TWENTY FIFTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

5 – 6 April 2017, Nuuk, Greenland

DOCUMENT 08 **REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES**

Submitted by: **Management Committees**

Action requested:

- Review and adopt possible new requests

JOINT MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

REPORT

4 APRIL 2017

@ North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

Please cite this report as:
Report MCSW 4 April 2017

Address: Science Park, POB 6453, N-9294 Tromsø, Norway
Tel.: +47 77 68 73 71, Email: nammco-sec@nammco.no

JOINT MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES
4 April, Nuuk, Greenland
Report

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair, Guðni Magnús Eiríksson, Iceland, opened the meeting and welcomed all participants.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted and the list of documents reviewed, both documents are contained in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

3. ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

3.1. Disturbance

The Chair of the Scientific Committee, Tore Haug, presented the updates from the SC.

Update from the Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee had reviewed the full report from the Disturbance Symposium at it's 23rd meeting (NAMMCO/25/07). He noted that the requests for advice from Council (**R-2.6.3, 3.4.9)** which were the impetus for the Disturbance Symposium, have been answered as far as is possible with the information that is currently available. However, these requests remain ongoing, and should be considered again when additional specific information is available.

3.1.1. Mary River-Baffinland project

At NAMMCO 24, Council had forwarded a new request for advice from the SC on the Mary River project:

R-1.5.3 *(NAMMCO-24): The Council requests the SC to monitor the development of the Mary River Project and assess qualitatively or if possible quantitatively the likely impact and consequences on marine mammals in the area.*

Update from the Scientific Committee

The SC had recommended that the issues regarding belugas and narwhals be discussed further at the JCNB-NAMMCO JWG. In particular, the SC recommended that the JCNB ensures the participation of Canadian expertise on the industrial activities at the next meeting.

The SC had identified and requested that the following information to be available to the JWG for review at their next meeting:

- Activity log for the Mary River project
- How many tons of iron ore shipped out,
- How many ships have passed through to date, and are expected to pass through in the future,
- Information on ship strikes,
- Studies that are ongoing from the industry, when that information will become public.

The SC also recommended that the JWG meetings routinely include information sharing between Canada and Greenland on new human activities that are occurring in either country that could affect narwhals and belugas.

The Management Committee was informed that the JWG had met in March 2017 after the SC meeting and thus that the report will be reviewed at the next SC meeting in 2017.

Comments and discussion by the Committee

Canada gave an update on the Mary River Iron Ore Project (an approved iron ore mine by Baffinland (the Proponent) located on Baffin Island). The project was subject to an environmental assessment conducted by the Nunavut Impact Review Board, and a Fisheries Act authorization was issued to the company in relation to the construction of their ore dock in July 2014.

On October 29, 2014 Baffinland submitted the Mary River Phase 2 project proposal for an amendment to the approved Project. The proposed amendment includes a proposal to increase production which would necessitate an increase to the shipping season to 10 months per year. Key components of the Phase 2 project include ice breaking, transhipping and the construction of a second ore dock. On February 17, 2016 Baffinland provided a further update to the Phase 2 project, which included the addition of the rail line constructed parallel to the existing Tote Road.

The Nunavut Impact Review Board had not yet received the revised proposal so no substantiated assessment has begun. It is however anticipated that the Proponent will optimize the open water season and would not pursue year-round shipping. Once final details are submitted to the Nunavut Impact Review Board, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) will be providing expert advice to the Board in relation to potential project impacts to fish (including marine mammals) and their habitats. Should the environmental assessment result in a determination that the project can proceed to regulatory decision making, DFO would be in a position to contemplate issuing any necessary authorizations under the Fisheries Act.

In response to an intervention on ships strikes from a hunter from Greenland the chair of the SC pointed out that there is a difference between fast and slow swimmers and how these may be affected by vessels. The concern is that slow swimmers like the bowhead are much more vulnerable to ship strikes. Furthermore, it was noted that for ice breeding seals this has proven to be very challenging.

