



**TWENTY FIFTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**  
**5 – 6 April 2017, Nuuk, Greenland**

**DOCUMENT 24      NAMMCO TWO NEW LEAFLETS**

**Submitted by:      MMFR and Secretariat**

**Action requested:**

- For information

**Background to the document:**

Since last Council meeting, NAMMCO has produced two new leaflets

- No food – or?
  - Prepared in the framework of the MMFR Project
- NAMMCO 25 years – Faces behind NAMMCO 92
  - Prepared at the occasion of the 25 year jubilee of NAMMCO

Both leaflets was distributed at the meeting.

## Why NAMMCO?

The Agreement to establish NAMMCO was signed in Nuuk, Greenland on 9 April 1992 by the current members of the Commission, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway. It evolved from a 1990 memorandum of understanding establishing the North Atlantic Committee (NAC) for Cooperation on Research on Marine Mammals. NAMMCO represented a new forum for cooperation on the conservation and science-based management of marine mammals and their sustainable use. It provided an alternative to the inability of the International Whaling Commission to agree on rational, science-based management of large cetaceans (baleen and sperm whales). NAMMCO also filled the gap in conservation and management for smaller whales, seals and walrus in the region, which had not previously been covered by any international agreements.

## Some Achievements

- Establishing an Inspection and Observation Scheme for the hunting activities of its parties
- Facilitating the training of marine mammal hunters
- Significantly improving hunting methods and reducing times to death in many hunts
- Providing an international forum for reporting and discussing marine mammal hunting methods
- Strengthening coordination between the Parties' marine mammal research communities and enhancing the understanding of the place and role of marine mammals in the ecosystem
- Facilitating regular cetacean population monitoring
- Regularly assessing marine mammal stocks in the Northern Atlantic
- Developing a new and innovative management procedure for narwhals
- Proposing management measures, the implementation of which has had a positive effect on the targeted stocks.

## Future Challenges

- Assessing the full range of anthropogenic impacts on marine mammals and their cumulative effect and enhancing the ecosystem approach to marine mammal management
- Continuing to ensure the sustainable management of marine mammals in the light of the complex consequences of climate and environmental changes
- Continuing to improve hunting methods by better understanding and reducing the struck and loss rates and further reducing times to death
- Better communicating the diversity of marine mammal stocks and the large differences in their conservation status, some endangered and some thriving
- Better communicating that marine mammals are environmentally responsible food resources and that their sustainable use is in line with efforts to ensure blue growth.
- Contributing to the continued sustainable use of marine mammal resources.

## North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

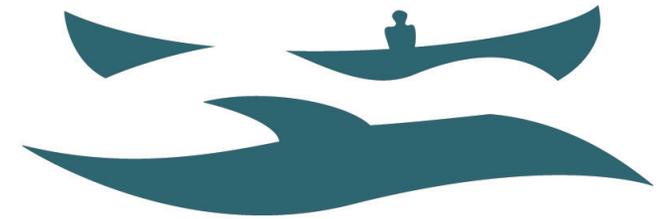
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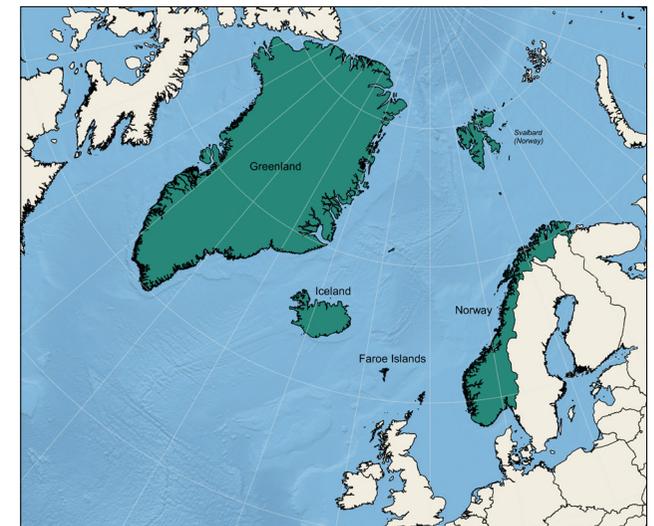
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# NAMMCO



