

**REPORT OF THE TELEPHONEMEETING OF
THE COMMITTEE ON INSPECTION AND OBSERVATION**

The Committee on Inspection and Observation held a telephone meeting 22 January from 14:00 to 15:20 hrs. Online were: Nette Levermann Chair (Greenland), Eypór Björnsson and Guðni Magnus Eriksson (Iceland), Hild Ynnesdal (Norway), and Ulla S Wang (Faroe Islands). 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 2014 SEASON

Presented under this agenda item were documents NAMMCO/IO-January/2015/2 containing the report from the Secretariat of the Observation Scheme for 2014 and NAMMCO/I&O-January /2015/3 containing the reports from the observer active in 2014.

Whaling and sealing in Greenland had been the focus of the observation scheme in 2014. One observer was contracted for the period 17 August to 5 September. No violations had been observed, and reports had been submitted to the Secretariat.

The Committee took note of the reports, and made a general comment on the continued importance of informing the hunters about NAMMCO and the rationale behind the observation scheme.

3. The 2015 SEASON

Presented under this agenda item were documents NAMMCO/IO-January/2015/4 containing the scope and budget of the Observation activities for 2015.

The Committee had advised the Secretariat to presents the plans for coming observation activities with information on geographical area, planned effort compared to the total fleet/hunt when applicable and a more detailed budget.

The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to be presented with the plans for the next season before Council received the documents, and gave their approval. In that way comments by the Committee could form a basis for the approval of Council.

The scope for 2015 is whaling in the Faroe Islands, budgeted with NOK 200 000. The suggestion is to send two observers, one from Greenland and one from Iceland, each covering different 25 days periods. Based on available information on pilot whale drive statistics, the high season is May to September – 5 months or 150 days. The suggested observation effort represents 1/3 of the high season and the Committee considered this to be good coverage.

4. UPDATE ON NATIONAL MONITORING DATA

The Faroe Islands do not have national inspectors. However the manner in which the hunt is regulated ensures the control and monitoring of the hunt trough the “Sysselman” and the foremen leading each hunt.

Norway confirmed that the electronic monitoring system (the blue box) continues to collect hunting data on each whaling vessel, and that inspectors are only used in cases of possible infringements. In

2014 no inspectors had been active on the whaling vessels. 23 licenses were given for the 2014 season of which 21 vessels participated which is an increase of 3 boats from 2013. The hunting period was from 1/4-25/9, no infringements reported.

With respect to sealing, there is a 100% control and monitoring effort as it is mandatory to have inspectors on board all vessels. Three vessels were active in 2014 in the West Ice, mainly in Greenlandic waters. The hunting season was from 10 April to 30 June but all vessels were back before 17 May. No infringements were reported.

Iceland informed that they had two inspectors on the fin whale hunt during two trips over a 7 days period. Two inspectors were also monitoring the minke whale hunt for 4 days. Iceland collected TTD data in the 2014 season including post-mortem examinations. Due to bad weather and technical problems with the hunting vessels, it was only possible to get enough data on the fin whale hunt.

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. The coverage is normally less than 2% of the hunting activities on large whales. In 2013, there were 6 reported infractions of national legislation on large whales. The infractions were related to the use of minke whale grenade for fin/humpback whale and cold harpoon used for minke whale as secondary weapon. Also reported, as infraction was the sale of whale products without prior stamping of sale license and hunting without proper license. Presently there are suggested changes to the job descriptions of the fishery inspectors in Greenland that can indicate that the inspectors will also be able to control and monitor hunting activities, something that would presumably increase the control and monitor effort in Greenland on marine mammals. There are only random control at sea on seal hunting thus it is mainly hunting permits that are controlled when coming to the harbor and later when the hunter is selling the products.

5. INFORMATION ON NAMMCO HOMEPAGE

The Committee had tasked the Secretariat to update the existing information and take steps to make the Committee itself and the Observation Scheme more visible and dynamic on the NAMMCO web page. The Secretariat informed the Committee that this was ongoing. The NAMMCO homepage is under reconstruction and the new page will probably be launched sometime in spring 2015. Much text has been added and more will come. The information on the existing homepage had been updated.

The Committee recommended that a clarification on the difference between observer and inspector be put on the homepage. The following text was agreed upon:

Observers have no authority (of jurisdiction) and consequently cannot intervene in the hunting or other activities connected with the hunting.

Inspectors are authorized by its national authorities to exercise control and if necessary to intervene in the hunting or other activities connected with the hunting. This authority is dependent upon a legal basis, and thus dependent on the relevant national legislation.

The Committee noted the report and asked that the text be circulated to the Committee for comments before going online. It was also recommended that documents like Rules of Procedure should be dated.

6. FOLLOW UP FROM THE LAST MEETING

The following points pertain to the Observation Scheme and were raised at the last meeting

- Control/check lists in relation to national legislation to be part of the observer kit. This is the responsibility of each member country. Norway and the Faroe Islands still needed to submit their lists with a deadline of April and June respectively.

Both Norway and the Faroe Islands will send these lists to the Secretariat before April 2015.

- 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.

Member countries were asked to supply the Secretariat with information on qualification requirements of the national inspectors. Based on these inputs the Secretariat will compile an overview that will be circulated together with all other documents in the nomination process related to the Observation Scheme every year.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Greenland, represented by Nette Levermann, has held the chair the last 3 years. However Greenland has held the chair since 2005. The vice-chair is Faroe Islands and Ulla Svarrer Wang will now be the new chair with Norway as new vice-chair.

8. NEXT MEETING

In line with the decision made under agenda item 3. above, the Committee agreed to schedule the next meeting as a telephone meeting to be held in late September/early October. The exact date will be confirmed later.

9. REPORT OF THE MEETING

The report was approved by correspondence on 30 January 2015.