It was reported that in certain narwhales areas the animals have disappeared at the same time as there has been an increase in trawlers activities. Hunters also reported on disappearance of whales in areas with seismic activities. Thus, it was the opinion of the hunters that noise has an impact on the animals in that they move away.

In response to Iceland's question on possible indications that some kind of ships /noises are more disturbing than others, it was noted that this particular issue has not been considered by the SC.

Tore Haug underlined that current scientific knowledge on how noise may impact marine mammals is too limited to conclude that there is a connection between seismic activities and disappearing whales.

Conclusion
The Management Committee noted the report.

3.1.2. Other issues

Haug reported that the SC had noted that the Mary River project is just one example of a project that affects a shared stock, and that when impact assessments are done, they should include the impacts on both sides of the border

Conclusion
The Management Committee noted the report.

3.2. Climate change

Tore Haug gave a presentation on climate change and seals as discussed in the SC. He reported that the SC generally address ecological questions related to climate change issues at each meeting. In the 2016 meeting, results were presented to the SC from a recent Norwegian study of summer diet of hooded and harp seals in the Greenland Sea which showed changes such as the inclusion of demersal fishes

and less importance of squid as compared with previous data. Furthermore, the SC had seen results from a Russian study of young harp seal migrations in the White and Barents Sea, based on data from satellite tags. Seals and arrived at northernmost point of their migration route, i.e. the edge of the pack ice in the August – October period. The return migration of the seals was during winter along the Novaya Zemlya to the south-eastern part of the Barents Sea. The SC were also informed that a long planned Joint Norwegian-Russian Research Program on Harp Seal Ecology, including deployment of satellite transmitters on harp seals in the White Sea, had finally received funding and would be performed in April 2018. The results from this experiment will be compared with results from similar studies performed in the 1990s when the ice cover was considerably larger in the relevant areas.

Conclusion
The Management Committee noted the report.

3.3. Marine mammal – fisheries interactions

The Chair noted that there are a number of previous requests under this agenda item, some of which were old and may be outdated (R-1.1.5, R-1.1.8, R-1.2.1, R-1.2***.)***. He suggested that the Committee review these at the next meeting when the members would have had time to prepared and discuss whether these should be taken off, or be updated.

The Management Committee agreed to this procedure.

The Chair further noted that there was a new request forwarded at the last meeting, NAMMCO 24:

R-1.4.7 (ongoing): *The Scientific Committee is requested to review the results of the MAREFRAME ecosystem management project when these become available. In particular, the results should be reviewed with respect to the ongoing and standing requests on marine mammal interactions (R-1.1.0) and multispecies approaches to management (R-1.2.0).*

Update from the SC
MareFrame is an EU funded research project which is set to be concluded in 2017 The primary focus is to investigate hurdles in the establishment of ecosystem based approaches to management of marine resources, and develop tools and methodologies to aid the implementation of these approaches.

In the beginning of 2017 the Institute of Marine Resources will launch the REDUS project aimed at understanding and minimizing uncertainty in the management of commercially exploited fish stocks. A potential for defining a joint project based on the output from the MareFrame and REDUS projects had been discussed and the Secretariat had been tasked with initiate discussions between the MFRI, IMR, UI and UiT.

Initially the SC wanted to extend the MareFrame to also include the Barents Sea. Due to the lack of funding this did not happen even though both Iceland and Norway have modellers who is competent to do the necessary work.

Comments and discussion from the Management Committee
Iceland commented that the MareFrame is on scheduled with a final meeting to be held in 2017 so it would be possible for the SC to review the results in line with the standing request at its meeting in 2018.

Conclusion
The Management Committee noted the report.

3.3.1. By-catch

Update from the SC

The issue of by-catch of marine mammals has received increasing attention over the years. There are concerns for lack of reporting in fisheries, that some fisheries have more by-catch than others and some species are more likely to be by-caught than others.

