

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

The Committee on Inspection and Observation held a telephone meeting 12 January 2016 from 14:00 to 15:00 hrs. Online were: Ulla Svarrer Wang, Chair (Faroe Islands), Nette Levermann (Greenland), and Hild Ynnesdal and Kathrine Ryeng (Norway), Charlotte Winsnes attended from the NAMMCO Secretariat. Guðni Magnus Eriksson (Iceland) did not participate in the meeting but gave his input after the meeting.

1. OPENING PROCEDURE

The Chair, Ulla S Wang, welcomed the Committee members to the meeting. The draft agenda was adopted and the list of documents reviewed. Charlotte Winsnes acted as rapporteur.

2. THE 2015 SEASON

Presented under this agenda item were documents NAMMCO/IO-January/2016/2 containing the report from the Secretariat of the implementation of the NAMMCO International Observation Scheme for 2015 and NAMMCO/I&O-January /2016/3 containing the reports from the NAMMCO observers active in 2015.

Pilot whaling in the Faroe Islands had been the focus of the observation scheme in 2015. Two observers were contracted from 3 – 24 August and 7 – 28 September respectively. During the total observation period of 44 days one pilot whale hunt took place and was observed. No violations had been observed, and observer reports had been submitted to the Secretariat. In 2015 there were 6 pilot whale drives and catches in the Faroe Islands, and these drives were in the period from 6 June to 30 November.

The Committee commented on the fact that only one pilot whale hunt took place during the time period where observers had been in the Faroe Islands. Since the only occurring pilot whale drive had been observed it was pointed out that it was a 100% overage in that specific time period. In general it was agreed to ask the Secretariat to expand its reporting of the implementation of the observation scheme to cover the activities of the focus hunt(s) for the whole calendar year where applicable.

3. The 2016 SEASON

Presented under this agenda item was document NAMMCO/IO-January/2016/4 containing the scope of Observation activities of the NAMMCO International Observation Scheme for 2016.

The Committee reiterated the importance of documenting the efficiency and rationale behind the chosen focus of the observation scheme in a given year. Economy and human (personnel) resources are the main constraints of the range of the observation scheme. Limitless resources would in theory accomplish a coverage of the observation scheme near a 100%. However, the activities observed will presently and for the foreseeable future cover only a very small percentage of the total hunting activities any given year, something that underscores the importance of random sampling and a kind of unpredictability of when and perhaps where an observer is active.

The Committee reiterated its advice to 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 suggested scope for observation activities in 2016 is whaling in Norway contracting up to three observers, one from Greenland and two from Iceland/Faroes Islands. Observation periods from two weeks up to 1 month depending on the hunting grounds of the boats in question. Observing on a boat that hunts in the Spitsbergen region involves three to four weeks at sea.

The total hunting season starts 1 April with varying ending dates. Last year it closed 28 September, and the majority of the boats started around middle of May. Based on the 2015 season where 21 vessels participated the total season counted 546 weeks. The effort that is suggested for 2016 (maximum 10 weeks) represents a coverage of less than 2% of the total activity. The suggested budget was noted to be around NOK 225 000. The Secretariat will develop a detailed budget based on the discussion of scope and range that will be presented to FAC and Council for approval.

The whaling fleet in Norway can be divided into three main categories based on the length of the vessels. An observer can observe on one boat or several boats. The Committee discussed selection criteria and agreed to pick one vessel from each of the described categories at random.

4. UPDATE ON NATIONAL MONITORING DATA

The Faroe Islands reiterated the information submitted last year that they do not have national inspectors to monitor whaling. However, the manner in which the pilot whale hunt is regulated by law ensures the control and monitoring of the pilot whale drive hunts through the district administrator (“Sysselman”) and the whaling foremen leading each hunt.

Greenland informed that the wildlife officers as part of the regular national control have followed and controlled large whale hunts, beluga and narwhale hunts, seal and walrus hunts. These are done by random control at sea, so it is mainly hunting permits and products that are controlled when coming to the harbour and later when the hunter is selling the products. In 2014, there were 2 reported infractions of national legislation on large whales. The infractions were related to the use of rifle for humpback whale as secondary weapon. No infraction was reported for 2015.

In Norwegian whaling at sea monitoring is carried out by the Electronic trip Recorder (Blue Box). In addition inspectors from the Directorate of Fisheries are conducting periodic and random checks of hunting activities. No inspectors have been active on the whaling vessels in 2015.

22 licenses were issued for the 2015 season, of which 21 vessels participated. The hunting period was from 1 April to 28 September. No infringements were reported.

With respect to sealing in Norway, there is a 100 % control and monitoring effort as it is mandatory to have inspectors on all vessels. As previous years, the inspector was a veterinarian, who also carried out quality control of the meat on behalf of the Food Security Authorities. Only one vessel participated in the hunt in the West Ice in 2015. The hunting season was from 1 April to 30 June. No infringements were reported.

Iceland reported that there had been two inspectors on the fin whale hunt during 7 trips over a 7 days period. Two inspectors were also monitoring the minke whale hunt for 3 days. No infraction was reported. Iceland collected TTD data in the 2015 season including post-mortem examinations for the minke whale hunt. In total TTD was collected for 12 minke whales in 2015 and one in 2014 season, making the total of 13 minke whale.

5. FOLLOW UP FROM THE LAST MEETING

Webpage

The Committee was informed that the NAMMCO webpage is a priority and focus of the Secretariat. The information displayed on the Inspection and Observation Committee and the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme is thus continuously updated by the Secretariat. Members of the Committee are welcome to comment and make proposals for improvements to increase the visibility and usefulness of the webpage.

Competence requirement for national inspectors

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.

The Secretariat had only received the requested information from Norway and Greenland. The Faroe Islands informed that they do not have national inspectors to monitor pilot whale drive hunts, and therefore no information on competence requirements for whaling inspectors is available.

The Committee asked the Secretariat to circulate the information received both with respect to competence requirement and also the control/check lists in relation to national legislation developed by member countries to aid the observers in the execution of their duties.

6. NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed to schedule the next meeting for November 2016 in order to comment on the 2017 scope and range of the activities. The exact date will be confirmed later.

9. REPORT OF THE MEETING

The report was approved by correspondence on 15 January 2016.