**sustainable use**  
**sustainable communities**



1992 – 2017

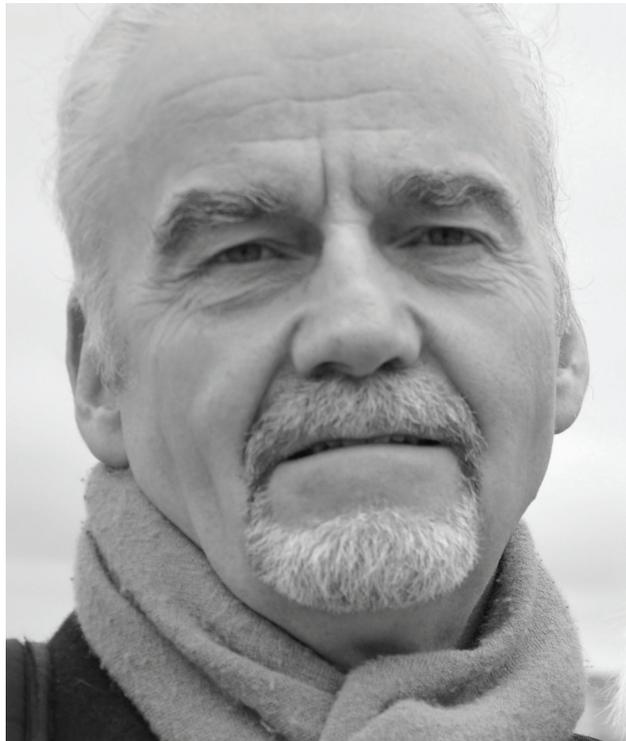
# 25 years

**of regional cooperation on marine  
mammal conservation and  
management**

# 5 of the faces behind NAMMCO 1992

*The first Chair of NAMMCO:*

**Kjartan Hoydal**, Faroe Islands (1941-2016)



As Director of Fisheries from 1986 – 1996, Kjartan was a strong advocate for the need to ensure a rational balance in international cooperation on marine mammals, with respect for the rights of peoples to use their own resources and the importance of science-based regional approaches to resource management. He was one of the major driving forces behind the NAC memorandum of understanding and the establishment NAMMCO. Kjartan was the first chair of the Council (1992-1994) and the first chair of the Management Committee (1993-1994).

*The first Chair of the Committee on Hunting Methods and the first chairwoman of the Council – active in NAMMCO since 1992:*

**Amalie Jessen**, Greenland.



Working at the Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture, Amalie ensured Greenland strong presence in NAMMCO. She was the first chair of the Committee on Hunting Methods (1992-1998) and was an important force behind the shaping and development of the Committee. She has since chaired the Council (1999-2004) and various committees. She is the only one who has participated continuously in the work of the Council since 1992. She also played an active role in the establishment of NAC.

*The first Chair of the Scientific Committee:*

**Jóhann Sigurjónsson**, Iceland.



Scientist at the Marine Research Institute, Jóhann had worked with whales at MRI since 1980. His expertise supported the process of establishing the scientific committee, its procedures, terms of reference and data needs for stock assessment. Jóhann was the first chair of the Scientific Committee (1992 to 1995).

*A driving force behind the improvement of hunting methods and equipment:*

**Egil Ole Øen**, Norway.



Former Prof. assoc. at the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science, Egil Ole is a strong advocate of responsible hunting: safety, welfare in hunting, minimizing time to death (TTD) and struck and loss of animals. He invented and had a major role in the development of the penthrite whale grenade, which is very efficient in killing large whales instantly or very rapidly, and the Blue Box, the sealed system continuously controlling hunting on Norwegian minke whalers. He made a major contribution to setting up NAMMCO Inspection and Observation Scheme of whaling and sealing activities.

*The first General Secretary:*

**Kate Sanderson**, Faroe Islands.



Kate worked in the Faroese fisheries administration from 1986 together with Kjartan Hoydal, assisting the efforts of the founding countries to establish NAMMCO. She became the first General Secretary (1993-1998) and had a leading role in establishing the Secretariat and shaping the organisation. Returning to the Faroese Foreign Service she continued to follow NAMMCO as head of the Faroese delegation and chair of the Council from 2004 to 2008.

## The good diet

**Meat from marine mammals** ranges on the top of seafood products and it is superior to meat from livestock animals.

Their meat is rich in protein, essential amino acids and mineral nutrients like iodine, potassium, selenium, magnesium, zinc, phosphorus and calcium. It is also a great source of vitamins A, B, D and E

The meat is low in saturated fats and rich in healthy long-chain monounsaturated fatty acids and *n-3* long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids, the omega 3 fatty acids.

**Health benefits** of a traditional Inuit subsistence diet, which requires exercise and hard physical work, are substantial. This traditional diet with relatively little fish, some game meat and local berries - plus meat from marine mammals - has prevented the effects of lifestyle diseases raging in the Western world. It could also be a protective factor against prostate cancer.