The new By-catch WG held an initial meeting on 29 February 2016, and the SC had endorsed the following recommendations:

- Norway, increase the reliability and the accuracy of the by-catch data in areas with high by-catch (i.e. especially Lofoten and Vesterålen) by increasing the number of vessels included in the CRF and ensure a better species identification of by-caught seals.
- Iceland, obtain by-catch rate for the cod fishery outside the April peak season,
- Faroes, modify the logbook for allowing for by-catch species identification and provide to the next WG meeting data on the fleet especially on the pelagic and semi-pelagic trawl fisheries including VHVO trawl (fleet composition, relative effort and by-catch information).
- Greenland, provide information on the reliability of by-catch reporting for all species.

There was also a general recommendation that fisheries expertise should participate at meeting and that the work should be linked to the ICES Working Group on By-catch.

The SC has suggested that the new By-Catch WG shall meet again 2-4 May 2017 with the following terms of reference:

1. Review the Norwegian harbour and grey seals and harbour porpoise by-catch data and estimates;
2. Review the Icelandic lumpsucker and cod gillnet fishery by-catch data and estimates;
3. Review the situation in the Faroese mid-water trawling - precise fleet description, by-catch risk and reporting; methods for improving the situation;
4. Review the information from Greenland on reporting of by-catch for the different species.

Comments and discussions by the Management Committee

Iceland drew attention to the new situation resulting from the US import rules, noting that by-catch issues for the next 5 years will be a focus and priority for managers and that this surly would be reflected in the working schedule of the Scientific Committee.

Iceland also noted that it had taken action to involve the industry to stimulate to improved reporting of by-catch. Iceland has already started the work on obtaining the data on the issues indicated by the SC. Emphasis will be on sufficient observer effort in the lumpfish fisheries in 2017.

The Faroe Islands noted that NEAFC had recently adopted a common electronical reporting system that also included by-catch of marine mammals.

Norway informed that pelagic fisheries are not regarded as relevant in relation to By-catch in Norway.

The Faroe Islands informed that they do not have gillnet fisheries in shallow water, but that there is an indication that are by-catches in other fisheries and this will be looked into prior to the by-catch meeting.

Greenland informed that there were several initiatives in place to improve the reporting of by-catch. Among them is a new executive order that makes reporting of by-catch mandatory in all fisheries, and also the traders have to report by-catch. The Ministry will make efforts to qualify these data before the May meeting.

The members had a round on how the different countries had reported to the US import conditions. Iceland and Norway both underlined that they had given preliminary data due to short time frame.

Greenland informed that they had organised a course on disentanglement of large whales, (Fshermen assisted release program) with David Matilla of IWC for local fishermen, hunter and wildlife officers. Also they had equipped the different regions wildlife officers vessels with the recommended disentanglement equipment.

Conclusion
The Management Committee endorse the recommendations to member countries from the SC on by-catch and also the ToRs for the next meeting.

3.3.2. Fish farms

Update from the Scientific Committee
The Chair, Tore Haug, informed that the issue of marine mammals and fish farms had been had discussed in the SC and gave the following remarks:

Norway: It is legal to shoot seals that are interfering with the farms, but although it is mandatory to report, there are little or no reports.

Faroe Islands: grey seals are shot at fish farms. There is a problem with reporting, in that the largest farm which comprises about ½ of the salmon farming is not reporting. From those that are reporting, it is estimated that at least 150-250 seals are shot each year in total. This level of removals seems quite high, especially given that the abundance may not exceed 1,500 seals, which is not based on a formal survey.

Conclusion
The Management Committee noted the report.

