPECTION AND OBSERVATION

The Committee on Inspection and Observation met at the Grand Hotel in Oslo on 24 February 2014. Present were Nette Levermann Chair (Greenland), Eyþór Björnsson (Iceland), Kathrine Ryeng, Egil Ole Øen and Hild Ynnesdal (Norway), and Ulla S Wang (Faroe Islands). Christina Lockyer, Jill Prewitt and Charlotte Winsnes attended from the Secretariat.

1. OPENING PROCEDURE

The Chair, Nette Levermann, welcomed the Committee members to the meeting. The draft agenda was adopted and the list of documents reviewed. The Chair and Charlotte Winsnes acted as rapporteurs.

2. THE 2013 SEASON

Presented under this agenda item were documents NAMMCO/I&O-February/2014/2 containing the report from the Secretariat of the Observation Scheme for 2013 and NAMMCO/I&O-February/2014/3 containing the reports from the observer active in 2013.

Whaling in Iceland (fin and minke whale) and Norway (minke whale) had been the focus of the observation scheme in 2013. Three observers were contracted and no violations had been observed.

The Committee took note of the reports. All reports need to be signed and filled out in full. The Secretariat will follow up by contacting the observers.

It was further noted that next to scope, budget and availability of observers were the main deciding factors when implementing the scheme in any given year. The Committee reiterated the importance of having the implementation of the observation scheme independent of the member governments. Thus it is the Secretariat that suggests scope and budget and that implements the plans. However the Committee suggested that when the Secretariat presents the plans for the coming observation activities it would be informative to also receive as much information on geographical area, planned effort compared to the total fleet when applicable and a more detailed budget.

The scope of the 2014 activities are sealing in Norway and the Committee recommended Council to increase the effort by sending two observers.

3. TRAINING COURSE FOR OBSERVER CANDIDATES

Presented under this agenda item was document NAMMCO/I&O-February/2014/4 summarising the observer candidates evaluation of the training course held in March 2013.

The summary had previously been distributed by email without having been discussed by the Committee. Most members of the Committee had participated in the course and the general impression was that the course had been a success. This was confirmed by the candidates in their evaluation where all underlined that the course had increased their understanding of the job and they felt competent to go out as observers for NAMMCO. The course was held in a Scandinavian language (Norwegian, Danish or a mix), and one reoccurring comment in the evaluation was the language barrier. All participants did not fully comprehend everything that was said, and the Committee noted that language will probably always represent a challenge given the different languages in the NAMMCO member countries. Another important comment was that most participants would like to have a stronger emphasis on the practical aspects of being an observer out in the field.

The Committee underlined the importance of developing control/check lists in relation to national legislation that should be part of the observer kit. It was noted that this was the responsibility of each member country and that Norway and the Faroe Islands still needed to submit their lists with a deadline of April and June respectively.

The Committee anticipated that the next training course will be when new candidates replace the present pool of observer candidates. The Committee also asked the Secretariat to distribute the presentations held at the course.

4. INFORMATION ON NAMMCO HOMEPAGE

The Committee had been asked to consider how the Observer Scheme and the Committee itself could be more visible and dynamic on the NAMMCO web page.

The Committee recommended that a first effort should be the updating of already displayed information such as committee members and relevant documents. It was suggested to develop short, to the point information sheets on the different hunts in the NAMMCO member countries and the laws and regulations governing these hunts for display on the homepage. The Committee furthermore agreed that with respect to the observation scheme information like the scope and effort of the activities should be on the web especially from previous years whereas information on ongoing activities should be held to a minimum. No observer reports should be on the homepage.

5. UPDATE ON NATIONAL MONITORING DATA

At its last meeting the Committee agreed to include the updating of national monitoring data as a regular item on the agenda.

Norway informed that there had been no data collection in 2013 pertaining to whaling. Data collected in 2011 and 2012 on time to death in whaling would be published in 2015. The electronic monitoring system (the blue box) continues to collect data on each vessel, and inspectors are only on board hunting vessels at random.

With respect to sealing it is customary in Norway to have inspectors (veterinarians) on all sealing vessels that also control food quality. Data had been, and will be collected, in 2013 and 2014 in relation to a research project looking into efficiency of killing methods and weapons in sealing.

Iceland informed that they plan to collect TTD data in 2014. The idea is to use the Norwegian model and use veterinarians. In 2013, in addition to the hunts observed by the NAMMCO observer, inspectors were present during two hunting trips.

The Faroe Islands informed that some scientific data collection had taken place. In connection with the new regulation on pilot whaling and the introduction of the new spinal lance and blow-hole hook training courses will be held in 2014. In the making is also a film depicting the hunting method with the new equipment.

Greenland informed that the wildlife officers as part of the regular national control have followed and controlled large whale hunts and beluga and narwhale hunts.

6. RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE COMMITTEE

Presented under this agenda item was document NAMMCO/I&O-February/2014/5 containing a draft Rules of Procedure (RoP) for the Committee as recommended by the FAC. The Council at

NAMMCO 21 tasked the Committee to make a RoP to be presented to the Finance and administration Committee (FAC). The Committee's RoP had been presented to FAC who made two alterations limiting member countries to have two representatives in the Committee.

The Committee disagreed with the recommendation from FAC and asked that the issue be discussed in Council.

7. TEMPLATE FOR OBSERVER CANDIDATES CV

Presented under this agenda item was document NAMMCO/I&O-February/2014/6 containing the template CV for observer candidates that had been adopted by correspondence 27 February 2013.

There have been great differences as to how the nominated candidates have been presented and the Committee therefore agreed that a standardised CV would make it easier to assess the different candidates during the nomination process. By mistake the CV had not been used in connection with the implementation of the 2013 observation season.

With respect to qualifications requirements for observers, the general rule is that an observer shall have at least the same level of professional competence as that required of inspectors in the country where the observations are to take place. The Committee reiterated its recommendation that information on competence requirements for inspectors must be circulated to all members as part of the nomination process. Duties of national inspectors vary between member countries due to differences in the activities which they control and it is essential that the qualification requirements are known to all member countries so that they are able to nominate competent people.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next face to face meeting will be held prior to NAMMCO 23 – tentatively in January 2015, and if possible back to back with the Committee on Hunting Methods.

9. REPORT OF THE MEETING

The Chair of the Committee reported the main issues from this meeting to Council during NAMMCO22. The final written report was approved by correspondence on 31 March 2014.