*Photo: Fernando Ugarte*

**Marine mammal oils** have potentially beneficial effects on several diseases and symptoms. They have pain reducing effects, and reduce symptoms in food hypersensitivity and allergic diseases in offsprings. They have an antioxidant effect. Balenin, found in bones and muscles from whales, works as an antioxidant. It may hasten the recovery process of fatigue - and has a positive effect on memory loss and learning disability with ageing. It may also have a preventive effect against dementia.



*Photo: Føroya Nattúrúgripasavn*

**Marine mammal hunting amongst the Arctic peoples dates back some 4000 years. It has largely retained the same significance. It was and still is a means of survival for Inuit and other peoples both in order to guarantee local food security and the links to a long tradition**

**In the Arctic**, food insecurity is particularly exacerbated by the changes brought by climate change and by widespread pollution of the oceans.



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**Marine Mammals**  
- a food resource  
vital to the Arctic  
and its peoples

**No food - or?**

*Photo: Adobe Stock*

[www.nammco.no](http://www.nammco.no)

## Blue Growth

The oceans of the world is the planet's single largest resource. Blue Growth seeks to maximise economic value and resource efficiency while conserving ecosystems, bringing more sustainable livelihoods.

Whales and seals are traditional but updated elements of a blue economy. They are an ecologically sound resource. They contribute to food security. Hunting generates jobs and supports family networking, upholding a tradition and a spiritual link to the past.

The ban on seal products and fur in the EU affects Inuit sealing although Inuits were expressly exempted from the ban. Very few skins are sold and tanned – although the seals are killed for food.

Blue growth seeks to maximise resource efficiency: as little waste as possible. Not being able to use the skins, a by-product of seals caught for human food, is counter-efficient. It is anti-blue.



Photo: Fernando Ugarte



Photo: scanfishphoto.com/H.P.Tysnes

## An abundant resource

23 species of seals, whales and dolphins are common in the Northern North Atlantic area. And people have always hunted them. After several years of precautionary management, many of the stocks are healthy and/or increasing and can bear controlled levels of removals. Others cannot and are protected

Management and conservation measures have for example ensured an increase in the populations of walrus, narwhal and beluga off West Greenland.

The harvested populations of fin, humpback, minke and bowhead whales are all on the rise because of favourable environmental conditions and sound management. Their conservation status is regularly monitored and assessed. The populations of seals that are harvested are abundant, some like harp and ringed seals counting millions of animals.

Still, management measures for marine mammals must be precautionary. A number of human generated stress factors, and not just direct catches, should be taken into consideration.

Pollution and by-catch are some of the influences that could have devastating consequences for marine mammal populations.

## Threats from the South

Today in the Arctic marine mammals are not threatened by the hunting but they are severely threatened by climate and environmental changes. The build-up in the Arctic of pollutants and microplastics originating from the South is of serious concern. High levels of PCBs can impair reproductive capacity, as seen for example in European killer whales and bottlenose dolphins.

Taking an interest in seals and whales as a food resource carries with it serious concern for their habitat and for the consequences of human activities, not just in the Arctic.

## The green alternative

Ecologically speaking, it is better that the Faroese, Greenlanders, Icelanders or Norwegians hunt sustainably in their own waters.

Locally hunting marine mammals is one of the environmentally sound sources of food in a harsh, Northern environment. The sustainable, energy efficient, non-polluting use of local renewable resources, with limited transport and low carbon footprint, is ecologically ideal. Imported products from Southern areas, filled with fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals, are not a sound green alternative.

The environmental cost of replacing marine mammals in the Arctic diet is not a small one.

Contamination and reduction of local foods lead to a high dependency on imported products, which are at a prohibitive cost and have a high ecological footprint.

Animals like pigs, cows and poultry of the traditional livestock sector are raised outside their natural habitats. This sector is one of the most significant contributors to serious environmental problems at every scale from local to global.

Fishing generates bottom destruction and high by-catch of threatened species, including marine mammals, hindering the recovery of some populations.

“The seals up here have lived a very good life, they are hunted in a very sustainable way. The meat is eaten by the Greenlanders and the fur is sold. That’s as sustainable as it gets.

*Martin Lidgaard,  
former Foreign Minister of Denmark*

## Natural or factory?

Whaling and sealing requires no confinement and transport of live animals. The animals develop and thrive in the wild and in their natural habitats. They are born, live and die free in an environment that might be full of danger - but it is their natural environment.