4. PROCEDURES FOR DECISION MAKING ON CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

4.1. Struck and lost (SL)

R-1.6.4 *The SC has recommended that catch statistics include correction for struck but lost animals for different seasons, areas, and catch operations. Council requested the SC and the Committee on Hunting Methods to provide advice on the best methods for collection of the desired statistics on losses. Council noted that this request, although brought up regarding walruses, not only pertains to walrus but to all species.*

Update from the Scientific Committee
The Vice-Chair of the Scientific Committee, Bjarne Mikkelsen, informed that the SC have commented that SL rates based on hunter interviews are often not reliable enough for use in assessments. It further agreed that the best method for collecting SL data was using observers in the different types hunts, as SL rates vary between species and hunts. It was acknowledged that this would be logistically challenging and costly and would therefore perhaps not represent a prioritised parameter for improving assessments.

Update from the Committee on Hunting methods (CHM):
The Chair of the Committee on Hunting Methods informed that the Committee concurred with the conclusion of the SC that the best method for collecting S&L data was using observers in the different types hunts, as S&L rates vary between species and hunts. Like the SC, CHM acknowledged that this would be logistically challenging and costly and would therefore perhaps not represent a prioritised parameter for improving assessments.

The CHM agreed that collection of S&L data for large whales were controlled and that the big challenge was with respect to the small whale hunts. CHM did not have any concrete solutions but pointed out that there might be a need for reviewing regulations for those hunts where S&L are thought to be high.

Comments and discussion by the Management Committee

Greenland reiterated its request that future quota advice include the S&L. Now the quota advices both include and don't include SL And this is a challenge for the managers to explain to the hunters.

Also under agenda item 4.1, Bjarni Mikkelsen noted that with respect to abundance estimates the Scientific Committee had previously tasked the Secretariat to compile all abundance estimates approved by SC for use in assessment, for all species and stocks in NAMMCO area of interest. The database contains the most recent abundance estimates, date of the survey and assessment and references, trend in abundance, the kind of removals the stock is subjected to and the annual direct catch for the most recent years.

Conclusion

The Management Committee noted the report from both the SC and the CHM.

4.2. Catch validation

Validation of catches has been brought up by the SC as an issue for a few species, the killer whale being a particular example where the SC has been requesting these validated numbers for multiple years. Jessen and Levermann gave a presentation at the SC/23 meeting in Nuuk to explain the validation process in Greenland.

Vice -Chair Bjarni Mikkelsen informed that the SC noted that the catch validation, with hunters asked to remember catches, months and sometimes years later was considered unreliable. It would be difficult/impossible to remember catch numbers a year(s) later, especially in the case of more common species such as harbour porpoises. Validation should ideally be made shortly after the catches were reported. Also, shorter reporting period may provide more accurate and reliable catch numbers.

Conclusion

The Management Committee noted the report.

5. USER KNOWLEDGE IN MANAGEMENT DECISION-MAKING

In Greenland, the Government include the use of locally-based documentation of living resources as a key tool for improving Arctic resource management.
With funds from the Nordic Ministerial Council, the European Commission and the Government of Greenland, they are establishing and testing locally-based documentation of resources, the PISUNA programme (Opening doors to native knowledge), in different communities in Disko Bay and Uummannaq, Qaasuitsup Municipality in North West Greenland.

The work of PISUNA has been ongoing for 7 years, and the results are very encouraging. The activities have improved the capacity and opportunities of the communities in terms of monitoring and managing resources within sustainable limits. Moreover, it has improved the communication and understanding between users and natural resource managers at a higher level. Through the use of this approach, community members have obtained a greater 'voice' in decision-making on resources that are of fundamental importance for their livelihood.

In correspondence with Greenland's law on hunting, local knowledge must be taken into consideration by the Government in their management decisions. The experiences show that this legal requirement can be fulfilled by an approach as PISUNA. It shows how local knowledge can be gathered, systematically documented, summarized and communicated in order to guide decision-makers.

This approach rolls observations from local natural resource councils, comprised of some of the most experienced fishers and hunters, up to village and to local authority and the central government. A consensus between many resource users in multiple communities can validate the local knowledge and information provided. In Greenlandic experience, species are better protected, and sustainable use can be achieved, if local knowledge is used. The experienced local observers must be allowed to present their observations and their recommendations. They should not be ignored with references to the "arm's length" principle or the precautionary principle.

The information from local fishers and hunters that is gathered through PISUNA generally agrees with reports and surveys in the same areas from professional scientists - where such data exist. Participatory monitoring can document local knowledge and shorten the time from observation to proposed action. Relatively low cost; possible to sustain with limited resources; large geographic coverage; provides data and information; helps pinpoint species and areas in need of attention; facilitates dialogue and the inclusion of hunter and user knowledge. PISUNA does not, however, replace scientist-executed monitoring.

PISUNA is now moving beyond the "project" stage as the local communities want to continue it and Qaasuitsup Municipality has budgeted staff time and resources in 2017. The PISUNA-net Local Observations database was developed to record, archive, and share indigenous and local knowledge and expertise on natural resources and resource use. This information is generously shared with the public by the observers and the communities within which the observers reside. PISUNA-net is a searchable, web-based database with (almost) real-time data and observations and recommendations from the community members in the Natural Resource Councils in NW Greenland. In this way, not only scientists' reports but also the local communities reports become available for the national decision-makers.

KNAPK commented that the organisation has been part of the project from the start and very much welcomes the new approach.

The Faroe Islands complimented Greenland and underlined the importance of making this known in other for a like the Arctic Council.

Conclusion
The Management Committee noted the presentation.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Greenland informed on a recently developed and implemented online system for accessing hunter licences. The system has resulted in a huge improvement for the Ministry in its work with hunters licences. It was also noted that the Ministry is working on improvements for the catch reporting system among other things to use apps.

KNAPK commented that they very much welcome the new and improved reporting systems.

Conclusion
The Management Committee noted the presentation.

Appendix 1 - Agenda

AGENDA ITEMS	DOCUMENT REFERENCE
1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS	
2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA	NAMMCO/25/MC/02
3. ECOSYSTEM APPROACH 3.1. Disturbance 3.1.1. Mary River-Baffinland project 3.1.2. Other issues 3.2. Climate change 3.3. Marine mammal – fisheries interactions 3.3.1. By-catch 3.3.2. Fish farms	NAMMCO/25/07, item 6 NAMMCO/25/MC/05 NAMMCO/25/MC/06, R-1.1.5, R-1.1.8, R-1.2.1, R-1.2.2, R-1.4.7, R-1.5.3, R-2.6.3 and R-3.4.9
4. PROCEDURES FOR DECISION MAKING ON CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES 4.1. Struck and lost 4.2. Catch validation	NAMMCO/25/07, items 11.2., and 11.2.2 NAMMCO/25/MC/06, R-1.6.4
5. USER KNOWLEDGE IN MANAGEMENT DECISION-MAKING	
6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS	

Appendix 2 – List of documents all Management Committees

Document no	Title	Agenda item
NAMMCO/25/MC/01	Joint List of Documents for the Management Committees	
NAMMCO/25/MC/02	Draft Agenda MCJ	
NAMMCO/25/MC/03	Draft Agenda MCSW	
NAMMCO/25/MC/04	Draft Agenda MCC	
NAMMCO/25/MC/05	Status of Past Proposals for Conservation and Management	MCC, MCSW
NAMMCO/25/MC/06	Summary of Requests by NAMMCO Council to the Scientific Committee, and Responses by the Scientific Committee	MCJ, MCC, MCSW
NAMMCO/25/MC/07	Recent proposals for Conservation and Management and research recommendations - Cetaceans	MCC
NAMMCO/25/MC/08	Recent proposals for Conservation and Management and research recommendations – Seals and Walruses	MCSW
NAMMCO/25/07	Report of the 23rd meeting of the Scientific Committee	MCJ, MCC, MCSW
NAMMCO/25/28	Report of the intersessional Scientific Committee meeting 2 March 2017	MCC